

In Memoriam

Katherine Griffith

Mrs. Katherine Griffith, retired Secretary of the Department of Political Science at Ohio State University, died on July 13, 1980. Mrs. Griffith worked with every chairperson of the department beginning with Henry Spencer in the 1930s until her retirement in 1973. Her many friends and acquaintances at Ohio State University and in the profession of political science will remember her able service and regret her passing.

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Hans J. Morgenthau*

For Hans J. Morgenthau, life was an unending search for truth about man, politics, human destiny. He set out alone in a hostile social environment moving across uncharted ground. His goal, as he defined it, was discovering "ultimate reality beyond illusion." He took no comfort from oracles nor any of the world's grand simplifiers. His vision expressed itself in the "searching mind, conscious of itself and of the world, seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking and speaking," seeking for light until the end.

He grappled with the most intractable of problems: the dilemmas of politics and of conflict. It was his postulate that the harsh realities of the body politic, like fatal diseases which ravage the human body, yield only to tough-minded analysis and clearcut diagnosis. Prescription depends on the statesman-physician's understanding of human nature and of the inescapable rivalries among men and nations. Interest and power were his roadmaps, not fanciful notions about political man early transcending himself through reason, virtue or reform. As nostrums followed panaceas in rapid succession in the postwar pursuit of peace, he was the first to measure them against political experience. Although he remained outside the corridors of power, he spoke more truth about selfish pride and the ambiguities of power than multitudes of practicing politicians in government and universities who pursued raw power with unacknowledged deceit.

In 1937, he had come to a country which offered him the promise of its national purpose, *equality in freedom*, while denying him initial personal advantage or professional favor. (Unlike many refugee intellectuals, he arrived upon

American soil without a sponsor.) When he trudged up the long steps of Columbia's Law Library, he discovered that the one scholar who might have helped him had died less than a year before. As he had migrated from Coburg in Central Germany to the University of Frankfurt and fled to Geneva and Madrid, he crossed his adopted country from Brooklyn to Kansas City to the University of Chicago returning in his later years to New York and the City University and New School. However unnoticed his beginnings, within a decade he had carved out a niche for himself at the pinnacle of international studies. By prodigious labors, he left a vast and abundant heritage of principles that we have only begun to fathom and not yet made integral to American foreign policy.

The core of that legacy can be found in rigorous criticism of prevailing national moods and trends which Morgenthau insisted crippled the nation's ability to cope with its most urgent problems. In his earliest writings he challenged not individuals (something he resisted) but popular trends and movements of thought which exalted illusions such as the belief that science and technology could save us. Rationalism, as the handmaiden of science, looked to reason and technical knowledge to produce easy harmonies of interest. Yet politics was the realm of contingency and incongruity, of the best under the circumstances. From the viewpoint of practical wisdom, the rationally right, the ethically good and the politically possible were not readily equated. The statesman shapes society *not* by "appeals to reason pure and simple" but by "that intricate combination of moral and material pressures which his art creates and maintains."

A few years later Morgenthau challenged those who blindly heralded a brave new world. Against men who touted new international organizations as substitutes for traditional diplomacy, he maintained that the struggle for power was an enduring aspect of international politics, no mere passing phase of state relationships. But his critics and some of his followers misunderstood him; his preoccupation was with power in its broadest dimensions and with its interconnections with purpose as reflected in the subtitle of his classic text: *The Struggle for Power and Peace*. "To say a political action has no moral purpose is absurd," he wrote, "for political action can be defined as an attempt to realize moral values through the medium of politics, that is power" (*Dilemmas*, p. 85). With Reinhold Niebuhr, he believed that "Politics will, to the end of history, be an area where conscience and power meet, where the ethical and coercive factors of human life will interpenetrate and work out their tentative and uneasy compromises" (*Moral Man*, p. 4). He joined Meinecke in affirming that "... moral life cannot be regulated like clockwork and ... even the purest strivings for good can be forced into the most painful choices."

If Morgenthau's legacy had been no more than

*The memorial above was originally delivered at the funeral service for Hans Morgenthau on July 22, 1980 at the Riverside Chapel in New York City.