

MRA INFORMATION SERVICE

'Probably the most disturbing book since *Darkest England*...'—
see back page

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'THE PUBLIC STRAIGHTENS ITS BACK'

*From the introduction to an illustrated booklet published this week by the Trustees of the Westminster Theatre**

THE theatre-going public has been bending over the kitchen sink for some time. Now it is straightening its aching back, and looking for the exit door from the sordid bed-sitters, with their confused and confusing inmates. Adultery and perversion are losing their charm—if they ever had any—and dirt is as disagreeable in the theatre as in the drains, and more out of place.

In London, the theatre of the inane is always with us, sometimes gay, sometimes entertaining, always innocuous. The theatre of the absurd pursues its puzzled and pessimistic path. The National Theatre will follow its own star and will produce the great national classics.

Meanwhile the theatre of ideas is entering a new phase. This theatre of ideas has long been socially conscious. From Ibsen, Shaw and Galsworthy to Brecht and Wesker, the theatre has rightly spoken on the burning issues of human society. But the emphasis has been on diagnosing the disease, on exposing the evil, on destroying hypocrisy and exploitation, or on the revolt against authority. Sometimes this only increases the hatred, the class war, the bitterness, the fear, which create even greater problems than those such plays set out to expose.

Without landmarks

Too much modern theatre creates a world without landmarks, where man is an animal and his ultimate fate, like Brecht's Baal, is to crawl off into the woods to die. It is an uninviting prospect. And it is boring to go on chewing the cud of the problems we know already.

We do not need to accept the shallow worship of a theatre where only the negative is real, only the dirty is true, only bitterness is human, and only the deprived are free. Why should plays in favour of pessimism, class war or promiscuity be called art, and plays in

favour of faith and decency be called propaganda? The public is sick of depressing diagnosis—they want a theatre of humanity and hope.

Can there be a theatre of ideas which answers the great questions of our time? Can there be plays that send you out of the theatre with more courage and zest for life than you came in with? Which entertain you hilariously, thoughtfully, movingly—and give insight into how to live in the nuclear age?

That is what we would like to do at the Westminster Theatre. That is our policy. It may not appeal to everyone in modern theatre, but it will appeal to the overwhelming majority of the British public.

New comrade

The 1960's and the 1970's call for a theatre that will answer the underlying contradictions of our age. Mr. Krushchev is looking for the new type of man. He knows that forty years of Communism have not produced the new comrade. But can we say that the affluent society has produced the new type of man?

Cannot the theatre offer an idea great enough to answer the contradictions of both worlds for the sake of all humanity? Could theatre speak to Russia and China with an idea more revolutionary, more effective and more satisfying than Communism? Could theatre speak to the Free World with a programme more revolutionary, more satisfying and more compelling than affluence?

We need a theatre that will build the character of the nation, not demoralise it. Are we to exchange the great themes of good and evil, right and wrong, life and death, power and weakness, freedom and slavery, for the muddy flow of meaningless, depressing and dirty plays of today? We need greatness in the theatre to help create a new age of greatness in the nation. Drama was the golden flower of the age of the First Elizabeth. Why not of the Second?

*20 pages with pictures of plays performed at the Westminster Theatre, and articles about the players, authors and the history of the Westminster. Price 2/-

'This book infuriated me . . . I could not put it down'

PUBLISHERS in Europe and America compete for the rights. A bishop praises it. The *Daily Express* is for it, the *New Statesman* against it. The world's largest bookstore features it. And the BBC appears to ban it.

It is not *Fanny Hill*.

The *Sunday Times* says it is 'expected to cause as much controversy as the Bishop of Woolwich's *Honest to God*', while the *Church Times* recommends it as an 'intelligent and responsible piece of polemical writing, in a warfare of vital concern to the Christian Church.'

It is *The New Morality*—a book which modestly and merrily suggests that some other books published recently are more dishonest to Paul than honest to God, contain more Rhymes than reason, and indicate that the spiritual capital of the South Bank is in the red.

The authors, Sir Arnold Lunn and Garth Lean, state, 'We are less worried by the increase of sexual immorality among the young than by the increase of intellectual immorality among the middle-aged.' T. E. Utley writes in *The Sunday Telegraph*, 'As a comment on *The New Morality* this has not yet been bettered. It is typical of the pungent style of an essay which, in its logical astringency and scholarly thoroughness, recalls the great days of religious and cultural controversy and contrasts refreshingly with the languid confusion and lack of candour of many of its targets.'

The book's scholarly presentation, thorough documentation and militant approach are remarked on by national and provincial press. (The Press Association sent all over the country an 800-word account with the theme 'A Moral Dunkirk'). At London University Union its contents helped defeat the motion 'That this house rejects the traditional Christian conception of sex.'

To the *Evening News*, Portsmouth, Lunn and Lean 'have stormed forth like Crusaders to assert the case for traditional Christian morality.' The *Western Daily Press*, Bristol, thinks the book has 'a rare subtlety of polemic, and a clear irony reminiscent of Newman.'

To the *Eastern Daily Press*, Norwich, 'This lively skilful book hits hard at the spokesmen for the new morality'. The *Evening Post*, Bristol, terms it 'eminently commonsensical' and 'done with a skilful ironic economy'. The *Southern Evening Echo*, Southampton, refers to the 'wit, skill, learning and urbanity' of 'a spirited, highly readable counter-attack'. The *Halifax Daily Courier* hopes that 'such restatements of traditional

views as these will be as widely read as the attacks which they counter'.

The *Irish Times* imagines 'Sir Arnold and his companion, cutlass in hand, storming the quarterdeck of the good ship *New Morality* crying "England expects . . ." as they swarm up the halyards in the approved Hornblower fashion. It is an exhilarating and an extremely provocative book . . . it rides the crest of the wave of controversy and masters it.'

The Rev. H. S. Goodwin writes in the *New Daily*, 'Throughout the last twelve months the "New Morality" brigade, presented with a virtual monopoly of the air by the British Broadcasting Corporation, have poured their poison into the homes of Britain. Many thousands of people have been made wretched by this wearisome parade of Woolwich, Carstairs, Comfort, Rhymes, Williams, the queer Quakers, with their stooges and aides de camp. But now those unhappy thousands, oppressed by a sense of helplessness because facilities for resistance have been withheld from them, may take heart. For here is a little book that has launched a powerful counter-attack which may well prove to be the turning-point in this warfare of the spirit.'

Not everyone likes it, but it is read,

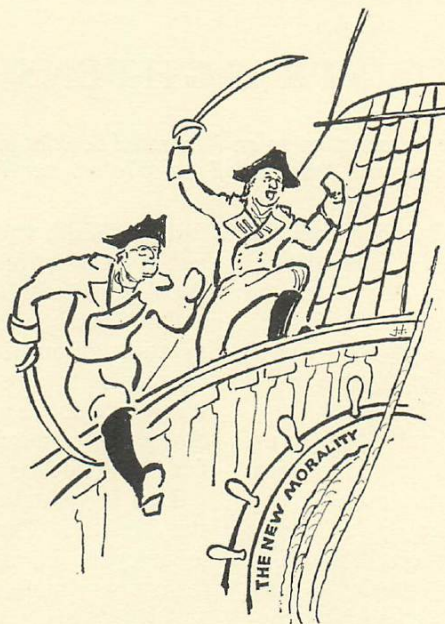
'This book infuriated me . . . I could not put it down!' wrote the reviewer in the medical weekly *Pulse*.

Not everyone ought to like it, but it is bought.

The Chief Executive of Blandford Press, the book's publishers, Mr. Ronald Plumstead, said reprinting started before publishing day. 'This reflects the trade's revulsion from the pornography and dirt that has been poured out to bookshops in the last five years,' he added.

'A profitable controversy rages about the "New Morality",' comments *Time and Tide*. 'Opponents attack it because they say it shouldn't exist; proponents defend it by saying it doesn't. The wise bookseller will smile an enigmatic smile and stock the bestsellers of both sides.'

On publication day the *Daily Express* carried the following editorial: 'A new book comes out today on morality. But this time it is not a plea for lowering standards and encouraging self-indulgence. It is a defence of decent behaviour. A counter-attack against those who see no difference between right and wrong. The challenge comes at a moment when the public is losing patience with those who deride moral values. The arguments of the new moralists were never sound. Now, they are not even fashionable.'



'HORNBLLOWER FASHION'

HOW FINANCE CAN BE FOUND FOR HOUSING

BY N. F. LEDWITH

Partner in a City of London insurance firm

ONE of the tragedies of today is that we do not know how other people live. We are not citizens of Britain; we are just citizens of a small patch of Golders Green, or St. Leonards-on-Sea.

It is worth getting out, and seeing how lavishly a few people live, and how horribly many do. Do you know that within a mile of Mayfair's centre there is a luxury club which has a wall or walls lined with mink? But in Liverpool there are 80,000 condemned houses, where a population equal to that of Oxford and York combined live in houses unfit for human habitation?

A member of Birmingham's Housing Committee told me that many houses there still have only one outside toilet to two houses. But this, he said, was progress. They used to have many with one to five homes. The dirt, the damp, the crowding is hard to believe.

But there is something worse than mere physical decay. Crowding and squalor wear away human character and are a constant spur to crime, incest, immorality and ill-health of body and mind. They are among the things that feed class war. They prevent our country playing the part it should in world affairs.

The land question

The Government have done many good things, but none on the two big housing issues—of profiteering in land and high interest rates.

On the land question a bank manager told me that an area of under two acres of allotments in North London which sold for £500 in 1930 is now being developed and changed hands at £65,000. This is wrong and it should be stopped.

Suppose you allowed the owners 5 per cent profit for every year they owned the land, compound interest? They would have realized £2,600. Not a bad profit, and a large group of houses would have been cheaper by £62,000. I know that we Tories are in favour of a free market in land. That's fine. Sell it freely, but let the excessive profits resulting from redevelopments be syphoned off by taxation and be used to help the housing problem generally.

Interest rates

The interest question is even more important. Most houses are built on borrowed money. In the case of local authorities, who make such a great contribution to housing, especially for those with lower incomes, they sometimes spread their finance over 40 or 60 years from the date of building, and at present they mostly pay 5½ per cent or 6 per cent for their money.

It is too high.

There is little or no provision for money to be provided at low rates for vital projects which are nevertheless not very profitable, such as housing. It seems that low-cost money for housing cannot be provided in the present financial framework. In that case we must change the framework.

If Local Authorities could borrow at 4 per cent they could build almost one third more houses for the same money.

I would like to suggest that the Government issue a national housing loan at 4 per cent and call upon public and private investors to invest in it as a contribution to the national welfare. I am confident that people would rise to this and it would become the accepted, the fashionable, the right thing to do, even if interest rates generally remain around 5-6 per cent.

Insurance companies' chance

What is more, I believe the great institutions of the country would lead the way. The insurance companies are supposed to own 10 per cent of all the shares quoted on the Stock Exchange. The time has come for insurance companies' investments to be made, in common with those of other people, on new principles. The good of the whole nation is more important than the safety or the profitability of the investment.

If we let Britain founder in a sea of slums, our investments won't be worth much. The insurance companies should search out the things which most need doing in Britain, and see that money is available for them. If the insurance companies want a country fit for policy holders to live in, and a good supply of policy holders in the future, they will help to see we get the houses we need, even if it reduces their investment income, and makes insurance policies a little dearer.

Loan at 4 per cent

The aggregate investments of the insurance companies increased by about £600 millions in 1963. If 10 per cent, 20 per cent, even 50 per cent, of that money were put into a 4 per cent housing loan, it would be a flying start towards homes at a cost which many working men could cover by paying an economic rent, or nearly. It would radically affect the burden which now falls on the rates.

It will, of course, mean a big shift in financial policy. The change which is called for is for investors to take a longer view, a wider view, and indeed the view which is the only proper one for a country which is mature, democratic, and, with all its failings, still in basic things a Christian country.

Afrikaner students' new aims

STUDENTS of Dr. Verwoerd's old Suniversity said in Johannesburg on their return from a visit to Europe:

1. 'The profits of our industries must be used to help underdeveloped parts of Africa.'

2. 'The accent should be put on character and a man judged on merit and not on his colour.'

3. 'The doors of our country must be opened to students from other parts of Africa.'

The students, whose statement was reported in the Johannesburg *Star*, come from Stellenbosch University, where the South African Prime Minister was once Professor of Psychology.

The Star report said that the students had been 'tremendously impressed' by discussions in London

with diplomats from Nigeria, Ghana, Mali and Uganda.

African leaders, said the students, were frustrated by the complete lack of contact with South Africa. One African politician had told them, 'We do not want bloodshed in Africa or South Africa. We do not really want you expelled from the United Nations. But South Africa has shut itself off from the rest of Africa and is only concerned with its own welfare and progress.'

In London the students took part in the New Year Moral Re-Armament Assembly, *The Star* said.

On their return to South Africa they declared: 'We are going to try to live honest and incorruptible lives and this is what we demand of our Government—to be honest to themselves and honest to God.'

Striking students stage-struck

PISA UNIVERSITY is on strike. 350 students have barricaded themselves inside the main building. The city has cut off the water to try and force them out.

The first non-strikers allowed to enter the building were the Colwell Brothers of Hollywood, whose songs are well known on Italian T.V.

The Colwells invited the strikers to see *Through the Garden Wall*, Peter Howard's play now playing in the Government-supported theatres of central Italy.

One hundred and twenty from the University came, among them the student leader of the literature faculty which began the strike. It

was the first time he had left the university in 13 days. He said, 'A very strong play. It has the courage to put the true situation in the world on the stage.'

Through the Garden Wall has come from Rome where the Popular Theatre Club, the capital's theatre elite, filled the house for one performance and the Left-wing C.G.I.L., Italy's largest trade union federation, bought out another.

A series of full-house showings for Rome schools also took place. These were given at the request of the Ministry of Education which recommended the play for its 'high educational value'.

Training 10,000 Japanese youth

A PLAN to train 10,000 Japanese youth in moral rearmament before the Olympic Games this year was outlined to governors and top businessmen in Tokyo last week.

The cast of the Japanese play, *Beyond Communism to Revolution*, reported on their visit to India and told of their plan for youth at a conference in the Bankers' Club. The

Speaker of the Japanese Parliament and 45 leaders of business and industry were present.

Many industrial managers undertook to give regular financial aid to this national programme.

The task force with *Beyond Communism to Revolution* has flown by military transport to the northern island of Hokkaido.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bombay, India—The Film Industry, the Press Guild of India and the Mayor of Bombay gave official receptions for Rajmohan Gandhi and the cast of *Space Is So Startling*.

Arvida, Quebec—The Executive of the Aluminium Workers' Union in Alcan, the world's biggest aluminium plant, arranged a showing of the Brazilian portworkers' film, *Men of Brazil*, for 150 shop stewards' committee members and their wives.

'The Diplomats'—The book of the play by Peter Howard, illustrated, has been published by Blandford Press. Price 5s. Available from book-sellers or 4 Hays Mews, London, W.1.

PORT TALBOT VISIT

THREE hundred and fourteen people from the South Wales steel town of Port Talbot have come to London to see *The Diplomats* during the last three weeks. Many are wives of men involved in the dispute with the Steel Company of Wales, which has put 17,000 out of work. Some of the steelworkers also came, together with the President of the Free Church Council of Wales.

'DISTURBING BOOK'

'PETER HOWARD'S new book, *Britain and the Beast*, is probably the most disturbing book since William Booth wrote *Darkest England* which inspired another journalist, W. T. Stead, and a group of crusaders to campaign for the moral cleansing of the nation.

'No minister or social worker, no politician or municipal representative, no educator or youth leader can afford to leave this book unread. It is a momentous challenge.'

—*The Reverend Dr. C. Irving Benson in a feature article in the Melbourne Herald, 11 January.*

SCHOOL LORE

'The classroom is fast becoming the coffin of character. Classrooms should be places where virtues are born, not buried.'—Sixth Former in a Cornish Grammar School.