THE EUROPEAN

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ANALYSIS by ***EUROPEAN***

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ANALYSIS

WHATEVER HAPPENS over Suez, the main lesson is already clear at the time of writing. The Prime Minister's thought of cutting expenditure on our defence forces by five hundred million pounds a year with the eager support of Lord Beaverbrook, was the most light-headed freak of irresponsible politics that even the epoch of Eden Expressed has produced. The incredible levity of such a policy could only be matched by the sinister inanity of the Russian visit which preceded it. The Prime Minister's dinner guests were contriving a shattering explosion beneath a vital supply line of Great Britain, just as their host was busily occupied with discarding the means to defend it. The British people can never hope to see a clearer illustration of the result of supporting the men they have elected to power. It is not too much to hope that at last the lesson begins to be learnt. They can now see exactly and precisely what the Prime Minister has achieved in recent months by a policy which we have opposed throughout and in every particular. In recent events they can observe the clear fact that in everything which matters the Labour opposition, and in particular its leadership, is identical with the Conservative government.

The Four Necessities of Defence

The plain situation is that our present means of defence are very inadequate to the burdens we have to assume, and still more inadequate to the forcible-feeble postures which the Conservative

leaders feel impelled to adopt by their deep sense of humiliation at the loss of the Empire their fathers won.

Recent events show that we were not far out in the estimate of our four basic defence requirements published in our July number. Few will now deny that at least points one and three were valid : we must have not only the main nuclear weapons, but also a highly mobile defence force that can move anywhere at short notice to defend our vital communications in the minor wars which Soviet policy is determined to provoke all over the place. And we cannot over emphasize, after this experience, the not so easily recognisable necessity for points two and four : adequate regular forces in Europe to repel Russian invasion when both sides are so well supplied with H bombs that neither side dare use them, and adequate forces of a novel or irregular character to repel the partisan tactics of infiltration and guerrilla war which the Soviets will certainly adopt in the coming economic crisis of the West.

Deterrent and Illusions

The most disturbing factor in the whole situation was the Prime Minister's apparent suggestion in the debate of July 24th, that the deterrent of the H bomb alone was sufficient to check Russian invasion, it passed with no animadversion more effective than Mr. Gaitskell's query, " What did they require at all in the way of conventional weapons in Europe ? " If this were Sir Anthony Eden's meaning he has just caught up with a six year old thought ; but this thinking has been outdated not only since both sides procured the H weapon, but also since it became clear that its large scale use by either side would mean world destruction. From this follows inevitably the conclusion that neither side will dare to use the weapon in any circumstance at a point in the very near future, and this fact will soon be recognised not only by the governments but by all the peoples concerned. At precisely that point the Russian armies will again be free to march through Europe. This is why we have so long insisted that we must either have general disarmament, or European re-armament with conventional weapons as well as with the H bomb. The new conventional forces, will, of course, include such weapons as atomic artillery, guided missiles with atomic warheads and aircraft carrying A bombs against troop concentrations, etc., etc. Fortunately for the fate of the West, even in this sphere, too,

quality is replacing quantity, and a relatively small force of highly trained specialists will before long be able to dispose of Russian mass.

The Classic Recipe of Final Disaster

It is a mortal danger if in these conditions the government clings to the two illusions, that the H bomb will always be a complete deterrent, and that a small and motley band of short-term conscripts, fumbling unwillingly with the weapons of the 1914 war, are an adequate substitute for a regular army of highly trained, highly paid, and, above all, highly honoured specialists in the use of new arms ; men who are both equipped for modern purposes and dedicated to a high mission.

We shall not be saved by the H bomb if it cannot be used, nor by a small mass of half-trained conscripts matched against an overwhelmingly greater Russian mass, which will almost certainly contain far more fully trained men than we possess half-trained men.

If at the same time the well-founded inferiority complex of the Conservative leaders impels them not merely to do the necessary minimum to guard Britain's interests with the inadequate forces their policy has provided, but to show as well that they are strong men after all — despite the loss in a single generation of the heritage which required a millenium of genius and heroism to create — we shall all too soon taste the classic recipe of final disaster.

A Very Clear Alternative

We may in some degree misjudge the intentions of the Prime Minister ; we greatly hope so. The habitual obscurity of his utterance makes him all too easy to misjudge. But that in itself is disquieting, because obscurity nearly always indicates a mind which is not in full command of its subject. If Kant was obscure, it was because even such a mind could not fully grasp such a subject. An elementary school boy may be obscure when discussing the rule of three, if he has not got so far. Somewhere in between these two extremes comes our present Prime Minister, when discussing high politics and strategy.

Lord Beaverbrook at least is clear ; decisive is the thinking of Sir Anthony's Egeria. Lord Beaverbrook would reduce our defences and abandon Europe, and in this at least he reflects a

considerable force of Conservative thinking and feeling. The sequence of events would then be simple as our final situation : the H bomb become unusable when both sides have it ; England out of Europe, and America following if the whole cause of the West were thus betrayed ; Europe defenceless, and invaded by Russian armies with scarcely a shot fired ; Russia on the channel coast, and Britain commanded by atom-headed missiles at short range, not to mention submarines, after our government had finally and completely isolated our country by systematic betrayal of every cause and every friend. The alternative is at all costs to maintain our defences both of this island and of our means of life, but to share the burden with many others in the same case ; otherwise, it may soon become too heavy for an economy weakened by so many errors. There is no middle way except the present muddle, which rests always on the edge of disaster. The alternative means not abandonment of Europe, but union with Europe. We have now only a choice between early death and greater life.

EUROPEAN

COMPETITIVE CO-EXISTENCE

The threat of Russian economic progress

by ROGER PEARSON, M.Sc., (Econ)

ALTHOUGH the intensity of the cold war between the communist powers and the West appears to have diminished since the death of Stalin, the new phase of economic rivalry, so delicately described as " competitive co-existence " by the Russian leaders, would seem even more likely to further the communist aim of world domination than the older policy of the Stalin regime. The communist leaders now look forward with confidence to the day when they can defeat the West in economic battle. How far are their hopes likely to be realised ? What is the present strength of Soviet industry ? It is essential for our own security that we should be fully aware of the strength of the economic forces with which the Russian leaders intend to wreck the halting capitalist economies of our own Western nations.

In studying the Soviet economy we are obliged, it is true, to rely to no small extent upon the figures published by the Soviet Government. Those who prefer the ostrich attitude towards unpleasant facts assume that these official Russian statistics are artificially inflated for purposes of propaganda, or else are based upon distorted figures supplied to the Russian Government by erring Works Managers, who wish to conceal from their superiors the fact that their factory has failed to reach its target. But all this is too optimistic. Some exaggeration and deliberate falsification there may be, but these figures are the same figures on which Soviet Government departments make their calculations, and whether we like it or not, we have to accept the fact that they cannot be far from the truth.

What concerns us most, in any case, is not the actual figures themselves, but the rate of growth or of expansion of the Soviet economy which they reveal. This rate of growth is truly astonishing, and it would certainly seem impossible for it to be exaggerated over a period of two decades without the figures in question ceasing to bear all resemblance to reality. Some faults and deliberate errors there may be, particularly when the Soviet Government wish to conceal some specific weakness in the economy — such as, for instance, the low real income of the workers, or the low rate of increase in agricultural yield — but with regard to the overall figures, a careful scrutiny leaves little ground for the supposition that they are exaggerated.

Taking these figures as our chief source of statistical information, then, we find that since the inauguration of the first five year plan in 1927, large scale Russian industry may safely be assumed to have increased its output by something in the region of four hundred per cent, as against the official claim of over five hundred per cent. This increase took place before 1940 at the cumulative rate of about thirteen per cent per annum, and since 1945 has continued at the rate of approximately ten per cent per annum. Soviet coal production has rocketed by one thousand per cent since 1927 — from thirty-six million tons of coal per year to three hundred and sixty million — and the production of iron has similarly increased from three million tons per year to thirty million. Half the increase in these products has taken place since the end of the last world war. We can only ask what are the reasons for such a phenomenal progress in Russia. How has it come about, and can it be expected to continue ?

Obviously a country which is but scantily industrialised, as was Japan during the last century, can make rapid strides by simply copying from those countries which are industrially more advanced. The pioneer nations have learned the pitfalls and problems of industrialisation the hard way, by trial and error, whereas late starters can borrow from the experience which the more advanced nations have won at such high cost. Russia has been able to make straight copies of existing machines, and even of whole factories, and so to advance rapidly without the long and arduous period of design and proto-type experimentation which always precedes the development of complicated techniques. But there is more to Russian progress than that. The first rush of industrialisation has now long since past, and the figures which

we are studying represent an expansion in an already mature economy. Once the initial ground has been covered, a country discovers that it has its own special social and economic problems to master — problems which are so individual in nature that they cannot be solved except by that nation herself. Russian industry has now progressed far beyond the copying stage, and we are obliged to realise that it is no mere giant of clay ; it is active and virile, and may itself claim the full laurels for its continued successes.

In the post-war period more significant reasons have to be found to account for Russian economic expansion than the simple argument of youth. Organisation is the prime answer. No free economy can compete with an *efficiently* controlled and properly integrated state economy. The entire Russian nation is organised with one aim in mind only, the production of further wealth for communism, further might with which communism may conquer the world. The importance of industrial productivity in the last war has taught the Russian leaders a lesson which they intend to use. And they intend to use it to our detriment.

The constant drive by communist leaders for increased production would not, by itself, be capable of achieving much were it not for the immense material resources which are available to the Soviet. One of the most important of these resources has been a steadily increasing population. Despite the temporary fall in the birth rate during the last war, the population of the communist Soviet today stands at two hundred and fourteen million, and in the period from 1951-1955 it is stated that a further increase of 16.3 million has been recorded as a result of the high birth rate encouraged by the Government. So plentiful has labour become that working hours have been reduced to forty-one per week, and the school-leaving age is to be raised to seventeen. Although the problem of finding sufficient food has been one of the most serious which the administration has had to face, agriculture has nevertheless responded partially, at least, to the demands of the Government. Russia has not had to import food, and in the early stages of the revolution the farmer was able to support himself, even though little surplus was available for the towns. The large peasant population provided a vast reserve of labour, and only constituted an economic problem when it demanded a larger share of manufactured consumer goods.

Given a large, expanding, but self-supporting population, Russia's next requirement was raw materials. And these were

also plentiful in the vast Empire which Moscow controls. Coal and oil are abundant beyond Russia's greatest conceivable requirements ; iron and minerals are in adequate supply, and only certain non-ferrous metals are short. Given such natural wealth as this, how could Russian industry fail to be successful ?

What might undoubtedly have delayed economic development under a capitalist economy would have been the inflexibility of the social structure, the refusal by labour to transfer from one district to another — to Siberia for instance — the shortage of capital, the absence of adequate communications, and the uncertainty of demand. Yet these were the problems which an authoritarian government was best suited to overcome.

Inefficiency and wastefulness there probably was, and may well still be ; it is difficult indeed to estimate how much of Russia's astonishing national product is annually consumed in wasteful and inefficient consumption ; yet bottlenecks and administrative inefficiency can be, and probably have been, removed. Slave labour has perhaps been of little economic value, but in the early stages we must recognise that it did provide labour at points where financial incentive would probably have been inadequate or uneconomic. Thus a planned economy proved its worth, and triumphed, where a capitalist economy would have developed only slowly.

Such has been the pace of Soviet development to date. What, in the light of this, are its prospects for the future ? The sixth Five Year Plan (1956-1960) which began this year emphasises the need for increased food production to keep pace with the ever expanding population. It is a key to Russia's policy that she should remain entirely self-supporting in all branches of her economy, so that if she keeps her frontiers closed no economic disturbances in the outside world can affect her own economic stability. The doctrine of free trade, and the specialisation of each country on those industries in which it is best suited to progress, finds no favour, and is unlikely to do so unless communism were eventually to spread throughout the world. Accordingly, the plan envisages a seventy per cent increase in Soviet agriculture before 1960. This may be partly wishful thinking, or it may be a deliberately high target, but if they attain even fifty per cent this will represent astonishing wealth.

The Soviet's main problem in agriculture is the individualism of the peasants. This they try to counter by further collectivisation,

not merely for the sake of doctrine, but because under the collective system the activities of the peasant may be more closely controlled, and a more careful check may be kept on the disposal of the produce which he harvests. Recently, however, the Government has brought a fresh weapon to bear, and this is neither more nor less than a return to the incentive system already re-introduced in the manufacturing industries. Industrial production is now sufficiently large to allow for an increase in consumer goods, and with these it is hoped to bribe the peasant to work harder, and to take a more serious interest in his output figures. With something to be gained by working harder, there is little reason to doubt that the peasant will be won over, and that agricultural output will consequently increase. And for good measure, the new rulers of Russia have thrown out Lysenko, with his unscientific theories of genetics. Lysenko, favoured by Stalin because he held that heredity was of no importance in man or animal — and that all men, regardless of their race or colour, were accordingly born equal, as the communists would so dearly love to prove — has at last been dismissed from his official post, since it has been found that his crude theories about science were ruining the quality of Russian livestock and Russian crops. With the charlatan sacked, and incentive re-introduced for the peasant farmer, Soviet agriculture will at last begin to expand, and may well even parallel the successes of Soviet manufacturing industry.

The general progress of the economy may be retarded slightly, it is true, by the proposed switch to consumer goods, and by the continued increase in the size of the population ; but the industrial basis is now sufficiently broad to ensure that these factors will constitute no serious problems, and many potential bottlenecks which existed only five years ago have now been removed. The recent aid to Burma of large shipments of cement, in exchange for unwanted rice, is an advertisement to the world that this commodity, which was previously short, is now in plentiful supply. Indeed, statistics show that the production of cement has risen from six million tons in 1940, to twenty-two million tons in 1955. With the recent reductions in the size of the Soviet armed forces, consequent upon the development of new military techniques, even more labour will become available for direction to whatever sectors may most require reinforcement. The improvements projected in the educational system will be

a guarantee for the continued technical development of the Soviet, and Science already claims the bulk of those students who proceed to higher studies. The output of qualified technicians already exceeds that of the United States, and Russian Engineering Degrees already call for higher standards than do their British counterparts.

Yet for all this communism is a sterile philosophy, and its basis is the accumulation of material wealth alone. A full stomach is the very best that it can offer mankind, and the people are made pawns towards that end. This concentration on productivity for the sake of productivity is its very danger. Never should we permit ourselves to suppose that Russia belongs to the common run of bureaucracies. Production in Russia is geared high because the leaders aim at producing more and yet more, ultimately to use that wealth for the domination of the world. The higher values of national culture, of human dignity, and of civilisation mean little in the steppes of Asia today.

If the threat to open war has diminished of late, and it may well be dangerous to assume that it has, then this is only because the Russian leaders are now confident of their economic power, and of their ability to disrupt the capitalist economies by creating a sufficiently large surplus in Russia which may be thrown on the free market, at a judicious time best calculated to disrupt the Western economies, in an all-out economic war. By this means they hope to achieve their end — world domination. By destroying with their surpluses the fragile price mechanism of the capitalist markets, they can ruin the Western nations and ensure the downfall of the Western system. Unless radical counterplanning is introduced to make the welter of Western industry capable of resisting the Russian manoeuvres, and of keeping pace with the rate of Russian economic development, then the economies of Western Europe, with their present slavish dependance on American industry, will be incapable of warding off a planned economic attack from the communist countries. It is doubtful, even, whether the American industrial giant, vulnerable as it is to violent changes in market prices, could survive an economic war with the communist block. Unless some such measures be introduced, and soon, then we must accept economic disaster as inevitable, and must plan instead to defend the West from communist domination in the political war which will accompany economic chaos.

THE B.B.C. MONOPOLY

THE END OF AN EPOCH

by GEOFFREY VERNON

FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS after emerging from the era of crystal sets and headphones, from 2LO and 5GB and Savoy Hill, sound broadcasting in this country enjoyed a secure monopoly, safe from the competition of television which now threatens its continued existence. What was the contribution of the B.B.C., during that quarter-century, to the defence of Western civilisation and the progress of mankind ? In search of the answer I turned to a selection from twenty-five bound volumes of *The Listener**, published last year.

In his introduction Mr. Church asks : " What is the attribute which makes all broadcasting, and therefore these selections, valuable and memorable ? " and replies to his own question : " The answer is contained in a passage from words spoken into the microphone over twenty years ago by a master of the medium, Sir Harold Nicolson ". I turned the page to the very short address by Sir Harold, reprinted from *The Listener* of 29th April, 1931 ; it was written in such simple prose that it should have been possible to have discovered immediately the answer to Mr. Church's question : but I found myself reading and re-reading Sir Harold's few words, searching for the answer, for what had made broadcasting " valuable and memorable " — and I went on to finish the book, with the question still unanswered.

Sir Harold's contribution must have been one of the most honest broadcasts in those twenty-five years. After discussing the rough edges we acquire as we progress through life, gathering

* *The Spoken Word*, ed. Richard Church (Collins, 16s.).

our convictions on such controversial subjects as religion and politics, he stated :

> ". . . The B.B.C. is not an institution whose function is to annoy. It is bound, obviously it is bound, to avoid those protuberant edges, those sharp angles, which will wound the feelings of other people. And those who speak on the microphone are thus from the outset obliged to avoid all subjects of controversy, all subjects, that is, which may conflict too strongly with the majority opinion of fifteen million listeners . . ."

He concluded his broadcast with a tribute to truth (the attribute to which Mr. Church referred ?) and said :

> ". . . No decent broadcaster can be happy at seeing himself edged gradually away from his own verities and realities, at seeing a flabby and amiable double of himself standing unctiously beside him at the microphone. For there are times when I feel that truth and courage are the only virtues about which there can be no argument."

These two quotations form such an apt comment upon the attitude of the B.B.C. that it is difficult to believe that the corporation has shared the enthusiasm of Mr. Church or Sir Harold Nicolson for truth. "'What is truth ?' asked jesting Pilate" and the question may have been re-echoed at many a conference in Broadcasting House.

Mr. Church divided his book into six sections and from the first of these, *Looking at the World*, in May 1930 : "What will the United States be like when she stands revealed as the greatest world power of the twentieth century ?" asked the Marquess of Lothian. With what calm resignation the displacement of Britain from her position as leader of the world was accepted in the thirties, the age of pacifism and "anti-imperialism", when the pseudo-intelligentsia decried the British Empire and exalted Soviet Russia. They have lived (most of them, in spite of their belligerent anti-Fascism, managed to survive the war) to tremble before the advance of the Soviet empire and to experience towards America sentiments compounded of gratitude for her protection against their erstwhile lover and resentment at her domination of Europe — sentiments further complicated by a nostalgia for the British Empire they have surrendered and a reluctance to strive towards

the only alternative to Soviet or American domination of Europe — the union of the continent they have divided.

An anthology of this nature must be a constant reminder of the passage of time ; so many of the contributors are now advanced in years or dead, and speak to us as ghosts from a past age. Dylan Thomas was reminiscing about his childhood in his birthplace (Llaregyb ?), George Robey was telling us (in 1936) that he had been appearing in the music-halls for nearly fifty years, James Agate was giving his impressions of Henry Irving and Monsignor Ronald Knox those of G. K. Chesterton. Children (although not in years) spoke about their parents — Lady Violet Bonham-Carter of Asquith, Jacquetta Hawkes of Gowland Hopkins, and Lady Megan Lloyd George opened her talk with her father's ingenuous remark on his appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer : " It will be a very peaceful job. There is only the Budget."

Lady Violet Bonham-Carter described her father's impressions as he watched the workers pouring out of an Oldham mill at the end of the day's work :

> " . . . They get an average of 18s. a week, and work, with intervals for meals, from six to six. Civilisation and religion have done something for them — given them paved streets, watertight houses, board-schools, chapels and even (in Oldham) an art gallery. But life in its real sense they have never known, and to their dying day will never know."

By 1939 trade union activity had considerably reduced the hours of work and raised wages ; by 1956 the Welfare State had added to the social amenities (even in Oldham, which now has " illuminations " among its attractions) : but in the intervening years the war and the incessant struggle (by working overtime) to close the gap between prices and wages have lengthened the working day and left real wages little higher than before the war. And what of " life in its real sense " ? Are the inhabitants of Oldham (or of the Old Brompton Road) any nearer to enjoying it ?

How adept the B.B.C. is at engaging speakers as skilful as itself at giving a broadcast talk which says nothing. In January 1932, Professor Ernest Barker spoke on freedom of thought, carefully listing all possible restrictions upon the free expression of opinions — the police at public meetings, the censorship of plays and films, prosecutions for publishing " obscene " books

although obscenity has never been satisfactorily defined, and charges of seditious libel. A stimulating lecture might have been delivered on the various forms of unofficial censorship which seeks to repress unorthodox opinions not approved by the existing order — denial of public halls, organised mob violence, press boycott or misrepresentation. But the myth of absolute freedom under democracy must be preserved.

Professor Barker's talk was reprinted in the third section of the book, *Ideas and Principles*, and only one character in it appears to have been able to escape from the strait-jacket into which the B.B.C. would strap all its speakers. Shaw rebelled against this system, and his reputation was such that he was occasionally able to dictate his terms and express some of his heretical ideas over the air.

Most of the fourth section, *Memorable Occasions*, is devoted to the war years. (Were there no memorable occasions in the last quarter-century outside 1939-1945 ?) Some of these " period pieces " make interesting reading now that we are so much wiser after the event. In a broadcast on 30th March, 1940 (during the " phoney war " period) Sir Winston Churchill made what proved to be one of the classic understatements of all time : " . . . It seems to me, taking a general view, that an intensification of the struggle is to be expected . . . " " Immense progress had been made in improving our defences " ; then came the *blitzkrieg* of May 1940 and on 18th June Churchill was broadcasting his " finest hour " speech after the evacuation of the B.E.F. from Dunkirk. He spoke of the strain of the coming winter upon " the Nazi regime, with almost all Europe writhing and starving under its cruel heel . . . " But national socialism was to survive four more winters and within less than ten years of the end of the war Germany was to be stronger and more prosperous than victorious Britain. In the same speech Churchill made the solemn pledge :

> " We abate nothing of our just demands, not one jot or tittle do we recede. Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch and Belgians have joined their causes with our own. All these shall be restored."

The people of Poland, whether suffering under communism at home or sorrowing as *émigrés* abroad, must frequently recall this promise, as they did during the Katyn massacre and the tragedy

of the Warsaw rising.

Quickly turning the pages which attempted to glamorise the bombing raids, the destruction of Monte Cassino, or the invasion of Europe, we come to the shortest extract in the book.

Fraternisation at Torgau
Broadcast by Edward Ward, April 29, 1945

"In the picturesque medieval town of Torgau I saw soldiers of the First American and the Red Armies throw their arms around each other's necks and kiss each other on the cheeks. I even had to undergo this greeting myself from a burly Ukrainian soldier. As I stood on a ramp on the west bank of the Elbe, the Russian soldiers in the town fired off mortars and rifles out of sheer joy. This most cordial of welcomes was a wonderful spectacle. The troops of each nation did their best to make the other understand what they were saying. (It's not so difficult as might be supposed.) The whole scene was one of the gayest fraternisation. A Russian lieutenant sat on a wall playing an accordian and singing Russian songs, and the doughboys joined in. Drinks were passed round and everyone was happy."

The B.B.C. decided to enlist an artist to describe the preliminaries to the last of the war crimes. In February 1946 Dame Laura Knight broadcast her impressions of the Nuremberg courtroom, where she sat — sketching and painting — above the dock. She saw "the unbending prisoners, Keitel and Jodl", Hess, "a walking corpse . . . the sickest man one ever saw" — and the others. She felt sure that "whatever the outcome, justice will be done". (Soviet judges, representatives of a system guilty of every conceivable form of cruelty and brutality, sat upon the bench beside their British, French and American colleagues). "*Alles kaput*" repeated witness after witness. Occasionally her conscience troubled her: ". . . when I can remember to do so, I feel a brute to be concentrated on aesthetics while twenty men sit below me on trial for their lives". Perhaps, with the sensitive inward eye of the artist, she looked beyond the dock, to the far-reaching consequences of the precedents created at Nuremberg: the assurance that defeat leads to the scaffold, that the speed of the "advance to barbarism" is accelerated.

There was little of lasting value in Mr. Church's fifth and sixth sections, *The Scientific Eye* and *Approaching the Centre*, and the book closed with a selection in which (it was claimed) we reached *The Centre of Things*. Mr. T. S. Eliot, in February 1937, gave

us his Church's *Message to the World.* After the conventional condemnation of fascism and communism (without any attempt to differentiate between those mutually hostile forces) he hinted at the beam in the democratic eye :

> " We need not assume that our form of constitutional democracy is the only one suitable for a Christian people, or that it is in itself a guarantee against an anti-Christian world."

Examining modern society, he said :

> " Perhaps the dominant vice of our time, from the point of view of the Church, will be proved to be avarice. Surely there is something wrong in our attitude towards money. The acquisitive, rather than the creative and spiritual instincts, are encouraged . . . I am by no means sure that it is right for me to improve my income by investing in the shares of a company, making I know not what, operating perhaps thousands of miles away, and in the control of which I have no effective voice — but which is recommended as a sound investment . . . "

He wisely separated the Church from day to day politics :

> " . . . It is much more the business of the Church to say what is wrong, that is, what is inconsistent with Christian doctrine than to propose particular schemes of improvement . . . "

He concluded :

> " . . . The Church has perpetually to answer this question : to what purpose were we born ? What is the end of man ? "

Father D'Arcy, S.J., broadcasting in October 1942, gave *his* answer (and that of *his* Church) to these questions, and Professor Gilbert Murray, in May 1949, answered them in much the same way, although he approached the problem on the assumption that we have no " infallible guidance " — " that we poor mortals never have ". With " tradition ", " conscience " and " moral sense " as his signposts he found his way towards that " ultimate right " which he believed to exist, which he felt man's moral sense " sees as in a glass darkly, and strives to approach ". Is this the attribute which might have made sound broadcasting " valuable and memorable " — an attribute which the B.B.C. sought in vain, or threw aside lest it might " wound the feelings of other people " ?

WHAT AUTOMATION WILL DO TO US

by BERTAM PEEL

AS EVERY WORKER KNOWS, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (D.S.I.R.) has published a report on automation. But despite the oceans of publicity enjoyed by this subject in the Fourth Estate of the Realm, the other Estates (the readers) still know nothing about automation except that whatever it is, it's here to stay.

This is a pity because the report, in addition to outlining the principles of automation, tells us in what order it will come and where, and what kind of people it will turn us into. We are familiar with the aim of automation — it is going to make a wonderful future for Britain, provided management and workers do not cut each others' throats and provided other countries do not cut ours in the fight for markets — but of interest, too, is what it will do *to* us.

In the automatic factory there will be two main types of personnel : management having overall control, and engineers and technicians who will be specialists in techniques. The managing type of person will not be the familiar all-rounder who knows a little about a lot, who knows how to handle men and make decisions right or wrong ; the report is quite definite that he is a disappearing species, and that our future managers will be technical men who know a lot about a lot. In any case, we are grimly informed, " discipline will be provided more by the technical process, through the occurrence of faults ".

This is ominous enough, but when we come to the other type,

the engineer in the factory, whose skill is " perceptual and conceptual " rather than " motor or manual ", we learn that he will be subject to " perceptual fatigue ". This is brought about by " continuously taking in and acting upon a heavy load of information ". We are not told what happens afterwards, so presumably he just gets taken out, screaming and waving his arms and rolling his eyes ; all the report tells us is that with full automation, which is the robot factory proper, the engineer will disappear and, with him, his perceptual fatigue.

It is generally acknowledged that before he will irrevocably accept the idea of automation, the British worker will need to be convinced that management is not ranged against him, and that the line-up is not the same as before the war. Post-war industry has not yet experienced a test serious enough to convince him either way about this, but even if the British worker embraced the principle of automation, he would have to experience another and even more difficult change of heart, namely, to develop a team spirit.

More than ever in automation, the contribution of one operative cannot be isolated from the contribution of others, so that payment of wages will tend to reflect the performance of a team rather than of the individual, and be based on criteria other than output, e.g., machine utilisation. This is the principle of reward for effort rather than for quantitative output. A team spirit such as this is unlikely to develop in the present industrial atmosphere, and some kind of worker-ownership or syndical incentive is clearly indicated.

The team will have to conceive one clear and dominating objective in common, to keep the machine line going ; and even in this there will be no satisfaction unless they are striving for some industrial goal beyond their circle. The need for such a transcendent aim is sensed in the report's view that opportunities for promotion to management from the ranks seem likely to be adversely affected " if the gap in skill and knowledge between engineers and management becomes too great to be bridged by experience gained on the job ". In other words, no more field-marshals' batons, it seems.

To promote such a team spirit in industry requires a common aim, and personal incentive. Unchanging human nature must be incorporated, not ideologically ignored as in past experiments at industrial socialism.

Whilst on the matter of human nature, how ineffectually has automation been introduced to the public by the Government and by industry. Even now, the Government, according to a Commons statement, has had to agree to prepare a simplified version of their report ; but on enquiry the D.S.I.R. has been found unable to comment.

Perhaps they are relying on automation itself being delayed by shortage of qualified personnel and machinery. The human genus will have to do a little more evolving to become the supermen this report expects them to be. It goes without saying that the technician-type managers will be practically gods, but the engineer, too, will have to be a very different species from the humble machine-minder of today. As well as being an expert in his specialist job (c.f. perceptual fatigue, above) he is expected to have " a broad vocational training which will permit a flexible deployment of technical manpower, both in individual firms and in industry as a whole ".

All this, at a time when the country is crying out for scientists and technicians. The *Electrical Journal*, closely concerned with both the development and products of the automatic factory, each year devotes unusually large space, in editorials and comments, to the shortage of qualified men in industry and teaching. These people are not being paid enough, and younger men are finding more amusing things to do than spend their time at evening classes or extremely specialised courses in effort that will not be rewarded later on. The effect on the future is obvious : shortage of the right men will be the decisive factor in delaying automation.

As to shortage of actual machinery, rapid expansion of the machine-tool industry seems necessary if it is to supply enough of the expensive transfer-machines, which are the heart of the automatic factory. Some large manufacturers may have to make their own. As to the all-important electricity supply, automation will mean 24-hour working if it is to be worth while, and the extra load will not worry the Central Electricity Authority. A guaranteed night load will justify the expense of more nuclear power stations.

On the question of capital, the report says : " There should be no difficulty in finding enough resources for investment in automation — in terms of national accounting ". But our national accounting is open to a good deal of analysis and criticism,

whether it be on private or governmental finance, and as a nation we could well do without the uncertainties of international trade while we embark on the costly business of automation,

Thus we have reached the question, where will automation be applied ? If anybody wishes to know whether his particular factory or office will be automated, let him consider the following points and see to what extent his own company is likely to be adapted. Whether a firm is go-ahead or not must also be considered, as in all matters of progress.

Automation is a confluence of three streams (i) mechanisation by transfer devices that link machine-tools in automatic production lines, together with advanced assembly and materials handling ; (ii) advances in automatic control of manufacturing processes ; (iii) processing of technical and business information by computers. It is applicable generally to manufacturing industries, and can lead ultimately to a complete factory system of automation. It will be adopted in those industries with most " flow " of production : chemicals, petroleum, motor vehicles, electronic components and equipment, iron and steel, printing, textiles, office machinery, stationary engines, also those industries producing machinery for agriculture, mining and textiles.

Is it then only large firms that will adopt automation ? The D.S.I.R. emphatically think not. The size of market is a better guide than the size of firm to the economic advantages of automation. Moreover, with transfer-machines and computers becoming more. versatile, the smaller production run will stand more chance of benefiting from automacity. Automation, in particular, suits the small and specialist companies, especially when they are contractors for the larger manufacturers.

This continuing hope for the future of the small concern will be a relief to most people, who fear domination by the mighty bureaucracies, private and public, just as much as redundancy itself.

THOMAS GIBSON BOWLES AT THE SIEGE OF PARIS

by LEONARD E. NAYLOR

IN SEPTEMBER, 1870, Thomas Gibson Bowles[1] had just come ashore at Southampton from a brief channel cruise in his yacht, when he heard the news that the Emperor of the French had surrendered, a Republic had been established and the Prussians were advancing on Paris. He took the first train to London, managed to get a passport and a visa in record time — and two days later, before the *Morning Post* even knew that it had a war correspondent on the spot, it was receiving despatches from Bowles in Paris, where he had arrived with ten pounds in his pocket.

Friends he had met in London before leaving predicted " horrors of all kinds ". Horrors, indeed, he saw in plenty, and as he was always trying to get as near the fighting as he could, he was fortunate in coming through unscathed.

His first act on arrival in Paris was to look for lodgings. He had many Parisian friends but they had all departed with the approach of the Prussians. However, this meant that there was plenty of accommodation to be had — and it was cheap. Bowles probably felt that the correspondent of a great London newspaper should maintain the dignity of his position, even though it happened to be one to which he had appointed himself. He found a flat with ten rooms decorated in white and gold and a balcony overlooking the boulevard, for six francs a day — which in those days would amount to about five shillings. " I believe I could have got them for nothing," he wrote, " on the strength of being an Englishman, and therefore inviolable."

[1] Later well know in the House of Commons, at this date he was a journalist in his twenties. Mr. Naylor is at present engaged in writing his life; this is a chapter from the book.

He saw the tattered fugitives from Sedan arrive ; the Prussians were thirty miles away, but still the loungers lolled on the chairs in the Champs Elysées. Bowles was not long in procuring for himself a *laissez-passer* which ostensibly permitted him to go anywhere ; but when he tested it out by visiting various parts of the fortifications his blond hair and beard and blue eyes attracted the attention of a beggar boy who bawled out, " *C'est un Prussien ; c'est un Prussien* ! " Bowles dealt with that emergency by preparing to belabour the boy with his stick, and he took to his heels. This was only the fore-runner of other incidents of the kind, due to Bowles' blondness and the out-of-the-ordinary uniform which he had provided for himself. Passing through an outlying town on horseback, a dragoon arrested him, ignoring his *laissez-passer*. He and a peasant took Bowles to the local commandant as a captured Uhlan. The commandant eyed him keenly, for he had just received a telegram directing him to arrest a horseman in shiny boots — and Bowles' boots were probably the shiniest in all Paris. Eventually, after an exchange of telegrams, Bowles was allowed to return to Paris, and as a commentary on the actual security measures he recorded, " Had I been a Uhlan I could have got into Paris without difficulty, for I was not challenged at the gate ".

At that stage, on the 11th September 1870, there were some 400,000 troops in and around the city, and a number of gunboats on the Seine which had been brought overland in pieces from the naval ports. Preparations had been made for a " scorched earth " policy to hamper the Prussians by setting fire to the woods and forests surrounding Paris and by filling the ditch round the ramparts with faggots and branches to burn.

Bowles saw some strange goings-on for a great capital threatened with investment and bombardment at any moment. One fine September day the garrison held a grand review ; the city was *en fête* and many of the troops sported nosegays on the muzzles of their guns and on their bayonets — with the Prussians only fifteen miles away — while smart little *cantinières* dispensed the contents of their barrels to the troops.

But even with a siege imminent, Bowles regarded Paris as a pleasanter place than London with its " street accidents, garrotters and police ", and in his opinion Paris was just as safe. On the 18th of September, eleven days after his arrival, the investment of Paris was complete. He asked the authorities for facilities

to see the fighting — a natural request seeing that he was a war correspondent — but they refused, saying that it was "too dangerous". However, Bowles was determined to make the first-hand acquaintance of the war he had come to report, and he and a friend hired a victoria, telling the coachman to go straight towards the enemy until he was stopped. The *cocher*, not unnaturally, demurred, but Bowles's powers of persuasion prevailed, and eventually they reached the gate of St. Ouen. The sentries had orders not to allow anyone to enter or leave the city, but at that moment they were much more interested in a pretty peasant girl, and the victoria went through unchallenged. As they proceeded on their way to the suburb of St. Denis, girls were apparently not so plentiful, for they were arrested three times within ten minutes by different groups of soldiery, who appeared to be so trigger-happy that the act of arrest came almost as a relief.

Some residents of Paris were still not taking the war seriously, and one Englishman, according to Bowles, was threatening an action against the North Railway Company for not issuing him with a return ticket to Charing Cross.

A little chemist whom Bowles met assured him that with a recently discovered explosive of fearsome power he could blow the Prussian army off the face of the earth. He had as well an even more terrible secret weapon, which would at once asphyxiate and burn any living creature it touched. Moreover, he knew of "a way of decomposing water itself, and turning it into consuming flames". He was, he informed Bowles, in the employ of the Government, and had already killed seven hundred Prussians with two torpedoes he had made. We hear no more of the little chemist, and if his devilish devices were not pure invention, the probability is that he was himself consumed.

Bowles and the other British war correspondents were having a trying time ; they were not allowed anywhere near the fighting, and such news as they were able to gather was delayed by the difficulties of transmission since all the balloons—the most expeditious and probably the safest means of despatch—had been appropriated by General Trochu. Bowles himself took the initiative in trying to obtain a balloon. He called a meeting of all the British and American correspondents, and received them in his sumptuous white-and-gold apartment. "*The Times* and the *New York Tribune* met together, the *Pall Mall* lay down with the *Daily Telegraph*," he wrote. "The *Standard* played on the *Daily News* nest, and the *Morning Post*

could lead them, so gentle were they." Probably they were overawed by the splendour of the *Post* correspondent's headquarters.

Some aspects of the siege were curiously like those in later wars. There was, for example, a kind of black-out, for Bowles wrote, " It is at once very patriotic and most amusing for zealous patriots to arrest and hustle every creature who shows fair hair on his face or shows a light in his bedroom window." There were searchlights in operation, too, for on the 25th of September Bowles recorded that the defenders had put in some very effective target practice on enemy troops trying to fortify the heights of Chatillon, and that " the electric light is kept playing over the country " to the enemy's further discomfiture. This must have been the first occasion on which searchlights were employed in war.

In an endeavour to maintain the morale of the citizens, Bowles suggested the reopening of the theatres with a series of patriotic plays. This, he said, would be a " much more profitable occupation than listening to and retailing apocryphal accounts of great victories." He found cause, too, to lament the decline in social behaviour. " There are a vast number of husbands and lovers away to the wars . . . it requires now an exceptionally small endowment of looks and audacity to make a successful impression upon the female heart." As for the husbands and lovers who were staying at home, their hearts, physically speaking, were being well protected, for " every other shop contains a supply of breast-plates of metal or leather, and a brisk trade is being done in them with those fathers of families whom a hard fate has driven into the Garde Nationale."

By the end of September the confidence of Parisians in ultimate victory had increased. Meat prices were controlled and a black market flourished, and although all communications were cut, Paris looked like " a city illuminated for victory rather than one . . . in hourly expectation of an assault." One minor French victory was the exploit of a trio of " ladies ", who went through the lines, took up their quarters with the Prussians, and returned laden with watches, trinkets and other valuable objects which the Prussians had looted from towns on their line of march. The savagery of the Prussians was showing itself in the villages around Paris. "If their daily requisitions are not met," wrote Bowles, " they shoot or hang the person on whom the requisition has been made. Already they have murdered four mayors, a wine merchant and two provision dealers."

On the 3rd of October a friend arrived to share Bowles's lodgings.

Neither had any money, " but we propose to support each other with our mutual credit, and to share our last rat together." Their main asset, however, was a man-of-all-work named Jean, who was general servant, valet and chef all in one, besides being adept in stalling off importunate tradesmen who demanded payment. He would go out at five in the morning in search of meat, butter and eggs, and would always return with trophies. The friend sharing Bowles's rooms was James Tissot, the artist who later executed many cartoons for *Vanity Fair* and whose more important work is to be seen in many public galleries.

Hereabouts there was a lull in the fighting and Bowles poked ridicule at the garrison of half a million men who sat with folded arms, not daring to strike a blow. " They . . . sow their ramparts with nails, points upwards, and propose even to cover them with broken glass, as if the Prussians were so many cats." The Parisiennes too were very critical of their menfolk, and two hundred women marched to the Hotel de Ville to demand that the able-bodied men doing ambulance duty should be drafted into the National Guard and their places taken by women. Another feminine organisation, the *Comite des Femmes*, had as its object the replacement of male combatants by female. Bowles was present at one of their meetings, when a speaker announced that she had invented a thimble which would save Frenchwomen from a fate worse than death. " The Prussian advances towards you—you put forth your hand, you prick him—he is dead and you are pure and tranquil." But none of the audience seemed inclined to adopt the thimble. The *Comite*, however, were determined to secure recruits, and realising the appeal of a glamorous uniform, displayed posters appealing to the ladies to join the *Amazones de la Seine*—and wear a uniform consisting of " a black pantaloon with orange stripes, a black blouse with a hood, a black kepi with orange band, and a cartouche box across the shoulders." They were to defend the ramparts and the barricades, and afford to the troops " all the domestic and fraternal services compatible with moral order and military discipline."

Bowles thought this might be an excellent idea. " There are those who laugh at these maidens of Saragossa, but if properly employed they might do harm to the Prussians in various ways. Honi soit qui mal y pense."

By the 12th of October the siege had become " desperately slow ", for not a projectile falls near the town. There was in fact so little for Bowles the war correspondent to write home about that he offered

his services as an ambulance driver. His request was refused, and so, frustrated in his efforts to get near such fighting as was going on, he could only report on events remote from the front line. The National Guard became a target for his sarcasm. " These valiant wine merchants and grocers mount guard on the ramparts every four or five days, within an average distance of five miles from the Prussians . . . . They have suffered fearfully. I understand that one-half of them are laid up with a cold in the head, and that the rest are so hoarse they can scarcely give the pass words. Such are the horrors of war, and such the heroism with which the shopkeeper of all times and countries defends his till."

Bowles never knew whether his letters and despatches got through or not. He had just witnessed a balloon turning somersaults in the air, and it might well have carried his correspondence. As to the communications entrusted to messengers on foot who essayed to make their way through the encircling Prussians, he found it depressing to feel that the messenger might, " in the hurry of being shot or hanged . . . forget to make it a last request that his letters shall be forwarded."

Towards the end of October the food situation worsened and widespread hoarding began to be practised. Bowles himself began to think about it, but whether he was serious is difficult to determine. " At present I am hesitating between a sheep and a horse," he wrote. " I can get a sheep for forty francs, while a horse costs two hundred ; but then one can't very well ride a sheep . . . On the whole I think I shall content myself with keeping a sharp eye on my *concierge's* cat, which I am surreptitiously feeding up for eventualities. I rather think, too, that the balance of testimony of the *gourmets* is in favour of the cat, which is exactly like hare, as compared with horse, which is only like horse."

Returning home on the 21st October, the day of the sortie of La Malmaison, he found Tissot there. He, with his company of sixty men, had been in the front line under the wall of Malmaison itself, and had lost seventeen of his company. The next morning Bowles, determined to do his job properly, set off for the scene of the fighting. At Rueil he came up with some ambulance vans on the way to the battlefield and offered his services. He was detailed to carry the ambulance flag, and led the cavalcade. The only soldier they met on the way was a Prussian, who amiably offered to show them where wounded might be found.

The food situation seemed to fluctuate curiously, for on the 27th October Bowles reported that the "starving-out" process did not appear to be making progress and that he could dine very well for five francs — "as well as it would be possible to do in London for twice the money". Moreover, in the restaurants "one can light one's cigarette over coffee, immediately after dinner, without moving." Even besieged Paris was better in this respect than untroubled London, and he hoped that "all the smart, dinner-giving people in London will contrive next season to make smoking in the dining room after the ladies have left a general rule."

Metz fell on the 30th October, but negotiations for an armistice broke down. Incoming news became scarce, as for a fortnight the carrier-pigeon service which had almost daily brought news from Tours had ceased to function. Rumour had it that the Prussians had detailed their crack marksmen to shoot the pigeons, and had also imported hawks from Saxony to bring them down.

In the Gare du Nord grass grew between the rusted rails, and the tracks were congested, not with rolling stock, but with "seven gigantic balloons painted gaudily in yellow, red and black stripes." On the 18th November Bowles witnessed the departure of one of them with quite a considerable cargo — five sacks of mail, five baskets containing thirty pigeons, and two passengers. The food situation just then underwent yet another violent change, for the populace continued to eat horse and donkey, "while even rat has its admirers, but those who indulge in these strange meats do it partly from curiosity and partly that they may be able to think themselves heroically starving." One feels however that many Parisians must have been on short commons, or the possessors of sporting guns would not have taken to shooting at sparrows in the streets to the detriment of many windows.

For the working classes, according to Bowles, the siege brought a rise in the standard of living. "The workman no longer rises early to spend his day in toil — all he has to do is to attend his National Guard drill, to mount his guard twice a week, and to walk about in his uniform. For this he gets fifteenpence a-day, while his wife receives from the *Mairie* tenpence a-day for herself and fivepence for each of her children. With these sums they can live in comparative comfort and are better off in all respects than they ever were in times of peace." The system, he said, encouraged idleness and drunkenness. "The National Guards

are drunk upon the ramparts, the workmen drunk all about the streets, and even the *cochers du fiacre* are drunk upon their boxes."

The balloon and pigeon posts were running fairly smoothly in November, and the incoming pigeons must have carried a considerable amount of news, for according to Bowles each bird generally carried from five to six hundred telegrams — which, even if written upon cigarette papers, sounds quite a heavy cargo for a frail bird.

It was a queer war, for in between reports of Prussian "frightfulness" we read that "a few days since, friendly relations between the two armies were pushed so far that the Prussian officers invited the French to a dinner, which was accepted and eaten in the greatest good-fellowship in a small villa between the lines." This, however, was followed by a very severe order from General Trochu forbidding such fraternisation.

On the 29th November and following days Bowles was present at the great sortie of Champigny. It was a disastrous affair, for the morale of the French troops proved unequal to the strain and they became a disorderly, panic-stricken rabble. The situation was saved only by the heavy guns of St. Maur, which silenced the Prussian batteries and enabled Champigny, partly occupied by the Prussians, to be retaken. Bowles, apparently, was so mixed up with the fighting that the risks he took were practically the same as those run by the combatants — with the important difference that he had no weapon with which to defend himself. A day or two after this engagement Bowles himself had experience of fraternisation with the Prussians, for four officer prisoners, on parole in Paris, invited him to breakfast with them at a cafe on the boulevard.

On the 10th of December the food situation took yet another turn, for cheese and rice, thought to have been exhausted long since, suddenly reappeared and were sold freely upon production of the ration card. Herrings too were on the ration — one-sixth of a herring per day per person. Vegetables, bread, wine and tobacco were still plentiful. But circumstances pointed to a grave shortage of meat, for Paris was plastered with notices offering rewards for "lost" dogs and cats, which Bowles was certain must have been "long since eaten and digested." The British residents of Paris — three thousand of them — were in rather a plight, and Bowles protested strongly in his despatches at the absence of any official person to look after their interests.

The Ambassador had long since departed — before the siege began. They were dependent on charity for their food, and it was fortunate for them that Mr. Richard Wallace, the celebrated art collector, came to their rescue with open-handed generosity.

By the middle of December things looked very black. Rouen had been occupied and Orleans retaken by the Prussians. The Government had fled to Bordeaux. The National Guard, Bowles reported, were a licentious lot, and their grave lapses were merely visited by the mildest of punishments. Yet, as regards the ordinary Parisians, Bowles remarked a striking change for the better as a result of the siege. They had, he wrote, " lost that extraordinary conceit which made them regard themselves as the one chosen people, and their city as the one idol of the universe."

Food, however, was still his main preoccupation, and on the 19th December he wrote that he had not tasted meat for a fortnight yet felt none the worse. Although always an enthusiast for food, he seems to have drawn the line at some of the meat dishes consumed by other residents of Paris. " Cat, rat, donkey, peacock, elephant, pelican, camel and even wolf find consumers at high prices," he wrote, " and at the outposts even stranger things are eaten. A *franc-tireur* tells me that he made an excellent dinner off a crow and a dahlia root." " I dined off dog last night," he wrote on the 21st December. " It is much better than horse ; but then it was a pet dog and only five months old — very like mutton." A fortnight later, almost all his gastronomic scruples seem to have been abandoned, for he records, " I have now dined off camel, antelope, dog, donkey, mule and elephant which I approve in the order in which I have written them but none of which greatly captivate me."

On Christmas Day he had a " strong presentiment " that he was to be the recipient of a lethal bullet. A few days later he went out to the fort of Rosny to find a Prussian bombardment — and a pretty accurate one — going on, and everyone hidden in casemates and corners. He walked out of the gate and engaged in conversation with two generals. " While we were standing there I heard the hiss and ' grurr ' of a shell flying straight at us. ' By Jove ! ' I said to myself, ' that's mine ! ' And for the first time I ' manoeuvred ', or in other words fell flat on my face. The shell exploded at least thirty yards off, and when I got up, covered with snow, I was disgusted with myself, all the more so

because I saw that the generals had not moved."

On the 5th of January, the 110th day of the siege, the bombardment of Paris commenced in earnest. But, like the citizens of London under bombardment seventy years later, the citizens of Paris were curious rather than frightened, and flocked to the Luxembourg garden and other spots where the shells had fallen. Bowles saw small boys doing a brisk trade in fragments of shells at from three to ten francs each. The shops were open, many smart young women were to be seen behind the counters, and children played in the streets despite the fact that shells were coming over and casualties, especially among women and children, were numerous. There was, of course, no question of evacuation ; all who remained in the city after the siege had begun had to stay there.

There seems to have been little love lost between Bowles of the *Morning Post* and the reporters of the *Daily News* and *Times*. Of the *Daily News* correspondent he wrote that he had " shown great qualities. From a commanding bedroom in the Grand Hotel he views with unmoved courage all the fighting that takes place, and being thus on the spot, is able to recount with every detail the incidents that occur at a distance of seven or eight miles." As for the *Times* man, " he rides about — insecurely on a horse, or securely in a brougham — covered with Geneva Crosses, and in a gorgeous uniform with a violet velvet collar, and a kepi covered with gold lace and embroidery. I thought he was a field-marshal, at least, when I first saw this splendour ; but I find he is — orderly officer to the Bishop of Sumatra. Fancy *The Times* riding about after a converted bishop ! What *would* Rothschild say ? "

In January, 1871, the news was still of food rather than fighting. On the 13th Bowles went again to Rueil, where he found two French redoubts " gently throwing a few shells over our heads " at the Prussians. But the most interesting news was that the food situation was better than ever, and preserved beef, chicken and veal had reappeared in the charcutiers' windows. White bread had been forbidden to be made, and as a consequence the bread was of a dirty brown colour and " most delicious". Bowles detested white bread.

If the French bombardment of the Prussians could be described as gentle, the same could hardly be said of the Prussian bombardment of thickly-populated parts of the city, for in twelve days they

had fired 6,000 shells and killed two hundred and ninety-six people.

On the 19th of January Bowles was present at what proved to be the last sortie of the garrison — the sortie of Buzenval, where he was able to be of more service than as a mere eye-witness. He arrived at a farmhouse full of wounded, and at the request of the solitary surgeon there he rode off to Courbevoie to arrange for ambulance waggons to be sent. "I have the satisfaction," he wrote, "of knowing that I was thus instrumental in abridging by hours the sufferings of some hundreds of poor fellows".

The sortie proved unsuccessful, and on the following day sixty thousand French troops were in full retreat. Five days later it was found that provisions were far short of what had hitherto been believed, and that Jules Favre was about to set off for Versailles to secure an armistice at any price. Bowles himself blamed the Government for the shortage, for he said that they had not made "the slightest augmentation of the capital's food stocks during the thirteen days in September when all the railways were still available".

On the 29th January the *Journal Officiel* published the terms of an armistice — none too soon, for Paris had only a few days' food supplies left, and the railways had to be repaired before the stocks of bread and meat necessary to feed a city of two million inhabitants could be brought in.

Seeing his job through to the end, Bowles, with his friend Tissot, went on the 30th to the fort of Vanves, and found it full of Bavarians. They were hauled before the commandant, who ordered them to get back to Paris — and underlined the order by providing them with an escort with fixed bayonet.

The war was now virtually over, and on the 3rd of February the election of the new Assembly which would have the task of concluding peace was in full swing. Bowles felt the need of something really appetising to eat, and rode out to Versailles on his "half-starved screw". There he enjoyed, he said, the first good meal he had eaten for four months. "I revelled in an omelette, a *sole au vin blanc*, and a Chateaubriand ; but if they knew the delight it afforded me after living for three months on bread and jam . . . they would appreciate the importance of the affair." One wonders whether the succulent elephant and camel steaks mentioned in the despatches were solid food, or just imaginary dishes for the delectation of his English readers.

His appetite appeased, he took a stroll around the town of

Versailles, which seemed to have " accepted, if not adopted, the enemy, for I found in a tailor's shop window a choice of new Prussian uniforms suited to all arms and sizes."

For Bowles himself, however, hostilities were not quite over, for on the way back to Paris he felt obliged to go to the assistance of a peasant driving a cart laden with potatoes, who had been set upon by a mob of Parisian hooligans. They had begun to rip open his sacks and seize the contents. " Seeing this, I spurred up to the rescue, working my horse in among them, and laid about me pretty freely with the butt-end of my hunting-whip, while the proprietor, encouraged by the reinforcement, did the same with his stick. Between us, we sent some dozens of them yelling away. They immediately began to pick up stones, but I shouted to the peasant to whip his horse, and we got him into a gallop, which soon put an interval between us and the assailants."

Two days later the Prussians themselves were behaving rather like those French hooligans, for they were placing difficulties in the way of revictualling and were even stopping trains laden with food when they had arrived close to Paris. Yet, paradoxically, Bowles reported that the capital had still " considerable supplies of fresh meat, butter, eggs and fish ".

Bowles reached London once again after a five months' absence. It had taken him thirty-eight hours to travel from Paris by horse carriage, goods train, and peasant's cart in addition to the normal mail steamer from Calais. It was to prove his only adventure as a war correspondent, but he had done the job thoroughly, for he had been through the siege without a break and had probably seen more of the fighting at close quarters than any other correspondent.

LITERATURE AND POLITICS IV

D. H. LAWRENCE AND THE SEPARATE TREES

by DESMOND STEWART

HOW DANGEROUS it would be if critics were able to censor books ! For the writer it is better if censorship remains in the hands of half-educated magistrates : their grotesque judgments can be laughed into oblivion, they do not pass into the clichés of mass-thought as do the clever phrases of the critics.

The critic — (though we only see his name, or his initials, year after year, till they stop, or sprout a " Sir ") — is a man like other men, a reader like other readers, except that he reads with a pencil ready to pounce on evidence for his preconceived idea ; and preconceived ideas are the greatest enemy of intelligent reading. The reader, without the critical pencil waiting to pounce, will have his preconceived ideas too ; but not having a pencil at-the-ready, he may allow them to be undermined by what he reads ; he may allow the writer to effect his purpose.

D. H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*,[1] is an example: if it had been left to the critics, it would have been popped down the memory-chute long ago, re-pulped, no longer referred to, forgotten. But the critics not being censors, it has merely fared badly, like Shakespeare's Sonnets during the 18th century. Even Dr. Leavis writes, " It is the least complex of all Lawrence's novels, (unless we bracket the very different Lady Chatterley's Lover with it) and it is the only one that I find difficult to read through ". The Plumed Serpent was published thirty years ago.

[1] The Plumed Serpent, D. H. Lawrence; Heinemann, and Penguin Books.

The American hagiologist, Mr. Harry Moore, in his detailed biography[2] reports that " the reviews were as usual ; the Times Literary Supplement pronounced the book " rather feeble ", P. C. Kennedy in the New Statesman found that Lawrence had " arrived at a negation, a barrenness, an abstraction, a repetitiveness, an emptiness," L. P. Hartley in the London *Saturday Review* said Lawrence was " no longer interested in the ordinary workaday relation between people " ; the Spectator felt that in this " bewilderingly romantic lush and verbose " story, Lawrence was unable " to create characters ; his heroes and heroines are phantoms, projected out of his own fancy which is sterile ". Mr. Moore who is faithful to the canons of American criticism — that the literary investigator should list all minutiae extractable from bibliography, press-cuttings, correspondence, interviews, police-files, laundry lists, etc. — gives as his own comment : " The passing of time (sic) has shown that, even if the Plumed Serpent is a failure among Lawrence's books, it is a magnificent failure . . . "

What do such phrases as " magnificent failure " mean ? A magnificent failure to charm Sir Harold Nicolson, Miss Marganita Laski, President Roosevelt, Cardinal Spellman, Danny Kaye, Miss Snooks *et al* ? Lawrence can hardly have hoped that this work (which is, if *Sons and Lovers* be considered his *Birth of Tragedy*, his *Zarathustra*) would have charmed the kind of American and Englishman against whom it is a manifesto.

> And sometimes she wondered whether America really was the great death-continent, the great *NO* ! to the European and Asiatic, and even African *YES* ! Was it really the great melting-pot, where men from the creative continents were smelted back again, not to a new creation, but down into the homogeneity of death ? Was it the great continent of the undoing, and all its peoples the agents of the mystic destruction ! Plucking, plucking at the created soul in a man, till at last it plucked out the growing germ, and left him a creature of mechanism and automatic reactions, with only one inspiration, the desire to pluck the quick out of every living spontaneous creature. Was that the clue to America ? she sometimes wondered.

The Englishman who would enjoy this analysis of America would, however, find no incentive to complacency in this novel.

[2] The Intelligent Heart, Harry T. T. Moore, Heinemann.

England is not an agent of death ; it is already dead.

The Plumed Serpent was propehtic in 1926, demanding a return to religious wholeness ; in 1956 it turns our gaze back onto the movements which so disturbed the peace. It is an uncomfortable book to the challenged. But when time has really passed it will rank as Lawrence's most significant political work.

The novels of Lawrence which are popular (the 'successes' as against the 'failures' ?) are those which deal with young men and women in Nottinghamshire ; young men and women of the working class ; young men and women with a great taste for conversation. I have attacked critics ; I should perhaps be explicit about my own personal reaction to these novels, though I shall not exalt it into a profound critical judgment : they bore me. Their background bores me. Already I feel that boredom with the island which the later Lawrence compared to a great black coffin sliding into the sea. Does this disqualify me as a critic, this admission ? On the other hand, the religious and political issues which Lawrence raises in *The Plumed Serpent* interest my whole being, as does his creation of Mexico. Does this disqualify me as a critic, this enthusiasm ? It seems to me that while the subject matter of *Sons and Lovers* and of *Women in Love* is treated with masterly new grip, new illumination, — as subject matter, we have heard it before. Life at the Haggs, the long detailed conversations ; I agree, despite myself, with Norman Douglas who said that a writer may give us short samples of dull people's talk — to let us know he is describing dull people ; but he should beware of transcribing whole pages of it, lest he become dull too. In his non-prophetic books Lawrence bores, at least me, to tears. Here I show myself as a critic out of the main stream, since the main stream flows gurgling behind Katherine Mansfield's dinghy, who first diagnosed the three Lawrences : the black devil, whom she hated, the prophet, whom she didn't believe in, and the artist and man whom she loved. This separation (applauded by Mr. Robert Liddell and other critics) is certainly arbitrary, and perhaps says more about the separators than about the separated. Lawrence was an intimate friend and enemy of Katherine Mansfield's, and there is truth in what she says — truth about herself. Lawrence was a full-passioned man, a man whose psychic energy was turned to far more important targets than those aimed at in Katherine Mansfield's stories, and he was an artist whose works fuse in imaginative synthesis a

passionate soul and an original world-view. The separators may be excused their dislike for the violence of Lawrence's nature, and for the interest which Lawrence admittedly took in politics, religion and certain other unfashionable subjects. But any attempt to make a Virginia Woolf or any other kind of pure artist out of Lawrence must fail. Even if Lawrence is safely dead, his works still speak, and far too frankly for that kind of fraud to be practised on him.

In *The Plumed Serpent* Lawrence considers Mexico, a country of great beauty that has turned into a slum, a people with a great past who have become disheartened, embittered and estranged : their own forms have gone, they have imported foreign exploiters and foreign morals and ideas. It is far more than Mexico. It is the 20th century body politic, it is man after the industrial revolution. (Lawrence had seen the same tragic change in his own mining village ; the expulsion of the old comradeship between the miners, the ever-increasing interest in money and acquisition.[3])

Only a few years after the Bolshevik revolution (and a whole decade before the communising thirties) Lawrence sees the inadequacy of socialism : his central leader-figure Ramon. criticises Montes, the new socialist president of Mexico :

> Politics and all this *social* religion that Montes has got is like washing the outside of the egg, to make it look clean. But I, myself, I want to get inside the egg, right to the middle, to start it growing into a new bird. Ay ! Cipriano ! Mexico is like an old, old egg that the bird of Time laid long ago ; and she has been sitting on it for centuries, till it looks foul in the nest of the world. But still, Cipriano, it is a good egg. It is not addled. Only the spark of fire has never gone into the middle of it, to start it. — Montes wants to clean the nest and wash the egg. But meanwhile, the egg will go cold and die. The more you save these people from poverty and ignorance, the quicker they will die : like a dirty egg that you take from the hen-eagle, to wash it. While you wash the egg, it chills and dies. Poor old Montes, all his ideas are American and European. And the old Dove of Europe will never hatch the egg of dark-skinned America. The United States can't die, because it isn't alive. It is a nestful of china eggs, made of pot.

Today, in 1956, there is a general boredom with politics, and in particular with socialist politics. But the book entitled *The God*

[3] Nottingham and the Mining Country. Selected Essays. Penguin.

that Failed had a lying title : it should have been honest, The Anti-God that Failed, the machine that did not turn into a goddess, the slot-machine that only coughed out lozenges and machine guns and gramophone records, not nutriment for the soul. And 1956 repudiates politics ; but not for religion ; for gossip, for religiosity perhaps, for sport, for summer holidays. Lawrence saw thirty years ago the horror at hand, the deadness, the deceit, the emptiness. Against this he posited the need for a new birth, a willed religious rebirth, not a political rebirth :

> " Above all things," said Ramon, " I don't want to acquire a political smell. I don't want to be pushed in the direction of any party. Unless I can stand uncontaminated, I had better abandon everything. But the Church will push me over to the socialists — and the socialists will betray me on the first opportunity. It is not myself. It is the new spirit. The surest way to kill it — and it can be killed, like any other living thing — is to get it connected with any political party."

There is then a passage which the reviewers, in 1926, no doubt skipped, but which may have a place in the anthologies of the future :

> " I would like," he said, smiling, " to be one of the Initiates of the Earth. One of the Initiators. Every country its own Saviour, Cipriano : or every people its own Saviour. And the First Men of every people, forming a Natural Aristocracy of the World. One must have aristocrats, that we know. But natural ones, not artificial. And in some way the world must be organically united : the world of man. But in the concrete, not in the abstract. Leagues and Covenants and International Programmes. Ah ! Cipriano ! it's like an international pestilence. The leaves of one great tree can't hang on the boughs of another great tree. The races of the earth are like trees ; in the end they neither mix nor mingle. They stand out of each other's way, like trees. Or else they crowd on one another, and their roots grapple, and it is the fight to the death. — Only from the flowers there is commingling. And the flowers of every race are the natural aristocrats of that race. And the spirit of the world can fly from flower to flower, like a humming-bird, and slowly fertilise the great trees in their blossoms. Only the Natural Aristocrats of the World can be international, or cosmopolitan, or cosmic. It has always been so. The peoples are no more capable of it than the leaves of mango-tree are capable of attaching themselves to the pine. — So if I want Mexicans to learn the name of

> Quetzalcoatl, it is because I want them to speak with the tongues of their own blood.

Naturally a passage like the above irritated the majority of readers in the twenties, in that hectic interlude between the carnage of the first war and the anaemia of the slump. Naturally his ideas were labelled hitlerian, and dismissed. Whether they will be so slickly dealt with in the future remains to be seen.

Lawrence's views of aristocracy speak for themselves ; we can meditate on them ; they do not need explaining. His views on sex — for which he is famous, even in Timbuctoo — the airport surely has the Indian-printed unexpurgated version of Lady Chatterley ! — do require some explanation. For Lawrence has suffered the fate of anyone whose ideas are in flagrant contrast with the *mores* of his society : what he said has been lost in what he is supposed to have said. Lawrence and sex have become reflex words, like Himmler and concentration camps. In fact, the strongest element in Lawrence's sexual attitude is one almost of puritanism. He was the opposite of the libertine. Above all, the opponent of the female libertine : the scorner of the casual, promiscuous amours which, since Kinsey, we think of as typically American.

> She realised that all her old love had been frictional, charged with the fire of irritation and the spasms of frictional voluptuousness.

Sex to Lawrence was one of the main embodiments of the great vital flow at the dark heart of the world. (This kind of language either makes sense to one, or does not.) Men and women are, when unfettered by a corrupt society, pillars of blood and valleys of blood. Their sexuality is not an instrument of spasmodic pleasure, but the pulsating warmth of their real selves. It is not the activity denoted by the commonest English swear word. Kate Leslie, the handsome forty-year-old heroine of *The Plumed Serpent*, has to learn the Lawrentian lesson of what it is to be a woman :

> She walked across the beach to the jetty, feeling the life surging vivid and resistant within her. " It is sex," she said to herself. " How wonderful sex can be, when men keep it powerful and sacred, and it fills the world ! Like sunshine through and through one ? — But I'm not going to submit, even there. Why should one give in, to anything ! "

She decides to leave Cipriano, her Mexican " husband in Quetzalcoatl ", and go back to Europe : " to see the buses rolling on the mud in Piccadilly, on Christmas Eve, and the wet pavements crowded with people under the brilliant shops ".

> " Is that life, to you ? " asked Teresa. (The dark Mexican girl whose whole life is in Ramon, her husband.)
> " Yes, without all this abstraction, and *will*. Life is good enough for me if I am allowed to live and be myself."
> " It is time Cipriano should come," said Teresa."

Then in a moment of superb self-knowledge, the experienced European woman

> saw herself as men often saw her : the great cat, with its spasms of voluptuousness and its lifelong hateful enjoyment of its own isolated, isolated individuality. Voluptuously to enjoy a contact. Then with a lustful feline gratification, to break the contact, and roam alone in a sense of power . . . She knew so many women like that. They played with love and intimacy as a cat with a mouse. In the end, they quickly ate up the love mouse, then trotted off with a full belly and a voluptuous sense of power . . . Another thing she had observed, with a touch of horror. One after the other, her women " friends ", the powerful love-women at the age of forty, forty-five, fifty, they lost all their charm and allure, and turned into real grimalkins, greyish, avid, and horrifying, prowling around looking for prey that became scarcer and scarcer. As human beings they went to pieces. And they remained these grey-ribbed grimalkins, dressed in elegant clothes, the grimalkin howl even passing into their smart chatter.
> Kate was a wise woman, wise enough to take a lesson.

Kate does not go to Europe ; she goes back to Cipriano, the little, dark, bearded Mexican who enjoys another kind of love-relationship with Ramon, the leader of the new Mexican movement. They form a new human trinity : Ramon, the personification of Quetzalcoatl, gentle, visionary and stern ; Cipriano, the embodiment of necessary violence, Huitzilopochtli, who punishes the traitors : " And swift as lightning, he stabbed the blindfolded men to the heart, with three swift heavy stabs. And he lifted the red dagger and threw it down.

" The lords of Life are Masters of Death."

And Kate herself is to become Malintzi, the womanly forshowing of mercy and forgiveness.

Each of the characters is bound to the other in a special relationship : just as in Lawrence's view of life all men must be bound by some kind of emotive force, even if only hate. (We remember the Nottingham essay : " This physical awareness and intimate *togetherness* was at its strongest down pit. When the men came up into the light, they blinked.") The one sin is to regard men as abstractions, as both capitalism and socialism do : the former as " hands ", the latter as " the proleteriat ".

Certain critics, perhaps themselves linked to the view of sex as frictional voluptuousness, have debated about Lawrence : was he impotent ? was he homosexual ? was he a victim of too great love for his mother ? did he preach free love ? These questions lack meaning to those who read and understand what he wrote. Lawrence is, simply, the apostle of the living world, of living men, of, if we must use the word, sexual men. Those who separate sex from life, putting it in its compartment, and economics in its, (like the little boxes we undress in at the beach) kill life and kill sex. Classification of sexual types, the positing of a rigid norm, an average of orgasms per week, and so on — that is the activity of the enemies of life. The Lawrentian man is sexual ; and Lawrence is the upholder of sexual honesty and is the flail of sexual deceit ; but he is the apostle of sexual wholeness. Each must be true to the Morning Star within himself. Kate Leslie's revelation of sex is as " the strange, heavy, *positive* passivity." Lady Chatterley's is yet another, as again is Cipriano's, who comes to Kate when he wills, who takes little notice of her talk, and who then goes off to his soldiers and teaches them, half naked, how to bring back the dances of Aztec Mexico.

All of life must regain the instinctual health which animals have still but which civilised man has lost.

Religion, the last and the most important theme of this great work, means, on Lawrence's lips, something so different from what middle class man has made it (we think of the phrase " ministers of religion ", and shudder) that to call Lawrence religious may sound to some like calling Hitler calm. But although Ramon is against the Catholic religion imposed on the Mexicans by the Spanish, although he revives the faith that the Cross surplanted, although he removes St. Francis and the Sacred Heart from the churches and replaces them by idols of the Aztec gods, the spirit in which he does so is a religious spirit, the very antithesis of the cheap sneers with which visitors to Russia are

shown round the churches and mosques converted to other purposes. The churches are turned by Ramon into temples, not into cinemas. The statues are carried out reverently : " And after came Jesus in a red silk robe, fluttering, then a wooden Jesus all paint and streaks, then Jesus in white with a purple mantle that blew like a kerchief, Mary in lace that fluttered upon stiff white and blue satin. But the Saints were only painted ; painted wood." They are ferried to an island on the lake and there burned, that Jesus and his Mother may return to the God behind the Sun on a ladder of sparks. There is no implying that religion is a fake, the opium of the people ; only that the European religion is no good for Mexicans, who need their own symbols and their own myths.

Religion, too, is never used by Lawrence's Ramon as a means, a kind of cohesive force for his political movements. Religion is the bond between men, and the men themselves. There is no separation between this world and that world ; all life is felt, under the religious rebirth, to pulse with the flow of strength, which Lawrence compares to the blood. Sometimes his symbols may not altogether convince : men as pillars of blood, women as valleys of blood, just as his hymns of Quetzalcoatl are all too similar to the hymns of the Eastwood miners. Is that what the critics mean by calling the book a failure ? If so we have passed into a world where pigmies blame giants for not out-reaching Everest. At least Lawrence wrote books that can interest an adult, that can stimulate an adult, on adult themes, politics, sex, religion : he writes them with prophetic newness ; we can see none of his themes in the same light as before after reading his works. When we survey in retrospect the millions of books that the printing presses printed in those years, the detective stories, the love stories, the triangles, the drawing room comedies, the dreary biographies, the false manifestoes of politicians, the newspapers, we know better what valuation to put on these critics' words — *failure*, *success*, *disappointment*, *triumph*. When we read of Lawrence's mangling at the hands of the *Spectator* or the *Times Literary Supplement*, we see now, thirty years later, who was condemned and who was justified.

A DIARY

IN THE HALL at Orly airport the crowd was so dense that it was difficult to push through to the check-in counter. What masses of people are travelling, I said to the porter. "Mais non," he replied, "ce sont les curieux. Il tombe de l'eau, ils sont descendus se mettre à l'abri." *Curious* is the right word, I thought, to describe people who spend time needlessly at an aerodrome with the intolerable noise not only of engines but of distorted, crashing voices on loud-speakers every other moment.

★ ★ ★

Air travel has great merits, but even now, after so many years, there is a tiresome element of impromptu about it which seems misplaced and unnecessary. The other day my aeroplane was held up for an hour, apparently waiting for the arrival of a couple of passengers from somewhere or other. The time has surely come when, weather permitting, aeroplanes should run to schedule like trains and boats. To miss a railway connection is a great bore, but no one suggests that a train should be kept waiting for the convenience of one or two passengers who have been delayed by another, late train.

It will also be a relief when air hostesses learn to be as undemonstrative as ticket collectors and to keep their nods and becks and wreathed smiles for their friends and acquaintances.

★ ★ ★

Historical films are nearly always wildly silly. It is a puzzle why directors take so much trouble to change the past, particularly as they often make it less and not more dramatic. At the time when M. Sacha Guitry's film *Si Versailles nous était conté* was being shown there were furious letters in the papers from parents whose children had failed in their history exams as a result of describing events as they had seen them on the screen. The new coloured film, *Marie Antoinette*, with Michèle Morgan in the title role, is not inaccurate, but the French are very critical and severe about it. "Un beau film pour les coiffeurs", said one. Many of

them refuse to go and see it ; they prefer not to watch their royal family insulted. Louis XVI, slow and undecided though he may have been, was certainly not the oaf portrayed in this film.

Herr Pabst, who has made a film about the last days of Hitler called *Der Letzte Akt*, has also used his imagination freely and not very intelligently. Heaven knows, April 1945 in the Reichskanzlei bunker was dramatic enough, yet Herr Pabst has invented as a central theme in his film a mythical flooding of the Berlin underground railway, in which thousands of old people, children and wounded soldiers, sheltering from the Russian bombardment, are supposed to have been sacrificed on Hitler's orders for the purpose of holding up the Russian advance for an hour or two — presumably the armies were advancing by tube, otherwise it is hard to see what the point of this could have been, even in the fevered imagination of a cinema director.

Herr Pabst knew Berlin in the old Weimar days, and he imagines it unchanged. In the bunker canteen the long-haired, untidy, drunken soldiers and the blowsy, drunken hospital nurses, all with cigarettes hanging out of their mouths, dance orgiastic blues ; it is probably a fair reproduction of a Berlin night-club in the late twenties.

The " hero " of the film (his heroism consists in reproaching Hitler for flooding the underground) has his hair done in a very strange way for a German officer. It grows in all directions from the crown of his head, so that a little fringe appears in front and at the back when he wears his uniform cap. His superior officers do not take this amiss, however, they themselves are oddly turned out, most of them have left their buttons undone and wear their caps at an angle. Perhaps it is unfair to complain that the actor who takes the part of Hitler looks so very unlike him ; there again is an echo of the twenties : caricatures in communist newspapers may have served as models. The soldiers and politicians in the film look and behave like actors and not like soldiers and politicians, just as in *Marie Antoinette* the royal personages look and behave like actors and not like Bourbons and Habsburgs.

★ ★ ★

The last lap of the Tour de France went through a neighbouring village at the end of July. First came vans advertising vermouth,

then a group of stunt motor-bicyclists advertising Cinzano, next the Humanité van selling the paper, followed by various other newspapers blaring publicity. Then came four exhausted-looking *échappés*. Following them were film cameras, more advertisements, and then the big group of bicyclists, in the middle of whom was the *maillot jaune* looking like the queen in a swarm. Another convoy of publicity, a few straggling bicyclists, and they were gone to the Parc des Princes, leaving the police to deal with the piled-up traffic of half an hour, and a crowd of spectators, satisfied by this glimpse of their heroes.

★ ★ ★

Three items for those who are fascinated by the price of things.

1. The monarchy costs each inhabitant of the United Kingdom nearly 2½d. a year.

2. The French, who now believe a good many of the ills that flesh is heir to are directly attributable to drink, reckon that alcoholism cost them £215,000,000 last year.

3. In a rare book catalogue the first number of *The European* is advertised for 6s. 6d. "Fine copy" says the advertisement.

★ ★ ★

For the convenience of people who bind their copies of *The European*, it will from now on be paged and numbered in six-monthly volumes, this issue being number 1 of Volume VIII.

Among the writers who have contributed to the first seven volumes are Robin Adair, Paul Berger, Chris Bjirknes, Jacques Brousse, Hugo Charteris, Denis Goacher, A. James Gregor, Michael Harald, John Haylock, Cahir Healy, Jorian Jenks, Anna Kavan, Francis King, Michel Mohrt, Oswald Mosley, Alan Neame, the Rev. P. H. Nicoll, D. D. Paige, Oswald Pirow, Maurice Rowdon, D. S. Savage, Desmond Stewart, Peter Whigham and Henry Williamson.

D.M.

THE BERNARD SHAW* CENTENARY LUNCHEON *AT THE SAVOY*

HENRY WILLIAMSON writes:

Sybil Thorndyke made a beautiful speech, which moved me much; it might have been a fourth act of St. Joan, her face radiant and young, the theme being the goodness and wit and immense kindness of G.B.S. Two actors afterwards in my hearing spoke of it with cold dislike, calling it "fur". I've heard of "onions", "treacle,", etc., but never before of "fur". They looked bleak, were no chickens, and bit-part players, so perhaps they lacked fur, or fire. We judge in our own images (?). Rosamund Lehmann was there, in a pink poke bonnet, to read a speech from French writers, in French, looking like an advertisement for "Devonshire" Cider. I saw Alec Waugh, looking as though he had not only written but bought an island in the sun, as he sat before a magnum of champagne. St. John Ervine, white and thinner than before, damned *The Observer* for printing two adverse articles about G.B.S. a week earlier, articles damning G.B.S. for his political opinions, St. John already having done this in his biography. (We judge in our images (?). The robin pecks his image in the looking-glass). U.S.S.R. sent a sincere tribute. Norway and Sweden ditto. I could think only of G.B.S. at forty years of age going to see his dying father in the Dublin workhouse and walking about all night unable to face the unhappy ghosts of his tearful childhood when he was called Sonny, or later, George. His father died while he walked round Dublin and G.B.S. never forgave himself, realising his life to be a façade put up against that early pattern, and when the personal test came, it failed him; . . . he had not, after a sick-making journey, been able to face the past which had very nearly broken him . . .

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* In response to requests, Sir Oswald Mosley's article on Bernard Shaw's *The Perfect Wagnerite* has been re-printed as a pamphlet; WAGNER AND SHAW, 1s. post free, from 302 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1.

CINEMA :

Double-Take in the British Film

by VINCENT MURRAY

DO I DETECT SIGNS of an awakening in British cinema ? In two recent releases **Yield to the Night** and **My Teenage Daughter** for example, you will actually find attempts to come to grips (though in two fundamentally different ways) with contemporary life — a change from the usual escapism. *Yield to the Night* is the more serious film, touching upon a vital present day topic and, though not going deeply into it, at least presenting a case in a workmanlike manner. The film describes the tension and agony of a convicted murderess in the condemned cell right up to the final moments before the execution. It is painstakingly done. Not a spark of imagination is allowed to brighten up the gloom, but I am prepared to accept that as inevitable in the ultra-serious early stages of a cinema struggling to find its feet. Such was the main fault in **The Divided Heart** and **The Prisoner,** both of which dealt with contemporary problems. These are commercial films and good examples of their kind ; nevertheless a little imagination and originality can enliven the best commercial movie — witness the films of John Ford or René Clair, to mention perhaps the best known and most successful commercial directors. The lack of these qualities is obvious in *My Teenage Daughter,* though the film itself is an indication that even such an efficient escapist producer as Herbert Wilcox is feeling the need to make use of a problem theme. Where his approach differs from that of *Yield to the Night,* however, is in its unconcealed determination to exploit the lurid aspect of the theme. The story is novelettish — Sunday newspaper style : a young girl of respectable parents comes under the influence of a juvenile delinquent, with all the sensational developments one can imagine. Like other Wilcox films, this one plods dully on to the final fade-out without a trace of filmic style. The important factor is that the subject was tackled at all and, while we criticise the approach, we must note the film as a further sign of the growing social awareness of the British cinema.

Most of the remaining releases this month are British too, but they show the reverse side of the coin. **Reach for the Sky, The Long Arm** and **Pacific Destiny** are essentially escapist entertainment. The first harks back (as so many recent box office successes have done) to our achievements in the war-time semi-documentary, but for a British director to attempt to combine serious character-study within a semi-documentary framework is courting disaster. The characteristic British emotional

restraint kills stone dead any scene that aims at anything more than an action or suspense level, and the deadening effect can be felt throughout the film. It cannot stand comparison with Fred Zinneman's splendid study of paraplegic re-adjustment, **The Men,** where all action is centred on the chief characters, the camera probing their moods and reactions. Technically of a high standard *Reach for the Sky* is about as stimulating as suet pudding. *The Long Arm,* the last film to be made at Ealing Studios, is a further example of cold British efficiency. The expected Ealing documentary background is impeccably observed, and the usual Ealing condescension is evident when it comes to " character " parts. Where, oh where, as the crime-story slowly unfolds, is the vital spark, the excitement rightly demanded of a thriller ? Why is there lack of interest in the characters of the story ? We've met them all before, is the answer, and they're typed down to the last extra. The film's clean — cut smooth exterior conceals emptiness. *Pacific Destiny* is a minor work, and pleasant enough as such. Adapted from a book of reminiscences by Sir Arthur Grimble, it is frankly escapist in design ; it scores in its successful merging of setting and story. So often a box office story is artificially imposed on an exotic setting purely for sensational appeal, but here the strivings of a young Colonial Service cadet to gain the friendship of the natives of a group of South Sea islands conjure up a vivid picture of the lives of the islanders. Why is it impossible for a director to do the same thing for the inhabitants of the British Isles ? Do we have to wait every time for the achievements of semi-professionals like Mazzetti (**Together**) to show us the truth about aspects of our life ?

For the most part it seems so ; even Carol Reed, our technically most advanced director, has deserted the contemporary British scene and produced **Trapeze,** an American film made for the Hecht Lancaster company. It is a conventional story of circus life and love with Gina Lollobrigida as the *femme fatale* influencing the lives of the two male star-performers. The inevitable padding consists of even more conventional shots of animals, on stage and behind the scenes. Reed, of course, tricks it all up in a gaudy fashion with his full repertoire of arty devices, but the final result is as cold and remote as any less pretentious commercial movie.

America occasionally mirrors her social scene very well indeed. **Marty** is probably the most interesting example to date, though **Wedding Breakfast** (like *Marty,* adapted from a Chayevski television play) comes a good second. It deals with the efforts of a mother to give her daughter the most lavish wedding reception that can be arranged, until at last she realizes the folly of it all. With the exception of Barry Fitzgerald, whose oversize gestures and grimaces seem to be getting worse with every film and mark him out here as an obvious " character ", the cast plays with superb naturalism. Bette Davis gives one of her finest performances as the mother, and Ernest Borgnine makes his presence felt as

the husband. Richard Brooks' direction is efficient, and succeeds in creating a genuine atmosphere of life as this family lives it. The settings are well designed, and help the accurate location of the story. When we, in Britain, can do as well for our own people then British cinema may be said to have come of age.

NEW BOOKS

***Soixante Jours Qui Ebranlèrent L'Occident. I. La Bataille du Nord* by Benoist-Méchin (Editions Albin Michel).**

ON THE 10th September 1938, at the time of the Munich crisis, M. Georges Bonnet asked the British government what forces it could send to France if war broke out over Czechoslovakia. No immediate reply was forthcoming ; finally, pressed several times for an answer, the London cabinet sent figures which were hardly reassuring. For the first six months of war England could send one hundred and fifty aircraft and two non-motorised divisions to the continent.

" Mais alors pourquoi s'était-il lancé dans une politique aventureuse, qui consistait à prodiguer les pactes et les garanties d'indépendance aux pays menacés de l'Europe orientale, puisqu'il savait pertinemment n'avoir pas des forces suffisantes pour tenir ces engagements ? " asks M. Benoist-Méchin. " C'est qu'il comptait sur la France pour les tenir à sa place " he replies. A year later, when England declared war, peace-time conscription had been introduced and a measure of re-armament had taken place, but the general picture was not much changed.

In the sixteen years which have passed since the German victories in the summer of 1940 an enormous number of books have been written by the participants in the drama. Most of the Allied and German generals, and many of the surviving politicians, have published their versions of what happened, usually a one-sided or tendentious version. In addition, journalists and commentators, diplomats and secret agents, soldiers, sailors, airmen and refugees, have between them covered acres of paper. M. Benoist-Méchin has had the brilliant idea of synthesising this bulky material, including despatches and official histories ; the result, in three volumes of which *La Bataille du Nord* is the first, is an hour-by-hour account of the sixty days.

Churchill, Ciano, Reynaud; Gamelin, Weygand, Gort, Manstein, Guderian, Rommel ; Spears, Cartier, Liddel Hart, and many more are quoted ; the reader has the opportunity of checking one version against another and thus arriving as near the truth as it is possible to be. Everything relevant to the battle, (including

the crazy story of French and English unpreparedness, the extent of which was well known to the politicians who pushed their countries into the war) is here set down, with every source noted. By implication it is a tremendous indictment of those politicians, many of whom have survived to plague their countries still further. Nothing could exceed their irresponsibility, unless it might be their vanity.

The generals were not realistic. General Gamelin's memorandum to M. Daladier of 16th March 1940 is quoted, in which he said the problem was, *how to induce the Wehrmacht to attack.*

The Allies, inevitably, as disaster overtook them, all blamed and reproached each other. The Belgians, French and English were none of them satisfied that the other two had done all that was possible to stem the German advance. When the battle was nearing its end the French were exasperated to see the English hurrying to withdraw across the Channel, taking their airforce with them. Promises that they would re-group in the island and then come straight back to France were not believed. When this volume ends, on the 4th June, the Belgians and English were out of the fight : France faced Germany alone.

" Dunkerque " wrote Pertinax " laisse derrière lui de lourdes conséquences militaires, politiques et psychologiques ".

D.M.

***Europa Minor* by Lord Kinross. John Murray, 18s. 0d.**

FOR A LONG TIME there has been talk of the Turkish Riviera as the next place to be swarmed over by tourists. Everyone who reads Lord Kinross's book will understand the threat — there is there everything of beauty to despoil — and will hope that some international cataclysm, or slowing down in jet-age transport, will prevent the " development " of this sacred land. For Asia Minor's western coast, more even than Greece itself, is the hearthstone of Europe. There in those islands and on those bays the miracle started, between the anonymous barbarism of the west, and the anonymous civilisations of Iraq and Iran ; the ignition, and from it the starting to life of city-names and mens' names which will live forever. Here, as Bertrand Russell has pointed out, there was sufficient weakening of priestly power and religious bigotry for free questioning to be possible. For a European, Ephesus, Miletus and Samos are sacred names.

Lord Kinross's earlier book was about another Turkey : a more outlandish, rougher journey whose personal anecdotes some reviewers have missed in *Europa Minor.* For myself, I found his second book the more exciting, particularly the middle and later chapters which concern the more important sites. Personal anecdotes are as often boring as illuminating ; or when, as with this author, it is not a dull journey that one makes, censorship of one kind or another may thicken the pen. Not that Lord

Kinross is writing a history of the fringe-lands of Asia Minor. Walking in his Elastoplast-patched sandals, he achieves a bifocal vision ; quotations from earlier visitors, whether Greco-Roman or 19th century gentlemen, jostle glimpses of modern Turkey, that strange society hacked out of the Ottoman Empire by an enthusiast for cloth-caps, Latin lettering and Turanian word-roots. Modern Turkey has none of the elegance either of Islam or of Hellas. A kindly, rather dull society of brave and honest bores, — yet they must retain, mixed in their stolid blood, somewhere in their chromosomes, something of that genial and inventive race whose theatres and temples (usually about one in ten preservation) astonish the traveller. Aspasia came from here, and Antinous, to forget, for a moment, the Trojans and the philosophers. The Turks must be less Turanian than they would have us believe : the little Asiatic men on ponies, the Seljuks and the Ottomans, dominated but did not destroy the taller, fairer inhabitants who had been there before. The handsome spongefisher is a descendant of the Argonauts. Just as the Virgin is the daughter of Artemis :

> " The house of the Virgin, which may date from as late as the fourteenth century, is a Byzantine chapel . . . Outside, beneath a tree which grows out of the building, by a well now cleanly encased in concrete, are tables and chairs where the pilgrims may sit, writing postcards and drinking bottled lemonade . . . By an image of the Virgin, in a prominent position, stands a substantial offertory-box. The shrine is unlikely to attract a tourist trade on the scale of the former Temple of Artemis. But at least it is in the Ephesus tradition."

I read this delightful book in a Hamburg hotel on the third day of continuous rain. Seeing the people in mackintoshes from my window, I felt again and again heartsick for the un-raining, unmotorised east.

" Around the arches of the towering Roman viaduct, throwing long weird shadows in the flaring light of paraffin torches, the men danced to the irregular ryhthm of drums and the monotonous lament of a pipe. It was a solemn dance, demanding tense concentration, like a disciplined drunken stagger."

In Europa Major they have the American *musikbox*, disc after disc of similar commercial songs. Lord Kinross takes us where the tabor and the flute still play — even if the player does not wear a Texas-shirt and a tweed cap.

DESMOND STEWART

Heaven and Hell **by Aldous Huxley (Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d.)**

THIS ESSAY is a sequel to *The Doors of Perception* in which Dr. Huxley described his visionary perception of things as a result of experiments with the drug mescalin.

He now advances the thesis that the visionary states of the mystic and of the mescalin-taker are the same. The state of the former is induced by fasting, chanting, shaking, prostrating, whirling, whipping, confinement in dark rooms and breath-control, of the latter by a drug. Either method interferes with the normal functioning of the brain by producing a similar chemical imbalance, inhibits the brain from concentrating on immediate problems and breaks down its habitual resistance to the intrusion of Other Things. Mescalin is a chemical shortcut to the "antipodes of the mind" to which ascetics strive by traditional, painful methods.

This ready access to the visionary world by chemistry does not of course imply (or at least I think it does not) an equally ready and chemical access to the One in all, but only access to the same visionary world in which the One in all may elect to reveal Himself to those, already sensitised by faith and prayer for the Supreme revelation, who enter by the path of mortification.

Is it really the same world ? At least it has the same characteristics of praeternatural light, praeternatural colour and praeternatural significance to the beholder. He sees all things as if made new, as if in Eden or the New Jerusalem. It is heaven.

In a typical mescalin experience, the subject first saw what seemed like a host of "star points", then what looked like "fragments of stained glass", then a tower hung with "transparent fruit" that might have been jewels. The emphasis at first arrival in the mescalin paradise is all on coloured translucence as of gems. The heavens of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse, the Western Paradise of the Buddhists, Uttarakura of the Hindus, the glass paradises of the Celts and Germans, are all built of glittering transparencies. Nothing but projection of worldly preoccupations into the Afterlife ? But why, Dr. Huxley asks, should men in the first place have valued, and moved mountains to collect, these transparent coloured stones ? Why should they have ever been considered beautiful and desirable, if not that they were the nearest approximation on the earth to the "transparent fruit" of universal vision ?

Some will now wish to consider whether Urmensch stumbled on his first quartz-crystal before or after his first visit to his mind's antipodes. Others will see in this the deeper reason why the stained glass for Coventry Cathedral is so vastly more satisfying, and more stimulating, that that displayed by the assembled Glaziers at the Building Centre this summer. Several will be murmuring of the archetypes of Plato as they hurry to the chemist. One caveat : if you are out of sorts or harbouring a grudge, a shot in the arm for the same price will land you in a praeternaturally significant Hell, with Real demons.

A.J.N.

WALT WHITMAN OR THE FLATWORM?

by ALAN NEAME

NOT LONG AGO it used to be the custom to bury people in the foundations of bridges, partly to stabilise the masonry, partly to ensure the permanent interest of a presiding genius. A guardian skeleton was, one is told, found in the dismantled foundations of Old London Bridge. Next it became fashionable to put bridges under the patronage of the saints; and recently, when their credit declined, to name the bridges after ourselves.

At present, in the United States, a sharp engagement is being fought by seven Holy Name Societies, doughtily supported by the Knights of Columbus and the Children of Mary, over the naming of a bridge linking Philadelphia with Camden, N. J. Holy Mother through her sodalities makes plain that she disapproves of naming the bridge in honour of Walt Whitman.

Holy Mother's claim to be patroness of the arts and conserver of the humanities is a familiar theme in her apologetics. Dazzled by the ecclesiastical monuments of Michelangelo and Bernini, we tend to forget Dante's persecution at the hands of the White Guelphs, or that the works of Sappho whom Socrates "rejoiced to call the Beautiful", whom Strabo termed "a miracle", whom Plato revered as the tenth Muse, were burnt by Holy Mother's orders in the times of S. Gregory Nazianzus and again in the days of the Canossa Pope Gregory VII, and thus lost to the world for ever. Holy Mother's patronage of poetic genius at least is sharply discriminatory.

In the case of Walt Whitman, the protest of the sodalities is directly levelled against his "homoerotism", a charge sufficiently

guaranteed to rouse tempers in the land of security risks. But this is only a stalking horse for a deeper antagonism. The teachings of Walt Whitman short-circuit the doctrine of Original Sin. He, at his most powerful, persuades his reader " that men and women, life and death, and all things are divinely good ".

And so William James could write :

> " It has come about that many persons today regard Walt Whitman as the restorer of the eternal natural religion. He has infected them with his own love of comrades, with his own gladness that he and they exist. Societies are actually formed for his cult ; a periodical organ exists for its propagation, in which the lines of orthodoxy and heterodoxy are already beginning to be drawn ; hymns are written by others in his peculiar prosody ; and he is even explicitly compared with the founder of the Christian religion, not altogether to the advantage of the latter."

That was in 1902, but theological rancour loses none of its bite for the passage of time. The eternal natural religion — mirage though it may be — loses none of its suavity either.

Stendhal distinguished the ministry of the Christian priests from other priesthoods earlier by their artful linking and stimulation of two common emotions. Cynically, but not quite untruly, he remarked that " they never let the mildest plague or smallest mishap pass without turning it to advantage, either by intensifying fear and the religious emotion, or at the very least by building a fine church, like the *Salute* at Venice ". Fear and what we should now call the sense of the numinous.

The natural religion of Whitman, which William James calls eternal, very clearly dissociates these two emotions, suppresses the first, fear, altogether, and exalts the second into an all-embracing religion of wonder, submission and charity. Whitman is one of the once-born. For him the circumcision of the heart is a cruel mumbo-jumbo.

It is to the sincerity and power of the *Song of Myself* that the sodalities pay their left-handed tribute by opposing Whitman's nomination as protective genius of the bridge at Philadelphia :

> " I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained,
> I stand and look at them long and long ;
> They do not sweat and whine about their condition.

They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins.
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his own kind that lived thousands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth."

However, lest Holy Mother should be accused of not liking poetry, lest the legend of her patronage should be impaired, the Sodalities of the B. Sacrament and the Sacred Heart Societies have put forward another local candidate for the stabilisation of the bridge. It is Joyce Kilmer, the author of that famous classical number *Trees.*

It would be superfluous to demonstrate the superiority of Whitman to Kilmer as poet ; not so superfluous to make a few distinctions on other grounds. For instance, if to qualify for a U.S. visa we Europeans had to name any six American poets of the nineteenth century, would any of us be able to do it ? Not many Frenchmen would be able to get beyond Poe and Whitman. English applicants would score Longfellow and Whitman, might identify the authorship of *The Raven* with that of *The Tales of Mystery and Imagination.* Honours candidates would possibly remember that Emily Dickinson was not the same poetess as Emily Bronte. One or two Nobel Prizemen would name Greenleaf Whittier. Walt Whitman is one of a smallish company as far as Europeans are concerned. But in all the three hundred pages of the *Penguin Book of Modern American Verse,* which starts as far back as Emily Dickinson, I cannot find a single reference to Joyce Kilmer. That tells us something about the sodalities' civic pride. Of creative writers in the late nineteenth century perhaps Ibsen and Whitman stirred more people than any two others. That tells us something of the sodalities' provincialism. Whitman was a non-combatant ; Kilmer was killed in the First World War, — *to consider :* the Church's attitude to war. Whitman was an original genius ; Kilmer a Catholic convert, " representative of American traditions, American family life and American soldiery." — We need draw no more distinctions.

Just to what extent Kilmer represents the traditions of the expanding frontier, of optimism at great expanses, great masses, great numbers, of huge anti-disciplinarian formlessness, of equality, of free-thinking and high thinking, even the Pontifex Maximus

might be hard put to define. Just to what extent the traditions of America are Catholic, rather than revolutionary, egalitarian, deist, Protestant, Emersonian, anti-hierarchic or Masonic would take more casuists to explain than are to be found in the whole of Pennsylvania. Nor, I suspect, in efforts to establish the Catholic tradition of their States, could the wittiest theologians of Pennsylvania and New Jersey combined succeed in reconciling the decrees of the Council of Trent or the devotions of the *Mary Psalter* with William Penn's attacks on the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity and the Anselmian theory of the Atonement (for which he was put in the Tower). Not even on the shifting ground that the Protestant reform embodied elements at least of the Catholic tradition — for in *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*, Penn showed an equal disapproval of Geneva as of Rome, and roundly denounced the Calvinist theory of Justification along with SS. Athanasius and Anselm. Would anyone seriously dispute Penn's rejection of all forms of dogmatic or institutional religion ? One begins to suspect Holy Mother of trying to pull the wool over our eyes in respect of the ancient Catholic tradition of Pennsylvania and New Jersey ; indeed, with the new cult-legend of the Four Chaplains, the ancient Catholic tradition of the United States at large.

Holy Mother would have a stronger case over the naming of the bridge if she were prepared to plead the superiority of Kilmer to Whitman on specifically religious, or ethical, grounds — that is if no son of Philadelphia or Camden, N. J. deserves of her higher honours for devotion to the Holy Father or prudence of private life than Joyce Kilmer. But if there have been greater religious or ethical geniuses than Kilmer, and probably the sodalists would be prepared to admit that there have been, we are bound to return to the point where we began : that Holy Mother has adopted as her candidate, not a holy priest, not a great Catholic thinker, not a Maria Goretti, but a poet. She invites us to an exercise in circumcisional aesthetics, to make a blessed choice between Walt Whitman and Joyce Kilmer, as poets.

If we listen to her pleas, what shall we engrave on the bridge at Philadelphia ? A little anti-poetic poem that, postulating the superiority of nature to art, mentions God twice and prayer once.

> I think that I shall never see
> A poem lovely as a tree,
> A tree whose hungry mouth is prest

Against the earth's sweet, flowing breast ;
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray ;
A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair ;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain ;
Who intimately lives with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Did I say anti-poetic poem ? Surely, an anti-poem. The initial lack of conviction in *I think*, so utterly foreign to the decisive mind of Holy Mother. The silliness of trying to force any kind of aesthetic comparison between poems and trees ; can one imagine Holy Mother confusing the categories and suddenly ruling that Peter's Pence were more beautiful than the Mary Psalter ? The last couplet has only this to be said for it, that it does not fall into the hateful errors of Malebranche and claim that God is the true author, through Kilmer, of the ever-popular lyric in question. On the contrary there is a limitation imputed to the Creator, that God makes trees but not poeticising fools. Or if that is not admitted, there is the general proposition that poems are made by fools (author self-included), from which it might seem to follow that the Psalms of David, the hymns of Prudentius, the poems of S. John of the Cross and even the Mary Psalter are all the productions of nitwits, and by no means as edifying to good sons of the Church as the contemplation of standing timber ; which brings us near to the abomination of the blue-domers, if not actually to Pelagio-Whitmanism.

We can leave Holy Mother and the Holy Office to examine at leisure the theological implications of the poem. There is not much movement yet for *Trees* to be classified *de doctrinâ*.

Now for the imagery —

A tree is like a woman. It has a mouth, eyes to look, arms, hair and a bosom. But it is an unusual kind of woman because her mouth is pressed to the ground, hungrily, all the time, and she is breast-fed, even when she is sufficiently matured to have a bosom of her own. The relative positions of her mouth and her eyes are also unusual, for she looks up into the sky at God all day, while her hungry mouth is prest against the earth. Might not God be a Laurentian earth-god ? No, because she lifts her arms to pray, which makes it quite clear that he is a sky-god,

as indeed Holy Mother teaches : *et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris, et iterum venturus.* The eyes certainly are not, cannot be, on the same plane as that hungrily nuzzling mouth, if they are to look in the same heavenward direction as the arms. And here is another curiosity, that with her mouth to the ground, the woman must be balancing on her face, with her eyes just above ground level, somewhere at the nape of the neck. She is an accomplished acrobat, as well as a freak. But probably, since the stance we have described would be very difficult to maintain day after day, we should understand the poet to mean that the woman is actually standing on the top of her head ; what matter if her lips be somewhat elongated and trunk-like to allow for continuous sucking, or the eyes, on the heavenward plane, be located either on the occiput or on the exposed surface of the lower jaw ?

Now, when we say standing on her head, we mean literally that, only on her head ; she is not doing a hand-stand or supporting herself with her arms, for her arms are lifted towards God in prayer. But wherever her eyes are, on the occiput or the under-jaw, there is still the peculiarity of her hair, which is at the other extremity of her body. It must be so, for the American robin (which ornithologically speaking is not a robin at all) nests well above the ground in the branches of trees — not in low brushwood or scrub. So that with the woman standing on her head, the hair must be on her hands or feet, given that we are able to distinguish between them.

Can Holy Mother's poet really mean that this sucking upside-down woman, with her freakishly-disordered eyes and her hairy hands and feet, is more beautiful than the Mary Psalter ? Or have we completely misinterpreted the image ? The woman is the right way up all the time, her head is where it ought to be. Her hair is a trifle disordered by nesting birds. Perhaps at night among the fowls there are bats too caught in the tangles. The arms are raised, leafy but hairless — for there is no spanish moss in Pennsylvania or New Jersey — a little axillary witches' broom at worst to accomodate a redbreast. But her mouth, there's the horror of it, like some monster out of Mandeville's *Travels*, she has her mouth in the soles of her feet — suck, suck, suck, as she prays with her eyes, like eating toffees at Mass. (" How many ? How many times ? " — I hear the confessor's voice cut through the hassocky air).

Kilmer says however that the mouth is prest (I love that spelling) *against*, not *inside*, the breast of the earth. Now the woman's feet are rooted presumably in the earth ; her mouth will be at the point where the roots unite in the trunk, where the trunk emerges from the ground. The digestive system of our tree-woman must be similar to that of the flat-worm Planaria, which has eyes at one end of the body, and at the other — alas ! — a single all-purposes orifice.

However planarial her anatomy, however incorrigible her guzzling at prayer, while ingesting and praying, she is visited by two lovers, one who has occasionally lain in her bosom whichever way up it may have been, and the other with whom she lives on terms of " intimacy ". It all seems somewhat antinomian, this endless synthesis of anal ingestion, lovers and prayer, and very much more complex than the homely comradeship idealised by Whitman. But what can one expect from the twice-born family-man ? As a saintly old priest remarked : " It's the confessions of married people that send the clergy grey ".

At any rate it would need more than a Bernini to sculpt the allegorical figure for the Joyce Kilmer Bridge, more than seven, or seventy-times seven, Holy Name Societies to get Kilmer into the *Penguin Book of Modern American Verse*. If by some extraordinary *coup d'église* Holy Mother's project for the Philadelphia bridge succeeds in spite of all, we may well ask where she will strike next in her cultural clean-up. At the Stratford Memorial Theatre ? At the King's School, Canterbury, responsible for hatching that viper Christopher Marlowe ?

And if a Pontifex Maximus in the nearish future should fulfil the prophesy of the Abbot Malachi — *Papa et Nauta* — in the way that many of the Abbot's adepts fear, what a scrubbing with pumice may be in store for walls and ceiling in the Sistine Chapel ; Michelangelo's contract with Pope Paul III will be hushed-up ; and future pilgrims to the Apostolic Threshold may learn to gaze in awe at gigantic oleographs of *Jesus and the Rabbits* after Margaret Tarrant.

LETTERS

THE WRITING OF REBECCA WEST

To the Editor of *The European.*
Sir,

When nations, in their folly, are busy killing each other, it is natural that each belligerent should defame and even slander the other, but for a woman to persist, with morbid eagerness, in doing so after the fight is over is a sorry spectacle indeed. Miss Rebecca West's intense and bitter hatred of the German Nazis seems to give her some rich interior pleasure. One thing she wrote shows how unscrupulous she can be in her comfortable and well-rewarded patriotism — her slanderous remarks about the Mosleys and those who, like him, believed the war to be a mistake. The panic and cowardly action of the government in imprisoning these men, ruining their business and their reputation without a single piece of evidence that they were disloyal to Britain, remains a foul blot on British justice. They had every right — yes, and *duty* — to say and write what they thought ; and history has proved all too sternly that they were right and that the war was a blunder, destined to lower England to a level of impotence in the world which it has never known for a thousand years.

I should like to add my sharpest protest against the whole spirit, tone and argument of these two books, *The Meaning of Treason* and *A Train of Powder.*

Yours, etc.,
P. H. NICOLL.

1 Craigie Terrace,
Dundee.

To the Editor of *The European.*
Sir,

Rebecca West is half-Irish, half-Scottish, but she is thoroughly English in her dual morality and selective indignation when dealing with international politics, a trait that has given the English nation a reputation for hypocrisy. Her writing on William Joyce mentions how he, an Irishman, fraternised with Tans. However, she did not call him a traitor because of that. To her, the I.R.A. of 1916-22 were not patriots like Princip, but murderers in raincoats. Their adversaries, whose atrocities she overlooked, were, to her, fine upstanding fellows, like the Croatian fishermen.

The Serbs were top-dogs under the monarchy, but the position has been reversed under Josip Broz, alias Tito, son of a Croatian father and a Slovenian mother.

Why do the Rebecca Wests and others of her type (" bookish fire-eaters " they have been called) still stoke these old fires ? It is because they have a vested interest in keeping the old policies going. They have grown fat on propaganda and dare not admit, now, that it was mere blather.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK J. N. BURY

Ballymountain House,
Waterford,
Eire.

RETURN TICKET ONLY

Sir,

In the March, 1956, *European*, your article "Return Ticket Only" was published; reading it I could not do anything else, but once more wonder about the so called *humans*.

It was a pity and surprised me really, that Mr. Richards stayed that long in Ecuador, Chile, etc., being such awfully disagreeable countries; but of course judging from your article that reads: "Ecuador, as its name implies, has a climate whose disagreeable monotony never varies from the unpleasantly hot," I can see that after being in that country, he does not know that it has medium as well as cold, and very cold, climate.

If Ecuador, Colombia, and the rest of South America, Central America, etc., remain today very much as they were centuries ago, is due to many factors; one of them, perhaps the main one, is that countries all over the world, and not only today but it has always been, come around seeking fortune mainly, once acquired, to go away to enjoy themselves, never with even a thought of gratitude for the uncivilised country source of their benefits.

Many times I wonder why there are people that do not like for us to refer to Spain as Madre Patria, being that it is our own privilege, and very proud of it; believe me, the only sorrow for many people today is that Spain did not conquer at least half of the world.

Perhaps the Spanish language you heard in those countries was that exclamatory hyperbolic language as you say, but I wonder who you heard speaking it; I am sure if you had changed surroundings, social classes, as well as location, you not only would learn the difference in climate but also in language, social standards, etc.

I am sure you can find the same thing in your country, and without going too far from the heart of it, one finds the cockneys; but naturally in England, Ecuador, or any other country in the world, the higher a person is, the higher his standards are. Once while in London I came across a few disagreeable things and the

rudest man I ever saw, but really all these details were below my way of thinking, for that reason today as well as ever, for me the English people stand very high, and an Englishman is a gentleman.

The last part of your article that reads: " sails away to shabby Europa where size is not a requisite of beauty," made me laugh; whoever thought of size, when thinking of beauty; size in many cases, is just a matter of convenience, and as countries go, if they are small it is certainly not done for beauty; if they remain small today it is for reasons too obvious to be mentioned; I take for granted that you are well aware of them.

Unhappily today what counts in the whole world is money, and do not look only to the people of the Americas, look closer, and surprise yourself to find the very same thing; the more money you have the prettier you are for the entire world. Do not fool yourself thinking or speaking otherwise.

Yours, etc.,
Leonor Salcedo.

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