

Dinner 26 October 1982

time 12:30
for Hugh's
dinner was
week. C.
22/10

Notes on guests

Sir Victor Pritchett (V S Pritchett). Knighted by Wilson.

He has been a writer, principally criticism and short stories, all his life. Is President of the Society of Authors. For years associated with the New Statesman, but I think has voted Conservative since 1970. His autobiography was very successful, specially in the US. Suffolk origin.

Sir Isaiah Berlin O M.

No need to explain. Rumour has it that he voted Conservative in 1979. I would not dare to ask.

Sir John (Jack) Plumb. Knighted 1982.

Until recently Master of Christ's College, Cambridge. Professor of Modern English History for many years. Biographer of Walpole (last volume still not finished - ? or begun), and general 18th century history. Leicester origin. Friend, and perhaps character, of C P Snow. Probably voted Conservative in 1979.

Stephen Spender.

Poet and survivor of the '30s. I do not think he has written much poetry for many years, but he has lectured and done a good deal of criticism. Has written his autobiography, twice (?). Now I should guess a Conservative voter. Perhaps tempted by the SDP.

Anthony Powell.

Novelist. After the completion of his immense and immensely successful saga A Dance to the Music of Time he appears to be taking almost as many volumes to complete his autobiography. Conservative surely.

Dan Jacobson

Novelist, now also lectures at University College London. South African origin, and much preoccupied by that country. Possibly SDP.

Anthony Quinton.

President of Trinity Oxford. Conservative philosopher. You liked his Politics of Imperfection and quoted it in the Airey Neave lecture.

V S Naipaul.

Very successful, sharp, angular novelist. Trinidad origin. Passionately opposed to the Left and of course "Liberation movements". His books about India, Islam etc are semi-autobiographical travelogues. Oxford educated.

Nicholas Mosley (Lord Ravensdale).

Novelist. Son of Sir Oswald Mosley by whom he is haunted. He has just published a book about his father, excessively candid. But even now probably still haunted. Once took Liberal whip in the House of Lords. He is Lord Curzon's grandson.

Tom Stoppard.

Brilliantly successful and entertaining, rather Shavian, playwright. Czech origin. I expect you will have seen several of his plays eg Professional Foul, Night & Day.

Philip Larkin.

Poet, deeply conservative. Librarian at Hull University. The only guest not really known to me very well.

Alfred Alvarez.

Poet. Half American I think. Some works of criticism and general brooding eg on suicide. Has often taught in universities.

Mario Vargas Llosa.

Novelist, Peruvian, excellent English, has just bought a house in London. He is a very well known writer, particularly in South America, but also in the US, very successful, travelled, a great anglophil, his children educated here, and he once taught here. Used to be on the Left, now definitely not. His subjects are usually enormous like his last novel The War of the End of the World which describes a religious maniac who inspired a great rebellion in North East Brazil in the XIXth century. President of International PEN.

PRIME MINISTER

File
C.

Lord Thomas' Dinner, October 26

He has had three refusals from:-

- 1) Iris Murdoch - who will be in Scotland
- 2) Le Carre - who will be abroad
- 3) Arthur Koestler - who has very bad Parkinson's disease and cannot attend social functions.

Hugh as therefore asked Anthony Powell, Tom Stoppard and Isaiah Berlin. The total list now looks as follows:-

V S Pritchett
Stephen Spender
J H Plumb
Dan Jacobsen
Anthony Quinton
V S Naipaul
Nicholas Mosley
Tom Stoppard
A Alvarez
Philip Larkin
Anthony Powell
Isaiah Berlin
Mario Varqas Llosa

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11 October 1982