

France vs. America

"Diversity of Worlds," by August Heckscher and Raymond Aron (Viking, 178 pp. \$3.50), restates and clarifies the discussions which took place last year at Arden House between apparently unreconcilable French and American delegations. Our reviewer, Lewis Galantière, author of *"Century of Total War,"* has been a student of international affairs for more than thirty-five years.

By Lewis Galantière

IN MARCH 1956 a meeting took place at Arden House between twenty-five Americans and eighteen Frenchmen. Its sponsor was the World Peace Foundation whose president, Professor Arnold Wolfers of Yale, was in the chair. Neither side made the mistake of overloading its representation with people who knew the other country intimately. The exchange of views could thus be a true expression of the limits of mutual comprehension.

At least two papers seem to have been submitted in advance. The French delegation was particularly struck by the statement in the Foundation paper that "If one were to compare Americans and Frenchmen in matters of conformism and intellectual interests 'one would come to the working hypothesis that Americans were better educated, more interested in issues not directly related to their family and personal lives . . . less stereotyped in their opinions . . . and more tolerant of ideas critical of themselves and of their views.'"

The task of restating and clarifying the discussions was entrusted to Raymond Aron, French historian and publicist whose analysis of American policy has been consistently objective and even friendly for many years, and to August Heckscher, formerly chief editorial writer of the *New York Herald Tribune* and a sympathetic student of French affairs. Their contributions are made in separate chapters in this book entitled *"Diversity of Worlds"*—not in collaboration.

Concerning what unites France and America the forty-three debaters seem to have had little to say. There is Lafayette, there is democracy, there is, of course, the Soviet menace; but as to this last we appear to be more

divided in our views about how to meet it than united in our determination to oppose it.

M. Aron's chapters let us know that the French delegation were concerned almost altogether with American foreign policy. The French, they said, are as favorable to the American civilization as anybody is, but "community of civilization does not necessarily imply political solidarity." Whether they were thinking of Ambassador Byrroade and Nasser, Sir Arthur Henderson and Hitler, or Louis XIV and the Grand Turk, we cannot say. What is true is that French intellectuals are incurious about our civilization. The press suffices as their source. Except for Jean Gottman's geographic studies and Mme. Magny's book on the American novel, I know no serious French work on any aspect of American life since Siegfried wrote in 1928.

OUR foreign policy is another matter: it impinges on their existence in a way they like to think our civilization does not. The United States, says the French delegation, is guilty of "a narrow and systematic anti-Communism and an obsession with military measures of doubtful necessity." Mr. Dulles takes alternately a "menacing" and a "protective" attitude to France which is offensive. At the same time he shows himself "partial to Adenauer." The French are not looked upon as a first-class ally: they rank third after Britain and Canada; indeed they are tied for third place with West Germany. In colonial matters the American position is intolerable. We defend Asian and African national aspirations as "irresistible" where the French are its victims, but give it another name where American interests are concerned, e.g., in China. We press for federalism in Europe, but when the French strive to federate their empire we call it colonialism.

M. Aron concludes that at Arden House there was "agreement regarding the disagreement" between the parties, and he adds dryly that this "in no sense constitutes a basis for common action." Courteously, he as well as lets us know that the party was a fiasco.

If that was the case, Mr. Heckscher gives us no hint of it. M. Aron knows better than to endorse all the French views he reports, and that some of

them—though we need to hear them—are half-truths. He knows that NATO is not a measure of "doubtful necessity," least of all for France; that Washington's "partiality" to Adenauer is not pro-Germanism but satisfaction with Adenauer's unshakable anti-Sovietism, and that this cannot be altogether bad for France. He knows also that French suspicion of the purposes of the Marshall Plan turned out to be not only false but base; and how regrettable it is that this should have taught nothing to his fellow intellectuals. If he does not say these things it is presumably because he considered that his business was not to write his own views altogether but to report what his compatriots had said.

MR. HECKSCHER, too, knew better than to fall in with, probably, a good deal of nonsense spoken by the Americans at table. But unlike M. Aron he refers little to the American side of the dialogue and uses his own remarkable insight into French affairs to write three admirable essays: on the French empire, on culture and democracy, on present problems of colonialism. No American has ever put the classic French position more soothingly, thoughtfully, and eloquently, nor answered it with gentler firmness on America's behalf.

The French, Mr. Heckscher implies, do not have a colonial policy, they have a concept of empire. It is extraordinary that at Arden House it should have been an American who spoke as if Rivière, Foucauld, Psichari, Lyautey—I would add, Saint-Exupéry—still lived: "France as a whole has kept in some profound way the sense that its destiny is to be more than France, that it has a mission to represent something more than European ideas or Western culture." How fine is his definition of the French concept of freedom: "The perfection of personality within a culture where the rights of the individual are made secure." How well he puts the French case against industrialism: "What is really at stake is the French personality, the original character of a civilization." The question is, are these things still true about France? Mr. Heckscher sees that the younger generation may not share these Siegfriedian concepts. And his insight, meanwhile, does not prevent him from pointing out that, for good or for ill, the overwhelming preponderance of power in the free world rests with the United States, and that the problem is "how two free nations, respecting each other, needing each other, yet totally dissimilar in military and economic strength, can manage their joint affairs successfully."

Journeys to Hell

In *"The Unforgotten,"* by Ilse Stanley (Beacon. 375 pp \$4.95), a German-born actress, who was born the daughter of a rabbi, recounts the harrowing adventures which she survived in order to spirit to safety during World War II more than 400 inmates of the Nazi concentration camps.

By Franz Schoenberger

THE preface by George N. Sluster to Ilse Stanley's *"The Unforgotten"* vouches for the truth of her story—a story which actually sounds sometimes as incredible as only real life can afford to be. It is a strangely hybrid book reflecting the strangely contradictory personality of its author. Though written in the form of a novel it is at the same time the documentary autobiography of Ilse Stanley who was born Ilse Davidson, the daughter of a rabbi in Berlin in the first decade of this century.

Under the professional name of Ilse Davis the author had started a successful career as an actress, a producer, director, and impresario for her violinist husband when Hitler's coming to power put a sudden end to all her plans. She soon found another less glamorous and much more dangerous outlet for her amazing vitality. By a wildly improbable coincidence she met in the headquarters of the feared Gestapo an old acquaintance: Fritz, whom she had befriended years ago when he had been a young policeman stationed at her theatre, and who had promised her eternal gratitude. Now a high Gestapo official he kept his word and proved his devotion far beyond any expectation. He risked his life again and again by giving her false credentials for the release of inmates of concentration camps. But the papers alone were not sufficient. She had to go herself into the hell of the camps and to bring back with her own car the often half-dead prisoners who otherwise—papers or no papers—would have been killed because they were no longer presentable.

There are no less than 412 people who owe their lives and safe existence in foreign countries to the heroic fearlessness and superhuman self-control of this astonishing woman. As a sort of official alibi she used her membership in the staff of a Jewish Welfare Organization which was still allowed to work in Berlin. But, of course, even her closest friends were—for their own good—not allowed to know anything about her secret ac-

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The

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