

in the magazines

"The present state of France," writes Raymond Aron in the December *Encounter*, "shows all the features by which one recognizes 'a Bonapartist situation.' The three main factors are: an atmosphere of national crises, the discrediting of parliament and parliamentarians, and the popularity of one man. . . . The beneficiary of the Bonapartist situation, whether he is called Louis-Napoléon, Boulanger, Pétain or de Gaulle, whether he is an adventurer, a waverer, an octogenarian, or indeed a great man, must have one peculiar virtue: the ability to transcend the country's political divisions, to be at once of the Right and of the Left, to unite the France of the *ancien régime* with the France of 1789. A 'Bonaparte' is, and wants to be, essentially a Monarch born of the Revolution."

M. Aron goes on to an analysis of the Fifth Republic, its "charismatic leader" de Gaulle, and the "oui-or-non" referendum of September 28. He also reviews the prevailing sentiments of his countrymen on such matters as the record of the Fourth Republic, Algeria, "*l'Afrique Noire*," and France's position as a world power. As to the future of France, much depends on what happens in Africa. Will de Gaulle be able to achieve "a synthesis between the imperial ambition of the French and the necessities of our century?" It is still too early to tell how close the General will come to accomplishing this heroic task, but his power and broad appeal allow him at present to do "anything he likes. . . . He can also demonstrate to his countrymen that they have only to accept France as she is, in the world as it is, for the road to the future to open straight before them."

Western World's debate of the month is on the question of "an American civilization." Arnold Toynbee maintains that there is no such thing, that there is nothing in American life, from its institutions, customs, political and ethical ideals to its language and literature, that is not shared by the whole of Western Christendom. "The United States," he writes, "is an integral part of a wider community—the community of Western peoples. I would go farther, and would say that this Western community, including the United States, is already on its way towards being merged in a worldwide society that will eventually include the whole human race, if mankind does not commit auto-genocide en route."

Max Lerner counters with a defense of the main propositions of his book, *America as a Civilization*. He declares that "the Toynbee view of America as an offshoot, or by-product, or excrescence of Western (i.e., Christian-industrial-Parliamentary-European) civilization, tries to cramp too much into a mold that will not hold it." America, he continues, "has become one of the great anchetypical modes of thought, emotion, and experience of our era (the other, of course,

being the Russian). . . . What I am suggesting . . . is that a people can start as part of an older civilization, outgrow it or break away from it (America from the West European, Russia from Orthodox Christendom), then that people can go off on a trajectory of their own, and somehow . . . end up with a structure of power and meaning that is something new in the world's experience."

In "Leaders Who Follow" (*New Republic*, December 1), Louis J. Halle deplors the deterioration of our leadership system of government. "Of late years it has been apparent that the direction in which the President leads is not necessarily the direction that he conceives to be right. It is, rather, the direction in which domestic forces push him." Recalling Mr. Eisenhower's statement that "we, the people, elect leaders not to rule but to serve," the author suggests that, increasingly, the leader's responsibility is "conceived to be that of harmonizing his followers, obtaining a consensus among them, and then giving it expression in action. It is not conceived to be that of seeing to it that the right consensus is reached."

Hand in hand with this tendency, Mr. Halle cites the practice of employing speech-writers to prepare the speeches that the President and other political leaders deliver. The trouble here is that "the primary concern of public-relations experts and copywriters is with the audience, . . . with what will be well received; and what is well received, in general, is whatever corroborates the views that the audience already holds." This has led to "an abnegation of leadership automatically produced by the processes of bureaucracy. The leader, who is merely one piece in the game, does not lift the people up but is brought down, by his staff-writers, to their level." The fact that leaders probably *need* speech-writers merely reflects "a dilemma that arises . . . out of the tendency for democracy in its evolution eventually to fall away from educated statesmanship." Combined with a manifestation of a cultural prejudice ("literary composition, together with the processes of thought which provide its substance, seems to us dilettantish or effete"), this has resulted in a serious national weakness, and "leadership becomes followership."

The December issue of the *Atlantic* devotes a seventy-two page supplement to a profile of Italy. Some of Italy's most distinguished literary and political figures contribute essays on aspects of Italy's post-war achievement, the political and cultural scene, etc. The supplement is the tenth in a series published by the *Atlantic* "to foster among readers in the United States a broader understanding of other countries."

PAMPHILUS