

Letters to the Editor: *"The Rape of Palestine"*

Mr. Ziff Protests

SIR:—I have just read the review in your November 19th issue written by Maurice B. Hexter of my book, "The Rape of Palestine." Mr. Hexter was, until recently, a member of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. As it happens, a large part of my book is concerned with an unsparing indictment of the Jewish Agency and its policies. Under these circumstances, it appears to me that Mr. Hexter is hardly in a position to write an unbiased review of my work. As a reply to my charges against him and his associates, Mr. Hexter's article is understandable; but as an allegedly impartial review (which is the impression he evidently is attempting to give), it is a thoroughly unreliable piece of writing.

Mr. Hexter endeavored to dispose of my book by categorically referring to it as "a bad book . . . whose demerit is directly proportionate to its bulk." He states that my book is "not even pseudo-scientific" but he gives no instance of proof. He makes the ridiculous assertion that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism of the present day are two entirely different things, that, therefore, my own evaluations are, on the face of them, lunatic. I have in front of me a whole shelf-load of anti-Zionist literature. In each case they are also anti-Semitic. There is in fact no anti-Semitic organization in existence today which is not in addition anti-Zionist.

Another large portion of my book is concerned with the anti-Jewish legislation passed by the Palestine Government and the anti-Zionist attitude displayed both in Westminster and in the Holy Land. Mr. Hexter attempts to dispose of this legislation by pretending that it does not exist. However, it does exist. It is on the statute books of Palestine. The records are available for anyone who cares to look.

I made it clear that the Jewish Agency had allowed itself to become an apologist for British politics aimed directly at the very Jews whom the Jewish Agency was supposed to represent. Mr. Hexter's reply bears out this conclusion amply. For example, he attempts to leave the impression that there is very little actual anti-Semitism in the Palestine administration or in Government circles in London. On this viewpoint there are very few informed men who can agree with him. The greatest authority on Jewish colonization in Palestine is Mendel Ussishkin, President of the Jewish National Fund. Here is a statement from Mr. Ussishkin as taken from my own pages: "From the start it was clear that the British officials of Palestine were against us. The entire Arab opposition to the Jewish National Home was 'made at the Government House.'"

Reading this riddle further, one may take the freely spoken words of Mayor Dizengoff of Tel Aviv, the most widely beloved man in Palestine and, by all odds, its ablest political figure. He charged the British Administration in Palestine with "playing a diabolical game," saying that in practice it had "outlawed the Jews and

handed them over to a mob of criminals." Information on this subject is voluminous and inescapable despite Mr. Hexter's attempt at denial. States Colonel Josiah Wedgwood, one of the best known M.P.s in England and an acknowledged authority on the Palestine scene: "The Government is at the present time anti-Semitic and is a disgrace to England." He writes that Arabs would give little or no trouble "were they not encouraged and stimulated to do so . . . by a Government which does not like the Jews and lets the Arabs know it." This is exactly the contention made throughout my book and supported, I believe, by indisputable evidence.

WILLIAM B. ZIFF.

New York City

Mr. Hexter Replies

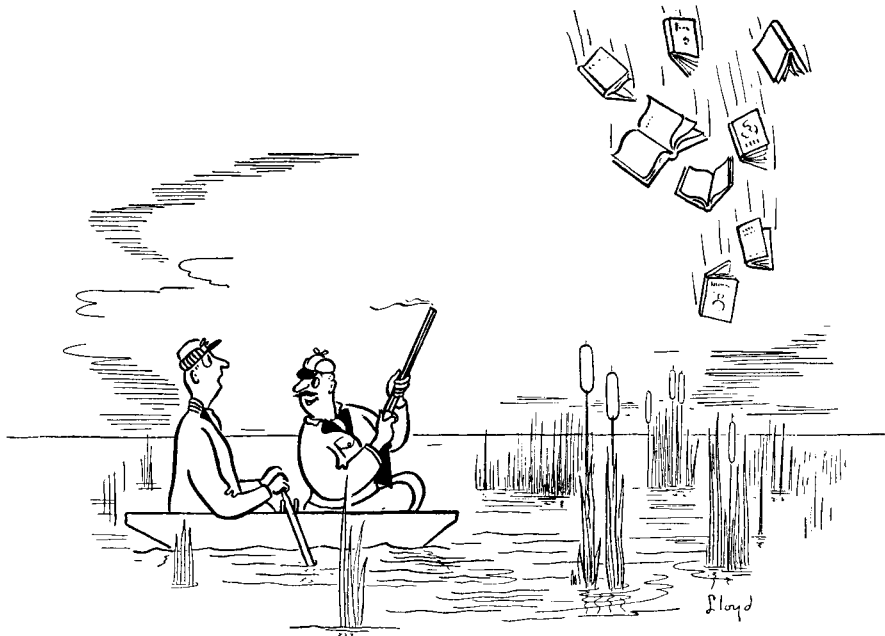
SIR:—Mr. Ziff is entitled to raise the question of bias, and I am glad to deal with it. The gravamen of his indictment (so far as Jews are concerned) is the political blindness, stupidity, and impotence, if not collusion, of the Zionist Organization and its leadership. Now the Zionist Organization is not the Jewish Agency by any stretch of imagination, and Mr. Ziff might well be expected to know this. He devotes quite some pages to a description of some of the leaders, not of the Jewish Agency as such, but of Zionist leaders. His accusation of bias collapses from his own words on page 153: "The Zionists maintain a London Executive and a Palestine Executive who mainly specialize in sending learned memoranda to the British Government and the League of Nations. With these executive bodies is affiliated still another politically impotent appendage, the Jewish Agency." "Hinc illae lacrymae!" Mr. Ziff can expect but cannot secure the best of both worlds. He knows of course that I, as well as the largest proportion of American non-Zionists and many European non-

Zionists, have for quite a long series of years opposed the political course of the Jewish Agency in which, de facto, they form a minority. True, the opposition was on divergent grounds from those on which Mr. Ziff has, in my judgment, failed to support his own bill of indictment. The portion of the work with which the writer and his group were more closely associated, and which, in some measure, they tintured with their personalities and methodology—the economic development of Palestine—comes off well in the furnace of Mr. Ziff's wrath. Furthermore, if Mr. Ziff wanted an intelligent reviewer of his book, he would have to seek a person who inevitably would be found in a group or party connected in some way with the work in Palestine. Across the comments of any such person, Mr. Ziff could, with the same injustice, try to draw a red herring, because there is no group or individual or party whom he has not tried to slap, unless it be my revered friend Ussishkin, who would not, even by his friends and admirers (amongst whom I number myself), be called "the greatest authority on Jewish colonization in Palestine"; or perhaps Colonel Wedgwood, of whom the Zionists may well say, "God protect us from our friends."

Mr. Ziff continues to equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. He speaks of the anti-Semitic scheme of exiling Jews to Madagascar and of other schemes of colonization of Jews in parts of the world not called Palestine. Automatically, Mr. Ziff puts into the ranks of the anti-Semites all of those humanists who, in the last ten days, have set to work to find a place for a hounded people. Mr. Ziff is tragically blinded by his own belief in Palestine as the only solution of the Jewish problem.

MAURICE B. HEXTER.

New York City.



"Missed the ducks, but I must have hit something!"

Who Profits from Fascism?

FASCISM FOR WHOM? By Max Ascoli and Arthur Feiler. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1938. \$3.

SOCIALISM ON THE DEFENSIVE. By Norman Thomas. New York: Harper & Bros. 1938. \$3.

Reviewed by ROBERT C. BROOKS

MESSRS. Ascoli and Feiler, in the first of the books under review, present admirably brief but comprehensive discussions of Italy and Germany respectively. As *fuorusciti*, both being now members of the faculty of "the University in Exile," one would expect from them implacable hostility against the Fascist and Nazi regimes. On the contrary, they give evidence at every point of scholarly detachment and rare critical acumen. Perhaps the question, "Fascism for Whom?" is answered too narrowly in the end. Both authors hold that only the self-perpetuating oligarchies of major and minor chiefs benefit from totalitarianism. Obviously the number of those who *think* they gain something under that regime is much larger. But the most interesting and timely chapters in the book are the two written jointly by the co-authors which deal with fascism in its relation to our civilization. Messrs. Ascoli and Feiler are profoundly convinced that international threats from totalitarian states have just begun and that these threats must be resisted. Their all too brief discussion of fascism as a menace to the democratic powers might well be expanded into a separate volume.

To Mr. Norman Thomas, also, fascism is the great enemy, the principal reason why socialism everywhere finds itself on the defensive. Not that he has any too high opinion of capitalistic democracy, the virtue of the latter being merely that "of the sated thief." Extraordinarily wide in scope, his book is based on a recent journey abroad in the course of which he met many prominent radical leaders, thus learning at first hand the present position of the socialist movement, the condition of labor, and the actual political situation in England, France, Spain, the U.S.S.R., and other countries. Naturally the chapter devoted to "Socialism and the American Scene" will be read with the greatest interest on this side of the Atlantic. Among other minor details it may be noted that Mr. Thomas pays his respects to Frank (I-am-the-Law) Hague somewhat pungently, but few will blame him for so doing. Republicans should note the author's denials that Franklin D. Roosevelt carried out the Socialist platform of 1932 more radically than Thomas could have done. The Socialist leader believes that if the President chooses to run again in 1940 he will

be reelected, barring a labor feud so bitter that the A. F. of L. will oppose any one actively supported by the C. I. O. Strongly as he condemns fascism, Mr. Thomas is an isolationist; indeed his position approximates that taken recently by former President Hoover. Throughout the present volume the author preaches pacifism with more fervor than socialism. Perhaps it may be fairer to say he believes that the outlook for socialism, now

on the defensive, would become hopelessly black for an indefinitely long period should another World War break out—hence his extreme devotion to peace. Is it, however, so certain as Mr. Thomas assumes that "war in the United States would instantly impose the fascist yoke upon 130,000,000 people?" "Instantly" or "for the duration" perhaps yes, but long established democracy possesses recuperative powers that make the prophecy questionable, at least, for any extended period.

Robert C. Brooks is the author of "Deliver Us from Dictators."

Painters, Critics, Dealers

QUEER THING, PAINTING. By Walter Pach. New York: Harper & Bros. 1938. \$4.

Reviewed by OLIVER LARKIN

WALTER PACH wrote the first American magazine article on Cézanne, helped organize the great Armory Show of 1913, debunked John Sargent's exhibitionism in "Ananias," and has met and talked with most of the men who made modern art. He now attempts not pure autobiography, but a record of "the art life of the time." Rodin, Cézanne, Matisse, Renoir, Monet, and a small army of painters, connoisseurs, dealers, and critics crowd his pages. Roualt campaigns amusingly for entrance to the Institute; John Quinn tells the story of the little red fox; paralyzed Renoir, "a mere cinder of a man," sculptures as it were by dictation. The style is urbane, the atmosphere cosmopolitan, the taste eclectic. If you are all of these, you will rest content with an esthetic credo which maintains that art is a "queer thing," as Turner said, an enigma never really to be solved, a matter of inherent qualities which, given time, inevitably proclaim the work of art either "absolutely permanent and good," or the reverse, and establish the artist's importance, "not for his time, but for all time." And you will conclude, as Mr. Pach does, that the private initiative of wealthy individual collectors has, up to now, "done the great things in art, as far as America is concerned," by enabling us to know the masterpieces of a Europe so much riper and more art-conscious than our own culture. And the museums, rather than popular interest or governmental patronage, you will look upon as "still largely the artistic hope of

the country,"—"the greatest single force in determining the direction of art here."

If, on the other hand, you belong to a less urbane and more realistic generation, you will doubt whether Redon said anything of importance when he averred that "the plane of the artist is not outside him, but within his mind," and remain less than satisfied with Mr. Pach's own dictum that "the real question about a work of art is whether it contains art."



Walter Pach: a self-portrait. From "Queer Thing, Painting."

If you are an artist, you will doubt, on the evidence at hand, that either the private initiative of a Maecenas or the Metropolitan Museum is your salvation. If you deny that the tradition of Paris is "still yielding splendid results," you will regret the relatively small space Mr. Pach gives to contemporary American art, and wish that some of the pages devoted to the wax-like perfections of Kenneth Hayes Miller had at least mentioned Sheeler, Blume, Marin,

Wood, Gropper, Curry, and others important not necessarily "for all time," but certainly for ours. If you consider art not unrelated to the social conflicts that shake mankind, and read Mr. Pach's contradictory assertions that the Rockefeller Center fiasco was due quite simply to "a dislike of Rivera's painting as art" and that "business will not let either art ideas or religious ideas stand in its way,"—you will decide that the author is floundering in deep waters, and will cease to regret the brevity with which he dismisses the artists of the left by bluntly misstating their aims: "only the subjects count in such work." You will perhaps murmur, "queer thing, criticism," and conclude that Mr. Pach's greatest contributions to art were his early pioneering on behalf of the now accepted old masters of modernism, and his admirable translations of Elie Faure and the "Journal" of Delacroix.