

ably by the weekend. Barriers inflame him. Heidegger could either let the Party's muscle-end carry out the work of his disgust with the modern or wait to see what Being was up to, but Sartre possessed a more impatient streak; and as early as *La mort dans l'âme* (1949) there are intimations of his view that violence possesses redemptive powers (Sartre, *La mort dans l'âme*, 197). But if Lévy is right about the two Sartres, when did this change occur? He thinks it was a while in coming, and even after it had arrived, as I have noted, there would be, throughout Sartre II's life, moments when his predecessor made cameo appearances. However, Lévy finds one key text to be the Christmas play, *Bariona*, that Sartre wrote and directed in 1940 in the German POW camp. Bariona, a leader of the resistance against the Romans, responds to some new oppressive decree by proposing that no Jews reproduce, that the country die out. However, word has come of the birth of this ... child. This purported Messiah. Eventually, Bariona alters his stance and leads a doomed struggle against the imperial troops that permits the child's parents to escape with him into Egypt.

Something about both the reception of this play and about the historically driven communal occasion itself moved Sartre profoundly. Simone de Beauvoir writes that when he returned from the camp he had become a different person, more inclined to involve himself in politics. Sartre himself repeatedly referred in later life to the experience of the camp. It was as if the individualist – indeed, the isolato – had recognized something like Humanity, in need of a philosophical assist in obtaining its inherent freedom. For Lévy this is a bad sign. The consequences would be deferred for a time. The Nazi occupiers had first to be dispatched. And then Sartre began his long involvement with politics, but, first, as a critic of the Party. Lévy offers compelling readings of *Les mains sales* (1948) that show how Sartre's anti-communistic impulse would, by the early 1950s, become a deep embarrassment for him.

But that 'humanity' business: it is easily linked to utopian notions. And it is easy to adapt one's notions of freedom to both (while discreetly omitting humanity's doomed God-projects along the way). I have earlier mentioned the way the repressed returns, and in Sartre's career Lévy identifies a striking instance. In *Nausea* the Autodidact was a self-avowed humanist. He came to this position in a *German POW camp*, during the 1914–18 war. How strange that Sartre so often echoed this character whose humanism drove Roquentin to lethal thoughts. One would not wish to identify Sartre I with his protagonist (for one thing, Roquentin seems to believe he will find some redemption from contingency through art). However, Lévy notes important areas of similarity between them, including their isolato tendencies as well as Roquentin's anticipations of Sartrean philosophical themes-to-come. One might add that Roquentin abandons the writing of a biography while Sartre (I and II) would write over a million words on Genet, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Tintoretto, and Flaubert.

It is as if the Autodidact represented some impulse Sartre I was resisting, leading him to present that character as something of – well, of a 'creep.' He is not particularly political, but there is this concern with 'humanity.' And it will reappear in the later Sartre, down the road of *engagement*. His post-war attempts to become politically active outside the orbit of Marxism were unsatisfactory. Too dependent on elections – 'a trap for fools' he would later call them – these attempts died, and he began his project of seeing whether Marxism could be redeemed from its deterministic sins by a strong infusion of French existentialism. By 1952, in *The Communists and Peace*, Sartre began his always shaky, often stormy, *rapprochement* with the PCF. Of course, there would be no *joining* of the Party, but in those years Moscow could expect Sartre to speak if not always on its *behalf* then in such a way as to place the burden on the West to defend its own position. The Hungarian uprising would give Sartre a temporary pause, but soon he took up the sword again. There were the trips to the USSR, China, and perhaps most depressingly Cuba, where he was swept off his feet by Fidel.¹¹ Only the Czech crisis of 1968 would bring his tilt towards Moscow to a halt, leading him to his great essay on 'The Socialism That Came In from the Cold.' After that, he turned to the Maoists and could claim, with astonishing confusion, in 1975, 'I have full respect for Mao, at least I did up to a few years ago. I didn't understand the "cultural revolution" very well. Not that I'm in the least opposed to it, but I haven't managed to form a clear idea of what it means' (Sartre, 'Self-Portrait at Seventy', 62).

Lévy's citations from the Sartrean texts of this period are generally depressing. Only on Israel did he seem to resist his worst tendencies, and then not always successfully: he attempted, for example, to put the best face possible on the Munich massacre of Israeli Olympic athletes. Nevertheless, he remained staunch on Israel's behalf against UNESCO and its other enemies of the period and even received an award from the Israeli government (one of the few awards he accepted during his life).

What went wrong? Lévy offers no definitive answer, although anyone who attempts this perhaps impossible task will have to engage his book very closely. I say 'perhaps impossible' because of that old Sartrean 'differential.' Paul Valéry, he once said, may have been a petit-bourgeois intellectual, but not all petit-bourgeois intellectuals were Valéry. Not all children of humble German backgrounds became Nazis. Not all French petit-bourgeois intellectuals admired Mao with 'full respect' (Raymond Aron did not). Sartre would smile at this impasse because he would

11 As late as 1975, he says of Fidel's dismissal of Sartre's intervention on behalf of the imprisoned poet Herbert Padilla, 'I don't know what's happened to him.' Many men and women, lacking the genius of Sartre, had no difficulty in understanding what had 'happened' to Castro.