

Forster's "realistic structures" add up to something different from realism as it is found in Wells or Arnold Bennett.

Probably the best remembered and most explicit treatment of listening to music in a Forster novel occurs in *Howards End*, when the three Schlegel offspring and a couple of friends attend a performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Forster gives most attention to the response of Helen Schlegel to the transitional section, between the symphony's third and fourth movements. While brother Tibby is warning them to focus on the part played in that passage by the drum, Helen thinks rather of goblins and elephants dancing, the goblins representing (in one of Forster's famous formulations) "Panic and Empitness." They are blown away by the fourth movement, which Forster terms "a triumphant conclusion" but adds, "the goblins were there. They would return. He had said so bravely, and that is why one can trust Beethoven when he says other things." Kermode is not alone in confessing to "wincing" at such authorial commentary, which he feels is "an enemy of the music," and this is part of his larger irritation with Forster's winsome ("droll," Kermode calls them) narrative intrusions. Yet almost buried in the attention given to how Helen sees "shipwrecks and heroes" in the passage is her sister Margaret's response, briefly described as seeing "only the music," as testified to by Forster's strong use of "only"—as in "only connect," another of those famous phrases from the same novel.

Kermode's admiration for this kind of seeing and hearing in Forster's own art wins out over any momentary irritations, but is the stronger, more telling, for not sweeping them under the rug. That this critic, at age ninety, should have produced such an extraordinarily packed, balanced, and wise book gives us heartening evidence of his staying power as well as E. M. Forster's. ■

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Robert K. Landers

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American Radical

The Life and Times of I. F. Stone

D. D. Guttenplan

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$35, 592 pp.

The legend of I. F. Stone, the feisty investigative journalist, cannot fail to have a certain resonance for anyone who has ever been caught up in the romance of newspapers. After the last progressive newspaper to employ him collapsed in 1952 and no other paper would hire him, the forty-five-year-old leftist radical started his own newsletter. Within a few years, *I. F. Stone's Weekly* began to turn a profit as well as turn up scoops; and eventually, thanks to the anti-Vietnam War movement and his own tireless investigative and polemical labors (as well as an assist from the *New York Review of Books*), Stone rose to fame and fortune and enthusiastic acceptance by the journalistic and intellectual establishment.

So great is the appeal of the mythic Stone that D. D. Guttenplan's *American Radical* is the third admiring biography to appear in the two decades since Stone's death. Guttenplan's rendition is distinguished by his own extensive digging into Stone's journalistic past and its context, and by his insistence that Stone's radicalism is at least as estimable as his investigative journalism. "If journalism

was his medium," Guttenplan says, "his message was unfailingly political." And so it was—which is in large part why his journalistic sainthood is so dubious.

For all his later admonitions against being seduced by the powerful, young Stone (or Isidor Feinstein, as he was known before adding the anglicizing surname in 1937) had fallen in that way himself during the 1930s. Though he'd strongly favored heading toward a "Soviet America" in the 1932 election, Stone got over his initial perception that President Franklin D. Roosevelt was moving toward fascism and became an editorial writer at the ardently pro-New Deal *New York Post*. Before long, says Guttenplan, Stone was "an intimate in the highest councils of the New Deal." "Thoroughly charmed" by FDR's "fixer," Tommy Corcoran, who got Stone's father a job at the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, the journalist soon became adept at trading in "the currency of favors."

Writing in the *Nation* in 1940 (having lost his *Post* job after a falling out with his long-time mentor, the paper's liberal anti-Communist owner), Stone was the first to reveal United Auto Workers leader Walter Reuther's written plan to convert automobile plants to aircraft production. He then wrote extensively about the Reuther Plan in the new progressive newspaper *PM*—without disclosing to his readers that he had ghostwritten the



Reuther Plan himself. (Walter Lippmann and James Reston, or their shades, have been rebuked in recent decades for having done much the same with a 1945 internationalist speech by isolationist Senator Arthur Vandenberg.)

Stone's journalistic voice acquired "reach and power—an audience, an analysis, an influence," Guttenplan says, when the Popular Front came into being in the mid-1930s. Moscow had belatedly decided to put revolution on hold and seek to win over the United States and other bourgeois governments as allies against Hitler. American Communists now pretended to be liberals ("liberals in a hurry"), and liberals, for the most part, went along with the pretense. As a result, Stone gained "a hard-won sense of political possibility."

Though disturbed by the Moscow show trials that began in 1936, later saying he had spotted them as "phony," Stone believed that Russia, still "the scene of the greatest social experiment of our time," was needed as an ally against Hitler. In the summer of 1939, Stone had been "ready to join" the Communist Party, having "worked with the party for years," literary critic Granville Hicks recalled. In their recently published *Spies*, John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and Alexander Vassiliev present persuasive evidence that starting in 1936 and continuing for a few years, Stone served the Soviet KGB as a "talent spotter" and a courier. Even so, as journalist Max Holland rightly observes in a detailed examination of the accumulated allegations and evidence in the summer 2009 issue of the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, "Stone was not a 'spy' in that he did not engage in espionage and had no direct access to classified documents."

In the same summer of 1939, suppressing his concerns about the Moscow trials and purges, Stone signed a petition whitewashing the brutal Soviet record and rejecting "the fantastic falsehood that the U.S.S.R. and the totalitarian states are basically alike." In doing this, Stone committed what "was unquestionably the most foolish and dishonest action of his entire career," his first biographer, Robert C. Cottrell, wrote in

Izzy (1992). The ink on the petition was scarcely dry when the Nazi-Soviet Pact was announced, bringing the Popular Front to an inglorious end.

Outraged by the pact, Stone vowed to a friend that he would do "no more fellow traveling." But if he no longer hesitated to criticize the Soviets, he still had only disdain for anti-Communists, and, Guttenplan says, later found the breakup of the U.S. wartime alliance with Moscow "almost unbearably painful." Indeed, it was not until 1956, after Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" on Stalin's crimes, that Stone finally visited the Soviet Union and then emphatically informed the readers of *I. F. Stone's Weekly* that "this is not a good society and it is not led by honest men." Going even further, he declared that Stalinism had "followed naturally" from Leninism. All this by then was very old news, but not to many of Stone's readers, some four hundred of whom angrily canceled their subscriptions. Even after finally publicly recognizing the truth about Soviet communism, Stone continued for many years to look yearningly elsewhere for the emergence of communism with a human face, whether in Eastern Europe, in Cuba, or in Southeast Asia—only to be disappointed, of course, in the end.

Guttenplan and Stone's previous biographers find plenty to admire in Stone's journalism over the decades, especially in the 1960s. "His exposé of Pentagon fabrications in the Gulf of Tonkin [in 1964] and his demolition of the State Department's [1965] white paper on Vietnam will be studied as long as governments lie," Guttenplan asserts. Perhaps so; but in those pieces, as he does so often elsewhere, Stone comes off less as an intelligent observer struggling to make sense of events than as a skilled trial lawyer making a case.

Stone trained his journalistic skepticism so intensely on the U.S. government, and so little on distant leftist regimes, because his primary commitment was to his radical politics—and also, I think, because of certain habits of mind, a certain lack of reflection. Myra MacPherson, whose biography, *All Governments Lie!* (2006), best brings

out Izzy Stone's personal qualities, says that when he "saw something to admire, he was not too interested in discussing the negatives," and that he was seldom introspective and hardly ever looked back. That made learning from experience rather difficult.

When Stone concluded that "all governments lie," he does not appear to have asked himself why that should be: Are those in power just naturally mendacious? Or does the use of power to bring about desired, perhaps even desirable, ends seem at times to call for prevarication? Is such lying ever justified? After all, in endorsing the petition whitewashing Stalin's crimes, Stone himself lied because he favored an antifascist alliance with Russia—and later claimed he did not regret his signature. Some complexities seem to have been beyond the ken of the relentless investigative reporter. ■

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