Britain and the Dulles Doctrine

So the Chinese have decided to keep the United Nations disunited! Just when everyone was hoping that the row between America and her allies could be conveniently forgotten, Chou En-lai has revived it. The Chinese Note—nicely timed to arrive just before the General Assembly began its Session last Tuesday—politely rejects the American plan for a two-sided conference and repeats almost verbatim the Round Table argument which even a relaxation of tension, no one should suppose that Chou En-lai has now revived it. The Chinese Note—nicely timed to arrive just before the General Assembly began its Session last Tuesday—politely rejects the American plan for a two-sided conference and repeats almost verbatim the Round Table argument which even a relaxation of tension, no one should suppose that Chou En-lai has now decided to make as much trouble as possible between the U.S. and her allies.

Mr. Dulles’s intransigence has put all those who really want peace in the Pacific in an awkward dilemma. We urge the need for a conference, but we should be wise to assume in advance that, even if we get our way, the conference will achieve nothing; and an old diplomatic maxim tells us that a conference which fails is worse than no conference at all. In this case, however, things have got to get worse before they get better. There is only one way to shift the Americans from their present policies and persuade them to return to the more moderate doctrine of Mr. Truman, which Mr. Adlai Stevenson reaffirmed at Chicago this week. That way is to prove conclusively at the conference table that, if they adhere to the Dulles doctrine, they must “go it alone.” Even if a Korean Peace Conference can achieve nothing, it must be the aim of British policy to ensure that it takes place in order to bring this lesson home to the U.S.

But are Sir Winston Churchill and Mr. Eden—let alone Lord Salisbury—prepared to submit Anglo-American relations to this kind of strain? The omens are not auspicious. As yet, there is no sign of any British opposition to American policies in Indo-China; and, at the United Nations last Tuesday, Sir Gladwyn Jebb made a further concession by supporting the proposal that the issue of Chinese recognition should be postponed till 1954. It is right and proper that we should do everything to avoid unnecessary conflicts with the U.S. But it is sheer irresponsibility to permit Mr. Dulles to count on our support for a near-war strategy which will be overwhelmingly rejected by public opinion when its consequences begin to be seen.

Sooner or later the Dulles doctrine must be challenged by America’s allies. The sooner and the more public that challenge, the better the prospects for peace.

The End of the Boom

The sharp decline in Wall Street stocks continues—since January they have dropped more than fifteen per cent.—and it is being taken as an omen of an approaching “shakeout” or “little recession” in the U.S. economy, especially as it is accompanied by a steady fall in farm prices and in sales of steel, machine tools, farm machinery and used cars. Other industries, too,
tall and broad, leaped forward and took him, awkwardly but effectively. Pougoul was angry. "Your trouble is pride," he shouted. "You must learn humility and patience."

"And efficiency," Guy went on to mix gin with pastis as an experiment.

"I have been telephoning about you," said Betty.

"No one's to blame, sugar. It's just the way we are," drewled Lou.

Hardwick said, "Your two propositions, both of them, Jack, are demonstrably false.

Roxane touched Jack's arm. "Here is your favourite wine. See—the bottle is still half full. Drink some. Be comfortable. Perhaps there is not much time to be comfortable." Jack tasted the wine and looked again at the valley. The telephone ringing sharply in the house made him glance up at Roxane.

She shook her head. "Not quite yet. You've a little longer. Just like the rest of us. The wine is good, isn't it." Then she turned to the others.

"Have any of you people realised that it's the Fourteenth of July today? There'll be fireworks in the town. Within the hour."

Vernon Johnson

The Arts and Entertainment

Matthew Smith

Matthew Smith at his best is a painter of great authority. Easily the most important English painter of his generation, he rivals the older Sickert or John (whose early greatness is now overlooked) in professional thought and potential. The element of surrealism is as utterly remote from this Fauve realist as are the structural preoccupations of the Cubists, or of their still more abstract brothers. Not that structure, as is occasionally asserted, is weak in Smith. He draws with colour, with a gigantic smudge or a sensuous weaving back and forth of the loaded brush—and we feel the density, weight and contour of his pears, his red Provencal hillsides, his model's thigh or belly. In fact, it is this very breadth, in the controlled gust of his calligraphic brush that Matthew Smith's failures materialise, and when they do. The breadth is sometimes broad—but empty. The very voluminosity of the forms—so hard for most to achieve at all—sometimes decomposes into vacuous loopings of coloured lines.

The realism of Matthew Smith is that of the observer. Like Matisse, but unlike Picasso, Matthew Smith paints always (one can surely surmise?) from the subject direct. He does not invent either his objects themselves or the positions in which they appear in relation to one another. What arranging there is, is done by the painter before he begins—stepping carefully about under the olives, finding the view, the exact grouping of vision which compiles the hillside there before him into a potential Matthew Smith. Or showing apples, pears, jars of roses about across the table top in the studio.

Once all these things have been methodically determined, what distortion there is consists only of a slight pulling about of profiles or big planes—jug profiles lurch and stretch beautifully. The rhythm accords with the wall or a curtain; table tops tip up a bit. And the protruding bulges of rotund forms, whether breasts or peaches, are actually extended by a flattening, sideways-and-downwards sort of brushstroke, often extending from fat outline to fat outline. And from this it follows that his typical design is a fluid rather than a rigid scheme, composed of curves and arabesques rather than straight lines, right-angled or rectilinear volumes. Nor is he successful when he occasionally tries out the latter sort. There are virtually no straight horizontals and verticals in his works. But that is a mark in his favour from the standpoint of the present moment. The rectilinear has triumphed universally of late. With a painting such as Couleur de Rose, number 24, a baroque composer like Matthew Smith brings a needed relief to eyes surfeited on the geometric.

Patrick Heron

This is not to overpraise him. I am not suggesting that he compares with Matisse himself. His idiom is altogether less daring, inventive or expressive than that of Matisse. Matthew Smith's problems have remained those of early Fauvism. Indeed in certain respects he is even more "old fashioned" than that—since he has never tired of that plastic modelling of forms which the flatter images of the mature Matisse "superseded". Smith's image of jug, olive tree or voluptuous body are nearly always modelled, to the same degree of illusionistic rotundity as were the forms of Cézanne in about 1885, for instance. But the question of his up-to-dateness, either now or in 1920, is of secondary importance when we are in the position of being able to survey the greater part of the fruits of this painter's career. Today at the Tate what we contemplate with so much reward is the very personal statement of a remarkably mature, and a powerful integrated artistic personality. With Matthew Smith the means of expression are as articulate and fluent as those of any British painter since Constable; and they are perfectly adjusted to his ends—which are not strange, or ambitious, or grandiose, but humble and in the most exciting sense, materialistic—concerned to praise the actual and the everyday.

Therefore his dahlias are real; their voluptuous depths of almost blackish crimson are the smoky explosions that actually, at this very moment, are giving cottage gardens their one yearly hint of the tropical. His nudes are not dream-figures; but women of the softer, rounder kind, undressed: one of them, is demonstrably the means of expression are as articulate and fluent as those of any British painter since Constable; and they are perfectly adjusted to his ends—which are not strange, or ambitious, or grandiose, but humble and in the most exciting sense, materialistic—concerned to praise the actual and the everyday.

Dwight T. Elmore

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amorous and savouring the moment of being alone with his delicious toy. And then the interruptions! In his lechery and his irradiated impatience alike Mr. Wiith was excellent. Miss Mal Zetterling seems to me to have greatly improved as an actress; but, alas, that doesn’t make her a Nora. Temporariously, she is a romantic actress who must make her effects by the charm of a personality shot through with a streak of sadness.

Nora calls for a different kind of acting, for character acting in fact, and Miss Zetterling does not yet command this.

Mr. Peter Ashmore’s production was sensitive and lively, but small sense of the weight and velocity of the scenes, but a production can’t be accounted a success if it fails at the big moments. The tarrantella scene, a brilliantly dramatic and effective climax to the second act, went quite wrong; it was an attempt to found her up her trunks — introduces just the wrong kind of realism at the very moment when truth itself is in a precarious balance.

T. C. Worsley

THE MOVIES

"Belissima," at the Continental

"Laughing Anne," at the Leicester Square Theatre

"The Moment of Truth," at the Academy

Assistant to Jean Renoir in France in the Thirties, and a distinguished stage director for several years in his own country, Luchino Visconti made his first film in 1943. His second, La Terra Trema, a long, meditative and sombre study of Sicilian fishermen, is among the best half-dozen films of the last five years, but it has hardly been seen outside Italy.

Belissima, his latest, tells of a contest organised by a film company in Rome to find a seven-year-old girl for its new production. Outside the Cinecitta studios, hundreds of eager gesticulating mothers arrive with their little prodigies, more innocent and exuberant than Belissima (Anna Magnani), with her subdued, gravely charming daughter. Determined for her child to win, overjoyed when after fling a poem, she is selected as a finalist, the mother plunges herself into a hectic, aimless world. Her husband, furious at the neglect of his home and the child, his evident exhaustion, beats her soundly, but the implacable Maddalena obtains a screen test for her bewildered Maria, at theayer which the sly, broken down and weeping hyperbolically. Director and assistants are convulsed with laughter at the over-painted little creature, her hair hideously bobbed and damped, soiled, smeared with make-up, Maddalena, confronted with this pathetic and desperate image and the mockery it provides, is overcome with remorse. She refuses a contract for Maria when the director decides that, after all, this is the film he wants.

The impossibility for irony, hard impressionistic observation and atmosphere that the subject (developed from a story by Zavattini) offers, is brilliantly seized. Visconti fills in his scenes with the istic observation and atmosphere that the subject (developed from a story by Zavattini) offers, is brilliantly seized. Visconti fills in his scenes with the

Radio Notes

Home Service and Light Programme plays, plays, that are not adaptations from the stage or from novels, but written directly for broadcasting; it is here, surely, that the BBC is at its weakest. It is the Corporation’s. One knows what one would like to hear: intelligent entertainment at an adult level; the radio equivalent, let’s say, of stage-play. Plays, as a rule, written by Dorothy and Campbell Christie. And, having said this, one realises the enormity of the demand. Aren’t such plays exactly those which are most lacking in the West End theatre itself? The B.B.C. is at its weakest. I have a general poverty. This being so, when a new play for broadcasting emerges that does deal with some adequacy with a real problem, one is almost bound to over-praise it.

Mr. John D. Stewart’s Leviathan with a Hook seemed to me just such a play. It came from Northern Ireland. Mr. Stewart imagines a remote fishing-community in an unnamed country. The fish have gone, and when a monster is sighted in the bay all the villagers know why. But, as the Government scientists know, the fish would have done in any case, for the sea-bed has shifted, and the monster is harmless. For the villagers the monster becomes the symbol of their fate and of their neglect by Government; for the Government it becomes a convenient tool by which to attempt to lever the fishermen away from the sea and to find a new occupation. The fishermen are stubborn in their superstition, the Government is caught out lying; the play ends in the solemn farce of the innocent and dying monster, which has strayed from its normal tropical home and is now feeding on the villagers. The sea-monster seems to me to have quite frit; too many issues were raised. Yet the subjects were real, and they were very skilfully dramatised: Mr. Stewart was inventing all the time, and some of the episodes were most exciting. Mr. John Gibson’s production seemed to me for the most part admirable, the acting was rather less so.

This problem of the play written for broadcasting presses less hard on the Third. For one thing, the distinctions between the future and the radio play are much less sharply drawn, as was seen in Mr. Henry Reed’s most entertaining programme A Very Great Man Indeed. Mr. Reed was illustrating the difficulties of writing the biographies of the recently dead. He was, with the evocative name of Herbert Reeve, is engaged on the life of Richard Shewin, “the poet’s novelist,” whose work, as quotation itself, worn in the end of his book. The text was strongly influenced by Mr. Graham Greene as at the beginning it had been by Henry James. Mr. Reeve visited friends, relations, executors; but where shall truth be found? It was extremely good fun, with one splendidly funny romantic character, the novelist’s brother, wonderfully played by Mr. Carleton Hobbs.

The Third Programme discussion on the nature of Dickensian dramatic verse was speaking between Dr. Bertram Joseph and Mr. Franklyn Kelsey. With Good Accent and Good Discretion, seemed to me to perform rather less than it promised. The programme upon which Mr. Kelsey approached the subject from contemporary works on rhetoric, and Mr. Kelsey illustrated his theories with passages from Shakespeare and Marlowe. I am bound to say, in all honesty, that the programme’ s making from strong, they amount to the same thing—that apart from an occasional lengthening of the word and a lowering or raising of pitch, Mr. Kelsey’s renderings didn’t seem to me to differ from those generally given by good modern Shakespearean actors such as Mr. Wolf. Mr. Kelsey, I thought, was merely using his voice as any actor playing in heroic drama or poetic tragedy should.

William Salter