

Comedy as Upology : Geneva

"A very remarkable, very able man... and on most subjects very sane" Shaw on Hitler

Geneva is as close to an artist's recantation for past acts of heresy as we are likely to see. The fact that it was probably written in response to Gilbert Murray's *Aristophanes*, published in 1933 and dedicated to Shaw, merely makes Shaw's self-betrayal more pathetic.¹

In the introduction to his study Murray expressed his longing for the return of the spirit of Aristophanes : he thought that Aristophanes would have acted as the much needed antidote to the jingoistic nationalism, xenophobia and illiberalism of Europe that had shot up to fever pitch. In 1933 it was still possible , though difficult , to pin one's hopes on sanity, to trust the curative, or rather prophylactic, quality of laughter, to believe that Hitler and Mussolini were Bergsonian monsters whom the bludgeon of laughter could beat back into natural human shape. A world that had not heard of Auschwitz could well have been excused for conceiving Hitler as an upstart rabble-rouser and the Jew as the bee in his bonnet. Such a world could conceivably see Mussolini as an actor of melodrama continually spewing

out half-digested chunks of Hegel and Nietzsche : according to such an optimistic vision an encounter between the two could logically end in only one possible manner, as it did in Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, with each hurling a chockful of pudding at the other's face. The years between 1933 and 1945, or even between 1938 ——— when the play was first presented at the Malvern Festival——— and 1945 have made nonsense of the calendar, because twelve thousand years rather than merely twelve accurately expresses the spiritual gap between the two ages. Surely the nature of man either changed during this period, or a different species came into existence at this time.

The philosophers of the Enlightenment may have served to mould the opinions of all subsequent evolutionists from Comte to Bergson and may have even survived the trauma of the First World War without being wholly discredited, but the moment the members of a certain race, for the mere crime of being born into it, became a raw material, a quantity of lard, that went into the manufacture of soap to be used by a "superior race", all the metaphysical theories regarding human nature that had sprung up in the last two centuries were exposed as woefully inadequate, if not outright delusions. It is significant that when Chaplin made his film, Hitler was perceived as an upstart in Europe. It is unlikely that as a Jew Chaplin could have made *The Great Dictator* had he known of the death camps.

The most important thing about Geneva is that it was as late as 1947 when the play received its final form. An additional act was furnished during the final revision for the Standard Edition. The great popularity of the play during the 1938-39 run in London has best been explained by Margery Morgan.² Civilized men are not unlike primitive savages in their faith in the efficacy of magic. In the absence of effective power of intervention, people in all ages have sought to ward off danger by burning the effigy of the adversary.

People knew even before Bergson that in farce and lampoon the characters stalking the stage are but effigies of their real selves and laughter is the fire. When comedy centres on a historical situation that evokes terror rather than laughter (as it does in Aristophanes and in Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*) the treatment may be the artist's route of escape : the only weapon left to a man of talent otherwise powerless is his imagination with which he can turn reality over and give it a less threatening shape, but when the work precedes the climax ——— or nadir ——— of a historical catastrophe (as Chaplin's film or the earlier versions of Shaw's play did) probably it is also prompted by the artist's faith that comedy can act as a prophylactic against the ultimate brutalization of society. When Gilbert Murray longed for the return of Aristophanes, he hoped that the pacifist Greek would succeed in purging people's overheated

passions and in restoring their sanity.

In 1938 , when all the facts were not known, Geneva was not hopelessly out of date, though it was evident that Shaw, then an old and tired man, had chosen to put up the shutters to escape his disturbing vision. The author of *Man and Superman*, the man who had seen more clearly than anyone else the hollowness of the naive faith of Watsonian behaviourists in the panacea of education, now chose to be a repentant sinner. After the war had ended and the facts came to light, the alibi of such touching simplicity became untenable. The world, or that part of it which was not drowned in the bloodbath, came to learn of insults that no tongue could utter, of elaborately engineered horrors that would make the febrile imagination of an Edgar Allan Poe seem phlegmatic in comparison. And yet in Shaw's play the Battlers and the Bombardones remain frozen in their postures. Every character is a caricature, and the good-humoured Shavian chuckle can almost be heard through the even-handed satire that makes no qualitative difference between different shades of folly. The widow of the late President of the Republic of Earthly Paradise approaching the League to save her country from blood-feuds and obligatory revenge, while asserting in the same breath that she is honour-bound to seek revenge, is not more absurd than the hysterical English bishop who, like the Bergsonian puppet, repeatedly slides on the floor at the culture shock

he receives from the Russian Commissar. And Begonia Brown, for whom Camberwell is the centre of the universe, and her light-headed Billikins suffer from the same kind of deficiency as the rather tender-hearted Battler whose one bee in the bonnet is the Jewish question—they all lack the right kind of education. The ambience and the flavour bring to mind the sportive world of J.M. Barrie and P.G. Wodehouse and Shaw's own potboiler, *Fanny's First Play*. The treatment of the dictators also remind us of Roman comedy—the petulant Battler who begins to sob at the first sign of crisis, the conceited Bombardone and the snobbish Flanco are little more than so many examples of the *miles gloriosus*.

Shaw's ambivalence was exposed by Lawrence Langner's letter to him in which Langner accused Shaw of whitewashing the dictators and portraying the Jew as a noxious character: "I do not believe that you will want future generations of Jew-baiters to quote you as part authority for a program of torturing, starving and driving to suicide of Jews all over the world."³

In Shaw's defence it can be argued that in much of modern drama the aggressor and the victim are not separated by the clearly demarcated line of morality. For example Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* and John Arden's *Live Like Pigs* tantalise the reader with possibilities of simple moral choices but end up by making such choices impossible even between victim and aggressor. The process goes even

further in the plays of Peter Barnes, since plays like *Bewitched* and *Laughter* reveal a symbiotic relationship between the predator and his prey and reveal that tyranny is made possible by the collusion of the sufferer.⁴

These plays are a part of a dramatic tradition that dates back to *Widowers' Houses* and *Mrs Warren's Profession*, plays in which melodramatic moral patterns are created only to expose their inadequacy. Though *Geneva* superficially seems to belong to the same tradition, it is actually the very opposite of such plays, because Pinter, Arden, Barnes and the Shaw of *Mrs Warren's Profession* first present a facade of reality, then explore it further and discover unexpected angles, forcing the audience, in the process, to discard stock responses in order to get attuned to a more complex reality. They assault simplistic moral positions, not morality itself. If these plays show that the apparently level ground is full of unexpected bumps and diversions, *Geneva* starts by levelling the moral ground.

To understand Shaw's compulsions one must go behind *Geneva* and examine the politics behind the play. Shaw's faith in democracy was always questionable, for the faith in democracy presupposes the faith in the judgment of the common man. We have the evidence of the novels that the common man is only marginally more intelligent than the common sheep, and the earliest of the Shavian messiahs, Sidney Trefusis, is unable to decide what is more

desirable—the redemption or the extinction of the common man. The gains of democracy are laughed at in the non-dramatic portion of *Man and Superman* and *Undershaft* is closer to the spirit of Fascism than to that of democracy.

However the messianic strain is restrained by conflicting tendencies in the plays. The internal check weakened considerably in the years following the First World War, and Shaw's position came closer to that of Trefusis. In *On the Rocks* the voice of the author becomes indistinguishable from that of old Hipney when the latter says:

I am for every Napoleon or Mussolini or Lenin that has the stuff in him to take both the people and the spoilers and oppressors by the scruffs of their silly necks and just sling them into the way they should go with as many kicks as may be needful to make a thorough job of it.⁵

How is this increasing stridency of tone to be explained? I believe that the cause should not be sought in any single factor. The Boer war, during which he wrote *Man and Superman*, apparently corroborated Shaw's lack of faith in mankind. The First World War left him completely shaken, for he saw that no one who really mattered did anything to prevent an entirely avoidable bloodbath. He was also unnerved by the fact that his own sensible suggestions

provoked vituperation even from people he considered his friends, and his critics unashamedly chose the occasion to bare their fangs on him. The treaty of Versailles convinced him that no horror and no debauchery were enough to dissuade politicians from petty politicking in the name of statecraft.

It is also possible that Shaw nursed an unconscious desire to be proved right as a prophet of doom to get even with his critics. But while the horrific experience of the war was probably responsible for the hardening of his attitudes, it did not spawn these attitudes, since his mistrust of the common man's sanity, his scepticism of democracy and even a sense of paranoia were clearly evident in the works of his nonage — his novels.⁶

When Mussolini and Hitler seemed to go from strength to strength and Stalin completed his stranglehold on Soviet Russia, Shaw, far from being apprehensive, decided to celebrate such occasions. The admiration for dictatorship and denunciation of democracy became such a regular feature of his speeches and articles that one feels that Edmund Wilson was entirely justified in proclaiming: "In his political utterances since the war, it is hardly too much to say that Bernard Shaw has behaved like a jackass."⁷ Shaw wholeheartedly agreed with "Signor Mussolini that liberty... is a sham; that oppositions as such cannot be tolerated in modern public business any more than they would in a private

business."⁸ "With inspired precision," shaw exclaimed, "he [Mussolini] denounced liberty as a putrefying corpse."⁹ The suppression of the constitution in Italy and Spain earned his unstinted praise :

These repudiations of constitutionalism in Spain and Italy have been made, not to effect any definite social change, but because the Spanish and Italian governments had become so unbearably inefficient that the handiest way to restore public order was for some sufficiently energetic individuals to take the law in their own hands and just break people's heads if they could not behave themselves.¹⁰

When the dictators broke people's heads Shaw generally blamed the people for failing to behave themselves and heaped ridicule on democrats while praising the dictators for suppressing the doctrinaires of liberty :

Mussolini , now Il Duce, never even looked round : he was busy sweeping up the elected municipalities, and replacing them with efficient commissioners of his own choice, who had to do their job or get out.¹¹

The suppression of elected bodies became highly desirable acts because Shaw, the champion of efficiency, believed that only by humbugging [the common man] to the top of his

bent can he be governed at all. It has therefore always been necessary to humbug him more or less ; but to the extent to which he has been able to make Parliament really representative of him his enfranchisement has made democracy impossible.¹²

The dictators of course were willing to oblige Shaw with various forms of "democracy" in which the common people would be humbugged, robbed of their franchise, and have their heads broken for their own good but those obtuse people who were so dull as not to see that "adult suffrage kills [democracy] dead"¹³ and insisted on civil and political rights got a considerably smaller portion of Shaw's sympathy. For instance when Dr Friedrich Adler, a leader of the Austrian Labour Party, disputed Shaw's claim that Mussolini kicked constitutional rights out of his way "to get public business done diligently for the public benefit",¹⁴ Shaw replied :

Are we to give [Mussolini] credit for his work and admit its necessity and the hopeless failure of our soi-disant Socialists, Syndicalists, Communists, Anarchists... to achieve it or even to understand it or are we to go on shrieking that the murder of liberty and Matteotti is trampling Italy underfoot....?¹⁵

Shaw felt that it was unwise to shriek over the murder of Matteotti, the rape of liberty, the administration of castor

oil to political opponents or the invasion of Abyssinia because Mussolini was doing what he was doing for the benefit of the public. Nauseated at the defence of the dictator, the famous Italian historian Gaetano Salvemini wrote in the *Manchester Guardian* on 19th September, 1927, that "Kate has at long last met her Petruchio" :

I do not reproach Mr Shaw with his ignorance of Italian affairs. I only intend to point out his levity in delivering judgment about matters of which he is wholly ignorant, and his callous ridicule of hardships and sufferings which his intelligence ought to understand even if his moral sensitivity is unequal to appreciating them.¹⁶

The *Manchester Guardian* commented in its editorial:

What is odd to us is that he should seem to make light of the destruction of free speech, of perjury and illegality in law courts, of personal violence and unchecked cruelty. One may readily conclude the need of controlling the right of private property in the interests of the community and still regard it as a high duty to safeguard these personal rights for which men of many parties and many nationalities have struggled in the past and still must struggle today.¹⁷

To anyone following the argument dispassionately today

it is obvious that both Salvemini and the editorial of the *Manchester Guardian* were unanswerable, and Richard Nickson's attempt to absolve Shaw does not quite succeed.¹⁸ The fact remains that though Shaw may have been ignorant of many gory details, in broad outlines he knew the nature of the Fascist regime, its naked attack on life and liberty. He did not challenge the evidence provided by Adler, Salvemini and others, he accepted them as par for the course because he was convinced that men could not be governed without brutality : "Benevolence is not a qualification for rulership at all. Capable rulers have often been infernal scoundrels, and benevolent monarchs hopelessly incapable rulers."¹⁹

Shaw's aversion to democracy had so overwhelmed him that he permitted his fantasy to synthesize a superman out of every available dictator, and the more insane the drivel of such a dictator, the greater was the proof of his wisdom in Shaw's eyes. Thus he did not fail to be impressed by Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.²⁰ In 1934 he excused Hitler's violence and brutality in newspaper columns and in the next year he demanded a Fascist salute from his friends and ended articles with 'Heil Hitler'.²¹

When Hitler overran Austria in 1938, Shaw rejoiced over such "a highly desirable event."²² When Hitler and Stalin divided Poland between themselves, Shaw blamed not them but England and cautioned the world of "the present complete

despotism of Chamberlain's War Cabinet and its innumerable Gestapos."²³

In the face of such overwhelming evidence, it is difficult to agree with Margery Morgan and Kingsley Martin when they argue that *On the Rocks* is not a pro-Fascist play, that it was written merely with the intention of shaking people out of their complacency.²⁴ Shaw's sympathy was unmistakably with Mussolini and this was embarrassingly demonstrated when he refused to sign the protest against the arrest of Unamuno, failed to condemn the murder of Matteotti and refused to play any part in supporting the victims of Fascism, which included Matteotti's wife and children, but did not hesitate to condemn the lynching of Mussolini in Milan.²⁵

Shaw called himself "a Totalitarian Democrat" who believed that the division of the human race into men and supermen corresponded to the division between rulers and the ruled, which was the law of nature.²⁶ Naturally, therefore, he found Hitler "a very remarkable, very able man,"²⁷ and Hitler's views "on most subjects very sane."²⁸ While disapproving of the Nazis' anti-Semitism he believed that there was no logical connection between racism and Nazism or Fascism.²⁹ As a "Totalitarian Democrat" he thought that Mussolini, "being a good psychologist and a man of the people to boot, was a true organ of democracy."³⁰

How completely Shaw's fantasy succeeded in subduing

reason can be gauged not only from his support of the bombing of Abyssinia³¹ and the condonation of Mussolini's torture of political prisoners³² but also, and chiefly, from his attempt to convince himself that the dissidents in Stalin's Soviet Union enjoyed being tortured.³³

Even death camps ceased to bother him. He submitted that not only dangerous lunatics and criminals but also idiots should be slain.³⁴ A man who believes that idiots should be killed is easily convinced, especially if he is the author of *Back to Methuselah*, that the majority of the world's inhabitants are idiots. The comments of Desmond MacCarthy on the liquidation of the unsuitables in *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* are worth recalling in this connexion because they shed invaluable light on the nature of the victims :

I am writing in the parlour of a pleasant public-house beside a small fire. Four jolly tars have just come in, their caps pushed back from the healthy, shiny, vacant, handsome faces. They have ordered pints and are presently going into the next room to play pool. A heavy commercial gent on a high stool leans across the bar drowsily reading an evening paper. So, counting the plump, prompt, bored barmaid herself, there are seven of us here; and a glance within and a glance around tells me for certain sure that we ought to be liquidated ! From the point of view of establishing a

Communist Utopia we are one and all useless.³⁵

The preface to *The Simpleton* proves Maccarthy right, for there Shaw supports Djerjinsky, the founder of the Tcheka and one of the masterminds behind the Soviet purges. Shaw's approval of mass murder becomes chilling: "There should be an inquisition always available to consider whether these human nuisances should not be put out of their pain, or out of their joys as the case may be."³⁶

This background of Geneva is indispensable in order to understand Shaw's evasiveness in the treatment of his subject. After the consistent championing of the dictators in effusive terms, after overlooking, even supporting on occasions, their abominations, after turning a blind eye to persecution, torture and murder, after divining wisdom in Hitler's *Mein Kampf* Shaw was faced with a situation where the dictators having sowed the wind were reaping the whirlwind.

To the credit of the dictators it must be said that they made no bones about the real nature of their ideology : Hitler made no effort to play down his racism, his glorification of domination, his xenophobia and his contempt for the weak; Mussolini sang paeans to the State and burnt incense at the altar of "Bellona's bridegroom", Nietzsche could not have rhapsodised more eloquently on the virtues of war and imperialism than these two spiritual heirs of his. If Shaw remained grossly deluded about them it was

because he wished to deceive himself. Whenever his gaze fell on the dictators it became intensely antiseptic and washed away every stain of their crime. As long as the suffering countries were Poland, Finland, Austria and Abyssinia, Shaw could argue that Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini were obliging these countries by gobbling them up, but when two of Shaw's icons, Stalin and Hitler, fell out with each other and the resulting war led to the death of millions it was no longer possible to keep alive the hope that the policies that led to such consequences were progressive .

As Hitler and Stalin got sucked into the war not as allies but as enemies, Shaw had to surrender his faith that Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was a beacon of light. Since it was impossible to argue that Western capitalism was responsible for the war between Soviet Russia and Germany, Shaw had to confront the fact that the politics on which he had showered his accolades had reached its logical conclusion. There was no way of mistaking the monstrous columns of smoke generated by the fires of hell for smoking incense. What stood condemned was not the bee in Hitler's bonnet but Hitler himself.

The war forced Shaw to face the fact that he, who had written off the human species as a political failure, had to write himself off as a political failure because he had collaborated in his own way with Hitler and Mussolini (We must only remember that the rigour of Shaw's logic convicted

his audience of collaborating with Sartorius" and Mrs Warren).

It is easier to withdraw behind a fog that obliterates moral distinctions than to subject oneself to the pitiless scan of the inner eye. Incapable of facing the fact that he too had played his part in lending respectability to the most ghastly political figures of the twentieth century, Shaw beat an embarrassed retreat, working out a compromise with his earlier position. If he could no longer paint Hitler and Mussolini as remarkable statesmen, he could at least dilute their guilt by making them ridiculous rather than evil and he took great care to make every other character except the Russian Commissar, who embodies positive values, as ridiculous as Battler and Bombardone.

It is clear that what we witness in Geneva is Everyman in his humour and Shaw sports with follies, not with crime.³⁷ To wish off the least malodorous hint of the latter, he makes a fine distinction between the actors and their actions; although the judge does seem despairing when he says: "I give you up as hopeless. Man is a failure as a political animal. The creative forces which produce him must produce something better"³⁸; the implication of the statement is not as radical as it seems because all he means is that a better system of education is required to make better men, because men — and this is to include Bombardone and Battler — "are naturally as amiable, as teachable, as

companionable as dogs. "39

In comparison with Shaw's earlier works, the satire in *Geneva* is milk and water. Turning his back on everything he discovered with a pitiless honesty in *Heartbreak House* and *Back to Methuselah*, he manages to synthesize a Panglossian optimism about the nature of man at a time when the bottom was being knocked out of the world before his own eyes. Thus he could say of Hitler :

It is not a change of heart that is needed: our hearts are in the right place. It is a change of head. Teach Herr Hitler that the vigour of his nation and ours is due to the fact that we are nations of arrant mongrels and he will follow my advice and not only invite the Jews back to Germany but make it punishable incest for a Jew to marry anybody but an Aryan.⁴⁰

In *The Devil's Disciple* it is Mrs Dudgeon, the hard-hearted Puritanic woman, who quotes Jeremiah, yet following another route Shaw himself came to the same conclusion. Nothing is wrong with the intellect of Higgins or of the heartbreakers who assemble in Captain Shotover's house, yet in *Pygmalion* and in *Heartbreak House* the truth that triumphs over Shaw's evangelic optimism is the realization that the heart of man is deceitful above all things. In the nineteenth century terminology which replaced the Biblical one, the term 'will' took the place of

'heart'. Almost fifty years before Geneva got its final shape, that erratic genius. Jack Tanner, discovered that the head is completely at the mercy of the will and in the main people learn what they wish to learn.

The play's spurious optimism is the result of Shaw's self-betrayal. Geneva is a pathetic apology for his politics : his mystical affirmation in *Major Barbara* that all power is spiritual and the emergence of Andrew Undershaft as a moral hero led him inexorably towards a commitment to efficient totalitarianism. His moral relativism, based on the ethics of pragmatism, led to his championing of Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini. In Shaw's hands we witness the reversal of the Biblical question : " For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? " He was willing to put up with the loss of the soul, thinking it to be a temporary loss that could be compensated for at the moment of epiphany when the human world would be transformed into the superhuman. But while the numerous revisions of Geneva were going on, Shaw witnessed the collapse of the only ground on which he had supported the totalitarian systems — the pragmatic ground. In *On the Rocks* Old Hipney was willing to support the dictators because they had delivered the goods; when the final version of Geneva came out Mussolini and Hitler had lost not only their souls but also the world that they had retained for a little while.⁴¹

History carries on even after the play stops, and the author who knew the fate of the persons whom he had once hailed as heroes was left with no option but that of a half-hearted recantation. The author of *Geneva* had to swallow the fact that history had been less than kind to the author of *On the Rocks*.

Anyone who is able, by an extra-ordinary exercise of will power, to sever the connection between Battler and Hitler, between the play and the facts surrounding it, is likely to find *Geneva* droll and even full of wisdom.⁴² That brings us to the knotty question : what is the relationship between comedy and social, that is non-fictional, reality ? Can comedy survive in an inhospitable climate ? When the barber in *The Great Dictator* breaks into a long, rambling and entirely non-comic rhetoric, he proves that faced with a certain kind of reality, the art of comedy must break down. Shaw's comedy does not because it avoids intersection with the reality that lies beyond the play. Given the fact that Shaw, like his Don Juan, always strove to be the master of reality and that the mastery of reality was in his eyes the determinant of abundant life, *Geneva* is, inspite of its numerous revisions, like the English Bishop about whom the Russian Commissar remarked : " Was he ever alive ? To me he was incredible. "⁴³

Chapter 14 : Notes and References

1. My attention has been drawn to the connexion between Geneva and Murray's *Aristophanes* by Margery Morgan's *The Shavian Playground*.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

3. Lawrence Langner, *G.B.S. and the Lunatic* p. 162. Langner claims that as a result of the animated correspondence between the two, Shaw revised the play, and that the first draft gave such a negative picture of the Jew that it seemed to justify Fascism. Langner, p. 169. The same point is made by Desmond MacCarthy, who remarks that "the case for the Jew ought of course to have been vigorously put. It was not. Nor was the cause of the democrat who was presented as a red-faced, heavy-punched, muddle-headed gaby." MacCarthy, *Shaw*, p. 194.

4. Edward R. Isser cites a number of plays, namely Christopher Hampton's adaptation of George Steiner's novel, *The Portage to San Cristabel of A.H.*, C.P. Taylor's *Good*, Peter Barnes's *Laughter* and Peter Flanney's *Singer*, which deal explicitly with the Nazi-Jew relationship, and in each case the Nazi defends himself, as Battler does in *Geneva*, against the charges of his victims. See Edward R. Isser, "Bernard Shaw and British Holocaust Drama", *Shaw* 12 (1992) : 111-23.

5. CP VI, p. 719.

6. A.M. McBriar argues that Shaw's anti-democratic attitude began in 1896, and attributes it to Shaw's personal disappointments and political disillusionment. A.M. McBriar, *Fabian Socialism and English Politics, 1884-1918*, pp. 82-83. Martin Meisel is in broad agreement with him but thinks that the watershed came in 1904. Martin Meisel, "Shaw and Revolution", in Norman Rosenblood (ed.), *Shaw: Seven Critical Essays*, pp. 106-34. Had McBriar and Meisel paid attention to Shaw's novels they would have found that Shaw's antidemocratic stance originates much earlier than they suppose. The disillusionment that McBriar stresses is not so much the cause as the symptom of Shaw's response to society. Most of the important characters in Shaw's novels—Conolly, Elinor, Owen Jack, Trefusis—are anarchists and antidemocrats in a fundamental sense. Richard Ohmann, in his extraordinarily perceptive study of Shaw's non-dramatic prose, discerns signs of mild paranoia in him and remarks that Shaw would rather err than be on the side of the majority. Richard M. Ohmann, *Shaw: the Style and the Man*, p. 82. I think that Ohmann is right in maintaining that throughout his life Shaw wrote as an opponent. Perhaps Bertrand Russell is right when he says that "envy plays a part in [Shaw's] philosophy in this sense, that if he allowed himself to admit the goodness of things which he lacks and others possess, he would feel such intolerable envy that he would find life unendurable". Letter to

- Goldsworthy Lowes Dickenson , quoted in T. F. Evans (ed.), *Shaw : the Critical Heritage* , p. 120 . Shaw did have reasons to envy the common man who possessed something he lacked : the precious memory of a secure childhood and parental affection.
7. Edmund Wilson, "Bernard Shaw at Eighty", *The Triple Thinkers* , p. 167.
 8. *The Sunday Referee* . July 21, 1935, p. 12. Quoted in Arnold Silver, *Shaw : the Darker Side*, p. 37.
 9. CP VI , p. 862.
 10. *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism , Capitalism, Sovietism and Fascism* , p. 372.
 11. CP VI , pp. 863-64.
 12. *Everybody's Political what's what #*, p. 40.
 13. Ibid.
 14. quoted in Allan Chappelow , *Shaw "the Chucker-Out"*, P.189. Chappelow's book is an excellent source of Shaw's speeches and utterances, much of which remain uncompiled elsewhere.
 15. Ibid., p. 191.
 16. Ibid., p. 194.
 17. Ibid., p. 195.
 18. Richard Nickson, "G.B.S.: British Fascist?", *The Shavian* 16 [1959] : 9-15.
 19. CP VI, p. 387.
 20. ~~New York Times, July 10, 1938. Cited by Silver, op.cit.,~~

20. *New York Times*, July 10, 1938. Cited by Silver, op.cit., p. 37.
21. Chappelow, op.cit., p. 396. For a capable survey of the literature on the subject see Silver, op.cit., pp.308-9. Silver also lists Shaw's innumerable attacks on British democracy and his repeated condonation of Fascist excesses.
22. *New York Times*, July 10, 1938. Quoted in Silver, op.cit., p. 38.
23. Chappelow, op.cit., p. 397.
24. Margery Morgan , op.cit., pp. 273-74 , Kingsley Martin in T.F.Evans, (ed.), *Shaw: The Critical Heritage*, p.337.
25. Silver, op.cit., p. 391.
26. Chappelow., op.cit., p. 322.
27. Ibid., p. 184.
28. Ibid., p. 197.
29. CP VI, p. 869.
30. Ibid., p. 864.
31. Chappelow, op.cit., p. 391.
32. Ibid., p. 187.
33. Michael Holroyd, *Bernard Shaw*, vol. III, p. 238.
34. Dan H. Laurence. *Bernard Shaw : Bibliography*. p. 844.
35. Desmond Mccarthy. op.cit., p. 207.
36. CP VI , p. 762.
37. Edward R. Isser feels that Shaw "reveals a stubbornness of character and blindness to reality" in dismissing "the evidence about the killing operations", for

though he came to know of the truth in 1945 after the liberation of the concentration camps, he did not express outrage towards Hitler even in the revised editions. Isser, op.cit., p.122. Isser does not grasp the point that it would be impossible for Shaw to "express outrage" towards Hitler without expressing outrage towards himself.

38. CP VII, p. 155.

39. Ibid., p. 106.

40. Undated typescript in British Museum : Add Mss. 50643, reprinted in CP VII pp. 175-76.

41. Shaw consistently praised the efficiency of the dictators and derided the British Parliament as "the most effective engine for preventing progress of any kind that has been devised by the wit of man." Chappelow, op.cit., p.175 Blanche Patch, Shaw's secretary, too, thought that Shaw supported the dictators for the effectiveness of their programmes. Blanche Patch, *Thirty years with G.B.S.*, p. 173. This was another of Shaw's illusions. As Leonard Woolf points out: "The British method of dealing with capitalism and capitalists has led to a far greater increase, both relatively and absolutely, in the welfare of the proletariat of any continental country." Leonard Woolf, "Fabians and Socialism", C.E.M. Joad (ed.), *Shaw and Society*, p. 53. A couple of months before his death, Shaw himself echoed Woolf's views and admitted that Britain's success was spectacular and conceded that had Russia succeeded in doing

what Britain had done, it would have blasted the news all over Europe. Chappelow, *op.cit.*, pp. 207-209.

It is true that Hitler created jobs by increasing state expenditure. But though Sir Arthur Chavender, the Prime Minister in *On The Rocks*, is not allowed by his Cabinet to implement a similar programme, the truth is that both America and England succeeded in ending the Great Depression by implementing the Hitlerite economic programme. See John Kenneth Galbraith, *Money : Whence It Came, Where It Went*, pp. 216-52.

42. Richard Nickson, for example, sees *Geneva* as a fruit of wisdom, a play that warns society. Richard Nickson, "The Art of Shawian Political Drama", *Modern Drama* 14.3 (1971) : 324-30. It is possible to discover wisdom in *Geneva* if one ignores both the background of the play and the fact that even in 1947 Shaw believed that the mastermind behind the holocaust was merely a ridiculous person.

43. CP VII, p. 67.