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SIXPENCE

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THE BABY IS PASSED BACK

THE unanimity of the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine is the common denominator of defeat. The Committee—and who can blame it?—has found no royal road to the solution of the twin problems remitted to it—the distress of the Jews in Europe and the position of Jews in Palestine. As an immediate measure of relief it makes a recommendation which the British Government should immediately and unequivocally accept: that arrangements should be made for the immediate immigration into Palestine of 100,000 Jews from Europe. This will at least empty of their present pitiful occupants the “displaced” Jewish camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy. But the figure of Jews likely to desire to emigrate from Europe is put by the Committee at 500,000 out of a surviving total of slightly over four millions, of whom a tenth are classed as “refugee” and “displaced.” The Committee has little hope that homes outside Europe can be found for all, or indeed many, of these would-be emigrants. It calls, therefore, on all the Governments concerned to assist the Jews to rebuild their shattered communities on the Continent by enforcing guaranteed civil liberties and equal rights, and by enacting restitution of confiscated Jewish property.

As for the future of Palestine itself, the Committee takes refuge in an affirmation that its peculiar status as a Holy Land “dedicates it to the precepts and practices of the Brotherhood of Man, not those of narrow nationalism.” The Jewish National Home is to remain in Palestine, but Palestine is to be neither a Jewish State nor an Arab State. With its present explosive mixture of antagonistic nationalities, it is not ripe for independence; and, pending transfer to United Nations’ trusteeship, Britain must continue to exercise the Mandate conferred by the old League. The immediate grant of 100,000 entry certificates does not represent finality; but the Committee confesses its inability to “construct a yardstick” for future annual immigration of Jews. The Mandatory Power must do its best to interpret its obligation to “facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the popula-

tion are not prejudiced.” Rejecting partition, the Committee recognises that the absorptive capacity of Palestine will depend on raising the living standard of Jews and Arabs alike. It recommends that the Land Transfer Regulations of 1940, which prohibited or restricted sales of land to non-Arab purchasers in certain zones, should be repealed as “discriminatory”; and it gives a vague blessing to plans for large-scale agricultural and industrial development in Palestine, provided there is a guarantee, not merely of peace in Palestine, but of the willing co-operation of adjacent Arab States. But surely, since it is agreed that the future of both Jews and Arabs depends on such development, the Mandatory Power must face and overcome political difficulties. Otherwise we are caught in a vicious circle, saying that there can be no peace without economic betterment and no betterment without peace.

Such action would, of course, involve the assumption by the United States of a share, at least financial, in the responsibility for Palestinian development, and there is no hint in the Committee’s Report of American willingness to shoulder any part of the burden. The baby, in fact, is passed neatly back to Britain. The British Government is left in the invidious position of having to decide how far to implement a Report which does not satisfy Zionist aspirations but which will cause among the Arab community serious apprehension lest the door, which they thought had been closed by the White Paper of 1939, is being reopened to unlimited Jewish immigration. That the 100,000 immediate entry certificates should be granted, we have no doubt. This is required in the name of common humanity. In his preliminary statement in the House on Wednesday, the Prime Minister seemed to suggest that action by way of immediate relief could not be undertaken in isolation from the rest of the Report’s recommendations, and large-scale entries of Jews to Palestine in 1946 must be dependent both on the result of discussions he was initiating with the U.S.A. and on the disbandment of all illegal Palestinian “armies.” This is cold comfort for the unhappy refugees in Europe; but we agree with Mr. Attlee that the task of finding a

long-term solution to a problem which has baffled the Committee is not one which the British Government can fairly be asked, as the Committee asks it, to undertake unaided. The sooner Palestine passes into *Uno* Trusteeship, the better.

Progress at Paris

So far, the four Foreign Ministers’ voyage on the stormy seas of treaty-making has been attended, contrary to expectations, by few incidents. The ship is still far from port; but, in so far as he has his hand on the helm, Mr. Molotov appears to be bent on steering it away from the obvious rocks. Cynics have suggested that his motive may be a desire to give the French Right no excuse for charging Russian Communism with wrecking tactics until the referendum on the French Constitution is over. However that may be, the Russian delegate has been more conciliatory than was expected. He agreed without demur that France should take part in the discussion of the Balkan treaties; he did not maintain the previous claim of the Soviet Union to one-third of the Italian fleet; he now proposes, not sole Soviet trusteeship over Tripolitania, but simply that there should be a Soviet administrator (with an Italian deputy) under an international trusteeship, with an advisory commission representing the other three Powers; and, subject to “certain considerations,” not yet defined, he offered no objection in principle to the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece. All this, of course, does not mean that the Conference is yet on the way to reaching a comprehensive agreement. Apart from the fact that the Soviet delegation declares that it is not yet ready to discuss the problem of Austria and shows no signs of eagerness to join in discussions of the long-term future of Germany, there is still plenty of room for dispute over the Italian Treaty—notably the Trieste frontier, for which the four “experts” have proposed four lines. Moreover, the fate of the Italian colonies has yet to be settled. Mr. Bevin, stressing British pledges to the Senussi, proposes that independence should be accorded to a United Libya, embracing both Cyrenaica and Trinoli-

A RARE POET

A Map of Verona. By HENRY REED. *Cape.* 3s. 6d.

Mr. Henry Reed is a rare poet, in more senses than one. He writes very little; that little is highly finished and exactly chosen. The first poem of his that hooked my attention was a parody sent in for a NEW STATESMAN AND NATION competition during the blitz. "As we get older we do not get any younger . . ." Sentence followed sentence with a shining aptitude. No doubt the reader will remember *Chard Whilow* or will have encountered it since in anthologies: here was the latter-day Eliot in person, with surprised eyebrows, caught, let us say, by the mild torture of the barber's chair. Such parody startles and enhances. It displaced in my mind several poems I was trying at the time to carry round—more serious poems, but then the fun of *Chard Whilow* was never a shade out. Obviously Mr. Reed, or "H.R." as he was on that occasion, had forgotten more than we had ever learnt from Eliot, and if there was another side to this mockery, his work should turn out remarkably.

It did. The next poem that came my way was the first of three pieces collected now under the title *Lessons of the War*. They weren't at all the kind of lessons one is supposed to learn; not rhetorical, not even bored; ironically protesting rather, for the inattention of the conscript listening to his instructor picked its way easily out from the reiterated official phrases. *Naming of Parts* transfers the intonation of the drill-hall to the Spring flowering beyond the window.

To-day we have naming of parts. Yesterday We had daily cleaning. And to-morrow morning, We shall have what to do after firing. But to-day, To-day we have naming of parts. Japonica Glistens like coral in all of the neighbouring gardens, And to-day we have naming of parts.

This is the lower sling swivel. And this is the upper sling swivel, whose use you will see, When you are given your slings. And this is the piling swivel, Which in your case you have not got. The branches Hold in the gardens their silent, eloquent gestures, Which in our case we have not got . . .

So, by ambiguities that in later verses raise the *double entendre* to the plane of metaphysical wit, the Small Arms Manual—deadly to human beings long before they reach the battlefield—is made to yield its lyric of sex and Spring. The same situation inspires the two companion pieces,

Judging Distances and Unarmed Combat which except for the slumping last verse of all juggle feelingly as does no English poetry I can think of since Marvell's. Circumstances, one imagines, developed in Mr. Reed this curious high balance (what a poor soldier he must have made!) but the earlier and later poems in *A Map of Verona* show the attitude as ingrained. Oblique and candid, divulging yet holding back, he offers us the landscapes, emotions, situations we know while keeping perhaps a finer interpretation in reserve. (The world has proffered a war, a Small Arms Manual.) Verona, "whence my dreams and slightest movements rise," pored over in maps and one day to be visited; the lovers, lying forehead to forehead, abstracted from time like the Eastern landscape, without shadow or reflection, hung overhead; the lately discovered wall round which two gardens, two lives, intertwine; the fugitive from nightmare in the autumn of 1939; the harbour towns where sailors loiter, separate, and grow restless for the coming voyage that shall justify all others; the shadow of King Mark rising in sunlit ruins at Tintagel; Philoctetes nursing his wound, stretching out for his bow—these are the situations, some more immediate than others, upon which Mr. Reed lays his stress and pattern. It is a very particular pattern, finely articulated in a phrase—

But you can cage the wood.
You can throw up fences, as round a recalcitrant heart
Spring up remonstrances . . .

The hesitation before a memory,
The stumbling thought by which we recognise
That pain is already here, but is still beyond our feeling. . . .

The blackened sand
Cracks into arid chasms and fissures, crumbles,
The vegetation shrivels, seeds from the chattering pod
Fall in the dust.

—and the longer passage, the whole poem, rises to a calm eloquence. Tintagel:

Tristram's tower
Rises and falls and rises.

The ruin leads your thoughts
Past the moments of darkness when silence fell
over the hall,
And the only sound rising was the sound of
frightened breathing,
Past the lies and pursuits, the arraignments and
accusations,
To the perpetually recurring story,

The doorway open, either in the soft green weather,
The gulls seen over the purple-headed sea,
the cliffs,
Or open in mist,
The gulls heard over and under you in the greyness—
This time or that, but always the doorway open,
And through the broken stones the forbidden courtyard,
And under the archway, ever, ever,
Bold in clear weather or halting through the mist,
The eternal reappearance of Iseult . . .

Even a casual reader will distinguish there—in the measured beauty of diction, the lapping rhythms, the pivotal clauses (as elsewhere in a certain secrecy and primness)—not the imitator indeed, but the inheritor from T. S. Eliot. The difference between them is that the younger poet, hardly less mature and assured in his beginning, has turned the corner of satire sooner; one parody, the equivocal war poems, and he's off. Where he will go to one can't tell, but all the hints seem to be here of larger work. Already Mr. Reed has a mastery of the blank-verse line as extended by Eliot. He is drawn to legend (his Philoctetes is as beautifully distinct as his Tristram). He slips the handcuffs of the present with the ease of a Houdini. Well then! . . . In the meantime, buy, borrow, read, read again this remarkable first volume.

G. W. STONIER

THE LOAN

The Washington Loan Agreements: A Critical Study of American Foreign Economic Policy. By the Rt. Hon. L. S. AMERY, C.H. *Macdonald.* 8s. 6d.

Mr. Amery, as a devout believer in empire economic unity, the sterling area, and a managed monetary and fiscal policy, is naturally all out against the conditions attached to the American Loan and the Trade Proposals to which the British Government was forced to express its adherence before the American negotiators would agree to commend the Loan to Congress. His arguments, as set forth in this book, follow familiar lines: indeed, they are very largely the same arguments as were put forward in this journal before Parliament accepted the Loan conditions. The only serious difference is that Mr. Amery attaches much more importance to tariffs in general and empire preferences in particular, and proportionately less to State trading through bulk sale and purchase arrange-

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