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ANALYSIS

THE EUROPEAN POWERS are being defeated in detail : they are being defeated without even knowing what they have to defend. They have neither forethought, plan, collective leadership, clear idea or commanding ideal. In face of the Soviet attack they are a group of fuddled sheep reacting nervously, belatedly and ineffectively to every movement of the sheep dog, which drives them slowly but surely in the desired direction. It is Soviet initiative that touches off trouble at diverse points of their colonial positions which none of them are sufficiently strong separately to defend. It is Soviet propaganda which uses the nonsense talked by western statesmen during the war to destroy their whole colonial position after the war. Soviet policy plays on the liberal sentiments of the west to deprive them of their vital supplies by breaking up their colonial empires, while Soviet might establishes a new white empire among the enslaved European peoples without even an effective protest from the statesmen who went to war on the plea of defending Polish liberty. The Soviets succeed in posing as the champions of freedom while using all the means of tyranny. The Soviets succeed even in their new disguise as the angel of peace, when they discard massed armies and prepare the guerrillas ; science imposes a change of tactics, so they devise more modern means of murder and call it an olive branch.

The grotesque assumption

We are now beginning to reap the full harvest of Eden. His invitation to the Russians to visit London softened up the whole resistance of the democracies to communism and achieved nothing. The present atmosphere requires that nothing must be done which can possibly offend the Russian leaders ; every effort of British policy is concentrated on nurturing the delicate plant, " the beginning of the beginning ". The whole process rests on the grotesque assumption that communists can be beguiled by charm from being communists. It is, of course, a thesis that is as insulting to the intelligence as it is to the character of the Soviet leaders. Why should they abandon without adequate reason the cause for which they have suffered so much, just when its prospects appear to be so bright ? The Church leaders may believe that Kruschev can undergo a " road to Damascus " experience at the very moment when by all material standards he is doing so well. But it is a little difficult for experienced statesmen to believe that such a revelation will occur between Claridges and Downing Street as the result of a few dinners with Sir Anthony Eden, and a very " social " evening with Mr. Gaitskell and his colleagues, while the Soviets hold a triumphant initiative not only in the whole of Asia and a large part of Africa, but also in the far less likely spheres of the Mohammedan world and Wall Street, which already quivers with the first reaction to the new Soviet tactic of military relaxation and foreign market dumping.

The Soviet arms cut

The Russians have certainly been left with all the cards, and are using them with much less than their pristine clumsiness. The recurrent error of Eden diplomacy in holding the Disarmamant Conference behind closed doors in an atmosphere of hopeful hush hush, until the usual breakdown, gave the Russians again the best of all worlds. They were able to avoid both the effective inspection which alone can make disarmament a safe reality, and the political disaster of openly refusing it. By a series of well calculated leaks from the stuffy corridors of the hermetically sealed conference chamber they were able to gain the propaganda advantage of posing as the champions of peace while avoiding all effective means to peace. At the end of a complete failure to agree about anything came a Soviet political triumph. They announced a severe cut in their armament figures. No one

can know whether there is any truth in the cut, because they have managed to avoid any system of inspection. All we know is that even if the cut were true, they would still have an overwhelming superiority in conventional land armies, which might be used decisively for the invasion of Europe if neither side dare to use the H-bomb when both possess it.

Steering between two dangers

So the Russians can get away with their posture as the angel of peace, and can still denounce the democracies as the champions of reaction and aggressive war while retaining in their free hands an overwhelming military superiority which might one day face the west with a challenge to surrender or death. Such are the results of substituting dinner parties for realist diplomacy, and private vanity for public capacity. There is only one way to get peace, disarmament and the political initiative. It is to face the Soviets in open debate before world opinion until we win the safety and freedom we want for the European peoples, or the Soviets lose the moral and political position of every Communist Party in Europe. To reach that position we need men who are capable of the clear thought which can formulate a firm policy, and who possess the ability, will and character to face the Soviet leaders in this debate of destiny with calm judgment. We must steer between the death of the world in modern war and the surrender of Europe to communist infiltration in the final dissolution of western society, which a continuance of the present decadence will make inevitable. Like many plain truths this seems an exaggeration to-day, but will seem a platitude tomorrow.

The Four Requirements of Western Safety

If we cannot have general disarmament made effective by inspection, we must have the four basic requirements of western safety.

1. We must always match the Soviets in the main nuclear weapons. It is true they are the " great deterrent ", even if further analysis suggests the deterrent is not decisive. In this sphere it is almost certain that we still lead. General disarmament is the most desirable thing on earth, but we must always retain that lead unless some really effective system of mutual inspection in this matter can be devised and accepted ; this is technically very improbable at present.

2. We must have sufficient strength in modern conventional weapons to check a Russian invasion of Europe within an H-bomb paralysis. When both protagonists possess the H-weapon in sufficient degree to make it clear that its use will virtually destroy the world, neither will dare to use it. This point is nearly reached, but at present the Russians probably fear sufficiently the continuing American superiority in this sphere to be held in check by the belief that the American will actually use the H-bomb if they invade Europe. They are right, for without doubt the present American government would use this weapon in that event. But this situation will at best only last a very short time. We may reach a point where the American use of the H-bomb and a Russian reprisal will clearly mean the end of civilisation. It will gradually become a basic and justified assumption of life that neither side will dare to use it ; Russia will then again be in a position to march with impunity. Nothing could then save Europe from the Russian land mass except a western force with adequate fire power. Science provides us with the means : atomic artillery ; the guided missile with atomic warhead ; tactical aircraft carrying A-bombs against troop concentrations, which can be clearly distinguished from strategic aircraft carrying H-bombs against cities. These weapons, manned by a relatively few highly trained specialists, can for ever free Europe from the fear of Eastern invasion. We shall need them unless and until Russia accepts general disarmament with effective inspection ; this remains a real possibility for conventional armies even if they are supplied with modern weapons. The H-bomb is in another category which makes inspection difficult, but this does not matter so much as it becomes clear that neither dare use it.

3. We need a highly mobile force trained in the use of the most effective light weapons which are now available for air transport. This should be an army of the combined west, ready instantly to defend the vital interests of us all wherever they are threatened. We have first, of course, to define what are the vital interests of the west ; a conspicious lack in our present foreign policy. Our view has long been published that the Europeans should consider together what is necessary to the life of Europe both in the short and long term. In the short term we need various colonial possessions for oil, food and raw material supplies which we should not need in the long run. We should not need them

eventually if we vigorously develop Europe and white Africa as a viable economic area, because that region would be large and rich enough to contain all the resources we need for the full life. But in the interval necessary to this development we should require the use of many of the old colonial possessions. We must hold them together, and the means suggested would provide overwhelming force for that purpose. American support for such a project would surely be available if we made it clear that the operation was for a limited term and had a precise objective ; opposition in the colonial areas would also be greatly reduced by the same clarity and precision in our definition of policy. Let us decide what we want, and hold it firmly — and together. The world will accept more readily the will of a united and determined Europe for a limited period than the present vague muddle of the old colonialism conducted by separate and feeble powers in indefinite menace of the human future.

4. We need something more, and something in no way yet foreseen and discussed within the old world ; here enters the fourth factor. All so far suggested is easily obtainable in terms of any realist measurement of the dangers to be faced in relation to the latent resources available ; nothing but elementary will and decision is lacking. It is not even necessary to have great objectives like Europe a Nation, or great policies like European Socialism, to save ourselves at this first stage. It is only necessary *to decide what is the minimum necessary to the life of Europe and then resolve together to hold it.* American support in the last resort is always assured, because that great power cannot allow Europe to succumb to communism. An American write off could only be in consequence of a European surrender.

The policy is neither beyond the manpower nor the purse of the civilised west ; the burden would be light if it were shared by making the defence of the west a single and united operation. Also, if it became clear to the Russians that we really meant business it is almost certain that we should get general disarmament of at least conventional forces, with effective inspection ; this would bring a great measure of relief from the burden. It is so clearly in the Soviet interests that the economic system of the west should not be sustained for ever by an artificial armament boom. The Russians must now realise that if the west takes precautions elementary to its own safety, the hopes of communist victory by military measures are finally frustrated ; Soviet policy

is bound therefore in the end to promote disarmament, in the hopes of assisting the economic disintegration of the west, which is their other means of victory. It must at least be certain that they have now reached the point of really believing that the universal danger of the H-bomb excludes large scale nuclear war. It is also probable they really hold the risk of an invasion within the H-bomb paralysis to be too great, because there would always be a chance that someone in those conditions might use the weapon of final destruction. So it is now fairly certain that the Soviet leaders have swung belatedly, but finally and decisively, to the opposite method of a drive for peace and disarmament. It is highly probable, but we still cannot gamble on it ; we must have sufficient modern-conventional weapons to check Russian invasion if they suddenly took a military gamble. We must be ready on all counts, but in our military readiness must not ignore the probability that a drive for peace, the relaxation of military tension, the end of the armament boom and the consequent economic collapse of the west are now their primary objectives. It is at this point that we are entirely unprepared, it is here that we meet the fourth factor.

The fourth factor is guerrilla warfare

A good deal of preliminary work will be done by the Soviets before we enter the last phase. The general softening up of the west must go much further and Europe must be persuaded to disarm as much as possible, without the Soviets abandoning any of their really vital weapons. It will be reckoned that the relaxation of military tension will restore the inherent " internal contradictions of capitalism " and that the economic disintegration of the west will thus accelerate. The process will be actively assisted by using the men the Soviets can afford to demobilise — since massed land armies became obsolete — in the production of competitive industrial goods. This increased production will not be much used, as the simpleton might suppose, for increasing in any great degree the standard of life of the Russian mass, who have long been accustomed to a way of living which would not be tolerated for five minutes in the western countries. It will be used, on the contrary, to accelerate the victory of communism by dumping on world markets competitive industrial goods below any prices which highly paid western labour can match ; there is already evidence that Russian industry merely enquires what

is the lowest western tender in any market and then quotes below it. In their new strategy this is the secret weapon — scarcely secret, because they have virtually declared their intentions — and it is much the most practical yet devised. With this combination of new methods the Soviets have real hope of success ; the only surprise is that they have been so long in thinking of it (perhaps, again, it was the fault of the obstinate old man who had first to be liquidated).

This success must develop according to plan before the fourth man enters ; he is the guerrilla. When a large measure of industrial collapse has occurred in the west, the Soviets hope that the consequent disorder will provide his opportunity. Half soldier, half politician, he will be the most highly trained combatant who has yet appeared. The Soviets are past masters of this technique ; in this sphere the professional soldier is paralysed and our present politicians are babes in arms. More than at any moment in the troubled history of the period, we shall need men in command who will know what to do when the fourth man enters. He is not here yet, but it is time to think about him.

New Strategy — Political

Strategy must be adapted to the new situation, both political and military. One of the ablest commentators of the Left recently remarked that the Soviet occupied lands of Europe, like Poland, were now being given " dominion status " ; an ironic commentary in language of characteristically insular hypocrisy on our war aims and pledges. In fact, the Soviets are doing in their slow, hesitant and cautious way what we believed some years ago they would do in a more decisive and drastic fashion. As part of the general relaxation of tension, with the aim of promoting the economic disintegration of the west, they are almost evacuating the occupied lands, now they are satisfied that they are strong enough and the west weak enough to reduce the risk. Is the west now thinking in terms of opportunity, and of duty ? — or is it just thinking that it is so nice of the Russians to think in terms of " dominion status " ? Labour would leave it at that, as long as a few of their particular friends among the survivors were let out of gaol. Will the rest of us ? The freedom of the lost Europeans can be won in the coming political struggle by a victorious idea, now that great-scale war is excluded. But we must have the mind to formulate it and the will and character

to defend it before the forum of world opinion ; henceforward, it is ideas that will battle for the soul of man.

New Strategy — Military

Ideas will count more and more ; if the moral was to the material as three to one in the estimate of Napoleon, it is as thirty to one to-day. That is why it is an error to smirch our reputation for no clear reason in Cyprus. It is urged by the Prime Minister that this island is essential to maintain our oil supplies and that a N.A.T.O. base on the mainland would be inadequate. It is further suggested in the press that it is a useful base if the H-bomb is excluded, although it is admitted that it would be useless in a full scale nuclear war. But a closer analysis surely shows that even if the H-bomb is excluded, a limited nuclear war is still in question. If we use atomic artillery and A-bombs against troop concentrations, we must expect the Russians to use them against us in such a war. Even in this limited warfare Cyprus would be a strategic death trap. Surely we have to give enough hostages already to nuclear fortune, why add another gratuitously ? The right place to defend the oil fields is on the mainland, from a dispersed base constructed on modern principles. And it should not be difficult to obtain when we stop setting Greek and Turk at each others' throats.

We have a common interest in the Middle East, but obsolete thinking and personal vanity now destroy it. Too much is at stake for this empty posturing, this strong hand *in vacuo*, this nostalgic brutality of the old colonialism ; it adds absurdity to cruelty, and a dangerous absurdity at that. Also it kills young men, both English and Greek, for no reason ; old men — enough !

Present Economics and Past Lessons

At home, the facts of the economic situation become clear even to the most fatuous optimism. In a lighter mood we might be tempted to repeat the resounding summary of justified prophesy by the sublime Garvin in the heyday of English journalism ; on certain occasions, " we wrote even better than we knew ". Many now begin to accept our analysis ; not so many, of course, are yet ready for our remedy. There is always a dangerous lag between the slow realisation of disaster and the even slower acceptance of the necessity for action. Hysteria then often succeeds complacency, and is almost equally dangerous. A classic example

in the sphere we have just discussed was the movement of public opinion in relation to the H-bomb. Some years ago (March 1950) we stated the obvious fact that the H-bomb would eliminate great scale war ; the age of the " paralysed giants " was at hand, when neither side would dare to use the major weapon. This view became slowly accepted as a revelation from on high when Sir Winston Churchill stated the same opinion four years later (November 1953).

Public opinion, and to some extent even expert opinion, then swung to the opposite extreme of believing that nothing unpleasant could happen any more ; no weapon was needed except the " great deterrent ". In that case the usual sequence was reversed and complacency succeeded hysteria. It had occurred to us, also, some time before even the theory of " great deterrent " became accepted, that many unpleasant things could happen even within the area of major military paralysis, and that much must be done to meet them. Slowly, and as yet partially that view too becomes accepted.

Sermons versus the terms of trade

The present danger in the economic situation is that hysteria should succeed complacency when it is realised that we shall not regain on foreign markets a position capable of supporting the present standard of life of the British people ; and that is a statement in terms of euphemism, for it may well be that our hold on foreign markets will not support in these islands any standard of life at all for fifty million people. We shall then face disaster unless we resolve on a rapid change of system. The abrupt realisation of this truth by an unprepared people might result in stampede ; it would, in any people less inherently stable. The present facts are that the government has failed to provide even a shadow of a remedy beyond ever feebler exhortations, and that the terms of trade are beginning to turn against us. In recent years the price of things we produced has tended to rise on world markets and the price of things we buy has tended to fall. This tendency alone has saved the British people from coming face to face with reality, and this tendency is at present being reversed. The wind may, of course, change again, and Macmillan will then claim that he is Boreas, but neither the wind nor the story will hold good for ever. We repeat a metaphor we have employed before : the ship lists without rudder, sail,

engine, helmsman or captain, at the mercy of an uncertain tide which sometimes carries us toward, and sometimes carries us away from the rocks. Only one thing is certain : that the rocks are there, and that sooner or later we shall hit them, though no man can determine in advance the precise time point. Then will occur a rude interruption of the crew's present game of spillikins, which may lead to some panic. Let us be ready with a clear idea and a firm lead ; the readers of this journal are already aware of what we mean.

Mr. Crossman dashes in where Shop Stewards Fear to Tread

It was left to one of the ablest members of Labour's Parliamentary Party to state with almost mathematical precision the present *reductio ad absurdum* of the left. Mr. Crossman, M.P. for Coventry, rushed in where even shop stewards now fear to tread. He suggested, in effect, that the British motor industry in its present distress should carry the burden of its own unemployed. The American industry was doing something of the kind under the impact of Mr. Reuter ; me too, said Mr. Crossman. But Mr. Crossman's usually clear eyes also have the same blind spot which will shortly be responsible for the final smash of the Labour Party. The British industry is dependent on foreign markets, and the American industry is not. To add to the costs of British industry at present is to put everyone out of employment instead of some. That is a fact which the shop stewards realised a little quicker than the professor ; they were nearer the facts, so the strike was off.

The story of this matter is a vital object lesson. The able Mr. Dick and his enterprising colleagues decided to do something to arrest the declining fortunes of the industry on foreign markets. At great capital cost they introduced automation, in order to reduce their running costs and keep down their prices for effective competition on those markets. Automation, of course, reduced the running costs by saving labour costs. At once, the left said in effect : oh no, you must employ as many men as before. The result would have been that the expenditure of a great capital sum to save a vital British industry would have been poured down the drain. The management would have incurred the expense of automation without the benefit, and no British industrialist who marked the lesson would have ever introduced modern machinery again. The falling market, and the clear consequence

of unemployment for all, alone save the able management of Standard works from this tragic idiocy.

The State's Responsibility for Automation ; Wanted — a Policy

But Mr. Crossman still apparently contends that the industry and not the state should be responsible for the consequences of automation ; which would, of course, so increase costs that it would bring the development of automation and all possibility of successful competition on foreign markets to an abrupt end.

Let us see if we can help Mr. Crossman out of his little muddle. His instinct is perfectly right in one respect, even if the academic reasoning faculty has gone astray ; (logical positivism after all appears to be an inadequate intellectual preparation for practical affairs). He is right in feeling that the only way to meet automation is to stop the reduction in purchasing power which the consequent unemployment causes ; we will go further and say that the purchasing power of the mass of the people must be increased in proportion to the extra productive power which science brings. But this is out of the question within our present international trading system, since any increase in costs — not only in the industry directly affected, but in the services which supply it like railways and coal — prices us right out of foreign markets and brings the whole system to a quick crash. Yet labour is as much tied to the international trading system as tory ; we have to compete under these old parties on foreign markets whether the British industries are privately or nationally owned, and with equally hopeless results in either case.

The way out of the dilemma is to construct in Europe-Africa a viable economic unit which can be insulated from the present chaos of the world cost-price system because it contains all the food and raw materials within its own borders that its inhabitants can possibly require. That is the system of European Socialism. Think again Mr. Crossman ; a few further reflections, both academic and practical, may lead to some interesting result.

Great Conductors

The eternal recurrence of the comical in life is one of the few cheering symptoms in the modern scene. There was a story in pre-war Hungary which caused much amusement among those who then ruled that once smiling land. A princely landowner of great wealth and position maintained a private orchestra, and

his friends and neighbours would come from far and wide to attend the eagerly awaited annual event when he conducted it himself. It was an impressive performance in every way, with only one peculiarity ; the masterful movements of the *chef d'orchestre* were always just one beat behind the orchestra. Great was the merriment of all his best friends as they observed : " He thinks he is conducting the orchestra, but really the orchestra is conducting him ".

Do we strain observation of the contemporary scene if we find Sir Anthony Eden at present in precisely the same position as the proud conductor ? The movement of events has been dictated by the discovery of the H-bomb by British, American and Russian scientists ; this has changed the strategy, and in turn the policy of the world, for reasons we gave some years ago and have just recapitulated. The H-bomb imposed peace and a new situation ; the Soviet leaders reacted as usual very slowly, but eventually they realised the new facts and reshaped their policy accordingly. So the orchestra of events has for some time past been playing the music of peace. Sir Anthony Eden was rather more than a beat behind when he emerged as the conductor of peace in the new jazz symphony at Claridges ; but that in no way diminished the applause of the faithful.

The important thing now is not to find out what happened last and to pretend that British policy did it, but to find out what happens next and to shape events in our favour.

EUROPEAN

THE WRITING OF REBECCA WEST

by DIANA MOSLEY

I. Ibsen's Rebecca

WHEN Miss Cicely Fairfield decided to be a writer she changed her name. Rather as a girl who aspires to be a film star may shed Mary Smith for something more in accord with her future glamour, so Cicely Fairfield may have thought that her own name, though just right for the lady who does the receipts for scones in the woman's page, was unsuitable for the sort of writer she wished to be. She took the name of an Ibsen heroine, Rebecca West. Under this pseudonym she was to become one of those writers of the twentieth century, part romancer and part journalist, who, great or small their talent, mould the opinion of the " little man ".

It was a curious choice of name for Miss Fairfield to make. Ibsen's Rebecca is an emancipated spinster of twenty-nine who conceives it her mission to " ennoble the minds of men ". As her instrument in this task she chooses Rosmer of Rosmersholm, the last of an old family : portraits of conservative ancestors hang on the walls of his house. Unfortunately (for Rosmer is married) she falls in love with him, and to gain her ends, which have now become confused between political and amatory, she contrives, by suggesting there is a reason why she and Rosmer must get married without delay, to induce his neurotic and childless wife Beata to commit suicide by throwing herself into the mill-stream.

Rosmer's brother-in-law, Rector Kroll, comes to Rosmersholm to collect money for a conservative Journal. When he finds that Rosmer and Rebecca hold advanced left-wing views he leaves them, determined to discover facts that will discredit their private lives and thus destroy them politically. On his next visit he is armed with damaging evidence against Rebecca. Not only was she the direct cause of Beata's suicide; she is in herself undesirable because she is the daughter, not

of her mother's husband, but of old Dr. West, the man who adopted her and gave her his name. This piece of news throws Rebecca into something like despair—to the surprise of Rector Kroll, who never dreamed that an " emancipated " woman would care whether she was born in wedlock or no. It is clear to the audience, though not to Kroll, that the reason for her violent reaction, and reiterated assertion that it could not be possible—since Dr. West had not known her mother before her birth, and so forth—is that her relations with him when they lived together during the last years of his life were not those of father and daughter. She admitted something about her " past " to Rosmer, but until this moment the thought of incest had obviously never occurred to her ; when it enters her consciousness the effect is shattering. She decides to leave Rosmersholm, but just before it is time to catch the boat (as so often in Ibsen's plays, it leaves at midnight) Rosmer comes in to find her sitting with her trunk packed. He has lost his illusions ; he now knows that she drove Beata to suicide and that everyone believes them to be lovers ; nobody will ever again respect him either as a man or an idealist. She is pursued by the furies. Obsessed by guilt and weighed down by failure, when Rosmer asks whether she has the courage to take the path Beata took — onto the bridge, into the millrace — she answers yes, and finally : " If you go—I go with you " says Rosmer. The play ends with the housekeeper at the window crying :

> " Oh good God ! that white thing there — ! My soul ! They're both of them out on the bridge ! God forgive the sinful creatures if they're not in each other's arms ! (Shrieks). Oh — down — both of them ! Out into the millrace ! Help ! Help ! . . . No. No help there. The dead wife has taken them."

Incest, murder and suicide are the dark threads that run through Ibsen's play; premonitions of death haunt the inhabitants of the old house—when someone is about to die at Rosmersholm phantom white horses are seen near the water. Freud wrote:[1]

" Everthing which happened to Rebecca at Rosmersholm, her love for Rosmer and her hostility to his wife, was the result of the Oedipus complex, a reproduction of her relations with her mother and with Dr. West. *Rosmersholm* is the masterpiece of the genre in which the fantasy so common among young girls (i.e. replacing the wife and mother as mistress of the household) is treated". He adds that Rank had already analysed *Rosmersholm* in *Das*

[1] *Imago IV.* 1915-16

Inzestmotiv in Dichtung and Sage in 1912.

When Miss Fairfield borrowed her pen-name, forty years ago, Freud's writings were not so well known as they are today. Undoubtedly, for her, Rebecca West simply represented emancipated womanhood. Nevertheless, in her literary work, in the realm of ideas, there are traces of the Oedipus complex; it is therefore noteworthy that her youthful literary interests should have been concerned with this particular play. She has since published more than a dozen books—novels, stories, biographies, literary criticism, a monster travel book and two volumes of reports of famous trials. Much of her work, as we shall see, has violence for its theme, and it may have been her interest in the subject that led her to abandon fiction for a time and to concentrate on reporting lynching, treason and murder trials in England and America, and the Nuremberg trials in Germany.

II. From Ethel M. Dell To The Smart Set

Except for her short study of Henry James (1916), her first book was a novelette, *The Return of the Soldier* (1918). A soldier, Chris, is taken to hospital in France suffering from shell-shock and loss of memory. The last 15 years of his life are a blank ; he imagines he is twenty-one and in love with an innkeeper's daughter, while in fact he is thirty-five and has been married for ten years to Kitty, by whom he had a child which died. The narrator is a female cousin, in love with Chris. From hospital he writes to the innkeeper's daughter.

As she has not heard from him for many years, and as the letter makes no mention of the passage of time, she realises something is amiss and goes to see Kitty, whom she has never met and who does not know of her existence. Kitty and the cousin are worried, they have had no word from Chris for some weeks ; yet

when the innkeeper's daughter calls, and sends a message that she has news of him to impart, Kitty at first refuses to see her, because the address on her card is an unglamorous suburb. The cousin talks her round, so :

> " she took up the amber hairpins from her lap and began swathing her hair about her head. ' Last year's fashion,' she commented, ' but I fancy it'll do for a person with that sort of address '."

Meanwhile the innkeeper's daughter was waiting in the hall ; she " hovered with her back to the oak table, fumbling with her thread gloves ", almost knocking over " the new acquisition of Kitty's decorative genius " which was " a small black bowl in the centre of which crouched on hand and knees a white naked nymph, her small head intently drooped to the white flowers that floated on the black waters all around her."

In this book Miss West reveals some of her notions of beauty, refinement, and the haughty behaviour of the rich. Occasional Jamesian turns of phrase are oddly incongruous with the womans-magazine story, which ends with the innkeeper's daughter nobly renouncing Chris by recalling to his memory his dead child, and thus giving him back to Kitty and the present. The innkeeper's daughter had also had a child, the same age as Chris's, and both had died at the same time, because they were *meant* to be one child, not two ; there is a faint echo here from *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, at an infinitely far remove.

Next came a long novel, *The Judge* (1922). It is about a poor but beautiful Edinburgh girl who falls in love with a handsome, much-travelled client at the office where she works, Richard Yaverland. Their courting, Ellen's poverty, and her old mother's death in hospital are well described. Twelve years older than Ellen, Yaverland is rich, the illegitimate son of an Essex farmer's daughter and the local squire. It is when the scene changes from Edinburgh to Essex that the book deteriorates into absurdity and melodrama. Marion Yaverland's story is told in a series of flashbacks. Richard was the fruit of her love affair with the squire, but just before his birth, alarmed by the hostility and violence of the village, she consented to marry the squire's ugly butler, Peacey, on condition it should be a marriage in name only. When Richard was three months old, the drunken Peacey raped his wife, with the result that Marion had borne another son, Roger. Richard was handsome, proud and

intelligent, and Marion, abandoned by the squire, transferred her passion to him. Their relationship is highly emotional ; as far as embarrassment goes there are no holds barred .

> " They clung to each other, weeping, and he said things into her neck that were far more babyish than usual and yet fiercely manly, and they almost melted into each other in the hot flow of loving tears. ' You were quite right to whip me ', he told her."

Roger, on the other hand, one is thankful to learn, she greatly dislikes ; he is ugly, stupid and dishonest.

When Richard brings Ellen home to Essex, Marion can hardly bear the thought of losing him to another woman ; although he is thirty and has spent many years abroad, the silver cord is unbroken. At the same time the un-loved and unsatisfactory Roger appears with a girl who, Marion guesses immediately, has just had an illegitimate child, and announces that they are engaged. Suddenly feeling life is too much to bear, Marion goes out on the marsh and kills herself. Until this point the story, for all its crudities, has been more or less credible. But now the incredible, and the incredibly silly, occurs. Richard is supposed to be a clever, charming, successful man of the world. He has always despised his clownish brother. He is in love with Ellen, a pure and priggish Scotch girl. He has everything to live for ; even his mother's overpowering love has now been dissolved by her death. Yet when Roger hysterically accuses him and Ellen, saying it is their immoral behaviour that has killed his mother, instead of ignoring this completely pointless and untrue observation :

> " What was Richard's hand searching for on the breakfast table ? She bent forward to see, so that she might give it to him. Richard had found what he wanted. His fingers tightened on the handle of the breadknife. ' Let's put an end to this,' he said. He drove the knife into Roger's heart. ' Mummie !' breathed Roger."

As Roger is a dummy figure (and nothing but sawdust can have come out of the hole Richard made) the reader is completely indifferent to this scene of violence, which cancels out any virtues *The Judge* may have in one moment of supreme silliness. The umbilical cord pulls Richard to the grave (the penalty for his crime) at the moment when he avenges his mother for the wrong done her by Roger's father—but we do not believe a word of it, and therefore what should be tragic is hardly even funny. The

story ends with Richard and Ellen, waiting for the police to come and arrest him, making certain that yet another illegitimate child, the third in this book, shall be brought into the world, to be yet another victim of concentrated, stifling mother love.

The Strange Necessity (1928) is, except for a rambling account of Pavlov's famous experiments with the vivisection of dogs, a collection of literary essays. Oddly enough, among them is a harsh attack on the work of Ethel M. Dell, a best-selling novelist of those days who dealt in melodramas with a decor and characters very much like the decor (suburban stately home, nymph in black bowl) and the characters (Chris—so fair, tall, rich and handsome, Kitty—so lovely, hard and haughty, the innkeeper's daughter—so plain, soft and humble) in *The Return of the Soldier*. Certainly Miss West owes more to Miss Dell than to James Joyce or Henry James or Marcel Proust, writers whom she praises but does not imitate.

In her essay on James Joyce there are echoes of Ethel. Describing her pleasure in " the movement of analysis and synthesis [in Joyce's writing] to which I had for so long been a stranger ", she says : " It was like standing up to dance the tango after one has not danced it for a very long time, with one who dances it very well." She is evidently quite unaware of the oddity of the scene she evokes.

Her judgments (and after all, the reason for writing criticism is that a critic should judge, and be judged by his judgment) range from the impertinent : " It is rarely possible to feel liking for Dante, who has that air of taking local politics seriously which make the Minor Prophets so unlovable ", to the ridiculous : " (H. G. Wells) is the most bubbling creative mind that the sun and moon have shone upon since the days of Leonardo da Vinci." No doubt this was written partly to flatter Wells, but perhaps there was another reason too. If H. G. Wells, with his stories and didactic novels and science fiction and history of the world in 24 monthly parts, is really the most bubbling creative mind the globe has produced in four centuries (the argument might run) the other bubbling creative minds cannot have been so very extraordinary after all. Thus she puts them all in what, no doubt, she hopes to be their place. For if there is one thing Miss Rebecca West dislikes more than another it is the outstanding man.[2] It certainly does no service to Wells to put him into a category where he is completely outclassed ; such exaggerated

[2] According to the *Sunday Express* (19.6.55) Miss West is ' proud ' of being ' anti-man '. She probably asks herself, before deciding whether to be "anti " somebody, is he a man or a mouse ?

praise obscures his genuine worth. The same method is later used with regard to countries ; wishing to express her admiration for Jugoslavia she uses, to praise its handicrafts, folk songs and simplified Byzantine church architecture, eulogies so extravagant that she forces comparison with the painting and music, the churches and palaces, the poetry and plays and novels, the furniture and porcelain of all the rest of Europe ; and this, of course, is unfair to the South Slavs ; instead of adding to their stature she takes away even that which they had.

In 1929 another novel, *Harriet Hume*, appeared. Written in a painfully whimsical style full of *wench*, *Gad*, *'tis* and *'twas*, it is sticky going. A modern fairy story, keeping half an eye on *Zuleika Dobson*, its archness embarrasses. It was an unlucky idea, for someone so heavy-handed to attempt any imitation of Sir Max Beerbohm's fragile fantasy ; the result is not a success.

The Harsh Voice (1935) is *pastiche* of another sort ; three of its four short stories are cleverly written in American. The fourth story, *The Salt of the Earth*, is English. It is about a do-gooder who unwittingly does infinite harm by her habit of telling home truths to her family and friends ; she is a character who distantly recalls Ibsen's fatal idealists. Her husband remonstrates with her, but she replies : " Nonsense, dear. You'd never have any civilisation at all if you didn't have the people who knew best teaching all the others what to do." So the husband decides that he knows better still. Although his wife is the salt of the earth, she is so tiresome that — he will desert her, and live alone ? No. Taking another kind of salt of the earth, he puts it in her evening cup of chocolate. She writhes, and dies. Like the murderer in *The Judge*, he is the " hero " of the story ; also like him, he has only to go away, leave the being who irritates him, and put himself out of range of the irritation. But neither character is content to live and let live. Easily, deftly, as they might brush away a mosquito, they kill : the one his brother, the other his wife.

Miss West's books, borrowed from the London Library, have been marked in the margins by a reader who often takes exception to her grammar and syntax. A passage in *The Salt of the Earth* : " She rubbed her weeping face against his coat-collar, but raised it to accuse him with miserable puzzled eyes " has not escaped his pencil.

Before coming to her last novel, it might be as well to glance at Miss West's biographical sketches ; *Henry James* (1916,) *D. H. Lawrence* (1930) and *St. Augustine* (1933).

D. H. Lawrence[3] is hardly more than an obituary notice, written, generously, to counteract the articles appearing in the newspapers at the time of his death which either attacked him as a pornographer or praised him very faintly indeed, the treatment so often applied to contemporary genius. Although Miss West cannot resist giving herself a little boost (describing Lawrence's beautiful manners when she was once taken to see him, she adds that he made friends " by taking notice of one's personality, showing that he recognised its quality and giving it his blessing ") and although she gets into a muddle with the conditional : (" if that were true, *it were not to be sneered at* "[4] she writes,) yet the little book was well meant and said things that needed saying at that moment.

Henry James and *St. Augustine* were presumably commissioned by the publishers : brief lives of the great to be digested between luncheon and tea. Both, within the limits of this genre, are well done. In *St. Augustine* there is an example of a method of reporting which she was later to make all her own : " To a Donatist priest who, to avoid arrest and forced conformity . . . inflicted grave injuries on himself, Augustine wrote a brisk and cheerful letter, beginning : ' If you could see the sorrow of my heart and my concern for your salvation, you would perhaps take pity on your own soul . . .'." Words which are neither brisk nor cheerful, though they may possibly have been hypocritical.

In 1936 Miss West published a novel, *The Thinking Reed*,[5] in which, compared with her earlier fiction, she had made giant strides towards sophistication. The scene is France : Antibes, Paris, Le Touquet ; the theme, the goings-on of the smart set. Isabelle, an American, is married to Marc, a rich French industrialist who has not quite mastered his native tongue :

> " ' Ah, little one, don't bother about that !' said Marc. ' I am very impulsive, and sometimes I like to do silly things *pour rigolo* (sic) but it doesn't matter '."

Her French may still be shaky, but she has come a long way since the *cottage ornée* (sic) and the nymph in the bowl of *The Return of the Soldier*. The book is immensely long, and nothing much happens, (except that Isabelle has a miscarriage at Le Touquet,) to enliven

[3] Secker & Warburg.

[4] My italics.

[5] Hutchinson.

the evenings in casinos and the afternoons on golf courses. Miss West's idea of the smart set is a quantity of men and women of different nationalities being as rude and disagreeable to one another as possible.

The Thinking Reed exhibits a deep and violent hatred of the English upper class. At first sight this looked a promising subject, but the promise disappointed, since the characters supposed to represent the disliked caste are too completely out of focus, too far out of range, to have a semblance of reality.

Not content with making them gross, stupid, ill-mannered and immoral, they have to be grasping money-worshippers as well. It would have been more artistic to distribute these faults among the group instead of giving each English " aristocrat " the whole list. It appears that Miss West must once have come across an extremely nasty lady who tried, in an un-businesslike way, to sell her a hat.

Except for the text she wrote for Low's *The Rake's Progress* (a redundancy, since the pictures were self-explanatory) this seems to be her total output of fiction and biography. From now on she concentrated on travel books, and the reporting of trials.

III. The White Horses of Rosmersholm

Miss West's longest book is *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, in two volumes. It is about a journey through Jugoslavia, where she fell in love with the country and the people in the wholehearted and uncritical way that normally only English maiden ladies can achieve ; although she was married and her husband accompanied her on her second visit we get the impression that she was still searching (like her namesake) for an ideal.

When King Alexander of Jugoslavia was assassinated in Marseilles in 1934 she was in a nursing home. She could hardly wait to see the film of his death. " As soon as I could leave the nursing home I

went to a private projection room, for by that time t had been withdrawn from the ordinary cinemas, and I took the opportunity to have it run over several times while I peered at it like an old woman reading tea-leaves in her cup." Just so, one imagines, would she (if she could) have the trials she attends run over and over, so that again and again she might see the black cap, the face of the prisoner, the judge passing sentence and imagine what is going on in the minds of the participants of the sordid drama.

It was nearly four years later that she and her husband stopped in Vienna on their way to Jugoslavia, and Miss West was once again in a nursing home. The Viennese nurses took the embroidered peasant dresses she had bought during her first visit to the Balkans and had them boiled with typical German thoroughness, for all Germans imagine that what comes from the Balkans needs a good sterilising. The dyes ran and the dresses were ruined. Miss West was very much put out.

> " You must not think me stupid " I said to my husband ; " you cannot understand why I think these dresses important ; you have not been there." " Is it so wonderful there ?" he asked. " It is more wonderful than I can tell you," I answered. " But how ?" he said. I could not tell him at all clearly. I said, " Well, there is everything there. Except what we have. But that seems very little." " Do you mean that the English have very little ?" he asked, " or the whole of the West ?" " The whole of the West," I said, " here too." He looked at the butter-yellow baroque houses between the chestnut trees and laughed. " Beethoven and Mozart and Schubert wrote quite a lot of music in this town," he said. " But they were none of them happy," I objected. " In Jugoslavia," suggested my husband, smiling, " everybody is happy." " No, no," I said, " not at all, but . . ." The thing I wanted to tell him could not be told, however, because it was manifold and nothing like what one is accustomed to communicate by word."

These are the accents of unreason ; this was a love affair and had nothing to do with reason. She and her husband left Vienna and travelled by train to Jugoslavia, and in their carriage were some German tourists, which spoilt the journey for her because she dislikes and despises Germans almost as much as she loves and admires Slavs, or at least as she thought she was going to love and admire them, for, as sometimes happens with love affairs, towards the end of the second volume of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (which, as she says of Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*[6], " arrived apparently because its

[6] *The Strange Necessity.*

author had come to the end of the writing-pad, or rather, one might suspect from its length, to the end of all writing-pads on the market ") she had cooled off remarkably and even had some quite sharp things to say of her favourites.

But at this stage she was myopic with love and admiration ; a condition not as unusual as might be imagined among English women in foreign parts and which, harmless in itself, is generally accompanied by an equally narrow hatred of some other, neighbouring country, which is supposed to have wronged the loved one at some time in their common history. Austria was, for Miss West, this neighbouring country (though Italy, Turkey and Bulgaria have to bear their share of her disapproval). To emphasise her point from the start, she complains of the German tourists in the railway carriage ; stupid, fussy and nervy, they were not nearly such good company as the Croat writers, editors and intellectuals with whom she dined on arrival at Zagreb.

Presumably she had announced her intention of writing a book, for they were shown round by a man whom she calls Constantine, a government official who was also a poet. On their first day in the country they were made aware of the hatred between Serbs and Croats which was a constant factor in " happy " Jugoslavia in those pre-war days, and probably still is, although the perma-frost of communism may freeze any expression of it.

> " We had spent the morning going round the sights of the town with a Croat lady and Constantine, and over the soup we told Valetta how much we had liked her ; and Constantine exploded : ' I did not like her. She is not a true Slav. Did you hear what she told you when you were at the Health Co-operative Society Clinic ? She said that all such things were very well looked after in the Austrian times. Yes, and she said it regretfully.' ' Well, it was so,' said Valetta. ' Yes, it was so,' said Constantine, ' but we must not regret it. No true Slav would regret it '."

Miss West tried to calm their passions as the lady of the manor might have calmed the members of a Women's Institute who were having a tiff, by praising their handicraft : " A dress, an Easter egg, a butter-churn . . ." but even the evocation of their folk-art was not enough to stop a Croat and Serb dispute. The Croat went on :

> " ' You would say we were well governed here ? You would say that nobody is arrested without cause and thrown into prison and

> treated barbarously ? You would say that nobody has been tortured in Croatia since it became Jugoslavia ?' He was trembling, and such sick horror passed across his face that I am sure he was recollecting atrocities which he had seen with his own eyes, at which his own bowels had revolted."

A strange introduction to a happy and civilised country ; but, undaunted, she is soon ecstatically describing fishermen " with thick straight fair hair and bronze skins " She adds, " These were men, they could beget children on women," as though this were a curious or rare phenomenon. Her husband explained the Croat-Serb situation away as best he could : " These people are born and trained rebels " he says. " They cry out when they see a government as if it were a poisonous snake . . ." while she was enthusiastic about their illiteracy :

> " Nearly one-half the population of Jugoslavia cannot read or write . . . From the extreme aesthetic sensibility shown in the simple architecture of their houses and the planting of their flowers it could be seen that they had not blunted their eyes on print."

But peasant embroideries and butter churns are not the whole story, for she adds with a *frisson* " Nor would I find clemency ".

Truly, as she herself says, " It is pathetic how these Northerners love the South." During their tour they were tireless sightseers, and each sight is noted down with a " telling phrase ": " The interior of the cathedral . . . has a fine form under its immensely rich vault, cut out of stone that has a warm grey bloom ; and there is a baptistry, naughtily over-decorated, but with an exquisite series of panels " and so forth. There are pages of such descriptive writing among the tendentious history and the intimate glimpses of Miss West, her husband and the poet Constantine ; so much of everything, in fact, that the book wears down the patience, and puts one in mind of the saying : *Le secret d'ennuyer est de tout dire.*

From the Slav point of view, and therefore from hers, the villains of the piece, historically, are the conquerors of the provinces now called Jugoslavia, the Turks and the Austrians. She admits that :

> " When Kara Mustapha . . . was beaten outside Vienna his camp dazzled Europe with a vision of luxury such as it had never seen, such as perhaps it has never known since. There were bathrooms flowing with scented waters, gardens with fountains . . . superb beds . . . priceless carpets."

The Vizier's tent was " a masterpiece of delicate embroidery in many colours ". But she says :

> " There is no getting over the troublesome facts that the Turkish occupation sterilised South Slav art for five hundred years, and that when it struggled back to creativeness it found itself separated by Philistine Austria from all the artistic achievements that the rest of Europe had been making in the meantime."

Yet these were the artistic achievements of France, England, Italy, Spain, and Germany including Philistine Austria, not of Slav countries, even those like Poland which were not in Turkish hands. It is useless to blame the luxury loving Turks for this, or the Austrians, even though they boiled the peasant dresses, and even though Miss West, in her determined *Umwertung von allen Werten*, might be prepared to trade *Don Giovanni* for a Bosnian folk-song. There were, of course, close links between Venice and the Dalmatian coast during the centuries of Turkish rule, but she dislikes all evidence of Venetian influence.

Sometimes the two villains combined. One of her chief complaints against the Austrians in Bosnia is that they favoured the Moslem population above the Christian. It is hardly necessary to point out, so often does she herself do so, that the former were dependable Turks and the latter volatile Balkans, always in revolt against authority : ". . . the Slav is never subject " she boasts. Her husband asked their Jewish hosts in Bosnia, " But are the Moslems a sufficiently important and active group for it to matter whether they are encouraged or not ?" Constantine replied, " Oh, certainly. Yes, they are very, very clever politicians, much cleverer than we are, for Islam taught them something, let us say it taught them not to run about letting off guns just because one of them has a birthday." Looking out of a window she saw " a stream of passing people, and none of the men without fezes, all of the women veiled. I do not mind there being such men and women " she adds, generously, " but one sees them with a different eye when they are in a majority."

Nearly everybody believes in self-determination now, but before the first war German Austria was not the only country holding down a subject population against its will, and using an alien minority within to assist in the task of keeping order. The use, by the English, of Scotch settlers in the black north to help them control Ireland is an analogous example. Ireland was just as irritant to Britain as Bosnia and Herzogovina were to Austria-Hungary, and the reason

for holding these provinces was the same in both cases — each empire imagined it was endangered by the small but unfriendly country on its flank which might be used by an enemy in time of war. But no one in their senses, however sympathetic to Irish freedom, would, years after it had been won, feel obliged to belittle or attack everything English from Shakespeare and Wren churches down to the twentieth-century royal family, and to hero-worship everything Irish, from Donegal tweed to the Phoenix Park murderers ; or, if they did so, expect to be taken seriously.

A large part of the book deals with Sarajevo and the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Countess Sophie Chotek on the 28th June 1914. Miss West's sympathies are unreservedly with the murderer. There was no newsreel film for her to see over and over again, but she examined the town hall, and the street where the shots were fired, and all the accounts ever written of all the personages concerned, and cross-examined men who remembered.

Franz Ferdinand and his wife are described in the jargon of the 30's, as having a death-urge ; this she deduces from the fact that the Archduke, like many other rich people before the first world war, and since for that matter, was very fond of shooting and was an excellent shot. He " liked to kill and kill and kill "—*game* ; a sign that he hated the whole world. " They could not be blamed for morbidity in a society which adored death, which found joy in contemplating the death of beasts . . ." she adds. So when the Archduke and his wife drove through the streets of Sarajevo " he had brought his doom on himself by the tactlessness and aggression of his visit to the Serbian frontier at the time of a Serbian festival." They had shown their aggressiveness at the town hall earlier in the day, where (not unlike Miss West twenty-three years later) Countess Sophie Chotek met " a number of (Moslem) ladies in order that she might condescendingly admire their costumes and manners, as is the habit of barbarians who have conquered an ancient culture." Most people would agree that admiring what is shown them on official visits, and shooting pheasants in their spare time, are very typical royal occupations, which do not necessarily prove those who perform them to be aggressive or barbaric, nor to have a death-wish so strong that it " coaxed (the bullets) out of the reluctant revolver to the bodies of the eager victims." (*sic*).

Princip, who pulled the trigger, was one of a group of young men whom she sentimentally describes as " these Bosnian children who

sat up till all hours in cafés and dabbled in free thought." She seems to be in some confusion about the whole question of the assassination, and of the guilt, innocence, heroism, patriotism and duty of killer and killed, but is of the opinion that none of the serious terrorist groups seriously intended to kill, that if they had done so Princip would not have been chosen to fire the gun, that therefore he and his inefficient co-plotters were virtually innocent since it was the " death-urges " of the Austrian Archduke and his morganatic spouse which coaxed the bullets from his gun into their bodies.[7] She notes, disapprovingly, in a contemporary photograph that the men who threw themselves upon the assassin all wore the fez. " Hundreds of schoolboys and students were arrested," and tried, and Princip and his fellow conspirators were condemned to death. " Nothing . . . was of any avail " she writes.

> " The Croats and Macedonians trained in Italy and Hungary who killed King Alexander of Jugoslavia represented the highest point of expertise in terrorism that man has yet attained. But in the days before the war the South Slavs were *touching and ardent amateurs* (my italics). Typical of them was young Zheraitch, a handsome Serb boy from a Herzogovinian village, who decided to kill the Emperor Franz Josef . . . in 1910. With that end in mind he followed the old man from Sarajevo to Mostar, and from Mostar to Ilidzhe, revolver in hand, but never fired a shot. Then he decided to kill the Governor of Bosnia, General Vareshanin, who was specially abhorrent to the Slavs because he was a renegade Croat. He waited on a bridge for the General as he drove to open the Diet of Sarajevo. The boy fired five bullets at him which all went wide. He kept the sixth to fire at his own forehead. It is said that General Vareshanin got out of his car and walked over to the body and savagely kicked it, a gesture which was bitterly remembered among all young Slavs. This poor boy was typical of many of his fellows *in his failure*." (my italics).

Constantine arranged a rare treat for them ; a visit to a left-wing female dentist who sang them Bosnian songs, and (she was sister of one of the conspirators of Sarajevo) enthralled Miss West with a collection of photographs of " mass executions . . . each showing the summer day thronged as if there were a garden party going on, with the difference that every single face was marked with the extremity of agony and brutality. The interest and strangeness of the pictures was so great that I swung loose from where I was and for a moment

[7] i.e. Princip was the instrument of blind destiny. Can he (even by Miss West's standards) also be a hero ?

looked about me, lost as one is sometimes when one wakes in a train or in an unfamiliar hotel."

Soon after this there were signs that Constantine was wearying of his guests. Miss West's habit of picking wild flowers began to irritate him. "I filled my lap with white violets and cowslips and marigolds" she writes. This he found very objectionable. "You pretend to love beautiful things," he said, "and yet you pick flowers though you know they must wither and die, and will have to be thrown away." She argued the point, and he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Oh, well, if that is your point of view, it is your point of view." Another time, discussing Russian writers, he said "Tolstoy was the greatest of them all"; but she disagreed : "... everything Tolstoy ever said that was worth saying had been said far better by St. Augustine and various Fathers and heretics of the Early Church, who carried the argument far beyond the scope of his intellect." Constantine was doubtless thinking of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* ; of Tolstoy the artist. And although Miss West annoyed him, he cannot have taken very seriously the opinions of someone who can write : "Goethe, whose philosophy, indeed, boils down to the opinion, Ain't nature grand ?" (the operative word here is *indeed*). Sometimes—now that the honeymoon time was over, and the poet and the tourists were thoroughly on each others' nerves—their Germanophobia was too much even for him, a Slav Jew. They discovered a German spy in their hotel: '"Yes, the Germans are terrible people" Constantine sneered, "they employ secret agents to serve their interests abroad ; I suppose the English never did so, not in Russia, not in India."'

Constantine's German wife decided to accompany them on their visit to Macedonia ; poor Miss West cried when she heard the news, and subsequently exercised considerable ingenuity in thinking of ways of being rude to her, such as saying that there was no room for her in their hired motor and forcing her to go by bus. One day they visited a group of intellectuals—among them a schoolmistress and a lawyer — and Gerda acted as interpreter. "Do you realise what horrible people they are ?" she asked afterwards ; "they are all Marxists." But Miss West and her husband knew better : there were no communists in Jugoslavia. "When they say they are communists they mean that they are for the country against the town." A friend had seen prisoners in irons on a night train in Sarajevo. "The gendarmes told him that they were communists. I expect they were nothing of the sort" she declares.

It was in Macedonia that she saw the sacrifice of the black lamb from which the book is named, and she was shocked by the whole proceeding ; this time it was not a film or a photograph but " . . . I had seen sacrifice in its filth and falsehood, and in its astonishing power over the imagination." She comments :

> " None of us, my kind as little as any others, could resist the temptation of accepting this sacrifice as a valid symbol. We believed in our heart of hearts that life was simply this and nothing more, a man cutting the throat of a lamb on a rock to please God and obtain happiness ; and when our intelligence told us that the man was performing a disgusting and meaningless act our response was not to dismiss the idea as a nightmare, but to say, ' Since it is wrong to be the priest and sacrifice the lamb, I will be the lamb and be sacrificed by the priest '."

And although she writes of " the unaggressive and civilised state of Jugoslavia ", elsewhere : " ' Jugoslavia is always telling me about one death or another ' I said to myself." Thus the white horses of Rosmersholm are never far away.

But death or no death, the attraction waned. " I felt a sudden abatement of my infatuation for Jugoslavia ". She was particularly pleased to go to a mining village run by Scotchmen ; " The lower half of the hillside was entirely covered with villas of the Golders Green sort, standing in little gardens ; and it was indeed *fino, fino.* I would not have thought so before I went to the Balkans, but now I knew it." She was glad to turn her back on the happy, civilised Jugoslavs, and to feel at home with the Scotch : " I hung round them shamelessly, like a hungry dog at a larder door."

Not long after this she and her husband returned to England :

> " Under an empty sky lay an empty England. There is a pretence that this was not so, that Munich was not negative but positive, that Neville Chamberlain signed the treaty because he knew his country to be unprepared for war and therefore wanted to gain time for rearmament. If this were true it would still not acquit him of blame, since he had been a member of the government which was responsible for the lack of arms ; but it is a lie. He and his colleagues made no use of the respite to defend their people."

In the margin, the same inexorable hand which criticises her grammar has pencilled the comment : " *This is untrue the old fool did start rearming.*"[8]

[8] This anonymous critic generally contents himself with underlining such sentences as the following : 'I am the monk whom you thought must be a German.' (Page 371).

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon was published during the last war. " Often," she writes " when I have thought of invasion, or when a bomb has dropped nearby, I have prayed, ' Let me behave like a Serb '." It is not altogether clear what she had in mind, for she describes such varied behaviour in her book, and may have meant something innocent and (like Constantine's typical Slav) have just wished to let off a gun on her birthday, or put on an embroidered peasant dress next time she stood up to dance the tango. On the other hand, she may have been voicing a parochialism, a factionalism, general enough in the West at the end of the war and potent enough to have achieved the Balkanisation of Europe : great civilised nations behaved like savage tribes, financing and applauding banditry, plunder and murder, and killing and torturing their defeated enemies, not in hot blood but months and years after they had them in their power. Is not this what the " Balkans " have meant ? The splitting up into mutually detesting Ruritanias of what had been a united and cultured Roman province ?

> " It is impossible not to feel pleasure in recording that one of his first actions was to throw Vutchitch into prison. There, very shortly, he died. The Turks wished to examine his body, but Milosh explained that it was better that they should not."

writes Miss West. This describes happenings a hundred years ago; but even were it a thousand years ago it would be just as horrible. It is not difficult to guess why " it was better that they should not " examine the body. But it is very difficult to imagine the state of mind in which " it is impossible not to feel pleasure in recording " the fact, even if Vutchitch was a cruel tyrant. These are Balkan values, tribe values, not European values.

At the end of her book she remarks that the policy of non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War " was in fact a furtive discouragement of any action, however licit, that might have aided the survival of an independent and friendly Spain, and a furtive encouragement of all actions, however illegal, that enabled our natural enemies the Germans and Italians to establish themselves on both flanks of our natural allies the French."

Miss West's independent and friendly Spain would inevitably have become communist. It is possible that she realises now what it would have meant had her wishes come true ; she was only sharing the particularly foolish fashion of the moment.

The rest of the sentence shows clearly the working of her mind. Balkanisation, like the tribalism of which it is an extension, depends on having natural enemies, natural allies, producing a permanent condition of feud and insecurity. Nothing is more certain than that England has no natural enemies in Europe, and our history proves it.

IV. The Charnel-House

The book Miss West put together from her Nuremberg trial reports was published in 1955.[9] The chapters concerning Nuremberg are called *Greenhouse with Cyclamens*—an example of the love of irrelevancy observable in all her writing, (this has lately assumed such tiresome proportions that whole pages wherein she sketches background and local colour may be skipped.)

Once war-crimes trials had been decided upon, and particularly if the judges were not to come from neutral countries in case they showed themselves over indulgent, then surely it was imprudent to choose all the war criminals from the same side—and that the defeated side ? No gangsterish revenge, this was to be justice[10]; and justice, blindfolded, is unable to see who commits a crime, but holds a scales in which to weigh guilt and innocence. A heavy crime merits a heavy punishment.

Imprudent, perhaps, with a view to history books and the opinion of posterity, but certainly simpler; for otherwise, while the trials were in progress, the ranks of the defendants would have been swollen week by week, and the proceedings would have dragged on interminably. The men who ordered the mass-expulsions ("nearly four

[9] *A Train of Powder* (Macmillan, 21s.).

[10] It is noteworthy that the English Bar was not permitted to take part.

million expellees in Western Germany" computes Miss West) would have had to be tried for their crime against humanity, and if it proved impossible to catch the Russians or Czechs, why then the English and American politicians who gave way to their pressure would have had to answer for their compliance ; the men who ran the Allied concentration camps[11]—not only the torturers they employed, but the soldiers, politicians and civil servants who were ultimately responsible, would have stood in the dock at Nuremberg ; also those who ordered the bombing of civilians where there was no military target, and many more besides ; not all of whom, unfortunately for England's honour and good name, would have been Russians.

The question of the guilt or innocence of the defendants at Nuremberg is outside the scope of this article ; the Allies have published their version, and no doubt sooner or later the Germans will reply with theirs. But one thing is certain : if they were guilty, they were not alone in their guilt.

As Miss West admits :

> " The Western democracies were . . . responsible for an amount of suffering which puts them on a level with those tyrants whose names, fifty years ago, stood for a wide and radiating cruelty, believed to have passed for ever from the face of the earth."

and :

> " The sufferings of the displaced persons and expellees and refugees are a terrible burden on the conscience of the Western Allies."

Yet, strangely for such an amateur of trials, she nowhere suggests trying politicians responsible for these events. Of all their disastrous crimes and follies, it is probably the hypocrisy of these people and of their apologists which Europeans find hardest to forgive.

She also says :

> " Civilisation would no longer have been regarded as a viable idea if Dr. Frank, the Governor of Poland, could not be punished for breaking Polish laws, simply because he had murdered Poland and the corpse was incapable of prosecuting him."

This may be the reason why nobody was punished for the post-war

[11] See *Belsen Revisited*, The European, No. 13.

atrocities : murdered corpses cannot formulate an accusation. And the Western Allies, to this day, are bearing the " terrible burden on their conscience " with remarkable fortitude.

About the actual trials she has not very much to tell.

> " . . . The accusations that were made against the leaders in the Palace of Justice at Nuremberg were true. *They were proved true because the accusers did not want to make them. They would much rather have gone home.*" (my italics).

This sort of frivolity is blended with the whimsy about greenhouses and cyclamens with which she decorates the charnel house she was visiting. Tragedy on a vast scale is treated with a triviality that disgusts, while she pads out her essay with colourful descriptions of the villa in a park outside Nuremberg where she and the other journalists were lodged. As for the defendants in the dock, they have become unrecognisable. What is the point, for example, of saying " Speer, who was black like a monkey " which conjures up an unusually swarthy, big-mouthed, low-browed little man, when we know that he is exactly the opposite—pale, tall, with a high, wide forehead ? Or that " Goering's appearance made a strong but obscure allusion to sex " when in fact it made a far from obscure allusion to energy, and will-to-power, but none at all to sex ? Descriptions of this sort are of no interest unless they are true to life.

" In Germany there was a call for punishment," she declares. " It was written on the crowds that waited for trams and never looked at the Allied personnel as they drove past." On the 30th September 1946, the day when the verdicts were to be pronounced :

> " . . . a fleet of Allied automobiles, collected from all over Western Germany, was out in the countryside picking up legal personnel and the visitors from their billets and bringing them back to the Palace of Justice. The Germans working in the fields . . . did not raise their heads to look at the unaccustomed traffic, though the legal personnel . . . were now attended by armed military police as outriders, in jeeps with screaming sirens."

This dignified behaviour on the part of the Germans surely does not look like " a call for punishment " ; as so frequently happens with Miss West's reporting, she notices something and then applies to it false reasoning. In this case it seems as though, by ignoring their enemies and the polyglot court and the screaming sirens (the

normal use of sirens is to warn other traffic of the approach of a fire engine or a procession ; on this occasion there was no other traffic to warn) they were dissociating themselves from the whole sordid business ; and, indeed, she notes " . . . the last day of the trial, there was something like hatred to be seen on the faces of many Germans in the street."

> " It seemed ridiculous for the defendants to make any effort to stave off the end . . . Their appearance announced what they believed. The Russians had asked for the death penalty for all of them, and it was plain that the defendants thought that wish would be granted."

On the last day :

> " The defendants were quiet and cool . . . It must be recorded that there was not a coward among them."

These very diverse men, awaiting death at the hands of their enemies, subjected (as we know from books written by the survivors, Schacht and Fritzsche) to most imaginable forms of degradation and bullying, behaved with perfect courage. It was not their personal fate which made them look as they did look. Their country seemed to be dying, their families were being persecuted, the tragedy for them was total. If they had had chivalrous opponents to give them the opportunity to do so, they would undoubtedly have taken their own lives in the high Roman fashion. That Goering contrived his suicide did not please Miss West ; she felt sure the Germans, walking through the rubble of their cities, were laughing and saying : " We always knew he would get the better of them yet." (And, of course, she includes herself in the " them ".) There is something dreadful in condemning a man to die and then depriving him of the means of suicide so as to have the pleasure of killing him yourself.

She describes the struggle and jostling to get away from Nuremberg after the verdicts, everyone falling over each other to put a few leagues between themselves and their handiwork. Perfunctorily, she regrets that the hangman bungled ; but it was not of the ghastly photographs which came out in American magazines that she could write : " some, though not all, of the photographs purporting to show people being shot and tortured had a posed and theatrical air "; her words refer to photographs of deeds allegedly done by Germans. The Allies had no need to fake their pictures with a posed or

theatrical air, for the atrocity they had perpetrated, and which with unparalleled cynicism they here recorded, was a shameful and undeniable fact.

★ ★ ★

A Train of Powder contains other trials besides Nuremberg : a lynching trial in South Carolina, and the trial of Brian Donald Hume, accused of murdering Sulman Setty, cutting up the body, and dropping it out of his aeroplane into the sea wrapped in brown paper parcels. He was found not guilty of the murder, but he had dropped the parcels into the sea.

This chapter contains a good example of Miss West's fascination for *minutiae*. She visited the Essex coast to seek out the boatman who found the bits of body at low tide. Seemingly unending descriptions of this boatman, his cottage, his family, the coast, follow ; and then there is a girl playing darts in a public house.

> " . . . each time she lifted her hand to throw a dart her eyes were as wistful as a begging dog's."

What has this to do with the murder of Setty, or the trial of Hume? The dart-playing took place in an inn which was sometimes visited by this man, who found the body when he was out in his boat in the shallow sea at low tide, is the answer. It calls to mind a nursery rhyme : *This is the girl with wistful eyes, Who lifted her hand to throw a dart, At the dart-board in the public house, Where beer was sold, Which was drunk by the man, Who found the body of Setty.*

Certainly she has not skimped her work here, though, as we shall see, there are times when unaccountable gaps occur in Miss West's reporting.

The 1949 edition of *The Meaning of Treason* had the following introductory note :

> " When this book was published in America it was frequently argued by reviewers sympathetic with totalitarianism that English traitors are no more culpable than the German refugees who aided the Allies against the Axis. I do not think this point should worry any reader accessible to argument, but if there be such an one I would remind him that Hitler was a traitor who had seized power by unconstitutional means and that therefore it was impossible to commit treason by working against him, and that, even had this not been so, German refugees had been deprived of

the protection of the German state for racial and political reasons, and therefore owed it no allegiance."

Possibly because someone suggested that this was a rigmarole of nonsense, possibly for another reason which we will examine in a moment, when the "second enlarged and revised edition"[12] appeared in 1952 the note was no longer there. It is unlikely that any reader familiar with even the most one-sided versions of modern German history would accept Miss West's account, but if (in her words) there be such an one, I would remind him that Hitler came to power legally and constitutionally when as leader of the largest party in the Reichstag he was summoned to the post of Reichskanzler by President Hindenburg. He was subsequently confirmed in his leadership by overwhelming popular votes, including the 90 per cent in 1935 in the Saar, where the secrecy of the ballot was guaranteed by the League of Nations. Of course, Hitler was opposed, openly, to the principles and policies of the Weimar Republic. Does that mean he was a "traitor"? This kind of reasoning could make Sir Anthony Eden a "traitor" to the Labour Government or Lord Attlee a "traitor" to the regime before, and would justify a large-scale importation into English life of the Balkan practice of assassination.

As to culpability, the side that wins a war catches and punishes its traitors; but whether they are caught and punished or not, they are still traitors. Those in authority in England, with the moral support of writings like the foregoing, ignoring the German adage *Wer einmal verrät, immer verraten wird*, employed the German and Italian traitors Fuchs and Pontecorvo on secret scientific work, thus putting them in the way of being able to inflict a grave injury on our country, which in due course they did. Between 1949 and 1952, therefore, events occurred which made Miss West's introductory note about the refugees look so foolish that either she or her publishers decided to drop it. She even wrote a new chapter, on the trial of "refugee" Fuchs.

About a third of *The Meaning of Treason* concerns the case of William Joyce, who broadcast propaganda from Germany in English throughout the war. Joyce had been a member of the B.U.F. from 1933 to 1937, when he was expelled by Sir Oswald Mosley and started a party of his own called the National Socialist League. He went to Germany just before the outbreak of war, and his wireless talks were famous. There is an excellent book about

[12] Macmillan, 21s.

him and his trial by Mr. Bechhofer Roberts[13] containing a transcript of the legal proceedings.

In brief, it turned out that William Joyce was born in America of American parents, and that he went to Germany and had acquired German nationality before America came into the war. Mr. Slade, counsel for the defence, submitted there was no case to go to the jury, since a man who was not a British subject, residing abroad, could owe no allegiance to the British crown and could not be a traitor. The case for the prosecution was that Joyce had not only lived in England for a number of years but had fraudulently obtained a British passport by alleging he was a British subject. Accordingly, as the passport afforded him the protection abroad that he would have been entitled to had he in fact been a British subject, he for that reason must be held to owe allegiance to the British crown. It was pointed out that it is difficult to leave England without a passport even for someone who, like Joyce, neither asked for nor received the said protection. If he had done what he did in the first war he must have been acquitted ; in those days no permit from the Foreign Office was required by travellers between England and Germany. The case went from the Old Bailey to the Appeal Court and finally to the House of Lords. (Lord Porter's dissenting judgment was based on his belief that no evidence existed to show that Joyce had availed himself of British protection after the outbreak of war.) Joyce was found guilty and sentenced to death. Outside the gaol on the morning he was hanged stood Miss Rebecca West, to see what she could see, which was disappointingly little : a small crowd, some of whom were weeping, and a white notice put up on the prison gate. Joyce's relations were attending a requiem mass.

Mr. Bechhofer Roberts says : " The German wireless propaganda (did not) adversely affect the British war effort . . . At its best—and William Joyce was undoubtedly the Germans' most outstanding broadcaster in English — it was entertaining but unimpressive." Joyce may have been unimpressive compared with, say, Hans Fritzsche, who was probably the best broadcaster in the world. But Lord Haw Haw, nevertheless, spoke night after night, for years, to a very large audience in England who made the conscious effort of tuning in to his wavelength to hear his imitation of Winston Churchill and his views on the progress of the war. Even if he was an American, he certainly succeeded in annoying the authorities, and this was

[13] *The Trial of William Joyce*, Jarrolds, 1946.

doubtless his intention.

As by now we have learned to expect, in Miss West's book the trial is no more than a background to her descriptions, fantasies and moralisings. There are pages of this sort of writing :

> " The police car brought him up from black Wandsworth Jail through the streets, never grand, thronged by the people, never great, of South London ; it slid across Waterloo Bridge to the fretted neo-Gothic outlines, alluding to Christianity, associated with power, symbolising tradition, of the Houses of Parliament, where the tower raised up against the winter skies Big Ben, the portrait of time, wrought large, to be seen by those on both sides of the river, who are alike subject to its discipline. He had thought that because he was not yet accepted on the imperial side of the Thames nothing that he did was of great moment, but now it had appeared that he had been involved by his birth in a war between the forces in the community which desired to live and those which desired to die, in a war between the forces in himself which desired to live and those which desired to die."

and so on, until we come to :

> " But in the upper air above those courts it was argued whether the God with whom men can have a perfect relationship is the dream of disappointed sons imaging a Father who shall be better than all fathers, or is more real than reality."

She ends characteristically :

> " So William Joyce was condemned to death for the crime of treason, yet fared not so badly. For the trial gave him a chance to wrestle with reality, to argue with the universe, to defend the revelations which he believed had been made to his spirit, and that is man's glory."

Which is, if we come down for a moment from the upper air, the exact opposite of the fact. Joyce was neither able to wrestle with reality, nor argue even with the lawyers, let alone with the universe, nor defend the revelations which he believed had been made to his spirit. The whole subject of the trial was the question of his nationality and allegiance ; the fact that he had spoken on the wireless was not in dispute. Although he was in the dock throughout, and impressed by his brave bearing, he never said a single word beyond his plea of *Not Guilty*.

The other cases are dealt with more briefly, though not with the

admirable lucidity and economy of Mr. Bechhofer Roberts, who covers the same ground.

Until I was asked to make this review of Miss Rebecca West's writings I had never read one of her books. It is only now, seven years after its publication, that her remarks concerning Sir Oswald Mosley have come to my notice. One of the lesser cases in *The Meaning of Treason* is that of a man called McLardy, whose decision to betray, she says, may have been due " to the sympathy with the architects of such hells (the concentration camps) which he had been taught by the B.U.F.[14] If that is so, it was the most direct influence exerted by Mosley on the proceedings of the traitors in Germany . . . Neither here nor in any other theatre of war was there proof that the B.U.F. had issued instructions to any member of the armed forces."

For a writer who takes such inordinate care not to leave out the smallest detail, relevant or irrelevant, from her descriptions of the background of every event even remotely connected with the trials, a reporter who (for example) visited every house or flat occupied by Joyce, for however short a period, during a quarter of a century, and retails every scrap of gossip she has been able to garner, it is indeed curious that she should not have troubled to discover whether, in fact, Sir Oswald Mosley and the British Union had issued any instructions to members of the movement in the armed forces.

When the war began, *Action* printed the following words, signed by Mosley :

> " To our members my message is plain and clear. Our country is involved in war. Therefore I ask you to do nothing to injure our country, or to help any other Power. Our members should do what the law requires of them, and if they are members of any of the Forces or Services of the Crown, they should obey their orders, and in every particular, obey the rules of their Service."

He knew, of course, that his followers were passionately opposed to a war which, win or lose, could only injure Great Britain. Elsewhere, in the same message, he says :

> " We of British Union will do our utmost to persuade our British people to make peace,"

and this he did, speaking to wildly cheering audiences (as I well

[14] Of which, according to Miss West, he was for a short time a member. He had left it before the outbreak of war.

remember) all over England. There was no secret about his attitude, which was frequently and clearly stated.[15] It was not even a new thing in English history ; Lord Chatham, Charles James Fox, Lloyd George, had all opposed wars they considered disastrous ; though none of these wars proved as disastrous for England and for Europe as the Second World War.

V. Conclusion

Not long ago Miss West gave an interview to another woman journalist, Miss Nancy Spain, and informed her that she was working on a long novel. Half a million words. To be published in three volumes.

> " ' It's all about a woman who is a sort of saint,' said Rebecca. ' Rosamund lives her life knowing that she is going to end in Belsen. Her family, of course, can't understand her at all '."

It would be useless to pretend that this piece of news did not lend wings to my pen; I hastened to finish my article before *Cousin Rosamund* reached the bookshops.

As I have said, until a few weeks ago I had never read one of her books, though I must have seen some of her newspaper articles. I am generally careful to avoid the sort of book of which reviewers say : " *It is gay in its colloquial humour* " or " *written in a style so impish, so eloquent and full of wisdom that lovers of literature will ignore it at their peril.*"[16]

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[15] On 9th May 1940 Mosley wrote in *Action* " In such an event [invasion] every member of British Union would be at the disposal of the nation. Every one of us would resist the foreign invader with all that is in us."

[16] Reviews of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* quoted on the jacket of *The Meaning of Treason.*

Now, however, I have read them all, except that I was defeated by *Harriet Hume* which I gave up half-way through. As a novelist, Miss Rebecca West does not compare with her great feminine contemporaries Virginia Woolf and Miss Elizabeth Bowen; as a reporter of trials she irritates with redundancies and imprecisions; as a literary critic she is both pretentious and frivolous. Her short stories are competent, and she makes use of a wide vocabulary in all her writing which — provided she sticks to English — must go on the credit side. There are, doubtless, people who enjoy long, discursive travel books with plenty of human interest. *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* perhaps is for them. But (even for those not put off by her intrusive prejudices) it is a tiresome book,

For several weeks I obliged myself to live in her world ; a very uncongenial world. At times I was on the point of abandoning my task, for it hardly seemed possible that this lady novelist could influence anyone. Could it matter in the very least what she writes for the *New Yorker* or the *Evening Standard* ? Probably not. But at a critical moment in the history of England and of Europe, she prayed : " Let me behave like a Serb." The effect of her writings, in my opinion, was to encourage actions unworthy, un-English, anti-European.

Like so many other nominal intellectuals, she has abandoned her former fashionably left-wing attitude. She has written a series of well-padded but unexceptionable articles attacking Burgess and Maclean. She is now a popular journalist, published by the Beaverbrook press, most anti-European of newspaper groups. Therefore it may have been worth considering the contribution to literature and politics of Miss Cicely Fairfield, who married a Mr. Andrews, took the name Rebecca West, and who is now known, according to the *Sunday Express*, as " the Countess of Crime " and " the Robespierre of reviewing ".

Men and Books V

CARL ORFF AND THE SONGS OF CATULLUS

by DESMOND STEWART

AS WE ADVANCE up the nightmare ladder of science-fiction fulfilled, we all, lowbrows and highbrows alike, look down, to the plains of the comfortable past : each to his own. How we wish we could go back ! Of course, each sees the past in his own way. Hollywood coins millions from seeing it vulgarly. The sister of my friend Max Burgos writes from Geneva that Max had a heart-attack while watching *The Robe :* the falsification of Christian history disturbed him so deeply. (One may remember his review of *Salome*, and regret that he did not sit out *The Robe*). But the Roman past has not only attracted embezzlers and distortioners. It has attracted the genius of a great contemporary German. This in itself is remarkable, since the Teutonic genius in the 19th century seemed to haunt pine-forests and misty Rhinescapes, to avoid, or else misunderstand, the hard clear light of the Mediterranean. Herr Carl Orff's setting of the songs of Catullus is a sharp jab in the eye to the type of Anglo-Saxon whose Saturday night amusement is generalising about the Germans.

Catullus is perhaps the most moving of all the Latin poets : the eruption of the Greek frankness and slimness into a literature whose greatest practitioners allowed themselves sensibility but never disallowed themselves dignity. Catullus has no competitor in English : more cantabile than Herrick, more adult than — but since Pope is the only adult English poet the sentence cannot be

completed ; as frank as Lawrence in his sexuality, but writing in a language where parts of the body can be named without sounding either clinical or obscene, and yet with none of the schoolmasterly intensity of D.H.L. — an amazing Latin youth, one can dimly mirror him, in that most fruitful period of Roman history, before the cult of personality threw all into shadow but the monolithic emperor and the spiteful historian in the colonnades. Caesar was still a private person, the brilliant failure from a failing *gens* (not yet the descendant, through Iulus, of Aphrodite herself) ; only one remarkable man in a city of remarkable men. And of them all, Clodius, Cataline, Pompey, Cicero, only this darkhaired boy with something Greek and yet something unGreek eating him, a passion for Clodia : and having as his night-companion, as all such passion must have, the profoundest melancholy : he outlives them all.

Perhaps, unless there is a *deus ultor* to prevent it, some American company will film this life, and degrade it, so that a century will have to pass before we can read the songs, uncontaminate ?

The right way is the way of this German musician : to let Catullus speak. Herr Orff has made of the Carmina an opera, a symbolic statement of all sensual love. A chorus of young men and young women chant the eternity of love : *eis aiona, tui sum* ! A chorus of old men interrupt their exalted enthusiasm. It is *res ridicula, immensa stultitia.* Both choruses then watch Catullus and Clodia play out their love. The old and the young seek vindication of their beliefs or feelings, in the events of the poet's love. *Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus :* the rush to life so different from Keats' desire to cease upon the midnight with no pain. To live more intensely, that is the Latin wish. But the mention of living, and of loving, draws, if only as needing to be refuted, the old men :

> *rumoresque senum severiorum*
> *omnes unius aestimemus assis.*

(and the rumours of severe old men all at one farthing, let us value them !)

But the old man predicts what the young man will be. The bright sun above the piazza will sink ; the shadowless pillar will limp, will be buried by its shade. And before the urgent, unromantic insistence on the myriad kisses are the lines that for

me stand out in all Latin for their intense beauty :

> soles occidere et redire possunt :
> nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
> nox est perpetua una dormienda.
>
> (suns to sink and to return are able :
> to us when once has sunk our brief light,
> night is perpetual, one, to be slept through).

No matter what hopes of immortality the philosopher argues, or the prophet asserts, no matter what our faith, or our speculations, these lines express the truth that the lover feels. So far as love goes, (this kind of love,) the words are true. There may be a survival of the soul ; there may be a resurrection of a purified body, or the reincarnation of a chastised spirit. But this one night cannot be again ; this one mortal from the arms of another mortal the rising sun will sever, the sinking sun will wither. It is unlikely that whoever put the world together will so contrive eternity that this precise moment can come again. More melancholy still, would we even wish it again, however beautiful ? Is not its very beauty in its transience ? Would not its perpetuation be as vulgar as — I cannot help thinking of the diamond streets and golden window panes of the Apocalypse. Thus, what is a commonplace, that love of the sexual kind is fleeting, intense now, tomorrow changed, is stated with a precision and intensity that transmutes it into something that itself will not fade or die.

In the love of Catullus and Clodia there is all the poison and irritation that is found in real erotic passion, as distinct from the legends of Eros which the troubadours and the makers of the Tristan myth purveyed. Clodia is unworthy of the young man's passion. She loses him at last. The old men rejoice when Catullus rejects Clodia, when he toys with *Ammiana puella defututa*, when he says to his wronged self : *miser Catulle, desinas ineptire, et quod vides perisse perditum ducas.* But at the close of the opera it is not the old men who triumph. Despite the flagging of Catullus' love, despite the poet's recognition that he has given to Clodia more than any man has given to woman before, (*Nulla potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam vere, quantam a me Lesbia mea es*) and that she is unworthy of such love, the composer concludes with a yet more triumphant iteration of the youthful chorus : *eis aiona, eis aiona, tui sum* !

Hearing this masterly work, composed in Germany in 1943, I knew again what it is to be a European. Herr Orff knits into one whole a culture that has lasted since a thousand years before Christ. At this moment, when one is so often ashamed of what Europeans are doing, or not doing, when young Greeks are hanged in Cyprus for thinking themselves ready too soon for self-government, when from North Africa come rumours less horrible than the facts, these translations of Latin songs into an idiom entirely of our own century (the orchestra is composed solely of percussion instruments) affirm more than the sexual love which they commemorate. They affirm the continuity of a culture, and its vitality. A culture lives in the minds of its possessions. Catullus lies in this magnificant setting of his songs. Catullus was alive to Herr Orff ; he is alive to us. Our past is ours still. We are not completely of *their* present, the *hangmen*, the hypocrites, the exploders of hydrogen.

Note. Catulli Carmina by Carl Orff are recorded by Vox PL 8640. The conductor is Heinrich Hollreiser ; Elizabeth Roon is the soprano, and Hans Loeffler the tenor. Perfect fidelity of sound is difficult with a work requiring voice from so many different parts of a stage ; but the only major complaint in this edition is the translation : banal where it consents to translate, elsewhere it has the odious italicised sentence : *For obvious reasons the translation of the following lines has been omitted.* How the reasons can be obvious to those who need a translation is not clear. Perhaps Messrs. Schott and Co. who own the translation have found that such archness *sells ?* The readers of *The European* can be treated as adults and informed that the parts left untranslated mention parts of the body presumably in their possession. But this is to reopen the whole battle fought round *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Ulysses ;* and here is *nec spatium nec tempus.*

A DIARY

HOWEVER MOTH-EATEN the scenery, Gounod's *Faust* could always be relied on to fill the Paris Opera. It has done so ever since it first appeared there in 1869 ; the Parisians are faithful to old favourites. For its 2,222nd performance *Faust* underwent a marvellous transformation ; clever M. Wakhevitch designed seven new scenes and three hundred and fifty new dresses, and now it is an even more glorious success, adorned with an elegant young Mephisto, M. Xavier Depraz, who looks, as one of the critics truly observed, like the flexible blade of an épée.

But when the great chandelier and the myriad lights go on in the interval they shine on a dusty, dowdy audience ; it could be the audience, a few times multiplied, of a Gilbert and Sullivan operette. It is a pity M. Wakhevitch cannot get to work on both sides of the curtain, but at present-day prices it would require a State subsidy adequately to brighten us up.

★ ★ ★

Not since Furtwängler died have I heard such wild applause from a Paris audience as greeted Herr Wilhelm Kempff's playing of the Schumann piano concerto with the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra. The enormous Palais de Chaillot was crammed, and the clapping, stamping and cries of *bis* went on for several minutes. Herr Kempff's performance was, indeed, perfect.

★ ★ ★

A television critic who has to spend much time gazing at the tiresome little convex glass screen wrote the other day that any film, however bad, seems wonderfully good by comparison with any television performance. As I said here once before, the point of television is that it reveals and exposes people and personalities ; at present it is quite unsuited to drama. I thought of the critic's words as I watched *Le Mystère Picasso*, which is like a television performance, but magnified and beautified out of all recognition by being shown on a cinema screen, much of it in colour.

The painter, padding about his studio in sandals, does bold, lightning sketches in coloured inks on opaque glass with a

bright light shining on it. One sees the stroke of brush or pencil, but not the hand holding the brush. Every now and then the cameraman and the producer (Messrs. Renoir and Clouzot I presume) irrelevantly and boringly appear, and address Picasso as *tu*, a comradely, communistic touch. Their intrusion is eminently televisionesque ; the interviewer on television often hogs the screen to the total exclusion of the interviewee. There is no danger of this happening here ; they ask a silly question or two :—. Are you getting tired ? Picasso is asked. Oh no, he replies, I could go on doing this all night — then they disappear.

He has a deep voice with a strong Spanish accent ; the bright black eyes, flat features and curiously shaped head are well known from photographs. He paints an aubergine on a plate, a mad beach picture with dozens of little figures, and many bulls and fights, a bull with a man on his horns like the bas-relief on a Minoan goblet. One could watch all night.

Probably most painters would refuse to play this game, which has an element of the conjurer in his booth at a fair about it. But any who are willing should be persuaded to do so. Imagine how amusing it would be to watch Cézanne, or Chardin, or Rembrandt — even if they only consented to draw a line or two, even if it were only to see how they held their pencil.

★ ★ ★

Budget : A pouch, bag, wallet, usually of leather. A leather or skin bottle. A boot in a carriage for carrying luggage. A statement of the probable revenue and expenditure for the ensuing year, with financial proposals founded thereon, annually submitted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the approval of the House of Commons — says the O.E.D. It will soon have to add a new meaning of the word. In a London shop the other day I asked for a cashmere jersey. "You are in the wrong department" I was told, "we only have budget jerseys here". Apparently a budget jersey is a cheap jersey ; it is for those whose pouch, bag or wallet is rather empty.

Another word which is developing in an odd direction is *contemporary ;* formerly *living, existing, or occurring together in time*, it now appears to mean anything unusually hideous.

★ ★ ★

M. Philippe Jullian has published a volume of short stories

on Proustian themes (*Gilberte Retrouvée ;* Plon) which are very funny, and charmingly illustrated by the author. Proust has such numbers of English admirers that this book should be a great success in England, where M. Jullian's drawings of the characters in *A la recherche du temps perdu* are already well known.

Nothing can exceed the dry drear of Mademoiselle Françoise Sagan's second best-seller, *Un certain sourire.* All about " love ", the characters are as prosaic and dehydrated as dead leaves blown about by an autumn wind. It is not possible to feel much interest in their fate — will two of the leaves end up in the same gutter, or in different gutters ? These little tales earn their authoress enormous sums of money, so they obviously interest many. They are to literature what the work of Bernard Buffet is to painting ; so *realistic*, so colourless, so dead, that the real world looks like a landscape by Rubens, and the sky looks like a Tiepolo, and the men and women seem like characters in a d'Annunzio novel, and the crowd in the street might be from an opera-bouffe, compared with this imagined *realism* of the Sagan or the Buffet kind. Both the writer and the painter, however, are in the Rolls-Royce owning class as a result of their sad work.

★ ★ ★

Burge-Lubin : . . . the real life of England is from Friday to Tuesday.

The Archbishop : That is terribly true. In devising brainless amusements ; in pursuing them with enormous vigour, and taking them with eager seriousness, our English people are the wonder of the world.

In the thirty-five years which have passed since Bernard Shaw wrote *Back to Methuselah* the week-end habit has spread to other countries. The roads into Paris on Sunday evenings (except for the big stores, the week-end here does not yet last until Tuesday) are a bonnet-to-bumper misery, a long funereal procession through petrol-fume laden air. The forests round Paris : Marly, Rambouillet, Fontainebleau, Chantilly, are so beautiful that perhaps it is worth while. Walking in them is not a brainless amusement, and the French are clever about picnics, they take folding tables and chairs and sit down to a comfortable meal in the shade of some huge and noble tree.

D.M.

THEATRE

Open Air Opera in Verona

by HUGH GREEN

WE were told to take a fairly heavy pullover with us and a coat or rug to sit on ; no ! we were not going to a football match, we were going to an opera. There were seventeen thousand others going as well as ourselves, that is, fourteen thousand more than the Opera House at Paris could hold. We walked through the narrow cobbled streets with high walled houses on either side : soon we were caught up in the happy crowd of Italians, and beautiful dark young women, with their myriad-coloured woollen shawls or stoles over their bare, brown shoulders, as a protection in the cool evening, all converging towards one of the city's yearly events. Swept along now by the crowd, we came out suddenly into a square, and there in front of us, dark against a paling evening sky, was our opera house. Built seventeen hundred years ago under the Emperor Diocletian, that cruellest of persecutors of the early Christian Church, stood the powerful bulk of the Roman Amphitheatre of Verona. As in the days of the last epoch of glory for the Roman Empire, so now, in the twentieth century, thousands of Italians and foreigners, we all filed in through those arches, along the corridors, out onto the circular stone tiers that seated their toga'd ancestors of far away centuries, to look down into the sandy arena. Before the Emperor's box, the doomed gladiators shouted :

Ave, Caesar, Imperator,
Morituri te salutamus.

The arena had re-echoed to the clash of gladiators' arms, the cries and groans of boxers and wrestlers, the roars of wild beasts, the hymns, cruelly interspersed with the agonised screams of the early Christian martyrs, the callous cheering of a cruel mob . . . now, the circle being complete, was to reverbrate to the melodic majesty of Italian opera, " Aida ", " Tosca ", " Mephistophles ". This is a combination typically Italian, their artistic pride and love for their

opera, for their architecture of antiquity, their taste for the spectacular. And a spectacle *it is*. The arena is shaped like that of the Colosseum of Rome, but its interior is infinitely better preserved. Thousands of faces, young and old, handsome and ugly, stretch away on either side to meet opposite where the circle meets and closes ; over forty tiers of solid stone leap skywards from the arena. The thousands come and wait for the sudden darkness to fall, as it does, in a matter of minutes, as if all light had been extinguished. This is the background for the opera, a background of agelessness which enables one's mind to be transported to any century. The night sky, sparkling with stars is the roof of the vast auditorium. The lights are about to pierce the blackness and illuminate the stage. " Ring up the curtain ".

But not yet : there is one more sight, unexpected, breathtaking. Among the immense gathering that we could just dimly see in the starlight of that Italian night around the arena, little lights began to appear . . . the Italians beside us produced small candles the size of a woman's lipstick, and in a half minute the arena was a sea of little, dancing flames illuminating the faces of the audience that held them. Almost ghostly, the effect was strange and wonderful, a spontaneous gesture of the Veronese, a tradition, not a tourist attraction.

Does the opera itself suffer from being exposed to the open air ? Not in Verona. The artists are first class, and nearly all the operas tried by the centuries. The acoustics of this auditorium are beyond reproach ; if anything, as in the Festival Hall, too perfect. Occasionally we could hear the steady drone of the prompter during the softer tones of the music . . . and we were in the top tier. Roman architects could not afford to make mistakes. Attitus, an architect, did, and Tacitus tells us : " Attitus was burned ". The scenery is lavish, proportionate to the audience and the auditorium.

By turning our heads we could see, from the top tier, the bustling night life of Verona spread out behind us. The operas do not end till one or two in the morning. During the intervals one sees the throbbing life of the city gradually settle down into deep sleep, when the cadences of the softly rushing waters of the illuminated fountain outside are the only remaining sounds carried in by the breeze. In the arena itself, one feels in a world of opera and history, apart from all else.

What makes Verona impressive ? It is not only the perfection of the production (Hell was reproduced with a realism I have never seen equalled) nor is it the perfection of the artists, the orchestra, or the chorus of over a thousand ; nor the skill of the lighting, or the friendliness of the Italians who know their opera and who, in the interval will sing their way with you through the operas you mutually admire. It is all these, but also the atmosphere yielded by a combination of the ancient, the medieval, the modern, an atmosphere that seems to span the years, and a feeling, like that of seeing the Roman Forum for the first time, that makes opera-going in Verona a midsummer's night dream.

CINEMA :

Revelation of Talent

by VINCENT MURRAY

BY THE TIME these lines appear the exhibition **Sixty Years of Cinema** will be open in London. I recommend a visit on the reputation it acquired in Paris last year. Stills, apparatus, documents will be there, and a fully-equipped film-studio is to be provided to demonstrate the various stages through which a film passes in production. For the present, though, the London cinemagoer must be content with more humdrum fare, although the arrival of a most intriguing new film from Spain provides an exceptional item of interest. But first a glance at the latest Hitchcock, and the reissue of a French classic.

The Trouble with Harry is far and away the best film Hitchcock has made in America since **Shadow of a Doubt** in the forties. Its subject — variations on the discovery of a dead man in a forest — is likely to be greeted with mixed feelings, but those who like their murder stories embroidered with humour (in other words, those who liked **Kind Hearts and Coronets** and **Monsieur Verdoux**) will find much to enjoy here. Harry is dead right from the start, and the film is concerned with the reactions of the people who stumble across his body : an elderly captain who thinks he might have accidentally shot Harry during a hunt ; the dead man's wife, and a spinster who claims that Harry attacked her in the wood. Through all the resulting burying, digging-up and reburying Hitchcock steers a remarkably steady course, never allowing his most literate humour to degenerate into farce. Nothing in his previous work could have led one to expect success in such a venture, and I suspect a restraining influence came from John Michael Hayes' excellent script, which the director has displayed to splendid advantage. The technicoloured New England scenery is breathtakingly beautiful, in pleasing contrast to the plot it embellishes.

The film-enthusiast should be eternally grateful to the Everyman, Hampstead. Its latest scoop is a showing of Marcel Carné's **Le Jour Se Lève** almost exactly to the day of the expiry of the American remake rights, and anyone who cares for cinema knows the thrill of discovery or re-discovery of a masterpiece once considered lost. In this instance what a tremendous thrill it is ! *Le Jour Se Lève* was made in 1938 after **Quai des Brumes** and **Hôtel du Nord,** and its fatalistic mood is in keeping with the " films noirs " of the period. Where it differs from them (and where its importance in French cinema lies) is in its perfect blend

of script and direction. It marked the artistic apogee of the Marcel Carné — Jacques Prévert team, for later, in such films as **Les Visiteurs du Soir** and **Les Portes de la Nuit,** Prévert's influence far outweighed that of Carné, to the detriment of the films concerned. The performances of Jean Gabin as the murderer and Arletty as Clara, his mistress, are models of their kind.

Apart from Luis Buñuel, Spanish cinema has been able to boast of few names that might go down in the history of cinema. Famous men have indeed worked there, and left when their jobs were done, but native film talent has persistently refused to develop. What an agreeable surprise, then, some months ago to see **Welcome Mr. Marshall,** a most pleasant satire by a young man called Berlanga with quite an attractive style of direction. This gentle, unambitious film unconsciously served as a preparation for Juan Bardem's **Death of a Cyclist,** which arrived in London two months ago. The film starts with an all-too-common street accident, and goes on to investigate the reactions of the people involved as ferociously as any such analysis in cinema. The critical net spreads and most of society is caught up and indicted, until the ending reverts to the personal tragedy with a stroke at once as decisive and pregnant as the final curtain of an Ibsen play. One comes away with the feeling that a new talent in cinema has made an important mark. Here, as in de Sica's **Umberto D,** and indeed in most films made without regard for wide commercial interests, the style is jagged, the cutting often abrupt and unexpected (though the cameraman has seen to it that individual shots are carefully composed) ; what matters is the content, and all extraneous material is stripped away in the direct forceful narrative. One notes that Bardem took a course at the Cinematographic Research and Experimental Institute in Madrid which, like its counterpart in Italy (the *Centro Sperimentale*) is doing excellent work in equipping talented young men for the cinema. No such organisation is evident in Britain ; hence the continual crisis in the British Film Industry. Experimental work (on which new talent depends for its expression) has to be independently financed, a fact that is rubbed in by the supporting film to *Death of a Cyclist* which is *Together*, one of the examples of Free Cinema discussed a month or so ago.

Recent commercial releases have amounted to very little : Henry Hathaway's **Beyond the River** adapts a Simenon story clumsily and unimaginatively ; the one new musical, **Carousel,** (directed by Henry King) contains one energetic dance sequence to " June is bustin' out all over " — reminiscent in its vigour of the barn-dance in **Seven Brides for Seven Brothers** — but the whimsy is too light and delicate to withstand the wide-screen, sterephonic treatment it receives. I notice that Warner Bros. are still attempting to cash in on the huge Catholic audience with glib " miracle " films, the latest of which is **Miracle in the Rain**

(director Rudolph Maté from a Hecht novel). Artistically they have all been very much earthbound, and this one is no exception. Fritz Lang (famous for his work in the silent German film) has lived in Hollywood for many years now, and has several times shown himself better able to recreate aspects of the American scene than American directors themselves. His most recent thriller **While the City Sleeps,** however, fails to achieve authenticity in its portrayal of the smart, wisecracking world of journalism. Casey Robinson's script is too superficial to allow the director any more than a facile surface tension, with the emphasis on the all-too-familiar killer-hunt.

NEW BOOKS

World Indivisible, **by Konrad Adenauer (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 10s. 6d.)**

DR. ADENAUER has written a most interesting book. It is an old man's testament of faith in the eventual realisation of his cherished dream of a united Europe. It is also an example of an old man's willingness to make the end justify the means, no doubt from fear of creeds he cannot comprehend.

Undoubtedly for admirers of *der Alte,* this book contains many fine things well expressed. He says :

> " We in Europe must break ourselves of the habit of thinking in terms of national states. In Europe the answer is integration. The process of integration, which in my opinion is the great movement of our time, is also a process of regeneration."

No one could quarrel with his belief in integration. It is the basis of all constructive progress. But regeneration — regeneration from what ? The recent calamitous past, he replies. Germany's experiment in National Socialism is an ever-present nightmare to him, even though the conditions which made it possible are gone.

He says that Germany must now be fine and free from blemish. She must be like another Germany which " once raised cathedrals

to the skies". That was a vigorous and youthful Germany; yet Dr. Adenauer wants a penitent Germany apologising for the past, which is an impossible contradiction.

"Germany must atone" wails through the pages of his book. The same motif runs through many of his speeches. He never explains how his nation of fifty million self-flagellants could go about the business of leading Europe, nay the world itself, to higher things. Perhaps they would have no time for this, however, between telling their beads and reciting their daily confession of guilt.

Dr. Adenauer seeks to persuade us that he leads a united throng of penitents. He congratulates his flock on their "high degree of political maturity and acumen" in returning himself to office. The Bundestag differs considerably from the one before it, which held twelve parties and several independents; today it has only six parties and no independents at all, a concentration in the doctor's strength of which "the German people can be proud".

He neglects to mention that this ironing-out came with his ruthless electoral law which denied to the German people any representation if their candidates lacked the finance and party-machine to fight elections all over West Germany.

Such sleight-of-hand has kept *der Alte* on top so far. Yet when it is done in support of a failing system it cannot last against the will of the people for change. Dr. Adenauer (or his successors) may shortly be wearing sackcloth and ashes for quite another reason.

R.R.

Communism and Christianity **by Father Martin D'Arcy, S. J., (Penguin Books, 2s. 6d.)**

THE POSTHUMOUS FALL of Stalin has produced a fresh outburst of wishful thinking among those who hailed his death as the beginning of a new era of greater individual freedom within Russia and of "peaceful co-existence" between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world. Their optimism was shaken by the blunt statements of Bulganin and Khruschev that the triumph of communism throughout the world was still the goal of Soviet policy and that its victory was inevitable; the delectable vision would never have arisen if the optimists had devoted a little time and thought to the study of marxism, as first conceived and as later interpreted. Father D'Arcy has done this for them; may they profit by his industry.

What is marxism? Is it an economic system, a political theory, or a philosophy? A combination of all three, says Father D'Arcy, but its third facet is much the most important. Karl Marx studied British political economy, French socialism, and German philosophy; the latter is the distinguishing mark of the creed he evolved.

A study of his philosophy from the Christian viewpoint is of particular interest ; Marx was a Jew by birth and a nominal Christian by baptism : he owed no real allegiance to either faith. In Father D'Arcy's words :

> " . . . His break with the Jewish community and religion and admission into bourgeois society denied him the Jewish messianic vision, but it could not prevent him from detesting the current bourgeois attitude . . . "

Marx claimed that religion had been " invented " by the oppressed to console them in their misery and that it was the " opium of the people ". He proclaimed his own religion — the emancipation of the proletariat, the control of the means of production by the workers, and freedom from all the restrictions and inhibitions of " bourgeois conventions ", to be followed by absolute freedom as the State withered away.

The influence of Hegel upon Marx has been examined in many other works. The theory of the clash between the " thesis ' and the " antithesis " and the emergence of the " synthesis ", correlated to the principle of the evolution of the living from the non-living (of which no scientific proof has ever been advanced) was applied by Marx to the clash between labour and capital, and developed into the Marxian dialectic of materialism.

Marx was primarily a philosopher and it was left to others to attempt to apply his theories. Differences of interpretation immediately arose, and have continued to arise ; in the absence of any fixed moral code who was to decide what was in the " interests of the proletariat " ? Was Lenin right ? And who correctly interpreted Lenin ? Was it Stalin or Trotsky ? Or Tito ? Or " B. and K." ? The answer has been a matter of life or death for tens of thousands of citizens of communist states, because of the emphasis laid upon orthodoxy, as defined by the State.

Lenin and Stalin quickly realised how impractical was the theory that the power of government must rest with the " proletariat " in the Russia of the immediate post-revolution years, with its preponderance of illiterate peasants. The Communist Party was substituted for the masses, and communist propagandists have been busily engaged in perpetuating the myth that the two are synonymous, while the Russian State has shown no sign of " withering away ".

This rejection of the individual (who had been exalted by Marx) might be termed the first of the " internal contradictions " of communism. It provokes a re-examination of the Hegelian contribution to Marxism : when the synthesis of communism had been achieved, what of the next antithesis, leading to a new synthesis ? There will not be one, said Marx, because once the workers control the means of production the struggle between

opposites will end. Communism was not to be a " continuing revolution ", but static, variable only according to the demands of expediency, as defined by the Communist Party ; any antithesis which may arise is doomed to lead, not to a higher synthesis, but to a slave camp.

Father D'Arcy has penetrated the smoke-screen of pseudo-scientific jargon or platitudinous expressions of brotherly love behind which communism is obscured. His book should be required reading for all — whether red deans or " progressive " laymen — who profess to see a similarity between Christianity and communism.

G.V.

***The East German Rising*, by Stefan Brant (Thames & Hudson, 12s. 6d.)**

MR. BRANT, like many Westerners, has the impudence to claim the East German rising as one in favour of social democracy. He does not explain, nor even mention, why the insurgent workers chanted Nazi songs. Their inspiration came not from the invertebrate Weimar republic of 30 years before, but from the force which drove the Bolsheviks from the streets of " Red " Berlin.

Nor does Mr. Brant mention the European character of the revolt. We know now that it blazed right across East Europe into Russia itself. When the news reached the Vorkuta slave camp, a month later, hundreds were shot in the consequent rising.

Mr. Brant cannot convey the spirit of this rising, the comradeship of German, Pole and even Russian, because he denies its roots and refuses to recognise its message for the future. As a strict chronicle of the events of the 17th June 1953, it is a valuable reference work, but the rising calls for a wider, deeper and more objective history.

M.P.Z.

SIR MAX BEERBOHM

A Memoir

by ALAN NEAME

AND DID YOU once see Beerbohm plain ?

Yes, I did. I did indeed see him once and plain. The workings of Providence are ever-admirable ; I saw him as an answer to prayer. Thus it is to edify the reader, rather than to glorify myself as a surviving link between Max and the Nineties, that I venture on a personal memoir of this Olympian.

I was staying with the Revd. Fr. Chute in Rapallo not long after the death of Lady Beerbohm. We were talking one morning of the literary figures of the town, all of whom were already figures of the heroic past : Gill, Yeats, Hofmannstal were in their graves, Pound was in prison, Beerbohm in strict seclusion. I asked what Pound and Beerbohm, neighbours as they had been, had thought of each other. Did Fr. Chute reply that Beerbohm had found Pound a bit too much and that Pound had found Beerbohm a little too little ? But I do remember having said that I should like to see Sir Max if it could be arranged. Fr. Chute scouted the idea : he himself had not seen him for years : the old man saw no one but his housekeeper, his close personal friends, their letter-bearing protégés and the occasional journalist who climbed the villa wall and took him by surprise.

We dropped the subject and by way of the impertinences of the age, when journalists climb into other people's gardens, we returned to Eric Gill, Canon John Green, Oscott, the Protection of Youth and other clerical topics. Perhaps it was that day or another that we decided to leave the July-stricken villa and make, as a set-piece to end my holiday, a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Mont'Allegro.

The cult-house of the powerful Virgin of Mont'Allegro stands on the edge of an ilex grove at the top of a grassy mountain, made accessible by a cable-carriage. Up we swung through the Ligurian heavens, an assumption applauded by idle children and orchestrated by grinding hawsers and nervous exclamations.

With popping eardrums and bodies of celestial levity we took a flight of steps and came to rest in a café ; two small wines in sight of the horizontally-striped facade of the Santuario Basilica.

Imagine a picture frame four times as high as a basilica, and imagine this frame composed of blue, green, orange and puce flowers each shaped like a cornucopia and proceeding from its neighbour, and imagine this frame to enclose a grey thunderous sky above the belfries and crockets of the Santuario, imagine this thunderous sky to support in its upper reaches Nostra-Signora herself, crowned, in red shift, blue cloak and yellow billowing veil, with an escort of two complete and three truncated cherubs, and imagine at a lower level in the heavens a whiskery peasant in blue pantaloons, white lawn sleeves and a geranium waistcoat, a big floppy hat against his knee, kneeling in adoration before an old-fashioned rose-framed picture ; imagine this, and you have the popular pictorial elements of this local cult. A well-informed clergyman with you as you sip your cinzano will tell you the history of the powerful fetich in the shrine. I do not now recollect the details. An air journey from Jugoslavia is involved, a raid by corsairs, a sea voyage from Sardinia (I fancy), a simple-hearted peasant under a tree, an apparition of N.S. di Montallegro, the miraculous picture of Apostolic origin rediscovered on the high place (alt. m. 612), where its virtues and indulgences continue to draw crowds all through the summer months. An altar to Mithras, I was told by an archaeologist, had been removed from the grove to some museum nearer sea-level.

" If you don't know what you want, you had better give N. S. carte-blanche. Virgo potentissima, never fails . . . " my guide said and made for the sacristy. I loitered before votive paintings of shipwrecks and amputations. In each ikon N. S. appeared in an aerial lozenge with her peasant and her own miraculous picture, floating above the scenes of human misery as if bound Sardinia-wards again. I had time to notice that the marble and plaster of her Santuario were coming unstuck here and there. I left her carte-blanche. I walked out into the sunshine and sat on a wall and looked at the arriving peasantry.

Later, following a rocky path bordered with hairbells and oversung by larks, we made a circuit of the holy mountain and looked down on valleys and villages, towers and trees that stretched in tiny scale towards the north. We rounded a last rock. Fr. Chute's advice was vindicated. The spirit of the

grove displayed her powers. There before us on a hotel terrace sipping coffee sat Sir Max and Miss Jungmann.

" My dear Chute . . . "

" Allow me to present . . . "

" How do you do . . . ? "

" Do you smoke ? . . . "

" His own brand, specially made in London, called ' Max ' . . . "

" Ha, ha ! "

" He, he ! "

A good joke, this, and one well-tried : he, he and only he ; but how many of this great man's biographers will know that to light these eponymous cigarettes, Sir Max used spluttering, stinking, almost-uninflammable sulphur matches ? Was this the secret of his mellow longevity ?

The wind blew, the matches spluttered and stank, the old man shuddered in the solarium. The second Lady Beerbohm-to-be solicitously went to fetch something.

" Miss Jungmann is from Berlin."

He did not look particularly small, sitting down. He was shrunken, nonetheless, like a headhunter's trophy, and red-eyed. Not that the eyeball itself was bloodshot, but, as sometimes with old men, the lower eyelid had fallen and turned inside out. Miss Jungmann came back with a rug and a shawl. We discussed how we should share them. His voice was difficult to hear when the wind blew — crackly, quiet, with a slight lisp. His delivery was winsome, almost coy. He suffered in his joints, a martyr to lumbago, sciatica.

I recommended him to carry nutmeg in his pocket, a specific.

" Nodmek ? " exclaimed Miss Jungmann.

He said : " I will try it ".

After a while two of the party went indoors ; whether Sir Max and Miss Jungmann or Sir Max and Fr. Chute, I cannot now be sure. Perhaps I was left with Miss Jungmann. The coffee grew cold, the hotel was still in morning shadow. They came out again.

" Good-bye."

" Good-bye."

Goodbye to the Nineties, goodbye to the Santuario Basilica, goodbye to the skylarks and hairbells and cable-car, goodbye to Rapallo and Fr. Chute, goodbye and grateful thanks to N. S. di Montallegro for favours received — I saw him plain.

LETTERS

EUROPEAN SOCIALISM

To the Editor of *The European.*
Sir,

I would like to comment on Sir Oswald Mosley's recent article in your magazine entitled " European Socialism ". Much of the substance of Sir Oswald's article can be accepted or rejected without argument, depending on one's personal ideas on the subject, but some points which have already been discussed in *The European* still have not been answered to my satisfaction and also, I am sure, to the satisfaction of many other of your readers.

Although I am aware that most of the discussion on Sir Oswald's proposals has already centred around his point four, *i.e.*, the method of industrial organisation, nevertheless, I venture to continue it. In theory it seems to be the ideal solution to have workers' ownership, at least in the larger industries, but Sir Oswald has never indicated exactly how this will work. It is no answer to say it " should be given the finest chance in a series of well-thought-out experiments ". The questions immediately arise : Who thinks out the experiments ? Who decides which experiments should be carried out ? Are they to be carried out simultaneously in all industries or only in a few selected ones and, if the latter case, which ?

Putting two and two together from this article and from Sir Oswald's previous writings which I have read, I believe he suggests that the directorship of a factory should be elected by the workers, but does he really seriously think that the workers are capable of deciding ? The last thing that I intend to imply is that the workers are lacking in intelligence or discrimination but how can they know if a man would be a suitable director or not ? Initially they may be inclined to vote for Joe Smith who is a decent type, seems to have his wits about him and has proved his abilities in more limited fields. This, however, is no guarantee that he could succeed with bigger things, and the results of six months of his incompetent direction at a high level may ruin an industry or at least cause such damage that several years will be necessary to make it good. In a basic industry or in a national utility this could be fatal to the economic well-being of the state as a whole.

In actual practice, however, I do not think the workers would be able to elect a board of directors for the simple reason that,

here in Germany at any rate, there are not enough capable men for all the directorial posts open, still less enough to provide candidates for an election of directors. As Sir Oswald must, of course, be aware, a potential director cannot be produced overnight : at least twenty to thirty years are necessary to equip a man with the knowledge and experience for bearing such heavy responsibilities and, in the few companies in Europe and America with managerial and directorial training schemes, only about one per cent of the total number of starters actually " make the grade".

If, however, I have completely misunderstood Sir Oswald's case and he really intends that the directorship should be appointed by " the leadership . . . who have devised the means of action and recovery " then surely " workers' ownership " is merely a phrase with little or no meaning in actual practice.

I think that before Sir Oswald can really hope to convince the thinking worker by his proposals, and, using the term in its broadest sense, that is the majority of the population, he will have to put forward far more precise arguments than heretofore on this particular point.

Yours, etc.,

17a Mannheim, Schafweide, 73. W. G. SHIPLEY

NORMAN DOUGLAS IN MAGNA GRAECIA

To the Editor of *The European*

Sir,

Norman Douglas intended to write a book about Capri, and made ample collections for that purpose. In 1906 he was forestalled by the publication of *The Book of Capri*, written by Harold E. Trower, British vice-consul on the island, who, with his wife, is infamously libelled in *South Wind*. This is not a good book, but is conscientious, and contains so much essential information that another book on Capri was out of the question. Douglas later published his scraps in *Capri* (Orioli, Florence, 1930).

Then, and only then, Douglas turned for a subject to old Calabria, and produced the book Mr. Harald so rightly praises. It was issued in America by the Oxford University Press (then directed by Paul Willert) in 1939 — I did all I could to boost it, but without success. Obviously, Douglas knew and appreciated his predecessor Gissing, but the book which inspired him was Craufard Tait Ramage's *The Nooks and By-Ways of Italy*. It is not a better book than *Old Calabria* but without it *Old Calabria* would never have existed. It is sad to think that such books as *By the Ionian Sea*, *Nooks and By-Ways of Italy* and the much better travel books of D. H. Lawrence remain out of print, while we are invited to lap up Graham Greene.

A word of warning — there is not much to see in Douglas's old Calabria. I went over the main routes in 1931, and realised that the whole thing is a literary invention. Since then the American war-machine has been over the country. *Old Calabria* is a lovely book, but in 1956 we must read it as fiction. Don't make the error of going there.

Yours, etc.,

Les Rosiers, RICHARD ALDINGTON.
Ancien chemin de Castelnau, Montpellier.

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