

of the problem: What are we who value Western Civilization, we who seem at the moment to be so few in number—what are we to do? Always, mind you, with tacit insistence on the point to which I have devoted the opening paragraphs of this review: only those who approach the crisis with that experience of God that truly underlies Western Civilization can hope to find an answer to the problem, because only they can pose it in terms of realities. The others, those who approach it without experience of God, cannot bring it into focus because the divinized “historical” in which they are steeped does not exist. They are the “sleepwalkers.”

Plato and Aristotle, like the three great books to which most of its pages are devoted (*Plato's Republic*, *Plato's Laws*, *Aristotle's Politics*), is at one and the same time a summary of a certain phase of man's experience of God and a statement of the problem of order. And it is, so to speak, a memorandum on political strategy to those who might conceivably be prepared to apply the truths of political science in the conditions of disorder that obtain in our world as in the Athens of Plato and Aristotle.

I can only suggest, in this brief space, what sort of thing Voegelin presents to us on this level of discourse. Not, let me hasten to say, any message of hope or optimism about the probable working-out of the present crisis—at least for our generations. “. . . [T]hose among us who find ourselves in the Platonic situation,” he writes in one of his *obiter dicta*, “recognize in the men with whom we associate the intellectual pimps for power who will connive in our murder tomorrow”—which amounts, I take it, to a flat prediction that those to whom Voegelin is addressing himself must, in our time, expect to be murdered. Nor will he urge us on either in our continuing *polemical* fight against the Liberals or in our summons to the “West” for a crusade against World Communism (the former, he will assure us, won't get anywhere: “when the society in its broad mass is corrupt, [corruption] has become self-perpetuating through social pressure on the younger generation and, in particular, on the most gifted of [them] . . .”; as for the latter, it can only, in present circumstances, enhance the power of those pimps).

Nor does he show us an easy way out. In a situation of disorder, he will explain to us, there is *no* short-cut to the restoration of order: “political realism must operate through the [education and training] of men; and [that education and training can alone] secure social predominance for the [mature, good men].” In short, if right order is to be infused into society, this must come about through revelation and philosophy, proceeding always through persuasion. And, again, Voegelin calls upon us to reconsider our whole strategy; to realize that the time to act will be, at soonest, after mass democracy has run its course; and to cultivate—Voegelin at least sets us the example—our books and our prayers.

CRISIS OF THE HOUSE DIVIDED. By HARRY V. JAFFA

(New York: Doubleday, 1959.)

Harry V. Jaffa's *Crisis of the House Divided* is: (1) a political history of the United States through the years preceding the Civil War; (2) an analysis of the political thought of the spokesmen (Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas) for two of the alternative courses proposed during those years; and (3) a creative venture in political philosophy that—unless the United States be as sick intellectually as some of us believe it to be—will provoke the most profound and far-reaching debate of our generation about American politics.

Some of the book's readers (who this reviewer hopes will be legion) will no doubt wish that Jaffa had written his three books one at a time. Like Bergson, he is a subtle and seductive teacher of philosophy who, however, makes great intellectual demands upon his pupils. But what Jaffa proves, if he does not prove anything else, is that political history is inseparable from the his-

tory of political philosophy, and that neither can be grasped by the man who is not a political philosopher in his own right.

The man who refutes Jaffa's controversial theses (which are legion) will have to bring to his task all the skills Jaffa shows himself to possess, and to possess beyond any member of his generation whom I have encountered on the printed page: the skill of the historian with an encyclopedic grasp of his materials, of the all-seeing textual analyst, of the creative political philosopher, and of the literary artist who has mastered the nuances and rhythms of the rich and beautiful language bequeathed to us by Milton, Shakespeare, Burke—and Abraham Lincoln. (Of Lincoln's right to be mentioned in this context Jaffa leaves this reader—the Gettysburg address, incidentally, entirely apart—in no doubt at all.)

The central problem of *Crisis of the House Divided* is the status in the American political tradition of the "all men are created equal" clause of the Declaration of Independence. For Jaffa this is the same problem as the status of Abraham Lincoln *vis-à-vis* the Signers of the Declaration and the Framers of the Constitution; which, again, is the same problem as that of the very possibility of self-government, that is of democracy, as a realistic political alternative. These three problems, Jaffa brilliantly demonstrates, were Abraham Lincoln's own deepest preoccupations from the earliest moments of his career—preoccupations, moreover, with which he wrestled not as the smart political strategist of recent Lincoln historiography (though Jaffa is willing for us to think of Lincoln as that too), but as a political philosopher of the first order of importance.

As for the "all men are created equal" clause, Jaffa's Lincoln (and Jaffa) sees it as the indispensable presupposition of the entire American political experience; either you accept it as the standard which that experience necessarily takes as its point of departure, or you deny the meaning of the entire American experience. As for the status of Abraham Lincoln *vis-à-vis* the Signers and Framers, Jaffa's Lincoln sees the great task of the nineteenth century as that of affirming the cherished accomplish-

ment of the Fathers by *transcending* it. Concretely, this means to construe the equality clause as having an allegedly unavoidable meaning with which it was always pregnant, but which the Fathers apprehended only dimly. As for the possibility of self-government, Jaffa's Lincoln sees it as turning on the following questions: What can be done about the Caesarist potential in the system elaborated by the Framers? What can be done to prevent the *passions* of a self-governing people from, in the long run, taking over from their *reason*, so that it ignores the duties correlative to the rights self-government is intended to secure?

Jaffa's Lincoln (and Jaffa) has a crystal-clear answer to these questions: Caesarism can be avoided, and the take-over by passions at the expense of reason circumvented, only through the ministrations and ultimate self-immolation of an anti-Caesar, himself as indifferent to power and glory as Caesar is avid for it—an anti-Caesar capable of transforming the fundamental affirmations of the Signers and Framers into a *political religion* that men can live by. And for Jaffa these three problems reduce themselves to the question—tacit, but present on every page of the book—of whether the Civil War was, from the standpoint of natural right and the cause of self-government, the "unnecessary war" of the historians of the past fifty or sixty years, or a war that *had* to be fought in the interest of freedom for all mankind.

Jaffa's answer to the question is that the war did indeed have to be fought—once the South had gone beyond slaveholding (Lincoln, he insists, had no wish to draw an issue over the slavery *within* the Southern States) to assert the "positive goodness" of slavery, and so to deny the validity of the equality-clause standard as the basic axiom of our political system. He insists that it had to be fought lest the possibility of self-government perish from the earth. That the war *did* establish the equality clause as the fundamental truth of the American political tradition, which by the very fact of the war's being fought transcended itself as Lincoln transcended the Framers. And that the present meaning of the tradition lies precisely in its commitment to equality as a goal ultimately to be realized. And, *within the limits* to which he for

sound reasons of strategy confines himself, Jaffa's case for that answer seems to this reviewer as nearly as possible irrefragable.

His readers will, therefore, be well-advised to keep a sharp lookout for those limits, lest Jaffa launch them, and with them the nation, upon a political future the very thought of which is hair-raising: a future made up of an endless series of Abraham Lincolns, each persuaded that he is superior in wisdom and virtue to the Fathers, each prepared to insist that those who oppose this or that new application of the equality standard are denying the possibility of self-government, each ultimately willing to plunge America into Civil War rather than concede his point—and off at the end, of course, the cooperative commonwealth of men who will be so equal that no one will be able to tell them apart.

The limits I speak of are set by the alternatives that Jaffa steadfastly—plausibly but steadfastly—refuses to consider: namely, that a negotiated solution might have been worked out in terms of compensating the Southerners for their slaves and attempting some sort of radical confrontation of the Negro problem, and that the Southerners were entitled to secede if the issue was to be drawn in Lincoln's terms.

The idea of natural right is not so easily reducible to the equality clause, and there are better ways of demonstrating the possibility of self-government than imposing one's own views concerning natural right upon others. In this light it would seem that it was the Southerners who were the anti-Caesars of pre-Civil War days, and that Lincoln was the Caesar Lincoln claimed to be trying to prevent; and that the Caesarism we all need to fear is the contemporary Liberal movement, dedicated like Lincoln to egalitarian reforms sanctioned by mandates emanating from national majorities—a movement which is Lincoln's legitimate offspring. In a word, it would seem that we had best learn to live up to the Framers before we seek to transcend them.

SOVEREIGNTY. By BERTRAND DE JOUVENEL
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.)

A science, like a language, is a mode of thought and expression. The man who seeks to master a science must, therefore, first of all learn its grammar, and by so doing get himself across the line that divides literates from illiterates—those who are ready to learn from those who cannot learn because they cannot understand that which is said to them. And that man may count himself fortunate if the science he has chosen to master possesses a book of which teachers can say, "Read this, stay with it until you have made its content your very own, and you will have got your start."

With the publication of *Sovereignty* by Bertrand de Jouvenel, the science of politics becomes such a science; those of us who have witnessed the development of de Jouvenel's thought over the years have, for that reason, eagerly anticipated its appearance. And the reviewer's problem, as he turns its pages and relives the experience of each of a thousand passages that he has marked, is that of choosing among a thousand different ways of saying, "Forget about the other books on politics in the current lists, and see to it you don't miss this one."

De Jouvenel, like Immanuel Kant, like Plato himself, touches no topic without illuminating it, and, what is more, illuminating it in the way of the great teacher—namely, by simplifying that which illiterates in their illiteracy have overcomplicated, and by pointing up the complexities in that which illiterates have oversimplified. And Kant, by the way, is much in point; for were de Jouvenel a less modest man he would have called the book *Prolegomena to Any Future Work on Politics*.

To de Jouvenel connoisseurs—particularly to those who read Dennis Brogan's shamefully inadequate review in the *Times*—let