Le comte Ferdinand de Bertier (1782–1864) et l'énigme de la Congrégation. By G. DE BERTIER DE SAUVIGNY. (Paris: Les Presses Continentales, 1948.)

THE period of the Restoration in France is often treated as a mere interlude between the empire and the Orleanist monarchy. Perhaps for this reason its history has remained a little obscure. Left-wing historians have tended to explain what could not be understood in its development by the operation of an unseen hand, the existence of which right-wing historians have denied, without providing any alternative explanation. In directing his researches to this period, M. de Bertier has had the good fortune of being able to utilize the papers of the son of the last intendant of Paris, Ferdinand de Bertier, who was at the heart of all the underground royalist movements of the period. In addition to this material the bibliography of manuscript and printed sources on which this study is based is extensive and thorough. It may perhaps be suggested here that some information could also be gleaned from British archives, particularly War Office records for 1813–14 and the correspondance of the British embassy in Paris.

The turning-point in the history of the Restoration came in 1825–6, when the opposition, practically eliminated from parliament by the electoral victory of Villèle in 1824, planted in the public mind the myth of the *Congrégation* and successfully identified the royalist government with the hidden hand of aggressive clericalism. M. de Bertier explains clearly, for the first time, what is true and what is false in this legend of a secret organization through which the ultras exercised their influence. The Congregation, or rather Congregations, for there were more than one, began in 1801 with an association founded by a former Jesuit for the practice of piety and charitable works. This movement played little or no part in politics, and it did not become a significant object of attack until its name was seized on by anti-clerical propagandists in 1824, because of its Jesuit associations. The legend of the political power of the Congregation achieved widespread acceptance through the writings of Montlosier in 1825, and it became one of the most important factors in the undermining of the legitimate monarchy. It was a wonderfully successful invention for propaganda purposes, and seemed to be confirmed by the clerical bent given to the government under Charles X. But what truth was there behind the legend? Before 1824 criticism had been directed against what was called the *gouvernement occulte*. This book shows that there was in fact such a power in the country, but that it was embodied not in the Congregation, but in a secret society founded by Ferdinand de Bertier in 1810, the *Chevaliers de la Foi*, sometimes called the *Société de l'Anneau*. The growth of this society in the last years of the empire is traced in detail. In 1813 and 1814, although ineffective from a military point of view, its activities in the south of France succeeded in creating the impression that the Bourbons had sufficient support to establish a stable government, and so contributed to the recognition of Louis XVIII by the Allies, though its members were bitterly opposed to the influences prevailing in Paris in favour of constitutional government. In Toulouse and Bordeaux they manifested their hostility by setting up

green, the emblem of Artois and of ' pure ' royalism, side by side with the white cockade, but they were unable to impose their ideas on Louis.

The *Chevaliers de la Foi* were held in check by Decazes, with the support of the king, up to 1820. Then, the influence of Mme. du Cayla and the assassination of the Duc de Berry changed the situation; and in 1821, under Villèle, they moved into office. Their influence reached its climax in the elections of 1824, when 410 royalists, including about 120 *Chevaliers*, were elected, against 19 liberals. But Villèle established a severer party discipline than the extremer and more idealistic royalists were able to stand. ' La soumission était portée à ce point envers M. de Villèle ', wrote Ferdinand de Bertier,

> ' que, du banc des ministres, tenant dans la main son couteau d'ivoire comme un bâton de commandement, on devait obéir à des signes convenus. Quand il craignait que le discours de l'orateur qui montait à la tribune ne fît une impression défavorable pour ses projets, le couteau était redressé : à l'instant même des conversations particulières s'engageaient, une portion plus ou moins considérable des députés se trouvaient subitement enrhumés, toussaient, éternuaient, se mouchaient de manière à ce que le pauvre orateur élevait en vain la voix.'

By the distribution of places Villèle tried to form the *Chevaliers* into a clientèle devoted to himself, but their other leaders were too independent to submit so easily. Although the most influential, Mathieu de Montmorency, was eliminated from the ministry, the society succeeded in making its policy on the invasion of Spain prevail over Villèle's opposition. However, Villèle had a strong card in his control of patronage, and rather than see the *Chevaliers* become a mere political party in his hands, Montmorency and Bertier dissolved them in 1826.

The anti-Villèlist royalists now devoted themselves to bringing down his government. In the elections of 1827 they even formed an alliance with the liberal opposition, which put the ministry in a minority in parliament. Martignac came in as a stop-gap, but Bertier and his friends were now turning towards Polignac and La Bourdonnaye on the extreme right. The last ministry of the Restoration was organized rather like a conspiracy than a government. ' C'était presque toujours par l'intermédiaire du premier valet de chambre que mes lettres étaient directement adressées à Sa Majesté ', says Bertier; and when he visited the king, ' je me rendais dans l'appartement du premier valet de chambre et il me faisait descendre par un petit escalier dérobé, dans le cabinet du Roi '. Despite the leading part he played in the negotiations which led up to the formation of the government, jealousy on the part of La Bourdonnaye and Polignac of his influence over the king kept Bertier out of the ministry. Faction and self-interest dominated royalist councils to the end. It is difficult not to draw the conclusion, even from this sympathetic survey, that a generation of opposition and conspiracy had so conditioned the royalists that the discipline and compromises of government were impossible for many of them.

The Revolution of 1830 was not quite the end of Bertier's political activity. Back in a revolutionary opposition he was in his element again. He took the lead in rallying the legitimist party, founded a new secret society called the *Société des Amis de l'Ordre*, and played an important part in the romantic, pathetic, and almost farcical conspiracy of the

Duchesse de Berry in 1832. The delays and rivalry of Blacas and Bourmont robbed it of any slight chance of success it ever had, and after this the founder of the *Chevaliers de la Foi* abandoned politics and joined the ranks of the *émigration intérieure.*

Students of French history are in M. de Bertier's debt for the conscientiousness and patience with which he has unravelled a complex tangle of intrigues, and exposed some of the real springs of political life during the Restoration. Possibly the impression he leaves is a little less than just to Decazes and Villèle. From a different point of view it might be argued that they were trying to train France and the royalists in the essentials of parliamentary government. The degree of success they achieved has sometimes been underestimated, and the responsibility of Charles X and the ultras in undoing it therefore attenuated. However, the author's sympathy for Ferdinand de Bertier has not prevented him from giving an account of his political career and influence which is marked by its thorough documentation and objectivity, which throws light on many other points, besides those we have mentioned here, and which is an important contribution to the general history of the Restoration.

A. COBBAN.

John Company at work: a Study of European expansion in India in the late Eighteenth Century. By HOLDEN FURBER. (London: Cumberlege, for Harvard University Press, 1948.)

MR. FURBER began this work, as he tells us, as a self-contained study, an economic investigation of a period beginning in 1783 and covering the last years of the eighteenth century when the lines of British imperialism in India had already been laid down, though the relationship between the claims of trade and territorial expansion on the one hand and between the interests of monopolist Company and individualist adventurer on the other were still imperfectly recognized. In the course of his work he has come to the conclusion that such a study ought to stand not alone but as one of a series, beginning in 1708 where the work of the late Sir William Hunter left off. Of the value of a series such as he has in mind there can be no question. Indeed, the only general criticism which can be made of the present volume is that, comprehensive and enlightening though it is, it loses something from the fact that it is not preceded by a study of earlier periods which might in some respects modify its perspective and which would give a surer indication of lines of development than is possible in a study which covers a period short in itself and immediately preceded by the disorganizing conditions of a widespread and exhausting war.

Apart from one chapter on the Company at home, the scene of Mr. Furber's investigations lies in British India, that vast sub-continent, whose strange variety shines intermittently between the lines of the correspondence of all the greater Company servants of the time. His theme is both the European impact on this sub-continent and its impact on the Europeans who came to make their fortunes there. That this approach leaves untouched vast tracts of the social and economic history of India he fully recognizes, and indeed he calls on the Indian historians