THE EUROPEAN

THE JOURNAL OF OPPOSITION

MAY 1957 Vol. IX No. 3

Two Shillings and Sixpence

Contents include :

AMERICAN LITERATURE
by *MICHEL MOHRT*

BEIRUT by *DESMOND STEWART*

ANALYSIS by *EUROPEAN*

Mr. Krushchev and the possibility of world settlement :
Final solution : we have Europe, they have Asia ?
World balance : America — Europe-Africa — Soviet-Asia :
America in support, but not in occupation :
The incidental advantage of losing Mr. Nehru.

THEATRE CINEMA

POLITICS BOOKS TRAVEL

THE EUROPEAN

THE JOURNAL OF OPPOSITION

Number Fifty-one
May - 1957

CONTENTS

MAY 1957

ANALYSIS by ***EUROPEAN*** .. .. Page 131

Mr. Kruschev and the possibility of world settlement : Final solution : we have Europe, they have Asia ? World balance : America — Europe-Africa — Soviet-Asia : America in support, but not in occupation : The incidental advantage of losing Mr. Nehru.

THOSE DICTATORS .. by ***BERTRAM PEEL*** Page 138

AUSTRALIA : THE SECOND CHANCE by ***ROY MACGREGOR-HASTIE*** Page 148

AMERICAN LITERATURE by ***MICHEL MOHRT*** Page 151

THE AMERICAN FILM TO-DAY by ***ALASTAIR HARPER*** Page 158

A DIARY .. .. Page 169

THREE POEMS OF TU FU Translated by ***CHAO TEZ-CHIANG*** Page 172

THEATRE : *EDWIGE FEUILLERE ; THE WIT TO WOO ; THE MASTER OF SANTIAGO ; PHEDRE* .. .. by ***MICHAEL HARALD*** Page 174

CINEMA : *BROTHERS IN LAW ; WINGS OF EAGLES ; THE WRONG MAN ; LUST FOR LIFE* .. .. by ***VINCENT MURRAY*** Page 178

NEW BOOKS : *The Collected Stories of Isaac Babel* *Challenge to Venus* by **Charles Morgan** *The Puritan Tradition in English Life* by **John Marlowe** *See What I Mean* Page 180

BEIRUT by .. by ***DESMOND STEWART*** Page 184

LETTERS : Israel and Zionism ; Kingsley Martin Page 191

WASHBURN AND SONS LIMITED
QUEENS ROAD, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

ANALYSIS

NO PROPOSALS of the Russians are now ever taken seriously. No doubt it is their own fault, because they have made so many and such diverse suggestions for the settlement of world affairs, with no continuous thread of coherent policy running through them except the clear design to secure a propaganda point. As a result everything they say is now ignored by the West, which continues stolidly to prepare for cold war. This journal, on the other hand, has urged throughout that every Russian proposal should be taken with deadly seriousness and subjected to the test of a definite method. A Russian démarche should immediately be debated in public in the full glare of world publicity, and tested with a relentless cross-examination until its clear meaning is revealed. It would then be exposed as a piece of propaganda nonsense which could do the Soviet cause no good, or would be established as a definite offer from which the Soviets would find it very difficult to retreat without loss of prestige and damage to the local Communist Parties of the world. The West would then either score a propaganda success or register a solid advance towards peace, disarmament and the real security we seek. We persist in this view, which is emphasised by recent events. We need a continuous athleticism of mind and spirit in the long wrestle with the Soviets to win the peace and a commanding influence in the minds of men.

British Defence Cuts in Relation to General Disarmament

The failure to use Russian offers for our own purposes has recently been reproved from such diverse quarters as the *Observer* and the *New Statesman and Nation*. The *Observer* commented on March 24th: "The same failure to relate our national defence planning to the wider strategy of disarmament and Soviet-Western relations can unfortunately be seen in the way we have gone about reducing our forces in Germany. The latest Russian disarmament proposals, published four months ago, contained a suggestion for a reduction of British, French, American and Soviet forces in Germany by one-third from the level of December, 1956. This proposal, and others related to a political settlement, were regarded in the West as Soviet gambits. But now Britain has been struggling for two months to get agreement to do with her own forces in Germany exactly what

the Russians proposed.

" Instead of putting this forward in the context of disarmament, thereby forcing Russian to make an infinitely more significant one-third reduction in her twenty-two divisions in East Germany, the reduction has been argued solely in terms of Britain's economic needs. Instead of creating gratitude and admiration among our European allies for a bold initiative aimed at reducing the strength of our common Soviet adversary, we have created doubts about our trustworthiness as an ally. Defence and diplomacy should never operate separately—but only political imagination can unite them."

We could not hope for a clearer illustration of our long reiterated argument.

Russian Withdrawal From Europe ?

The *New Statesman and Nation* capped this on March 23rd in the course of an article which argued that the two sides were now very close together in the matter of disarmament : " As for conventional weapons, an agreement could be signed tomorrow : and Britain's painful efforts to obtain the consent of her allies to defence cuts made indispensable for economic reasons would become unnecessary."

In fact, with a little skill and a little luck at Russian roulette, we might have tip-toed back into history instead of this squalid shuffle out of our European obligations under cover of borrowed rockets.

But the main theme seems even yet to have drawn no notice from British publicity. In our January issue under the heading, " Most important thing said since the war," we drew attention to an observation of Mr. Khrushchev at a cocktail party in Moscow which seemed of more enduring interest than the contemporary spectacle of the protracted calypso on Jamaica beach. Mr. Khrushchev was 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 " (and when Mr. Khrushchev said this he could not then have realised that — in the event of an American withdrawal from Britain — there would be no one left to fit the atomic warheads on the rockets which the Americans have since been good enough to lend us).

America in Support but not in Occupation

The gist of Mr. Khrushchev's suggestion was repeated by

Mr. Shepilov on more serious occasions, and was finally reiterated by Mr. Khrushchev himself in more detail during an interview with Mr. Joseph Alsop of the *New York Herald Tribune* 20.2.57. Mr. Khrushchev is reported as saying : " Soviet troops would be withdrawn to the national territory of the Soviet Union from all countries in Europe where they are now stationed in accordance with existing treaties and agreements.

" Meanwhile, Western European countries would also withdraw their troops stationed in the territories of other Western European countries. The United States would also withdraw its troops to American territory from Europe and Asia, and along with that would go the liquidation of all foreign militarv bases."

Let us try to see exactly what this means. In the severely practical terms of present fact, does it mean any more than the removal of United States forces from the front line to the support line? And in these days of I.C.B.M.,* when New York and Moscow can both rocket each other to pieces without any assistance from intervening bases, does this mean anything at all ? It is surely only conventional forces that are in any way affected. If these words are taken literally, the proposal means that German troops will have to stand the first shock of a Soviet invasion of their own territory before British and French troops could come into action. In that sense, the present structure of N.A.T.O., would be broken up. But in practical terms, Britain, France and America would then enter the scene a good deal more rapidly and effectively than the expeditionary forces from America and Britain in the last war. It should be noticed that no veto is suggested on the economic and political union of Europe, which would in any case, of course, be completely resisted. All that is hindered is the actual stationing of the forces of one country in the territory of another. And it is clear that this is primarily aimed at America. That country is asked to return to its own borders in return for the liberation of Europe from Soviet occupation. The real question is whether American support is not a greater asset for Europe than American occupation ? In the event of a Soviet return, America with modern weapons could strike decisively not merely

* Inter-continental Ballistic Missiles appear from latest published reports to be as yet in the possession of neither side, but it is confidently stated that America will soon have some with a range of 5,500 miles. When this ultimate weapon arrives, the present advanced bases of America should be redundant. The disarmament of land forces on each side to the point where invasion of another country was impossible, would of course create the same situation.

at advancing armies but at the heart of Russia ; and for this purpose it now needs no base except America.

World Settlement ?

But in his last interview Mr. Khrushchev adds Asia to the zone of American withdrawal. Here we must surely press for further definition. What does he mean by this ? America clearly cannot be expected to give up her hold on the island chain and on the periphery of Eastern Asia which are her effective defence line against Soviet encroachment, not only in the direction of her own continent but also toward Australia and New Zealand. The line of demarcation here is not so easy as on the old Soviet frontier in Europe. The strategic frontiers involved would have to be the subject of detailed negotiations. But the broad outline becomes clear.

Is there anything in sense or strategy, as opposed to politics and prejudice, which prevents (1) The withdrawal of the Soviets to their own frontiers in Europe. (2) The political and economic union of Europe. (3) The organisation of Europe as a potential unit of defence even if troops are initially garrisoned to fit the Soviet definition (an over-meticulous request which could surely be negotiated). (4) The withdrawal of America from the front line in Europe to the support line in America, whence she can emerge instantly to strike at aggression not only with all the weapons now regarded as the great " deterrent ", but also with rapidly mobile conventional forces held in strategic reserve ?

The World Balance

In terms of a final political settlement what does it mean ? The final solution would be : we have Europe ; they have Asia ; — is not this the answer ? The world balance would be America — Europe-Africa — Soviet-Asia — can any one in terms of plain sense object ? Or are all great ideas *ex hypothesi* objectionable ?

Europe-Africa will be the balancing power; it is noteworthy at this stage that Mr. Khrushchev lays no claim to Africa.

Europe-Africa will hold the balance of the world with the strength of America in reserve for use against any power which in these conditions could conceivably desire to upset it.

And what is the price that Mr. Khrushchev asks ? In effect, his price is Asia. Cannot we afford to pay with a coin we have lost in any case ? Mr. Nehru considers leaving the Commonwealth ;

and the key state of India votes communist. It is doubtful whether even the visit of Mr. Bevan will long delay the course of nature, which one of the shrewdest American Ambassadors not long ago described as a fifty-fifty chance of India going communist. Mr. Nehru still finds his Commonwealth "contacts" useful; particularly perhaps in Africa where an Indian minority holds open the door to the ideas which now invade India. It is time that in a general settlement we considered the incidental advantage of losing Mr. Nehru.

Intermediate Lands

Mr. Khrushchev laid no claim as such to the Arab lands, but reserves them as an area of purest commerce. We may buy oil there, but we may not exploit Arabs. We agree; particularly as we hope soon to have our own oil supplies in Africa and to be as independent of Middle East oil as of Russian threat or of American command.

Before the Suez performance we could have looked forward with confidence to the inclusion of the Musselman nations as sister peoples in the European comity. We can still have confidence that in the end both faith and interest are likely to divide the Arabs from the Soviets. But they are likely to fall into the category of intermediate lands among which South America may also be found; countries which belong to none of the three main civilisations but are areas where at least two cultures may meet and blend. Among the Arabs, and among the Latin peoples of South America, the European influence will always be strong, but it may no longer be dominant.

Disarmament Can Follow Political Settlement

So we envisage three areas of different political, economic and cultural development, without any ground for conflict because all their requirements will be self-contained. American and European civilisations will meet and interlock in South America; European and Soviet civilisations will meet in the Musselman lands where Europe is dovetailed into Asia. Will each not have enough to do at home? Will they have any cause to fight about anything, and, in any case, will it not be relatively easy to eliminate the means of combat when we have removed the cause?

*Disarmament is a natural sequel when there is nothing left to

* Disarmament should in any case follow a general settlement, but it could precede and cause a general settlement by rendering advanced bases unnecessary.

fight about. The political struggle will always continue, the battle for the minds of men which will carry the ultimate decision. But men will observe which of these three competitive systems is the most successful, and proved results will win the final verdict. To material rivalry or moral infiltrations we can present a front which stretches from Prussia to Japan, with America in reserve. What have we to fear, what has anyone to fear — once the decision is taken to abandon fear ?

The Falling Pound

The fall of the pound has been long foreseen. It was depicted in graph form by *The Times* of April 1st last. The direct cause is an inflation of production costs occasioned by wage increases which are unaccompanied by a corresponding increase in production. A temporary advantage is secured by exports from a depreciated exchange provided the internal price level does not rise in proportion to the fall in the exchange rate. But in our case a large proportion of our imported raw materials suffer an immediate rise in price, and another main factor, which is wages, now increases in cost even prior to the depreciation. Any slight temporary advantage accruing to our exports can also be immediately offset if our competitors correspondingly devalue their currency. The remedy is higher production and lower prices. It is now a proved fact that price does not depend on wage but on the rate of production. It is possible at the same time to pay the highest rate of wages and yet produce the cheapest article of its kind in the world, as Ford proved long ago. But this depends on mass production for a great market. That market is all Europe. We return always to the same point ; a common market for the whole continent of Europe within which the complete freedom and mobility of both capital and labour will provide sufficient competition to keep prices down. The only instrument required by Government will be the wage-price mechanism : the power to raise wages to a uniform level in comparable industries, and the power to fix prices in any still prevailing monopoly conditions where competition cannot enter. The same power of economic leadership in government can equate production and consumption as science increases the power to produce, by a steady raising of the standard of living to absorb the extra production. High wages and low prices can go together in a large market which is free from undercutting competition from

within and entirely independent of any necessity to sell anything outside its own borders. We shall at last be free of the recurrent threat : raise wages in the export trade or you will have nothing to export, but, if you do raise them, you will not be able to sell what you export. This is the blackmail to which successive governments have succumbed, until the pound totters. It is this pressure from which the greater economy alone can save us. At last men will get what they earn and no more ; and what they earn will be determined by what they produce.

Cyprus : As It Was In The Beginning

The present government wisely hurries to settle matters in Cyprus. The first question that occurs is whether this affair could not always have been settled on exactly the same terms. This incident has been a repetition of the worst methods of " Colonialism ", without purpose of any kind. The island was clearly untenable in face of nuclear attack ; apart from that it was entirely unsuitable for a military base as General Auchinleck pointed out in the early days. The occupation complicated our relations with Turkey, ruined our relations with Greece and broke up the carefully constructed system of alliance in the Eastern Mediterranean which could both cover the oilfields and provide a springboard against the Russian flank. Cyprus was at best a temporary resthouse for politicians on the run from Suez. The price we have paid is loss of eighty young British soldiers with a shot in the back. The subsequent hanging of still younger rebels who were fired by patriotism, reminded the world of Ireland and India and robbed British Government of a badly needed moral authority in rebuking oppression and atrocity in others. The old Colonialism is dead, but for a dark moment its ghost walked.

New Defence Measures

As we go to press comes news of the new defence measures of the Government. At last we are to have the army of specialists armed with modern weapons for which this journal has so long pressed. Conscription goes, and the trained regular replaces the reluctant amateur. This is good, except that a vital part of the most important weapon is produced elsewhere and is under foreign control. Once again it is clear that the only way in which we can afford all the weapons we require and be masters of our own defence, is to enter Europe and share the burden with the whole continent. EUROPEAN

THOSE DICTATORS

by BERTRAM PEEL

THE Nazis took over Trafalgar Square yesterday. The men in S.S. black and Wehrmacht grey thronged a plinth covered with red, white and black banners, and standing out boldly in the heart of London was the hated swastika. This, for 30 minutes was the humility of defeat. This was how 18-year-old Kevin Brownlow of Swiss Cottage imagined London would have looked if Hitler had moved in. This was part of the amateur 16mm film Kevin is making called "It Did Happen Here". Sunday afternoon strollers came face-to-face with a vicious machine gun manned by German soldiers. They watched the "invaders" strut across the pavements and the swastika fly alongside Nelson's column. German uniforms have been borrowed or adapted from British uniforms. Cap badges, belts and buckles, even the machine gun have been made by Kevin's helpers. Working with him is ex-Wehrmacht officer 31-year-old Frank Marz. In the film he wears the Iron Cross he won on the Russian front. He said, "I am happy to help Kevin show what might have happened if, perhaps, I had been in London at another time". The Gauleiter in Trafalgar Square yesterday was Manfred Lowengard, of Hampstead, sent to a German concentration camp in 1937. By his side was Hans von Volks, ex-lieutenant in the Waffen S.S. Kevin said last night: "I have at least six months' work before filming is finished and some of the biggest scenes have yet to be shot. I shall want 200 volunteers for them."

THE ABOVE REPORT is taken from an issue of a London daily newspaper of about a year ago. The closer it is

studied the more questions spring to the mind ; a masterpiece of Fleet Street journalism, by any standards you like to name it makes sordid reading — that is, to a European of 1957.

It was twenty years ago exactly that the foreign editor of the same newspaper, G. Ward Price, wrote a book called *I Know These Dictators*, probably as fair a book as will ever now be written of the characters of Hitler and Mussolini, their rise to power and pre-war intentions. And because it seems, professionally speaking, to be an example of fair reporting, it is proposed to use parts of it firstly to show why *The European* is so sure that the declaration of war by this country on Germany was a ghastly mistake, and secondly to try and learn something of benefit to the new Europe which is now bestirring itself.

We are not to be concerned here with Hitlerism (whatever that is) or with the conduct of the war, since a declaration and acceptance of war alters every premise. Our concern is solely with international affairs and power blocs.

Looking back, it is easier to see the nature of Europe's position between the wars. It was a " liberal " Europe *par excellence*, a lefty Europe bemused by Freud and Marx, in which the financiers were making money out of trade (what did that matter to us since London was the world's banker !), and the communists were installing themselves in every country with scarcely a sign of opposition. True, there was unemployment and poverty ; but the slump was over and things were sure to get better. The communists ? Decent enough at heart ; just trying to be different, that's all ; besides, it was only the Roman Catholics they were really against and could you blame them ! Yes, the world under British guidance had reached the highest ever level of civilisation. One could hardly ask for more.

There were, however, four countries that gave us much cause for unquiet — Spain, Germany, Italy and Japan, all of whom we had succeeded in thoroughly antagonising by the year in question, 1937. These were the only four countries in the world actively and successfully opposing communism, and, on the convinced assumption that communism is by far the greatest enemy of Europe in the 20th century, the tragedy of our pre-war foreign policy may clearly be seen when the long view is taken.

Theoretically, we fought the last war in defence of human decency and because the megalomaniac Hitler wanted to conquer the world. (Oh yes we did ; ask any man in the street and he will

assure you of it). A glance back at the quotation heading this article will do much to explain why many British people will continue to believe this for a long time yet. To discover the real reasons it is necessary to return to the root cause — Versailles.

The German temperament is prone to take things very much to heart, and in defeat Germany lost self-confidence ; in her position any nation would have done the same. Threatened with permanent financial servitude as a result of the reparation decisions, the hope of becoming Europe's greatest power was replaced by a feeling of being at the mercy of the victors in the great war. Territory had had to be given up on every frontier, and the victorious nations successfully chained and bound the vanquished by a network of restrictions and controls unrivalled in the history of Continental free trade. Further, the French had occupied the Ruhr. Finally, an unsurpassed inflation occurred, which eliminated savings and reduced millions to poverty.

As Ward Price declares, in that wild nightmare of civil war and currency inflation, aggravated by semi-starvation, general strikes, unemployment and foreign occupation, a stage arrived when nothing was too fantastic to be believed. Hitler showed political sagacity by abstaining from all attempt to repair the situation as he found it. Instead he painted a brilliant picture of an ideal Germany, different down to its foundations from the one he saw around him.

In Italy another state of depression existed. There was an enormous tax deficit, taxation principles and operation were in an extremely muddled condition, public services were poor, a crushing bureaucracy weighed down the populace, there was no sense of security and, as in Germany, the country had no self-respect. When the fascist state became established, *The Times* (31/10/23) observed : " It is incontestable that Italy has never been so united as she is today. People have become impressed by the fact that Fascismo is not merely the usual successful political revolution, and the South is no longer apprehensive of being sacrificed in the interests of the North and vice versa." A parallel mood swept Germany when Hitler arrived as a positive force, and it is important to realise that the mood pervaded every class as it was suddenly realised that the consequences of defeat need not last for ever. Ward Price describes the mood as follows : " There is no ground for surprise in the fact that the German nation readily accepted the rigorous discipline which the Nazi

regime imposed ; if personal restraint was the price of national recovery, the Germans were prepared to pay it ".

It is easy to see now the spark of future conflict, when one adds to this spiritual ardour the difference of viewpoint over the Treaty of Versailles. It is manifest that the British and French thought it a permanent settlement, establishing a new and revised arrangement of power in Europe, whereas Germany and Italy never considered the position to be static. The underlying aim of both countries, but particularly of Germany, was to level themselves up to the other Western powers.

We may now consider the real cause of discontent — the need for elbow room. Whatever the authors of Versailles may have thought, it is not possible to keep a vital and powerful entity like Germany cooped up in the middle of a seething continent, or to limit the outlets of a great trading people like the Italians. Only in the supernatural realm are the laws of nature circumvented from time to time : in economics the ordinary laws apply. It may usefully be recalled that among the twenty-five points put forward by the National Socialist Party as a programme in February of 1920 were : The union of all Germans to form a greater Germany, equality of rights for the German people and the abolition of the German and Austrian Peace Treaties, and the acquiring of land and colonial territory for the settlement of surplus population. The Party wanted Austria and the Sudeten Germans within the orbit of the Reich, and an outlet overseas. According to Ward Price, Hitler said to him in October 1933, " It is to the interests of the world that a great nation containing too many people for its area, shall not be deprived of the requisite conditions of existence. We shall never go to war to get colonies, but we are convinced that we are as capable as any other nation of administering and developing colonial territory. We regard this as a matter for negotiation."

Mussolini also spoke to him in similar vein during April 1935. He said : " Italy needs territory for overseas settlement and the plateau of Abyssinia is one of the last un-annexed regions in the world suitable for colonisation by Europeans. Two-thirds of Italy's surface consists of mountains. Our country is only half the size of France and has a fifth of her cultivable area, yet our population is larger by several millions than the French." He later confided : " Those who obstruct our efforts to find a colonial outlet must face the consequences of antagonising us.

We might make friends with Germany again. What would you think of a new line up of Rome and Berlin ? It is dangerous to restrain the expansive tendencies of overcrowded countries like Italy, Germany and Japan."

Every act of foreign policy by Hitler or Mussolini before and during the war was consistent with this aim. Men follow dictators because of their vitality and their straightforward honesty as regards their intentions. These are the very things that " liberal " politicians in Britain and elsewhere cannot understand, conforming as they do to the well-known Code of Accepted Deception so familiar to the democratic electorate. It is past the comprehension of such men that a person should be capable of observing a malady, proposing a cure and actually doing something about it. Thus the list of strong-willed men whom we are supposed to consider as possessed by the very spirit of evil grows ever longer as their opposite numbers become ever more incapable of doing anything. Franco, Mussolini, Hitler, Mosley, Strijdom, Nasser — who is next on the list, one wonders ?

Failure by statesmen to understand such figures makes it difficult for them to face facts in regard to the balance of power. Thus we have seen two World Peace organisations set up by the Western group, both unable to comprise the powerful personalities they were directed against (not to mention the behaviour of Eden and Nehru). It may be true that the communists have gained most from the existence of the United Nations Organisation, but, under the pre-war League, Germany and Italy clearly had nothing to gain from an organisation designed in reality to maintain the status quo of the Versailles Treaty, which these two countries understandably did not accept. When Eden visited Rome in June 1935 to try and induce Mussolini to call off the invasion of Abyssinia, Mussolini declared : " Why should Italy be made a scapegoat to restore the League's prestige ? The League did not interfere when Japan invaded China or in the Paraguay-Bolivia war, and when a quarrel broke out between Iraq and Persia, the British Government actually forbade League intervention."

(It is interesting to compare the action of Eden here against the weaker nation while not facing up to Japan or Germany, and his recent action against Egypt while not facing up to Russia. In 1956 Eden clearly thought history was repeating itself, and his complete failure to understand Nasser or his aims leads one

to feel that he may very well have been wrong about Hitler and Mussolini.)

Writing in 1937, Ward Price comments : " If Great Britain had reserved to herself more liberty of independent action, and had used it to negotiate directly with the dictators, Europe might be a safer place today. The wisdom, resource, experience and prestige attributed by foreign opinion to British statesmen lost their effectiveness on being thrown into the common stock at Geneva . . . Fancies have been allowed to prevail over facts, and only those visionaries who prefer shadow to substance can be satisfied with the result ; that result has brought about a combination of two countries each of which was well disposed towards us and less well disposed towards each other."

The truth of this last statement is impossible to deny. With their strange ideas about racial supremacy, the Germans were naturally adverse to an alliance with Mediterranean peoples and much more inclined towards ourselves. Hitler always desired friendship with this country, but this was discounted by circles here that were unfortunately more anti-Hitler than pro-British. Even before the Great War there is evidence that in the beer cellars of Munich he used to declare that Germany's territorial expansion must be at the expense of Russia, and that the support of Britain was needed to protect her rear. It is conceivable that the answer to the question why didn't the Germans come over after Dunkirk is simply that they had no reason to. In the case of Italy, we have the example of a traditional friend of Britain being aggravated beyond measure. At the meeting with Eden previously referred to, Mussolini roundly declared : " We need Abyssinian territory so that we may expand overseas without interfering with the interests of Britain or France. Italy wants to take her place among the satisfied powers."

In the end we return to our original point, that in order to justify the war which we declared on Germany, we are obliged to propagate the unprovable calumnies that Germany sought world domination and was herself steeped in an evil that simply had to be crushed. The first charge flies in the face of every piece of evidence, and cannot be substantiated. Hitler undoubtedly believed himself to be the divinely-appointed saviour of Germany but he never at any point showed any desire to exceed these terms of reference. This charge is as stupid as the calumny against Mosley, that he wanted to be dictator of England ; Mosley knew

too much about English politics ever to believe it could be done. Hitler in 1934 proposed an all-round limitation of arms expenditure, the limitation of the French and German armies to 500,000 men, and offered to maintain for a period of five years half the air force that France possessed. These overtures were refused, so that instead of admitting Germany to equality on a small scale, we were all obliged to spend great sums in trying to be equal with her on the largest scale of which she was capable. Moreover, by an obstinate attitude of so-called collective security, a local conflict in Europe was in the end turned into a world war, the results of which were disastrous to Europe.

In regard to this " evil " about which a kind of hideous legend has grown up, a combination of two or three factors can do much to form a cult of anything. It has been a tradition of a certain type of Englishman for many decades to rate other peoples in accordance with their similarity to ourselves. In particular, the British have never liked the Germans for being conscientious and energetic. It is difficult to say whether many Germans really believed in the Master Race theory ; perhaps they all did. At any rate, Hitler was first and foremost a politician, and found this theory very useful for drawing the nation together. He himself certainly wanted to keep the race pure, and the Nazi movement drew most of its early support from those who sought self-discipline. This was understandable in view of the riff-raff that ruled for a decade or so after Versailles. As a result, it needed but a few references to " Prussian iron heels " and " barbaric Nordic instincts " to convince the English that here was the Devil incarnate with all his fallen angels. In fact, this aspect assumed ridiculous proportions in the sensational press. The chief cause of Germany's discontent, the economic, was hypocritically ignored.

As to the Jews, we are of course considering the year 1937 and not the events and incidents of later years. Hitler saw two major enemies of Germany right from the start, namely, the communists and the Jews. Commercially and spiritually they seemed to be eating the heart out of Germany between them, and he saw them as a cancer endangering the life of the whole world. Whether or not this view was or is true would make a fine subject for a book. All that need be said here is that Hitler's diagnosis of Germany's ills was brilliant ; if he persecuted the Jews it is easy to understand why he did so, though being

Christians we cannot approve.

In summary, then, whatever we may have thought of the Master Race theory and the treatment of the Jews, there was certainly no cause to declare war on the grounds that the Axis Powers sought world domination, or were a barbaric evil to be suppressed. (As already stated, what was done by both sides in the heat of battle is a different question entirely, which has yet to be considered impartially.)

Now we come to the communists, and it is here that we can learn most for the future of Europe. Just as in 1956 the real tragedy of the Suez affair was the moral sabotage of the West at a crucial point in the Eastern Europe risings, so in 1939 the tragedy of Britain's declaration of war on Germany lay in the sabotage of the one nation in Europe that was actually preparing to "square up" to Russia. It will be recalled that Germany and Japan already had an anti-communist pact, and it was the intervention of the Soviet Government in the Spanish civil war that provided the stimulus for the formation of the Rome-Berlin axis.

As is now known, Russia called out all the forces at her command to bring to fulfillment the design of Lenin that Spain should be the next country to achieve bolshevism. Had this attempt been successful, France would have quickly followed suit and both Italy and Germany would have been faced with communism on two fronts. Consequently, as Ward Price observes, "Instinctively and automatically rather than by design, the two authoritarian states formed a partnership to avert that danger". Henceforth national socialism and fascism had a common cause and enemy — the Third International. The latter was also Britain's enemy, all Europe's in fact, but our people lived in a fools' paradise. In Germany and Italy, national socialism and fascism had grappled and won against rampant communism, and we can only guess at the emotions of our own politicians when faced with this magnificent achievement of Hitler and Mussolini, added to their other, material achievements.

Some of our pre-war intellectuals might not care to be reminded which side they backed or fought for in Spain, but see how they still ache for Franco's downfall when there is a bus boycott twenty years after. Make no mistake about it, Europe has little reason to thank those who forsook their own faith and culture in its critical hour. But for Franco's stand all Europe

instead of just half would be under Moscow by now. How ungrateful can we be ?

While the egg-heads of the British Left betrayed us, the men of the Right and Centre fell into a sullen hostility towards the dynamic figures of those dictators. Such was the character of Hitler and Mussolini that had they been asked from the start to deal with a man of Churchill's stature, it is possible that a practical agreement could have been worked out in Europe. And yet, one wonders, in view of the betrayal of Eastern Europe at the end of the war. At any rate, Parliament in 1939 allowed itself to be impressed by Mr. Eden's point of view, and the result was the most pointless war in history from which Russia gained half Europe and which threw the rest of us into the embracing arms of America out of sheer hunger and terror.

Now at last, Europe is showing signs of stirring, so far in the economic sphere only. Our continent has been running down for five decades, some say five centuries. The communists are well aware of this and desire nothing so much as the complete collapse of Europe, and that is why they loathe men like Franco, Hitler and Mussolini (and, incidentally, the Pope). Hitler declared a number of times that the day would come when Britain would thank God that Germany had a strong army to defend her against Soviet Russia. In fact, however, Britain's leaders have shown only too often their willingness to sup with the Devil.

Ward Price, writing in 1937, remarks : " Dictatorships are a phenomenon of our time which must be faced. They have sprung up in many different parts of Europe and have achieved great success while democracy has manifested grave defects." The writer does not know what democracy is and does not think anybody else does either. Whatever it is, it has been found wanting after its brief incursion into history and is unlikely to last very long. Until recently the only alternative put forward was world unity in some form or another, and in 1957 the world is as far away from unity as it ever was.

Behind the facade of U.N.O. the power blocs continue to do battle, whether in cold war or in hot. Russia, America, the beginnings of an Afro-Asian group that may or may not come to something, a restless Islam. These groupings will undoubtedly shift in years to come. Russia may revolt, America may collapse, Arab and Jew may fight to the death, China may dominate the East.

The customs union and common market in Europe is the seed of an idea that has been in the air for a long time, namely, Europe as one nation. But the economic union of Europe will come to nothing unless there is common government as well. The attaining of this end will meet with great obstacles, the overcoming of which will call for techniques of statesmanship different from those now in use in the democracies. M. Spaak has discovered that in the economic field.

The idea of Europe united is but an extension of patriotism, and Europe today is in a somewhat similar position to that of Germany and Italy before the war. Ward Price ended his book in the following words, as valid now as in 1937 : " Criticism of dictators and their works leads nowhere, but unprejudiced study of the energy and patriotism with which they have inspired their fellow-countrymen may provide valuable lessons for every nation in the world ". And if our politicians make a mess of the resurrection of Europe, our continent will need and deserve no less than another Hitler or Mussolini.

AUSTRALIA-THE SECOND CHANCE

by ROY MACGREGOR HASTIE*

TO those of us who see in European Union the only alternative to World War, and a necessary precedent to World Government—as well as to anyone interested in emergent patterns of human behaviour reflected in contemporary literature—Australia is the most fascinating country in the British Commonwealth. Founded as an English-speaking convict settlement, today it is the home of Europeans of every nationality, as great a melting pot of hopes, fears, loves and antipathies as the United States at the end of the nineteenth century. And because it is such a " second chance " for the study of the problems attendant on any attempt to fuse into a European whole diverse national groups, we should, I think, look on it as our " laboratory ", our testing ground and research establishment.

The Australians themselves do not realise the importance of their country seen in this light ; until recently they seemed to be bent on making the same mistakes that resulted in the establishment of Little Italys and Little Polands in New York, districts where a man could be born, live, read, work, eat, make love and die without ever speaking a word of English. But even out of these mistakes have come anomalies, which are in themselves an object of study likely to be rewarding both for ourselves and for the Australians, new and old.

Apart from the obvious economic advantages conferred by mass migration on a rich and underpopulated country, the influx of

* Vice President of the Poetry Society of Australia.

Germans and Italians—and to a lesser extent Czechs, Poles, Greeks and Russians—has taught the Old Australian that other languages are spoken in the world . . . other languages, that is, than his own debased English. Government institutions have not yet realised the full significance of this, as they show by their reluctance to teach Modern Languages in their High Schools, and by their poor patronage of the Faculties of European Literature in the Universities, but certainly both the private and public sectors of industry and commerce are well aware of the changes being made in the way of life of a people more, and less, English than the English of the island themselves.

The assimilation of migrants in Australia is left largely to " voluntary bodies " of well-meaning women, whose policy is to give parties and dances in an effort to make the new arrivals feel at home ; unfortunately their attitude to the Mediterranean and German peoples is such that they not only fail to disguise their peasant suspicion of the outsider (calling them " dagoes " and " squareheads " without any intention to be pleasantly familiar), but send the migrants away from their first " social evening " convinced that they have come to a country with less personal freedom than the ones they have left had " liberty ". This, and the incompetence of the instructors appointed by the Commonwealth Government to teach them English, has led them to form their own business and residential communities, to found their own schools and their own outlets for opinion and self expression. Federalism has shown itself to be about the least effective system for efficient and immediate administrative action—and has shown us how dangerous it is to contemplate a Federal Europe without a strong central authority—but perhaps the absolute inefficiency of the migrant officer has had a reaction that could only come to an absolute of action or inaction.

The geographical and intellectual isolation of Australia left it, until recently, in a state of prosperous barbarism ; such art as there was was parochial in content and inept in form and execution. The arrival of painters from Eastern Europe, and their formation of a School in linguistic self-defence has brought about a minor revolution in the plastic arts. Rapotec, Ostaja-Kotkowski and the Dutkewicz brothers now dominate the field of contemporary painting, and their great technical skill and feeling intensified by their exile, has produced some very fine work ; their style is a highly intellectualised one, and abstract in manner. They have created an

Australian form which is neither imitative of the atmosphere of one European national culture, nor self-consciously " pioneer ".

In creative writing, too, the migrant excels. Quick to establish newspapers and magazines in their own languages, the Germans and Italians have succeeded in building up their circulations to such an extent that they cover the continent and reach practically every migrant in it. And so high is their standard, generally, that they are used in the Universities as, at least, very readable background copy for research : the *Corriere*, in particular, is the only newspaper which publishes poetry every week, and devotes about an eighth of its space to literature—a record unequalled even by the best of the English-language newspapers, the *Sydney Morning Herald.*

Now to anyone who believes that language barriers exist to be crossed, all this proof that they can be crossed without resorting to extravagances like Esperanto is very heartening—and the way in which it is being done, in spite of Governmental *laissez faire*, exemplary. Perhaps, with ten per cent of the population a post-war increase through migration from Europe, bi- and tri-lingual, a literature may be developed in Australia which will be of more practical help in solving problems in the way of European Cultural Unity, than all the efforts of the European Cultural Unity Foundations in Geneva and Milan. Maybe we shall be able to draw our blueprint for Europe from the design for living accidentally produced in the hothouse we now call " the cultural desert of Australia " —but which is certainly our second, and perhaps our only chance to " evolve " a continental revolution.

AMERICAN LITERATURE

by MICHEL MOHRT

THAT there exists such a thing as American literature is universally admitted today. One even sees translations of books written and published in the United States described on the covers as " translated from the American ". But the fact that there are certain words and expressions which are only used by Americans does not suffice to make the language they speak and write a separate language. Many of the idioms belong to ancient English usage ; no longer heard in England they have been conserved in America. It is true that ever since the end of the 18th Century certain English authors have spoken scornfully of " American dialect ", and censured faults of grammar committed in Connecticut (as if errors were not also common in, for example, Wales). Yet English critics have praised Melville and Henry James for the brilliance of their style, and the " American " written today by Thornton Wilder is as pure as the purest Oxford English.

It is only since 1930 that Harvard University has inaugurated courses of lectures on American literature as distinct from those on English literature. The American critic Yvor Winters speaks of an unhealthy tendency, half-conscious and neurotic, to create a literature completely independent of English influence. And it is indeed an unhealthy tendency, since it finally considers as truly American only those authors whose art and genius are furthest removed from the English norm, a Whitman or a Mark Twain. Henry James has been annexed by the English. He figures in a recent history of the English novel between Trollope and Galsworthy.

But James, as we shall see, is no less American than Melville and Hemingway, in spite of his tardy naturalisation. The case of T. S. Eliot, born at St. Louis, Missouri, but settled in London and having become English as a young man, is a special one ; we may abandon this great poet to the imperialism of English critics. The problem is academic, since it seems likely that in years to come the links of every sort which join England and the United States will become ever closer. Cases like those of Henry James, or T. S. Eliot, or, the other way about, of W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, will become more and more common. Differences of vocabulary will tend to diminish. In short, the literature of the two countries, like their foreign policy, will be aligned. This is the moment to affirm the existence of a distinctive American literature, before evolution has wiped out the distinction. Harvard University, when that occurs, can once again merge them together.

It is first of all necessary to be precise about the meaning of the word " literature ", which has for us French a rather different sense from that which is the subject of this study. What we call French literature is characterised not only by works of the first importance, but also by all the writings such works give rise to, including the criticism destined to defend them, or even if necessary to secure their acceptance ; criticism not only written but also spoken, in the academies, the salons, on the wireless. French literature is remarkable not only for the number of its writers of genius but also of the writers of talent who surround them. It is the latter who publish militant manifestoes, and keep alive discussion and argument between the various schools. Romanticism is not only Balzac and Hugo, but also Alexander Dumas, Mérimée and Charles Nodier. The chief difference between American literature and our own is that in America great works stand out more from the average. The great writers appear more isolated ; they are not supported by academies or by society people or by state aid. They do not form, within the Federal Republic, a republic of letters with powerful institutions and venerated traditions, capable, even when great works are lacking, of keeping up an imposing façade. French writers advance in formation ; they have lived in the same town, dined in the same restaurants, loved the same women, written articles about one another. American writers, on the other hand, have almost all been " free-lances ", working alone, far from cöteries, and

suffering from either a debilitating regionalism or else from a cosmopolitanism which has left them rootless. The difficulty of our enterprise lies precisely in this, for wishing to introduce order into the anarchic whole we may indicate groups or discover links between artists who often in fact know nothing of each other and never meet during their whole lives.

Although American literature is thus unlike the literature of Western Europe, and particularly that of France, it has nevertheless undergone a similar evolution and passed through analogous phases. The literature of a country largely reflects its customs and institutions, and the chief events of United States history since the 18th Century correspond with those which have moulded Europe. The rhythm of wars and revolutions, the cycle of economic crises, are the same. The revolt of the American colonists against England in 1779 is rightly called the " American Revolution " since this revolt, prepared by economists and philosophers, nourished by the ideas of the encyclopaedists, was in truth a prelude to the French Revolution. The war of Secession, which cuts the 19th Century in two for Americans, may at first glance appear to have no European analogy either for its causes or for its consequences. It is, however, admitted today that the problem of slavery was but a pretext for a war in which the driving force was in reality ideological. A democratic conception of society confronted an aristocratic conception, or, to take Montesquieu's definition, a society based on virtue confronted a society based on honour. The revolutions and wars which broke out in Europe in the middle of the 19th Century also had, beyond their superficial causes, the deeper ideological aspect. During the war in Italy France fought in the name of the ideals of the Revolution and the principle of nationalism against Austria, last rampart of Catholic and monarchical conservatism left in Europe. It was one of the last struggles of reactionary forces against the new forces of egalitarian democracy.

The end of the century in America and in Europe, the end of the Victorian era, the beginning of the Third Republic, are the same : material prosperity, triumph of the bourgeois aesthetic, isolation and revolt of the artists. This parallelism was destined to become more marked, since with American intervention in the first World War in 1917 the United States and the nations of Western Europe are indissolubly linked.

The conquest of the Far West was a specifically American occurrence, yet it may be compared with the colonial expeditions undertaken after 1830 by France and England. The nations of the West seemed to be possessed by a will to conquest, the result of their economic efflorescence after the industrial revolution. Thus on both sides of the Atlantic a similar civilisation experienced within a few years parallel adventures. One must therefore expect to find in America, as in England and France, the same lines of thought, the same political and religious preoccupations, give rise to a similar literature.

The beginning of the 19th Century is notable for the renaissance of religious sentiment, which inspired American romanticism as it did French romanticism. This was followed by realism after the war of Secession, and in France after 1850, and its excesses led to a re-awakening of aestheticism : Ruskin and Walter Pater in England, Huysmans in France, Henry James and Henry Adams in America. The early 20th Century brought a renaissance of poetry, inspired in the United States by the example and the teachings of symbolism. There was the same upsurge of romanticism in France and in America after the first World War with the " sacrificed generation " the " lost generation ", succeeded in the thirties by neo-realism. This parallelism continues right up to the present day.

Such is the essential pattern. However, romanticism, realism and aestheticism in the United States, though they are open to European influence, yet have their own particular character. They are American. In what does this " Americanism " consist, as remarkable in Whitman as in Henry James, Theodore Dreiser or Faulkner ?

One fact dominates the moral formation of the United States : religion. Against the Church of England's compromise between Catholicism and Reform the puritans demanded a purification of religion, austerity, and the suppression of the episcopacy. Persecuted, they emigrated. Puritanism emphasised the necessity for suffering and renunciation ; its accent was on the problem of evil and the difficulty of salvation. The consequence of liberty of worship was that innumerable different sects arose, but they all had one morality in common. A heroic morality, which afforded an excellent excuse for enterprises of conquest and revenge, giving biblical sanction to the pioneer with gun or axe.

Born of opposition to dogmas, proclaiming free choice and the value of personal interpretation of texts, the Reformation fostered a spiritual questioning in its adherents which favoured the exercise of thought and of writing. A rich harvest of sermons, theological treatises and pious edification was the result, with intimate journals which replaced the confessional as an occasion for self-examination. Such is the source of American letters, a source that has never dried up, and from which flows not only the astonishing sermon on Jonah in *Moby Dick* but also the homilies of pastor Dimmesdale, the lamentations of the blacks in Faulkner's *Go Down Moses*, the poems of Emily Dickinson and the journals of Jeremiah Beaumont in *World Enough and Time* by Robert Penn Warren. The whole work of Henry James can be explained by puritanism ; the poems of Whitman were conceived as subjects for lectures and those of Emerson actually became lectures. The " lecture ", the layman's sermon, is a genre which, in America, is worth a study to itself.

To the fact of religion is linked the fact of colonialism. The mixture of attraction and repulsion which America evinces towards England, France and Italy ; the snobbery of imitation, like the inverted snobbery of mockery which so many Americans affect towards Europeans, can only be explained by the circumstance that the United States was once the colony of an European country. The " colonial complex " is enough to divide the writers into cosmopolitans and isolationists: Washington Irving and Fenimore Cooper, Henry James and Mark Twain.

The third important point is the influence of 18th Century philosophy, both on institutions and customs. But while in France the materialist atheism of the encyclopaedists created a tradition in opposition to the Christian tradition, in the United States the philosophic tradition was curiously fused with puritanism. This explains the religious fervour with which so many writers, poets, novelists, essayists have celebrated the ideals of democracy. Transcendentalism has furnished a Christian version of the philosophy of light, still the official philosophy of the United States. Only an occasional voice here and there has denounced the democratic gospel. It was necessary to wait for a generation of Southerners born of the Civil War to arise, which would found an original traditionalist movement (that of the New Criticism) to oppose with force and cohesion the philosophic tradition.

But beyond such historical or religious influences it is the country itself, its configuration, its riches, its climate, which have left their mark on the work born of its soil. The American continent strikes the traveller by its immensity. Not only are its trees the oldest and tallest in the world ; the rivers are wider than European rivers, the lakes bigger, the deserts more hostile. The towns have caught this gigantism, and the individual feels as lost in them as though he were at the bottom of a canyon in Arizona. From Whitman who sang the pioneer launched on the conquest of the Far West on his " prairie ship " down to Thomas Wolfe who, throughout *Of Time and the River*, in an obsessive leit motiv, describes the trains linking the country in all directions, American writers have lyrically celebrated the wide spaces of America. They have felt the attraction of grandiose nature, have lost themselves in the forests, have sailed down the rivers. And pride of place must be given to the great river which flows across the continent from North to South, the ancient Meschacebé, the Father of Rivers. A whole literature, in which shine the names of Mark Twain and Faulkner, has been fertilised by the Mississipi. T. S. Eliot writes that it is the submission of man to nature that gives dignity to man, for without a God of some kind, man is not very interesting.

The most recent aspects of American romanticism in the young Southern writers are based on the primitive America which has never been completely submerged by industrialisation.

Time, too, is not measured in America as it is in Europe. The infinite possibilities of contraction and relaxation it affords when multiplied by space explain, perhaps, the richness of the novel, the boldness of technical experiments in this genre. It has been remarked that the present is the important time for the American novel, which explains the success of the short story which is so typically American. But time, for Henry James, is a recent past which acquires, by virtue of distance — the author puts the wide ocean between himself and his heroes, between his heroes and their past — the value of an anterior past. With the same magic and movement the characters project themselves into the future, with the author constantly anticipating events. In Faulkner's work time makes past and future coincide, with incessant change from one to the other, to such an extent that it almost destroys, in his heroes, the feeling of identity that memory gives.

Perhaps the American novel is but the dramatic effort of a man,

naked and alone, lost in the desert of forest and cities, having cut himself off from his past, his country, seeking his identity through a muddled, distorted memory — the symbol of a whole people wildly determined to find themselves a history, to forge themselves a legend. The genius of America is bound up with the forward movement of conquest which gave it birth. The attraction of the West is doubtless linked with the hidden laws of human mass migrations, and finds expression in the myth of *the frontier*, that flexible line, which in the early 19th Century separated the colonised territories from the immense virgin spaces still occupied by Indians and herds of buffalo. The frontier moved ; today it is the Pacific, the line which cuts Korea in two, and the marines in the last war continued the tradition of the pioneers of the Far West. Certain pages of a novel like Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* describing G. I.'s in the jungle are echoes of similar passages in Fenimore Cooper.

THE AMERICAN FILM TODAY

Gadarene Reflections

by ALASTAIR HARPER

MILLIONS of sentences are annually squeezed out of the advertising agencies of the American film industry to glorify the films themselves and the actors who play in them, but little is ever said of the effect which these films have on the minds of the cinemagoers. Filmgoing is one of the most effective escapist rituals in our society, and bearing in mind the susceptible nature of the human psyche in face of any dramatic influence, we are compelled to regard with misgivings the tendency of the contemporary American cinema. Plato, Longinus and the ancients understood the subtle dynamic of drama, and passed some of their most meditated judgments on the necessity of controlling the dramatic works which were made available to the people ; yet we, in fear lest we offend that doubtful god, Freedom, allow our young people to be exposed, in contemporary cinema, to a degraded representation of life.

In the chorus of protest which must surely rise soon against the vast semi-conscious force of decay in our society, some of the wrath must be left for those arbiters of the American film world who have become such willing slaves of the horrid 20th century Zeitgeist that militates against what is best in European morality. American films are set to destroy, and ultimately replace with a specious morality, the ethical heroism that is native and traditional to Europe.

Whether the American film organisation is overtly and centrally controlled in this design is impossible to say ; but reviewing the issue of the machine inductively there arrives the inescapable con-

clusion that a presiding spirit dominates every element of it. High powered nihilism, the American variant of the democracy of this century, is the spiritual background to all the films made. For the individual film director—were he to will it himself—there is no more freedom than there is for the editor of the national newspaper whose tenure of office depends on his ability to perform those tricks which his master specifies. The whole set-up of the contemporary American film clearly indicates the organisation of total control which so many of Hollywood's astute but hypocritical writers seem to attack in their creations. One is reminded of the old Italian proverb which runs, " Presto Mamma, chiamcla putana, prima che lei ti chiama a te ".

The screen is a mirror for our society and its lack of a positive moral element. Beyond a vague drifting to anarchy, which combines the worst features of intellectualism with a sort of Totentanz, the American film has nothing that is not on the degraded level of Cyprus, 4th century A.D. In the stuttering juvenility of Messrs. Dean and Brando resonates the only real moral tone in the tissue of the motion picture of today, and even in this, the muted rebellion of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *East of Eden*, and *Rebel Without a Cause*, there is but the *cri de coeur* of an abandoned generation which, instead of being stimulated to copy some noble example, is encouraged by the arbiters of our morality in Hollywood to project itself still further into an ideal personalising of its own being. In the nightmare of distortion which this age has become for the sensitive young mind, it seems little short of criminal to nurture such a desire for self-destruction as the characters of these dramas already mentioned exemplify. This mode, however, will last as long as the society which spawns it, and there seems likely for each succeeding generation a film aesthetic more violent, more lascivious and more sentimental than the one before.

Marking it off as particularly its own, this century has given the American film an overpoweringly plebeian and egalitarian character, at variance with the aristocratic measure of our former Faustian life and work. Attendant upon this are the features of feminism and the cult of the cosmopolitan. From the stamp of this tripos there is no escape for any film produced in Hollywood, and in these qualities the modern historian can diagnose the decline of moral standards and the entropy of Western Man. The blame for individual parts in the business of American film-making should be awarded in proportion to the consciousness which the film magnates

have of their part in the effort. Typical of the publicised mentality of these men is an utterance of D. F. Zanuck who, when questioned recently on the matter of his films, replied, " I don't set out to make message pictures, I just happen to like their stories." Are we to take this sort of naiveté seriously ? It would be as futile and unrealistic for us to condemn these men as (to use an elevated analogy) it would have been for members of the Catholic society in Europe in the 17th century to have blamed Bach for the Reformation.

Because Hollywood is of the plebeian spirit, and feels no sympathy for anything which is not slave morality, all its masterpieces are made about people who are base. Heroism and moral elevation are shunned and the cardinal virtues have suffered a polar change. On the theme of baseness there have been many variations. *The Lost Weekend* and *I'll Cry Tomorrow* idealised the personality of the alcoholic ; Joe, the hero of the *Rose Tattoo* was a near-moron whose father had the " beer habit " ; *The Golden Arm* concerned itself with a drug addict's life and drew its real popular interest from the presentation of low living : whoever, indeed, would seek to disprove the thesis that Hollywood's inspiration is baseness itself would have to fly in the face of literally thousands of screen stories which have at their core the doctrine of submission and defeat. The idealisation of the " Common Man " in the midst of his pathetic world can make, as it did in the screen triumph *Marty*, a profound effect on millions, for in the wretched and luckless strivings of the little Italian butcher a harmony of fellow-feeling was established with countless numbers of those whose lives are as unenlightened as his. Like the searing notes of a jazz trumpet violence punctuates the Hollywood screenplays of today, and in the latest successes, *Baby Doll* and *The Come On*, brutality and the distorted features of a generation in agony hold cinema audiences in thrall. Sickness and insanity, which the heroic mentality shuns, are good reasons today for a picture being a success ; how otherwise would *Johnny Belinda* and *The Glass Menagerie* which depend for their being on the public acceptance of the portrayal of blind persons, schizophrenics, and cripples, have made such an effect on the public mind ? The Cinderella theme for male and female roles is too common to bear exemplifying, but it serves as a necessity in a society where tension and frustration achieve unbelievable levels. The whole enormous outpouring of the Western films, as evidenced in films like *Shane*, *Yellow Sky* and *High Moon*, is taken up with the vicarious expression of tendencies of violence generated in people by this

society which, if they were to remain unexpressed, would lead to a serious social explosion. But the conception of the heroic personality by Hollywood is one far removed from that created by artists of former times. Can Mickey Spillane be expected to understand what Chaucer meant by " a verray parfit gentil knight " ? The so-called heroism of the American film is really not heroism at all, but the pathological outcome of the failure to achieve it ; and in fact the need for films that make of men the utterly impossible creatures which Hollywood shapes them, arises from the fact that we in the West have almost forgotten that physical courage and the other associated qualities are only the external appearance of heroism, in much the same way as evangelist meetings are only the shadow of true religion.

The idealisation of the base and the degradation of real values has the stamp of the proletarian on it. It is what the German thinker has called Schadenfreude.

Complementary to this, the plebeian morality of which we have been speaking carries a hatred of aristocratic institutions. In this it abuts upon the overtly political, and in many ways resembles the social egalitarianism of the Left Wing organisations. Satire and ridicule are the main weapons in the armoury of the script writers here, and in their comedies we see the mode most employed. Two recent examples of this sort of thing are to be found in the films *The Iron Petticoat* and *The Ambassador's Daughter*. In the former an American Air Force officer, who is played by Bob Hope, is delegated to escort and, if possible, secure the ideological conversion to democracy of a female Russian pilot. Hope's fiancée, a snooty English damsel belonging to an aristocratic landed family, is out to ensnare him in the mistaken belief that he is rich, so that she and her brother may thereby restore the family fortunes. Hope, however, is rescued from her artifices by the airborne Ninotscha, and to the discomfiture of aristocrats everywhere the American and the Russian are united, in farce. In *The Ambassador's Daughter* the stage is held by the ever-young Olivia de Havilland whose suitor is an aristocratic Frenchman, not just so much of a nit-wit as the aristocrat in *Clochemerle*, but moving in that direction. The film is built round the efforts of a young G.I. to capture the affections of this ambassador's daughter which, despite aristocratic competition, he latterly does. *D. Day 6th of June* has a much more sober setting than the other two, but maintains the cutting criticism of persons and institutions aristocratic. The heroine's father, an

English staff officer, is shown striking with his stick an American G.I. who has been somewhat rude about the appearance of the Home Guard. The ignominy of the return blow from the American and the belief that the Empire is collapsing sends him to suicide. The remainder of the picture is taken up with the overwhelming contribution of American arms to the winning of the war. One wonders, when watching these repetitions of slurs on aristocracy, if the selection of types as immigrants to the U.S. has had anything to do with the prevalence of this attitude, and at which point the latter phenomenon can be squared with the near idolatry of any persons remotely connected with European aristocracy today, if they happen to come within range of America. It would, in fact, be a task of cataloguing to record all those films in which this tiresome malicious habit appears.

If this were the only part of the aggressive element of the plebeian spirit, we who concern ourselves with the security of European morality would have no difficulty in warding off its assault. Unfortunately, however, what we have been describing is nothing compared with the violent antagonism to ethical heroism which obsesses Hollywood.

In their choice of material, equalitarian dogma is exclusively favoured. Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* with its socialistic import is preferred to, say, a production of Virgil's *Aeneid* (heaven forbid that the Hollywood Moloch should ever think of it) and in the majority of cases where themes by writers of former ages are employed, they are given the special Hollywood treatment, ostensibly to fit them for scenic production. It is this treatment which deserves closer scrutiny than any other element of contemporary American motion picture production, for within it is the very genius of distortion. In the rarest of cases one finds an honest approach to Man and History. I refer specifically here to the films of Warner Brothers in which, as has been commented before in the incisive and admirable cinema criticism of Vincent Murray, there is a not infrequent attempt by that excellent director John Ford, who is the philosopher of the Confederacy today, to view the past as it was and not as the defective vision of this age would have it. How this attitude has survived in a jungle of predatory dogma one could only tell by inner knowledge of the hierarchical set-up of Warners. In the works of all the other companies, however, the attitude which we have been discussing prevails absolutely. Where heroic characters are invoked it is not to display the facts of genius which made

them great by all previous standards, but to twist their lives and works into such a plausible complex that they seem to be the exemplars of an actually anti-heroic morality. In *Alexander the Great* and in the film *Desirée* about Napoleon, this point is made clear. Alexander was depicted petulant, avid for power and unscrupulous, unendeared to our hearts until by Hollywood's command his character changes. The metamorphosis takes place, we are assured, at that very time when all other estimates of his career indicate a collapse. On his disastrous return from India, when his dreams of a world order were shattered, he permitted, for purely expedient purposes, the union of many of his Nordic Thracian warriors with Persian women. This decision, born of defeat and biological necessity, has been seized upon by Hollywood as some sort of personal re-birth and magnified quite out of proportion to its actuality. This, in small, is typical of Hollywood's approach to History. Napoleon fared no better in *Desirée*, for in this much coarser presentation of an historical personality he suffers what in common language we would call "taking the Mike". The man who so long held the destiny of Europe is shown in this film as being a mere arbiter of female fashion, spending an absolute minimum of time on the great matters which he had on hand.

Religious themes are favoured by Hollywood for an interesting nexus of reasons. The setting of these is generally the Middle East, and since by far the greater number of people connected with the film industry in Hollywood are Jews, the choice is not surprising. Added to this, the Jews now have an unprecedented opportunity to explain the orthodox Jewish angle on the Christian story. They are able to work off on the screen the burden of guilt which has been their lot since the Crucifixion. They are, moreover, able to capitalise on the splendour of 1st century Rome, and make of the simple Christian story as vulgar an extravaganza as can be imagined. The Pax Romana can be converted into a brutal and warlike force whose depicted aims of world enslavement are exactly counter to what the Romans actually intended. *Quo Vadis* and *The Robe* are the best examples of this, and *The Egyptian* shows how the Jewish idea on monotheism can be publicised, a matter which is interesting in view of the work done on this very subject by Sigmund Freud in *Moses and Monotheism*. Christianity, though it had a geographical origin in the Middle East, has however been informed and inspired by Europeans. We must do what is possible to counter the spread of the cult which bids us take of the Scriptures what alien people

recommend.

The heroic idea of nobility, personal forthrightness, and the primal virtue of manliness are all the subjects of the most subtle attacks. An excellent example of this was seen in the film, starring James Mason, *Bigger Than Life*, where he played the part of a schoolteacher who has become addicted to cortisone. Whilst under the influence of the drug he addresses a parent-teacher meeting in his school hall. He is plainly crazed, and the speech which the Hollywood script writer has put in his mouth startles the audience. The content of it was a criticism of the present educational vogue for so-called free expression. He deplores the loss of discipline in the American educational system and advocates a return to the old virtues of self-reliance and self-discipline. The delivery of those ideas by a delirious person cast the ideas into disrepute, and in numbers of films this mode is employed, with no doubt great advantage to the process of conditioning which Hollywood has espoused. Personal dynamism, self-reliance, individual decisiveness, and qualities of leadership, where they are not employed on behalf of a society according to Hollywood dogma, are treated as sins. The qualities of which we have been speaking are regularly personified in Hollywood by gangsters, "dictators", and amoral tycoons. Typical of this kind of film were such successes as *Johnny O'Clock*, *All the King's Men*, and *Executive Suite*.

The historical romance is particularly suited to the ulterior purpose we have been considering, for it is accessible to a large number of people by reason of its immediately stimulating character, and it is blatantly anti-aristocratic. Kings and the nobility seldom appear at anything but a discount, and if they are favourably portrayed it is because of the possession of some plebeian virtue. Popular legends are re-cast so that the simple tales of folk heroes are geared to the position of class-war heroes until it is impossible to tell the difference between the productions of Hollywood's *Robin Hood* and Sovietfilm's *Stenka Razin*. The epic, now firmly established in Hollywood, is the type of *The Crimson Pirate* which delights in showing how easily established and aristocratic orders can be overthrown by the ordinary little people, if only they are aided by a sort of superman who has musicians and idiots for friends. *The Crimson Pirate* leads a very crowded field here. *Ivanhoe* was reduced to an anti-Norman farce, and some years ago *Scaramouche* was produced with the name of the writer proudly displayed as Count Gobineau. What followed was a travesty in the most corrupt possible terms of

the little-known romance by that philosopher of aristocracy, Count Arthur de Gobineau. The work, written in 1847, was acutely sympathetic to the idea of aristocracy, then about to be smitten its crippling blow. No doubt a little holiday was celebrated in the hearts of many of the Script Writer's Guild in Hollywood at the premiere of that film.

In the foregoing we have been specifically concerned with the anti-heroic content of American films, and have omitted the features of feminism and cosmopolitanism which are the other two ideological supports of the American film.

Feminism can be regarded as one of the most characteristic features of our society. We may take Mill's famous essay of 1861, *On the Subjection of Women*, as being the point of public recognition of this attitude, and marvel how far the tendency has reached today. Nowhere in Western society has it advanced so far as it has in the United States where "Mom" and "Girlie" worship has achieved proportions unbelievable to those of us who live in communities where there still remains something of the natural order of relations between the sexes. There is no Western community which this development of the feminine status has not reached, however, and we may regard ourselves as only a little way behind the Americans in the doubtful progress to the feminist heaven. It is asserted that the reason for the great increase in films, feminist in outlook, arises from the growing number of relatively young American widows who, by dint of their middle-class status, have a high investment capacity. Film companies, it would appear, tend to attract these investments. Realists, however, will recognise feminism as an accompaniment of the loss of energy which indicates a civilisation in decline. The feminist film is not difficult to recognise. It seeks to show that in the long and the short run women are superior to men, and that it has only been the deliberate scheming on the part of men in previous ages which has prevented this being seen. No better examples of this sort of thinking are there than two recent films from Hollywood, *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* and *The Proud and Profane*. In the former the long re-settled veteran, played by Gregory Peck, is shown as having constant recourse to his wife in all the problems of his unexciting career. This build-up is necessary for the crux of the plot, which brings to light a touching little romance in war-torn Italy between the husband and a charming Italian girl. As a result of this affair the Italian girl has a child whom she supports herself. When the burden becomes

too great she obliquely approaches her former American lover for help. This is high drama, and Hollywood spares no pains to get over to the audience what it really means. The wife has to be told of the affair, and from then on she is the centrepiece of the film. After a giddy flight she recovers her composure and returns to her hand-wringing husband. With a divine magnanimity she forgives him, and what is very much more she sees that her husband does not stint his assistance to the little Italian. The man in the grey flannel suit is last seen in the adoring posture he has striven to maintain throughout the whole picture.

We can see from slush of this nature that film drama in the main is now on the level of " soap opera ", it will require something like explosive to shift it.

The Proud and Profane goes one better. In this Pacific theatre epic a tough American colonel (half Cherokee) after a life of effort in arms, falls in love (or his variant of it) with a beautiful Red Cross widow of a Marines captain. By him she becomes pregnant, and with the brutality which has hitherto characterised all his actions, he leaves her. As a result of a fall accidentally sustained at their last meeting, she loses the child. Immediately thereafter he is posted to active service, and not long after reported killed in action. At first his death means little to her, and then there sets in the period of feminine compassion. By the time she herself is posted to the forward area in which he was reported killed, she has quite overcome her sorrow and shame. The climax of the film at this point reveals that our hero is not dead but recently returned from the front, a seriously wounded man, whom she has no difficulty in locating in the forward hospital. The film closes on the note of feminine triumph which has been sought after all through. The tough, overbearing Col. Black lies on a stretcher murmuring repeatedly, " Forgive me, forgive me ". The audience is left in no doubt as to who it was who won the last round.

Vincent Murray said something recently in his Cinema criticism about " final reels ". What I think he could have added was that most final reels are ruined by the fact that they have to contain the sting in the tail. If memory serves, the average filmgoer will be able to bundle together *The Bridges of Toko Ri, Love is a Many Splendored Thing, All About Eve, It's a Womqn's World* and *The King and I,* for these films are all feminist screen triumphs.

On a completely animal level, Hollywood has invoked the female sex in a way that only the centuries of advanced decadence could

equal. It has capitalised on the sense of frustration which permeates society through the loss of a spiritual and religious interest, and has made of the female body something far beyond the appetitive symbol which it has been for prior generations of our civilisation. Bosom-worship—mastoconcupiscence to the psychologically educated American—is the characteristic of a society that has lost the true meaning of love in both its spiritual and sexual zones. The higher the pedestal on which women are placed by such agencies as Hollywood, the more difficult will it become for men to reach them, to the frustration of both parties. This process is much the same as that referred to at the outset, where the incitement to further adolescent rebellion was preached by films which took the theme of adolescent revolt as their subject. At all events the dominating American " Mom " who, after all, is only an elder " Girlie ", has found herself enthroned before the males (American and other) of our society.

The last member of the tripos of decadence which American films embody is that of cosmopolitanism, that insidious zeal to reduce the natural barriers of race and nationality and to fuse the world's population into a vast undifferentiated mass. In inspiration this movement is born of the plebeian morality in that it seeks to erase the crucial distinctions between races. By so doing it is hoped that there may be obliterated all traces of racial superiority, and that thus the world's peoples and their achievements may be reduced to the level of the Common Man. The moral evil of such an idea is not for discussion here, but only its appearance in the contemporary American film.

In the American film of today the absolute cosmopolitan thesis postulates that all races should be fused. In films, up to this point, the lesson has been taught with some reserve, but this month there appears what will certainly usher in a succession of such films. In the guise of just another romance, we are treated to *Island in the Sun*, which has as its centrepiece a love-affair between a white and a coloured person. Once this precedent is created miscegenation will become a positive virtue. The softening-up period has been going on for years now, making as its immediate objective the reduction of any sort of discrimination. Negroes have been cast in " soft " roles, as has been evidenced in the case of the negro actor who is to play the hero in *Island in the Sun*, Harry Belafonte. By judicious casting he has had built up for him a highly sympathetic public. Zanuck's *Gentleman's Agreement* won awards from Jewish organisa-

tions all over America at its first appearance, yet when it was in preparation, these same organisations made highly public attacks on the producers for attempting to re-open " The Jewish Question ". One would have thought that in a country like America the people would have been wise to a trick as corny as that. Films like *Trial*, *No Way Out* and *Storm Warning* are produced with no other purpose than to combat any possible organisation of native Americans who have banded together to protect their natural rights against the infiltration of aliens. In films like *Pinky* the segregationists are allied, as they are a little later in *The Phoenix City Story*, with dyed-in-the-wool criminals. In *The Blackboard Jungle* Glen Ford almost choked to death rebuking a school class for racial intolerance, and his whole career seemed to be in jeopardy when the hyper-intelligent negro member of the class accuses him of that same unspeakable crime. *The Rains of Ranchipur* showed an Indian doctor playing the saint before the devilish antics of a white woman who is trying to filch him from the path of duty as a physician with his people.

The modern film is a screen for projection in more than its literal sense. The troll people of Hollywood know this, and in the films they make a net is woven with all the subtle threads which have been discussed here to mesh those of us who have become too slothful to evade their cast. They work for the capture of our interest today and the possession of our souls tomorrow, and even though, as seems likely, television supplants the cinema, the self-same agencies will only be brought thereby right into the homes of the people whose resistance to the attempts cannot of itself grow stronger.

What a regenerate film organisation would find its task in the event of the overthrow of the present decadent order of society can not easily be given immediate and detailed expression, but hinged as any such effort would be to the greater order of the European mind, there would arise a new form in the cinema such as we who love that art have long dreamed of.

A DIARY

WHEN Chairman Mao referred the other day to certain intellectuals and others who maintain a critical attitude to the régime, he said with characteristically Chinese euphemism that these people have " uneasy thoughts ".

It is difficult not to have uneasy thoughts about some of our rulers. When, like the present Minister of Education, they expose themselves to our uncomfortable gaze in a weekly poem our thoughts get uneasier and uneasier. Mr. Graham Greene, in a letter to the *Spectator*, the paper which favours its readers with Hailshamia, wondered whether Lord Hailsham purposed to add Wilhelmina Stitch's poems to the curriculum in State schools. The implication seemed to be that Miss Stitch has served Lord Hailsham as a model for his own verse. Admirers of Miss Stitch's rhyming sermons may resent this. Her work was so polished, neat, and cleverly contrived, the moral so aptly pointed. A poem of Lord Hailsham's, recently published, called *Hopes and Fears*, beginning :

> Is the fragile bark that's me
> Tossing on the stormy sea,
> At length to harbour drawn ?

had, doubtless, something in common with Wilhelmina Stitch's verse as regards spiritual content, but technically the poetess was in another class. Stitch fans may care to know, if they are not satisfied with the hebdomadal offering of the Minister of Education, that the *Irish Independent* daily employs a delightful poet called James J. Metcalfe.

" Some would do anything they could . . . To live another day . . . While others wish to go to sleep . . . And quickly pass away . . . Both attitudes are wrong because . . . Our time upon this sod . . . Is only by the holy will . . . And by the grace of God." This is an extract from one of Mr. Metcalfe's recent poems ; it bears an undeniable resemblance to some of Lord Hailsham's verse as to

subject matter but Lord Hailsham is hardly Mr. Metcalfe's peer as yet, when it comes to a really original rhyme.

★ ★ ★

An ex-Minister about whom some people may have had uneasy thoughts is Lord Salisbury. He was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* on the 16th March 1957 (when he was still in office) as having opened the " Atoms and Health " Exhibition at the Royal Society of Health with a speech that " could not have been more soothing ". " He assured us " wrote the *Daily Telegraph* reporter " that future generations had nothing to fear from atomic radiation."

The very next day the *Observer* (which never stops treading on the toes of members of our Tory Government) published an article by its scientific correspondent, Mr. John Davy. " One thing is certain," he wrote ; " every additional bomb test will do *some* damage. It will cause some people to die of bone cancer who would not otherwise have done so. It will also produce genetic changes, the majority of which are likely to be harmful. These will effect not us but our descendants. . . . The trend of recent expert reports — such as that produced for the World Health Organisation last week — indicates that the hazard is more immediate than earlier estimates suggested."

Since Mr. Davy is a scientist, while Lord Salisbury is not, his article unfortunately must be taken more seriously than " No need to be nervous " (the heading in the *Daily Telegraph*). It might be better, in some ways, if Ministers left poetry writing to the poets, and scientific forecasting to the scientists. The English love of amateurishness and dislike of professionalism is sometimes carried almost too far.

However necessary it may be, in the jungle world our politicians have made for us, that England should test its H-bomb, we prefer to do without soothing speeches which fail to soothe. The uneasy thoughts they engender are connected less with the possibility of getting bone cancer than with the incompetence and frivolity of the administration in every single sphere of its activity.

★ ★ ★

According to the *Star*, the Bishop of Chelmsford has appealed to people " to queue up outside a church before service so that they

would attract other people to see what was going on." What a quaint idea of the Bishop's. Can it really be that people so love queuing that they have only to see a queue and they are impelled to join it ? Has the Bishop considered what will happen when finally, with the ringing of the five minute bell, the queue moves out of the rain to lose itself among the deserted pews of an empty church ? Might not even the most ardent queue-lovers then wonder whether the churchgoers had not taken leave of their senses ?

If the Bishop of Chelmsford were to cross the Irish Sea he would find churches so full that queues are formed, not as a stunt but from necessity. Most Irish towns and villages have two churches, one old and charming, often 18th-century Gothic, the other ugly and modern. The pretty ones are empty and the ugly ones are full of worshippers. It always appears to me that it would be a generous, Christian and logical act on the part of the Church of Ireland if it were to give at least half of its empty churches to the Catholics It will take more than the attraction of imitation queues, or even the musical comedy ditties of clergymen like the Reverend Simon Phipps popularising dogmas (" can anyone tell me an original sin ?") to fill Anglican churches. Mr Phipps, in any case, looks like being left far behind by another clergyman, the Rev. Geoffrey Beaumont, who hopes to attract " Teddy boys and other loiterers " to his Camberwell church with a Jazz Mass, " When Father Beaumont performs it in his own church, he knows just the kind of combo he wants : a small, zippy dance band, perhaps with some of the gutty quality of a Louis Armstrong " reports *Time* magazine.

★ ★ ★

Gardening in Ireland is very rewarding Everything seems to flourish and grow rapidly to immense size. The daffodils come out in February, some of the rhododendrons are flowering at Christmas, and the mimosas are in full bloom for the opening of the salmon fishing season in the South on the 1st of February. In March come the camellias ; J. C. Williams is smothered in artificial-looking waxy pink flowers by the third week of the month. After that the Spring advances leisurely, and there is no sudden burst when everything happens at once, like in the Ile de France, which catches up and passes Ireland in the space of a few warm April days. Strawberries and roses are a month later in Ireland than they are near Paris.

D.M

THREE POEMS OF TU FU

Translated by CHAO TEZ-CHIANG

A Sleepless Night

The bamboo cool invades my bedroom ;
Wild moonlight fills the courtyard corner.
Heavy dews form crystal drops ;
Scattered stars are on and out.
Glowworms, flitting in darkness, glimmer on themselves ;
Birds, roosting on the water, call one another.
All things are engulfed by battles ;
I grieve in vain at the night gone.

The North Slope of the East Village

The thiefs pressed by a floating life ;
The poor squeezed by the foreigners.
Only birds are in the empty village ;
No man is encountered at sun's setting.
The wind blows at my face in the dale ;
Dews drop from the pines on my body.
I turn my white head to the far hills :
Yellow dust is in the battleground.

THREE CHINESE POEMS

To Block the Lu-tzu Pass

Far, far are those five towns,
Farther than the River.
Our border troops are all at the east front ;
Those towns are deserted to briars and thorns.
Shih has left Huai and Wei ;
Kao is sweeping westward.
Their advance bypasses the waste ;
The Shao and the Han are guardless.
Yen-chou is the north gate to Ch'in ;
We can rely on its defence.
How can we get ten thousand men
To drive on and block the Lu-tzu ?
There is Commander Hsueh in Ch'i ;
He flanks the foe in the mountains.
Of late the barbarian soldiers
Have retreated one hundred miles.
The Pass can choke the two rebels ;
A deep significance lies there.
Who can tell this to the King's usher ?
For the Tartars are moving like ghosts.

THEATRE

Compagnie Edwige Feuillère

(*PALACE THEATRE*)

Mervyn Peakes' The Wit to Woo

(*ARTS THEATRE*)

Henry de Montherlant's The Master of Santiago

(*LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH*)

by MICHAEL HARALD

LA PARISIENNE and *Le Carrosse du Saint-Sacrement* are trifles light as air, but they left behind the suspicion that a goddess might prove to be only an actress. A great actress, of course ; but perhaps, after all, no greater than a combination of Réjane, Duse, Bernhardt and Ellen Terry at their best ; no nearer Heaven than the topmost branch of the theatrical tree. I croak this treason against my will ; and I must now attempt to justify it.

The greatest artist must finally be judged on the highest level of his art. The creative artist, as distinct from the interpretive one, achieves that level unawares : it has not existed before. His ascent is to the unknown. On his arrival there he challenges the critic to measure his height and define his achievement — for he is at the same time Art itself and a yardstick by which to judge it. If he is a composer or a dramatist he demands both collaboration and a death-duel from his peers among interpretive artists. In that death, if it be mutual, great music or great drama is born. This *naissance* — or *renaissance* — is, finally, the justification and the magic of the theatre, the opera-house, the concert-hall.

Mme. Feuillère must be aware of this, intuitively, for in France she has usually chosen to perform in great plays, resisting the temptation to Sardoodle in the Bernhardt way. Yet she brings with her on a short visit to a starving island the self-same bag of stale biscuits which we swallowed — gratefully, then — a year and a half ago : *La Dame aux Camélias*. To quench a raging

thirst we are offered oil in the form of Henri Becque's *La Parisienne*, a rubbishy little sex-triangle farce which Réjane used to tease with seventy years ago, and a dash of vinegar brewed by Mérimée — *Le Carrosse du Saint-Sacrement*. The English theatre is by no means of the rank of the Athenian stage of Periclean times ; it is in most ways miles behind the French theatre, as I have more than once indicated ; but it is all the same discriminating enough to house the world's best actress for a week or two in the world's best plays. Mme. Feuillère judges us too harshly.

The danger was that the *hors d'oeuvre* might have ruined our palate for the main course. I personally went into strict training for *Phèdre* ; and I suppose that M. Noel, M. Calvé and the rest did too. In the first week's trivial plays they emerged as acolytes not actors, cue-servers to the High Priestess : this was an inevitable consequence of harnessing a great name to a poor vehicle, and over-stressing the importance of a solo effort. Yet they were quite likely acting very well indeed, in their way, stranded high and dry, ruefully giving the text what it was worth and no more. Mme. Feuillère's superlative performances in all three pieces rubbed the shoddy stuff threadbare and bright, and left her talented colleagues in the outer darkness.

★ ★ ★

" Nous aimons Phèdre pour ses moments d'humilité ", M. Mauriac wrote in his *La Vie de Jean Racine*. Boileau was impressed by her " douleur vertueuse " — and Sainte-Beuve was so impressed by the phrase that he quoted it once or twice and then claimed it as his own. Chateaubriand called her " une épouse chrétienne " ; La Harpe stresses the fact that we have more pity for " Phèdre coupable " than for " Hippolyte innocent ". Jules Lemaitre writes of her " conscience infiniment tendre et délicate ", and follows with one of the most important lines of criticism ever penned :— " et le mot sur lequel son dernier soupir s'exhale est celui de *pureté* " . . . .

With one or two honourable exceptions, London critics of Mme. Feuillère's great performance were unaware of or unmoved by such considerations. Critical chins dropped in dismay on the

first night, for it was clear from her first entrance that the actress's concern was with Racine and not with the titillation of Fleet Street voluptuaries. Her aspect was that of a *religieuse*, not a *femme fatale*. Her aim and her achievement was to convert a London theatre into a temple, not a brothel.

Her performance lingers, as beautiful and disturbing now, a week later in the study, as it was in the theatre. It grows in the mind. It illuminates the footnotes in the *Classiques Larousse* edition of the play ; it directs and heightens the routine dream in which the sea-coast of ancient Greece is more familiar than the No. 19 bus-route. " Queens have died young and fair " . . . and we are pierced enjoyably to the heart by each sad reminder of the fact ; but Mme. Feuillère quickly purges us of all such rubbishy, romantic notions. We are intimidated, instead, by her spiritual austerity — but we begin at last to think with our minds and not our bowels. Not for an instant does she flatter her audience : the purple patches arise naturally from the poignancy of her revelations and are given neither more nor less than their value. Finally, we lose consciousness of the dramatist and the actress ; we are, in the words of M. Chabot, transported " au plus lointain des temps mythologiques, dans le monde fabuleux ou les personnages ont vécu ". We remember, in short, Phèdre's ancestry : nothing in Mme. Feuillère's performance permits us to forget it.

★ ★ ★

The Wit To Woo at the Arts is a farce-fantasy which needs ruthless cutting, overall re-casting and dazzling, pin-point direction if it is to entertain at all in a spurious fashion as inferior Fry. The first half of the piece is saved by the genius of Mr. Kenneth Williams ; but I record the fact more in sorrow than in gratitude. It is saddening to see the most brilliant young comedian in England wasting his gifts in this manner. Mr .Williams' way with poor material is first of all to render every other actor invisible (a merciful if fortuitous gesture in the present production), and to oblige in their absence with a firework display. This is delightful ; but a master-builder needs bricks and mortar — coloured fire is no real substitute. Mr. Williams should have been born in France, for he was born to Molière.

It is good that Mr. Wolfit's preoccupation with saintliness and sacerdotage has led him at last to Montherlant's Pauline cell : the great French dramatist might have waited indefinitely for an inferior, more fashionable actor and a better production. As it is, his performance of the terrible Don Alvaro was something for the connoisseur to dream about, while the production was quite nightmarishly bad. This is the first of Montherlant's plays to be done in London. Because of its searing, uncompromising religiosity, it is probably the one least suited to the English palate. But others are to follow. They demand good translation — Montherlant is what actors term, with a pejorative inflection, a " word-merchant " — and inspired direction. The absence of these essentials at the Lyric, Hammersmith strained *The Master of Santiago* nearly, but not quite, to breaking-point, and caused even our greatest living player to burst his hair-shirt at the seams.

★ ★ ★

Shaw felt it comfortably within the confines of his elastic conscience to write of the doings of the Independent Theatre, in which many of his own interests were vested. I shall, therefore, end this review with a few lines about *New Playwrights*, 1957, an enterprise in which I was glad to play an active role. The experiment of presenting extracts from unperformed plays attracted good actors, small audiences and an enthusiastic press. It is one which I hope will be repeated. Two of the best of our younger actresses, Miss Olive Gregg and Miss Shirley Cooklin, lent lustre to the first plays of Mr. White and Mr. Campton respectively ; and Mr. Michael Hitchman, as a nonegenarian butler in Leonard Ansell's *The Benefactor*, cleverly conveyed that Frankenstein has a definite niche in Disneyland.

★ ★ ★

Note :— One of the greatest of all books on the Theatre, Edward Gordon Craig's *On The Art of the Theatre*, has just been reissued by Messrs. Heinemann, the original publishers, at 25s. At the sacrifice even of a half-year's theatre-going, at gallery prices, I would urge all readers of these articles to rush out instantly and buy this serious and lovely work.

CINEMA

Brothers in Law, Wings of Eagles, The Wrong Man, Lust for Life

by VINCENT MURRAY

ONE certainly has to be grateful to commercial television for some things. Over the last few months, for example, they have been putting out a series of old British feature-films once a week, and the opportunity of seeing and re-appraising them is extremely valuable. The ITV film-selector has not allowed himself to be hide-bound in his choice; the programmes contain a selection of purely commercial as well as more imaginatively produced films, and the overall picture of the period gains accordingly. The only difficulty is finding the willpower to sit through so much that is mediocre in the hope of catching a glimpse of originality. The faults of the wartime " semi-documentaries " leap to the eye today, but so does their reaction to the studio-bound pre-war films, and the relative freedom gained is noteworthy in the light of later developments. So far, though, nothing has been shown that in any way might serve to alter one's views on the almost total lack of tradition in British cinema. Themes selected apparently at random, stock situations galore, crude treatment of the regional characters, theatrical performances from the leading players, little attempt at constructive direction — that is what emerges as typical of the first sixty years of the British film.

The question of tradition — and the lack of it — has been brought up again recently with the release of the Boulting's **Brothers in Law.** Because their previous film *Private's Progress* was a satire on the Army and their new film makes gentle fun of the law, John and Roy Boulting have been acclaimed as the latest embodiment of " tradition " in British cinema (Carol Reed was subjected to this treatment some years ago, but is now conveniently forgotten). When the genuine article does not exist it is a common tendency among those ardently desiring it to find it in the next best thing, and use their rhetoric to convince others of it. In the cinema this is a common occurrence, and the Boulting affair is the most recent example of it. These men happened to make two consecutive films on similar themes and a " tradition " springs up. No one bothers to look at their previous work to assess their real value. Where is the satire in *Pastor Hall* or *Thunder Rock* ? Are *Seven Days to Noon* and *High Treason* anything more than extremely well-directed adventure stories ? Is *Journey Together* a satire on the R.A.F. ? I think not, and, much as I enjoyed *Private's Progress* and *Brothers in Law*, I don't think the

barbs go very deep. If you want satire in British cinema why not consider *Tke Rake's Progress* by Launder and Gilliat, which is probably the best we have done in this field, but there's no " tradition " here. *The Happiest Days of Your Life* and *Lady Godiva Rides Again* are hardly in the same vein as the *Rake*. Why not enjoy the films for what they offer in themselves, and leave it at that ?

American cinema, though, has developed several traditions, chief among these being the Western. John Ford, whose name has long been associated with this genre, has of late turned with varying success to other themes, most recently to biography. **The Wings of Eagles** is his latest, and probably least successful for some time. Sentimental, sprawling and episodic, the film tells the story of Frank Wead, American Schneider Trophy winner, with little genuine feeling for the plight of the crippled hero. And when sympathy is lacking, when the mood refuses to emerge, all the traditional Fordian elements fail to blend, and take on the appearance of isolated and exaggerated incidents. *The Long Grey Line* had the same basic deficiency. The slap-stick fight and the heavily larded patriotism are indulgences that Ford has never learned to keep in line with his theme. The only solution, one feels, is a hasty retreat back to the simplicity of the old West. There, at least, Ford's " stock-company " feel at home and Wayne is not hopelessly out of his depth.

Hitchcock, too, has a recent release now going the rounds which is for him a little off-key. **The Wrong Man** has apparently a lot in common with the director's best work : a firmly developed plot, a multitude of suspense-tricks and a good cast. The treatment meted out by Hitchcock, however, is more pedestrian than I can remember for a long time. After a first half of well-maintained tension the story, of a musician who is wrongfully accused of armed robbery, loses pace and crawls to an end that is more a full-stop than a climax. The reasons are not hard to find. From a simple love of plain story-telling, Hitchcock is allowing himself to get absorbed in incidentals (such as police procedure in this film) which consequently occupy a disproportionate amount of screen time. Pace suffers, and the essence of the thriller is lost. Henry Fonda plays finely in the lead and the supporting cast is good. What a pity about Hitch !

That most sophisticated of European directors working in Hollywood, Vincente Minnelli, has managed a commercial art-film which will probably have good box-office receipts. I mentioned briefly **Lust for Life** from Edinburgh last year, but now it is on general release and deserves a further note. It is adopted from a popular biography (Irving Stone) and retains a decidedly novelettish flavour. Nevertheless there is an attempt to present Van Gogh as more than the conventional screen hero — Kirk Douglas not only looks like the painter but gives a very creditable performance in the role — and to use his portraits as an integral part of the film. To this latter end the colour-process proves remarkably successful in bringing out the original hues. In spite of some crudities in both dialogue and action the film should, I think, not be missed.

NEW BOOKS

The Collected Stories of Isaac Babel (Methuen, 18s.).

ALTHOUGH some of Babel's stories appeared in this country in 1929 under the title of *Red Cavalry*, this is the first opportunity the English-speaking reader has had of seeing them all. The publication of the book under review (edited with a penetrating introduction by Lionel Trilling) was " hailed as a major literary event " both in America and Britain. It deserves the superlatives of praise which have been hurled at it.

Isaac Babel was a Jew brought up in the Odessa ghetto, who became a Bolshevik and rode with Budënny's Cossacks in the attack on Poland in 1920—the central event of his life. During the twenties he flourished, writing his short stories, ranking as an important literary figure ; later on, however, being a man of independent mind, he not unnaturally found his way into one of Stalin's concentration camps, where he died in about 1940. While the bulk of the stories concern the Polish campaign, there is also a selection which depicts, with magnificent down-to-earth humour, life in the ghetto of old Odessa—the Moldavanka.

Like Dostoevsky, he has an atmosphere (rather than style) which is completely individual and most difficult to analyse. He is a cross between Dylan Thomas and Maupassant with a pungent Jewish flavour, yet Russian. The thoughts trot along at a spanking pace ; the mind seems to be in perpetual high spirits, verging, indeed, on hysteria. Some of the stories are not even incidents, but slices of life illuminated by harshly bright light, as when one opens a shuttered ground-floor window at mid-day in Seville to be overwhelmed by the concentrated glaring life of the street. Magic touches even the degraded : " a drunken apprentice staggered to the gate and, casting his plane one way and his saw the other, collapsed on the ground, collapsed and started snoring in a world filled with golden flies and the blue lightning flashes of July." Or Babel can pump his enthusiasm into a description of a rainy day in Poland : " More rain fell. Dead mice floated along the roads. Autumn set its ambushes about our hearts, and trees like naked corpses set upright on their feet swayed at the crossroads." The landscapes are like the landscapes hiding in one's subconscious which only appear in dreams, but the

people are real, suffering, brutal.

In the stories of his childhood, Babel describes the weird Moldavanka society from the point of view of an amused member of it who knows he is going to escape. Most entertaining of all are the epic adventures of the great Jewish gangster Benya Krik, who wore " a chocolate jacket, cream pants, and raspberry boots." The " Red Cavalry " part of the book is dominated by the author's consciousness of his extraordinary position : a Jew serving in a regiment of Cossacks, traditionally the most brutally anti-semitic of all Russians. Here he is, a frail young man " with spectacles on his nose and autumn in his heart " plunging about on a thoroughbred horse ; fascinated by the beauty of the animal life of the Cossacks (which Nietzsche would so have loved) while deploring their brutality ; thanks to the effect on his mind of generations of Rabbi forefathers, unable to be more than an admiring outsider.

Casting his whimsical smile on Jew and Cossack, Bolshevik and Polish nobleman, Babel was one of the few benefits for which the world can thank the Bolshevik Revolution, to some extent counterbalancing the guilt men of his race bear for their sponsoring communism. It is good to hear that he is soon to be republished in Russia.

R.B.

Challenge to Venus by Charles Morgan (Macmillan, 15s.)

A HANDSOME, penniless, middle-class young Englishman staying for his holiday in an Italian town with an old English don — the don is a " character " of course — falls in love with the incredibly beautiful twenty-five-year-old widow of an Italian prince. In spite of one passionate night her noble blood rejects the notion of marriage and life in a small house near Lewes ; she therefore refuses to marry the handsome young Englishman.

That is the story, but what of the trimmings ? They are all there : " the valley with its tawny river spread out in the embrace of distant hills ", " the sunlit stillness of the almost empty piazza, the light, the air, the glow of Italy ", the Renaissance palazzo with a garden full of statues and fountains and an interior hung with ancient velvet and dark looking-glasses. Mr. Morgan has denied himself nothing. Fatherly old butlers, ironical old noblemen, worldly-wise old women, not to mention the heroine who looked like — yes — Botticelli's Venus and is compared with a high-spirited thoroughbred, " throng " the pages of this well-written, well-padded, novel. It has all the right ingredients : a little poetry, a little art, a

good deal of local colour and a whole company of ham actors and actresses to fill the well-worn roles.

Is the Englishman the barbarian from the north ? Is the Italian girl ages old, with something pagan, something pre-Christian about her ? " Where were you in B.C. 55 ?" For those with stomach for this sort of thing *Challenge to Venus* will do. It ambles on, restrained, suburban and harmless, for just the right number of pages to the expected, the unsurprising, end.

D.M.

The Puritan Tradition in English Life by John Marlowe (Cresset Press, 16s.)

WHAT, in Mr. Marlowe's words, " . . . transformed England from a small island kingdom into the centre of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen "? Puritanism, says the author. What, then, has led to the decline of England to the third-rate position she occupies in world affairs today ? The decline of Puritan influence, he replies.

The author has worked hard to justify this extraordinary thesis and has sought to enliven the reader's journey through 142 pages of tortuous argument by liberally sprinkling them with epigrammatic paradoxes, brittle if not brilliant.

Professor G. M. Trevelyan has defined puritanism as " the religion of all those who wished either to purify the usage of the Established Church from the taint of Papacy, or to worship separately by forms so purified." Thus, whatever it became later, Puritanism was religious in origin. It carried to its logical conclusion the revolt against the authority of the mediaeval church, extolling individual judgment and personal interpretation of the Bible as the divinely-inspired answer to all questions. But how to accept the authority of the Bible while rejecting that of the Church which gave it authority ? And how to reconcile such impossible contradictions as the free will inherent in the revolt of the individual against authority with pre-destination ? All attempts at reconciliation and synthesis have failed and confusion, compromise and anarchy have triumphed.

Mr. Marlowe's work is only in part devoted to the religious aspects of puritanism ; he is more concerned with its effect upon politics, the arts and social life, and the English character. He claims objectivity and to have observed the " splendour and grandeur " of puritanism as well as its misery. The reader may agree with him and with his conclusions — or he may finish the book convinced that there has been little of splendour and grandeur and much of misery in puritanism. He may see in puritanism that force which drove a breach

between England and the rest of Europe wider than any Channel, which has sought to stifle any upward surge of spirit within England and the achievement of noble ends by men of genius and energy. England must enter Europe and lead Europe — but it will not be puritanism which will take her there, but a new spirit at work within the minds and hearts of new men.

G.V.

See What I Mean (Mills & Boon, 3s. 6d.)

HAVE you ever experienced difficulty in making yourself understood on your continental holidays ? Have there been occasions when the time-honoured method of shouting louder and louder failed to overcome the invincible ignorance of the peasant ? Have your charades and dumb-play only confirmed the shopkeepers' suspicions concerning the insanity of all English tourists ? Have dictionaries and phrase-books proved useless because (*a*) you could not find the word or phrase you wanted and (*b*) you could not pronounce it when you found it ? If so, here is the solution to all your travel problems.

You set out armed with a copy of *See What I Mean.* At the slightest difficulty you look up the required word in the index, and turn to the page indicated, where you will find a neat little sketch of the article you desire. All you have to do is *point* — with further appropriate gestures if desired. No more frustrated English tourists unable to purchase safety-pins in Baghdad or napkins in Budapest. The publishers are to be congratulated upon their contribution to the easing of international tension.

A trial run with members of the family, however, foreshadowed difficulties and slight misunderstandings ahead. The idea was perfect ; its application less so. Some of the sketches exhibited more ambiguity than clarity, and their captions would prove of little use as they were, alas, printed in English only. It was surprising to find that pointing to a sketch of men sitting enveloped in clouds of billowing smoke did not mean " Please send for the fire-brigade ", but " Where is the smoke-room, please ?" See what I mean ?

I fear we shall have to continue to grapple with our vocabularies and irregular verbs, but in the long winter evenings, when we weary of looking at the snapshots taken on our last continental holiday, this little book may provide material for an original party game.

G.V.

BEIRUT

by DESMOND STEWART

BEIRUT is a restless city. By this I mean not only that its traffic is among the noisiest in the world, or that on a June night rest is difficult with the beat of a jazz-band below your window. Nor do I mean that the people of Beirut are forever working. What I mean is that Beirut is a city whose appeal is movement : it is a city whose children say in praise of it, " Twenty minutes, and you can leave Beirut, and be in Aley, a thousand metres up." Or the more fanciful, " You can swim in the sea at eleven, and be playing in the snow at half past." (Fanciful, because a small percentage of Beirutis would ever indulge in this race against health and the clock.) Beirut is no place for a rest cure. Failure politicians would find no Jamaican easing of the nerves in a Beirut hotel, or on a Beirut street. No consideration of Beirut, therefore, can ever divorce the city from the places you go to when you leave it : Hammana, in summer, below its cascaded ridge, above its pine-forests, the remote Cedars ; even the island of Rhodes is advertised as a suitable place for an excursion. On a humbler level, the restlessness of Beirut is revealed by its taxidrivers. Not by their way of driving, though that is always audacious ; and often tragic. Rather, by the most extraordinary habits of the drivers in the streets. You are walking (as calmly as you can contrive) down the main square, the Bourj, or Place of Martyrs, intending perhaps to buy a tube of toothpaste, or a packet of cigarettes. And all the way you are entreated by taxidrivers, or their assistants : " Sir, Tripoli ? " or " Damascus, *ya ustadh ?* " The same sales appeal is exerted on you as by the hawker of chicklets or jumping rubber crocodiles. The assumption must be—because no Beiruti would waste energy on nothing—that many people walking in the streets do not know their own minds, even at ten in the evening, and may, on the suggestion of the driver, suddenly decide, Yes, Tripoli is precisely where I want to be. I shall go there at once. I shall pay the half lira demanded of me. I shall leave Beirut. . . .

But if you stay in Beirut, if you resist the restless impulse to be off, how do you savour the city ? What is it like ?

BEIRUT

Unlike Rome, Beirut has no embarrassing extent of antiquities in its centre to distract the visitor from the present. Beirut is old, but no one (except a few foreigners) bothers about the past. There is a museum, but who visits it ? There is, near the museum, an attractive fragment of Hellenic temple, a few Corinthian pillars. But even they do not belong there ; they were put up there, recently, as an ornament to the city. Scholars repeat that Beirut was the site of the greatest school of Roman law in antiquity. No one cares. Like most eastern cities, Beirut knows to avoid the embalming of antiquarians, and to seek what may be sought, in the here and now.

The search depends on the seeker. There can be few tastes that are not catered for in this lively city, from water-ski-ing to Rock and Roll. There is no hatred of appetites : no disdain for the flesh. Puritanism, even if imported along with western artifacts, cannot put down very potent roots in this soil. The people are handsome, both men and women, and remind me at least of the Hellenic world which was buried under two thousand years, but which came alive again in the poetry of Constantine Cavafy, who died in 1933.

Although most of Cavafy's poetry* is evoked by Alexandria, the ghosts of Beirut are almost as frequent as the ghosts of Caesarion and Cleopatra. Beirut's memories are rarely heroic : a Grammarian is about the only hero to be mustered :

> Near the Beirut library, just on the right
> As you go in, we buried Lysias the Wise
> Grammarian.

It is not for its culture that Cavafy remembers Beirut : though in the Roman Empire, it had the biggest law-school.

> I would not stay in
> Alexandria, not I.
> But in the taverns
> And in the bordellos
> Of Beirut I wallow.
> In cheap debauchery
> Somehow I exist.

Cavafy, when not recording the heroism of the Hellenes, records the side of life which he sought, and it is a side of life that the

* All the quotations are, of course, from Professor John Mavrogordato's excellent translations : *The Poems of C. P. Cavafy*, Hogarth Press.

stranger can find in Beirut still, if he passes by the libraries and the universities, the bookshops and the cultural institutes. It is recognisably a room in Beirut that is described in the poem *The Afternoon Sun.*

> This room, how well I know it.
> Now they are rented, this one and the next
> As business offices. The whole house has become
> Offices for agents, and merchants, and Companies.
>
> Oh, how familiar it is, this room.
>
> Near the door, just here there was the sofa,
> And in front of it a Turkish carpet ;
> Close by the shelf with two yellow vases.
> On the right ; no, opposite, a wardrobe with a mirror.
> In the middle a table where he used to write ;
> And the three wicker chairs.

The room is made memorable to the poet for the experience he associates with it. So the love one associates with Beirut drives out any puritan objections to yellow vases ; the cosmopolitan name-plates on the offices, consulates, importers, exporters, mysterious *agences,* all add up to an environment that banishes remorse and whose ugliness—for offices are usually ugly—is wreathed round with the memory of desire. In the street the handsome people go towards the Bourj ; up the stairs come the rotund gentlemen who make money importing, or exporting, or arranging visas. This is one side of Beirut : a shabby, yet beautiful Mediterranean city that weaves itself into one's dreams.

But, someone may object, is there no beauty more orthodox than " sounds from the first poetry of our life—Like Music, at night, in the distance, that dies away " ?

Yes, Beirut has beauty in abundance : but confused beauty, in fragments, of varied kinds. It lacks the unified beauty of Damascus, or of Rome, most powerful of cities, where Julian, Papal and Fascist architecture are made into one by the *genius urbis.* Beirut is discordant and jangled. The scenery behind it is as exquisite as southern Italy or Greece : a rapidly rising screen of mountains, where at night gleam the eyes of a thousand tigers, beyond, above, the hill villages, irresistibly attractive. But by day, in the city itself, it

is hard to find one place of beauty which is not placed next to something ugly, or is not violated by a building of a discordant style. Basically, the 19th Century stone houses with red roofs form the Beirut which the stranger sees from the deck of the *Esperia* as he approaches the harbour. (Just as from a plane no architecture is noted, only the astonishing vividness of the red sand and the green pinetrees.) But this beautiful vernacular style of building is vanishing, with its delicate balconies and intricate irregular arched windows, and in its stead has arrived the blank anonymous featureless concrete of the west. The Bourj still retains the chaos of the east ; though even it is islanded by cinemas recalling London suburbs. But streets still wind, with sudden glimpses of trees, with small cafes set haphazard, under the shadows of tall buildings, with mysterious upstairs rooms with wrought iron balconies and inside, vast chandeliers lighting up distempered walls. If we wait long enough, someone will come to the window. We can wait, no one minds.

But the post office is the centre of a concrete nexus which grows bigger and bigger. Marble gives glamour, but no individuality to these essentially featureless blocks : which house bureaucrats conveniently but do not delight the soul. Beirut is a city of banks : the money-changers who can legally sell or buy any amount of any currency in the world are housed in fluorescent-lighted cubby-holes or featureless temples of concrete with wrought iron gates. Did a bank ever delight the soul ? The *Banco del Santo Spirito* only delights in name. This profitable featurelessness extends to the whole area of *Ras Beirut*, the southern quarter of the city, where blocks of flats shoot up while your back is turned. Some of the latest are being slab-painted with violent colours, like a house created by a child : the colours are certainly preferable to the khaki of the 'forties. But Ras Beirut is essentially anonymous : one street is like the next : a foreign influence, predominantly American, gives prosperity rather than character. The streets are numbered, as well as named. (The British Embassy, for example, is in Rue 69.) The names change often ; and the Rue Georges Picot is now Sharia Omar Daouq. To remember which street your friend lives in you have to remember which pharmacy is on the corner, and all the pharmacies are much alike. If you are the kind of person who likes to know where he is, you rush down to Zeitouné, the quarter on the sea, which jostles sponge-fishermen with wealthy diners, dancing girls with foreign missionaries. Bathing establishments " of the

poorer sort " limp into the sea on stilts, long stockings of sea-weed nibbled at by fish. The St. George Hotel looks Chinese, the Normandy as though its stolidity may soon wither into something almost picturesque. Anzac Harry has the one streetside café in Beirut. He claims to be 82, and he pushes into your hand a little card which advertises " Dinkum Food As Mother Made It ". But if you want French, not Dinkum cooking, you can go to the Lucullus which in summer is open to the night breeze, on a level with the tops of the palm trees in the Avenue des Français. After dinner you can look at the monument to the French soldiers of the first war (unless it is being guarded by the police) which in its own way is as much a curiosity as anything else in this city : a third of a circle of indifferent pillars with much frozen iron work, and bronze letters bleeding greenly onto the masonry. I have mentioned the Lucullus : this is perhaps invidious. There are numerous restaurants which compare favourably with those anywhere in the world. The food reflects the east, or the west. The wine reflects a marriage between both : since the Lebanese wines of Ksara and Musar are the fusion of Jesuit care, French viniculture and the vine and soil of Lebanon (believed by many to be the birthplace of Dionysus, and therefore of western culture in its deepest self.) But more typical of Beirut are the cafés by the sea, where overlooking the waves you are served the aniseed-flavoured araq of Zahlé and a huge *mezzé* of side dishes, which in the generous fashion of the east astonish you by their prodigality.

East or west—to which does Beirut belong ? In a sense it belongs to both. Or rather, it takes from both. It is on the Mediterranean, and is the heir of the Phoenicia whose invention of alphabetic symbols was the foundation of Europe ; so it has given to the west, too. On the other hand, it has given to the east : no part of the Arab world has played a more active or more constructive role in the liberation of Arabism from foreign domination. It is true that Lebanon played little active role in the revolt of the first world war. But her revolt was intellectual and spiritual, and the more effective, perhaps, for being that. Her martyrs were martyrs in the truest sense of the word, standing up for Arab freedom when the Ottoman empire had the power and the will to hang whoever it wished, when it wished. The language of the Lebanese is not French, nor English, however well they speak those tongues : it is Arabic, and the Lebanese contribution to Arabic literature is substantial. Some people have tried to use the fact that half the Lebanese are Christians

for political purposes. They have claimed that this aligns half the Lebanese with the west. This is as superficial as it is dangerous : for Christianity is as much an eastern as a western faith. In fact, Europe has adopted a religion which started near Lebanon and in a deeper sense, the asking of the question, East or West ? is stupid, like asking of a man, legs or head ? Man is both legs and head ; and to divide civilisation into east and west is perhaps irrelevant. The great centre from which European civilization sprang was the Mediterranean : and the civilisation of Islam has equally sprung from the countries encircling this inland sea. Thus Lebanon, by being both of the west and east, taking from both, and giving to both, is not freakish : rather, she is loyal to a unity which the west has often tended to forget.

Beirut is the capital city of the Lebanon, and in it live more than a third of the Republic's people : in it, a parliament meets, and cabinets are born and die. But Beirut is also the first city of the Levant : and the word Levant has ceased to mean the land of the rising sun, and has acquired a connotation, an aroma of its own. This connotation has not been pleasant : it is used to suggest rootlessness, obsession with commerce to the exclusion of higher values, and other " non-British " qualities. But I have wondered, since living in Lebanon, whether this deformation of a beautiful word is not an obscure form of propaganda, formed on Anglo-Saxon lips ? Is it perhaps the intelligence of the Levantine which the foreigner has feared, and which he has attempted to smear by pretending that this Beiruti intelligence is not pure (like his own) but is entirely devoted to self-interest (unlike his own actions, missionary, police, or otherwise) ? Certainly Beirut has not found as many enthusiasts among western " Arabists " as have the Beduin of the desert. The trusting may believe that this is because the Beduin are nobler. better, purer—or any other comparative you like to use. The events of November 1956 must have diminished the ranks of the " trusting ". If it has, and if those who trusted have begun to distrust, a first exercise might be to enquire why the people of Beirut (and for that matter, Aleppo and Damascus too) have been less pleasing to empire-building litterateurs than the *Beni Asad* or the *Beni Shamar*. An answer which seems to me possible is that while the Beduin are simple and easily bluffed, the Levantines have an educational tradition far older than that of England or France ; they also have an inherited agility of mind, which enables them to see through a trick even as the trickster thinks

it up. Hence perhaps the insidious attacks made on Palestinians by those English people with Jordanian experience. "The real Jordanian is a wonderful person ; but as for the tricky Palestinians . . . ." Certainly I should advise any foreigner who wishes to *patronise* to keep away from Beirut. Only those who are prepared for friendship on a basis of equality, only those who do not suspect and dislike the clever, can expect to be happy here. If they wish to find people on to whom they can project an outworn class-relationship (duplicating with Beduin what they once felt for "fags" at school, or the village) they would be wiser to go elsewhere. Quite where, I am not sure : as there seems to be a world revolt against the values of the Sahib and the Memsahib. But Beirut is certainly not the place. A Beiruti bellhop can spot a Memsahib a block away. He will rook her silly. She will leave the airport aggrieved and saddened. But to their friends, Beirut friends are as sincere as could be desired. Such visitors will leave Beirut with real regret, and the determination to return, as soon as possible. Even if the nights were noisy ; even if the jazz-band rattled till the sun rose over Aley, a thousand metres up.

Next month in
THE EUROPEAN
THE CHALLENGE AND MEANING
OF MODERN MARXISM
by
D. V. CHAPLIN

LETTERS

KINGSLEY MARTIN

To the Editor of *The European*

Sir,

Might I say how admirable I found Michael Harald's article, out-critiquing Critic. I can only hope that the Editor of the *New Statesman* will devote the column in his " Diary " which should be headed *Europe* to an answer to Mr. Harald's Anti-Fabianung.

The New Statesman seems to me to be every bit as dangerous to contemporary thought, political, economic and literary, as the maiden lady of Langham Place ; it has become an Anti-Establishment Establishment as rheumatic as the original Establishment it set out to destroy. When the new *Universities and Left Review* spares its space for a mild rebuke to one who would once have been their oracle, something must be wrong in Great Turnstile ; perhaps (happy thought) Kingsley Martin will emigrate and start afresh in one of our (until now) contented dominions ? Perhaps he is feeling the pace a bit, having once had the monopoly of choleric ill-temper, and now being surrounded by Angry Young Men ?

In a recent issue of the *NSN* he published an inaccurate and mislieading article on conditions in the Union of South Africa ; I met a great many South Africans, white, coloured and negro while broadcasting there for the SABC, and wrote in (with a dozen or so of my friends) to correct him, and mildly reproved him. He has ignored our letters to date and seems likely to do so. . . but then perhaps he is no longer willing to admit that he knows nothing about a particular subject (c.f. the Gold Standard !) ; or maybe he is now in the morbid state of being unaware that there is anything to know.

Yours, etc.,

ROY MACGREGOR-HASTIE.

ISRAEL AND ZIONISM

To the Editor of *The European.*

Sir,

Mr. Desmond Stewart's suggestion, in your March issue, that the remnant of European Jewry should have been settled in Canada and Australia, shows that he misses the whole point of Zionism. Neither of these countries were promised to Mr. Jon Kimche's ancestors : Israel was, according to the Old Testament. That is why Dutch Guiana (the Dutch and the Frisians have long been good friends

to both Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews in time of trouble) and Kenya were both declined with thanks.

In any case, if these unfortunates who had left European bigotry (Slavic, Hungarian, Lithuanian and Rumanian as well as German) and ghettoes behind them had settled in other Christian countries, they would have congregated in cities like Toronto and Sydney as they did in London, Leeds, Amsterdam, Kiev, Vienna, Warsaw, Budapest, Dublin, Paris, Berlin, etc., at various times.

It was after the early Zionists had raised the standard of living in what was then called Palestine that the Arabs came swarming in. As for Mr. Stewart's objection that Israel is a European enclave in the Levant, how long will this be so in view of the fact that the western Jews coming into Israel in recent years have been outnumbered by those who were born among Arabs, Berbers, Kurds, Iranians and Dravidians ?

As for the " broken pledge in the Balfour Declaration itself ", surely the Arabs have only themselves to blame for what happened after the English withdrew ? They, after all, were the aggressors.— not the Jews, who drove back people who, with English help and connivance, tried to push them into the sea. I do not say that all the right is on one side : indeed, what fairminded person can ? That, in fact, is the tragedy of this quarrel between predominantly Semitic peoples whose present enmity is *not*, as some political pundits assert, " age-old " nor " traditional ". There is room in the Levant for Moslems, Jews and Eastern Christians, as there will be in Northern Africa for Moslems and Europeans when a United Europe restores that region's former fertility.

Yours, etc.,
PATRICK J. N. BURY.

Carrowmore,
Aughrim,
Co. Galway.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1 Year £1 10s. 6 months 15s. Single copies 2s. 9d. (including post)

U.S.A.

1 Year $4.50 6 months $2.25

Cheques should be made payable to THE EUROPEAN and sent to THE EUROPEAN, 302 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W.1.

Contributions, which must please be typed on thin paper, can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.