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ANALYSIS

THE disaster in the Middle East is due to the failure to think and act as Europeans. If we cannot now learn to think and act as Europeans we shall be divided, conquered and destroyed by the barbarians as certainly and finally as the City States of classic Greece. Any European truly regarding the Middle Eastern problem from the European standpoint would have pursued an entirely different policy, which would certainly have avoided present errors and could have brought us to unity and security. This is not wisdom after the event, for it is the policy we have advocated throughout. Europeans in the present period have but two interests in this region. The first is to check a Russian advance aimed at the invasion and conquest of Europe. The second is to preserve in peace, and war, the oil supplies of this area, which have importance for all Europe until we can develop in Africa, or elsewhere, alternative sources of supply.

The Middle East has very great importance as a base from which the Russian advance against Europe can be checked. A strong base on the mainland of Greece or Turkey for a united European force could be a standing threat to the left flank of Russian advance, and could be used decisively in time of war. Such a base could also cover the oil regions from Russian attack ; the Arabs would never deprive themselves of their own means of livelihood by ceasing to sell us their oil unless the follies and crimes of our policy had first driven them insane.

All of this depends on the unity of European policy, and the recognition of two clear truths. The first is that, for us all, the maintenance of the life of Europe is the most important thing in

the world. The second is that the strength of Russia is a vital threat to this life, and that it is the final and unchanging policy of the Soviets to destroy our European life. If the massacre of the heroic Hungarians at last brings home these truths to the mind and spirit of Europe, the vast tragedy of that superb death will not have been in vain.

British Government is Small in Mind and Obsolete in Policy

In place of the great policy of European Union, we have had small, obsolete national policies which have pursued the personal vendettas of the pygmy leaders. The present government of Britain and their predecessors have proved themselves quite incapable of thinking and acting as Europeans. They have not only pursued a selfish national policy, but a policy which in terms of simple British interest is many years out of date. They still talk of the Suez Canal as the "life-line of British Empire", but they gave away the Empire at the other end of the "life-line" in the course of fighting a fratricidal war with Germany. India, and even Pakistan were ranged against them in this quarrel, and Nehru is always far nearer the standpoint of Soviet Russia than that of Great Britain. The Suez Canal is not vital to Australia and New Zealand, because the journey to these Dominions is very little longer round the Cape. In fact, the Cape route even to the oil lands of Persia always has to be used in time of war or trouble. The Mediterranean was closed to such shipping during much of the last war, and one A. bomb, not to mention H. bomb, would have put it out of action for good in another war ; in fact, the very limited means of sabotage available to the Egyptians has now probably closed it for months. Britain should long ago have built the large tankers and provided the dock facilities which would make the Cape route little more costly (if at all) than the Suez route. In fact, when Sir Anthony Eden speaks of the Suez Canal as a "life and death" interest of Britain, he is as obsolete in his military as in his political thinking. It was Bonaparte who first recognised that in the conditions of his day the Middle East was the key to the world, and in this matter very few people in Western Europe have done much thinking since he died ; in terms of politics and strategy the arrival of the submarine, aeroplane, A. bomb and H. bomb have passed almost unnoticed.

The Identity of European and Arab Interest in Face of Communism

Hypnotised by the past, the British government has thus aban-

doned the present. They have failed to devise a united European policy, and they have quarrelled with the Arabs over something that did not matter. Those of the Musselman faith are our natural friends and allies in face of communism which challenges equally their beliefs and their civilisation. It was a monumental folly to discard that friendship for the illusions of an obsolete policy. That error must be repaired, and friendship with the Arabs must be restored. But the men of Suez can no more regain Arab friendship than these same men, who divided Europe in fratricidal war, can now build the Union of Europe. The first necessity of Europe is a change of government and system in Britain. These fresh blunders of the present government will give a new economic impetus to the forces of change, whose final victory is certain. Meanwhile Musselman opinion should understand that recent events do not represent all England and certainly not all Europe. That knowledge may save the Arabs from the embrace of communism which is as deadly to the Musselman as to the European. There is but one true policy in the Middle East ; the union of all the European powers in strength and solidarity on the left flank of Russia, and the closest friendship with the sister Arab peoples whose interest is identical. The folly of Cyprus, which divides Britain from her Greek ally, must also go. To break the Western Alliance by using as a military base this small island which one H. bomb could put out of action, was a characteristic folly of a British government which desired an obsolete policy but had not the courage to implement it by keeping their forces on the Suez Canal. The Cyprus policy was always the child of stupidity and timidity ; like all weak half measures it will perish in the storm. What we need is a mainland base in Turkey or Greece where a united Europe can concentrate its strength in case the final test with Russia comes. We need, too, the friendship of the Arabs, whose civilisation in the end will live or die with Europe.

What are the Chances of World War ; Present and Future ?

Recent events have confirmed rather than shaken our estimate of the military situation. We still live in the age of the " paralysed giants ". Science has produced such weapons that neither side dare launch world war. Russia may threaten Europe with rockets but no more dare use them than she dared to march with the overwhelming strength of her land armies through a relatively defenceless Europe. The reason is that the present development of the H. bomb by America provides an answer that can destroy Russia.

Even the great spaces of the Eastern power give no more protection against this weapon than the crowded cities of the West. The Russians know that an H. bomb suitably treated, and exploded in the centre of the Soviet Union, can send a drifting death through even their spaces ; the risk is not American inability to knock out Russia but the danger of destroying their allies and themselves as well. Such are the horrors which science has brought, but they are at least a deterrent from present world war. The two giants are still paralysed, the one by fear of Russian mass and the other by fear of the H. bomb. The renewed risk of world war lies some time ahead ; a war fought with modernised conventional armies when the H. bomb is excluded. When both sides have developed the H. bomb in such degree that its use would mean world destruction, it is clear that neither side would dare to use it. At that point Russian armies will again be free to march through Europe, unless in the meantime we have also developed a conventional army supplied with modern weapons to check them. We need a relatively small army of long term, highly trained specialists using such weapons as atomic artillery, A. bombs used tactically against concentrations of troops, and guided missiles. In modern conditions mass armies of short-term conscripts are obvious nonsense ; toys for old politicians who lack all realism and live in the past.

We have not much time to develop a real European army before the power of the H. bomb deterrent passes. In the meantime, too, we need such forces in all the innumerable semi-military, semi-guerilla operations which the Russians will launch within the general military paralysis caused by the arrival of the H. bomb. They will use all violence possible to destroy us short of world war ; the method will be a combination of political propaganda and guerilla, or small-scale war such as they are now trying to develop in the Middle East. Will Europeans now come together to develop such a force to guard our united interests from communism, wherever they are threatened ? Naturally, we should first decide together what are our united interests and what is our common policy. We need to form the policy and spirit of Europe a Nation. Our present position and dangers prove again the necessity.

The Betrayal of Hungary—The Great Lesson

In the end Europe will surely find the will and strength to save herself. Once we find the will we can soon find the strength. Are 300 millions of Europeans—the most vital and gifted peoples on

earth—to tremble for ever before the spectre of half their number of barbarians from the eastern steppes ? Nothing but the crimes and follies of our rulers have placed us, or can keep us in such a position. We must and will find in time the means to check the Russian march ; it is not difficult, nothing is lacking but the will. Then the future will be settled by a decisive struggle of political ideas. To win that struggle it is necessary to have an idea that can command the mind and light the spirit of men ; that is why our present rulers cannot even enter that struggle. But even when the idea cannot be formulated, it lives in the instinct and the blood of brave peoples. This caused the heroic struggle of the people of Hungary, even when they were shamefully betrayed. They were betrayed because undoubtedly the landing in Egypt enabled the Russians to return, and complete the massacre. Before that event the Russian armoured divisions were pulling out ; they dared kill no more, and the Hungarians were still resisting. Those who say that they would have returned anyhow to finish the butchery show a complete ignorance of real politics. The fact is that in face of world opinion even the Soviets cannot kill more than a certain number of defenceless people. If they go too far they destroy the moral and political position of every Communist Party in Europe. And the more modern science brings military paralysis and prevents world war, the more they depend on the victory of communism as a political force.

If the diversion in Egypt had not covered up further atrocity in Hungary, the Russians could not have continued the repressions. Every communist worker in every factory and in every street, would have been faced with a situation which would have destroyed the political position of communism. " So it is you who are working and paying to support the vile tyranny which is slaughtering your fellow workers in Hungary " ; that would have been the simple statement of truth at every bench in every factory, and in every cafe and beerhouse, in Europe, which would have destroyed communism if Russia had persisted. Sir Anthony Eden saved communism and destroyed Hungary at Port Said. The Soviet Empire was in a corner, tottering to defeat ; Eden let communism out. The heroism of Hungary perished on the altar of his vanity and stupidity. England and Europe will always remember him for that black deed with an execration from which contempt alone will save him, because execration is reserved for the great.

Let us from this tragedy derive the great lesson ; it is the force of

the moral in modern struggle. A soldier of genius said that the moral was to the material as three to one. That was the judgment of Bonaparte in his own time ; it is as thirty to one today. To win, we need a great idea ; and we need on our side honour and truth. Let the coming Nation of Europe never underestimate these eternal powers, which today are a greater force than ever in the real politics of mankind.

The Swimming Pig

The temporary effect of the Suez performance on British politics is interesting. There is no doubt that it has greatly heartened the Conservative Party and was at first thought to have swung a number of marginal votes to them until Chester proved the exact opposite of the Gallup Poll. (How much longer are political amateurs going to be taken in by the oracular nonsense of these private polls ?) At first sight the effect on the Tories seems a curious result for an operation which antagonised most of the world, and is bound in the end to shake still further the crumbling economy of the country ; particularly when it was so tardy in inception and so timid in conclusion that it was almost a parody of " frock control ". Indeed, it is admitted even in the most rabid Tory circles that it was ridiculous to start and then immediately to stop, far short of any real objective and subject to taunts about a loss of nerve under Russian menace. Nevertheless, it has momentarily rallied the Conservative Party as never before under Eden.

What is the explanation ? We believe it has satisfied that same instinct which can often be found in distraught civil servants when they can get no decision on any subject from ministers who are hopelessly incompetent and weak willed. At last they have been known to say : " it does not matter what they decide, good, bad, indifferent, or completely foolish, so long as they decide something " ; it is a mood of despair, but comprehensible. After 18 months of Eden government the mood of the Tory party was surely simply this : " it does not matter what he does, so long as he does something " ; and now he has done it, good and proper. The atmosphere, of course, will change very quickly when not only the money but the moral bills come in. Britain is not in such a strong economic position that she can afford to incur the hostility of the Arabs in the oil lands, or to lose the goodwill of America to whom her government may soon turn again more insistently but less hopefully, for some form of more or less disguised dole.

Things are certainly now beginning to move. Once the pig is in the water, the further and the faster he swims the quicker he cuts his throat ; the historic mission of conservatism will now soon be accomplished. That party has brought the final and irretrievable break-up of the Empire for which not only professedly, but quite sincerely, it stood, with the most genuine and disinterested emotion it has ever known. It is surely plain that much of what is nominally left of the Empire is becoming a pure liability.

British Equipment of India for Benefit of Soviets ?

Politically, Mr. Nehru has been no great help to the Commonwealth in the Suez dispute, and he performed a considerable disservice to the cause of all Europe when he appeared to side with Soviet Russia during the Hungarian struggle for freedom. Perhaps this eminent democrat apprehended that such a vigorous assertion of freedom might stimulate to fresh effort the subject peoples whom he is holding down in the East. In the end the many devious devices and contradictions of his policy will avail him little, for, if ever writing was clear on the wall, it indicates today that Nehru's government in India represents merely the tragic transition of that sub-continent to communism. This was inevitable from the moment that British rule was brought to an end both precipitate and premature ; once again not an ordered policy, but weak men in a hurry for the repose which nature denies in general and modern conditions in particular.

But it is not inevitable that Britain should pay for the modern equipment of the coming communist state in India ; particularly if this munificence casts such a strain on our enfeebled exchange that it causes an earlier devaluation of the pound. For the moment the white areas of the Empire seem to have brought their balance of payment into a precarious equilibrium. But the Asian area is largely passing into disquilibrium which throws a fresh strain on sterling, and India in particular seems to be running down her sterling balances for purposes of capital equipment to an extent that can jeopardise the whole sterling position. India's sterling balances were largely acquired by sending us supplies at a very good price for the common war effort to which Britain then contributed most of the fighting and is now expected to contribute most of the payment. In the end Soviet India is likely to be very well equipped by our present payment for the goods which India contributed when we were both fighting with Soviet Russia against Germany in what

was called the cause of freedom. A good democrat is Mr. Nehru, and a great asset to the Commonwealth ; particularly in Africa.

South Africa and Germany

British administration in general and, in particular, the City of London, is far better disposed to Mr. Nehru than to the Government of South Africa. In such circles the feeling is very strong that if anyone is permitted ever to notice little variations in colour, you never know who will be next. This sentiment has become a neurosis when dealing with such cases as the present government of South Africa, which, for better or worse, is supported in its attitude to the colour question not only by the Dutch population of the Union but by the overwhelming majority of the British stock. This same feeling among British people who have to live with the problem is now spreading to Rhodesia where the resentment of a contrary policy imposed by the Colonial Office is leading to quite serious talk of a modern version of the Boston Tea Party. For the moment we are not discussing the rights or wrongs of the matter; we are only asking the British public to look in time at the facts, and the possible results. The two outstanding facts are: (1) that a growing divergence of view has long been developing on the Colonial question between all the old parties in Britain and the government of South Africa, to which is now added the sentiment of Rhodesia. (2) that the City of London has consequently for reasons of pure political prejudice starved the most naturally expanding economy in the world of the capital necessary to its development, and has quite unsuccessfully tried to exert all kinds of financial pressure to secure a change of régime. This created inconvenience but not disaster for the government of South Africa, because if you are fortunate enough to possess a land which economically can clearly become as rich as the United States, it is inconvenient if your traditional source of capital dries up, but it is not a disaster as you can obviously replace it with a little time and effort. Following the steadily growing interest in Swiss and American financial circles for the economic development of South Africa, the decisive figure of Dr. Erhard with a considerable staff of experts arrived on the African scene against a background situation which is ominous for the policies of the present rulers of the Commonwealth. Dr. Erhard is a decisive figure for the plain reason that he is Minister of Economics in the only country in Europe which is running a steadily favourable balance of payments to such a degree that it is becoming a menace to the whole cock-

eyed economy of our continent ; Germany, in fact, is the only European country whose export surplus enables her really to undertake the capital equipment of another country instead of wondering like many other European nations whether it may be just possible to export enough to pay for sufficient food and raw materials to keep going without a crash. Germany is in a position to supply the means of an African development so rapid that it could become another German miracle. And it is very improbable that the German people will be inhibited from that enterprise by any opinion that the resident population of three million whites in South Africa should really be subject to the population of ten million migratory blacks. It is more probable if the present situation and the present British policy continue, that Germany will come together at an early date with South Africa and, ultimately, also with Rhodesia in one of the greatest economic developments the world has yet seen. If any sanity prevailed in Britain this great country would be prominent in the direction of a European partnership which might well be called Europe a Nation, where our old political skill and imperial experience in persuading diverse peoples to work together would be of inestimable value in promoting great enterprises of boundless benefit to the European and human future. But at present Britain prefers Conservatism, Eden and Suez, Labour, Bevan and free teeth ; all the amiable idiosyncrasies of an old lady turning her face to the wall for the last repose, and drawing round her shrunken shoulders that pathetic mantle — the last illusions of a vanished grandeur. It is our disagreeable duty to do what we can to inform the British people of the inevitable consequences.

The chickens fly home to roost

The present and inevitable pre-occupation of the Government is, of course, oil. Any child could have told them that the first result of the Suez enterprise would be this pre-occupation. The Government of Britain now stands, cap in hand, in a humble plea for oil before a Government of America whom the British Government ignored and the British Press insulted. France is sadly placed in something of the same oil predicament, because instead of assisting her to secure a just settlement in the vital European interest of North Africa— territories which are the natural bridge between Europe and Africa— we dragged her into the Suez adventure which had relevance to nothing but the private feuds of British statesmen and the private interests of people who are not European. All the chickens are coming home to

roost. It seems a longer time than a brief eight months since the high junketing at Claridges featuring Mr. Kruschev, Mr. Charles Chaplin, Sir Anthony Eden and all in the roll that rocked the world. Have the personality and method of any British statesmen ever before so tinged even tragedy with farce ? The sky is dark ; the air is thick with chickens flying home to roost, headed by a very wet hen ; always wet, and now irretrievably bedraggled.

EUROPEAN.

SOCIAL COLUMN

With reference to the sad announcement in our last issue, following the *Sunday Express* of 21.10.56, that a divorce had been arranged and would shortly take place between Max Beaverbrook of Sunnyside, Jamaica, and Fanny Eden of 10, Downing Street, London, S.W.1, we are happy to learn that this charming couple has come together again at Suez. We are equally interested and happy to learn that Mr. D. Hamilton and Miss D. Dors have also come together, at Maidenhead.

Since the above was written, the rendezvous of the political honeymoon has been changed to the more congenial climate of Jamaica, where the bridegroom already knows his way about.

Meantime, for the rest of us, a good time is being had by all.

SUEZ: WHAT HAPPENED

by BERTRAM PEEL

THERE is a large measure of common feeling that the problems of the Middle East have three root causes : Moslem-Hebrew tension, the British withdrawal, and Russian scheming. It is at least agreed by all that overshadowing everything is the possibility of World War. Even so, thanks to a rare historical chance, the affair that has now become known as the Suez Crisis may be considered in isolation. Further, the events within it may conveniently be divided into three general phases : from Nasser's " grab " to the formation of the Suez Canal Users' Association, from Israel's attack to the British cease-fire, and from that point onwards.

It is proposed here to recall the events of the first two phases and provide a record of the facts before they are hopelessly lost. The facts as they stand ought to speak for themselves, but it has become convenient in many quarters to confuse the earlier events and that is why those facts do not speak as loud as they should do. The news items abstracted below are taken from a right-wing daily newspaper favourable to the Government, and the comments are added for the sake of continuity and to relieve the tedium of a long list of happenings.

Nasser's " grab " occurred on July 26, five weeks after the last British troops pulled out of the Canal Zone, and a few days after Britain and the U.S.A. withdrew their offers to finance the Aswan Dam because Nasser was playing the West off against the East. The nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company repudiated a 1954 Agreement which assured Britain's rights in the Canal being maintained at least until 1968. Britain's interest is that she holds 353,504

of the total 800,000 shares in the company, the French Government owns no shares but derives tax benefit from the Canal dues, the company being registered in Paris. There is, therefore, good ground for looking at this dispute as a commercial matter between the Egyptian Government and the company. However, the next day a note is sent by Britain to Egypt saying that the consequences of her act must rest entirely on the Egyptian Government ; Egypt declines to accept such a note.

Sir Anthony Eden pledges " firmness and care " in the Commons and consults President Eisenhower. The U.S. State Department says America " trusts to the commonsense and judgment of the leaders of England, Egypt and France (*sic*) to see that nothing of a serious nature breaks out." The American attitude is thus determined from the start. In the British Press and Commons Nasser is named the " Hitler of the Nile ", and thus the British Government's attitude is also determined from the start.

On the next day, July 29, Britain and France agree to set up a number of sub-committees of experts to prepare a plan of action. Two Egyptian warships (ex-British destroyers) prepare for sea at Portsmouth. Moscow Radio declares, " Egypt has a legal and moral right to the act of nationalisation ". Eden in the Commons says, " We will not tolerate Egypt's having unfettered control of Britain's lifeline ; no arrangements for the future of this great international waterway are acceptable to the British Government which would leave it in control of a single power." Egypt's sterling is frozen, and the Service chiefs meet a second time. Three aircraft carriers are placed under sailing orders and the call-up of reservists put in motion. Britain evidently means business.

America's attitude, however, is different. On July 31 the U.S. State Department says that if America can help Egypt find economic stability and eventual prosperity there is no doubt she is prepared to do her utmost. Thus the U.S. view is confirmed, and it is no use for the British Government to blame Dulles for not backing us later on over the use of force. The American objections are : (1) Franco-British economic pressure and military plans could be interpreted as running contrary to international law, (2) Britain and France are opposed to consulting Russia and (3) internationalisation of the Suez Canal could be a precedent for Panama. Kruschev now states that the nationalisation of the Canal is an act to which a sovereign government is entitled. Those two points of view should have been enough to warn Britain of the immense consequences of rash action.

But on the following day, August 2, Britain and France declare they will " implement a control system for the Canal, if necessary by intervention with naval, ground and air forces, to assure continuity of operation as guaranteed by the Treaty of Constantinople, 1888."

A conference is called in London for August 16, and British Service chiefs are reported as saying that, if this conference fails, the Canal will be " occupied from both ends ". It would almost seem as if the decision were already taken, because paratroops sail in the *Theseus* on August 5. Meanwhile America sticks to her same attitude, instructing her ships to pay tolls to Egypt " but under protest ". Iraq, Britain's strongest ally in the Middle East, declares in favour of Egypt. Meetings take place in Cairo between Nasser, the Russian ambassador and Nehru at which the last-named urges that the Suez question be placed under the aegis of U.N.O. The U.S. Defence Secretary says he hopes the Suez problem will prove a local friction and not something involving East and West. (This is a very important observation.)

On August 7 the Foreign Office is reported to expect an overwhelming majority for us at the August 16 conference but, despite the fact that the choice of invitees is completely arbitrary and the acceptors number only 22, and although Nasser insists on a conference in Cairo of *all* Canal users, this is nevertheless not going to be a " rubber stamp " conference.

The Prime Minister on August 8 gives his " life and death " broadcast and calls Nasser's action " an act of plunder which will not be allowed to succeed ". At the same time " Britain does not seek a solution by force but by the broadest possible international agreement."

Nehru now describes Egypt's act as " ante-dating the take-over of the Suez Canal Company ". The irony of it is that the next day Russia declares Franco-British military actions to be incompatible with U.N. principles. Actually she's right. She is also not far from the truth when she says, " The nationalisation did not infringe Western interests, but only those of the former Suez Canal Co. drawing high profits from exploitation of the Canal, the company now being deprived of the possibility of growing rich at Egypt's expense." It is possible to disagree with this interpretation, but who can deny her statement that the choice of nations invited to London has been tendentiously made with an eye to securing a majority to support the Franco-British proposals ? Nasser clearly thinks so, and in declining the invitation to London asks for a Cairo

conference of all users of the Canal, which he adds up to 45 nations.

It is now August 13, and one senses a slight loss of public interest in the whole affair. Mr. Menzies finds it necessary to denounce those who say we must do nothing and those who say that Nasser has not yet prevented their ships from using the Canal. The conference is held at the appointed time, Shepilov astonishing all by at once accepting all Britain's proposals on conference procedure and accepting Selwyn Lloyd as chairman—very intelligent people these communist " egg-heads ". Dulles and Nehru put rival plans before the conference; Spain also comes up with a plan, in point of fact a quite workable compromise which is practically ignored except in certain American quarters. Shepilov sniffs roses and warns that any attempt to impose international control of the Canal by force could lead to full-scale war throughout the Middle East and beyond. In Moscow, Kruschev says that if war breaks out the Arabs will not stand alone.

The conference ends on August 23 with 18 nations backing Britain and France, including the U.S.A., West Germany, Pakistan and Spain. The Egyptian ambassador in London is handed a note inviting Col. Nasser to discuss with the Menzies deputation the decisions reached by the 18 nations in his absence (and also in the absence of Israel, who complains about this, being the only nation whose ships cannot use the Canal). Nasser's reply to the note is awaited in London for several days, during which he arrests two Britons, expels two of our diplomats, advertises for canal pilots and is said to be thinking of selling the Suez Canal.

The Menzies committee finally arrives in Cairo on September 2. Nasser says he will not negotiate under duress, asks Russia to speed up the supply of arms, says he will go to war if attacked and prepares to block the Canal in an emergency. While the Menzies committee is engaged in these climactic negotiations the British Foreign Office sends a note to Egypt demanding compensation for British officials sacked by King Farouk's government 4½ years ago ! It is not surprising the talks are now deadlocked.

At this point Eisenhower declares America to be in favour of an approach to U.N.O. The T.U.C. demands that there be no war for the Canal and advocates taking the case to U.N.O. Geddes says with the full backing of the T.U.C. Annual Conference : " If the Government drags this country into an unnecessary war the nation will be roused to deep, bitter, implacable anger ; trade unionists will not allow themselves to be plunged into war merely

to remove a dictator or to provide Tory back-benchers with an excuse for re-occupying the Canal Zone." Eden should have heeded this warning from Britain's most powerful single body.

On September 19, the Menzies mission having failed, Eden at last agrees to take the matter to the U.N. Security Council. Britain and France point out that all along they have acted on U.N. principles. Eisenhower says the U.S.A. would go to war if there were any aggression by Egypt. Meanwhile the Americans are studying four possible plans : (1) an emergency oil supply for Europe, (2) diversion round the Cape, (3) economic pressure on Egypt and (4) a " crash-plan " for rapid building of round-the-cape tankers. Thus America shows herself eminently practical and willing to face facts. Eden, however, chooses to bog himself down with a Suez Canal Users' Association, a proposal which Nehru immediately attacks, advising a negotiated settlement.

Russian pilots arrive for Suez duty on September 14. An 18-nation conference begins in London on September 19 at which 14 nations agree to form the Users' Association, but France now withdraws her support because one of the clauses gives members the right to pay tolls to Egypt if they wish. In this she is at least being logical, a facet of diplomacy which Britain does not normally approve of. There are now 11 firmly in favour of the Users' plan ; it can hardly be said that world opinion is on our side. Nevertheless the Users' Association is officially set up and—they form a committee !

On September 28 Egypt is loaned £5,350,000 by the World Bank, and on October 1, Mr. Macmillan returns from Washington with his European Free Trade proposal just as the October issue of *The European* comes out with an article by me on the very same subject.

So ends phase one of the Suez Crisis, a diplomatic failure from start to finish owing to the wavering and indecision of a man who professes to have spent a lifetime in diplomacy and foreign affairs. In phase two the facts will reveal, in addition to this, a moral failure of the highest order ; it may never be known whether this failure was wickedly criminal or just obstinately cowardly. No charge is made here.

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It seems to have been completely forgotten that on October 14 the British Embassy informed Israel that if she launched an all-out

attack on Jordan, Britain would stand by the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty and was prepared to send troops to defend Jordan ; and that if Israel started full-scale hostilities for any other reason, Britain was bound to intervene. Further, on October 15 Ben Gurion declared : " Israel will never initiate a preventative war or any other war " and, speaking of the Egyptian arms build-up, " We want to prevent war and safeguard our position ; this can be achieved in one way alone—if our friends and true lovers of peace give us sufficient defensive arms."

Russia used the veto at the United Nations on October 16, thereby driving home the last nail in the coffin where is laid to rest Britain's matter of life and death. All that is left are negotiations for more talks at Geneva between Britain, France and Egypt.

Now begins the tragedy of phase two, on a cheerful note with Titoist Gomulka restored overnight in Poland, and Kruschev and six other Soviet leaders scurrying back to Moscow after the biggest rebuff since Tito's own revolt. On the next day but one, the Budapest rising begins and the Russian army moves round the Hungarian capital. Shortly after that the Soviet H.Q. at Liguitza is attacked, where the command of Soviet troops in the satellites is centred. On October 26 Russian tanks cause horror to the world by mowing down the rebels in Budapest's streets, and Russia forbids the mass meeting in Prague to celebrate the birth of the Czech republic. By October 28 Hungary's Prime Minister Nagy is demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops, together with many freedoms. Tito calls for the ending of bloodshed in Hungary, and Poland's Cardinal Wyszynski is released. Developments in Eastern Europe are now at a very fast rate.

On the same day Israel offers Britain air bases in Israel if Britain should have occasion to withdraw forces from Jordan and if the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty should be terminated. Israel mobilises and Eisenhower warns Ben-Gurion of the gravity of such a step.

The invasion of Egypt by Israel takes place on the following day, October 29, and units of the British navy steam to the Eastern Mediterranean. Eisenhower declares that the U.S. " will honour its pledge to assist the victim of any aggression ", and proposes to take the crisis to the U.N. Security Council the next day. An ultimatum is sent by Britain and France telling Egypt to stop fighting ; this, while Israel troops are advancing rapidly into Egyptian territory ! (The ultimatum was widely declared to be impossible of acceptance and therefore unethical.)

Developments in Eastern Europe, meanwhile, continue at high speed. By October 30 Soviet secret police are being hanged in Budapest, the Hungarian air force gives the Russian army 12 hours to leave Hungary and Cardinal Mindszenty is released. Half the country is in rebel hands. In Poland, Gomulka restores all church property but declines to sanction the formation of a catholic political party, acknowledging that such a party could win an election.

The next day is crucial. The Soviet Government orders its commander-in-chief to withdraw the troops from Budapest, Nagy says he is ready to tear up the Warsaw pact and Mindszenty is tipped for future premier. At this turning point in East-West history, when a satellite had every appearance of having achieved the impossible, when the world watched fascinated and breathless to see what Russia would do, and when the entire philosophy and movement known as communism had reached the breaking point the West had been waiting for ever since the war—Eden struck. On that same day, a British cruiser sank an Egyptian frigate because " it failed to answer a challenge ". The R.A.F. raided four Egyptian airfields and Britain's police action against the *victim* of aggression was initiated. Without delay Mr. Hammarskjold proposes to resign as U.N. Secretary-General. On the following day Russian tanks move on Budapest.

Eden gets his vote of confidence in the Commons and further Egyptian airfields are strafed. Mr. Anthony Nutting, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and expert on the Middle East, resigns. The next day our paratroops receive final orders, Russia seals off the Hungarian borders and Nagy pleads for the assistance of the United Nations—the body formed for the protection of the weak against the strong and for the peace of the world. Britain and France have already vetoed the U.S. resolution in the Security Council calling on them not to use force in the Israel-Egypt clash. The entire moral position of the West has deflated over night.

By November 4 there are said to be 1,000 tanks round Budapest. Nagy broadcasts to the world for help and is subsequently marched out of the Parliament building at gunpoint. But there is still hope of a rally in the West when Mr. Hammarskjold proposes a U.N. police force under Maj.-Gen. Burns for settling the Suez conflict. On Guy Fawkes day Radio Budapest plays jazz as the rebels are massacred throughout Hungary. Paratroops drop on Egyptian soil at dawn today.

Now, at this exact point, Bulganin sends a letter to Eisenhower urging that the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. should act together, and a letter to Britain and France saying, " Russia, in company with other members of U.N.O. are full of determination through the use of force to crush aggression and put an end to the war in Egypt ". The same evening Eden dramatically announces a cease-fire from his seat in the Commons. The Conservatives are jubilant and the Opposition are silent ; their silence is found justified when it is later discovered that the cease-fire has been rejected by Egypt.

Another cease-fire is ordered for midnight the next day, giving the commandos time to land and drive the length of the Canal to Ismailia. This is the prelude to the arrival in Hungary of an estimated 15 divisions of Mongol troops ; Russia is not to be outdone by Gt. Britain. Mercifully, a cease-fire is accepted by Egypt on United Nations terms. It is left for the General Assembly to adopt resolutions calling on Britain, France and Israel to withdraw their forces from Egypt, and setting up an international Middle East police force.

Thus ends phase two of the Suez Crisis, with Egypt sinking blockships in the Canal. Britain and the Commonwealth are bitterly divided, as are the United States from Britain and France. Our reputation as a moral force has never been lower, our name is mud in the Middle East and Asia-Africa, an oil pipe line is blown up and the Canal blocked for perhaps as much as six months, Russian aircraft are flying into the Middle East, and the cost of the whole operation is not yet fully known.

On the question of collusion with Israel, no accusation is here made ; in due time the evidence for and against this will be examined. It is not necessary for such a crime to be proved before an indictment is made ; whatever may be said from all sides during the third phase, the facts of phases one and two are enough to support the demand that " Eden must go ".

As regards what has followed, it is relevant to make two particular observations. The U.N. police force was mooted by Mr. Hammarskjold on November 4, the day *before* Anglo-French troops landed at Port Said ; it is thus useless for Lennox Boyd to state in the Commons on November 8 that *because* of the Government's resolute action a U.N. police force was being formed. The second observation worth making is that not until November 7 did Selwyn Lloyd first mention, in a broadcast, the " dangerous possibilities in the area," in the matter of Russia's activities in the Middle East.

Mr. Peter Thorneycroft on November 8 declared : " Our intervention *disclosed* that Egypt had been armed to the teeth by Russia ". How then could he say, in the next breath, " We intervened to *stop* a war before the Egyptian air force ran amuck in the Middle East ". The facts of the Russian build-up in the area were known long before the Suez affair ; what is doubtful is that from that point onwards events were arranged to give the present result to such a nicety as the Government would have us believe ; why did the U.S.A. express such horror at our action, and why was the Leader of the Opposition not informed on this matter of national importance ? The Government headed by Sir Anthony Eden seem to be trying-on one of the biggest political escapes in the history of Parliament. If so, it would be exceedingly bad for our Parliamentary system as it exists if they are allowed to get away with it.

TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF ZANZIBAR

by R. H. PARKER

FOR MANY PEOPLE Zanzibar is probably just " the place where the cloves come from ". In fact, as we shall see, the clove-tree is a comparative new-comer to the island, the first seedling having been introduced less than 130 years ago.

Zanzibar Island is about the same size as Hertfordshire and lies 26 miles north-east of Dar-es-Salaam. Its sister island of Pemba, 25 miles to the north, is a little larger than Huntingdonshire. The Sultan of Zanzibar is also the nominal ruler of a strip of coast on the mainland of Africa, including the town of Mombasa, which is leased to the Government of Kenya for a rental of £11,000 a year. The name " Zanzibar " is derived from the Arabic " Zinj-Bar ", which means " Negro Coast " and was formerly applied by the Arabs to the whole of East Africa.

The history of Zanzibar has been closely linked with that of Arabia, Persia and India. Europeans do not appear on the scene until the sixteenth century A.D., but centuries before the birth of Christ, Arab dhows, little different to those of today, sailed to and fro with the monsoons from Arabia to East Africa.

The first literary reference we have to Zanzibar is by the unknown author of the " Periplus of the Erythraean Sea ", a kind of Trade Directory of the Indian Ocean written about 60 A.D. He tells us that the Island of Menouthias (probably Pemba) is held by the people of Mocha in Southern Arabia who " send thither many large ships ; using Arab captains and agents, who are familiar with the natives and intermarry with them, and who know the whole coast and understand the language ".

Until the sixteenth century we have only scattered references to Zanzibar, which appears to have been a minor port. The Arab " Chronicles of Kilwa " suggest, however, that in the thirteenth century the island was an independent state with a Sultan and army of its own. About 1503 it came under the dominance of the Portuguese, who exacted a yearly tribute of £57 and thirty sheep. The relative unimportance of Zanzibar can be gauged from a comparison with the tributes levied on the cities of Kilwa (£1,100 a year) and Mombasa (£715).

It was not until 1591 that the first English ship, the *Edward Bonadventure* arrived. " This place," wrote the captain, Sir James Lancaster, " for the goodness of the harborough and watering and plentiful refreshing with fish . . . and for sundry sorts of fruits . . . as also for oxen and hennes, is carefully to be sought for by such of our ships as shall hereafter pass that way."

Portuguese dominance declined, and by 1698 Portugal had lost all her East African possessions north of Mozambique. The power which ultimately took her place was not a European one, but an obscure and remote Arab principality on the Persian Gulf — the Kingdom of Oman. The chief town of Oman was the port of Muscat which the Portuguese had conquered in 1511. In 1650 the Portuguese were driven out. The Omanis went from strength to strength. The Albusaid dynasty, which still rules in Zanzibar, was founded in 1741.

Then in 1804 a great and most remarkable man, Seyyid Said, became the ruler of Oman. After spending twenty years putting his own house in order, he turned his attention to East Africa. By 1837 he was in undisputed possession of the whole East African littoral from Cape Guardafui (the " horn of Africa ") to Cape Delgado (now the southernmost point of Tanganyika).

In 1832 Zanzibar had become the capital of Seyyid Said's dominions, and a period of unexampled prosperity and importance followed. The influence of the Sultan extended far into the East African hinterland. It was said :

> " When one pipes in Zanzibar,
> They dance on the Lakes."

It was Seyyid Said in 1828 who introduced the clove-tree. He obtained the seedlings from Mauritius, whither they had been brought from the East Indies, with many other spices, by the appropriately named M. Poivre. Said's method of enforcing the cultiva-

tion of the clove was drastic but effective. He ordered every landowner to plant three clove seedlings to every one coconut palm in his plantation. This action, resented at the time, laid the foundation of Zanzibar's present prosperity.

Said died in 1856 after a reign of 52 years. Tradition has it that 112 children were born to him by 70 wives and concubines. On his death the Asian and African portions of his empire fell apart. Sultan Majid, who succeeded him in Zanzibar, came much under the influence of Colonel Rigby, the British Consul. The prosperity of the Sultanate at this time still depended on the slave trade. Rigby did his utmost to bring this degrading traffic to an end, personally setting free 8,000 slaves.

Majid died in 1871 and was succeeded by his brother Barghash. During his reign Sir John Kirk became British Consul, and it is probably to him more than to any other person that the suppression of the Arab slave trade is due. Kirk eventually became a kind of Grand Vizier to Barghash. Thanks to his efforts, by 1876 the slave trade had come officially to an end. The legal status of slavery was not abolished, however, until 1907.

Before this the " scramble for Africa " had led to the Sultan's dominions being divided between Germany and Britain. The tale can be quickly told. In 1885 Germany annexed 60,000 square miles of the Sultan's mainland territories. In the following year Britain, France and Germany mutually agreed, without consulting the Sultan, on the extent of the latter's dominions, and divided them into German and British " spheres of influence ", which soon became colonies. In 1890 Zanzibar proper became a British Protectorate under the Foreign Office. In 1913 it was transferred to the Colonial Office under a British Resident. This is still the position today, a century after the death of the great Seyyid Said.

LITERATURE AND POLITICS V.

DRIEU LA ROCHELLE

An Anglophil "Collaborator"

by PIERRE ANDREU *

J'aurais dû naître Anglais. Voilà une de ces imaginations qu'on garde jusqu'à ses derniers jours.

Drieu La Rochelle (La Comédie de Charleroi, 1934).

EVERYONE in France today, with the exception of Aragon and a few similarly out-of-date writers, honours the memory of Pierre Drieu La Rochelle. Drieu, as we all called him, killed himself on the 16th March, 1945 ; partly to avoid undergoing the humiliation of arrest followed by a ridiculous trial, partly to escape from spite and hatred, but above all because for years past he had abandoned hope of giving his life any meaning except by means of a voluntary death at a moment chosen as the extreme point of detached consciousness.

A young philosopher, friend of Sartre, has written that death facilitates many things, by easing the effort of comprehension — a Christian would add, of love — which we owe to every individual man. And we are called to an even greater effort of understanding and love when death is not the inevitable end which awaits us all, the death of Hamlet's grave-diggers, but the death a man cruelly inflicts upon himself.

*M. Pierre Andreu knew Drieu La Rochelle personally ; his first book was a critical biography of this great writer : *Drieu, Témoin et Visionnaire*. He has since published a book on the French socialist philosopher who inspired Mussolini : *Notre Maître, M. Sorel*. Coming shortly is *Histoire des idées politiques de la jeunesse française entre* 1928 *et la guerre*.

" Poor Drieu " the men and women who had known him sighed sadly in the Paris salons of 1945 ; but those who loved him in a more positive way understood their loss. The publication in 1951 of the forty pages of *Récit Secret* — an admirable piece of writing worthy to put beside the finest in French literature, which we hope the English will soon have an opportunity to read — reminded everyone what an enormous tragedy his death had been.

Drieu's writings are considerable ; poems, novels, essays, stories, plays. He wrote some of the most sombre and beautiful novels in contemporary literature : *Drôle de voyage*, *Le Feu follet*, *Gilles :* admirable short stories : *La valise vide*, *La Comédie de Charleroi*, *Le voyage des Dardanelles*, *Le souper de réveillon:* always with the same ugly picture of a society rotted and destroyed by alcoholism, drugs, homosexuality, suicide, boredom, libertinage. The strong and virile life of days gone by is replaced by a tragic comedy which deceives no one ; as he wrote in connection with his friend Huxley in 1930 : " Such is life today, in London just as much as in Paris . . . the life of all these beings is appalling, like the lives of us all."

The political thought of Drieu was often wonderfully prophetic ; untroubled by details, he saw with burning clarity through the chaos of day-by-day events. As early as 1920 he predicted the rise of the United States and of Russia ; the era of giant empires, the decadence of a Europe which would not unite. In 1934, the inevitable disappearance of Poland if war came ; in 1944, the swift decline of the French Resistance, smothered by all the old politicians resuscitated from the Third Republic. " And the Fourth Republic will only be the Third over again. The Resistance will dissolve in an instant, like the 6th February, like the Popular Front. Nothing will remain but a slight additional fatigue " he wrote.

His views on England are not less striking. As soon as he began to be interested in politics — and he began at a very early age — Drieu looked admiringly towards England and the English. He was the most anglophil of the French collaborators. Brought up at the end of the last century, like many French boys whose fathers could not " swallow " Fashoda, to hate England instinctively, he had begun, even before visiting London, to learn through books and history to admire the strength and order of Britain. Doubting his own country, of which he already clearly saw the weaknesses, he dreamed of emigrating to America or Australia, some

Anglo-Saxon country of the nordic race, to which he himself belonged; or even, (shades of Colonel Lawrence) of placing his intelligence at the service of the British Empire. During his first journey to England in 1913 he was "already conquered by her". Towards the end of his stay he went to Oxford. "There" he wrote in his first book, *Etat Civil*, "something gripped my heart for ever". He esteemed the beauty and strength of the Oxford generation of 1914, living under ancient and worthy laws.

"Je frissonnais le soir quand, après les jeux, je voyais rentrer les centaines de jeunes hommes et de jeunes filles, dans la gloire de leur sang. Leur cortège rapide, en hâte vers le bain et le thé, avait la majesté d'un heureux ensemble, d'une de ces réussites qui sont rares et qui donnent soudain a l'entreprise des hommes au milieu de l'univers un mérite qu'on ne peut nier."

In a poem, written after the war in 1920, he praised Cambridge :

> "Les idées passent d'heure en heure
> Le monde végète copieusement sous ma tête
> Herbes grasses et trainantes de la Cam."

During the war Drieu met the English again at the Dardanelles ; he admired them once more ; beneath other skies they resembled the glorious young men at Oxford. Several times in his writings he described his humiliation as a poor French subaltern leading shabby grousing, territorials (who, nevertheless, knew how to die) when he had to relieve an elegant Scotch regiment, admirably at ease in this colonial expedition. "Thirty Scotsmen in antique skirts with bare knees, linen jackets, bonnets set at an angle, and comfortable camping arrangements. The soldiers with their free, easy, aristocratic gestures, have the same grace as their officers. They are proud ; they are men."

Back from the war, Drieu published one of his most important books : *Mesure de la France*. In it he expressed for the first time a thought which became one of his basic ideas, and which was at that time, in an age surfeited with idealistic reasoning, substantially new : the law of numbers. A country with five million inhabitants is not the political equivalent of a country with forty million, and a country with forty million does not weigh as heavy in the scales of history as a country with one

hundred and fifty million. France, measured in this way, seemed to him small and menaced, but so also did England. The British Empire, outwardly still so powerful — the articles in *La Gerbe*, 1942, were not merely the result of the German victories — was also threatened with irremediable decadence. Placed, like France, at the extremity of the European continent, the British Isles, with their millions of unemployed, their declining industry, the Irish secession, the Indian agitation, were perhaps in an even more precarious position than France ? And Drieu in 1920, posed the following prophetic questions : " Does not England risk the loss of her colonies by revolt, of her dominions through ingratitude, of her industry from the disappearance of her privileges and monopolies, of her financial power with the flight of gold and the movement of markets, and of her social stability through the lawlessness of her unemployed masses and the humiliation of the élite ? "

In 1928 came *Genève ou Moscou*, a book in which he once again implored the European countries to surmount their nationalistic antagonisms, and, unless they wished to be carried away by Moscow, to unite within the new capitalism. He wrote : " There is no point in the English boasting of their Empire. Even the simplest of them can hardly imagine he is really the 450,000,000th subject of King George. England will be another Spain."

In 1931 *L'Europe contre les patries* was dedicated to his old friend Gaston Bergery. When Drieu, at the threshold of a decade which was to end with the fatal war of '39, condemned as " vieilles folles " the old nations which tear Europe apart in the name of patriotism, he also blamed his beloved England.

" And, naturally, I am against England too. She has not seen beyond the idea of reprisals against Germany, she sank the German fleet, she encouraged France in her crazy colonial expansion. Although she knows she is linked with France against Germany (within the framework of the old nationalistic struggles) by inexorable necessity, yet she has not had the courage to admit it. Neither has she, by placing herself resolutely on the other side, fought against the policy of hegemony of a frightened France. She blindly followed her old line of balance of power, which justifies all the discouragements and all the disorders in Europe."

In 1936 Drieu took the plunge and became a fascist. He joined Jacques Doriot's *Parti Populaire Français*. As he wrote several

times, he thought that only fascism—a rough and ready remedy—was capable of arresting the decadence of Europe. During the years '37 and '38, when the terrible menace of war weighed once more upon Europe, he exhorted France and England to awaken, to adopt a more virile attitude, which, while saving their national independence, would also save the peace. In December 1937 in Doriot's paper he addressed the English, forgetful of imperial virtues, hesitating before conscription, in these vigorous words: "Your Empire is terribly threatened in the Mediterranean, it is as good as lost in Asia, your Dominions will become satellites of Washington. You are no longer an Empire, you have lost the idea of Empire, you have no soldiers to defend it with. We know it, and we want no more of your blind and false pride."

After the Munich crisis, Drieu went even further, he told France and England that they must live "faster" and "*plus fort*". He thought English democracy, despite a certain spirit of tradition and discipline, unknown in France, should, if it wished to survive, turn to the specific remedies of fascism, and "discard all the worn-out forms of democracy". The *faux fascisme* of Chamberlain, Eden and Cooper would not suffice, any more than the *faux fascime* of Daladier, although simple people insisted he was a dictator. Drieu cried to the French and English alike, in striking slogans for which he had a brilliant gift: "You will either sleep, and die, as democrats and liberals, or arise, live and triumph once more as fascists."

In June 1940 Drieu's predictions came true. England and France were defeated as democrats. A few weeks earlier Drieu, whose war wounds (he had been wounded at Charleroi, in Champagne and at Verdun) had kept him out of the French army, thought of trying to join up in the English army, a fact which I disclosed, for the first time, in my book.

Partisan of collaboration with Germany, which, for Drieu, meant European peace within a free, united, strong and prosperous Europe, he bitterly reproached England, in the articles he wrote during the first years of the occupation, for turning her back on Europe. Even before the entry of the United States into the war, he wrote in May 1941: "England is America, we are Europe. England is the dominion of America in Europe."

Later on, during the years '43-'44 by which time he felt an equal contempt for Hitler and his enemies since all were combining to destroy Europe, he recalled in one of his last articles for

Révolution Nationale his ancient love of England.

" True, I love all the European peoples equally. But, among those people, apart from the English whom I can never forget any more than I have ever forgotten my first mistress, I am beginning to appreciate the Germans. They, too, are a minority."

He had loved the English when he was twenty, and he never ceased loving them all his life. At fifty, he began to love the Germans, brave and alone, holding on to Europe. War between these two great peoples was terrible. The end of the world. Despair for Europe.

" Dissensions within Europe are all inept and terrible, but the dissension which is the crime of crimes, in its essence and because of its consequences, is the German-English dissension. The supreme conflict between the two nordic brothers tears Europe apart and destroys it." he wrote.

Table Near The Band

by ALAN NEAME

An extract from The Adventures of Noakes

"YOU MAY THINK at the moment," I said, as I laid the cane down among the cutlery, "that you are the centre of curiosity for every single person in the restaurant; and in thinking so you are undoubtedly right. But this will pass. By sitting in view of all, we show that this curiosity means nothing to us; we have nothing to hide; we are as we appear, nothing more, nothing less. Let them gaze their fill; they will soon tire of us. Curiosity thrives on the half-concealed, on nakedness it surfeits. As for discreet alcoves, do not suppose me innocent of their pitfalls, their paper-thin partitions, their microphones and spyholes. Take an old soldier's word, if you wish to discuss private matters in public, choose a table by the band. A violin drowns conversation more effectively than a thunderstorm. But let the programme be classical, for with modern music you never know when it may not stop and surprise you in a confidence, for the applause is often late and half-hearted. Many an eavesdropper, to my knowledge, has earned his fee between the last chord and the first clap of a Peter Fricker concerto. Here, with these Strauss waltzes, we are in the safest place in Hamburg. I know them all by heart. Tra, la, tra-la-la; la-la-la, la-la-la, tra, la, la!" I warbled a snatch of an old favourite. "But even among the masters there are moments of inconvenience. When I was in wartime England with the General I recollect there was a sacred air by Handel with a two-beat rest in the refrain. Doubtless you know it? Correctly performed, it goes: 'Lift up your heart, lift up your voice, rest and two, rejoice, again I say rejoice'." It was a pleasure to lift up my voice to Handel's

enspiriting melody as I beat out the time with the baton. "But more often it is performed incorrectly, for the organist will intrude : 'Lift up your heart, lift up your voice, pom-pa-pom, rejoice, again . . .'. There, what did I tell you ? The waltz has caught me carolling. *Waiter* ! Once in Handel's breathing space I distinctly heard a middle-aged man say : 'Toad-in-the-Hole'. *Waiter* ! Ah ! there you are. But this is the menu. No, it is the wine list that we need. Well, well, you may leave the other now that you have brought it, though I never eat in the evening. You have no toad-in-the-hole, I suppose ? *Turbot ?* A much over-rated fish, all glue and gristle. No, if you assure me it is fresh I will take a hot lobster in cheese sauce. Swineflesh, did you say ? Far too rich at night for my system. Well, just one sucking pig perhaps, and a breast of turkey with a few mushrooms and shallots. Noodles, I think would go well with that — nothing heavy or fatty, mind you. And to follow ? That is already more than enough, unless you like to bring an Apfelstrudel and a zabaglione and perhaps a portion of gruyere. Have you starchless bread ? And two bottles of Johannesburger, for that is the main object of our visit. The food is our merest excuse for keeping the table."

The waiter clicked his heels and turned to Mr. Thompson, who said :

"I feel faint."

"Hurry, waiter !" I cried. "This is an emergency. Bring Schnapps and peach brandy. You may save him yet and earn his gratitude for ever. And, *waiter* !" I shouted after him as he flew towards the bar, "on no account forget the dumplings. Life must go on, we owe it to ourselves to keep up our strength, though what I have been through at hand of friend and foe would have crushed a lesser man long since."

And I picked up the menu again with a sigh.

"What are Kohlkopf, I wonder ? Perhaps I might try them with a fillet of calf. Tell that waiter to make haste," I urged a passing page, "or he may have a dead man at his door and add some Spargelsuppe to the order. It is a wonderful restorative and my nerves are sadly jangled."

As Mr. Thompson would do nothing but glare at his knuckles, white, I fear, with temper, I soon permitted my solicitude on his behalf to languish, and turned my eye to scrutiny of the company. At last, overcome by impatience and hunger, for it had proved

a long and exhausting day, I stood up as though to stretch my weary muscles, and with a smile of excuse borrowed a handful of water-biscuits from a neighbouring table — dry fare and noisy, I confess, but better than a feast of expectations.

"And now," I said, "the time has come for you to explain."

Sullen silence was now the reward of my overture.

"I hope that you will not now to imprudence and false shame add the insult of a grudging hospitality."

My fingers strayed among the forks. There was a pause as when a volcano pauses before irruption. A hysterical scene at this point would have marred all my plans, if not endangered my very life. The best of disguises is not always proof against violence. My spirit was not lacking, but my weakened condition and womanish frame could hardly promise me the victory over a whole restaurant if it came to a scrimmage. That was a risk I could not take. I must put all to the hazard, freely, but the hazard must be of my own contriving. Therefore suddenly leaning towards Mr. Thompson and throwing my eyes into a squint that would have shocked a brigand, I rapped his knuckles with the salad server. At the same instant I hissed :

"Do not touch that doggie. He may have rabies."

"My God, where ?" he cried, leaping to his feet.

"Under the table."

But the tablecloth hung down to the floor, and as he peered cautiously under one side, I was able to give a hidden kick to the other.

"He has gone now," I said. "The danger is over, thanks to my presence of mind. He has gone under the bandstand. Let others take care for themselves. Rabid or not, he will not quickly forget the taste of my good leather boot. Here comes the lobster and high time too. We shall not be troubled by him again in a hurry. Please continue with what you were saying."

The diversion had been entirely successful, and as I broached the lobster, he hesitantly broached his story.

The History of Mr. Derek Thompson

"I first spoke to you on the station in French because of your uniform. After you had spoken under your breath in English — you said something about falling into a trap — I began to feel frightened and broke into English too. As you speak it so well and evidently know my country, I shall tell you my story

in my own language and if you do not understand all I say you must say so.

"I was born in what was then the village of Chxlfxnt in H — shire, not far from the Memorial Theatre. My parents enjoyed private means and my father never worked. There were two ruling passions in his life: theatrical dress-designing and drink. Throughout the early years of my life, as I remember him, when he was not absorbed in the one, he was soaked in the other.

"His talents as a designer were considerable, and I think that, if he had had any determination to succeed, he might have become famous. I have some of his sketches here with me in Hamburg; perhaps you would like to come to my lodging-house later this evening and see them. The ones for the stage adaptation of *Paradise Lost* at the Tercentenary Celebrations of the Birth show an originality comparable to that of the late Gordon Craig. However, he never submitted his designs to anyone who might have made use of them. He seemed quite without ambition. He never received a disappointment because he never risked one. Even if he had chosen designing for a career, I dare say the irregularity of his life would have made him an intolerable colleague. His work was done in unpredictable fits, and each of these periods of activity was followed by a bout of drinking that might last for a week or even more.

"In his drunken spells, my father would first become abnormally high-spirited; from high spirits he would pass almost to hysteria. Then he would become morose, next violent and finally paralytic. In his violent phase, he would beat my mother and myself with canes and boot-trees, break furniture and crockery, deface his designs and threaten murder and suicide.

"The inevitable scandals made it difficult for my mother to engage servants. My father's intemperance made it impossible for her to keep them. She herself was a poor housekeeper. Our home was comfortless at best; protracted neglect and ill-usage reduced it to squalor. The outdoor staff, fortunately for us, were less affected by my father's outbursts. Latterly, the gardener, a peasant of great physical strength, was the only member of our establishment capable of dealing with his frenzies. Pinioning my father often in the act of flourishing a knife or a shotgun, he would lift him off his feet, carry him upstairs like a sack and quieten him by a mixture of brutality and indulgence that would be hard

to match outside the Anglo-Saxon world.

"When I was sixteen my father died of a heart attack under the ministrations of the gardener, who after a brief interval became my stepfather. Once assured of my mother's fortune, he began to ape the worst traits of his late employer. A second reign of violence set in, more brutish than the first. After bearing this for six months, I ran away from home in desperation.

"A man whom I had met at the Milton Festival, found me a job in the cosmetic department of Nathan's in Panton Street, where for some time I was very happy.

"Time passed. I made friends in the London theatrical set. These introduced me to others and eventually I fell under the influence of the notorious Mr. I — P — who had pretensions to noble blood, since his mother had been a chorus girl at the turn of the century. He lived by robbing the guests at his own cocktail parties. This middle-aged roué persuaded me to quit my job for the post of resident secretary. Under his roof I learned bad habits and after three months of his dissolute tuition my character might have been utterly ruined had not a criminal prosecution, brought against my employer and a master-baker from Hoxton, put an end to our connexion. All his affairs were investigated. I should have found myself in serious trouble, if I had not been able to plead the privileges of a minor. My home was recognised as unsuitable for my return. My education and the distant cousinship of my mother to the late Dean of C — bury saved me from the horrors of an approved school. A naif magistrate committed me to the mercies of the court missionary — who contrived to have me shut away in the Duke of York's Summer Camp for Boys."

"Court missionary? Missionaries at Court!" I exclaimed. "Then farewell England. The sands of your greatness are near-spent, if these low schemers can so exploit the bounty of the Household!"

"I was not undeserving of *help*," retorted Mr. Thompson, apparently nettled by my interruption. "But the Duke of York's Camp was *torture*. Had it not been for the patronage of my tent-leader who had read of my misfortunes in *The News of the World* I do not know how I could have borne the horrors of the place for as much as a week. The communal living, the camp beds, field sports, carbolic soap, bread-bangers, cold water, Jeyes Fluid, chlorinated tea from urns; the rough justice, the red necks and

raucous voices . . ."

"Come, come," I interrupted. "Where is your sense of proportion ? If you had been shanghaied into the Foreign Legion, you might have cause to complain. Marching through the Sahara with your eyelids cut off for losing your buttonstick for example, how would you have liked that ?"

"In the Foreign Legion at least you suffer among men."

"I admit I do not care for the society of adolescents in the mass myself," I said, "though singly or in pairs they may be well enough for anything I know to the contrary. Nor do I like, indeed I abhor, the frolicsome banter of youth leaders and social workers. But you seem to forget as against all this, that not every young man has had the honour to share the same mess-tin, the same campfire, the same cricket pitch as a Royal Duke. We are not all as near the Throne as you have been. I distinctly remember a press photograph of His Royal Highness, as he was then, wearing shorts and playing cricket, and very skilfully he played too, I make no doubt. What more could a British lad desire than to keep wicket for his sovereign ?"

"Be that as it may," said Mr. Thompson, as I took another helping of Apfelstrudel, "I found the bracing climate of East Anglia entirely horrible, and after ten days of bullyragging, surveillance, compulsory games and bangers, ten days of nightmare in fact, I ran away and hid in a fishing smack in Southwold harbour. I was of course recaptured within half an hour ; lectured, hectored, bullied, scrubbed, put on my honour, ducked, abused, watched, and tossed in a blanket by my tent leader.

"The next day I stole the Chaplain's bicycle and cashbox, thus putting the entire English-speaking world against me. I rode to London in terror of interception, threw the motorcycle into the Serpentine and lived the life of a hunted man for fifteen years in the capital. The treatment I had received in the Camp had dissolved for me all obligations to a brutal and mealy-mouthed society. To raise my passage money to the Continent and to make sufficient to keep me alive there without work, I seized every means that came : small-part actor, museum attendant, photographer, auctioneer, insurance agent, private detective and so forth. I have tried my hand at all these trades, and even for a short while ran a coffee stall at Victoria.

"At last I came by enough money to escape from England and begin a new life in Hamburg, where I hope to find something

of the peace and happiness that so far my wretched lot has denied me — in three words : a home, a father had a friend."

There was a pause as I peeled my oranges. Then I spoke with deliberation.

"I do not believe a word of the latter part of your story. It is unthinkable that a known juvenile delinquent would be admitted to the Duke of York's Summer Camp. I am surprised that you did not add to the list of your recent occupations that of confidence trickster and romancer. Whatever may be your motives for pitching such an improbable tale — a home I cannot offer you, having none myself in the accepted meaning of the word. My fleeting acquaintance with your family makes the vagaries of your father seem not without an element of pathos. His rôle is one that I should hesitate to fill. As to friendship, do you believe in it as between soldiers and civilians ? I do not. We sons of the camp know no stability. Fidelity to persons is not our *forte*. We are nomads, fly-by-nights ; at the word of command we must up boys and at 'em. Perforce we may not linger where we love. No, no, it is to a cause that we devote our being, sustained by comradeship *within* the ranks. That is the spirit that animated the victorious march of Alexander's armies, the conquering might of Rome, the Theban Band, the Grande Armée, the Luftwaffe — *a Kloster Ettal if you have one, and the bill* — the Foreign Legion too, though I was never in it."

The waiter brought the bill and mistakenly handed it to me. It was only half folded and despite my scruples I could not help noting the figures as I waved it away — eighty-four German marks, and not unreasonable for continental fare. Mr. Thompson's parsimony with Zenana Society funds betrayed his bohemian past and destroyed what little of my sympathy his recital of personal sorrows had aroused. After contesting every item, he repudiated the whole. As his guest, my sense of decorum naturally forbade me to intervene in the dispute, and we left the Alsterpavillion in an atmosphere of some unpleasantness.

A DIARY

THE Rock and Roll film, which so excited Anglo-Saxons that several English towns felt obliged to ban it, fell very flat in Paris. The night I went I waited in vain for the destructive impulse to evince itself, expecting to see the local Teds get to work breaking up the cinema. But the place was half empty, and the progressive jazz evoked no response from a small and unappreciative audience.

There is no story in the film, except a little argument between the female exponent of rock and roll and a man who lets out dance halls as to how much per cent of the takings each of them should receive. (In Paris, I suppose, the answer would be that neither would get anything). The music is just like other jazz except that it is slightly louder and insists longer than usual on the syncopated beat. The dance is ugly. Fat girls in sweaters and little rat-like men hurl each other about, or stamp, sticking out their behinds. It is not new ; the natives in East Africa have been doing it since the days of Dr. Livingstone, and presumably even longer. Not to mention the monkeys.

It evidently will not amuse the French as much as it has the English and Americans. Possibly language has something to do with this (though I doubt it). See yer later alligator sounds better than *A tout à l'heure, aligator,* the translation given by *Paris-Match.*

★ ★ ★

A visit to Normandy reminded me once more of the many similarities between this rich French province and Kent and Sussex, which after all would only be half an hour or so away if a channel tunnel could be built.

The beaters at a partridge shoot make exactly the same sounds to induce the birds to rise as English beaters. The gardens are like English gardens with proper lawns and masses of flowers. The village churches of flint and brick, the cottages, the white cliffs are very like.

A large hearth rug made entirely of foxes looks strange to us, but as there is no fox-hunting they naturally shoot their foxes. I doubt if Kentish farmers eat anything like so well as their counterparts across the Channel. The great belt of heavy eating which stretches across northern France through Belgium to the Netherlands probably has no equal either for quality or quantity anywhere else in the world. After three giant meals in the day it is not unknown for the family to rise from their beds and enjoy *le repas de minuit*.

★ ★ ★

Ever since the war France has been divided by resentments, hatreds and mutual reproaches arising from four years of occupation, upon which it is obviously out of place for English people, who have experienced nothing of the kind for about nine hundred years, to express an opinion. The new generation of French can scarcely remember it ; for them, as for us, the whole argument has been brilliantly set out in a play by Jean Anouilh, *Pauvre Bitos, ou le diner de têtes*.* At a fancy dress dinner party the guests are to represent characters from the French Revolution. The right-wing host induces Bitos, left-wing " resistant ", to come as Robespierre. All the other guests are invited to bully and frighten Bitos, in order to pay him out for his actions at the time of the liberation. The sympathy of the audience is kept continually on the move ; Bitos is a dreadful little man, but the others are dreadful too, horrible in their ill-mannered assumption of class superiority, and in their insulting cruelty to the washer-woman's son who won all the prizes at school and was disliked by both masters and boys.

M. Anouilh does not flatter his countrymen ; representatives of left and right are shown in an unattractive light, though poor Bitos, so pleased to assume the personality of Robespierre, so sure he is *l'incorruptible*, is the nastiest. The play sparkles with wit and intelligence, and the historical analogy sets the whole thing in perspective.

★ ★ ★

The Eden government had a wretched press for their Egyptian outing. Except for one or two papers which rather overdid it (VAST ARMADAS NEARING CANAL was a headline in the

* We hope to publish an article on the play in January. Ed.

Daily Sketch) they were scolded by right and left in England just as they were by Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Bulganin in the unfriendly outside world.

The weeklies were unanimous in their condemnation of Eden's police action. The most damaging attack on the Prime Minister was a cartoon in *Punch* which I saw reproduced in *Paris-Presse : Eden, or the lamb in wolf's clothing.* A well-fed lamb with Sir Anthony's unfortunate physiognomy, badly disguised by a mangy wolf's skin, is taking a flying leap in a desert landscape. The expression of wild and meaningless excitement in the eye, the silliness of the teeth and chin, must be frightening enough to Eden's friends to contemplate, whatever emotions they may arouse in his opponents.

Presumably the picture of Port Said after the police action, flattened and burning, cannot do the government much good, although I notice that the Tories, between the storms of applause for one another with which they keep up their spirits in the House of Commons, pretend that nothing much happened when the " police " landed. According to the *Times* unbroken windows still glint in the evening light, but French reporters see things otherwise. "J'ai vu le visage d'une ville frappée à mort " was the headline in *France-Soir* ; " l'eau manque totalement a l'hôpital incombré de blessées " ; and another reporter described the all-pervading smell of *cadavres.*

★ ★ ★

Mr. Kingsley Martin, Mr. Michael Foot and Cassandra are always so indignant about everything that their indignation has worn thin with the years. The same applies, if in a lesser degree, to Lady Violet Bonham Carter. She wrote a furiously anti-Eden letter to the *Times*, but was just as furious not long ago with the *Daily Express* because its reporter said Mrs. (missing diplomat) Maclean " smiled " when in fact, since they had only had a telephone conversation, he could not have seen whether she smiled or frowned.

These clever controversialists might resolve to save up their anger for important occasions.

★ ★ ★

France has shown itself at its best during the Hungarian tragedy. Not only in Paris, but in every provincial town there have been

huge demonstrations, and the French have offered to take in any number of refugees. Leaders of all parties marched to the Arc de Triomphe to lay a wreath in honour of those who died for freedom ; political differences were temporarily forgotten as prime ministers walked together and stood in homage.

At about the same time in London, at the Lord Mayor's show, the Prime Minister was bleating out his slow platitudes at the Lord Mayor's banquet. How slowly he speaks ! His broadcast, to which I listened, (the one where he mentioned that he was a man of peace) dragged on so that one thought it was going to run down to a stop. As he must have had a typescript to read from, surely he could say his say at normal speed ?

★ ★ ★

It is only fair to add that most Conservatives seem to be delighted by the turn events have taken, and are having great fun cutting those who are not. Resignations from the government and newspaper polemics by the more intelligent and thoughtful do not mean much ; the vast flock is pro-lamb in wolf's clothing. The Tory loves a fool, and adores a feud.

★ ★ ★

English people are giving huge sums of money to the Lord Mayor's Fund for Hungarian refugees ; in Paris the *Humanité* building was wrecked ; these are two characteristically different ways of demonstrating European solidarity, but both of them effective.

D.M.

THEATRE

Edmond Rostand's

Cyrano de Bergerac

(THÉATRE SARAH BERNHARDT—PARIS)

Arthur Miller's

A View from the Bridge

(COMEDY THEATRE—LONDON)

by MICHAEL HARALD

THERE is a vein of masochism buried shallow or deep, but at any rate discoverable, in most critics. It compels the unemployed reviewer to go on reading novels, it propels the retired music critic to village institute productions of the *Elijah* and *Hit The Deck*, it urges the part-time dramatic critic of this journal to drop in on performances of *La Nuit doit Tomber* in, of all places, Brussels, where night for the visitor ought by rights to fall in the Parisiana club, and of *Il Maggiore Barbara* in, of all places, Rome, where Protestant itch and *frigidità feminile* seem, to put it mildly, out of place. But I have little inclination and less space to deal seriously with these two plays. Dan, in Emlyn Williams' *Night Must Fall*, is as tedious in Belgian-French as in English-Welsh. Very young actors find him fun to play with — true ; but now that I am no longer an actor, nor, to speak the sad truth, very young, I find this argument easily resistible. Barbara's arguments are a different matter, and in Rome they had sex as well as sense behind them — a union which had not I think in this instance occurred to the author. But Barbara was always, to my mind, the least successful of Shaw's heroines. She is very old and doddery now, and would be advised to confine her public appearances to RADA matinees and Shavian tea-parties — excerpts only.

For another old period-piece, now running at the Théatre Sarah Bernhardt in Paris, I have both space and inclination. Rostand was and is in France absurdly overrated by the public and — probably for this reason — underrated by the critics. But he possessed in abundance that indefinable quality, that restless magic, which, as Shaw reminds us, was the chief stock-in-trade of Art during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries. Rostand was one of the very last of the great European enchanters ; he had what Shaw again calls " the sacred fire " ; and if at times the flame appears to have been kept burning by the over-expenditure of midnight oil, let us not quibble at that : Rostand was a professional magician, not an amateur conjuror. His spell starts to work long before the curtain rises. It starts in the foyer with old black and yellowed lace, with the bowing and the chatter and the programme-cries. Here tonight is sure and usual magic ; there is anticipation, but there can be no surprise. Each performance is a *soir enchanté*, a ritual continuation of the first first-night, December 27, 1897, at the Théatre de la Porte Saint-Martin — " *Etiez-vous à la répétition générale ?*" " *Oui, j'y étais . . .*" " *Et moi aussi . . .*" " *Et moi . . . et moi . . . et moi . . .*"

(Could they all, then, have been there — *really* there ? It is a lovely idea ; the imagination first of all boggles, and then is bewitched.) It is easy to scoff at the devotion of these dotty, wispy old ladies who crowd the theatre, a lock of Rostand's hair marking one scene in the suede-bound book, a faded picture of Coquelin (the first Cyrano) another. But they are the *real* critics ; they are the policewomen of the drama ; and woe unto any performance that falls short of excellence. The old gentlemen demonstrate their devotion more audibly ; and until you get used to it it is a little distracting to find a dozen or more self-appointed and quite unnecessary prompters distributed among the audience. But the fantasy cannot be split by the proscenium arch ; it demands full participation. The prompters swell into full voice in the second act, when Carbon, looking not at Cyrano, but out front, seems deliberately to underline the cue :

> *Puisque ma compagnie est, je crois, au complet,*
> *Veuillez la presenter au comte, s'il vous plaît.*

There are trebles, too, among the old mens' voices : this is a

set-piece in French schools. (I remember the last time I heard these verses, beautifully spoken by a child of ten or thereabouts, in an old house in the Rue de Seine.) The old ladies remain silent and disapproving. They were writing letters of complaint about this to the management and the newspapers fifty, sixty years ago. Tomorrow *Le Monde* shall hear from them again . . .

M. Pierre Dux sensibly regards this as a rest period. I have not seen him act before, and have no idea how he is regarded by critics and kingmakers ; but in this giant role he appears a tremendous actor, of the Wolfit sort and in the Wolfit class. I expected more of the comic spirit, true — particularly in the Act I exchanges with Montfleury, and I missed the line " *Que tous ceux qui veulent mourir lèvent le doigt* ". (Ralph Richardson, in a prose translation years ago at the Old Vic, was better here, and " All those who wish to die, hold up their hands " was delivered with just the right blend of threat and courteous inquiry.) I expected, too, more wit and style in the famous rhyming-duel scene. But in the garden with Christian, under the balcony, rhyming and pleading with Roxane in Christian's voice, M. Dux was superb. And at the end of that scene when Roxane yields and Christian is afraid to clinch the bargain Cyrano has secured for him, M. Dux's " *Monte donc, animal* ! " remains with me as the finest single line I have ever heard spoken on the stage.

Wisely, though, for it is here that the old ladies come into their own, the actor keeps his best for the last, the fifth act in the convent garden — *La Gazette de Cyrano.* No one could go wrong with that beautifully-written scene where Cyrano re-reads his Christian's last letter to Roxane (M. Raymond Rouleau's production, faultless throughout, carried here the stamp of genius — the shadows of the trees lengthened, the leaves drifted, and the letter became a lullaby) ; but a lesser player than M. Dux would be tempted to extort tremendous pathos from the short scene which follows. Cyrano is dying ; Roxane's " *Je vous aime, vivez* ! " comes too late ; and besides, as he whispers to her, her love " is not in the story ". M. Dux speaks the passage beginning " *J'ignorais la douceur féminine. Ma mère ne m'a pas trouvé beau* " in the most matter-of-fact way imaginable ; and this is right. But they shall not be cheated, the old ladies. He pauses for a long while before delivering the last line, and " *Grâce à vous une robe a passé dans ma vie* " gets everything a finely-trained actor can give it. A break for sighs, sobs and the

entrance of Le Bret. Only two more pages of dialogue, then the certain pleasure. The "*vieux ennemis*" are despatched (M. Dux brilliantly reserves his maximum displeasure for "*la sottise*"); and now the great finale; here a magnificent tenor chant . . . .

Oui, vous m'arrachez tout, le laurier et la rose !

Arrachez ! . . .

We are all Cyranos, *they* are all Roxanes. We drift silently from the temple. If a voice from the silence should suddenly command us to speak the first phrase that comes to mind, two thousand people would mechanically reply, "*mon panache* !"

If the Lord Chamberlain really *did* refuse a licence to *A View from the Bridge*, which is now running at the Comedy Theatre under the auspices of The New Watergate Theatre Club, then he played straight into the hands of all concerned. His ban is a bonus, for in the event the play has proved a *succès de scandale* as well as a *succès d'éstime*. It is just as easy — though a little more expensive (club membership costs 5s.) — to see the play; and the Comedy, after years of scruffiness, is now one of London's most attractive theatres. The Lord Chamberlain's only victims are those who imagined, naturally enough, that the ban implied something sensational and salacious, and who would not have visited the play had it been licensed and presented without fuss in the normal way. They have been cheated: the Lord Chamberlain has not kept his implied agreement to corrupt; and he ought fairly to be made to refund their money.

A Brooklyn stevedore, a "dumb ox" in spite of his Sicilian blood, first takes under his roof and then betrays to the police two other Sicilians who have been smuggled into New York. One of them marries his niece, a step which the betrayal is designed to forestall; and the other one kills him. Alfieri, lawyer and friend to the dockside Italian community, acts as Chorus to the drama, watching in horror as Eddie Carbone climbs — or should it be descends ? — the ladder of classical tragedy. Yes, I use the term advisedly. True, in its present form, the classical mould is blurred and runny, and the Chorus proves often an unnecessary bore, explaining what action and dialogue have already made evident. It was written and, I believe, performed in America as a one-act play; and it is painfully easy to pick out those scenes which Mr. Arthur Miller has obligingly

written in to allow the London production to run for the quasi-statutary minimum two hours. In its original form, pruned and hard, its visual impact alone must be quite overwhelming, its *suggestiveness* (I do not, of course, use the word in its Lord Chamberlainian sense) as urgent as anything in the Euripidean canon. Yet, great as the play is in many of its aspects, it falls short of total greatness. (I am discussing now, if I make myself clear, the London production, whilst reserving the right to remove lumps of padding here and there.) Eddie, though not a bore, is a cry-baby. He wants the moon ; the moon being in this instance his niece. If it wasn't his niece, it would be something else. This is the main weakness of the play. It is still a tragedy, for Eddie would, under certain circumstances, be prepared to commit the irrevocable act to *secure* the something else. But he is easy prey for the gods ; he is not an authentic tragic hero. And his last dying words reveal that he has not the slightest notion of why, when and where the wheels of tragedy began to turn. We cannot pity him, for stupidity on this scale arouses the sadistic and not the compassionate impulse.

Do please go and see this play. It is the finest new play that I — and you — have seen for many years. The production (Mr. Peter Brook again) is very good ; the acting, on the whole, is not nearly good enough. Most of the players have trouble with their Italian-American voices, particularly Mr. Quayle in the leading role — I am surprised both that Mr. Quayle was offered this part and that he accepted it ; he is most unsuitable. Mr. Ian Bannen, an actor unknown to me, acts quite beautifully the role of Marco, Eddie's murderer, and I hope he got away with a verdict of justifiable homicide. Miss Megs Jenkins gives her usual immaculate performance as Eddie's wife, and in the two-minute part of a " Submarine ", Mr. Peter James must learn either to silence his guns or submerge completely.

I repeat, earnestly, please go and see this play.

CINEMA

Lettres de mon Moulin
Regain, Bigger than Life

by VINCENT MURRAY

TELEVISION is hitting the cinema where it hurts. Two local " fourth-run " cinemas in my town have recently been forced to close, and this is happening all over the country. Such a situation is hardly surprising when one considers the weekly round of films, so few of which are worth leaving the fireside to see. Even in London, even when the silly season is over, the amount of average-quality film entertainment is overwhelming. An appalling version of *Attack* and a plodding one of *The Mountain* have competed over the last month with large-scale, theatrical musicals for filmgoers' favours, making the critic's task of singling out the best dull and uninspiring.

There are at least one or two directors to write about, even though the films representing them are scarcely of the first water. Marcel Pagnol, who has been making films for longer than I care to remember, has had two films in the West End of late : **Lettres de Mon Moulin** and most recently **Regain.** The former is comparatively new (1954), but *Regain* is almost twenty years old, though from the point of view of filmic style the lapse of time is unnoticeable. Pagnol, to put it mildly, has never been enamoured of the cinema. As a means of presenting his plays to a wider audience it was convenient and profitable ; for anything other than this Pagnol could not see what all the fuss was about. And this at a time when Renoir was making *Toni* and Feyder *La Kermesse Héroïque* ! Nevertheless a strong narrative and first-class players can overcome even the most determined rejection of film-technique, and *Angèle*, which Pagnol made from a play by Giono in 1934, bears this out, for with all its gaucheries of style it makes a good impression even today. *Regain* completed three years later, lacks all that made *Angèle* notable, and makes one wonder why it should have been re-issued at all. The only reason seems to be the present popularity of Fernandel (ITV viewers recently had his name and person before their eyes, miming to a translation of a scene from *The Sheep has Five Legs*), and I know there are many who will say that is sufficient. But how many reissues of bad Fernandel films can the comedian's reputation endure ? Over-exploited by French producers, Fernandel can be protected in

the foreign market by a judicious selection of his better films. The film industry drives its stars hard, and a long-term policy of star-preservation like this would find little support. Nevertheless the plea must be made. *Lettres de Mon Moulin* has not got Fernandel, but it has a firm foundation in the stories of Alphonse Daudet, and on the whole this enables it to overcome the deadening effect of Pagnol's direction. One episode, the third, called " The Secret of Master Cornille ", is especially successful and the Provençal setting is admirably photographed.

Nicholas Ray is an American director we have been hearing quite a lot of lately. One of the most intriguing things I've heard is that Gavin Lambert, ex-editor of " Sight and Sound " and probably the most outstanding critic writing on cinema today, is now in Hollywood working as an assistant to Ray on active film-work. Critic-artist combinations rarely succeed, and this one will be extremely interesting to follow. At least Lambert has chosen a director who, while working within the Hollywood system, has a reputation for films of revolt. *They Live by Night*, *Knock on any Door*, *Rebel Without a Cause* go as far as seems possible within commercial limits in tackling contemporary, adult themes. Ray's latest film **Bigger than Life,** in London a month or so ago, continues his quest for the unusual, for it describes the effects of over-indulgence in cortisone, a drug which a teacher (Ed Avery, well played by James Mason) takes first to relieve pain and finally because of his dependence on it. As with so many social problem films the semi-documentary exposition is vastly superior to what follows. The early sequences are well written and tautly directed, but the melodrama of the final reel, when all seems sensational for no reason whatever, is very hard to swallow. There is a good book waiting to be written on " Final reels I have known " or " What to do with your off-beat hero ", but until it appears there's a most instructive recreation to be had in working out all the masterpieces Hollywood might have produced if it hadn't been for that final reel. No prizes.

The foregoing at least show signs of belonging somewhere, whether, in the case of the Pagnol films, to a filmically stultifying tradition or to a vigorous realist trend such as the Ray film. Take a look at recent British films shown in London : *The Green Man*, *A Hill in Korea*, *Dry Rot*, *Satellite in the Sky*, *The Weapon*, and the vagueness of contemporary British production becomes plain. It takes time for a trend to develop — one tends to see film-trends only in perspective — and the remarks I made some months ago about signs of life in the industry may yet prove true. I sincerely hope they do. This batch is nothing if not derivative : *A Hill in Korea* harks back to the war and adds nothing to what has been said (far better) before ; *The Green Man* and *Dry Rot* are conventional farces, the former stylishly, the latter indifferently made ; as for the remaining two, one derives from an American tradition of space-fiction and the other from the small-budget realist trend, also American. British cinema will have to do better than this.

NEW BOOKS

Adonis and the Alphabet by Aldous Huxley (Chatto & Windus, 18s.)

MENTION OF ADONIS whets a reader's appetite ; alphabets too have their charms, ranging from sacred tree-alphabets and samplers to romanized Chinese and spelling reform. Adonis and the Alphabet in Huxleian conjunction augur well. We fret for Arcadian reading-lessons stagemanaged by Chirico.

This new collection of essays indeed touches a fascinating set of topics : ideal education, " spiritual religion ", sewage disposal, male continence, musicians, Toulouse-Lautrec, Mormons, Mother, Toynbee, population control, slowplaying records, caterpillars and explosives ; but the whole exhales a pessimism and a disillusion that belie the savoury title.

The initial essay, urging rediscovery in ourselves of a virgin non-mind capable of non-verbally not-thinking as the true basis for formal education, ends with the discouraging reflection that " the disintegrative effects of the kind of civilization, under which our technology compels us to live, may completely cancel out the constructive effects of even the best and completest system of formal education. Time alone will show. Meanwhile, we can only hope for the best." Alas, we were not born yesterday. We know as we appeal to future time what hopes there are for the large-scale cultivation of non-verbal non-thought ; Huxley himself tells us what gift the future will bring : over-population. This lugubrious and recurrent thought concludes the book, though in polemic disguise. " By outlawing contraceptives and by advocating instead two methods of birth control, one of which doesn't work, while the other, effective method is never systematically taught, the prelates of that Church (the Roman) seem to be doing their best to ensure, first, a massive increase in the sum of human misery and, second, within a generation or two, the triumph of World Communism."

If World Communism is the imminent disaster that Huxley suggests, the prospect of any Foundation's spending five or six millions on a scheme for making available at cost the principal works of world literature on slowplaying records is remote, before the cataclysm at any rate. Cheap planetary gears and a wide selection of slow-players might indeed do " incomparably

more good than hundreds of millions spent on endowing new universities or enlarging those that already exist." But dons, faced with World Communism any day now, will as like as not take Huxley's warning more seriously than his advice, investing the five or six millions in inter-planetary escape-equipment. More forlorn than any other, the never-never world of ideal education.

The essays exploring the scientific solution of problems hitherto reserved to religion, the essays related, however loosely, in subject matter to his treatise of *Heaven and Hell*, are more stimulating, if as sad. The three horrors — dirt, disease and untouchability — challenged the heroic virtues of mediaeval mankind. In a world of disinfectants and sulpha-drugs, the exploits of S. Francis Borgia and Queen Philippa of Hainault become superfluous, just as the centuries of meditation and fasting are made redundant by a few cubic centimeters of mescalin. Is the lot of man improved ? "A man may be clean ; but if, in a dictatorial state, he lacks a party card, he figuratively stinks and must be treated as an inferior at best and, at the worst, an untouchable." Where does Adonis come in, how does he make out in the coming world of universal thought-control ? What price his alphabet, even though it be on longplaying records ? From the Trinitarian temple of Nation, Party and Political Boss there will be no way out, for Adonis, Mother, the disposers of sewage or indeed for any of us, "except for those who have learned to go beyond all symbols to a direct experience of the basic fact of the divine immanence. *Tat tvam asi* — thou art That."

Many readers of *The European* have already gone so far beyond symbols, that they may not much relish these unaffirmative essays.

A.J.N.

Collected Stories of V. S. Pritchett (Chatto & Windus, 20s.)

LITERARY Jekyll-and-Hydeism is a matter which should be probed by the whimsically-minded researchers who set the *New Statesman and Nation* weekend competitions. What would Mr. Connolly make of *The Rock-pool*, Mr. Priestley of *Three Men In New Suits*, Mr. Toynbee of *A Garden To The Sea ?* When Mr. Pritchett corrects the proofs of his own fiction, does he lay down his howitzer and pick up a pea-shooter ? These fancies are both diverting and *à propos*.

Mr. Pritchett's fame as a critic and essayist is universal and deserved. No-one writes as well as he does about the old crocks, bores, giants and geniuses who built the English comic novel. Myself, I cannot now read, for instance, Fielding, Sterne, Smollett

and Peacock with enjoyment, and am bored with my old lies about lack of time, small print and the need for stronger light and glasses : I will never read them again. But it is enjoyable still to read Pritchett on these writers. They become as it were his own creations, freakishly-brilliant, muddled, selfish and brave : one's heart warms to them, and warms to their critic-creator. In short—for this is a short review—I would submit that Mr. Pritchett is the best literary journalist writing in English today ; and I threaten one day to prove it.

Mr. Pritchett's fame as a storyteller is, it seems to me, quite *un*-deserved. The thirty-seven stories in this collection cover a twenty-year period ; but it is impossible to detect the writer of the thirties from the writer of the fifties : the impression throughout is of a clever, elderly man with a taste for literary doodling. On this evidence, Mr. Pritchett has never owned a view of life, has never known a religious, artistic or political imperative, has never looked out of the window. His tales are neat, well-turned, told with a wink and a twinkle. I cannot imagine that any of them would be refused by *Argosy*, that any would be accepted by *The European*. Spaniards, sailors, drunks, clergymen and Colonels' daughters are all efficiently delineated, machine-processed, rubber-stamped. There is comedy here (*Mr. Pritchett has an unerring eye for the extravagances of human behaviours*) ; there is pathos (. . . *serious and sensitive in his view of character*). He is a gift to the blurb-writer ; but he is a sorry problem to his real admirers.

M. H.

The Walled Garden by Hugh Ross Williamson (Michael Joseph, 15s.)

MR. Hugh Ross Williamson's three loves have been religion, politics and the theatre ; to all of them he has given his services not only as a writer, but also as a man of action. In his autobiography he tells his adventures to date, as priest, as parliamentary candidate and journalist, and as dramatic critic and playwright.

The son of a Congregational minister, he joined the Church of England as a young man, and later on was ordained. Highly intelligent, thorough in all that he undertakes and with great gifts as a preacher, it appeared certain that he would quickly rise to an eminent position ; men of his calibre seldom take holy orders in the Church of England nowadays. There was, however, an enormous fly in the ointment — Mr. Ross Williamson's logical mind. He had studied theology from childhood and chose the Church of England because of, not in spite of, its liturgy. When he recited the creeds he believed in

the words he spoke ; for him they are a literal profession of faith. Unlike, for example, Canon Raven's bride, who is reported in the newspapers as having said: " I believe strongly in God but I don't know anything about Christ ", Mr. Ross Williamson is a Christian ; and when he declared " I believe in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church " it was because he really did so ; he did not mean " I believe in an assorted group of Protestant non-Apostolic churches ". He defines a Christian as " one of the company of people, which no man can number, who eat, have eaten and will eat the Body of Christ and who drink, have drunk and will drink His Blood in accordance with His categorical command to do so till the end of time . . ."

This being so, Mr. Ross Williamson naturally fell foul of the Church of England, a church whose members can believe any parts of the creeds they choose, rejecting, or interpreting in their own fashion, anything they do not wish to accept. After twelve uneasy years, the decision of the Bishops regarding the Church of South India was, for him, the last straw, the final cynicism. The Anglican communion, fast moving towards unity with non-conformists, can now no longer pose as a Catholic and Apostolic Church. Mr. Ross Williamson, after an exchange of letters with the Bishop of Exeter, chosen because he is a theologian (and who, significantly, has refused permission for publication of his share in the controversy) submitted to the Church of Rome. Religiously speaking he is now in the walled garden of the Church, from which one hopes he will emerge from time to time to use his great talents in the political field. In his exchange with the Bishops, and with the Moderator of the C.S.I., these talents were wasted, because reason and logic and clear thinking are all very well in their way, but in reality the whole argument was about faith which, like taste, is beyond argument.

Mr. Ross Williamson conscientiously objected to the second world war, and here his dialectical skill and knowledge of history were of use to him, " I was not a pacifist in the accepted sense," he writes, " since the church obviously taught that, in a just war, a Christian might have the duty to fight. What is more, in such a war — against, for instance, communism which, at that moment, the then Archbishop of York was explaining to puzzled patriots was virtually the same as Christianity — I should have wanted to fight. Therefore, my objection must be firmly established on the basis that this was not a just war by the Church's definition of such a conflict." He proceeded to establish this, taking point by point the definition of a just war of St. Thomas Aquinas.

(1) *The war must be declared by a sovereign authority to vindicate an undoubted right.* He pointed out that in a democracy, the sovereign authority is the people. " In 1936 Mr. Baldwin was returned to power on his programme of keeping peace. This was the last time the country was consulted . . . Without any consultation of the people . . . the whole basis of foreign policy was changed by the guarantee to Poland ; Mr. Churchill was substituted for Mr. Chamberlain ; the life of the new self-constituted government was prolonged beyond

the statutory limit by its own act ; Habeas Corpus was suspended and the country turned into a totalitarian slave state ; and Britain has now been committed by Mr. Churchill not to make peace until Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Stalin permit it. The ' undoubted right ' is, if possible, even more tenuous . . . It appears . . . that what ' right ' there was in a doubtful matter was not on the side of Poland." The next point (2) is *there must be no supra-national authority to which appeal can be made.* " The Pope, (who has refused to admit that the British Government's cause is just) is a competent supra-national authority " wrote Mr. Ross Williamson. That point (3), *All possible attempts at arbitration must have failed*, had not been met he " illustrated by one out of many possible examples," quoting from the Blue Book on the origins of the war that Lord Halifax, against the advice of Sir Nevile Henderson, refused to advise the Polish Government to send a plenipotentiary to Berlin on the evening 29 August 1939, and did not even inform it of Hitler's offer of " discussions on a footing of complete equality " until the time limit set by the Germans had expired.

" This deliberate sabotage of the last chance of peace by Lord Halifax in face of the advice of his own Ambassador is alone sufficient to dispose of this point " he says.

The C.O. Tribunal did not exempt him from National Service on the above grounds, but he won his appeal and his objection to the unjust war was sustained. This was in 1942 ; a year later he became an Anglican priest, and in 1955 was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

If the most interesting part of *The Walled Garden* is concerned with Mr. Ross Williamson's religious progression, it also contains amusing stories of secular life, behind the scenes in theatres and in newspaper offices. He worked for some time on the *Yorkshire Post* under the inspiring editorship of Arthur Mann. The then Mr. Anthony Eden had a family connection with the paper. " My training in cynicism was completed by watching the launching of a politician. Anthony Eden, then an undistinguished back-bencher, was given little jobs to do," contributing weekly notes on Parliament and " even art notes which, signed A.E., duly appeared every Thursday and whose arrival in the Board Room was awaited with anticipation of some merriment." It was Mr. Ross Williamson's first contact with the political world. " In political matters, as long as one is content to observe and to refrain from participating, disillusion is not complete. There remains an incredulity that something so apparently important as politics should be in fact so petty and so corrupt." he writes. He did not refrain from participating, and he did not relish the experience. " Not until . . . every cynicism has been justified to the depth can one identify oneself with Hilaire Belloc's savage riposte to a friend telling him of Parliamentary happenings : ' Is that bloody nonsense still going on ?' "

There is one small error of fact in his book. Making the perfectly valid point, in connection with his own expulsion from the Labour

Party, that it habitually expels men who show signs of believing in socialism (he mentions Cripps and Maxton) he says that one of these was Sir Oswald Mosley. In reality Sir Oswald Mosley resigned from the Labour Government and left the Party in 1930 after all the measures he advocated for dealing with the grave problem of unemployment had been turned down.

D.M.

Report on the Vatican by Bernard Wall (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 21s.).

THE title of this book gives a very fair idea of its contents. Mr. Wall reports in lively journalese, and in the chapter *The Pope is dead: long live the Pope* which begins : " In the Piazza San Pietro that Saturday morning in 1954 the wintry sun was streaming down on the travertine stone, and there was a great stir. The rumour had gone around that Pope Pius XII was dying . . ." one imagines he was hanging about waiting to scoop the death, the funeral, the conclave ; but the scoop failed because the Pope lived. Strangely enough, the miracle and the Pope's vision on that occasion are not mentioned ; possibly news of them was only released after this book went to press. Mr. Wall is hypnotised by the odd paradoxes and impressive antiquity of Vatican customs and traditions, and he emphasises, as journalists are taught to do, every imaginable " human " story connected with his subject.

I enjoyed *Report on the Vatican ;* it induces nostalgia for the Roman scene. The author loves Rome, and it is impossible not to share his regret that it was chosen to be the capital of united Italy although, as he says, this was inevitable, " so much had Rome been the ideal centre of the dreams of centuries." But at the end of the nineteenth century " Augustus Hare pointed out," writes Mr. Wall, " that twenty-two years of Sardinian government had done more for the destruction of Rome than the invasions of the Goths and Vandals ". In spite of the protests of foreign lovers of the picturesque, terrible demolitions took place, classical ruins were tidied up, the Rome of Hubert Robert gave way to noisy modernity. Yet even now, almost a hundred years later, it remains the most beautiful of cities, with a church for every day in the year. The book is illustrated with brilliantly clever photographs, some showing the architectural glories of Vatican City, some the fancy-dress ceremonies in St. Peter's, others studio portraits of influential Cardinals, or snapshots of nuns, priests and friars.

Who will the next Pope be ? Mr. Wall inclines to think that he may, once again, be an Italian.

D.M.

FAR EAST JOURNEY

III HONG KONG

by JOHN HAYLOCK

ON the way from Kai Tak airport to Kowloon, the town on the mainland of the colony, I saw three Chinese labourers in plate-like hats working on the summit of a crag. They had tied their umbrellas to long poles stuck in the ground at the foot of the rock, and so provided themselves with an oasis of shade to work in. This, I thought, typified the simple practicality of the Chinese.

The town of Kowloon is as crammed with people as the island of Hong Kong itself. The population of the whole colony has swelled to 2½ million, with the refugees from China ; refugees of all sorts : peasants, prostitutes, members of the bourgeoisie, businessmen, rich racketeers who saw in Hong Kong a place where they could carry on their activities of making quick profits, while if they had remained behind in Canton or Shanghai they would have had to change their mode of life.

I stayed in the Grand, a hotel off Nathan Road, the wide modern thoroughfare of Kowloon. I paid 38 Hong Kong dollars (£3) for my air-conditioned room ; everything else was extra, including service which was polite, but cool and distant. The Chinese have great dignity whatever they do, and never seem to cringe, however menial their work. This must annoy some travellers. The dining-room of the hotel looked uninviting so I went in search of a Chinese restaurant. Nathan Road was packed with evening strollers : Chinese, Americans, British soldiers, some in pairs, some with Chinese girl friends, others with their wives ; there were queues outside the cinemas. The narrow lanes off Nathan Road were overflowing, the pavements with camp beds on them having to serve as bedrooms, playrooms and parlours. Up above are covered balcony flats ; washing hangs out on poles. One wonders how many go to a

room — ten ? twenty ? Everywhere there is activity ; everyone, or nearly everyone, is doing something even at a late hour. There are joss sticks on sale, chopsticks, and umbrellas : (almost everyone carries one, as sunshade or as parapluie). Inside some shops, work is over, and people are slamming Mahjong pieces down on the table, others are making the yet noisier rattle of the mixing of the pieces. Babies sleep on the backs of their mothers who gossip in the gutter, or on the backs of their elder sisters who run about and play as if they carried no burden. In a shop men are still at work at 11 p.m. making basket chairs. There are a few beggars, some of whom lie at the side of the road groaning. One's first impression is of noise and chaos, but an ordered chaos ; despite their cramped living space the Chinese manage to keep their crowded little dwellings tidy.

I went into a busy Chinese restaurant. After studying the Chinese menu I ordered what turned out to be diced pork and walnuts. First I was brought a handleless cup, a tiny bowl of soya sauce, and ivory (or bone ?) chopsticks in a paper cover. Then came a platter of pork and walnuts and a little bowl of rice. I put the rice into the cup, a little sauce and tried my skill with the chopsticks. At first I could raise nothing ; the food fell off the slippery poles. I looked sheepishly round, but none of the Chinese was watching ; they were much too absorbed in their own conversation. I tried again, and in the end I succeeded ; I was surprised how quickly the cup emptied and needed refilling. Then followed very weak tea that tasted like hot water. Finally I was given a damp face-flannel, smelling faintly of disinfectant, to wipe my hands and face. This is sometimes brought at the beginning of the meal and is very welcome when one comes in from the hot streets.

In the morning I walked from the hotel to Nathan Road. The shops were fascinating, full of every kind of merchandise : carved wooden heads and fishes from Indonesia, fragile pottery dragons and coloured horses from China, dolls and snowstorm glass balls from Japan, Swiss watches, German cameras, imported goods from all over the world, for sale at a cheaper price than they are in the countries of their origin. The Americans have to have a certificate to say that what they have bought was not made in China, this is readily provided by any shop whether the souvenir came from the new Communist Republic or not. A bunch of rickshaw boys pestered me. I got in one and said, " Star Ferry ". I don't think any modern westerner can travel in a rickshaw, pulled by a running boy in rags, and not feel guilty. I also felt conspicuous, as most Europeans ride in motor-cars,

taxis, or the double-decker buses, and only take rickshaws at night for a joke after a party. By the time we reached the ferry the boy was glistening with sweat and I was rather shaken, as rickshaws have no springs. I paid him a Hong Kong dollar (1/3d.) and took the ferry over to Hong Kong side. One either lives on Kowloon side or Hong Kong side ; if one lives upstairs it is called top side. The use of the word " side " comes a lot in pidgin English. I met a Chinaman who had been to Venice. " Where did you stay ?" he asked, " Lido side or Venice side ?"

The view from the ferry onto the island is beautiful. The harbour is full of merchant ships, American men-of-war, junks, whose upper parts are made of old planks and whose sails are patched. I was reminded of the description of the great waterways in sixteenth-century China that comes in Vincent Cronin's *The Wise Man of the West*. There was great excitement on the ferryboat when a junk nearly collided with us ; it was just kept away by straw-hatted men with long poles. On Hong Kong " side " green hills sown with houses and blocks of flats rose steeply above the tall business buildings of Victoria, the town of the island. The ferry was crowded with hustling Chinese civilians and British soldiers. It takes ten minutes to cross. On landing one finds onself in the business quarter of the city, among towering banks and offices. Ladder-like alleys run up the hill above the main streets ; these are packed with stalls selling mostly rubbish. There are shoemakers, tailors, pot and pan makers, men mending spectacles, old women in shiny black cotton blouses and baggy trousers selling tea. I saw a family eating their rice lunch : holding their rice bowls close to their mouths, they quickly flicked in the food. Down in Des Voeux Street trams were overflowing, and shops, people and small children were everywhere. The streets looked as gay as for a royal visit, because of the large coloured shop-signs in decorative Chinese writing : white letters on a red background, white on blue, red on white. These gave the town an air of being *en fête* and took away much of the drabness of the upper stories; even from these hung laundry as various as the flags at a congress. I squeezed my way on to a tram with some hope, as its destination was marked " Happy Valley ". It was a disappointment to find nothing but a racecourse, a football ground, and a tennis club — all shut.

I lunched at the Parisian Grill, in the business quarter, with an English banker. Apart from the Chinese waiters, and the fact that most of the lunchers had their coats off, I might have been in the

City of London. I was reminded of the hurried lunches I have had with my stockbroker. Such are the contrasts in Hong Kong : the bowl of rice eaten by the shopkeepers, the rickshaws ; the perfect lunch at the Parisian Grill and the latest American cars. Another improbable detail : at 11.45 p.m. I listened in to the Wimbledon finals being played in the afternoon of the same day in England ; there is a difference of nine hours in the time. As one gets up in the morning in Hong Kong people in England are going to bed on the night before.

The hotel advertised tours of the island. I met the guide, a young Chinesewoman in the hall. " Call me Miss Milli," she said, as I introduced myself. Like most Chinesewomen she was as thin as a stick and wore the *Chungsan*, a high-necked, split-skirted dress. The fashion in this dress depends on the collar and the split ; some years collars and splits are high, others they are low. The only other person doing the tour was an American colonel, on leave from Formosa. We got into a large American shooting-brake and drove to Star Ferry. While crossing we got out to admire the view.

" If I were rich," Miss Milli said, " I'd like a nice house in Kowloon."

" I'd rather live up there," I said, pointing to the Peak, the highest spot on the hilly island.

" They do say," she replied, " that the richer you are the higher up you live."

The first item on the programme of the tour was a ride up in the cable car to the Peak. The ascent is almost vertical. As the ticket collector walked about the car he had to lean right back in order to keep on his feet. We got out at the top and were led to a concrete shelter from where we looked down at Victoria, the harbour dotted with shipping, Kowloon and the hills beyond.

" On the other side of the second range of hills is Communist China," Miss Milli said, with fascination in her voice.

" Would you like to go there ?"

" Well, I don't know — but I am Chinese, and China is my country."

" Can one go there ?"

" Yes, but it's difficult to get back, I believe, if you are Chinese. People do go." Then she abruptly said, " This is where William Holden and Jennifer Jones stood in the film ' Love is a Many Splendoured Thing '."

" Yeah, I remember," said the colonel. " What a good film it was ! I saw it twice."

" It's all true," Miss Milli said, " I met William Holden too. Look down there at those buildings. Do you see the small huts on the flat roofs ? People live in them."

" They look like car parks."

" Yes, and most of the huts are smaller than the average American car. There's nowhere else for the refugees to go."

There was a pleasant fresh breeze up on the Peak, the view from the other side over to the many islands that belong to the colony was magnificent. The Peak is where the rich live in fine villas with a splendid outlook. Up here it is not crowded. English women amble about with dogs on leads, nurses wheel prams. They seem in a different world from the confusion and squalor of the teeming city below.

" We must go on," Miss Milli said, looking at her watch ; the tour was carefully timed. The motor-car had come up to meet us on the top of the Peak. We drove down the narrow winding road to the Tiger Balm Gardens, one of the sights of Hong Kong. On the way we passed a Chinese style house. Miss Milli identified it as the one used by Clark Gable in the film " Soldier of Fortune ".

The Tiger Balm Gardens are in the grounds of the house of the late Mr. Aw Boon Haw who made his fortune out of the ointment used by millions in the Far East. The garden, up the side of a hill, is full of fantastic figures : dragons, fairies, elephants, snakes. All are made of concrete and are highly coloured, but the gaudy colours fade and concrete, unlike marble, crumbles in the rain. The figures all look a little the worse for wear. There are blue grottoes, made of cement, harbouring mermaids and snake-women ; a nine-storey pagoda is a memorial to Mr. Aw Boon Haw's parents. It's quaint and ugly ; a paradise for children, a hell for adults who must escort them up the many levels, puffing up and down steps all the time. The Tiger Balm King made a similar garden at Singapore. One wonders why. Why didn't he grow flowers instead of wasting money on these grotesque, loathsome, nightmare figures ? Perhaps he had the mind of a child ; perhaps he wanted to amuse the children of Hong Kong and Singapore ; nevertheless one has to pay to go in. The experienced Miss Milli waited in the café near the entrance while the colonel and I trudged round the garden. We ordered a Coca-Cola. Miss Milli took a tiny red tin out of her handbag and rubbed some ointment on her forehead.

" What's that?" the colonel asked. " Not Tiger Balm ?"

" Of course. It's wonderful for headaches."

" Surely you don't believe in the stuff ?"

" But it's miraculous."

I wondered after the colonel and I had bought a tin for 50 cents (7½d.) whether Miss Milli got a free drink for recommending Tiger Balm, but I think she really believed in it. Inside the packet a pamphlet in Chinese and English says :

" This wonderful balm is a sure cure for Cough, Cold, Headache, Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Gout, Sciatica, Lumbago, Sorethroat, Toothache, Asthma, scorpion and other bites and stings, cramps and all chest complaints.

" N.B. To prevent Infectious diseases it is advisable to keep a bottle of this balm when travelling and at home.

" Directions :—Rub well into the affected part 2 or 3 times a day and then wrap with a flannel or warm clothing."

The balm, sold in a small round red tin has a tiger embossed on the lid ; it smells of peppermint. Later in Japan I tried it for sunburn and found it as Miss Milli said, miraculous. Millions of people must have found it the same, otherwise Mr. Aw Boon Haw would not have made his vast fortune.

We continued our tour round the island, passing a reservoir on the way. There are no rivers in Hong Kong. For water everyone relies on rain catchment. In hotels water is not plentiful, and it is rationed for private houses. How the refugees manage in their huts it is difficult to imagine. The road round the island reminds one of the Grande Corniche, and Repulse Bay, a popular resort, where cars are parked nose to tail on both sides of the road as in Brighton or Cannes, was full of trippers. The colonel and I hired bathing suits and swam in the rather dirty sea while Miss Milli waited, looking at her watch, in a café. " A swim is not really included in the tour," she said.

As we passed Deep Water Bay, further along the coast, the colonel asked about, and we were shown, the house William Holden and Jennifer Jones swam across to in the film. The car was stopped and Miss Milli pointed out the place where they entered the water. We then went on to Aberdeen, the famous fishing village, the tourist's *must* according to every guide book. It is here that many of the " water-people " live : fisherfolk who are born, brought up, eat, and sleep entirely in their junks or sampans. A crowd of boys and sampan girls gathered round the car, each begging us to take her boat across to the floating restaurant. As we got into our sampan I knew it was coming and it came, " Do you remember in the film

William Holden and Jennifer Jones went across in a sampan to the restaurant ?"

" Yeah, it's a sequence I remember well."

Our sampan, rowed by a girl and her mother, was spotlessly clean, and apart from an enamel cup containing a toothbrush and a bar of soap one would never have guessed that the small boat was also a home. The Tai Pak restaurant is a houseboat anchored among the junks and sampans 200 yards from the shore. Baskets of live lobsters, crabs, white fish and parrot fish are lashed to the side, and a boy with a net catches the fish of one's choice. The colonel and I chose lobster, crab, fried white fish and rice. It was most difficult trying to eat crab and lobster with chopsticks, but the Tai Pak restaurant is accustomed to tourists and a waiter stands ready with forks when the foreigner has failed to eat in the Chinese way.

" Did William Holden and Jennifer Jones eat here ?"

" No, I guess that sequence was shot in Hollywood," the colonel said quite seriously.

" But it couldn't have been," Miss Milli replied, " for there were junks and sampans around."

" They were shot here, I suppose, but the dinner scene was shot in the studio and superimposed." Miss Milli went on with her rice dish.

" Do you think Hong Kong will last long ?" I asked the colonel.

" I think that you'll have to get out of here if we recognize Red China — not that that's likely."

" But you cannot think that Tchang Kai Chek has a chance of getting back ? And the Kuomintang army must be getting rather old."

" My boy, the present regime in China won't last. And it's a good thing for you that we're in Taiwan, or Formosa, as you call it." The colonel addressed me as if he were talking to the British Empire.

" The reds could take Hong Kong any day they liked ?"

" Yeah, but as I've said before, we're on Taiwan, and our fleet is around too. Laso Hong Kong is quite useful to China for trade. All the food for the colony comes from China proper, and lots of commerce goes on."

" A British businessman I spoke to yesterday seemed as calm as if he were a bank manager in Guildford."

" I know a lot of your people aren't worried at all. What can they do about things anyway? They are living comfortably with obedient servants, in fine houses ; they go to the office, the club, to parties, to dinner with the Governor if their grade is high enough, why should

they waste time worrying ? As things are Hong Kong is a very pleasant place to live in ; it's a lot nicer than Taiwan, I can tell you. There's wonderful bathing, sailing, golf ; you can make expeditions to the other islands ; living is cheap, practically everything is duty free. It's a danger spot, but they just don't think about it. They're all right at the moment and that is what matters. I'd be the same myself if I lived here. Business is fine, booming in fact. Exports are good, new factories open every week. Why worry ? It's the only attitude to take in a place like this."

" Yet it seems strange that plans should be going on for the development of Kowloon and the New Territories whose lease runs out in 1997."

" Oh come, that's way ahead."

" Yes, but China may walk in at any moment."

" Yeah, but it's no good thinking it will. The whole Far East is uncertain. One just has to carry on as if everything will remain the same."

" What do you think, Miss Milli ?"

" I don't think about the situation. I hate to see so many of my people suffering, but they used to in China and I suppose they could go back. As for me I'd like to go to the States."

We were rowed back in the same sampan to the shore, and had to tear ourselves free from the children who clung to our clothes asking for money. We passed the hospital, another place where the two film stars played a scene in " Love is a Many Splendoured Thing ", and then on the outskirts of Victoria the university, which in spite of the lack of space has some fine buildings.

I spent my last evening in Hong Kong with my calm banker, a Pakistani businessman, a Eurasian and a Japanese. The banker had been invited by the Pakistani and I was brought along and given a warm welcome. We met at a tennis club in Happy Valley and I watched the banker and the young Japanese play tennis. The atmosphere was most friendly. Indians, Chinese, Japanese and some English all played together, making up impromptu fours and singles. This was not the smart club for the élite, but the mixed club to which rich local businessmen belonged. At the Pakistani's flat we were once more offered a great deal of whiskey. The Pakistani told me that he was a second generation Hong Kong-ite. He had two brothers in the colony, one in Karachi, and one in England. " Hong Kong is my home," he said. " In fact I've never been to Karachi. I've been to England though. I went over for the Coronation as a

matter of fact ; ghastly weather." The Eurasian who had worked nearly everywhere in the Far East from Bangkok to Tokyo told me that he would rather live in Hong Kong than anywhere.

We sat down to a curry supper cooked by the Pakistani's wife. Soon one of the brothers swayed in, having been too long at the Indian club. Our host was ashamed of him, but apart from some rather pointed remarks made by his brother to the Japanese about his Emperor the evening went off quite well.

The Pakistani and his family, the Eurasian, and many middle-class Chinese regard Hong Kong as their home ; most of the English don't as they go back to England when their " tour " is over or when they retire. For these Hong Kong-ites the future of the colony is very important, their lives and their livelihood depend on it developing as it has been doing in the last few years. New flats are going up, new factories produce goods that rival those from Japan, and compete with them in world markets. Even the " water-people " have found a sort of home in their junks or sampans nestling in the bays of the indented coast. The refugees are the problem, and so are those who have made and perhaps are still making fortunes dishonestly, by smuggling, by the many tricks and quick profits open to those who live in an entrepôt. It is the extreme poverty of the refugees and the great wealth of the racketeers that may make the ordinary citizens of the colony interested in what is happening on the other side of the frontier.

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CAHIR HEALY

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