THE EUROPEAN

THE JOURNAL OF OPPOSITION

JANUARY 1957 Vol. VIII. No. 5

Two Shillings and Sixpence

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Number Forty-seven
January - 1957

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ANALYSIS

IT IS almost certainly true that no one at present has the intention of starting a world war, but when so many clowns are playing on the same stage the comedy is always liable to turn to tragedy. Russian excitement mounts as they observe the errors and the divisions of the West, and their policy becomes bold to a point that can cause an explosion by accident. The British ruling cla·s become ever more hysterical as their blunders cause an ever more intolerable domestic situation, just as a dull and dissolute lout almost welcomes a war and army life to escape from a wife whom his improvidence has made a shrew. We would certainly have a war in this situation if the H-bomb did not make it so serious that even the gaderene can see the danger notice on the cliff. So the hysteria takes the milder form of anti-Americanism ; grunting bravely all the way while Suez is evacuated — not at our enemies, but at our allies.

The patience of the Americans in this situation is indeed remarkable. We are witnessing a strange reversal of roles ; it is the Americans who are behaving like adults and the British like children. No doubt the fortunate possessors of American mothers are natural selections to employ the shrillest abuse because they know that Mom can take it ; after this we must surely celebrate the monumental calm of the great matriarchy in trying circumstances by importing "Mother's Day". The necessary atmosphere for that great act of recognition will probably soon return, because the comforter has been restored to the mouth. We are back on the dole again — oil this time — and even in second childhood there is less temptation to bite the hand that feeds. How long will this great, and still vital, British people

endure this ignominy ; this squalor which is called a government ?

Britain and America

Our own feelings in the matter of Britain and America remain constant. We can never forget the help America gave us when we were down, and the protection they now give us while we are getting up ; a disgracefully protracted process. We have consistently and persistently urged the Europeans to save themselves and regain their independence ; even when this is done we shall recognise the continuing value of American friendship in a united front against communism. But we are cursed with a government which perpetuated dependence by denying union, and then jeopardised even dependence by an operation which began with bad faith and ended in failure and spleen. It is quite plain what our government did in this matter, but it is not so plain what complaint they have against America. Without consulting an ally on whom the life of the west depended, British government took action which might have set the world aflame. They chose the exact moment, which occurs once in four years, when that ally is paralysed by the domestic controversy of an election. They chose, too, the exact moment when the liberation of Europe became for the first time an active possibility, and they destroyed that supreme opportunity by creating a diversion which gave the Russians an excuse to return to the killing ; a slaughter sufficient to break even a people of heroism, which could be put through under cover of darkness because British government had turned out the lights of mankind. Such is the record of our government, for which we now suffer a petrol ration, and will soon suffer more.

Biting the Hand that Feeds

What are the offences of America ? It seems that immediately after this performance President Eisenhower felt there was no useful purpose in talking to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd (surely with anyone less patient that sensation would be not temporary but permanent). So the little Lord Hailsham — his wig all abristle — rose up to abuse the plaintiff's attorney, " entirely on his own responsibility " (and we can well believe that no one else was eager to accept responsibility for that oration). He found it " hard to say " that he is half-American, and " still harder to say " that " he is proud of it ". We find it still harder to say we are proud that he is half an Englishman ; it is not English to live smugly for

years on foreign charity, and it is still less English to accentuate the national disgrace by insulting the donor.

All the noisy, empty nonsense of the young Tory tin drums was mobilised for the slanging match. Mr. Hugh Fraser, M.P. — under the modest title ; " Warning to Eisenhower, does he know what he is doing ? " — was given pride of silliness by Lord Beaverbrook's centre page for the remark : " If America supports Russia in U.N.O. is it impossible that we should seek arrangements with Red China ? Stirred up we are a proud people prepared to act in independence." Does this odd noise mean — if we may answer in the rowdy vernacular of the tory taproom — having drawn the dole from the Yank for the last decade, he wants us to draw the dole from the Chink for the next decade ? If not, what does it mean ? And anyway where is the independence, and where, indeed, is the pride ? Those who will independence, must first will the means, and the means is that European union of which most of these Tories have long been the malignant enemies.

Mr. Dulles, and First Things First

It is a strange position to be defending American policy, after years of pressing for the end of an ignoble dependence ; particularly when we defend it from the attacks of a party which throughout that period fawned on America while their government lived on dollar aid. But it is difficult to see in this matter what is the crime of America in general, or of Mr. Dulles in particular. The incident concerning the Aswan dam alone seems inexplicable, though there may be some perfectly good explanation we have not heard. For the rest the policy of Mr. Dulles seems clear, consistent and intelligible throughout ; it seems also much nearer to common sense than the continual vacillations of Sir Anthony Eden. America has put first things first, which are broadly speaking the defence of the West against Soviet Russia. Any American who cares for America, and we would add any European who cares for Europe, should surely give this principle priority. From this it followed that it was much more important to have the main body of the Arabs in the eastern Mediterranean on our side than it was to avoid the payment of another penny on a gallon for our petrol, which was the estimated cost of going around the Cape in the event of having to write off Suez.

It was also far more important to keep the European alliance

intact with such powers as Greece and Turkey on the Russian left flank, than to break it up with a silly and discreditable row about a small island like Cyprus, which could be put out of action on the first day of war by one H-bomb. Therefore Mr. Dulles pressed us to leave Suez and all concomitant troubles, rather than to risk antagonising Arab nationalism for the sake of a position which was obsolete in terms of strategy, and in terms of politics was a pure liability. He saw the wood which was the Soviet menace, and our Government could only see the trees of narrow British interests ; fallen trees at that, for in reality these interests had ceased to exist. In fact the course of Mr. Dulles appears a model of straight-forward consistency, compared with the double scuttle out of Suez and back again — with the Cyprus entertainment thrown in during the interval — which may have been intended by British Government to save the Empire and oppose communism, but has clearly resulted in the break-up of the Commonwealth and in the substantial advance of the real frontier of Russia into lands where that country never previously secured a foothold. America has a great case if it cares to speak, but in this new adult attitude apparently prefers to leave the screaming to the children. Nevertheless America should speak plainly ; American propaganda has too often suffered from several pebbles and quite a few Pilgrim Fathers in the mouth.

The Methods of the Establishment ; when " the lowest thing on earth is a Tory "

Meanwhile, English society is split as it has not been since the Irish question, and American-phobia runs riot. Any who dare to oppose the Establishment — particularly if they have any American blood — are subject to the vilest abuse, mostly, as usual, in private. Those who have enjoyed their hospitality for years suddenly discover the most insuperable barriers to their friendship. In the case of a resigning Minister, a flood of publicity was released against his private life by that section of the yellow press which is for ever congratulating itself upon its probity in refraining from comment on such matters. Every measure, private and public has been exploited : " pour encourager les autres ". To old boys in outrage like us, it is diverting to see the fire of the Establishment so widely spread ; quite restful. But this changing of view about a man's character and ability, merely because in some matter he becomes opposed to the Establishment, is now

reaching dimensions of the grotesque. The change from angel to devil status can occur overnight in current hysteria, and the oscillations are likely to become more violent as the situation deteriorates. Taken all in all, the method of whispered abuse is the most unpleasant thing in English public life, and makes the violence of political controversy on the continent seem clean in comparison. It is largely a Tory invention ; at least they have brought it to perfection. At such points in a survey of Tory character recurs to the historical memory an old slogan from the robust days of liberalism : " the lowest thing on earth is a Tory ". But it applies only to the Establishment in this period of fatty degeneration of the heart. In the ranks of the Tory party and, particularly, among the young Conservatives, are some very fine, upright and even intelligent people. In fact most of the latter are not really Tories, and only find themselves in that Party at all through the accident of war ; their ever-developing astonishment at their situation will increase rapidly in the coming period.

The stand on Jamaica beach, and on other beaches

The departure of Sir Anthony Eden for a long, sunshine holiday on Jamaica beach was almost too much even for the Tory Party, or for a large part of it. He left, in the words of his chief supporter in the Sunday press, at " the most critical period ". At first there was a great effort to create the familiar hard-luck atmosphere against the background of general good fellowship. A sporting knock imposes a great strain on the batsman, even when he is out first ball ; after a brief rest he will be in form again, and sport, or politics, have great advantages over war because you live to have another chance when you make a mistake.

But it did not work out quite like that ; the public is developing a nasty latin habit of thinking logically in grave matters. When the president of a latin country at a moment of tension is found swimming in a pond, and observing " quack, quack, I'm a duck ", he disappears ; such occasions in England were wont to be greeted by an honour and a rest, followed by a smiling and waving return to the enhanced popularity of one who has suffered discomfort in the country's cause.

The most successful blockade ever

Happily no such symptoms were apparent in Sir Anthony Eden, but after the occupation of Port Said in face of the whole Egyptian army by the combined forces of Britain and France he

was feeling the strain — not of war, but of a strenuous " police action " — sufficiently to require at least a three weeks' holiday at a spot very remote from the scene of action. He left behind what was rightly described as a more successful blockade of the country's vital supplies than that of the Germans in the last two wars, a broken Western alliance, a broken Commonwealth, British fighting forces in immediate jeopardy and a quite considerable risk of world war.

The deputies to whom he left this assignment no doubt felt their burden considerably relieved, when they learned that he was having a direct telephone to Downing Street fitted up in his bungalow on Jamaica beach ; if the *Daily Express* could be run like that, why not the country ? — is it really so much harder to conduct a war than a gossip column ? But in the oddly obstinate way of British people who get an idea, the public remained unimpressed by sweet reason and good fellowship. Technically, of course, all business can be done to-day over a good telephone ; and tomorrow this new invention may be able to give even the visual advantage necessary to sense the atmosphere of calm, alert, decisive confidence in a Conservative cabinet during a moment of crisis, while you talk to them over a long-distance telephone. But the mass of the people are still likely, even then, to hold to the old fashioned view that in a period of great crisis a commander should be not sunbathing, but at the head of his troops.

Think, lad, think

Even a sound instinct can, of course, be reduced to the absurd by the overstatement of empty partisanship. One Conservative commentator compared Sir Anthony Eden to Hitler encouraging a last stand in Stalingrad while absent from that city, and added that even Hitler did not go at such a moment to a Jamaica beach. Such an argument, of course, provokes the query whether Sir Winston Churchill, when he appealed for a stand on the beaches, intended personally to receive the Germans with a machine-gun in his hand at Dover, or whether he intended to defer his personal last stand to Downing Street ? If the former course was his choice, his death or capture on the first day of the action might have seriously disorganised the defence of the country by the loss of a commander whom it had been led to believe was indispensable. In fact was it, or was it not, arranged — as this subject has been raised — that no such last stand should take place even in Whitehall,

but that the government in the worst resort should be transferred to Canada ? We ask the question in all innocence as we do not know the answer ; perhaps it can be supplied by readers of the innumerable war memoirs which have filled the gap before history could be written. In any event, such a course could not possibly be regarded as dishonourable by a government, or by people who rapturously received in London Frenchmen who behaved in exactly this manner. There is a great case against Sir Anthony Eden, but it is spoilt by the addition of such flatulent nonsense ; think, lad, think, it is high time to begin.

HEALTH, STRENGTH AND POWER

How should leaders live in order to retain the capacity for action ?

The health of Prime Ministers is a serious matter, and the subject merits serious consideration. What are the fair principles to apply in this matter ? Is it just to say that a man must be fit enough to see a crisis through, when crisis arises ? If he cannot, should he not go for good ? A nation simply cannot afford a leader who collapses through strain during a crisis. If a man stops a bullet or a knock on the head, he is, of course, out of action for the time being through fair cause. But we cannot have men going to bed because things get rough. They must keep going until a particular crisis is over ; in the interval between crises they can rest as much as they think fit, provided they can keep on top of the ordinary routine of business. Are these not fair rules for general guidance in these matters ? — if not, what are they ? In fact, the whole manner of life of leading statesmen, as well as their administrative method, needs a radical overhaul. A man cannot be at his best if he plays the fool with his life to the usual degree of politicians.

The first thing, of course, is to develop a proper administrative method which depends on knowing what matters and what does not matter. The man in the lead should in principle never do anything that anyone else can do. He should be the initiator of new policies for which he needs time to reflect, and he should be the breakdown gang when the smash is so bad that no one else can manage the job, for which he needs a carefully conserved health and energy. Most Prime Ministers occupy their days

with much interference in a lot of small things which other people can perfectly well do, because they love the sense of the small exercise of power. The psychological explanation, of course, is that such characters shrink from the responsibility of doing big things and escape into small things. Shaw with his wide experience and his unerring instinct in such matters depicted the type in several plays, which were so near to the facts of high office that they are scarcely even caricatures.

The method of the concentrated life

A man capable of great action, on the contrary, is impatient of doing anything but his supreme task. When he is not doing his particular work, he would rather sleep to conserve his energy, or reflect to develop and preserve his mind, rather than dissipate the river of his vitality in the sands of the trivial. For any man who really wants to do anything serious, it is incredible to spend time in high office playing bridge or reading detective novels ; the distraction idea is the greatest nonsense, for it does the tired system no good to fill it with garbage. If a man wants to change the rhythm, he should read something which lifts the mind from the diurnal and inspires to fresh thoughts ; the trouble for the creative mind in good reading is that it sparks off so many new ideas that it is difficult to get on with the reading.

But we digress from our second point, which is that statesmen require not only a selective and concentrated administrative method, but an entirely different way of life. The acme of nonsense is reached when a statesman in responsible office runs round a lot of dinner parties ; it is just another form of escapism, and disastrous for the health both physical and mental. He should not even attend the Lord Mayor's banquet. Let him confer with expert bodies by all means and keep touch with the mass of the people through their representative institutions (also directly in informal ways) as well as using television screen and occasional great meetings to explain to them what the government is doing. But apart from his work, the private life of a Prime Minister — his feeding, resting and way of living — should be as carefully secluded and considered as that of a Derby winner. After all, more depends upon the race, and even the British will be convinced of this before long. And, of course, long before he has reached this position he should have trained himself to sleep when he can ; in crisis snatching sleep for a few minutes at a time, at

intervals throughout the twenty-four hours, and at all times sleeping twice during that period, which is the best proved conserver of energy for those under great strain. And, of course, he should also have trained himself to remain still, to reflect, and to think out his decisions in calm whenever he has a chance, rather than to run round in circles performing small tasks which are simply an escape from the reality to which he feels inadequate.

Athleticism of mind and spirit

This attitude is not puritanism ; it is simply an athleticism of mind and spirit. On the contrary, we believe an innate puritanism is the root cause of many breakdowns. Men should enjoy themselves to the full whenever they have the chance, but that opportunity is not during time of crisis. It is no paradox to say that you are less likely to go to Jamaica beach as Prime Minister in a crisis, if you have previously visited certain agreeable beaches on more appropriate occasions. Relax when you can, and relax good and proper, provided always, of course, that relaxation is not exhausting. The classic Greek with his life of moderate asceticism relieved by feasts, was nearer to the formula for a crisis proof character than the puritan with his regular life of fussy little rules and superfluous tasks. The man who has been trained as a racehorse can pull out the extra pace, when it is needed, more easily than the man who has been trained as a donkey.

Away with puritanism, and let statesmen in their training subject themselves, in accord with Plato's high advice, to every reasonable test of pleasure, as well as to the test of pain which the modern age imposes in any case on any true man. The steel will be all the more resilient after such experiences for the great stretching and testing of crisis. But when real men come to their task, for which all life should be a preparation, they must become completely concentrated and entirely dedicated beings. We need new men as well as a new policy. We cannot afford men who crack ; they must go.

The rot of present political life

But where can the Tory Party find the new men to replace them ? — or, for that matter where can Labour find them ? Most of those available appear to have cracked already on lesser occasions. What is the matter with British politicians ? Why do politicians

nowadays succumb so much more easily than men in other walks of life, e.g., soldiers, lawyers, business men, etc. ; they too have their strains in this world the politicians have created ? The answer is, surely, that something exists in present political life which softens men through and through, which rots the very fibre of a man. Many of these men began with very good war records in the first world war, which was certainly by test of casuality figures or by any other criterion the hardest proof of will and character men have yet had to endure ; they were clearly once reasonably strong types. But after long years of the political life, the virtue has entirely gone out of them. Yet history clearly indicates that really strong characters are stronger in age than in youth. It is the disease of current politics which destroys them ; the eternal compromise, the humbug, the jollying, the junketing and bogus goodfellowship in all the great racket of mass deception for small ends.

The toughness of the men who arrive contra mundum

Only the men who conform to the Establishment are so vulnerable. Those who arrive *contra mundum* do not crack. In their various climes and langagues they are more apt to echo the reply of Lord Randolph Churchill, when asked if he was finding it very hard work being Chancellor of the Exchequer : " Not nearly such hard work as becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer ".

Much has been said from many and very diverse points of view about Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler, but no one has yet suggested that they cracked under tests somewhat more exacting than a clash with Egypt over Suez. It is these stall-fed, hand-groomed and pampered animals of the Establishment who catch cold directly they go out in the wind. After a few decades of this treatment, they are sure to get a chill when Suez begins to flow through the drawing rooms.

Perhaps Sir Winston Churchill was saved from this particular disability by having the Establishment so violently against him for so much of his life. As one of his early intimates observed the other day ; " the secret of ultimate success is to live long enough for all the men who hate you to be dead ". Yet it must be recognised that character, as well as experience, has much to do with it ; toughness, the power to endure, also a natural inclination toward a hard way of life. But the Establishment

cannot normally tolerate characters like that ; it only accepts them because it must when all else has failed, e.g., Churchill in the war. And by then they may no longer be available.

Next choices of the established parties

The most likely choices now to head a government of either established party are men who happen never to have undergone any hard, difficult or dangerous experience in their whole lives : men who give a more marked impression of real softness than any statesman England has yet experienced. And we have already observed nature's rule ; it is not enough to begin hard, you have to keep hard. We shall now experience the men who began soft and have inevitably become softer. At the end of it all must come a government by men who have not spent their lives in orthodox politics, but in contact with some forms of reality however diverse. During the war, and on other brief and particular occasions, many such men have acquired some experience of government and administration, but have not been long enough in current politics to suffer the great rot. The age requires men. The dolls have had their day.

The most important thing said since the war ?

While in England we are concerned with the rearrangement of the puppet show, real things are happening in the real world. The most important thing said since the war passed quite unnoticed during the calypso celebrations on Jamaica beach. Mr. Khrushchev was alleged to be drunk at the time, because he had looked so crossly at some British diplomats that they felt impelled to leave the room during a party, so British diplomacy missed what was said. However, his words seem to have been repeated in a more guarded and partial form at UNO by Mr. Shepilov, and they must therefore be taken at least as seriously as Mr. Khrushchev's new determination to stick to tomato juice. (Trying isn't it, even for the strongest nerves, to see such weapons in such hands, and even then not reassuring to take a look at our lot). Mr. Khrushchev is reported as saying : " If you withdraw your troops from Germany, France and Britain — I'm speaking of American troops — we will not stay one day in Poland, Hungary and Rumania ". If this be true, it could be a turning point in history. Just another bluff to get themselves out of the Hungarian mess, some may say ; and that may well be right.

But whether it be reality or bluff, the answer is the same : get into the ring with him, instead of getting out of the drawing room because he is rude. If it is bluff, call it ; then you hit communism. If it is real, pin him down ; then you win European freedom.

The winning of European freedom without war

A real business conference should immediately be called to consider it, and, if we get nowhere in private, we should insist on a public session where the Soviet position could be exposed to the world. By such means we can force them out of these occupied lands in the end ; not by war but by political struggle, as we always insisted. If they say things like that and do not mean them, if they are then exposed publicly again and again as liars and tricksters, the whole political position of communism throughout the world will be finally destroyed. If in the end they become disposed to feel their position in the occupied lands is untenable, we shall seize the opportunity to win the freedom and Union of Europe. They can have any guarantee in the world they like against the aggression of such an European power ; the most complete disarmament, provided it is mutual and guaranteed by effective mutual inspection. If they really have the sense to see that war with these weapons can destroy the world, they can have peace tomorrow. And when war is renounced we are not afraid to meet them in the struggle of ideas and clash of systems. Whenever they give such openings we should take them ; either to get what we want, or to strike down their propaganda. We need a constant athleticism of mind and spirit in our western leadership ; a constant striving. Never let up ; never crack.

Will Russia always recoil before an American warning ?

" Let us act like men," President Eisenhower is reported as saying when the decision was taken to issue the sharp warning of America as Russian volunteers were threatened in the Middle East ; we might echo George III in wishing that he might bite some of our politicians. The American warning was effective, and the Russians recoiled sharply. But would it always be effective ? Probably not when the Russians have also reached saturation point in the production of the H-weapon is the answer. When they are in a position to say " very well, if you use the H-weapon New York and all American cities will be as flat as Moscow the

same afternoon", — will such a warning against the entry of Russian volunteers into such wars be effective ; will it even be effective to stop the march of Russian armies through Europe ? At that point we must be ready with specialised land armies to stop the onrush of Russian mass and the infiltration of communist guerillas ; unless, of course, we can first get real disarmament, and even then we must take all precautions.

American weapons and European independence

Fortunately, it appears from recently published reports that the Americans have already in position at least a fair number of ground to ground missiles which can be very effective for this purpose. We can only hope that now or in the near future they will be ready to put down such a curtain of fire that a Russian mass advance would be impossible. We can only hope, because we do not know ; we can only be reasonably sure that if anyone is ready, it is America and not Europe. How long shall we endure the disgrace of 300 million Europeans living under the skirt of America ? Come out Europe, and play the man. We can be as strong as America and Russia put together, once we find our will and lose our politicians. Thank God for America today, and let us never forget what the Americans have done, but let us be able to thank God and those who help themselves for the Europe we will make tomorrow.

EUROPEAN

MAX AND FANNY SERIAL

Further to the announcement following the *Sunday Express* in our penultimate issue concerning a pending divorce between Max Beaverbrook of Sunnyside, Jamaica, and Fanny Eden of No. 10 Downing Street, S.W.1, and to the further and felicitous announcement of a reconciliation on the beaches of Suez and Jamaica in our last issue, we regret now to observe the appearance of a rift in this true romance consequent upon the bride's declaration of political bankruptcy. It is still hoped that the justly celebrated constancy of the bridegroom's character will yet afford a firm front to this embarrassing situation.

NEW ROADS FOR BRITAIN

by ROBERT ROW

OFFICIAL sponsors of the "Mind That Child" campaign claim that several hundred children have been saved from death since it began. Yet there is a steadily mounting death-roll on the roads. Total casualties last year were 267,922, including 5,526 killed and 62,106 seriously injured—30,000 more than in the previous year. They were 29,000 more than in the worst previous year, 1934. In London alone victims generally reach 50,000 a year.

This is despite great activity by Government and local authorities. Motorists and pedestrians have never had to run such a complicated gauntlet of directing signs, strident warning placards and police control. Awkward corners in busy streets are padded out, wide ones narrowed in. The aim seems to be to force an ever-rising volume of traffic down to a safe crawl. And what is the result ? The massacre goes on. Thousands are still killed and injured, millions of precious hours are wasted, everyone is frustrated, particularly during the rush-hours.

At this year's Motor Show at Earls Court the number of passenger models that can comfortably reach 100 miles per hour numbered 15 or 16. These are mainly sports cars. But even a "family car" such as the Morris Minor can do 80, and there will be thousands of these on the roads as "the answer to the Volkswagen". On the roads as they exist that means thousands more casualties.

Science and industry will go on making ever more wonderful machines. Mr. Dick, Managing Director of the Standard Company, says that the industry is "on the eve of important developments

in transmission. . . ." The Rover Company has turned out a car probably one step removed from completely automatic gear-changing : the final stage, no doubt, is the gas turbine car. Yet what is the good of the industry spending millions of pounds in research each year to produce better and faster cars when the country has not got the roads to take them ?

Mr. S. B. Wilks, Managing Director of the Rover Company, says that though Britain is the first country to manufacture the gas turbine car she will not be the first to have it in general use unless there is a considerable improvement in her roads.

But why cannot Britain build modern roads when she is well to the front making modern cars ? Why was Germany, bankrupt in 1933, able to build a complete network of autobahnen during the following six years that are still the admiration of all who use them ? Why is Germany, defeated and bombed out in 1945, able to announce a big extension of that network ?

According to figures given by Sir Patrick Hennessy, deputy chairman of the Ford Company, Italy has reconstructed since the end of the war more than 22,000 miles of roads and 6,000 bridges. She has built more than 10,000 miles of new roads and 250 new bridges. Western Germany, already possessing 1,500 miles of first-class highways, is adding 400 miles to them. The West German Transport Ministry has an over-all ten year programme to build or restore 46,000 miles of roads at a cost of nearly £2,000 million.

Why can Germany, a defeated country, do this while Britain, a victor, does not ? The answer lies in the fact that the Germans have put enormous funds into their road-building programmes while Britain has taken them out. The British motorist pays some £340 million a year in taxation, yet only approximately £30 million is spent by government on the roads.

The long-term policy of successive governments has been to rob the motorist of the money he has paid in taxation. All this should have gone on the roads. In 1909 Lloyd George introduced a petrol tax of some 3d. per gallon, giving a solemn pledge that the money so raised would be spent on the roads ; it was, in fact, heavily plundered during the First World War.

The Road Fund was started in 1924, but since its inception the motorist has been bilked of around £2,500 million. (If this money had been spent on making new highways it is estimated that Britain would have today a dual carriageway with a total length of half the circumference of the globe.) From 1945 to 1953 the motorist

paid £1,220 million in taxation. Out of this total only £190 million, or 15 per cent, was spent on the roads.

The United States pay out over £10 a head of population on their roads ; Portugal pays out £4 8s. a head ; Sweden £2 12s. a head and Belgium £1 17s. a head ; Britain a miserable £1 9s. a head. Yet Britain has the highest density of traffic per mile of any country in the world. The government-sponsored Road Research Board estimates that, by 1963, possibly earlier, there will be twice as many vehicles on the roads as there are now. New cars, lorries and buses come on them at the rate of 55,000 a month.

But the Government ignores these ominous figures. It keeps expenditure cut to the bone. Yet it keeps road taxation high. That is why, according to Sir William Rootes, motor manufacturer and Chairman of the International Road Federation, more than £250 million a year is lost in Britain through the drawbacks of an old-fashioned road system.

> " This is the direct loss in accidents, fuel wastage, wear and tear, additional vehicle maintenance and so on ", he said recently. " The indirect loss is infinitely greater. Crawling queues on our main roads, stationary queues in our towns do more to cause ulcers to the two classes which are, I am told most ulcerprone, businessmen and bus-drivers, than anything else.
>
> " Take that £250 million, double it or treble it to take into account its indirect effects, and you get a burden which no industrial nation can carry."

In 1905, an age of horses and carts, a G.W.R. 2-horse van could travel down Park Lane at over 10 miles per hour. All vehicles manage slightly more (11 miles per hour) in the same direction today, according to the Standing Joint Committee of the A.A., R.A.C. and R.S.A.C.

In 1905, again, a private trap travelling east-bound along Piccadilly could reach a comfortable 13 miles per hour. The average vehicle does it in just about as much today. In 1905 a hansom cab could bowl along the Victorian Embankment at well over 15 miles per hour and a private dog cart could touch 19 miles per hour along Birdcage Walk. Fifty years have passed, each one of them seeing new marvels of science, yet traffic in Britain's capital city is now reduced to an average 4.8 miles per hour in Charing Cross Road or 5.5 miles per hour in Old Street.

It is true that the present Government has announced a pro-

gramme for making new roads. In July, 1955, the Minister of Transport said that a total of 340 miles would be built, but that "a start" would not be made until four years had passed. One month before this cautious announcement the Chairman of the Roads Improvement Association claimed that the scheme was already hamstrung by the Treasury and the deflationary policy of the Government. So another project highly-boosted in the Conservative Press appears to be still-born. Today the whole scheme is dreaming along, a leisurely enterprise dragging on into vague and distant stagnation, without drive or punch or even the certainty that it will ever get going.

Much of the trouble lies in the fact that the Ministry of Transport is a junior post, a mere stepping-stone to more exalted positions in Government. It is filled by junior politicians with one eye on promotion and the other on the Treasury, an institution which few dare challenge. One man resigned on principle, after his emergency programme for road-making had been turned down by a terrified Labour Government—Sir Oswald Mosley, who proposed a big main roads programme as a part of his plan for curing unemployment in 1930.

Later, in the years before the war, Mosley suggested a scheme even more ambitious than the German autobahnen, with four-lane highways.

Britain needs a Mosley plan. Roads would be built by a national body, not local authorities, using a compact staff of engineers and other experts with a power to call on the necessary national resources, but handing over sections of the job to private firms and not to bureaucrats. Piece-work rates would be employed, for firms and men, to get the best results. Initiative and efficient co-ordination would soon give Britain modern roads.

Four-lane main roads are essential, allowing fast and very fast traffic to get along safely. In many cases railway lines could be taken over and turned into wide straight concrete roads, but given a double function by erecting a monorail line above them. This is probably the future of the train. It costs less to install and maintain, and has higher speeds. There is no reason why the road and rail systems of the future should not be closely integrated by following the same routes.

The new roads should not go through any large town, apart from such converted railway lines. But what about crossing the large city of the future ? What about the motorist who wants to go, say,

from Croydon to St. Albans ? Must he waste time and petrol going all the way round London ?

Surely the answer is that, instead of going through or round London, he should go *under* London ? The Underground does this already, and it will not be impossible to send undergound also the long-distance traffic which helps to create congestion. Deep tunnels travelling straight under big cities would take all long-distance cars and lorries, cutting down congestion and also their travelling time.

Other big cities have the same problem, which can be solved in the same way. Liverpool has made a financial success of the Mersey Tunnel to Birkenhead ; now the demand is for another, possibly two more Mersey Tunnels. Why not more Thames Tunnels and a Severn Tunnel as well ?

There will still remain the actual problem of congestion, however. The rush hour will remain a serious social headache until the streets of our cities are thoroughly re-planned. It is impossible for the centres of cities to expand horizontally, therefore they must expand vertically. Streets at different levels would separate the motorist from the pedestrian. Multi-storied garages are a necessity, also multi-storied parking sites to help in easing congestion. Moving pavements and open-air escalators will be needed to get pedestrians quickly out of crowded areas. The monorail train will be invaluable, also, for its high rate of acceleration and speed will enable thousands to leave a busy city quickly. It can be installed over the roofs of existing buildings : for example, a dozen lines might be carried over the Thames, to take great numbers rapidly from the City to the South London Suburbs, saving them the weary crawl of today.

The monorail will also be invaluable for getting from city centres to airports on the outskirts, saving valuable time.

Science has made all this possible. What holds the Government back—the cost ? Mosley suggests abolishing usury charges on loans advanced for road-making and house-building. They would be interest-free, but for minor charges for staff wages and other bookwork involved.

FARMING IN THE ATOM AGE*

by R. REYNELL BELLAMY

AUTOMATION IS COMING. Neither retrograde legislation nor sabotage can stop it. The second Industrial Revolution is upon us, and farming will be as affected as any other industry. The inventive genius of man has released the means by which either chaos in the shape of widespread unemployment can descend, or the scientific equipment of the future can take much of the back-ache, drudgery and long hours out of farm work. Let us consider how this is likely to touch those employed on the land, what will be their chances in the future, and what policy will best serve agriculture as a whole.

As farmworkers we are more interested in wages and conditions than in the degrees of affluence of individual farmers. But as no one can expect good wages and decent conditions from an impoverished industry then, as a natural corollary, all of us connected with the land must strive for a thriving and stable agriculture. Too often in the past the British farmer has been denied what should be his birthright, the British market. Never again must a reversion to the conditions pertaining between the wars be permitted, when potatoes from the Continent were landed at Ipswich, King's Lynn, Wisbech, Boston and Hull, while thousands of tons of native potatoes rotted in the ground, or in the clamp. In those days there was little or no profit in producing beef, mutton,

* This was one of the prize winning entries in the *Farmers Weekly* essay competition, it is here published for the first time.

or bacon, poultry, eggs and butter. Cereals, even barley, flooded in from overseas. Home milk production alone throve, but even that began to feel the chill winds of adversity when Dutch vessels delivered Holland's surplus milk to the Port of London, and manufacturers started making umbrella handles and nick-nacks from our own.

Subsidies may put money into worthy and unworthy pockets alike, but they do not indicate a satisfactory state of affairs. No industry which is healthy should require such artificial stimulants. Prices cannot come down without causing hardship and calamity to the farming community ; so the consumers must be prepared to pay more for their food. At present, food is cheaper in Britain than on the Continent, where wages and salaries are generally lower. The foreigner considers good living more important than entertainment. In this country it is the reverse. Tens of thousands of townsfolk . . . and not only townsfolk . . . would rather economise at the table than in the expensive *trivia* they have come to regard as essentials.

The power of propaganda, especially when used wisely and discriminately, is almost boundless. All the means of propaganda, Press, wireless, and poster should be arrayed by the Ministry of Agriculture, and by all agricultural organisations, to indoctrinate the people in the value of fresh, wholesome, home-grown food, attractively and hygienically marketed . . . and without the aid of spivs, great or small. Co-operative marketing on the lines adopted in Italy before the war has much to recommend it. When it is recalled what was achieved by Government propaganda in both the World Wars, the difficulties of persuading the public to readjust its views as to what is vital to better health and the maintenance of Britain's greatest single industry should not be insuperable. Nor should the propagandists play down the fact that a truly flourishing countryside would be an insatiable customer for their manufactures.

Agriculture should also be more adequately represented at Westminster. Better still if the National Farmers' Union and the National Union of Agricultural Workers could combine to establish their own Industrial Federation, or National Council of Agriculture. Whatever they chose to call it, no Government would dare to ignore an authority so powerful. Perhaps in time this federation of the Unions of those whose life's work is on the land would become integrated in Government itself, empowered

to make its own bye-laws and regulations for the efficiency and well-being of the industry.

A matter of the utmost immediate urgency, with more bearing on the present than the future, is the so-called " drift from the land ", which has become more of a race than the slow ebb which the word " drift " connotes. Everyone knows the main reasons . . . remuneration, quite inadequate by comparison with other manual trades ; primitive living conditions, and remoteness from shops and centres. These defects could be fairly easily remedied by any Government acting whole-heartedly and energetically on behalf of farming. But many men require more of life than a sufficient wage-packet and a cosy home. There is ambition. In the ranks of the farmworkers are many ambitious men, but because present-day farming offers them little scope for the fulfilment of their desire they quit the industry. More land and generous financial assistance should be made available for competent, progressive-minded farmworkers anxious to become their own masters.

Hinging on that, arises the question — " Which serves best the national interest ? " — the very large farm, often owned by a Limited Company, and run scientifically and as efficiently as is possible by a degree-ed or well diploma-ed farm manager, or the place of little more than 100 acres usually run by one man and his family. With experience of employment on a famous farm of nearly two thousand acres, and on a small mixed farm of one hundred and thirty acres, as well as many years on a medium-sized farm, I consider that it is often the little farmer with the aid of his family who extracts more from every square yard of his soil than does either the big man, or the more average-sized farmer. For example, on the big farm of my experience the headlands were untouched ; on the five hundred acres farm they were cultivated as carefully as the rest of the arable land, but on the small-holding even the corners were tilled with a spade and sown by hand. I think that the Beet Sugar Factories will bear me out in my contention that the greatest degree of productivity in their particular sphere generally comes from efficient small-holders. Much of this is due to the hoeing, in particular the singling, as when this is done by the grower or members of his family, it is performed more painstakingly and selectively than by the hired piece-worker on the larger acreages, where speed is a vital factor if the hoer is to obtain decent earnings.

What is likely to happen in the future with increased mechanisation, and the introduction of automation ? At present the former is still only in the adolescent stage, and the latter embryonic.

Although in this country we are alleged to possess more horse-power per arable acre than anywhere in the world, we should look across the Atlantic to see how the best and fullest use is made of farm machinery. A friend of mine, a former farm worker in England, now has a mixed farm of several hundred acres in eastern British Columbia. He and his wife run this place alone. They have a dairy herd, rear some beef, and harvest, just the pair of them, two or three hundred acres of cereals, mainly barley. The corn is cut with a binder, and left lying on the ground, neither stooked nor shacked ; next it is swept up on a super-sweep, mounted on aeroplane wheels, and carried to the buildings, where the wife cuts the bonds and feeds the sheaves to the thresher by means of an elevator. From the drum the grain is blown to the granary, and the chaffed straw is blown elsewhere for subsequent use as feed and litter.

It is inevitable that with the introduction of such techniques to this country many farm workers will become redundant. They must not become unemployed, but should be given every opportunity and all assistance to become self-employed. For that purpose land should be acquired by the State for smallholdings for their occupation and use. In the Britain of the future as I visualise it, there will be fewer farmworkers, but a great many more occupiers of farms of small acreage, run as family concerns. I do not suppose that they will be operated on the identical lines of my friend's Canadian farm, but more or less after that method. A practice that tomorrow's small farmers could borrow from Australia should be that where a group of neighbouring settlers, in order to avoid the individual expense of each one buying a complete tackle, agree that " A " will purchase a seed drill, " B " will provide a binder, and " C " a " stump-jump " plough, and so on. The success and smooth running of this scheme is rather too dependent upon the sweet reason and cordial relationship of the neighbours to be guaranteed. In this country where neighbours know just a shade too much about each other, it would probably be found better to have pools of machinery and grain-drying and storage facilities, etc., available locally, and allocation made by a committee or body as disinterested as

possible.

Co-operative marketing would be a boon to producers such as these.

Let me summarise. First we should establish confidence throughout the industry by guaranteeing the Home Market, removing subsidies, and raising prices. At the same time campaign to impress on the public the reasons for such measures. As widows and pensioners would be likely to be the only real sufferers from a rise in the cost of foodstuffs, some of the funds saved by removing the subsidies could be used to raise their present pittances.

Next, induce farmworkers to remain on the land, not only by improving their conditions, but by keeping before them the incentive of the possibility of a farm of their own. Also, when automation shall have finally made them redundant at their place of work, ensure that the possibility of a farm of their own becomes a reality. Some of the larger farms will have to be reduced gradually in size to meet these ends.

Finally, and beyond all, let Britain show the world how the modern inventions need not turn our countryside into a vast distressed area, with three men out of every four " on the dole ", but can make life sweeter and easier for all.

DE VALERA

by CAHIR HEALY

De Valera and the March of a Nation by Mary C. Bromage (Hutchinson, 25s.)

AFTER forty years' experience of the toss and tumble of Irish public life, Eamon De Valera can be described as going steady. Although he has failed, so far, to resolve the major national problem and restore the unity and independence of the country, as he set out to do, he is still leading the largest single party in the Irish Republic of twenty-six counties. Indeed, the two recent by-elections, in Dublin and Carlow, give some indication that the Fianna Fail Party may be on its way back to power.

Mrs. Mary Bromage, an Irish-American writer, is an admirer, and her biography is the best so far. She includes most of the Chief's achievements, but she by no means overlooks his failures.

Among the former was his success in persuading the British Chancellor to forego the Land Annuities (a matter of several millions a year) ; it was he who abolished the oath of allegiance, and who was able to coax Mr. Chamberlain into restoring to him the three reserved Irish ports. His chief failure, up to now, has been his inability to persuade the Northern politicians, or the majority of the electorate in the six counties, that they should take shelter under his Republican umbrella. They prefer the Union Jack, with its slightly higher social services.

Dev is a picturesque figure who can draw larger crowds anywhere than any three of his leading opponents combined. He has a great appeal to the crowd. At the same time, the voters would appear to re-consider the matter between the meeting and the booth, for the Chief rarely secures more than half of their crosses.

He fought with the Insurgents in the 1916 Rebellion. He has a large acquaintance with English prisons. including Dartmoor, Maidstone, Lewes, Pentonville, Gloucester and Lincoln. He escaped from Lincoln by making a duplicate key, modelled from the altar candle butts, and with this he calmly walked past the guards. He went to the U.S.A., when all the King's horses and men were watching for him, disguised as a sailor.

His judgment of the American political arena was superficial. When senators were interviewed, and with the Irish vote in sight,

they agreed to adopt a reservation approving of the principle of self-determination for the Irish people. Dev telegraphed home an exultant message: "A Te Deum should be sung throughout Ireland"! His rejoicing was premature, for in a day or two the Senate in council rejected the whole peace plan, "including the Irish reservation".

Dev backed the Irregulars when they made war upon the Dáil and the National Army; they were a relatively small minority then. Before that disaster had arisen Sir James Craig, leader of the Northern Tories, went all the way to interview him at Dalkey. The Boundary clause of the Treaty was still unimplemented. Craig was prepared to give many concessions to Northern Nationalists in return for a settlement. But once the Irregulars struck at the Provisional Government in Dublin, the national strength was dissipated, and Craig saw his danger had passed. He could afford to ignore all Dublin politicians after that. The whole struggle for a united Ireland had gone out of the people of the twenty-six counties, and by the time Dev and the Government had composed their differences, the country wanted peace at any price.

It may surprise many that Dev was not originally in favour of a rebellion, but as a soldier felt bound to obey orders. It will also come as a surprise that when Casement landed on the Kerry coast from Germany, he was coming not to comfort the Irish Republican Army but to cancel the rising altogether. He realised the hopelessness of depending upon outside help in the circumstances of that day. The British nevertheless executed him. For the matter of that, the existence of the elaborate plot to have the Germans invade Ireland, which the British Secret Service professed to have discovered then, and on account of which Dev and the others were interned in Lincoln by Chief Secretary Shortt, was bogus, declares De Valera. English statesmen in a difficulty rarely want for evidence, or an excuse.

When Dev crossed to London to negotiate with Lloyd George he soon discovered there was little chance of bringing back a Republic, and he was constrained to substitute a new qualification, "external association", to make the pill more acceptable in Whitehall, where the limit had been set as dominion status for 26 counties —perhaps for 28.

One wonders now, if the Irish had fixed upon dominion status for all Ireland, whether they might not have won. The magic of the term "Republic" held the Irish delegation in fetters. That, and

the fear of the extremists behind, like Mary MacSwiney, Brugha and Stack. It is only fair to Dev to admit that he would have given up much for a united Ireland. Smuts, from South Africa, assured him he could have dominion status for the asking. Dev, in his difficulty, offered Craig any measure of autonomy he desired, if the North would come into the Republic.

Meantime, an Election was held in Northern Ireland. The Nationalists in the six counties believed in 1921 that their best interests would be served in having the Dublin Republicans representing Northern seats in Belfast. Dev was elected for Down, McNeill for Derry, Milroy for Tyrone and O'Mahony for Fermanagh. But these Abstentionists produced only dead sea fruit for the Northern people. The latter did not re-elect the group again.*

The July 1919 negotiations came to nought, but were revived in October, when De Valera remained behind in Dublin, sending Griffith in his place to the conference table. Collins, too, went reluctantly. Neither Stack nor Brugha would go, knowing what was possible, and wanting to be in a position to say later that they had never let the Republic down. It is only fair to Dev to admit that in all his talks and letters to the plenipotentiaries he insisted that if a break must come with the British, it should be upon exclusion of the North rather than an oath of allegiance to the King.

Griffith, in his private talk with Lloyd George, was the first to accept the fatal compromise of a Boundary Commission to decide the new boundary. Dev thought his colleague was being deluded. It proved to be so, for the wishes of the people concerned in the border counties were never consulted. Judge Feetham, the chairman of the Commission, told McNeill his mission was merely to correct little pockets of people who found themselves isolated from their political groups. Griffith understood by the wording of the vital clause that administrative units like Rural and County Councils, or Corporations, were to be the areas the views of which would determine where the new boundary would be drawn. If Griffith's view had been accepted the two Counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh would have voted themselves into the Free State, along with the City of Derry and large areas of South Armagh and South Down.

Neither Griffith's view nor that of the majority in the border counties was accepted. And with the excuse of an internal rebellion upon their hands, the Free State Government then felt obliged to acquiesce in the border as fixed by the British Government. They

* De Valera was, however elected for Down until 1938. He was Abstentionist.

had either to do so or start off afresh on a new " boundary " war.

One third the area governed by the Northern Government would then, and now, vote itself into the Republic of Ireland if given the choice. The result of the vote for the border seats at Westminster makes this clear enough. At the last Imperial Elections two Abstentionist Republicans who were returned were later found to be disqualified by reason of their conviction over border raids. They are doing ten years penal servitude. Their seats, on petition, have been filled by their two Tory opponents, who received a minority vote.

De Valera is a strong advocate of an Irish-speaking country. This part of his programme has not produced any fruit. In a country where humour is rather typical of the people, he rarely makes a joke ; he neither partakes of intoxicants nor smokes. St. John Ervine, who wrote the biography of Craig, comments :

> " It is singular that the man from the North should have all the qualities that are associated in alien minds with the southern Irishman and that the man from the South should have all those that are commonly associated in the same minds with Ulstermen."

Like Eisenhower, De Valera stands much better with the populace than does his Fianna Fail Party. This suggests that when, in the near future (he is now 74) he bows himself out, there may be many changes in the political situation. His eyes have been giving him trouble for years.

He has not been successful in his major policy of restoring the unity of the country. It cannot be claimed that in the economic field he has been altogether a success either. He has, with Government backing, set up many new industries and given electricity even to the remote mountain places. The relatively high cost of these has imposed a heavy burden upon the taxpayers. Notwithstanding these aids to industry, the young continue to leave the country in alarming numbers, the majority making their way towards the better paid jobs in England.

All this has given rise to an underground element of unrest and dissatisfaction, which reveals itself in the resurrection of the once defunct I.R.A. or an imitator which continues to make raids on the border, burning customs huts and attacking army and police barracks. This form of opposition merely hardens pro-British opinion in the six counties, giving them warning of further trouble in the offing. De Valera, with many troubles behind him, has, seemingly, a troubled enough world ahead.

KOESTLER AND ORWELL

by MICHAEL HARALD

Arthur Koestler by John Atkins (Spearman, 16s.)
A Study of George Orwell by Christopher Hollis (Hollis & Carter, 18s.)

THE following demand recently appeared in a general-knowledge paper at a mid-west American university : " Say what you know of these great English writers : Dickens, Sir Winston Churchill (*sic*), George Orwell, Arthur Koestler (*sic*), Aldous Huxley. Choose any three." Eighty-three students out of 91 ignored Churchill and Huxley (*I* shall now ignore Dickens). Nearly 50 per cent quoted Otto Katz's comment on Koestler : " We all have inferiority complexes . . . but yours isn't a complex—it's a cathedral "—71 mentioned that Orwell's real name was Eric Blair. Now this is fame indeed. How many, I wonder, could have quoted *anybody* on Churchill, from Lloyd George to Eisenhower ?—how many could have quoted Hemingway on Huxley ? How many would have known, say, Mark Twain's real name ?—how many would have known *Mark Twain*, except possibly as the dull subject of an interesting review by Orwell or Koestler ? To come nearer home : every reader of *Punch* is expected to be as familiar with Koestler's defects of character as with Sir Anthony Eden's. His political odyssey, his guilt feelings, his uneasy sex-life are assumed to be common knowledge. The satirist—Michael Padev, for instance —has the agreeable expectation that his witty bits will be fully appreciated, that the satire will be considered neither esoteric nor unkind. (I quote now from Mr. Padev's " The Invisible Complex ") :

" When I was a Communist for seven long years between 1932 and 1939 I was wrong. But I was wrong for the right reasons, not for

> the wrong reasons. For this (right) reason my inferiority complex was not then of truly Cathedral-size proportions, as it is now (for the wrong reasons). . . . "

Koestler has earned the right to be mocked by his adopted country in his adopted language : transplantation has never—not even in the case of Conrad—been so swiftly and successfully effected. But *Punch*, after all, and *pace* Mr. Muggeridge, is only *Punch* : it has not yet achieved the mass circulation of the *Daily Express*. In this august journal now, Orwellese, like Mitfordese, is freely used, without acknowledgement or translation. It would probably be unjust to accuse the staff of the *Express* of knowing Orwell's real name—Beaverbrookians are generally preoccupied with non-essentials of a different sort—but they know all about his Big Brother. *Doublethink*, *blackwhite*, *thoughtcrime* and the rest pop up in even the yellowest of yellow tabloids : only the *Daily Worker*, for some reason, seems to wish not to exploit them. . . .

These reflections are prompted by two new books on Orwell and Koestler. Very quickly I realised that *Arthur Koestler* was not for me. A glance at the foreword—does *anybody* read these things first ?—showed me why.—" *There are many things missing from this book.* (Not a good start !)—*It concentrates on Koestler as a political writer, which he primarily is . . .*" He is " primarily ", of course, nothing of the sort. He is, and always has been, a *publicist* ; and it is as such that he interests *Punch*, the American students, Europe and myself. He began as a propagandist for Communism—a job which paid so badly that he was obliged to advertise sex as a sideline ; and in the last decade he has publicised himself. He is now, arguably, the most expert self-propagandist of the age. His methods—not his motives—are not so very dissimilar to Shaw's. Both writers would come in for censure from Mr. Hollis, who writes in the introduction to his *Study of George Orwell* :

> " There are secrets of the heart which every man has a right to keep to himself and which decent men, as a rule, prefer to keep to themselves. It is no compliment to the world to pay it
>
> *The evil and the insolent courtesy*
> *Of offering it my baseness as a gift.*"

But Shaw's confessionals had more to do with wit than honesty ; and this is surely right—the gods laughed ! Koestler has less humour than any other modern writer of comparable eminence—even Orwell.

His real genius lies in his realization that anything presented on a sufficiently massive scale is sure to arouse public interest, so—not a complex, but a " cathedral ", no half-measures, but " absolutitis ". —That, plus his (probably intuitive) understanding of the pleasure/pain principle ; for many people, I fancy, read Koestler for the sheer bliss of putting the book down occasionally and going out to the pub. How else can one explain the dreadful fascination of this sort of thing ? (My copy of *Arrow in The Blue* has vanished, but Mr. Atkins's paraphrase is neither mitigatory nor satirically intended) :

> " It (dedication to a cause) was a refuge from his sense of guilt and if he were not obsessed with some external task he would have been obsessed with himself. He adopted the routine, unusual for a writer, of staying at his desk for eight or nine hours a day, the year round. Whenever he tries to break these chains he goes to the other extreme, wastes his time, gets drunk, suffers hangovers, chases women. . . . ' Work became my therapy and my drug, my compromise with a guilt-laden ego, and a sacrificial offering to the ghosts of the past '."

Yes, of course, it's comic as well. But only, as it were, at one remove. Koestler taking himself over-seriously *can* be fortuitously funny ; but when you've been hit in the face with a battering-ram for half a dozen chapters you don't feel inclined to laugh. A biographer taking Koestler over-seriously is a different proposition ; and Mr. Atkins at time is funnier than the aforementioned Mr. Padev, of whom Mr. Atkins rather disapproves. I like his footnotes best :—

* *Koestler's mystic self, revealed in prison.*
* *I had better add that this is my own addition to Koestler's list of neuroses.*
* *Who has a good word to say for Sweden ? . . .*

It is a bad book. Koestler needs to be assessed rather than paraphrased. Mr. Atkins, on this evidence, is not the right person to attempt this assessment.

Back once more to Koestler's fellow-devil. I report with regret that Mr. Hollis's little book throws no new light on his subject. Indeed Mr. Atkins—the ubiquitous Mr. Atkins—wrote a bigger and better Orwell study a year or two ago. This biographer is an inveterate tiller in other men's gardens : he did the spade-work on

Orwell, ferretting among old newspaper-files, rummaging through w.p.bs. The book was not, I think, widely read, except by reviewers —some of whom actually reviewed it—and by intending biographers of Orwell. It deserved to be read. (Mr. Atkins was not, however, at Eton with Orwell. Mr. Hollis *was*. So was Cyril Connolly. Name three well-known old-Etonians who *weren't* . . .).

Mr. Hollis writes with modesty and charm ; but he tells us what we already know ; what even mid-west American university students know. I capped one oft-told story with another—to my taste, funnier—which the biographer either hadn't heard, had forgotten, or hadn't bothered to quote. Certainly the information in the Eton chapter that " Blair kept his head and stopped the rush " was new to me ; but it did not delight me. And was it necessary in a study such as this to include lengthy synopses of *Animal Farm* and *1984* ? They are sufficiently well-known. The heart sinks at the reminder that " The obedient sheep . . . change their bleat of ' Four legs good, two legs bad ' into ' Four legs good, two legs better ' ". Yes, once again, guided by Mr. Hollis, we meet the snap-judgments, the sneers, the remorse, the honest self-criticisms. What a bleak bore the man was !—Professor Trilling's " virtuous man "—how one dislikes oneself for liking him ! And then dislikes oneself for attacking him, for it is clear that he was a kind and gentle man, that he practised as well as preached " decency " and good works.

Orwell was a writer who knew little of literature, and cared less, who yet took pains to write well. He was often a good critic and never less than a good journalist. He was a man without Art who, with one very great satire, entered its realm. He was a political " thinker " who lacked the self-discipline necessary for hard reading and consecutive thought ; a muddled man, fair game for clever fools and mad rogues ; an authentic *naif*. Yet, at the end, he was fumbling his way towards a better solution than Candide's : his realisation that *Europe* was the garden that we must cultivate might, had he lived, have brought him the peace, the inspiration, the leader he searched for.

Mr. Wyndham Lewis in *The Writer and the Absolute* has the truest and best things to say about Orwell *qua* novelist. Perhaps, one day, Sir Oswald Mosley might be persuaded to comment on Orwell the lost lamb in the political wilderness of the 1930s ?

QUEBEC: EUROPEAN CITADEL

by JOHN BURY

ONLY four hundred miles from Times Square, the Empire State Building, Wall Street, Fifth Avenue and Broadway, exists a civilisation where the fields are laid out in feudal strips, where ox-drawn ploughs are still seen sometimes, where monks pad along the cobbled streets of ancient towns, and where little English is heard. That country is Quebec, where I lived for two years and observed daily a clash between America's Manifest Destiny and a culture which, to quote A. M. Lower, Professor of History at Queen's University, Ontario, and Canada's best known historian, is a " chip off the old European block ".

French Canada is a distinct national entity, centred on Quebec but proliferating over into New Brunswick and Ontario. It has resisted socially and linguistically, where Pennsylvania Dutch, Florida Spanish and Louisiana French have failed, absorption by the all-conquering march of the American Way of Life. Drive from New England into New France and you see swarthier complexions, French signs, steep-roofed stone cottages with small suspicious windows, and long white roads lined with Napoleonic poplars. This countryside converges on Quebec City, the only walled town in North America, the Nuremberg of French Canada. At the foot of the heights scaled by Wolfe you find *la basse Ville*, whose wharves and cobbled alleys recall St. Malo, while the section round the citadel resembles a Vauban border fortress. Even the CPR's massive Chateau Frontenac, seventeen stories of skyscraper, is topped by a bristle of green-pinnacled turrets *à la* Chantilly. You feel you are in a European town.

However, to indicate the separateness of Quebec Province merely by stressing the quaint is not the whole story. For the province produces a quarter of the world's aluminium, three-quarters of the world's asbestos, and up in " the attic " of the province, vast quantities of copper and gold (Rouyn-Noranda) iron (Sept-Iles and Ungava) and uranium. And in Montreal are chemical and plastic plants, textile mills, vast finance houses, and an aircraft industry employing 100,000 workers. Where Quebec's separateness from the North American scene as a whole comes in is in the re-

sistance which the Québecois are making to some of the cruder forms of American materialism.

Quebec, of course, is by its historical circumstances cut out for differentiation. In 1776 she was the only American colony not peopled by British stock, and yet the only one (with Nova Scotia) which preferred the aegis of far-off lackadaisical George III to nearby Puritanical George Washington. Quebec remains relatively impervious to the propaganda of Big Business and Tin Pan Alley behind barriers of language few Americans can surmount. And Quebec's militant Catholicism gives her a totally different mental atmosphere, bringing her nearer to Europe, which is 75 per cent Catholic, than America, which is 75 per cent evangelical Protestant.

I am one of those who feel that despite common ethnic origin, and the fact that America is the child of Europe, the civilisations of the two have grown so far apart that they must be regarded by future Spenglers and Toynbees as constituting two separate culture-areas. America is equalitarian, Europe hierarchic : they bow before wealth, we, I venture, before virtù : they are optimists, we are obsessed by the tears in things : they are our superiors in plumbing, we theirs in the arts : they " Get Religion ! ", we are Outsiders. One might add, that insofar as the influx of American *mores* into Europe creates schisms of the soul and dance-hall scuffles, a study of Quebec is interesting as a society, folkish, Catholic, different, " a chip off the old European block ", yet daily subjected to a greater degree than any other to the march of America upon earth.

Canada as a whole, of course, is the most Americanised country in the world. While vibrant with self-determination *à la* Wilson, a third of Canada's capital stock is nevertheless owned by American investors *à la* banana-republic. And though by and large, thanks to rugged individualism, high wages and a growing unionism, this is Canada's greatest boom of this or any other century, there is a seamy side to Canada's dynamic *laissez-faire*. There is an abnormally high incidence of seasonal unemployment—half a million have been jobless over the winter these last few years ; Canada's textile industry has been subjected by free trade to murderous competition from Japan and America's black belt ; and the lot of many small traders in face of meteoric new combines is reflected by the bankruptcy and " fire " sales you see, for example, down the Golden Mile of St. Catharine Street, Montreal. And ever since 1763, the English-speaking minority (10 per cent) have been trying

to make the Herculean wealth of Quebec their own on the basis of the labour of a French-speaking proletariat.

But the Québecois are Frenchmen, not fellahin, and what struck me as the brightest spot in all that land of bright, cold sunlight was the way in which a spirit of hostility to unadulterated Capitalism exists and develops. In the Dirty Thirties, French Canada was deeply depressed, with the fisherfolk and the farmers bearing the brunt of *laissez-faire*. It was in 1936 that a new movement, the Union Nationale came to power in the Quebec Legislative Assembly. " La Province de Quebec," writes Paul Bouchard, the movement's leading publicist, " est sortie en 1936 de l'ère du *laissez-faire laisser-passer*. . . . Une politique de partialité et favoritisme envers une minorité de profiteurs a été remplacée par la réalisation graduelle et progressive d'une politique nationale, sociale et familiale "—none of which is the language of the U.S.A. A national, social and family policy : a reflection of the ideals of Rerum Novarum which the Quebec Catholic Church under Paul-Emile Léger, the powerful Cardinal-Archbishop of Montreal, has been infusing into Canadian economic life for many years.

The National Union's man of destiny is Maurice Duplessis, Prime Minister of Quebec since 1936 and the most controversial figure in the Dominion in virtue of that national (i.e. French-Canadian) social and family policy.

Some of the schemes introduced by Duplessis into Quebec since 1936 have been, by Canadian standards, revolutionary. In Quebec such concepts as the paid holiday, over-time pay, and pension schemes began with Duplessis. Also there has been a trend away from unadulterated capitalism in the direction of a mixed economy similar to Sweden's. Before 1936 Quebec's cardinally important hydro-electric resources were being taken over gratis by hustling companies, many of them American. In 1937 Duplessis did an Abadan on these pirates, requiring them to pay royalties, and he began a system of provincially-owned projects which brought the charges of the private companies into line.

In his defence of the farmer Duplessis has done much to maintain a balanced and integrated French civilisation. Thus Duplessis' government began a vigorous public works policy on the land : 600,000 acres drained, the electrification of the countryside, loans of $100 million to the farmers, so that while farm populations in other provinces declined, the Union Nationale claimed 16,000 new farmers have gone into business in Quebec since 1936. Thus while

all over Canada youth flocks to find high wages in the gimcrack, garish cities, Duplessis has laboured to maintain a flourishing rustic life as the backbone of French Canada's integrity and individuality.

Of course " the urban middle class " have to pay for all this, and it is at this point that Duplessis'policy turns into a race policy, that of the rural and proletarian French against the West Montreal commercial English. The Montreal English loathe Duplessis. Duplessis bans margarine, Duplessis puts a 5 per cent sales tax on Montreal, Duplessis gerrymanders the ridings, or constituencies (true, actually) and worst of all, in 1954, Duplessis introduced a Provincial income tax. Provincial income tax is unknown in the other provinces, but in Quebec it affects incomes of over $3,000 per annum, which few farmers but most English bourgeoisie earn. How often around the smart bars of West Montreal and the Laurentian ski-resorts you hear seething excoriations of these iniquities. And iniquities they are, by the argument of count-of-heads Demuckracy : though Europeans will be familiar with the principle that favoured sections of the community should lend aid to the less favoured.

In Quebec there still exists a deep hostility between the French majority and the English minority. The French, like the Dutch in South Africa, have political power whilst the English have economic power. The English, however, are living Californially in Quebec, and don't do more than grumble about Duplessis' Fascist behaviour. The French occasionally boil over into street violence : there were two serious riots in Montreal in 1955, ostensibly over a rise in the street car minimum fare from twelve to fifteen cents (1/3d., you would-be emigrants who hear of the vast salaries you *can* make in Canada). On those occasions, French-yelling mobs of students, unemployed and bums fired shots, burnt street-cars and looted stores, and commentators murmured about " hidden nationalist passions."

By and large, French Canadians will not let themselves be exploited. They retain the easy-going, tradition-loving, Catholic ways of old France. Under Duplessis, they have shown how a small nation, while modernising itself, can resist those cruder, acquisitive features of her culture which America tends to export. Quebec's methods of preserving her integrity are the Leonine middle way in economics, and an intelligent determination to cling to her linguistic and national distinctiveness.

A DIARY

IN FRANCE Twelfth Night is kept as a feast and the children eat a galette with a little china doll or a china bean hidden in it. The child who finds the doll in its slice is given a gold crown to wear, in honour of the three kings from the East.

Madame de Caillavet, the great friend of Anatole France, once ate a *baba* in which she found a human tooth. This made such a ghastly impression upon her that she could never again look at a *baba* without being sick. "J'essaie de la raisonner," said France. "Je lui dis : Vous imaginez-vous que les pâtissiers s'amusent à arracher leurs canines pour les fourrer, comme la fève, dans le gâteau des rois ? Votre baba est unique dans les annales de la pâtisserie. Elle ne répond pas : elle vomit. C'est un argument sans replique."

When I see the china doll peeping out of the pastry I cannot help remembering Madame de Caillavet's horrid experience.

★ ★ ★

1956 was a bumper year for centenaries ; two thousand five hundred years since Buddha, one hundred years since Freud and Shaw were born and Heine died. Each one is made the excuse for articles, books, exhibitions ; the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale showed their Rembrandts and hunted out their Mozart manuscripts. I suppose one will always regret not having struggled to Holland to see the Rembrandt exhibition which celebrated the 350th anniversary of the painter's birth, but stories of queues before every single picture were daunting.

When America sends pictures there is the extra incentive of knowing that it is the only chance one will ever have of seeing them.

Should pictures travel ? Since the war they have been

constantly on the go ; neither people nor works of art seem able to stay at home for long. The Florentines demonstrated recently against sending their treasures to an exhibition in America. As they truly said, the ship they sailed in might go down, like the *Andrea Doria*. And then, no doubt, it would be men, women and even children first, and the pictures nowhere.

★ ★ ★

" If I could have my way, I should go out to dinner every night, and then to a party or an opera, and then I should have a champagne supper, and then I should go to bed in some wonderful person's arms."

Who wrote that ? Lytton Strachey, to Virginia Woolf.* Strangely enough, the first time I ever met him part of the fantasy had come true. It was twenty years after, and he had become a literary lion who could have gone out to dinner as often as he chose.

We had been to the opera, and Lady Cunard gave a supper party afterwards for about forty people at a huge table in her upstairs drawing room at 7 Grosvenor Square : I suppose we were too many for the dining room. It was very gay and glittering. Lytton Strachey came and sat next to me, old and mysterious behind his beard and spectacles. I was eighteen, and not long married. I thought how wonderful and amusing and fascinating he was, and was amazed at my luck and at his condescension in honouring Lady Cunard with his presence at her party and me with his proximity. Writers and painters and composers seemed to me then the princes of mankind ; they do still, but I realise now, as I did not in those days, that *Uebermenschen* can love gaiety and pleasure just as much as ordinary people.

But Lytton's periodic excursions into the *monde* were not always a success. " Garsington was terribly trying " he wrote on one occasion after a visit to Lady Ottoline Morrell. " I was often on the point of screaming from sheer despair."

Many of these letters are bitter complaints about the small miseries of life. Lytton Strachey was delicate and always felt cold ; cold during damp English summers, freezing in the winter time. The Bloomsburies had a genius for making themselves uncomfortable. This was not the result of dire poverty ; the poorest peasant in central Europe would refuse to put up with

* *Virginia Woolf & Lytton Strachey: Letters*. Hogarth Press and Chatto & Windus, 18s.

such discomfort as they did — he would get himself a stove and keep it burning night and day When I knew Lytton he was quite rich and had a pretty country house, but I remember how cold it was staying with him.

★ ★ ★

The Bloomsbury revolt against Victorian values extended to other spheres besides literature and philosophy. No blazing fires or heavy nourishing meals for them ; no scrubbed kitchens, shining door-knobs or starched linen. Lord Berners told a story about one of the group whose name I cannot mention because he is still alive. This Bloomsbury was his host at dinner.

" Do you like *oys*ters ? " he asked.

" Yes, very much," said Berners unsuspectingly.

" That's *splen*did, because I've bought some oysters from a *dir*ty little *shop* round the *cor*ner."

★ ★ ★

Mr. Leonard Woolf and Mr. James Strachey, who have edited the letters, leave dots here and there to spare feelings. This is very tantalising. They have obliged with some footnotes, but probably many people who knew already that Rumpelmayer was a pastrycook might care to be told who Carrington was : dear, faithful friend of Lytton Strachey, whose death killed her with sorrow.

★ ★ ★

The winter exhibition at the Orangerie consists of a large collection of the work of that most curious painter Odilon Redon. Old maidish jugs of wild flowers and little girls wearing first communion dress and framed in stained glass are hung side by side with terrifying nightmares, madmen, grinning spiders, Goyaesque visions of horror. A self-portrait shows a handsome, bearded, rather weak face. The pictures come from museums and private collections, and are, no doubt, a rare treat for amateurs of surrealist painting.

★ ★ ★

As the influenza season approaches I recommend a book so enthralling that it will induce forgetfulness of aches, pains and

boredoms. *How Charles Bravo Died: The Chronicle of a Cause Célèbre** by Iseult Bridges is the true story of a poisoning mystery of the eighteen-seventies; it is far stranger than fiction.

★ ★ ★

Last month's *Diary*, with its disobliging references to Sir Anthony Eden, was printed before he flew away to the sun suffering from severe strain. The *New Statesman* delicately refrained from publishing Vicky's usual unkind cartoon on the 24th November, though by the 1st December it evidently felt that the Prime Minister could once again stand the severe strain of seeing himself as others see him. A monthly magazine is more rigid than a weekly. Before these words appear it will, presumably, no longer be correct to call the lamb in wolf's clothing Prime Minister. I imagine someone else will be busy trying to clear up the mess.

The Tory Party is unpredictable. It may continue to pretend that Sir Anthony was right. But remember Munich. Someone reminded me the other day how we had the pleasure of actually seeing Lord Halifax's tonsils, so loudly was he acclaiming Mr. Neville Chamberlain upon his return from Germany. Within a few months, however, the whole enraged flock had turned about and was scampering in the opposite direction.

D.M.

* Published by Jarrolds, 1956.

The EUROPEAN

THEATRE IN SCOTLAND

R. J. B. Sellar

and

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Weir of Hermiston*

by EDWARD BOURKE-HALIBURTON

DESMOND STEWART remarked in his Edinburgh Daybook that what we need here " is a Scots theatre of drama, rather than a theatre of Scots drama ". This is the first play of merit in the new Gateway season.

I was one of that band of players which, in 1948, found itself destitute in Dumfries upon the closure of the Classic Theatre there. A gifted and fantastically visionary producer named Charles Turner, in an attempt to found a Burns Memorial Theatre in the heart of the Burns country, opened the venture with a " season of plays " such as Mr. Stewart would have acclaimed : they were by Shakespeare, Ibsen, Maeterlinck and some of the more worthwhile moderns. By the second week, a sweepstake had been organised by the company as to the number of the audience on a given night : tickets were marked " one " to " ten ", and the eleventh ticket was scored " more than ten ". When the curtain went up on *Merry Wives*, there were more people on the stage than in the stalls. The actors cried when they were owed a week's wages, but at the end of a month Turner had lost his entire savings, £1,000—in a Scots theatre of drama. Lest it be suspected that the Dumfriessians are less evolved aesthetically than other Scots, the late Wilson Barret used to produce one play by Shakespeare per season until told by his directors that not even the remaining eleven weeks devoted to bedroom farces could recover that one week's losses.

The only way you can get a Scottish audience to a semi-serious play—unless you are Gielgud or in the Festival—is to tell them that it is by one of their own people ; that it is written part in English and part Scots (enough Scots to show them where they are, but not too

much or you will get a dispute over accents) ; and that there is a good switch of moralising mixed up with the fun. You will then draw the type of audience which also enjoys hearing the minister preach on Sundays and which comes feeling that their evening will not be " ill spent ".

" Parochial nationalism " may not be Third Reich but perhaps it is better than no nationalism at all ; the Gateway has come to terms with it to escape the fate of the Classic Theatre of Dumfries. Pitlochry has compromised even further, and in its last season of plays was hardly distinguishable from the vacuous productions of " B " London rep companies which are Scotland's sole alternative theatrical fare.

From Stevenson's unfinished masterpiece, R. J. B. Sellar has created just that sort of play calculated to more than half fill a small theatre. I am all on the side of R. J. B. Sellar and the Little Scotlanders. The Laird's wrinkled breeches and the smudged flats in the second act would have made Desmond Stewart's heart bleed ; I found them merely distracting. Why cavil at the state of the tablecloth as long as the soup is hot ? Stevenson had taken the tale to the point where Lord Justice-Clerk Weir (a thinly disguised Braxfield) finds himself in the situation of trying his own son Archie on the charge of murder. Weir resembles the Dr. Knox of Bridie's *The Anatomist* : the Man of Principle utterly indifferent to popular feeling. Whereas Knox trades with the body-snatchers in the interests of science, Weir hangs impartially and without stint to defend society. But Lord Weir is a Scottish folk-lore figure for another reason. He lurks in the Old Testament in company with Abraham and Samuel ; Stevenson may have personalised him but it was Calvin who brought him to the forefront of the national consciousness. Weir of Hermiston is archetypal of the parent-image : he yearns for the blood sacrifice of a son to salve the purity of his own self-esteem. Small wonder that Mr. Sellar, faced with the most urgent of all Stevenson's obsessions, should have burked reality. To keep faith with the author he must leave Weir unmerciful. But he adulterates the characterisation : first, in the redesigned ending, by inserting a mitigating plea for the retention of capital punishment, then by having Archie rescued from prison in approved Wild West fashion. Had the part of Lord Weir been allowed to develop about the original intention, Tom Fleming would have been equal to the task. As a tragic actor, he is in danger of spoiling himself through compulsory under-playing.

LONDON THEATRE

Bertolt Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan*

(*COURT THEATRE*)

Noel Coward's *Nude With Violin*

(*GLOBE THEATRE*)

by MICHAEL HARALD

IT IS a dolorous thought that the Coward and Brecht plays might have been seen by members of the great Compagnie Madeleine Renaud — Jean-Louis Barrault, for two of our famous players are appearing in them. Dame Peggy Ashcroft is in the Brecht and Sir John Gielgud is in the Coward ; but for all the difference it would make they could very well exchange roles, and perhaps by now they have. The main elements of both performances are a heavy, mask-like make-up, a sneer and a pair of trousers — loosely fitting in the case of Dame Peggy, tightly fitting in the case of Sir John.

I cannot subscribe to the view that undue managerial pressure has been brought to bear on these two artists. Nothing short of the cruellest refinements of Chinese torture would induce unwilling persons to act in such plays ; and it would be hysterical as well as unjust to suspect H. M. Tennent, Ltd. and the English Stage Company of enlisting even domestic rack and homely thumbscrew. It is saner to assume that both are willing victims of the two worst plays currently running in London. Are their performances, then, too good for the text ? — a phenomenon by no means uncommon in Paris, as in London, and one which might have wrung from French professionals admiration instead of derision. No : they are not. There is not a pin to choose between plays and playing. Nothing could fully redeem the worthlessness of either play ; but it is sure that M. Barrault as the fine-spun valet of the one and Mlle. Renaud as the homespun whore of the other would have mitigated the total horror of two such evenings at the theatre. It is mortifying to be unable to recommend to our visitors a theatre where English acting is demonstrably as good as French. The truth must be faced : it is not. And at the Court and the Globe it is, for the most

part, quite appallingly bad.

I know nothing of the genesis of *Nude With Violin*, but it seems incredible to me that it should be a new play, product of what I suppose must be termed the " Bermuda " period. I would guess that Mr. Coward wrote it thirty or forty years ago as a boyish prank, that it is rightly a product of the " Precocious " period. *Very* precocious ; for this damp-squib satire on " modern " art is based on views which appear to have been acquired by listening at keyholes to the phillistinisms of elderly clubmen. A famous artist, one gathers, has died. His paintings are revealed to have been the work of a crazy Russian princess, a barmaid, and a Negro . . . I cannot go on, the play defies serious comment. I was sorry to find Miss Kathleen Harrison and Mr. David Horne wasting their time in this tasteless drivel.

The Good Woman of Setzuan opens hilariously, and for a few minutes I thought I was going to enjoy it. Three rather tatty old Gods take shelter for the night with a Chinese prostitute, Shen Te (Dame Peggy Ashcroft), and reward her with a large bag of gold. She decides to buy a tobacconist business and devote the profits to poor-relief. This is warming, the more so as she communicates her decision in the dulcet tones of Pont Street, scarcely a stone's-throw from the Court theatre. Shen Te soon discovers that philanthropy on this scale doesn't pay. In order to avoid bankruptcy it is necessary first to invent and then to impersonate a cousin, Shui Ta (I think), a ruthless businessman who very quickly gets rid of her parasitical proles . . . The fun fizzled out by page 5 or thereabouts. The text triumphed.

There is a moment in *The Good Woman of Setzuan* which I propose to detach and describe, for it conveys something which is still perplexing many earnest folk : the essence of Brechtianism. Wang, a water-seller, is shuffling along a deserted street. It is raining. He looks sadly from the sky to his water-jars, then back again. He shrugs his shoulders. Business is going to be bad today.

Now what could be clearer than that ? A child of four would have no trouble in understanding Wang's predicament. Then why not get on with the action ? No, says Brecht : let's make sure the audience really grasps what's going on. Wang, therefore, starts to chant as follows (that he does so in a hideously cacophonous manner is a trifle I shall not dwell on) :—

I am water-seller and it is raining
It is raining and I am water-seller
Water I sell and raining it is
Raining it is and water I sell . . . .

The tune vaguely resembles one sometimes used for the *nunc dimittis* ; but this is no comfort, for it is plain that Brecht

isn't going to leave it at that. It has occurred to him that we might be deaf as well as daft, so an electric sign flashes out the reassuring explanation that it's still raining and that Wang is still a water-seller.

Several points emerge from this styleless, shapeless jumble. We learn that poor people are often predatory ; that the quickest way of ruining a rich person is to advertise his philanthropic bent ; that private charity can lead to public chaos ; that noble means frequently result in evil ends, and *vice-versa* ; that no-one, not even a warm-hearted prostitute, can be truly good in an unsound society. These highly-original observations are illustrated by snippets of drama cognate with the one I have just outlined. The play gets the acting it deserves. Dame Peggy must positively play Peter Pan next : her power to convert Brecht into Barrie should not be wasted, suggesting as it does the glorious possibilities of Barrie converted into Brecht. But I must thank Mr. Esme Percy, wittily miscast as 1st God, for making me giggle from time to time and laugh outright twice, and Mr. John Osborne (Lin To) for reminding me that writers do best on the whole to keep to the auditorium side of the footlights.

CINEMA

The Film Year in Review

by VINCENT MURRAY

IN spite of the Exhibition, Miss Monroe's marriage, two *Othellos*, some hectic Dors publicity, and revelations from the U.S.S.R. and Gt. Britain it's been a pretty poor year. Such is the inevitable verdict when the year's reissues have a greater stature than the new films, and in 1956 there was nothing to equal Marcel Carné's *Le Jour se Lève* or Chaplin's *Gold Rush*, the two most notable reissues. Nevertheless the screens were kept filled—though the year saw the collapse of an increasing number of small cinemas—and for the most part with reasonably entertaining movies in the currently fashionable shapes and techniques.

America sent over a string of Cinemascope musicals, each adapted from a Broadway musical and each bearing evidence of

divorce between stage and film-technique. *Guys and Dolls*, *The King and I*, *Oklahoma* and the rest were too much like their origins to be good screen-entertainment. Yet Gene Kelly's *Invitation to the Dance*, a film that had no literary origin, was less of a success than it might have been, mainly because of its break with traditional forms of entertainment. Strange are the ways of the film-business. There is no cut-and-dried rule for turning out good cinema. A similar paradox is to be found in the success of *Wedding Breakfast*, a play designed for cinema's small-screened but deadly rival, which, like its predecessor, *Marty*, turned out to be one of the best films of its year. The expected dose of filmed plays was regularly administered, all but *The Rose Tattoo* killing rather than curing—and that exception was chiefly because of Magnani's subtly subdued performance. America's teenage revolt continued with *Rebel Without A Cause*, a beautifully directed drama in which the remarkable personality of the late James Dean was recorded. *On the Bowery*, though, was America's one outstanding piece of original filmcraft. Its director's personal vision, courage and skill were at the back of this film, and its independent approach to a demoralising subject makes it a fascinating document. The sheer size of Vidor's *War and Peace* makes omission impossible, but, like Rossen's *Alexander the Great* earlier in the year, the director's determination to be accurate at all costs, from settings down to quotes from Tolstoy, successfully drives out any feeling for the period. All that is left, which means all that comes alive, are the superb battle-scenes which must be amongst the best in cinema. The other notable spectacle of the latter half of the year was Huston's *Moby Dick*, a technician's film if ever there was one, with phenomenal camerawork and first-class direction. The too-good-at-heart Ahab, though (Gregory Peck), would not wash.

And from France ? Remake after remake (*Nana*, *Le Grand Jeu*, etc.) suggests a dirth of new material, and the reissues (apart from *Le Jour se Lève*) have been uninteresting. The spate of sex films, violence films, Fernandel comedies becomes interminable. Becker's *Touchez pas au Grispi* was probably the best of the *films noirs*, but right at the opposite emotional extreme a passionately human *Si Tous les Gars du Monde . . .* (*Race for Life*) brought a breath of life into the stagnant boudoir that is French cinema today. It led, needless to say, absolutely nowhere.

Comedies and elegantly-made crime-films came from Britain too, along with patriotic drama (*Reach for the Sky*, *Battle of the River Plate*). The only films of any real worth to come out of British studios this year have been short ones : Mazetti's *Together*, that moving study of deaf-mutes, and Richardson and Reisz's *Momma Don't Allow*, a rhythmic story of a dance-hall. Anderson's *O, Dreamland* was linked with the others in performance this year, but was made earlier. They are the first attempts to look at the British social scene since the great documentary movement of the 'thirties. Such a privately-sponsored movement could link up with this

tradition and form an excellent starting-point for future British production. From this point of view the past year has been the most promising year of cinema in Britain for a long, long time.

Soviet cinema, breathing in the relative freedom of " the thaw ", showed us new themes, new names, new standards of artistry. The humanizing process is most definitely at work in *The Big Family*, for example, or in the brilliant re-thinking for the screen of *Othello*, a revelation in film-dramaturgy. A beautifully produced ballet-film of *Romeo and Juliet* and a delicate version of Chekov's *The Grasshopper* confirm the impression. A good film year—and a hopeful one —from the U.S.S.R.

Italy was represented by only one name of importance last year—Federico Fellini, whose three films *The Street*, *Spivs* and *The Swindlers* have all now been shown on British screens. The first two have previously been reviewed in these pages and their value is known. The third film extends the meaning of the second by concentrating on the deliberate exploitations of the gullible by professional cheats. The direction is more controlled, the playing more uniform and the whole flow of the film marks a further step in Fellini's career. From other countries the number of films shown here has been small, but the quality good. Orson Welles sent his glittering but almost incomprehensible *Othello* from Morocco—a preliminary reading of Michleamoir's *Put Money in Thy Purse* is essential for this one, I think. I am addicted to Welles, though, and his wayward genius fascinates me. Shakespeare-lovers, then, must excuse this mention of his film. Spain sent *Death of a Cyclist*, a film with deeper roots than its title suggests (already noted here) by a brilliant young director Bardem. Let's hope we hear more of him this year.

So much for the past year. Scarcely any progress on the whole, but some promising points could be followed up. You will have noticed the relative absence of famous directors and the record number of new names. A nice balance of the two would mean a hopeful 1957.

THREE POEMS

by ROY MACGREGOR-HASTIE

Song of Nagasaki

Dream, in a vacuum of now,
in a willow pattern wonderland, let the stream
of consciousness flow on.
Dance, sing, whirl through the unsubstantial here and now
until the music stops.

Take a text from Buddha, Christ or Tao,
let the nightmare vanish, the clouds dispelled
by the warm word of the chanted liturgy.
Let the conscience sleep sound in the arms
of an optimistic psalm.

Put out your hand,
and, in the middle of the night,
the flesh of the beloved seems only of delight ;
but wait—
can you not feel the softness of decay
of the corpse left on the battlefield of glory ?

A little wine ?
Even the heart fermented and distilled,
the palate replete ;
no place now for the taste of blood,
no wish to remember that it's spilled
in the distant vineyard.

See—only the flowers bloom,
only the soft and sweet,
only the beautiful and non-repeatable,
only the barricade, the painted palissade,
built high to hide the moat in which the dead are thrown.

Listen again.
Note how the rattle of the teacups drowns
the sound of the bomb,
that leaves the tea-gardens a desert place.
Can you not hear,
faintly behind the chink of glass on glass,
the echo of a sound that came
once, when the moon smiled coldly on the grass,
shrivelled and atomised in Fear ?

The Frontiers of Belief

Everything is ready now ;
it was ready many years ago
when preparations first were really begun,
at the beginning that had no place in Space or Time.

He says we must move on.

He does not tell us where, or how,
and from his helpers we can get but little information,
—only a doubt as to how little preparation
will be enough,
and no word as to whether the crossing will be rough,
or the journey in the other time too long.

He says we must move on ;
and yet the others round us stand and stare,
for they were never going anywhere,
and where they are now is their destination,
and nothing in their hollow shells can be repaired
though trained mechanics of the soul abound.

But we are wiser at the last,
for when the hands move round,
and what is now is past,
and what will be is what is even now,
our papers will the necessary visas bear,
for we are all already there.

He says we must move on ;
and then, without another word, is gone,
and he was never fair to look upon,
so we retain no picture of him in our mind.
And now there is, and always will be,
only ' We '.

I Prefer Marx and Spenser

And if a War comes now,
what shall we do, you and I,
who paid our sixpence every month,
to Morgan Philips greater glory,
and thought that this would save Democracy ?

We cannot fight—how can we ?
—for that is surely contrary
to all those principles we once avowed,
though Royalty still draws a crowd,
and of our loyalty to Marx
there is some little doubt.
And we could hardly take our place
beside the enemies of that in which we once believed,
though many of us grieved
to find our former idols' feet of clay.
No flag can show us two the way ;
though we have gathered up their manna,
we cannot see ourselves in uniform
beneath a Star be-Spangled Banner.
Nor, though we sing about
it, does the Red Flag give us much to shout about.
Better to think, and drink, and wait,
but then, perhaps, its even now
Too Late.

NEW BOOKS

Guy Burgess: A Portrait with Background by Tom Driberg (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 12s. 6d.)

EVIDENTLY Mr. Tom Driberg finds poor fat grubby chain-smoking communist Guy Burgess a more sympathetic subject for biography than he found rich energetic trans-atlantic bossy buccaneering Lord Beaverbrook. Nothing could exceed his tender regard for the former unless it be his spiteful resentment of the latter. Guy Burgess, of course, is not a man calculated to arouse either envy or malice; he is too far down the ladder.

Mr. Driberg relates of him that he so much dislikes violence and cruelty that he ostentatiously turned his back when a boy was beaten at school. It may seem strange that someone so sensitive about the barbarous practices of his own countrymen should be so insensitive to the vast organised cruelties of Soviet Russia; but perhaps he simply turns his back again. The child father to the man?

Burgess appears to have disclosed little or nothing that we did not know already from Cyril Connolly's book, from Petrov, and from the reluctant Foreign Office White Paper, about the case of the "missing diplomats". It is curious that the *Daily Mail* should consider extracts from Mr. Driberg's book the scoop of the decade, or of the century, I cannot remember which it was supposed to be. Surely not on account of Burgess's sentimental and amateurish little sketch of a night view of Eton College chapel from Luxmoore's garden — likely, no doubt, to evoke tender memories in some of the *Daily Mail's* Etonian readers, but of small interest to those educated at other schools?

As to his visit to Sir Winston Churchill at Chartwell during the Munich crisis, we do not require to be told by Mr. Guy Burgess what Sir Winston thought about war with Germany. It will

come as a surprise to nobody. "I hope to be employed again," he is quoted as saying, and Mr. Driberg comments: "it has been forgotten how completely down and out politically, Churchill at that time seemed."

"You know, Tom, living in a socialist country *does* have a therapeutic effect on one," says Mr. Burgess, and he goes on: "In London I was lonely for the important things—I was lonely for Socialism."

I hope Mr. Driberg's bad luck in having his little whitewashing effort published just now (he could not have been expected to guess what his Russian socialist friends would be about) will not put him off trying to get another scoop next time he spends his summer holidays in Moscow. Maclean's story might be interesting, if he would tell it. But perhaps he is not seedy enough, or silly enough, to arouse Mr. Driberg's sympathetic interest.

D. M.

Mr. Hamish Gleave by Richard Llewellyn (Michael Joseph, 12s. 6d.)

THIS novel of the Foreign Office was obviously inspired by the treacherous activities of Burgess and Maclean, who appear as thinly-disguised characters. It adds one more to the long line of suppositions concerning the motives and movements of the two communists. What, then, is its significance, making it worthy of review?

It was published in March, 1956 and therefore, presumably, was written before the end of 1955. Yet it tells in substance the story with which Burgess has recently been regaling readers of the *Daily Mail* through the mouth of Mr. T. Driberg, whose book was recently published. Is this pure coincidence? Did Mr. Llewellyn have any pre-knowledge of the departure motives? Or, again, has Driberg and/or Burgess read Mr. Llewellyn's book and decided that it would make a plausible contribution to the white-washing campaign in which they are now busily engaged? It is an interesting speculation.

Those who decide to read the book will find the vital question of why the missing diplomats absconded somewhat obscured by the subsidiary issues involved—sex-life at the Foreign Office (hetero- and homo-) and the beautiful Mata Hari-like agent who flits through its pages. But they will return to the main theme—the sufferings of the frustrated diplomats, driven in desperation to seek a brave new world in Russia.

At first we may feel considerable sympathy with our villain-

heroes, or indeed with any honest and intelligent men who enter Britain's foreign service. They are all volunteers, accepting the privilege of serving their country as compensation for comparatively low salary and long and irregular hours of work. Their idealism fades as the years progress, and they have doubts as to what interests they are serving. Those of "the country"? But what is "the country"—the people, the government of the day, or "the establishment", which goes on for ever, although governments may come and go? They object to American domination of British foreign policy, and American strictures upon the laxity of our security forces. The two diplomats resent the domination of Britain by the U.S. and decide that the alternative is flight to Russia, complete with suitcases filled with secret Foreign Office files.

A naïve story, whether told by Mr. Llewellyn, Burgess or Driberg.

G. V.

Le Malfaiteur by Julien Green (Plon, 600 francs).
Thin Ice by Compton Mackenzie (Chatto & Windus, 13s. 6d.).

THESE two novels both deal with the homosexual in relation to society. Sir Compton Mackenzie's is a well-born, rich, politically ambitious man who is betrayed by his abnormality into wild indiscretions, so that he is blackmailed and ruined. His story is told by a contemporary and life-long friend, who always had the job of paying the hush-money; this friend disapproves, yet is well-disposed enough to wish to "save him from himself".

M. Julien Green's *Malfaiteur* is a very different character, and his novel is more intelligent than Sir Compton Mackenzie's, which would hardly fill a couple of hours on a train journey.

In an ancient house in a French provincial town live two sisters, the husband, daughter and son-in-law of one of them, and two poor relations. One of these poor relations is Jean, a writer aged about forty, who seldom leaves his room to join the vulgar, disagreeable and quarrelsome family. The other is a young girl, Hedwige, incredibly innocent and childish. Jean and Hedwige fall in love with the same very nasty young man. He uses his power over Jean to get money from him, but is unaware of the passion Hedwige has conceived for him after a chance meeting. Jean, in trouble with the police, goes away to Naples where eventually, in his despair, he kills himself with poison. Most of the book is the story of Hedwige's hopeless love, described with M. Green's curious sensibility and sympathy. Yet the *Malfaiteur* of the title is not the horrible object of her and Jean's passion, the unspeakable Gaston Dolange, but, apparently, is the unfortunate Jean himself. He is several times thus referred to by his elderly female relations, and as he creeps about in his dressing gown he seems to feel that

they are right.

Although the story is set in the provinces about thirty years ago it is hard to believe in. It certainly does not begin to correspond with the reality of today. *Thin Ice* and *Le Malfaiteur* are reminiscent of the sentimental Victorian tales of " fallen women ", in which the bejewelled and successful demi-mondaine of the last century must have recognised herself with difficulty.

M. Green shows how deep love for an unworthy object can lead to intense sorrow. Hedwige suffers as much as Jean. Both commit suicide because their love is hopeless. Is Jean the malefactor, or Gaston Dolange ?

With the law as it exists at present in England, the situation in Sir Compton Mackenzie's book is perfectly credible, but the characters are only dolls made to fit the circumstances, the reader cannot care in the least what becomes of them. M. Green's characters, on the other hand, are real and alive. Except, that is, for the shadowy, guilt-ridden Jean ; but he is an important exception. The moral of both novels is : that homosexuals come to bad ends. But *do* they ?

D. M.

The Masque of Everyman by Peter Fison (T. H. Mowbray, 5s.).

QUITE often when one has dropped off to sleep with the wireless still tuned in to the Third, one awakes with a start to hear a sepulchral and rather ill-drilled Chorus reciting highbrow banalities about Beauty or Death. This reviewer normally switches off with some dispatch, but for those who like that kind of thing — and even, perhaps, for some of those who normally don't — Mr. Fison's Masque is to be recommended.

An allegory is not, perhaps, the easiest genre for a young author to try at his first attempt. It must be grave but not pompous, wise but not platitudinous. The convention has a rather bucolic rhythm of inevitability which comes hard to a modern sophisticate, and if it is badly done it can be quite ridiculous. Mr. Fison brings it off amazingly well, avoiding all these traps by a deft use of irony and irradiating many parts of the work with a real poetic gift, of which we may well hear more.

Passed to the dear old Third for information and action. If they do it, I, for one, shall listen.

K.F.

OTHER CONCENTRATION CAMPS

by JEFFREY HAMM

AS hostilities ceased in 1945 the floodgates were opened and a wave of war memoirs, adventure and escape stories came tumbling from the printing presses. At first they all presented the allied case, until Captain Liddell Hart took us to the other side of the hill and into the minds and hearts of the German generals ; as war hysteria subsided it was remembered that courage and heroism know no frontiers, and the exploits of German war-heroes now fill as many best-sellers as those of the allies. Little has been written of those who were destined to see both sides of the hill.

A cursory examination of what lay beyond the hill in the 1930s revealed no fundamental clash between British and German interests. German claims to territory taken from her at Versailles appeared reasonable to anyone who stopped to consider how England would have reacted in similar circumstances. Some Englishmen saw in the growth of a " greater Germany " a threat to British Empire; they included the Labour Party, which was pledged to " liquidate " the British Empire and Tories who rivalled the Left in demanding disarmament (in the face of a heavily-armed Germany they professed to regard as a menace) in order to pander to a pacifist electorate. To other Englishmen, whether ex-servicemen of the first World War or youth pledged to fight if ever Britain were attacked, it appeared more logical to re-arm Britain as a precautionary measure while withdrawing from European entanglements within an insulated policy of " Mind Britain's Business ". (This was in the pre-atomic era, when the Channel was in fact and not in wishful imagination the moat surrounding an island fortress.) Such a foreign policy was the natural prerequisite to the development of the pre-war British Empire as a self-contained unit capable of providing the British people with the highest standard of living the world had ever seen. When we heard Sir Oswald Mosley advance these twin policies in the 1930s we knew our destinies lay with him in British Union.

On 3rd September, 1939, the British government declared war on Germany. Our position was clear, and had in any case been

defined in a statement issued by Sir Oswald Mosley a few days earlier : those of us who were members of the armed forces would loyally obey the rules of the services, while the rest of us would do all we could (within the law) to persuade our British people to call on the government to make a just and honourable peace. We were following in illustrious footsteps—Chatham, Fox, Lloyd George and Ramsay Macdonald ; their paths led to high office and public esteem, ours to the concentration camp.

In May, 1940, I was in the Falkland Islands, the British colony off the coast of Argentina, when it was announced that Sir Oswald Mosley and some of his supporters had been arrested. I continued with my job (that of travelling teacher) until 3rd June, when my breakfast in an isolated cottage some fifty miles from the little town of Port Stanley was interrupted by the arrival of three members of the Falkland Islands Defence Force with a warrant for my arrest. (It is a tribute to the efficiency of allied propaganda concerning the dangers of approaching a " fifth columnist " that they had armed themselves with revolvers and handcuffs.) They speedily decided that these were superfluous and we were firm friends before we reached Port Stanley after a three days' ride. We had a race over the last mile and in my efforts to win my horse stumbled in a pothole, throwing me so that I arrived with face smeared in blood, as if to confirm the rumours sweeping the island that I had violently resisted arrest.

I was met by a British army officer in command of the local defence force who informed me that if I felt " aggrieved " I could appeal. I told him I felt considerably aggrieved but experienced some difficulty in appealing in the absence of any charge or explanation for my arrest. He replied that " as far as he knew " members of " certain organisations " could be detained. I was then taken by boat to the hulk of a ship lying out in the harbour and there deposited in the hold, with a couple of guards on deck.

I found I had a companion, and his story gave an interesting glimpse of the other side of the hill. (I will call him by his Christian name of Andreas.) He was a German born in Eger, in Sudetenland. When the first World War ended he was a boy at school and found his German teachers replaced by non-German-speaking Czechs the day after the incorporation of his home town in the new polyglot state of Czechoslovakia. He had run away to sea and after a series of adventures had been shipwrecked on the coast of Chile. He was frequently involved in political arguments and when it was sug-

gested to him that his Czech seaman's papers were not compatible with his pro-German sentiments his reply had always been the same : my passport says I am a Czech but my heart says I am a German. When Sudetenland became German again he brought his papers into line with his heart by taking out a German passport at a South American consulate.

A few years before the second World War Andreas had returned to sea as a cook on a British ship with Port Stanley as its home port. There his ship docked on 3rd September, 1939, and Andreas was arrested as an enemy alien and lodged in the local " lock-up ", with an armed sentry outside his cell. As his gaolers had been his drinking companions for several years the situation was not devoid of humour.

In the early weeks of the war the crew of a German ship which had scuttled in the South Atlantic had been brought to the Falkland Islands and interned in a hastily-improvised camp, to which Andreas was now transferred. In December, 1939, the *Graf Spee* was engaged in the Battle of the River Plate, after which her commander scuttled her. During the battle the British cruiser *Exeter* was badly damaged and withdrew, to crawl to the Falklands, where she made harbour four days later. There she landed some forty seriously wounded men, to the consternation of the meagre staff of the tiny hospital of Port Stanley. In a desperate search for additional staff the hospital authorities interviewed Andreas in his prison camp and asked him if he would become the hospital cook. He replied that as a German he could do nothing to injure Germany or assist Britain but that he considered cooking for wounded seamen humanitarian work and would therefore agree. He was at once released from internment and worked freely in the hospital, being given the freedom of Port Stanley, without even giving his parole.

Some time later his former prison-camp companions were transferred to South Africa for internment there and Andreas begged to be allowed to accompany them. He was persuaded to stay in the Falklands and continued to work in the hospital. Later still the *Exeter's* wounded were transferred to South Africa for convalescence and Andreas was deeply touched when her Captain (accompanied by the Governor of the colony) came to the hospital to thank him for his services to his crew. He continued to work at the hospital until the day of my arrest, when he was taken away to our prison ship. It was apparently argued that a German could not be left free while an Englishman was imprisoned, and gratitude

for his services was conveniently put out of mind. At times he was inclined to feel embittered, but he too had seen the other side of the hill, where lay the real England, so different from that of officialdom.

All this I was to learn from Andreas in the months which lay ahead, when we exchanged life stories and exhausted our stock of anecdotes, absent-mindedly repeating them until we knew them by heart and could fill in any details the other omitted, like children listening to an oft-told bedtime story. We had so little to do except talk. There were no rules ; we got up when we liked and went to bed when we liked : we had meals whenever we could summon up sufficient enthusiasm to cook some of our meagre and unappetising rations, brought off to us from the shore once a week. We were allowed on deck by day, but frequent rain and high winds soon drove us below again. Once a week we were taken ashore to the public baths, solemnly marched to and from the quay by armed guards.

After a week of this existence I was summoned ashore to appear before a tribunal appointed to hear my appeal against internment. It consisted of the senior army and navy officers stationed in the Falklands, under the chairmanship of the local colonial secretary, from whom I heard for the first time anything in the nature of a charge. I had been detained as a member of " a certain organisation, the policy of which is in sympathy with a government with which His Majesty is at war." Useless to reply that British Union did not fall into this category ; " that is for us to decide " was the Chairman's answer.

A few weeks later I received a letter informing me that the Governor had ordered that my detention should continue and adding—somewhat superfluously—that my " engagement with the Government was terminated ". A series of letters to the Governor claiming my right of appeal to London and protesting against the conditions under which I was detained produced only evasive replies from the colonial secretary. Stalemate continued for four months, until the Governor at last agreed to transfer us to a cottage ashore, where we remained under house arrest.

Unexpectedly, two weeks later, we were told that we were " going away ", but were not informed of our destination, even when about to sail. At sea we discovered that our ship was bound for South Africa, but we had no idea whether that was to be our final destination or only a port of call *en route* for England.

After a detour through seas strewn with ice-bergs to visit South

Georgia we proceeded to the South African naval base of Simonstown, where we disembarked. From Simonstown we were taken to an army detention centre at Weinberg, on the coast between the naval base and Cape Town. The wonderfully kind treatment we received at the hands of the Afrikaaner military police was indicative of their real feelings about the war, concealed beneath a thin veneer of pretended enthusiasm for the Smuts government. After a few days I was separated from Andreas (whom I never saw again) and taken by train to Johannesburg. The tedium of the journey across the Great Karoo and into the flat, uninteresting veldt of the Transvaal was enlivened by the friendliness of the Afrikaaner police who escorted me.

A car took me from Johannesburg to the internment camp of Leuwkop, on the open veldt some ten miles from the city. After " reception " (a formal taking of particulars and a cursory search which spared one the indignities of the English prison system) the inner gates of the camp were opened and I was handed over to an internee for escorting to my hut.

A new arrival from the outside world was always a source of great excitement and I was greeted with a babel of German voices asking at once who I was and where I came from. My reply that I was English caused astonishment, but my explanation that I was interned because of my membership of an English fascist and national socialist organisation evoked more than surprise. I was almost thrown out of the hut by the inmates, who were all anti-Nazis, many of them communists and Jews, who had been interned for such offences as entering South Africa illegally. Back at the gate I was handed over to an internee from " the other side ", huts well segregated from those of the communists and housing those who, in some degree, favoured national socialism.

They were not all Germans, but included one or two representatives of almost every country in Europe, interned for a wide variety of reasons, among which the anonymous letter or the secret report of the *agent provocateur* figured high on the list. My position as the only Englishman was rather delicate. I was opposed to the war and to the British government which had declared it, but I did not wish to see my country defeated by any foreign power. This point of view was respected by the Germans in the camp, who good-humouredly referred to me as " the British consul ". We lived together in warm friendship and comradeship, but our discussions on the war and the fate of our countries were

regulated by a mutually-imposed formality. This attitude bewildered the camp commandant, an English army officer, who could never believe that I was really British (in spite of my passport) and found my position far too subtle for his simple military mind.

The commandant interfered little with the internal administration of the camp, carried out by the internees under the leadership of an elected *lagerführer*. We prepared and cooked our own meals, washed our own clothes and kept our quarters clean by rota, each man doing his allotted share of *stubedienst* and *lagerdienst*.

Communication with the outside world was officially restricted to censored mail and occasional visits. But the camp had been a Bantu prison and some of the " boys " came into the camp from the prison to which they had been transferred and worked there by day. With their co-operation and by the exercise of considerable ingenuity a newspaper was daily smuggled into the camp, while a cunningly concealed radio not only received news and messages, but transmitted camp information to interested parties outside.

The neglected art of conversation was revived in the camp and our favourite occupation in the cool of the evening was to promenade in twos and threes, putting the post-war world right in long discussions prefaced with the pathetic *nach dem Krieg*. By day the more energetic read or studied, while the lazier ones sunbathed, and so the days, weeks and months rolled by.

As Christmas 1940 approached a little extra fare was collected, saved from Red Cross food parcels or salvaged from meagre rations, and a brave attempt was made to celebrate in the " traditional " way. On Christmas Eve a German priest among the internees sang Midnight Mass, in a hut packed with almost every man in the camp, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. As Christmas Day dawned his voice rang out : *Heute ist Weihnachten, und heute gibt's nur einen Wunsch in jedem Herz . . . die Friede.* What a longing for peace welled up in every heart, German, French, English, all Europeans.

Such a highlight served only to accentuate the monotony of camp life, and men began to consider the possibilities of escape. For the Germans, who formed the majority of the camp's population, escape was the prelude to a trek of several hundred miles to Lourenco Marques in Portuguese East Africa. There the German consulate would take the escaped man under its wing and a passage would be arranged on a neutral but friendly ship ; many escapees reached Germany by devious routes, after thrilling adventures. The

first step was to get out of the camp. By day armed guards surrounded the camp compound and a large garden at the rear, in which we were allowed to work, growing a few vegetables. At the end of the afternoon a bell summoned us into an inner compound, where the roll was called. When the commandant was satisfied that all were present the guards were withdrawn from around the garden and took up positions around the inner perimeter until morning. A would-be escaper had therefore to hide in the garden until after roll-call (on which his absence had to be concealed) and, when the guards had been withdrawn, had only to slip through the barbed wire to freedom. The occupants of the first hut would line up to be counted, after which they would fall out ; one of their number would rapidly crawl through holes in the hut walls, emerging further along the line to be counted again, suitably disguised by a change of clothing. By this method an escape was often unnoticed for weeks, until a change of method in roll calling rendered this particular plan no longer feasible.

Escape by night from the inner compound was more difficult, but in the early months of 1941 I joined a small, carefully selected group in an attempt to dig a tunnel from the camp centre, beneath the barbed wire to the outside world. We commenced our digging beneath the floor of a storeroom, carefully replacing the boards early each morning before creeping back to our beds. The disposal of the excavated earth was the main problem, but we made steady progress, lighting our tunnel with stolen electric light bulbs as we advanced. My activities were brought to an abrupt end in April, 1941, when I was unexpectedly released and returned to England.

On my return home I found England fighting for her existence and political opposition to the war no longer feasible ; I therefore volunteered for the forces and served until the end of the war. But I often thought of my friends in South Africa, sitting on the other side of the hill. What were their feelings as they saw all hopes of a German victory fade away ? Were they further depressed when they realised that there would be no victory for England or Germany, but only for Soviet communism ? Or, as they looked through the barbed wire and across the South African veldt, did they see a new Europe arising, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the old, a continent united at last, developing as our common Empire the Africa which had been our prison and the land of our exile ?

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