

The term 'Black Power' has fast become a slogan and one felt until the advent of this book that for most people it needed extensive definition. Here at last the authors present us with the meaning of 'Black Power' as they

employ the term. The book is well worth reading even if only to dispel the familiar overtones of the slogan Black Power.

AUGUSTINE JOHN

THE JERUSALEM WINDOWS, by Marc Chagall. *Michael Joseph*. 120 pp. 63s.

The arrival of Jewish influence and achievement in painting is extremely late; after all, there was practically no Jewish art prior to the nineteenth century, if one excepts liturgical vessels, manuscripts and an occasional rococo interior. Jewish stained glass can only be said to belong to the twentieth century.

With the publication of *The Jerusalem Windows*, by Marc Chagall, Messrs Michael Joseph deserve a word of thanks for having made the greatest work of art in the twentieth-century Jewish tradition available to everyone at a reasonable price. For some time there were two alternatives; one was a monograph published by Sauret, which was very expensive and is now very rare, and the other was the ordinary handbook that could be bought in Jerusalem, which gave no idea of the quality of the windows it illustrated.

The introduction, by Jean Leymarie, is a bit too ecstatic and fulsome in tone to be comfortable. However, it brings home the point that the art of Chagall is primarily a traditional art, reconciling the remote past with the present. In his art, which transfixes and transfigures this remote truth by means of a modern vision, Chagall succeeds triumphantly in doing in glass what his forebears were inspired to do in the scriptures. It is in the particular Jewish tradition, and also in the great tradition of all religious art.

It is curious to note that the idea of a Synagogue being a Sacred Edifice in the same way as a Christian Church, seems only to have matured very recently, most probably under the influence of the enormous development in Jewish art and architecture in America. Without this change in idea of the Synagogue, the Jerusalem windows would probably never have come into being at all, but there were two other influences in Chagall's life which were of prime importance, making the designing of the windows possible. One was the Chasidic genius for story-telling which runs in his blood, and which alone makes the idea of a totally abstract Chagall ludicrous; the second factor is the unbreakable tradition of Russian Folk Art which combines with his Chasidic background to build up his personal vision as an artist, a

vision that succeeds in making a precise spiritual statement by means of extremely diffuse handling of the imagery. This is rare enough; in English art one can only think of Sickert and David Jones, obviously, in the same category.

The windows themselves are a good instance of how far a great artist can transgress against the rules of making stained glass and still triumph by the very power and conviction of his personal vision. In this they bring to mind Rouault's windows at Assy. Certainly in the translation into glass, Chagall has been helped enormously by the interpretative genius of Charles Marq, although the rather slicing arbitrariness of the leading across the cunning meander of Chagall's line and colour, evident in his cartoons, is only too prominent in the illustrations. Perhaps this is exaggerated in the photographs and is, in fact, not so obvious. Chagall's colour sense is felicitous and appropriate for stained glass, and it is a mark of genius that he took a theme colour for each of the windows and then elaborated on it, dovetailing the major and minor colour schemes of each to complement its neighbour. The result in the Hadassah, I am told, is transfixing, but perhaps it is too violently concentrated and crushed together, to create an altogether successful interior. The brilliant near Eastern light would doubtless contribute to this. Much as it would be better for each range of windows to be spaced apart a little, rumours that the Synagogue is to be rebuilt to accomplish this are apparently unfounded.

Seen in the light of Chagall's development, the Jerusalem windows are more of a one-off achievement than one would care to admit. The influences that combined at that moment to create the conditions necessary for the stained glass can never be repeated. Chagall is unique. Be that as it may, there seems to be in the Synagogue a general urge, now, to capture light and weave it into an environmental atmosphere, as in the Christian tradition of stained glass, and it is ironical that at the very time when advanced thought in the Catholic Church at least, would reduce the fabric of the Church to a teaching God-box, if retain it at

all, the Synagogue is evolving in the opposite direction. More profound, and more sinister, today in the light of the total sociological development of man, is the general absence of some kind of a dimension of memorative appreciation and understanding, either in artist or in spectator. This, if it existed, would build up the depth of maturity needed for the formation of a real religious art, developing

over a long time period. This may indeed be the explanation why the best artists working in churches in the twentieth century tend to be old men; they have succeeded in building up in themselves a maturity of outlook that in past times was formed for them in great measure by the structure and inclination of society. Such men, nowadays, inevitably, stand alone and apart.

PATRICK REYNNTENS

RACE. A Christian symposium edited by Clifford S. Hill and David Mathews. London. *Victor Gollancz Ltd*, 1968. 30s.

There are nine essays in this book each dealing with different aspects of the race problem. Dr Tadeuz Stark discusses most lucidly the questions migration raises for jurisprudence; Dr Stafford-Clark has helpful things to say about the roots of prejudice, and there is also a very interesting theological essay by the late Archbishop de Blank. A number of immigrants have written about their experiences, in particular about the culture shock they undergo owing to the discrepancy between expectation and reality.

Part of the problem is that our emotional attitude to what we call race (a term that is very difficult to define apart from certain superficial physical differences that are associated, on a system of averages, with certain constantly changing groups) bears very little relation to the social realities of our time. If the term has any meaning it can only be rendered in biological terms, and from the biological point of view mankind is outgrowing the period of racially separated communities. The cultural problem is more complex, in that certain racial systems are associated with cultural expressions that can be identified historically, or with some sub-culture. In this country we have reached a critical point in this respect, for we can no longer soothe ourselves with the old platitudes about the liberalism of our traditions. The island fortress complex, that deep distrust of the stranger, has recently hardened into an attitude that rejects the stranger immigrant in his full dignity as a human being—and the evidence suggests that the darker the immigrant the stronger is his rejection. The 'Go home, nigger' reaction is, of course, related to the deep insecurity of a people who do not share the ideals of their rulers, and who are motivated by a primitive desire to find a scapegoat. The immigrant, in his turn, bruised and disturbed

by his rejection, finds himself confined to housing areas that were well on their way to becoming slums before he arrived, and his opportunities for employment and promotion restricted by a group prejudice that his individual merit can do little to overcome. He then consoles himself with a nihilistic vision, 'Burn, baby, burn'.

Those of us who are liberals, however true our judgements may be, are for the most part people who live in an area unaffected by the more serious problems, and therefore our exhortations have an unreality that is deeply resented by those who see themselves as the victims of the situation. Liberalism has to prove itself by promoting the radical kind of social change that involves a revolution in housing and education, the kind of change that is impossible without a redistribution of capital and power. Catholics too must reflect on the significance of the fact that many immigrants, feeling themselves unwelcome even in the Christian community, have left such bodies as the Catholic Church, the Church of England or the Free Churches to which they belonged in their countries of origin, and joined Pentecostal sects.

We have in this country reached a point of decision. Can we accept the fact that we are already a plural society? That we could be a society in which the dominant group does not pursue an ideal of integration that demands a sacrifice of identity on the part of minorities? The minority will have to adjust, but in a context in which he is allowed to make his distinctive contribution. This means change, but the kind of change that could help to project our rather sluggish and old-fashioned society into the modern world.

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