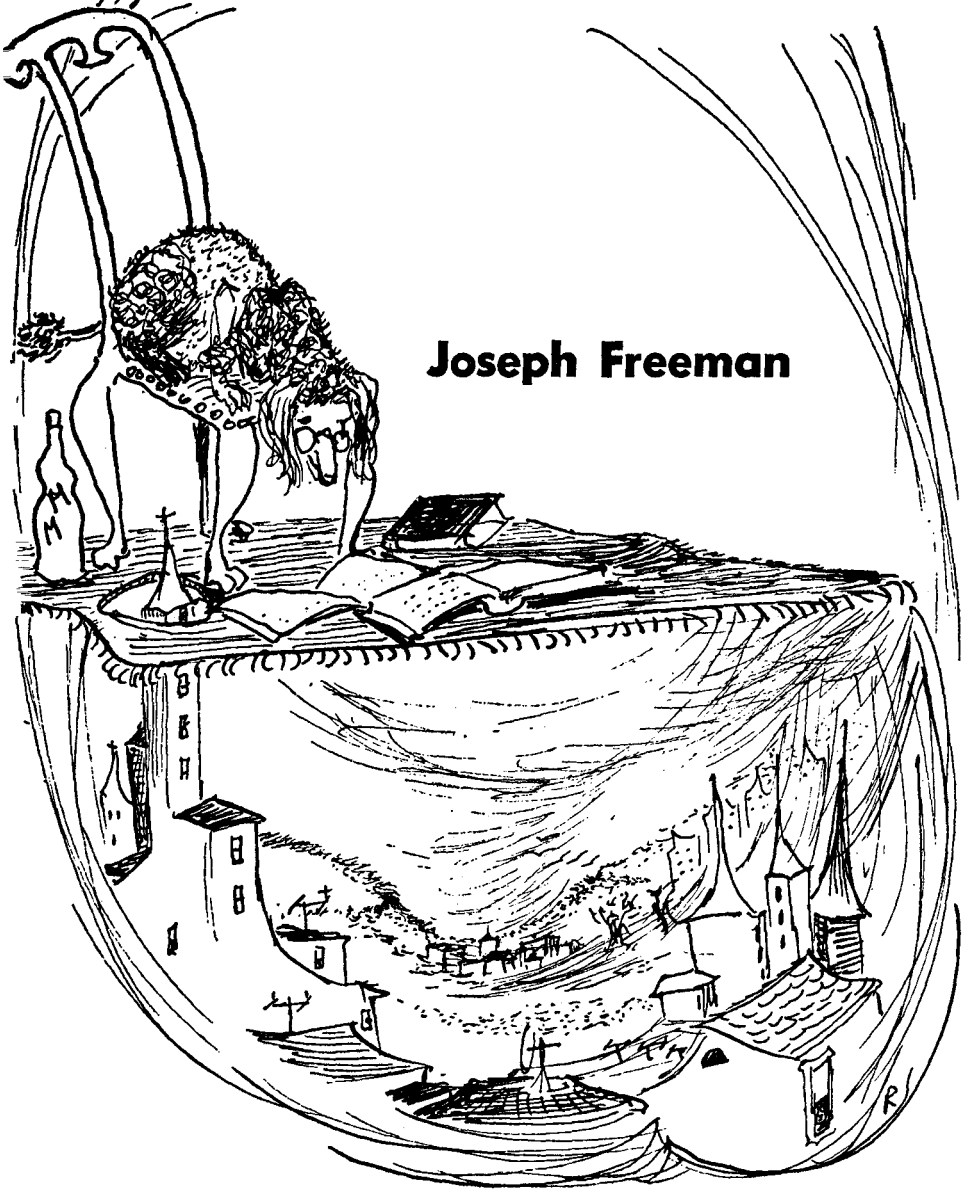


# THE RAINBOW

**Joseph Freeman**



**T**HE FOLLOWING IS TAKEN from an unpublished romance about life in the fabulous republic of Cheereebamba. All the characters in it are imaginary and any resemblance between them and any actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental and something of a miracle.

The action takes place five years ago in the mind of René Arnaud, Viscount St. Cyr and Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at the University of Cheereebamba. Early in the decade—at a critical moment in his own life and in that of the republic—St. Cyr was transformed in the twinkling of an I into a golden royal poodle with the mind, the heart and the speech of a man.

The opinions with which he experiments are not necessarily his own or, for that matter, anybody's. Such fantasmagoric notions are possible only in a Wag and Wit of the Institute of Irony and Pity and only in a country as legendary as Cheereebamba.

This republic, located off the west coast of South America, is known the world over as the Paradise of the Pacific, the land of boundless impossibilities and the home of the astonishing, the enchanting and the absurd.

## I

### I

**V**ISCOUNT ST. CYR WAS HAVING a snack in his private suite at the palace and reading the current issue of *Fluke*, Cheereebamba's leading news weekly, which combined the flamboyance of a circus poster, the corn of a tabloid, the acumen of a poll and the depth of a Foundation report on the hidden trends of national life. He skimmed through the captions under the pictures and the headlines over the articles, then concentrated on the serious business of pushing himself away from the table.

Slowly and gracefully, he sank into a comfortable armchair that faced the window overlooking the garden and the river beyond it, lit a long panatela, filled an immense goblet with 100 proof bottled-in-bond Old Mishmash, laid his copy of *Fluke* on the taboret beside him and finished the mystery story he had begun at breakfast that morning.

A passionate and persistent aficionado of mysteries, he had translated into Iberio-Provençal—the language of Cheereebamba—the brilliant tales of Raimundo Chandler, Yanqui maestro of the genre; it was one of these he now pursued to its dénouement with unabated breath.

At last he came to the end and knew who had murdered whom

and why. One more proof, he reflected, that Aristotle was right when he said that poetry, in the sense of all imaginative literature, is more philosophical and of graver import than history. In literature we can find out in an hour who murdered whom and why; in history we have to wait twenty years for the revelation and sometimes history never tells.

Tolstoy went Aristotle one better; he said history would be a wonderful thing if it were only true. Napoleon went Tolstoy one better; he said history is a pack of lies generally agreed upon. St. Cyr thanked the gods he had spent his current life on Comparative Literature.

History reminded him of the news, chronicle of events before they are transmogrified by history; he picked up *Fluke* again for the latest evidence that this is indeed the best of all possible worlds and that whatever is is right.

He read and reflected. He was aware of the old truth that the art of reflection lights up the whole world. When he practiced it he felt the multitudinous pressure of all the human and inhuman situations he had experienced down the ages, the surge and pressure of all his lives. All persons, all combinations were there, all the fantasmagorias of existence, of whose current phase *Fluke* kept a sensational record.

## 2

He was delighted to learn from the pages of the magazine that throughout the Western world, as the sixth decade of the century was drawing to a close, there was a new breed of youth-tanned, crewcut boys and golden girls in ponytails—who were free from all utopian flimflam and enjoyed the human condition, not in the light of a promised Eden that never comes, but for what it is and where it is and when it is.

There were, naturally, gnarled old utopians, counter-utopians, ex-utopian anti-utopians, hardened Whigs, rockribbed Tories, and Senior Citizens of every other lack of faith, who found the new youth far too earnest, bland and sober, a generation without profile whose typical gesture was a big shrug—a brood of Coxcombs who at nineteen were complacent *Kleinbürger*. What fools these obsolete mortals were! The new youth was out in the sun that shone on the best of all possible worlds and this was a lot better than the dawn when it is bliss to be alive and that ends in darkness at noon.

What pleased St. Cyr most about the new breed was that they were moving toward a common global mentality. The old national barriers were crumbling in process that was neither conscious nor, thank heaven, millenarian.

If someone told the youth of the world: You are a unity from the dance halls of Cheereebamba to the shores of the Sea of Cathay, they would shrug their shoulders and say: We couldn't care less.

After the battles and the blood of the utopian and counter-utopian wars of the age, the new breed was bored with politics of every kind and absorbed in the things that make life worth living—to drink the same drinks, dance the same dances, listen to the same music, have love affairs on vacation abroad in the same way and settle down at home to the good life.

How wise the new breed was and how lucky! The young of the utopian age that was now dead were born in violence, lived in violence and died in violence. The bright young men and women of the Twenties and the Thirties came into the arena with stars in their eyes and a mission in their hearts. They felt they were fated to free all mankind, no matter how; or at least to lead a nation, no matter which. They committed themselves to every utopian and counter-utopian venture of our time, hoped for the best and settled for the worst on the ground that it was Historic Necessity. They rode to glory and grief on the bandwagon that cascaded down the mountain of history from absolute freedom to absolute despotism and from absolute despotism to absolute war.

The new breed despised all this in the most effective form contempt can take. They did not know a thing about the utopian past and they couldn't care less. They had no stars in their eyes, no mission in their hearts, no desire to free all mankind.

They wanted at the beginning what many of the surviving utopians settled for in the end—to earn a good living, to get married, to live comfortably with your mate in a three-room apartment, to go to the movies, to have at least one child, to drink the right drink, dance the right dance, listen to the right music, eat the right cheese, visit their old schoolmates and talk over old times.

St. Cyr read this joyous news, took a swig of Old Mishmash, and said aloud: “B r a v o!”

### 3

*Fluke* published forty-five columnists with a byline and St. Cyr now turned to his favorite, Emilio van Hooren, one of the republic's supreme intellects and the Leonardo da Vinci of the press.

Van Hooren knew everything and everybody. He had visited every country in the world and had read every book ever written, and no false modesty ever prevented him from sharing his knowledge and wisdom with the public.

He also had opinions about everything east of the sun and west of the moon. His strength of character was such that he made public only one of his opinions at a time. But he was not rigid. He had a million opinions on everything and he changed his mind in the open with every change in the winds of doctrine that blew over the republic and the world.

If all the contradictory opinions he expressed through the years in his column, his books, on radio and television, on the

lecture platform and at the dinner table in the luxurious palaces of the faubourgs were laid end to end, the world would explode with a pffft of utter confusion.

Nothing van Hooren ever said was basically new to St. Cyr. In his myriad reincarnations down the ages the Viscount had heard it all and heard it better. What he enjoyed were the rhetorical devices with which van Hooren palmed off clichés as discoveries.

One of his main assets was his old and fluid reputation as a demi-utopian. It was this which enabled him to be on every side of every issue and on both sides of the Ironie Curtain.

Many people never knew what to do with their hands. Van Hooren always knew. He used them to show that every issue had at least two sides—on the one hand and on the other hand.

In the Thirties he proclaimed himself an ardent Fellow Driveller of the ultra-utopian Movement in Cheereebamba and, at the same time, of the classless utopian republic of Laconia. In the Fifties he aided and abetted Senator Yeck's Great Manhunt against utopians—past, present and imaginary. He did so with a bad conscience but with a brilliant use of his two hands. Better than anyone else he knew the reasons for protecting the nation's civil liberties on the one hand and, on the other hand, for helping the Senator from Wisteria, however brutal his methods might be, to wipe out the conspiracy of the ultra-utopian ideologues, real and imaginary, to overthrow the republic with their moribund nineteenth century flimflam.

In hopping from one bandwagon to another, van Hooren was never capricious. He had left the poverty and obscurity of his youth in the Lower Depths far below him and was now a Success on the peaks of Money, Status, Kudos and Influence. This gave him the time, the connections and the freedom to leap on the bandwagon which at the moment was riding fastest and farthest toward still dizzier peaks and was way out front in the race.

#### 4

What St. Cyr most admired in van Hooren was the subtlety and eloquence with which he proved that this is the best of all possible worlds. How old fashioned it made Dr. Pangloss! Van Hooren, too, was a new breed.

The arguments Pangloss had advanced to show that this is the best of all possible worlds were based on the existence of God as demonstrated on the ground of Sufficient Reason by Leibnitz. At the dawn of Creation there were an infinite number of possible worlds and God could have made any one of them. He chose to make our world because, of all possible worlds, it was the best and, in his infinite goodness, God wanted man to have nothing but the best. Our world is the best because it is the only world we have and because it contains more good than evil.

Pangloss was nobody's fool except Voltaire's and he knew perfectly well that if God had wanted to he could have created a world without any evil at all. But it would not have been as good as the world we have. Many things are good only because they are the opposite of some evil. To enjoy a steak, medium rare, with baked potato, you have to be hungry; to enjoy a beaker of 100 proof bottled-in-bond Old Mishmash you have to be thirsty; and to enjoy the best of all possible worlds you have to have a world with evil in it, but one in which there is more good than evil and that is what we have and what could be better.

The past half century had contained a little evil here and there—mostly there—but without this evil the new breed of youth could not enjoy the good life of the right drink, the right dance, the right music and the right cheese without a thought for the morrow.

There was a time when St. Cyr liked the old argument of Leibnitz, but he knew it had no influence in our time. Nowadays all the smart money was on Nietzsche's proposition that God is dead and, if this was so, you could not derive the best of all possible worlds from the goodness of God. You would have to derive it from nature, history, free monopoly enterprise, dialectical materialism, technological progress or the withering away of the state. St. Cyr lived in a corner of the world where you did not have to do anything of the kind and he was in quest of other proofs that of all worlds possible this is the best.

Sometimes this left him in a dilemma and in one of these dilemmas van Hooren came to the rescue. It was he who developed a truly original argument to prove that this is the best of all possible worlds and this was one reason St. Cyr was grateful to him. He shuddered to think of the catastrophe that would have ruined the globe if van Hooren had not come up with his own brand of Sufficient Reason.

The columnist saw that, on the one hand, God is dead but, on the other hand, men feel the need to worship someone or something they believe is bigger, better and more powerful than themselves. Some worship money, others worship power or military might or science or art or race or nation or alcohol or the utopian vision or the void or the Metaphysical Fuck. The trouble is that if you worship any of these you may be right some of the time but you can't be right all of the time. The genius of van Hooren was that he found something to worship that made you right all the time on every subject and on every occasion, He worshipped Time.

5

Van Hooren never got caught on the wrong bandwagon because he applied the never-ending flux of time to man's fate, the

human condition, the contemporary crisis, the next presidential election, last year's World Series, this year's crop of books, the biggest historic events of the age and the most trivial tripe of the day.

It was typical of his flair that he was able to translate this sublime ontological gruel into demi-sophisticated tabloid terms. It made him the idol of millions whose lives were a mess and who needed to be assured that, in spite of all evil, this is the best of all possible worlds and whatever is right.

For the Balzacian middle class he was Heraclitus, Arthur Brisbane, Dr. Frank Crane, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Beatrice Fairfax, Count Keyserling Dr. Coué and Sancho Panza rolled into one.

His formula for proving the supreme goodness of the Cheereebamba System—which for him was what God had been for the middle ages—was as simple as it was original. It was this: Today is not yesterday and this year is not last year. It requires little reflection—and the less, the better—to see the profound and far-reaching consequences of this inspired and inspiring formula.

In the Thirties, for example, van Hooren applauded everything about the classless utopian republic of Laconia, including the crimes of its Caesar Divus and Pontifex Maximus, Clovin Barbaradze. He justified the Umbrian Trials and the dialectical massacre of the Old Jacobins. By the time the Pact came, van Hooren had to repudiate his self of the Thirties as if it had never existed. He did so with commendable candor.

"Laconia is an evil empire ruled by evil men and we must look upon it as the supreme foe of all civilization and the supreme threat of the age," he wrote. "There are some who still believe in the fable about Laconia that had so great a vogue so long and so disastrously among the feeble-minded, the venal, the power-hungry and the subversive. Those days are over. It is of the utmost importance to remember that 1939 is not 1917."

Nobody could deny this mathematical truth and that is how van Hooren, by making millions see that Laconia was irremediably evil, served the nation in a time of crisis.

Two years later Laconia was Cheereebamba's Great and Gallant Ally in the second global war and van Hooren had to explain his renewed and even more boundless enthusiasm for the classless republic. And again the magic formula did it. Remember, he told his readers, 1941 is not 1939.

His pro-Laconian fervor lasted till the Frigid War and the Great Manhunt. Then he became once more a bitter and brilliant opponent of the republic ten thousand miles away, of the global ultra-utopian enterprise in general, and of the Cheereebamba ultra-utopians in particular. And he brought to the aid of Senator Yeck and his horde of inquisitors the unflinching magic of the van Hooren formula: Remember, 1953 is not 1943.



Then came the death of Clovin the Greatest; the rise to power of his Tanin; the Thaw; the Revelations; the sensational exploit of the Futnik in outer space and the equally sensational resurrection of Prometheus, or the Poet as Hero, in the world acclaim and domestic scandal that raged around Andrei Volgin, Laconia's greatest living poet. All this alerted van Hooren to the fact that another big change was in the offing.

Never one to be caught off a bandwagon, he prepared hundreds of columns in advance praising Laconia from here to the moon. These he kept for release at the proper moment. A devotee of Time, van Hooren knew the importance of timing. He was certain that those who set the fashion in Cheereebamba, and swung from one extreme to the other like the daring old man on the flying trapeze, would sooner or later be as convulsively in favor of Laconia as they were at the moment convulsively against it.

Long experience had taught him that the ardent enthusiasts for Laconia on the day of reconciliation, restoration and peaceful co-exploitation of the world would be the embattled brains who had been most active in the Manhunt against those idiotic utopians who had been pro-Laconian too soon or too late and always for no reward whatever.

For the dazzling and ephemeral era of global goodwill that was bound to come, van Hooren prepared and polished the most lyrical columns of his career. Their refrain was: Remember, 1964 is not 1960.

6

Nobody could dispute this, particularly in Cheereebamba, where people live like flies from moment to moment and never remember the past or envision the future. Besides, to act on the natural law that this year is not last year had prudential advantages for certain people, not least among them van Hooren himself. Since 1964 was not 1960 or 1936 or 1917, he did not have to explain or remember his contradictory enthusiasms, and disenchantments over the years and down the decades.

The past had vanished in the mist of the universal plea for peace. Everybody wanted world concord and only the classless utopian republic of Laconia and the free enterprise republic of Cheereebamba could bring this about. If these two global powers were to cooperate, each of them had to understand that the other was, thanks to the flow of Time, a brand new country that had just come into being. The tycoons of Cheereebamba had to understand that the Laconia of today was not the Laconia of the late Emperor Clovin, and the boyars of Laconia had to understand that the Cheereebamba of today was not the Cheereebamba of the late Senator Yeck. Remember, van Hooren appealed to the world, today



is not yesterday; this year is not last year; the twentieth century is not the tenth.

St. Cyr knew better. He had lived many lives in many epochs and had learned in the fires of remembered experience that van Hooren's magic tranquilizer of conscience was part of the Human Comedy.

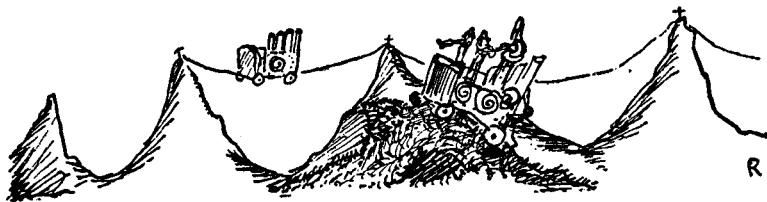
As long as men forget what they did to others and what others did to them, and pretend that the horrors of the past can never return because today is not yesterday, they make it certain that yesterday *will* return, bringing with it the old horrors in new and more terrible forms.

And St. Cyr had no illusions about van Hooren's gift for prophecy. On the eve of World War I the columnist had reminded everybody that 1913 was not 1813; the era of great wars was over, never to return. In the dawn of the Laconian metamorphosis he reminded everybody that 1917 was not 1793; the era of great revolutions was over; the ultra-utopians could not win, the classless republic could not possibly last. And when the Hyenas of the Crooked Cross seized supreme power in Teutonia, he cried: The Pfuirer is a clown! He can't last a year. The Middle Ages are over. Remember, 1933 is not 1233!

The Viscount was certain that if and when World War III came and both sides began to drop their missiles on the men, women and children of the world, van Hooren would call it the Phony Nuclear War and exclaim: Remember! the cosmos of today is not the cosmos of Hiroshima!

St. Cyr was aware of all this and if he enjoyed reading van Hooren week after week and year after year it was because he never tired of tracking down utopian flimflam in all its forms and of finding in the mirror of its folly the reflection of his own wisdom. The columnist was a challenge. On the one hand he was now celebrated around the globe as an anti-utopian champion of the Status Quo; on the other hand there was his Past. Was it possible that he was a crypto-demiutopian, that his realistic flexibility in making split-second leaps from view to view concealed a hidden loyalty to the old pipedream about man and the world?

This was the nut St. Cyr wanted to crack, though he was neither a mountain nor a squirrel, but a Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature who remembered all his reincarnations down the ages and had been metamorphosed into a golden royal poodle for his failure of nerve at the height of the Manhunt.



## II

### I

**T**HE MORE VAN HOOREN proclaimed the agreeable gospel that the world was created this morning, the more St. Cyr—himself no mean leaper through loopholes—suspected that the columnist did not really believe this is the best of all possible worlds and Cheereebamba the best of all possible countries.

Ah, Plato, Plato, who can escape you! the Viscount murmured. The original sin which bred the world's utopias was The Republic. Nevertheless, Plato was a raving realist compared with the arch-utopians who want to make the state ideal by abolishing it and the fanatics of all camps who want to make the world ideal by bombing it to bits. Every attempt ever made to transform a world with some evil into a world with no evil had always brought mankind grief, disappointment and catastrophe; and Euripedes was right when he said that revenge creates greater evil than the evil it avenges.

O these fantasmagoric utopians and their fantasmagoric visions of the universal liberation and redemption of man! They lived, not in time, but in eternity; not here, but everywhere. They believed that in the realm of metaphor and mathematics—the realm of reality behind appearance that is half way between the realm of brute fact and the realm of brittle fancy—Cheereebamba or Laconia or any other place on earth is not only what and where it is, but is every land that ever was and the land that never was on sea or land; and everything that happens there is—as Saint Augustine said of a continguous realm—true in a way precisely because it is false in a way.

What fairy tales the utopians made up to explain this or that evil! What madcap schemes for its abolition!

Blessed and cursed with total recall, St. Cyr remembered the innumerable magic formulas which, down the ages, had explained and abolished war on paper, but never once in fact; and he considered himself fortunate that in his first ten lives he had been an Athenian.

### 2

The Greeks had a word for it: Man is war. Mortals make war not for economic, political or ideological reasons; these are excuses, rational in form, irrational in content. Can the mere passage of time—a year, a decade, a century, a millenium—by itself transform man? Who has ever found the magic abracadabra that can close the jungle past and open the authentic human future of which all men dream?

St. Cyr, a classicist and a tory at heart, tempered his inhuman

condition by alternating between the spiritual anodyne offered in the *Enneads* of Plotinus and the carnal *Fata Morgana* offered in Fuchs' *History of Erotic Art*, whose illustrations alone were worth the price of emission. And the Viscount believed, in so far as a Wag and Wit allowed himself to believe anything, that man is as human today as he ever was or will be, and the way things are is the way things ought to be. But while he opposed change when it was urged as that which ought to be, he embraced any change when it became that which is. This reasonable attitude made him equally at home in the court of a prince of ancient lineage and the capital of a victorious rebel who had just proclaimed himself King of Kings and God Almighty; and what could be better in a world where life is long, nasty and brutish and in a time when most of us must be content to be as though they are content.

Ah, these chiliasts! Many of them still thought the magic formula was the basic dream with the changing name, the ever-recurring vision of the universal liberation and redemption of man as it was interpreted in our time. To be sure, there were also the transmogrified romantics, redeemed Ishmaelis like Tristan. These, as one of the best of them put it, were temperamentally incapable of embracing the politics of sin, cynicism and despair; this compelled them to re-examine the classic assumptions about the nature of politics and the political character of human nature. The new breed of Don Quixotes followed Socrates, who said that to reach truth we must define everything all over again and must keep on defining till there is nothing left to define and we are down to rockbottom axioms from which we can begin a new voyage of discovery.

Van Hooren was something else again. He knew the basic doctrines and believed in none of them; he was strictly a man of the latest headlines who quoted the ancients or the moderns as it suited his purpose at the moment. The columnist was the epitome of the era of disenchantment which followed the Age of Assassins and the Age of Anxiety. A beautiful lady savant who taught at the University of Cheereebamba had described it as Beyond Utopia.

In one respect, however, van Hooren was, in his own way and on his own level, more or less consistent. He had no use for any unilateral liberation and redemption, above all one that was imposed from the outside. On this score St. Cyr sympathised with him. But he doubted whether, in the contemporary crisis, a surface commitment to things as they are in our own country, and a flexible opposition to things as they are elsewhere, was enough for a man who molded the minds of millions. The Viscount suspected that the veins of van Hooren still harbored the old utopian virus and that he attributed to Time the magic properties which other millenarians down the ages had attributed to God, Nature, His-

tory, the Nation, the King, Money, the Army, the Party or the Leader. Time, said Euripedes, heals all wounds. Van Hooren took this to mean that Time would prevent all wounds in the future.

Some people believed that men would not change till their hearts changed; others looked for salvation in a change of political, economic and social institutions; still others saw it in a change of rulers or in the same ruler with a change of slogans. Van Hooren believed, if he believed anything, that men change with the calendar.

3

Yes, St. Cyr reflected in a cloud of cigar smoke and aglow with Old Mishmash, van Hooren is a chiliast after all. He is standing the utopian fantasmagoria on its head, but he is a utopian just the same. If he really believed this is the best of all possible worlds he would not want to change it even with changes in the calendar. Then the Viscount wondered whether he was unfair to van Hooren; even the most dogmatic of us can't be sure of everything. *Did* the columnist want to change the world, even if only with the calendar? Van Hooren was glad that Time marched on and the year changed every twelve months. Wasn't this a way of paying homage to the God of Things as They Are?

St. Cyr hoped so. He wanted to think well of van Hooren. He was fond of him. In fact, he owed him something. When the Viscount was metamorphosed from a professor of Comparative Literature into a golden poodle many people remarked maliciously that it served him right. Not so van Hooren. He published a brilliant column saying that people ought to accept the Viscount for what he was now and not measure him by what he once had been. Remember, van Hooren added, today is not yesterday!

Moreover, van Hooren had the virtues of his defects. The same flexibility which always landed him on the winning team made him perceive one of the most enchanting paradoxes of the age. He was among the first to understand and proclaim that, on the one hand, the Twenties were ruled by hope and, on the other hand, the Fifties were ruled by fear. This, he pointed out, gave the élite everywhere a common bond that transcended everything and that, in spite of everything, was creating One World.

The disadvantage of ruling by a chiliastic promise, van Hooren said, is that the promise cannot be carried out; the advantage of ruling by threat is that the threat *can* be carried out. It is impossible to have a global Eden based on free monopoly enterprise or the utopian vision. It is possible to have global nuclear war. And now that the millions no longer believe in chiliastic promises they will do as they are told under the threat of nuclear war. It is the old fear of Hell, van Hooren concluded, made actual by tech-

nology and politics and far more effective because it is real, therefore rational.

For this aperçu the Viscount forgave van Hooren his alternating hands, his worship of the calendar and his crypto-demiutopianism.

Van Hooren was alright. It was not about him that St. Cyr was worried. The incorrigible utopians who caused him the greatest anxiety were those politically unaffiliated romantics he knew and loved best—his closest friends among the Wags and Wits of the Institute of Irony and Pity.

They were the opposite of van Hooren in one fateful respect. The columnist closed the past every day and pretended it had never happened; the romantics refused to close the past at all. They acted as if it were still the present, and as if the present had never replaced and modified the past.

Van Hooren wanted the world to forget the horrors of the Age of Assassins; the Wags and Wits behaved as if the horrors were still here and the monsters who had created them still dominated the world.

St. Cyr was a centrist. He liked to remind professional optimists that today contains yesterday and tomorrow will contain both; and he liked to remind romantics that, in spite of everything and because of everything, the world does move, the future determines the past and whatever is is right. For those who remained ultra-utopians at heart he cited Marx, who said that no revolution comes out the way its ideologues envision it.

He did not forget that it was his centrism in the Great Manhunt that had metamorphosed him into a dog with the mind and heart of a man and the talk of a professor of Comparative Literature. Centrism has its risks. But what stand or lack of stand could anybody take in an age like ours that was free of risk? At any rate, he would rather be right and a dog than wrong and a man.

In his own peculiar, conservative way St. Cyr, too, was a utopian, though if anybody told him so to his face the Viscount would tear him to pieces; he, too, was certain he was right on every point where he was wrong.

It was not for being right in the Manhunt that he felt so much like a dog that he became one. How human he was, after all! He forgot yesterday's trauma where it hurt most today.



St. Cyr found his own condition so painful to remember that he thought again of the human condition and found respite from it by arguing in his own mind with his romanto-utopian friends. This was his favorite form of argument and he always got the best of it.

He was distressed and amused by the widespread confusion about the great metamorphosis of our time. This so obsessed people that they did not see the most obvious things about it.

Yes, the revolution in Laconia and around the world was a tremendous success; that was a fact. But this was not the *utopian* revolution, the one that was going to liberate and redeem the helots everywhere and, through them, every man, woman and child on earth.

The utopian revolution had failed. It had been taken over and exploited by predatory men of power, as all such metamorphoses had been taken over and exploited down the ages. The helots remained helots everywhere, the universal liberation and redemption remained the stirring dream of the apocalyptic proclamations, and all the bread and circuses in the world had not altered this anywhere.

But the revolution of our time *had* liberated one class and had raised it from the Lower Depths to the peaks of money, glory and power and had catapulted its élite to the heights of history. What was succeeding everywhere today was not the helotarian revolution, but the Balzacian revolution of the Kleinbürgerthum. The class that was going to be ground between the upper and nether millstones was inheriting the earth.

The authors of the Ultra-Utopian Magnafiesta had defined revolution as the replacement of one ruling class by another. How simple! How clear! Yet the utopian utopians had never understood this. They were drugged with the opium of the ideologues—the passion for truth, justice and freedom for all. It was the predatory utopians who understood the blunt dictum of the Sacred Oracle. And it was the élite of the Kleinbürgerthum that had replaced the old élite on top of the heap, as well as the utopian utopians, and they had done it not only in Laconia and Cheereebamba, but everywhere on the face of the earth; and this was fine and dandy with St. Cyr who, as a tory and a classicist at heart, knew that whatever is is right.

The arriviste princes of our time, the Viscount reflected, are like the Grand Bourgeoisie which replaced the old aristocracy after the Great Gallic Metamorphosis. They adored those they had overthrown and aped them. They wanted nothing more than to be accepted by the people whose relatives they had guillotined, to

intermarry with them, to buy their estates and titles, to be like them on a more Gargantuan and expensive scale.

Out of this reconciliation of the new with the old ruling class came the Great Restoration and a new élite. This consisted of the most supple, clever and realistic of the old aristocrats and the most gifted, predatory and ambitious rebels who had buried their utopian past together with the ideals that had made their rise possible. They were the heroes of Balzac's Comedy.

The new alliance of élites despised the helots they flattered and exploited. They despised even more the leaders of helot organizations who failed to fight or finagle their way into the new amalgam of élites; and they hated with fanatical ferocity the utopian utopians who, mad with the apocalyptic vision, wanted to abolish all élites and criminally clung to the old fantasmagoria of universal liberty, equality, fraternity and poppycock.

5

Ah, what a wonderful world was emerging from the horrors of the age! Amidst all the current ructions, a new time was coming—a time not of heroics but of healing, not of revolution but of restoration, not of experiment but of equipoise.

Tears of joy came into the Viscount's blue eyes as he realised once more that at last the era of Reconciliation was under way. The tough, ambitious adventurers of global utopianism who had reached the topmost peaks of power were ready to make peace and to share the earth with the Robber Barons of free monopoly enterprise; it was only a matter of time and it would do the poets no good to emulate de Musset by dividing humanity into men of matter and men of spirit.

The gods be praised! St. Cyr said to himself and his old tory heart beat with bliss as he remembered one of the bravos who had risen in our time from the Lower Depths to become the supreme ruler of a small but fascinating classless republic.

This utopian hero declared that if and when the Laconians reached the moon, he hoped they would reserve for him a thousand acres of forest where he could hunt stag.

Like the kings of old! St. Cyr thought and he remembered the times when he was a hunting dog in the packs of Greek heroes, Gallic princes and gentlemen of Albion.

The more the world changes—he reflected with ardor, if not with originality—the more it is the same and it is always the best of all possible worlds. Wasn't it a blessed thing that—after half a century in which men hunted each other to the grave for the sake of transforming the world into Paradise or for the sake of preventing this calamity—that after this, rebels turned princes should hunt stag on the moon.

O for an Archiolochns or a Heine to give us an account of



this sublime recurring moment in the annals of man! St. Cyr murmured; or failing that, a historian who would remember that Clio, too, is a Muse, that the Greeks rightly considered history a branch of literature and that Macaulay hit the nail on the head when he urged that "a truly great historian would reclaim the materials which the novelist has appropriated."

6

St. Cyr refilled his golden beaker with 100 proof bottled-in-bond Old Mishmash, took a deep draught of the amber fluid—nectar of the gods and Cheereebamba—lit a fresh panatela, relaxed again in his armchair and resumed his reflections about the Golden Age that awaited the world.

Unlike the political utopians of our time, he had no blueprint or magnafiesta for the happy event and he set no specific time for it. He was more akin to the metaphysical utopians among whom he had lived through many incarnations; these had had the wisdom to make their predicted Arcadias as vague as possible and to posit their arrival in a shadowy future without time or place.

Yes, he said to himself, the dawn of Reconciliation and Restoration is under way. Any day now—in the next five, ten or fifteen years—the Frigid War will be called off. And it will be called off by the Laconian boyars. Why not? We say they began it, they say we began it and there are obscure grammarians of history who say nobody began it, unless it was the dialectic process. But whoever began it, the boyars of Laconia will end it; they always call the shots. And they no longer need the Frigid War. They have gotten out of it what they want so far and they will get the rest out of something else in their own good time. They are men of destiny, God-Nature-History is on their side any time they have the heaviest missiles. Meantime, why quarrel, gentlemen? The world is big. There is plenty for all. Let us share the booty between us. Bottoms up!

St. Cyr was convinced that the Robber Barons of Cheereebamba would be delighted by it all. At last their great fear would be over. O not the fear of nuclear war! No oligarchy of any age had ever hesitated to wipe out whole nations in order to get what they wanted and they did not need nuclear missiles for that. The Romans did not even have gunpowder, yet they killed every man, woman and child in Carthage, utterly destroyed the cities, laid waste the countryside, sowed the ruined empire with salt and never had the slightest qualm of conscience about it. Genocide was not original with our time; it was one of the oldest of sports.

What the kaputalists dreaded more than anything else was that the boyars of Laconia had really established a free society of equals.

If this were so, and if that society worked, the helots of the world would be inspired to do likewise. It was to prevent this catastrophe that the Robber Barons everywhere had fought the Laconian republic with every weapon at their command.

They had let mankind plunge into the second global war in the fantasmagoric belief that the Hyenas of the Crooked Cross would destroy the classless Eden. Anything was better than this! Let half the world perish, let the gas chambers and the bake ovens wipe out millions of men, women and children—but never let a free society of equals exist anywhere! This was the supreme danger, the ultimate evil, the unspeakable crime, the Second Death.

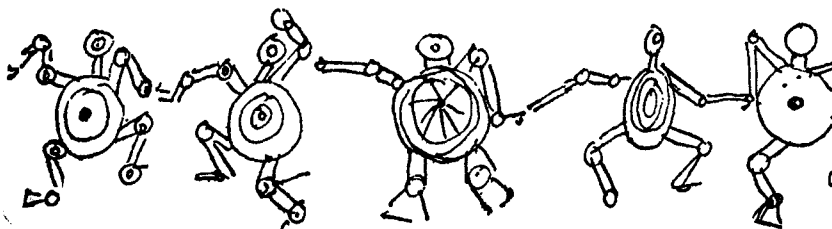
7

Then the Robber Barons of the world, roused from their dogmatic slumber by Barbaradze's ubiquitous firing squad, made a discovery that filled them with relief and joy. Laconia was *not* a free society of equals! It was like every society that had ever existed since the dawn of time when men ceased to be equals and became hordes of helots ruled by an élite of masters.

The titles were different—the creed, the gobbledegook, the myths, the manner of riding herd on the felaheen, all were different. But in essence East and West, North and South, were one world, a world of inequality and of a freedom limited to the élite and, as far as St. Cyr was concerned, what could be better.

At last the Robber Barons and the utopian boyars understood each other. They were in the same business. They were carrying on the old tradition which romantics denounce as man's inhumanity to man and realists know is the law of God, Nature or History by which each man is called to his place and authority keeps him there, unless he is endowed with what it takes to get him out and the luck that makes it possible. And in certain respects the boyars were way ahead of the game and were going to teach the Robber Barons new ways of keeping the helots contented in their place through total control of mind, heart and will.

Ah, gentlemen, St. Cyr reflected, this is indeed government by consent of the governed! The thrall does what the hypnotist tells him to do and, in a way, does it of his own free will.



And so, the Viscount decided, the allied patricians of the world—East and West, North and South—are ready, at the mutually advantageous moment, to call off their quarrel. Soon there will be the supreme Restoration, the joyous Reconciliation; and all the princes of the world and their ideologues will cooperate to further the only revolution that has triumphed in our time—not the demiutopian or the social utopian revolution but the Industrial Revolution.

And each peerage will vie with the others in finding ways and means of engineering the consent, molding the opinions and monopolizing the minds of the common run of philistines and helots; and these nameless, faceless millions will believe they are free and will look upon the triumph of the industrial and political machines in the hands of the princes everywhere as the supreme and final fulfilment of demiutopianism, social utopianism, the Second Coming, the human enterprise and the ultimate purpose of God, Nature and History.

O how delightful! St. Cyr murmured. How perfectly delightful!

There will be war, of course, he quickly reminded himself. War is the sport of princes and they take it in their stride. They know that the enemy of today may be the ally of tomorrow, and the ally of today the enemy of tomorrow, and they always leave the door open for any turn of events, so that win, draw or lose they come out of every war with something and even the most catastrophic defeat can be, for them, a miracle of re-enrichment and preparation for a new trial of arms in the mechanized chivalry of our time.

It's another story for the millions. You can't get them to die for a mere game; they are willing to die only when you persuade them that the game is Armageddon or Judgment Day, that this is the war to end all war, the final conflict after which the first heaven and the first earth will pass away, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and there will be no more sea, and the victors will wipe away all tears from the eyes of men, and there will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, and no more pain, for the former things will pass away; this war is Omega and Alpha, the end of all things old and the beginning of all things new, and now each man will be rewarded according to his merit. For this men are willing to die and have died down the ages, and so it will be again in the Golden Age ahead, and men will be taught from the cradle to the grave to love their fate.

And St. Cyr saw, as in a vision, that in the Metternich Era ahead the monopoly of mind would be by far the most miraculous in the annals of men. The Few, he reflected, are born with a flair for reality and a genius for duplicity; they know what the

score is and never lose sight of the world as it is or a chance to make it look as they want it to look to those they manipulate. Soon the manipulation will be so thorough that, for the Many, the abyss between their actual experience and what they imagine they experience will be more immense and fantastic than ever. The Many will mistake the fables they are taught for the world as it is, and the ideologues will mistake the flimflam around them for the truth they have found after years of heroic effort.

9

The prospect of all this pleased St. Cyr no end. His myriad lives down the ages had taught him that this was how men had always passed their time on earth, and he was happy that in our time the élite everywhere would find new and better ways of playing the old game.

It was a good game, the only game that could be played in this best of all possible worlds. God-Nature-History had created men unequal in capacity, therefore unequal in value. This made them unequal in money, status, power and glory and, since that is how it is, that is how it ought to be.

The Few are born to rule, the Many are born to obey and to serve those who rule, to live for them and to die for them; and it was a wonderful thing that science and the machine and the renovated knowledge of man had made it possible for the new allied élites the world over to give the Many everywhere the most fabulous bread and circuses the world had ever known.

To be sure, there would be executions, too. The Viscount agreed with de Maistre that every society on earth is based on the executioner. But the world would be free of the vulgar mass liquidations perpetrated by the utopians and counter-utopians of the millenarian nightmare that was reaching its end. There would be no attempt to liberate mankind by shooting half of it and gassing the other half. It would all be done in the civilized spirit of those eras which now and then hung or decapitated a man simply to make an example of him and, in that way, to confirm the moral law.

In the Metternich Era that is under way, the Viscount reflected, every prince, in order to make his helots feel they are treated well, will denounce other princes for treating theirs badly. And princes everywhere will understand that this is only a gambit for teaching the Many that the grass is greener on this side and there is no grass on the other; and paradise will no longer be a chiliastic promise for distant space or time, it will be, through the power of myth, that which is here and now and by fiat irreversible.

This enchanted St. Cyr, who was a devotee of the present and, even more, of the past, and had no use for the future until it became the present, to be seized or fled; then the past, to be

embalmed and embellished in books. And his heart went out to the princes of the Golden Age ahead who had risen from the Lower Depths to rule men rationally and realistically from the peaks of power and he remembered that even Plato, in his own utopian way, had ascribed the blessing of divine madness, which is the principle of Eros or creation, not only to lovers, healers of souls, poets and above all, of course, to philosophers, but also to founders of states and families; and these have never been millenarian visionaries; they have always been a rough and hardy crew, polished by time and idealised by history.

Ours, the Viscount reflected, is the epoch of the founders of states and families and what could be better.

## 10

To be sure, his friends among the romantic utopians at the Institute of Irony and Pity misread the portents of the time and mistook the Golden Age ahead for a new era of vision and metamorphosis. They imagined that behind the Gilded Youth hailed by *Fluke* there was emerging another, more authentic youth that was ready, without pose and without fanfare, to pick up the fallen torch of the basic dream with the changing name and to run with it toward the ever-advancing horizon that leads toward the universal liberation and redemption of man.

Stendhal said of his hero in *The Charterhouse of Parma*: "In his moments of leisure he delighted in savoring the sensations produced by the romantic circumstances with which his imagination was always ready to supply him. He was far from employing his time patiently observing the real characteristics of things in order to discover their causes. Reality still seemed dull and sordid to him. I can understand that one might not like to look at it, but in that case one ought not to reason about it. And one certainly ought not to raise objections with the various components of one's ignorance."

The Viscount often hurled these lines at his utopian friends, adding: *De te fabula narratur est!*

[These utopian Fabrizioos never knew the score of the game, the time of the year or the rhythm of the era. They were ready to rise out of the debris of their pulverized dreams for another flight to the ideal world of their desire.] Tristan who, as far as history was concerned, was the most romantic of the lot, even went around the lounge of the Institute declaiming the final stanza of Prometheus Unbound: To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite; to forgive wrongs darker than death or night; to love and bear; to hope till Hope creates from its own wreck the thing it contemplates; neither to change nor falter nor repent; this, like thy glory, Titan, is to be good, great and joyous, beautiful and free; this is alone life, joy, empire and victory.

O God! O Montreal! How long would these chiliasts go on spinning their flimsy Edens—and, of all times, now; and after all that had happened in our time and all that had never happened.

Fortunately, the Viscount comforted himself, the prophets of Arcadia are as futile as they are absurd and the joke is always on them. The millenarian nightmare, the fable of the bees, is done and the Balzacian fable of the glass bees is about to begin. Once more, as in the days of old, fucking will be a factor in history, history a factor in metaphysics and metaphysics a factor in the enlightenment that makes the prince content with his palace, the pauper with his pigsty and the casuist with his apology. It is true, as the Talmud tells us, that to slander is to murder and the zealot who yesterday abetted the guilty in their crimes for an idea he now reviles, will tomorrow libel the innocent to their graves for no reason at all, thereby confirming the law of Dostoyevsky that it is precisely the innocence of the victim that fires the blood of his murderer; and after the tiger devours the lamb, the lamb, in absentia and post mortem, will be convicted of devouring the tiger. Free of the eschatology that has trapped them down the ages between the Creation that never returns and the Apocalypse that never arrives, men will once more enjoy the Eternal Cycle. They will find tranquility in the belly of the whale guarded by the Behémoth of the amorlists, the Leviathan of Hobbes and the nuclear warheads of the princes. All this will be accepted as the True Liberty of Human Actions from Antecedent or Extrinsic Necessity. The ever-recurring machinery of force and fraud will be called universal freedom and global peace, and the babe in arms will be taught for life that a throw of the loaded dice will never abolish Chance.

Things being what they are, the utopians may rise again to proclaim that man is thrilled with joy, the world is standing on top of golden hours, human nature is reborn again and, in fulfilling their historic mission for the millenium (or the counter-millenium) men will be driven to crime and horror by a terrific reservoir of guilt and ignorance that can no longer hold its loathsome charge, but bursts and spreads in deluge through the world. Should this occur, heaven forbid, the new era will weather the storm by remembering that if spring comes, winter cannot be far behind.

Done will be the days when the world considered the Gauleiter who killed a child innocent of murder and the cabinet minister who goosed a call girl guilty of treason. And if the Napoleons of the coming order will overrun the world with blood it will not be because they are failures in their own tents; on the contrary, every prince will be granted not only his own stag preserve on the moon, but his own deer park on earth; and the state will subsidize his Lola Montez, Madame du Barry or Antinoüs and, in the spirit

of the age, will give the royal favorite every form of social and sexual security, and a marble tomb in the National Cemetery between the Unknown Soldier and the Founding Fathers of the republic. And if the helots and ideologues have the time, the money, the energy and the inclination, they too will be allowed to mitigate the terrors of death by the pleasures of Eros. In this case, if in no other, the golden rule will be from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs; and the new Internationale, translated into every tongue from Iberio-Provençal to Swahili, will be *Cras amet qui nunc amavit, cras amavit nunc amet*.

And men will so love their fate that they will never again suffer and die for any chiliastic or counter-chiliastic flimflam, but will labor and live for the renovated aeon of reconciliation, restoration and hierarchy and will find their bliss not in Utopia—subterranean fields—or some secreted island, heaven knows where, but in the very world, which is the world of all of us—the place where, in the end, we find our happiness or not at all; and this happiness will come from the simple things of life—the right drink, the right dance, the right music, the right cheese and the right opinions.

The Viscount heaved a deep sigh. O to be human again and twenty!

JOSEPH FREEMAN, who has been writing poetry, fiction and essays since he was fifteen, is the author of six published books. Among them are two novels (*Never Call Retreat*, *The Long Pursuit*) and a volume of memoirs (*An American Testament*). In the twenties and thirties he was a foreign correspondent (*Paris, London, Moscow, Mexico*); on the staffs of *The Liberator* and the *American Civil Liberties Union*; one of the founders and editors of the *New Masses* and *Partisan Review*; and a co-founder of the *Theatre Union*. In the forties and fifties he was on the staffs of the *American Civil Liberties Union*, *Information Please*, *Edward L. Bernays* and *Executive Research*; and one of *Hans Richter's* collaborators on the avantgarde film *Dreams that Money Can Buy*.





# CORRESPONDENCE

## Exchange Over Fleming Review

### To the Editor:

D.F. Fleming's two volume work on the Cold War is a monumental study, one of the truly important books of this era. Joseph Clark's review in *NEW POLITICS* (Winter 1963) unfortunately is the typical "you're another" bit of emotionalism. Fleming gives us a *two-sided* insight into the world conflict; Clark returns to the "we're right, they're wrong" hysteria that today grips the nation.

For every "fact" that Clark raises on one side, there is a rebuttal on the other. Molotov supported the German war effort. True and shameful. But Britain and others encouraged the Nazis in the first place, permitted Austria to be carved, Sudetenland to be occupied. The Russians refused to honor commitments on Poland; but what of the British counter-revolution in Greece; French, Dutch and British attempts to re-establish colonialism in Indochina, Indonesia, Malaya? Or American support of the power elite in Korea, South Viet Nam, etc., etc.?

The merit of Dr. Fleming's work is that he deals with these interrelationships. There is no whitewash of Russia, but neither is there an effort to expiate the sins of the West. As I read it the postwar world could have been refashioned peacefully only if the major powers on both sides had joined hands to help the revolution of rising expectations. Once Churchill, and later Truman, decided to replay the game of power politics the Cold War was inevitable. If power politics is the criteria then the Russians were "right" because they gained far more than the West did. But if one judges by social and moral criter-

ia, it is power politics itself which is the culprit. Fleming has shown this as graphically and poignantly as it is possible to do. Clark's apologia for the State Department is better than most, but it is alas only an apologia. Perhaps the tip-off is Clark's incredible defense of the game of threat and counter-threat played last October in Cuba. If this is Clark's idea of the road to peace, heaven help us.

SIDNEY LENS

### Mr. Clark Replies:

I wonder why Sid Lens put quotes around the word facts. In this respect Lenin was right, "facts are stubborn things." If the quotes mean I was in error let Lens cite a single instance.

Fleming gives us a two-sided insight into the origins of the Cold War, according to Lens. Does he? Not if facts concern us. Take the issue Lens mentions: British encouragement of the Nazis in the first place, balanced by Molotov's support of the German war effort. A two-sided insight would, I suppose, evenhandedly condemn both.

Fleming does nothing of the kind; he condemns the British policy and absolves the Soviets. Indeed, he says the Soviets had no alternative but to make their pact with the Nazis and that this pact helped them meet the Nazi onslaught. Here is no balanced condemnation of appeasement by both East and West. Here is unabashed support of the Soviet position, a position which went far beyond appeasement; it involved a joint attack on Poland. In fact, as I write this I wonder if Lens read either the Fleming volumes or my review.

The volumes, presumably, deal with the origins of the Cold War. Is there a two-sided attack against power politics conducted by both sides? Not in the Fleming volumes and, for that matter,