

The power of the arts to anticipate future social, political and technological development, by a generation and more, has long been recognised. In our century Ezra Pound called artists "the antennae of the race". The arts as radars act as an early alarm system enabling us to detect and target social and cultural targets in time, to prepare us to cope with them. This concept of the arts as prophetic agents contrasts with the popular idea of them as mere self-expression. If art is an "early warning system", it has the utmost relevance to media.

When the radar was newly developed it was found necessary to eliminate the balloon system for protection of the city. The balloons got in the way of the electric feedback of the new radar information. Such may prove to be the case with our existing primitive educational curricula, to say nothing of art education or generality of the arts. We can afford to use only those portions of the arts that enhance the perception of our technologies, and their psychic and social consequences. Art as a radar takes on the function of indispensable perceptual training rather than the role of a privileged diet for the elite or as a social evening at the art gallery for exchanging pleasantries with feigned smiles. (A local journalist while interviewing me suggested that it is the right-wing students in Karachi who do not wish Fine Art to be taught at the Karachi University. One wishes they could be explained the other and most relevant aspect of the arts, to remove their fears that art is confined to painting female bodies, and hence how can a chaddar and chardeevari slogan be violated) If the Americans do not mind breach of copyright I would say the arts are AWACS par excellence for they provide greater benefits to humanity and are fitted with the most sophisticated and sensitive human cells constantly thinking about how to bring happiness to this beautiful planet. Unlike the original AWACS and their related cataclysmic nuclear threats.

Art and media are identical in relevance to their social role. Sincere and honest governments are never hostile towards them. A historian remarked that "Napolean understood the grammar of gunpowder" but Napolean regarded other media such as communications and telegraph as giving him greater advantage over his enemies. Napolean is on record for say-



# The arts as social AWACS

ing that "three hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets".

In our world as we become more aware of the effects of Psychic formations and manifestations, we are losing all confidence in our right to assign guilt. This is the theme of the novel 'Childermass' in which lack of communications is shown as causing the massacre of innocents. Ancient pre-historic societies regard violent crime as pathetic; the killer is regarded as we do a cancer victim.

It is IQ testing, that provoked C.P. Snow to describe top level British brains of 1930s as, "their IQs were much higher than usual amongst political bosses. Why were they such a disaster?" The answer is provided in the book 'Appeasement', "they would not listen to early warnings because they did not wish

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to hear ... being anti-red made it impossible for them to read the message of Hitler ..." But their failure, notwithstanding their higher IQs, is nothing as compared to our GHQ's. This is however no time to suggest strategies when the threat has not even been acknowledged. If he was alive even Louis Pasteur wouldn't have been able to tell doctors about their greatest invisible enemy, hence the perpetuation of treacherous and repressive conditions leading towards disaster.

Subliminal and docile acceptance of the media's impact has turned them into prisons for their human users, for as A.J. Liebling in his book 'THE PRESS' says: "Man is not free if he cannot see where he is going even if he has a gun to help him get there. For each of them media

is powerful weapon with which to clobber other media and other groups. The result is that the present age has been one of multiple civil wars that are not limited to the world of art and entertainment only." As Professor Nef remarks, "the total wars of our time have been the result of a series of intellectual mistakes."

The present situation which afflicts our intellectuals, elite and ruling junta alike, is similar to the psycho-analysis mentioned by Jung: "Every Roman was surrounded by slaves, the slave and his psychology flooded ancient Italy and every Roman became inwardly, and of course unwittingly, a slave. Because of living constantly in the atmosphere of slaves, he became infected through the unconscious with their psychology." No one can shield himself from such an influence.