

younger but accepted his proposal nonetheless. But matrimonial storms were frequent and chiefly over money but also involving Aaron's promiscuity. With reckless abandon Burr wasted his wife's money until she began divorce proceedings.

As he neared his eightieth birthday Burr kept busy with books and some socialising. To a pretty woman who reminded him of his daughter he declared that he did not believe in life after death but if he was wrong and was reunited with his first wife and daughter he would rejoice. On the other hand if only an eternal void awaited him he was content. Ministers who visited him in his last sickness found little encouragement. When one gently enquired of the dying man whether he was prepared to accept salvation the lifelong unbeliever consistently replied "On that subject I am coy." Within hours life had fled.

The funeral oration made no reference to the stormy events of Burr's life. But the weather seemed to hint at them. "Threatening clouds filled the sky during the service, and when the gravediggers began to fill in the hole in which the coffin had been placed, a sudden deluge turned the dry earth to mud." Op cit 227.

break up into separate days and homilies on each section **DISILLUSIONMENT**

Who hasn't experienced it? hopes dashed, ideals shattered, the future clouded and sometimes the heart broken. You are a rare individual if the experience has not been yours.

Consider some of the pages of history. When the French Revolution began multitudes hailed it as the dawn of a new era for mankind--an era of equality, fraternity, liberty! What joy! What triumph! The fall of the Bastille symbolized the fall of tyranny, poverty, despair. The great poet Wordsworth (in the days before his fame) heard what was happening across the Channel and felt that it was bliss to be alive at such a time, and to be young was very heaven. He went to France, joined in the fever, celebrated it by fathering a child, and --returned. He did not stay to see the guillotine rise and fall with tremendous finality. He did not stay to see the rise of the little Corsican who would be the strongest man in Europe before he was thirty. He was not in France when the word of the ^{dreathful} bloody fields of Waterloo reached the capital, or earlier when the news of the tragic failure of the Russian campaign seeped through. One thing we know===he was disillusioned about the French experiment and wrote no more about bliss in its connection.

Goethe too cheered when he heard of the upheaval in France but moaned as later reports reached him. And the composer Beethoven had just dedicated his most recent composition to Napoleon when he heard of the Corsican crowning himself king. At that point Beethoven tore off the dedication sheet and almost destroyed the whole ^{score} work once dedicated to Napoleon.

Yes, history has a myriad of examples of disillusionment. Read sometime the book The God That Failed edited by Richard Crossman. It tells of the disillusionment with Communism experienced by Arthur Koestler, Ignazio ~~Chad~~ ^{Belose} Richard Wright, Andre Gide, Louis Fischer, and Stephen Spender. It is an outstanding anthology of personal experiences connected with disillusionment in our own century.

As Louis Fischer tells us, the Communist revolution offered to millions redress of wrongs, recognition of worth, equity, freedom from poverty and oppression.

For the first time, a government undertook to fulfill the dreams of the reformers, iconoclasts, and pioneers of all ages. A thrill shot through humanity. Fear shook the upholders of privilege, tradition, militarism, empire, white supremacy, and the status quo; their fear spurred others' hope.

The unique appeal of the Bolshevik Revolution was its universality. It did not propose merely to introduce drastic change in Russia. It envisaged the

1

and changed it with the blood

Richard

just

world-wide abolition of war, poverty, and suffering. In all countries, therefore, the little man, the laborer, and the intellectual felt that something important had taken place in their lives when revolution took root in Russia. Actually, this general sympathy stemmed more from discontent with conditions in their own countries than from knowledge of conditions inside Russia.

ps. 199-200

At the top of a list of Communist virtues stood internationalism. National frontiers are often the consequence of robbery and aggression. Nationalism, the breeder of wars, economic rivalries, and hatreds, is a variety of racism. But the Bolsheviks regarded all races as equal though different. . . . Bolshevism recognized national divisions but fostered an international Communist society to supersede them and thereby create permanent world peace.

p.202

Louis Fischer tells us that it did not take long for him to make his choice. He preferred "fresh sweeping winds to stale stagnant air, and well-intentioned pioneers to proved failures." He ~~tells us~~ ^{says} that he "liked the Soviets because they were an experiment in the interest of the downtrodden majority, because they destroyed the privileges of the powerful few, because they were weak, and because the world's conservatives and reactionaries opposed them." p. 203.

Fischer thereby spoke for millions. Soon Communist theory had spread to the ends of the earth and parties were being formed everywhere. If ever anything was here to stay, it seemed Communism was it.

For many honest intellectuals it took ~~ten to twenty~~ years before disillusionment became so overwhelming that they took the step of official separation from the Communist party. Thus it was with Koestler ~~and Fischer~~ ^{and Fischer}.

We don't surrender our illusions and hopes easily. Koestler saw enough in 1932-33 to make him give up Communism yet he held on. Here is his account of his personal encounter with starving peasants in the Ukraine due to the man-made famine of the time.

. . . hordes of families in rags begging at the railway stations, the women lifting up to the compartment windows their starving brats which---with drumstick limbs, big cadaverous heads, puffed bellies===looked like embryos out of alcohol bottles; the old men with frost-bitten toes sticking out of torn slippers. . . . The maid in the Hotel Regina in Kharhov fainted from hunger while doing my room. . . . I could not help noticing the Asiatic backwardness of life; the apathy of the crowds in the streets, tramways and railway stations; the incredible housing conditions which make all industrial towns appear one vast slum (two or three couples sharing one room divided by sheets hanging from washing lines); . . . the fact that the price of one kilogram of butter on the free market equaled the average worker's monthly wage, the price of a pair of shoes two months's wages.

p.60

Koestler was no fair weather fellow traveller. He spent four months in Spanish prisons, in Malaga and Seville, most of the time in solitary confinement and most of the time convinced that he was going to be shot. While there he came to the conclusion that ethics ~~is~~ ^{are} not a mere function of social utility but "the gravitational force which keeps civilization in its orbit." This paved the way for his ultimate disillusionment with the philosophy that had led to his incarceration.

Koestler after years of experience with Communism concluded that "at no time and in no country have more revolutionaries been killed and reduced to slavery than in Soviet Russia."

The day came when Koestler witnessed the raising of the swastika flag at Moscow Airport in honor of Ribbentrop's arrival. After recording that event Koestler says:

I have only mentioned this epilogue to my Party days, my clinging to the last shred of the torn illusion, because it was typical of that intellectual cowardice which still prevails on the Left. The addiction to the Soviet myth is as tenacious and difficult to cure as any other addiction." p.74 Koestler says he like Jacob slept with an illusion when he served the Communist party for seven years. He also had woken up to an ugly Leah instead of the lovely Rachel.

These disillusioned intellectuals have much to teach us. Fischer reminds us that many fell in love with Communism not because of anything they knew about reality in Russia itself but because of their discontent with their own local personal situation. Because life is full of awful possibilities and some certain certainties all of us practise escapism to some degree or other. Indeed, some form of escapism is vital. Remember Nietzsche said that if we look into the abyss too long, the abyss will look into us. Discontent with our own lot prods us to wander in Fairyland. It maybe okay to visit such a place but abiding there is another thing and usually results in awakening to be confronted by Leah. Koestler's words about his post-prison conviction that ethics and true charity constitute the gravitational force which makes life possible is a valuable clue for all who have been disillusioned or need to be. There is a reality, and it comes from beyond this world. The writer elected the Czechs in recent times knew about this and wrote as follows. (Havels quote from RC journal) (could quote in my first book too?)

Jacob didn't die after waking up to Leah. He did come to embrace Rachel and live long and happily with her. Disillusionment isn't the end of the world--it may be the beginning of life.

Of course, we haven't even mentioned the main causes of disillusionment. They are not the French Revolution or Communism. But they are that personal thing to which we pin our individual hopes--it may be my marriage, or a special job, or any one of a host of things. The fact of disillusionment is universal, the precipitating factor varies with the individual. It is simply the result of pinning the celestial treasure upon a human affair.

Nebuchadnezzar's image began with a gold head but ran out into mud. And in the later Testament we read of that wine which may be as precious as gold in some wedding ceremonies. But the wine ran out. Neither gold nor wine satisfy or last. But blessed are the disillusioned for they may find that which is not illusion--they may discover reality, and seeing reality through the prism of Christian revelation, find it good and altogether satisfying.

But even here you have to be careful lest your wires get crossed. At the center of Christianity is not a creed, or an organization but that God who became man in order to die in our place out of love to us. Life makes sense only when viewed through the cross of Calvary. That view does not dodge the hard things but sees beyond them to the opening of Joseph's new tomb and the new Life, undying Life, there manifested. FINISH

DO ARTICLE ON NED FOR CHRISTIAN SCEPTICISM. how many have been cheated and wounded because they have lacked scepticism. Politics, business, sex, religion, --any one of them can do it to you if you lack the spirit of serious enquiry. talk about medicinal heresies. phenacetin. the drug responsible for loss of limbs, talk about investments and south sea bubbles, talk most of all about the need to be sceptical concerning oneself. things are seldom what they seem. this solid desk is chiefly invisible electrons. us also. in heads. salt looks very much like sugar. if it sounds too good to be true it probably is--unless it's the gospel. better to be suspicious beforehand than rueful afterwards rueful and wounded.

Only that version checked
deletes all disillusionment.

— only lower than the stars and less stable than the heavens.