

argument that antiabortion legislation constitutes the establishment of religion is surely specious, but religious opposition to abortion can be privatized, just as libertarian arguments for it have been. The tendency on both sides to cry up scientific evidence is only a lateral move among the privatized positions, not a real engagement in public discussion. Noonan, however, directs our attention to the only court that stands above the Court of *Roe v. Wade*. Let us hope that court is still in session. **WV**

## THE YAWNING HEIGHTS

by Alexander Zinoviev

(Random House; 829 pp.; \$15.00)

John Romjue

It is one of modernity's accepted dogmas that the Russian Revolution was a good thing. No matter that its popular element was rapidly extinguished, or that a totalitarian order supplanted a verging constitutional monarchy and became the most enduring tyranny in modern history. Most Western intellectuals down to our day have chosen to rationalize or ignore the documentation of class purge and *gulag*. "Avert the eyes," a strange inner voice has told them, and a great silence prevails.

Against the know-nothing tide has stood a succession of great imaginative writers—Zamyatin in the 1920s, Orwell and Koestler in the two decades following, and since the late 1950s Solzhenitsyn. The genius of these great antitotalitarians has thrown an unrelenting light upon the demonic power, merciless coercive spirit, and endemic self-sabotage that animate and enervate the Soviet creed.

To this band belongs Alexander Zinoviev, a Moscow professor of philosophy whose satirical devastation of Soviet society, just published in its American edition, prompted Soviet authorities to strip its author of his citizenship and academic degrees while he was on a visit to the West in 1978.

This humorless Soviet due process was amply provoked. Zinoviev has written the unforgivable about the socialist paradise. The "yawning heights of Soc-ism" reflect an infinitely boring society proceeding in a state of chronic self-sabotage. Zinoviev's metaphor is the earthiest of all insults—the mythi-

cal country "Ibansk" is a Russian pun connoting an obscene, four-lettered state of being.

Nothing makes sense in this jumbled land. "If you want to learn to understand our life, you've first got to learn how to walk about upside down." In Ibansk values exist as self-mockeries, "anti-logic" prevails, deception is fundamental, denunciation is the normal pattern of life.

All the Ibanskians are named Ibanov and are distinguishable only as allegorical figures representing famous politicians and intellectuals. That things are so Ibanskoid owes to the legacy of "Boss" (Stalin) and "Hog" (Khrushchev). The poet Snottyhanky (Yevtushenko) travels extensively in the West and is directed to go to America and "show the world that we here in Ibansk have complete artistic freedom." Claimant, Colleague, Sociologist, and Thinker are the system's hollow men who imagine that they are using the system, even as through them it consolidates its great gray power.

Against the systemsmen are the dry-eyed system critics, alert and dangerous—Chatterer, Slanderer, and Schizophrenic. Chatterer and his co-disputants peer into every cranny and social contradiction of the Ibanskian state—the many manifestations of class privilege, "psychiatric" clinics for the writers of *samizdat*, egalitarian education where bribe and privilege govern, informers, "History yet to come," the ubiquitous corruption fostered in all human relationships by the theology of the Total Ism. All the Ibanskians discuss spiritedly the great figure of Truth-teller (Solzhenitsyn), whose Book has awakened some in the West but not others, including "that friend of Ibansk, the American millionaire Shark."

Zinoviev delineates universal values in this important book. One does not have to go to Ibansk to learn that "there are two ways of advancing: one is to make yourself bigger, the other is to make others smaller." As he queues for his crematorium chit at the end of life, Chatterer perceives clearly for the first time that "Truth is the foundation of any truly human existence....The battle for truth and against it is the most ferocious and profound battle fought in society."

Zinoviev's critique of the closed society has depth and great range. *The Yawning Heights* belongs to that body

of serious literature within which civilization has always seen itself most clearly reflected. Zinoviev's fantasy-reality recalls those concentrated discourses on good and evil in Thomas Mann's great novel *The Magic Mountain* or, better, Kafka's prescient vision in *The Castle* of omnipresent state power against which resistance has become absurd.

Hope does not reach out to the pilgrims of Ibansk as it did to Bunyan's Christian. Zinoviev's figures traverse a totalitarian landscape toward the visionless secular void. They are heroic and good, greater than the evil that crushes them; but like the society from which they spring, they are self-amputated from a transcendent moral world. Zinoviev has not followed Solzhenitsyn out of the dead ends of secular humanism and onto the uplands of faith. **WV**

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## Briefly Noted

### THE CIA AND THE AMERICAN ETHIC

by Ernest W. Lefever and Roy Godson

(Ethics and Public Policy Center [Washington, D.C.]; 161 pp.; \$5.00 paper)

The authors argue that a full range of intelligence activities, including covert operations, is consistent with the Judeo-Christian ethic, that the organized opponents of intelligence work are indifferent to the threats to the national interest of the U.S., that the communications media are outrageously unfair in presenting an essentially negative picture of intelligence work, and that these and other propositions should be more widely and intelligently debated. Ben J. Wattenberg, in a foreword, and Charles M. Lichtenstein, in an afterword, agree with the authors.

## THE SAYINGS OF JESUS

by T.W. Manson

(Eerdmans, 346 pp., \$7.95 paper)

First published in 1937, this New Testament study has proved a classic. Its reappearance in paperback is most welcome. Manson's understanding of Jesus is highly ethical and opposed to the themes of "crisis theology" that were becoming dominant in the 1930s. He contends that Jesus did not propose a mere "interim ethic" for a sect of frantic exchatological hope, but a universal, albeit not legislatable, direction for human life both individually and in community.

### Correspondence (from p. 4)

given Kissinger's sense of history and given the enormous effort to write so detailed a book, a defense based on lies could at best buy time while it compounded the indictment history would inevitably bring down. Perhaps when all the records are open, that will be the verdict.

To say that Kissinger was guided at least to some extent by moral principles is not to require concurrence with his particular moral judgments. In fact it is not at all clear to me how well the distinction between necessity and choice holds up. Exactly how necessary is necessity? Surely the degree differs from case to case, and surely practical considerations color the evaluation. Was the "necessity" of Vietnam worth the thousands of lives, the billions of dollars? I do not ask that question rhetorically; the "necessity" of pursuing a particular policy in Vietnam may have come at too high a price. And the price we should be willing to pay for one "necessity" (say, defending our borders against invasion) is not necessarily the same as that for some other "necessity" (defending South Vietnam).

But if there is room for moral debate, it cannot come about by denying one side of the debate any moral principles at all. As an active partisan in the Vietnam debate, I have been unable for ten years to look again at Vietnam. *The White House Years* and the recent volume by Guenter Lewy are the first I have been able to consider. The continuing assessments of Vietnam will occupy all of us for years to come, but they will be with my generation for its

entire life, just as the Depression and the Second World War were with the previous generation. Together with the Civil Rights movement, the antiwar movement defined our political consciousness. But we will not expiate the shadow of Vietnam by casting doubt on the morality of those with whom, perhaps wrongly, we disagreed.

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### THE POPE AT DROGHEDA

To the Editors. Your magazine should be commended for being, to my knowledge, the only American publication to make reference to the pope's speech at Drogheda, in Ireland, before he came to this country (Paul F. Power, "The Pope and Northern Ireland," January-February).

In my view, the Drogheda speech was the pope's most significant of his entire trip. It was a fervent attack on terrorism. Coming on the heels of John Paul's visit to Auschwitz, the site of crimes by Christians against the Jewish people, it was obvious that his remarks were not only intended for the ears of Irish terrorists but also for the PLO and other Arab terrorist groups intent on destroying the Jewish state of Israel, which the Christian world helped establish as an atonement for the crimes at Auschwitz....

The most significant part of the speech was the pope's announcement that he would use the same appeal in his address to the United Nations! This is what he said on that subject: "I hope to address the United Nations Organization on these same problems of peace and war, justice and human rights. These questions I shall be discussing before United Nations Assembly in a few days." However he did not. He mentioned nothing about terrorism and violence in his speech before the U.N.

The question therefore arises. What went wrong? Why did the pope change his mind and delete the attack on terrorism in his U.N. address?

Friends of mine who are close to the Vatican have intimated that he was talked out of it by people close to the secretary general and by forces that today go under the heading of "the Third World," certainly under Com-

munist and Arab pressure.

An opportunity of great historic and moral dimensions was thus lost. The Drogheda speech, however, reminds us that the pope indeed had in mind that Christian states should have nothing to do with terrorist organizations of the PLO variety. Had the pope said so publicly, the current lamentable trend toward making the PLO "respectable" might have been reversed. Still, the Drogheda speech will serve as a reminder of where the pope really stands on the issue.

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### FORGIVE AND FORGET?

To the Editors. With regard to "The Vietnam War. Is It Time to Forgive and Forget?—Three Views" (*Worldview*, January-February), permit the undersigned yet a fourth view.

If one forgets, then, alas, there is no lesson derived therefrom; that would be immoral. Forgiving, however, requires mutuality of obligation; it cannot be a unilateral act. Hence, it appears that if Robert McNamara sought forgiveness for his political participation in the Vietnam war, an oblique contribution as executive of the World Bank would scarcely qualify him for pardon.

There are breaches of duty. One consists of acts of commission, while another entails acts of omission. As to the former, perhaps Robert McNamara is not culpable. His commitment to the Vietnam war and policies might very well have been undertaken in total good faith. On that score, judging him is difficult. But, respecting the latter (acts of omission), Mr. McNamara stands guilty.

After leaving office why couldn't he provide us with the benefit of his experience and insights and furnish us with guidance relative to the continuation of the war under Nixon and Kissinger? What course of extrication?

Misplaced loyalty, personal pride, and prestige accounted for his silence. A bolstered image, for him, was decisive. Thus, Robert McNamara merits our scorn and is deemed unworthy of the award.

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