



Telescope by Fernando Krahn

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## In the current issue Commonweal

### HANS KUNG "The Vatican Council— End or Beginning?"

"MUCH CAN BE LOST by indolence, cowardice and indecision on the part of the progressive majority of the Council; much can be blocked by the false policy, obstruction and sheer force of a particular group. And the difficulties which plague this council day by day ought not to be belittled. Among them, and not the worst, by far, despite what one hears, is that there is too much talk, debate, even prattle in the Council and too few decisions . . ."

• COMMONWEAL, a weekly review of public affairs, literature and the arts, is published by Catholic laymen. Recently it has carried articles like the following:

The Congo: A Second Boxer Rebellion?  
by William Pfaff

Should Catholic Colleges be Eliminated?  
by Leonard Swidler

Evelyn Waugh  
by Alan Pryce-Jones

World Poverty and Christians  
by Barbara Ward

What Do We Want in Europe?  
by Ronald Steel

The Inferiority of Women  
by Gertrud Heinzelmann

The Council and Birth Control  
by Gregory Baum

Saving the Liberal Arts  
by Paul Goodman

Also: William V. Shannon on domestic politics, Wilfrid Sheed on the theater, J. M. Cameron from England, Robert McAfee Brown's "A Protestant Viewpoint"—all appear regularly in Commonweal.

Enter an inexpensive trial subscription now and receive seventeen issues of Commonweal, including the issue with the Hans Kung analysis of the Vatican Council, for just two dollars.

Return coupon below or a facsimile  
**SAVE HALF THE SINGLE COPY PRICE**

— 17 Issues for \$2 —

#### COMMONWEAL

232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016

Send me the next 17 issues of COMMONWEAL, including the Hans Kung issue, at your special half-price trial rate of only \$2, as offered to Reporter readers.

☐ Check here if you enclose \$2 with order to obtain 2 extra issues free (19 in all).

☐ I prefer 14 full months at the regular one-year subscription price, \$8.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

## Damned with Loud Praise

ERIK WENSBERG

TWO YEARS AGO, Edward Albee left the off-Broadway log cabin, moved uptown with only four characters and their abundant conversation, and was elected. It was a popular victory, though some said *Virginia Woolf* was bad for you. Let me state that no possible harm can come of the Broadway presentation of William Hanley's *Slow Dance on the Killing Ground* or of what appears to be its success with both audiences and reviewers—no harm except to its author. He, lacking Albee's skepticism, could have used some sensible advice.

Hanley's very slow dance has been laid out on the premises of the Plymouth Theatre, in an Oliver Smith setting of such solemn, huge, and intricate hideousness as to impel quite extravagant efforts from his actors to overcome it. They can't, but the current acting odds, one good performance out of three, are nevertheless maintained. The direction of Joseph Anthony is often competent, and if it reverses what point the playwright does allow himself, it is not the first time Anthony has done that, and some in the audience cheered the night I was there.

Two short plays by Hanley, *Whisper Into My Good Ear* and *Mrs. Dally Has a Lover*, were produced off-Broadway to some acclaim in 1962; they were modest, orderly views of unassuming people making the best of their personal limits and their entrapment by circumstances. *Slow Dance on the Killing Ground* is far more ambitious, and its success could very well persuade the author that he has written a most interesting play. He would be deceived.

To begin with, the play has everything that fashion could wish for—a Negro problem, a sex problem, and a Nazi problem. His well-meaning plot brings together in a side-street newspaper store, in what has to be called the dead of night, a German who saved himself, but not his wife and child, from the Nazis, a college girl from the Bronx in search of an abortion, and a flamboyant Negro youth on the lam. Of

these three, Carolan Daniels holds to a perfect regional pitch of nasal dubiety and dogged rationality for just as long as the playwright and the director allow, and so achieves the one believable performance among the three.

THE TRIO confess, harangue, and judge each other for the length of the evening. They are not in Hell, you understand, not Sartre's, not Shaw's—not them. They are in a newspaper store, in the dead of night, and are perfect strangers. Just here, someone might have pointed out to the playwright that this discourse, inflamed and tender by turns, could not possibly occur among these characters, and that if the playwright wishes it to, he would have to employ theatrical modes other than journalistic naturalism. (In Albee's case, someone might have pointed out that the characters in *Virginia Woolf* couldn't have remained vertical, not to say eloquent, while belting down fifty-six naturalistic highballs.) What Broadway calls the "situation" in Hanley's play is straight out of *The Petrified Forest*, where there were once a few real trees. Now Hanley has tried to replant an irreclaimable soil with looping tendrils of rhetoric and some little blossoms from Descartes and Voltaire.

"'Among wolves one must howl a little,' Mr. Glas," cries Randall, the lamming Harlem swinger. "Have you ever heard that, Rosie? Do you know who said it, Rosie?"

ROSIE: "Voltaire, wasn't it?"

RANDALL: "Are you asking me or telling me, Rosie?"

ROSIE: "Voltaire."

RANDALL: "Yes. The point is, Mister Glas has never learned to howl. You see? He has no talent for it, you see? The wolves are howling their heads off out there and Mister Glas is in here keeping his trap strictly shut. True, Mr. Glas? Why, Mr. Glas?"

The passage is restrained by comparison with many that Clarence Williams III, as Randall, must howl