10. Goodbye to America

America, the country which had welcomed Chaplin, in the end refused to let him stay.

The picture that started the trouble was Modern Times, which appeared in 1936. The story takes place during the time of the Depression, with strikes and unemployment common in America. Although the picture was a great success, some critics thought the picture favoured Communism. They pointed a finger at Chaplin, for in America in those days many people feared Communism.

Ten years went by after the making of Modern Times. The war had ended, and anti-Communist feeling was growing stronger in America. One day Charlie was told that he had to go to Washington, to appear before the Committee on Un-American Activities. If someone was suspected of liking Communism, that person had to go before the Committee. The members of the Committee were very suspicious and very powerful. If they thought a person was a Communist, life in America could become very difficult for that person.

Charlie sent them the following telegram: "I am not a Communist, neither have I ever joined any political party or organization in my life." In return he received a polite letter from them. It would not be necessary to go to Washington, the letter said. Charlie felt relieved. In reality, though, it was just the calm before the storm.

Having finished another picture, Monsieur Verdoux, Charlie went to New York for the opening. There he met the American Press.

"Are you a Communist?" a woman asked him.

"No," said Charlie firmly. "The next question please."

"Why haven't you become an American citizen?" asked someone.

"I see no reason to change. I am a citizen of the world."

"Do you know Hanns Eisler?"

"Yes, he's a very dear friend of mine, and a great musician."

"But he is a Communist."

"I don't care. He is my friend anyway."

"But you seem to like the Communists."

Charlie left the meeting feeling bad. That evening Charlie went with his friends to the opening of Monsieur Verdoux. He sat down in the theatre, but something was wrong. The mood was not the same as before. The film began. Some people clapped, but not many. There was a lot of hissing. Half-way through, Charlie's heart began to sink, and he crept out of the theatre. He knew he was in trouble.

Charlie was not an easy man to beat. After returning to California, he decided to make another picture Limelight, this time a love story.

When Limelight was finished, Charlie was sure it would be a success. He planned to take his family to England to watch the opening night there. In order to return to America afterwards, though, he needed a re-entry permit. When he applied for one, some men from the Immigration Department came to ask him questions. They were the same questions as before. Was he a Communist? Why did he not become an American citizen? And so on, for three hours. In the end, though, he was given a re-entry permit, and with his family he set sail for England on the Queen Elizabeth.

But the bad news came on the second day of their voyage. A telegram arrived from America, saying that Charlie could not go back.

Limelight was a huge success everywhere. In England, France and Italy, Charlie and Oona were received like heroes. Everybody welcomed them with open arms. It was all so different to America. This made them decide that Europe was the right place for them, and in the end they chose to live in Switzerland. There, Charlie enjoyed the evening of his life until his death in 1977 at the age of eighty-eight.

In 1972, twenty years after his sad parting from America, Charlie made one last, emotional journey back to that country. He was invited as a special guest by the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The Academy bestowed on him a Special Academy Award in recognition of all he had done for the world of the cinema. It was Hollywood's way of apologizing to Charlie.

EXERCISES (10)

Ａ　（　）に適切な日本語を入れ、本文のあらすじを完成させなさい．

1936年に公開された『モダン・タイムス』は、（ア　 　 ）の時代を扱った大ヒット作となったが、一部の批評家は（イ　 　　　　　）に好意を示していると非難した．

第二次大戦後、アメリカの（ウ　 　　　 ）感情はますます強まり、彼は政治的危険人物とみなされた．そしてついに、（エ　 　　　　　　　　　　　 ）のために一家でイギリスへ向かう船上で、アメリカ政府の（オ　 　　 ）がおりないことを知らされた．結局彼は（カ　 　　）を安住の地と定め、88歳で亡くなるまで静かに晩年を送った．

1972年、ハリウッドはチャーリーを招待し、その功績をたたえて（キ 　　　　　　 ）を贈った．それがハリウッド流の謝罪であった．

Ｂ　本文の内容に合うものにはＴ、合わないものにはＦを書きなさい．

(1) Americans feared Charlie because he said he was in favour of Communism. ( )

(2) On the first night of Monsieur Verdoux, Charlie felt the mood had changed and that he was in trouble. ( )

(3) When he was asked why he had not changed his nationality, Charlie answered that it was because he loved England. ( )

(4) After the making of Limelight, Charlie left America never to return. ( )

Ｃ　下線部の表現に注意して、次の文を日本語になおしなさい．

(1) If she doesn't want it, neither do I.

(2) Having read the letter, he tore it to pieces.