

reform prisoners" (p. 122). Visiting individual prisoners, helping rehabilitate them after their release, and assisting their wives and children increased her concern for the need to change social conditions in Japan. Contact with imprisoned strikers led to her association with Sōdōmei, The Friendly Society Labour Federation of Greater Japan. She even appeared at labour rallies where, using her hard-won near-native fluency in Japanese, she "gave inspirational talks to strikers and their families" (p. 242).

Macdonald's ideas for reform extended beyond economic issues; she saw better education for the working classes as an essential precursor of social reform. Men, she contended, must learn that women were "not slaves, not mere playthings and conveniences for men" (p. 160); women must know of their legal right to live independent lives and have the economic means to do so—they must not be content with simply being a "good wife and a wise mother" (p. 161). Such education could take a very practical turn. The wives of some men jailed for strike activities asked her to teach them knitting so they might help support themselves by selling knitted garments. While the women were knitting, Macdonald led discussions on the need to stand by the men and the causes of strikes. At the request of some women strikers, Shinrinkan established a night school where women workers could acquire a high school education or learn knitting and other crafts and cooking. Not only would the women acquire skills but Macdonald expected that the classes, by improving "their sense of individual dignity and their group solidarity," would begin making them into citizens (p. 231) and might lead them into Sōdōmei's educational programme, where they could learn principles of trade unionism.

Prang has been informed by feminist theory and scholarship but sensibly subordinates theory to telling a fascinating life story, providing necessary background about contemporary trends in theology, and nicely sketching social and economic conditions in Japan. This book brings a Canadian heroine to life and offers an attractive introduction to some aspects of Japanese society in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

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Gordon Johnson, ed. *University Politics: F. M. Cornford's Cambridge and His Advice to the Young Academic Politician Containing the Complete Text of Cornford's "Microcosmographia Academia."* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp. vii, 112. US\$12.95 paper, US\$29.95 cloth.

It is the rare scholar's bookshelf that does not boast a copy of Francis Macdonald Cornford's masterly translation of Plato's *Republic*. Completed shortly

before his death in 1943, it marked the culmination of a lifetime of study and has been a fitting memorial for a man who was the driving force in the development of "Cambridge Classical Studies" and the publication of the new scholarship. Less well known but with a deserved reputation at the dinner tables of Oxford and Cambridge Colleges and in the pages of literary reviews is his *Microcosmographia Academia*. This elegant satire of University politics, published anonymously in 1908, offered an unflattering but accurate portrait of academic posturing and pretension. A second edition, under his name, appeared in 1922. Although deliberately humorous in a style then in vogue and thoroughly familiar to Cornford as a former editor of the *Cambridge Review*, there was, as Johnson recognizes in this excellent edited version, a serious intention. Cornford, a young Fellow of Trinity College, was engaged in a battle to rescue his subject from what he considered to be a dry and exhausted tradition.

Cornford's reforming efforts were part of a general campaign to modernize English universities. In Cambridge, changes to the syllabus, the range of courses taught, the balance between teaching and research, membership and the admission of women, the influence of religion, the relationships between Colleges and the University and the funding of each, and the place of modern science in the curriculum were all fiercely debated. All were eventually settled, although the ideas themselves obviously continue to bedevil university politics. The transformation from mediocrity to a well-deserved reputation for excellence after the First World War was not easily achieved at Cambridge. There was enthusiasm for a new order in the college halls but the administrative structure meant that obstacles to reform were legion and confusion was the general order of business. Most dons avoided tiresome committee work and, as in most universities, a few energetic souls were left to run the place. Policy changes, however, required community ratification and the tendency at Cambridge, as in any large body, was to favour the *status quo*. This forced the reformers and their opponents to play politics. Johnson's introduction, "Cornford's Cambridge," carefully outlines each of these issues and the manner of their resolution. But it is Cornford who brilliantly exposes the excesses to which such games of manipulation by the cynical and bargain making by the conservative could be taken.

*Microcosmographia Academia* begins with an "advertisement" urging that it be put aside unread. Otherwise, the reader may know despair and "may your soul (if you have a soul) find mercy." Once begun, the academic quickly finds familiar territory. Cornford's eye for the ridiculous in university politics is delightful and the characterizations are telling. Five parties dwell in the ivory towers: "Conservative Liberals, Liberal Conservatives, Non-Placets, Adult-imites, and Young Men in a Hurry." The first two lurk in the "Valley of

Indecision" despite the best of intentions. The Non-Placets rely on principle, the principle of inaction. Adullamites are ambitious and conspire against the system. One way to put them to flight is to suggest that working hours be lengthened. Young Men in a Hurry tend to be inexperienced, narrow-minded, and priggish, prone to meeting in desolate places and gnashing their teeth. Pettiness and willful foolishness, a trait that has been more rather than less common in the modern university, fear, and greed dictate action. Obstructionist tactics in particular can be carried to a fine art. Remember, says Cornford, that no academic person is ever voted into the chair until he has reached an age at which he has forgotten the meaning of the word "relevant." Within this world there are certain verities that govern debate and ensure permanence. Principles take unusual forms. Among the more familiar is the Principle of Sound Learning. It dictates that vulgar fame should never trouble the cloistered academic existence. Learning is called sound when no one has ever heard of it, and "sound scholar" is a term of praise applied to one another by learned men who have no reputation outside the University and a questionable one inside it. The Principle of the Wedge decrees that one should not act justly now for fear of raising expectations that you may act still more justly in the future—expectations which you are afraid you will not have the courage to satisfy. Finally, the Principle of Dangerous Precedent states that nothing should be done for the first time.

Following publication, Cornford was surprised to be told that his analysis could be applied equally well to other walks of life. His pusillanimous groups and excuses for principles have their counterparts in most large organizations. Comparisons can, however, be taken too far. Academics were, and still are, a peculiar, noisome breed and it is his appreciation of the nuances of their behaviour that is most striking. His observations that the claim to open-mindedness is spurious as the perspective is invariably narrow; that logic, blindly followed, is used to excuse shifts in opinion from the plausible to the fantastic; and that the desire to be different often leads to decisions based less on reason than prejudice, are instantly understood by academics in any time frame. *Microcosmographia Academia* should be required reading for all fresh recruits to the university world. Gordon Johnson is to be commended for bringing it once more to our attention.

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