

the self-deceptions of the human condition, the calculus of our vanities and lusts that Auden must draw as the only place on which a human being can stand. He has melted down his critical essays into so many ideas of human finiteness and necessity, so many *aperçus* and aphorisms and bristling statements of moral science, that these essays become variations on a single argument: "It is a purely human illusion to imagine that the laws of the spiritual life are, like our legislation, imposed laws which we can break. We may defy them, either by accident, i.e., out of ignorance, or by choice, but we can no more break them than we can break the laws of human physiology by getting drunk."

Despite its chill stoicism, the book becomes as exhilarating as aphorisms always do, for they give us location, a resting place within the usual uncertainty. There may not be much to look forward to, Auden seems to be saying, but when a man can give us a definition of experience that can be trusted as a fact, he has given us some intellectual habitation.

AUDEN thus sees himself as a guide through our fallen world, a teacher to the unenlightened for whom there is hope if they can still remember Yea and Nay. His ideas seem to me pretty gloomy, but as a guide through the modern hell his performance is so brilliant, honest, and tough that it cheers you up: "There are people who are too intelligent to become authors, but they do not become critics." "No poet or novelist wishes he were the only one who ever lived, but most of them wish they were the only ones alive, and quite a number fondly believe their wish has been granted." "French classical tragedy strikes me as being opera for the unmusical." "What could be more terrifying than a modern office building? It seems to be saying to the white-collar slaves who work in it: 'For labor in this age, the human body is much more complicated than it need be: you would do better and be happier if it were simplified.'" "It is, perhaps, inevitable that respect for the liberty of the individual should have so greatly diminished

and the authoritarian powers of the State have so greatly increased from what they were fifty years ago, for the main political issue today is concerned not with human liberties but with human necessities." "A daydream is a meal at which images are eaten. Some of us are gourmets, some gourmands, and a good many take their images precooked out of a can and swallow them down whole, absent-mindedly and with little relish." "Every European visitor to the United States is struck by the comparative rarity of what he would call a face, by the frequency of men and women who look like elderly babies. If he stays in the States for any length of time, he will learn that this cannot be put down to a lack of sensibility—the American feels the joys and sufferings of human life as keenly as anybody else. The only plausible explanation I can find lies in his different attitude to the past. To have a face, in the European sense of the word, it would seem that one must not only enjoy and suffer but also desire to preserve the memory of even the most humiliating and unpleasant experiences of the past."

Of such is Auden's breviary. At times his observations seem almost too good for criticism, proper only to a poem, as when he says that from an airplane "all history is reduced to nature," but that "if the effect of distance upon the observed and the observer were mutual, so that, as the objects on the ground shrank in size and lost their uniqueness, the observer in the airplane felt himself shrinking and becoming more and more generalized, we should either give up flying as too painful or create a heaven on earth." But on the other hand, perhaps this book would not be this good if Auden's poetry filled up his own mind. Eliot once said that poetry describes the world as it is, criticism as it should be. Auden, by the very severity of his critical arguments, makes one wonder if criticism of this kind does not for him diminish poetry. He has expressed so brilliantly the limitations of our nature and the defects of our society that perhaps he has proved too well that a more generous, a more comprehensive, a less self-conscious art, of the kind he identifies with the past, is impossible.

# Polish Pragmatism

HANS LANDSBERG

CENTRAL PLANNING IN POLAND, by John Michael Montias. Yale. \$7.50.

Not even to the intelligent layman, that earnest consumer of technical texts whose hunger for knowledge is heavily counted on by the university presses, does one lightheartedly recommend a book of more than four hundred pages, replete with diagrams, formulas, statistical appendices, and eighteen pages of bibliographical references (mostly in Polish). Ordinarily a script so clearly addressed to the fraternity of academic economists qualifies for reading exclusively by those operating "at the summit." While agreeing with the recent judgment of John Kenneth Galbraith that operations performed in that rarefied atmosphere are best left to be watched by those who dwell there, I am tempted to grant a waiver to Mr. Montias.

If the reader will go at this book selectively, picking and choosing as he goes along, he will emerge from it with an improved understanding not only of the problems and frustrations of Polish economic planning but also of some of the central problems of our own economic growth. He is likely to meet them all: the efficiency of the price system in allocating resources; the quest for efficiency of investments given alternative opportunities; the merits of decentralization of decision-making (the cry of the western-leaning Polish economists more than faintly paralleling the urgings of the more conservative among their U.S. colleagues); and even the familiar American dilemma of how to achieve over-all economies by creating ever larger aggregations of producing units without destroying the independence of the "little fellow," and the indispensable incentives to effort.

To be sure, there is also the hopelessness of seeking economic changes against the basic political will and control of the party, but these problems are prominent among all those cast up by economic planning in a Communist society. Little wonder

# THE REPORTER Acrostickler® No. 71

by HENRY ALLEN

## DIRECTIONS

- 1) Each crossword definition contains two clues. One is a conventional synonym; the other a pun, anagram, or play on words.
- 2) Letters from the acrostic should be transferred to the corresponding squares in the crossword, and vice versa.
- 3) The initial letters of the correct words in the acrostic will, when read down, spell out the name of a prominent person: the acrostician.

A 76 62 158 54 44 8 48 198 110 206 212  
A central borough in the city of London.

B 32 66 216 196 134 186 20 A popular summer drink (4,3).

C 130 2 46 82 88 92 162 30 160 100 "They say that man is mighty, / He governs \_\_\_\_." William Ross Wallace, "What Rules the World" (4,3,3).

D 168 78 120 "But winter ling'ring chills the \_\_\_\_ of May." Goldsmith, "The Traveller."

E 202 14 132 124 220 106 182 To involve deeply; absorb.

F 222 58 22 72 192 116 "The slender would not shake / One long milk-bloom on the tree." Tennyson, "Maud."

G 148 12 104 156 224 74 176 140 144 90 \_\_\_\_ shouldst be living at this hour: / England hath need of thee." Wordsworth, "National Independence and Liberty" (6,4).

H 18 190 6 42 200 Building in Paris at the intersection of the Blvd. Madeleine and the Rue du Quatre Septembre.

I 50 210 80 172  
"The Stars are setting and the Caravan Starts for the \_\_\_\_ of Nothing - Oh, make haste!" Fitzgerald, "Omar Khayyam."

J 138 204 26 218 The scene of Albert Camus' novel "The Plague."

K 40 136 28 84 178 "The dust and silence of the \_\_\_\_ shelf." Macaulay, "Milton."

L 184 180 24 34 16 70 52 64 126 174 56 96  
A term sometimes applied to the Acrostician because of his activities (5-7).

M 154 4 68 146 150 164 214 "An' it all goes into the \_\_\_\_ But it never comes out in wash." Kipling, "Stellenbosch."

N 10 122 102 194 94 "Cowslips from a Devon combe - Midland furze \_\_\_\_." Kipling, "The Flowers."

O 60 166 142 170 36 152 208 86 A demon or evil spirit.

1	2	C	3	4	M	5	6	H	7	8	A	9	10	N	11	12	G	13	14	E								
16	L			18	H		20	B		22	F		24	L		26	J		28	K		30	C					
31		32	B	33		34	L	35		36	O	37		39		40	K	41		42	H	43		44	A	45		
46	C			48	A			50	I			52	L		54	A		56	L			58	F		60	O		
61		62	A	63		64	L			66	B	67		68	M	69		70	L			72	F	73		74	G	75
76	A			78	D			80	I			82	C		84	K		86	O			88	C		90	G		
91		92	C	93		94	N	95		96	L	97		99		100	C	101		102	N	103		104	G	105		
106	E							110	A									116	F							120	D	
121		122	N	123		124	E	125		126	L	127		129		130	C	131		132	E	133		134	B	135		
136	K			138	J			140	G			142	O		144	G		146	M			148	G		150	M		
151		152	O	153		154	M			156	G	157		158	A	159		160	C		162	C	163		164	M	165	
166	O			168	D			170	O			172	I		174	L		176	G			178	K		180	L		
181		182	E	183		184	L	185		186	B	187		189		190	H	191		192	F	193		194	N	195		
196	B			198	A			200	H			202	E		204	J		206	A			208	O		210	I		
		212	A	213		214	M	215		216	B	217		218	J	219		220	E	221		222	F	223		224	G	225

## ACROSS

1. What ought to be the feeling of the OAS, but seems to be the moving spirit of the neutralist bloc at the UN.
31. The UN I mob, I do, for columbium.
39. With 66 across, the place of employment of the Acrostician (7,5).
61. An old Japanese city in which many Edomites lived.
66. See 39 across.
72. A fantastic inquest holds five in France.
91. Ay, risen is appropriate when the old man is getting along thus (2,5).
99. A pail I'll carry for small stones.
121. Feeds facts, but not sad ones, and so brings about results.
129. A South American capital and so forth have such a weather pattern.
151. A Greek coin found in Anglo-Bolivian excavations.
156. A ship hold tea? No, vice versa, and in a cup to boot, in Paris!
162. With Pan, David's wife becomes a symbol for curiosity.
181. Heeding what the horses said?
189. A pair or I may argue this way (1,6).

212. What good poetry often has for a plan (5,3,6).

## DOWN

1. With 123 down, a short-sighted economy that throws its weight about? (5,4,5,7).
3. Do any? No, not one at this hour.
5. I? Mad about the girl.
7. Mrs. 162 across has need for these.
9. Store 150 for a leather bottle.
11. An open aperture may hold part of the neck.
13. Allspice (not a pound!) can be of a distinctive character.
30. Is a seed slain? Not when it holds a quip and is given to long words.
80. Look out! And it's a society with Ward.
86. A castle site may put one in a spin.
123. See I down.
127. A white infusible powder found in Northern Europe.
129. A fish holds a star and we find an English apple.
133. All is loving when a short America holds a Filipino.
170. Sam Johnson was the Great one with a hundredworth of ham!
176. A Shakespearean actor, not Greet, but almost.