

THE DEATH OF THE FAMILY, by David Cooper. *Allen Lane The Penguin Press*, London, 1971. 154 pp. £1.50.

EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE MODERN WORLD, by Henri Lefebvre, tr. by Sacha Rabinovitch. *Allen Lane The Penguin Press*, London, 1971. 206 pp. £2.95.

David Cooper is already well known for his polemics against the methods of conventional psychiatry and for his desire to link psychological with political criticism of society. He now urges on us the absolute priority of destroying the institution of the family. This has been a recurrent motif in the revolutionary programme at least since *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). Surely every one recognizes the difficulty parents and offspring have in understanding their feelings about one another. Much distress in adult life may be traced to the effects of one's being kept so long an infant in the care of a guardian. The infant/guardian pattern of playing roles and generating anxiety is reproduced, as Cooper says, in many different social situations and institutions, and begets endless frustration and even disease. He doesn't mention either the parish or the monastery, but the plight these two institutions are in at present confirms his thesis, because it is the problem of 'authority', of 'responsibility', of how we are to cope with 'Father' and 'Mother', that reappears in both cases. It is not difficult to see how destroying the family might affect the Church.

It is particularly interesting for a friar (such as the present reviewer), committed as he is by his profession to the principle of fraternity as opposed precisely to the ancient monastic tradition of abbatial government (abbot = father), to reflect on his experience of 'life without Father'. Cooper's solution is, of course, the commune, but he concludes disappointedly from his own (brief?) experience in an urban commune that pairing seems unavoidable between adults (whether or not of the same sex). At best, so he says, 'there may be a shifting system of dynads leading to a polycentric relationship-structure even though there will probably be a degree of hierarchization in the emotional significance of the various two-person relationships that each person has' (p. 53). The corollary of such pairing, so his experience proves, is the appearance of *jealousy*—and 'when jealousy in any form arises there has to be at least one person strong or "wise" enough to . . . catalyze the emergence of a greater degree of emotional reality between the people concerned', etc. What, according to

Cooper's prolix jargon, this person actually *does*, is not so much my point as the fact that his intervention as mediator is required at all. The only way of getting out of the clutches of a bad parent is apparently by resorting to the help of a good one: a procedure which may be difficult and upsetting but which is not uncommon and certainly is much less cataclysmic than 'the death of the family'. So many important issues are raised by Cooper that it is maddening to see them disappear in obfuscation through his incapacity to make simple distinctions. If only he would make up his mind whether it is the parent-teacher-leader figure *as such* who may be destroyed, or only the *bad* parent-teacher-leader figure. The true leader, so he tells us at one point (p. 81), such as Fidel Castro and Mao Tse-tung as opposed to Hitler, Churchill and Kennedy, is the one who leads 'by almost refusing to be a leader in the sense that he diffuses the quality of leadership outwards so that the minds of millions of people become enlivened with *their own* qualities of leadership and each person becomes the unique origin of struggle'. How does one *almost* refuse to lead?

Apart from all the muddle there are also some passages in the book which seem pretty unpleasant to me. Insisting at length on the value of masturbation and multiple love-making in the project to revolutionize society, Cooper concludes sadly that even these gambits seem only to reinforce people in their preference for the two-person relationship: 'This is all very well', he says (p. 122), 'for sophisticated first-world middle-class intellectuals who even then, unless charismatically guided, will have their "difficulties", but for the less sophisticated middle-class and working-class men-women relationships . . . one needs a more totally operating revolutionizing activity in the whole society. This is where acutely posed strikes, bombs and machine-guns will have to come in with a guiding compassion, but also a certain reality that is wholly objective, seen and felt, by the agents of bourgeois society towards whom we can only be compassionate at a second remove.' I wonder if that final clause means anything at all, I note the reappearance of the charismatic guide (required apparently

to sort out sophisticated London intellectuals), I confess to a slight chill at the prospect of these bombs being 'acutely posed' (how do you pose a bomb *acutely*?) 'with a guiding compassion'; but what appals me is the assumption that, while a course of (guided) masturbation and multiple love-play should do for Hampstead, it will take strikes and bombs to sort out the men-women relationships among less sophisticated middle-class and working-class people.

Cooper's book deserves attention, then, not only because it asks some important questions about the effect of being brought up in a family, but also because he offers some terrifying answers, which, given his indisputable charisma, are bound to satisfy a great many people. It is a relief to turn from this 'manifesto for revolutionary social change' to Henri Lefebvre's eloquent plea for a 'festive Marxism', *un marxisme en fête*.

Lefebvre is a distinguished French sociologist, two of whose books have already appeared in English (*The Sociology of Marx* and *Dialectical Materialism*). There are some oddities in the translation: I was bemused for a moment when I found him attacking the Communist Party for 'politism' (p. 195), but having re-read the word with the accent on the first syllable I realized that he was deploring their 'politicism', not their excessive politeness. He belongs to the distinguished company of errant

French Marxist intellectuals, and I suppose the heart of the book is his argument that the revolution must be *cultural* as well as economic and political. Lefebvre is rather like a Richard Hoggart or a Raymond Williams who has never been submitted to the discipline and the particularity of judgment implicit in the post-Leavis world. In fact he often sounds exactly like McLuhan. Some of his generalizations are astonishing ('We cannot close our eyes to the fact that whole nations are bored, while others are sinking into a boredom at zero point', p. 186). His definition of the sense in which our own society is 'terrorist' (p. 147) is very close to Herbert Marcuse's, as is also his final vision of 'the city as play' and 'the Festival rediscovered' (p. 206). I find Marcuse more rewarding—believe it or not, less abstract and less ponderous; but even if one never knows quite what he is saying (a sentence at random will illustrate what I mean: 'Our object is, in fact, to expose the non-quotidian as the quotidian in disguise, returning to the quotidian to hide it from itself; this operation is carried out to perfection by means of language consumption (or metalanguage consumption), more successfully even than by means of display consumption, which in any case it assists', p. 142), I certainly feel a good deal safer contemplating Lefebvre's festive Marxism than playing Cooper's anti-family game. FERGUS KERR, O.P.

FAITH AND PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY, by D. Z. Phillips. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, London, 1970. 277 pp. £2.50.

This is a thoughtful and thought-provoking collection of papers by a writer who has tried, consistently, to bring Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy to bear on the Philosophy of Religion. The reader who comes to them for the first time should find them refreshingly different. It is likely that the argument will appear elusive at times, but if he perseveres in its pursuit he may well find the effort philosophically rewarding.

It is widely assumed that it is the philosopher's task, with respect to religious beliefs, to examine and evaluate the reasons that can be urged in their support. And it is this assumption that Phillips is most concerned to discredit: hence the difficulty. In challenging the basic assumption of so much Philosophy of Religion, he has laid himself open to the charge of irrationalism in religion, or fideism—albeit up-to-the-minute 'Wittgensteinian fideism'. A careful reading of these papers should make it difficult to sustain this charge.

As Phillips conceives it, the role of the philosopher is not to justify—or disqualify—religious beliefs, but to understand them. His investigation is, in Wittgenstein's phrase, 'grammatical'. His task is to discover and describe the rules which are operative in a particular language practice (or language game), and make explicit the connexions which obtain, or may obtain, between concepts employed in that context.

The first casualty of such an approach is the assumption that 'religious belief' is, like any 'belief', a poor relation of 'knowledge'. Instead of assuming that 'belief' *must* mean a state of mind approximating to knowledge—a conjecture or hypothesis, more or less well founded—Phillips' counsel is to assume no more than that a religious belief is religious. In other words, don't think 'belief' must mean this or that: look and see what it does mean in the context proper to it.

Simple and salutary as this advice seems to