

producer has to turn out the kind of product he feels will earn money. Since TV has usurped most of his audience, the movie producer has been forced into a position where he can no longer afford to gamble on "message" pictures or artistic triumphs that lose money. If his pictures don't make money, he will soon be out of business. And, "Marty" and a few other exceptions notwithstanding, history has proved that the average moviegoer would rather see a star-studded spectacle or the dramatization of a salacious best-selling novel than a small, tastefully made picture of superb quality.

But Mr. MacCann has a rather strange outlook on this. He says, "Even if it were possible to forecast what people want, is it right to give them what they want?"

This kind of criticism is pure nonsense. Making a movie is a very costly venture today—even a so-called low-budget one can run to a million dollars or more. Only a fool would deliberately set out to make a movie that the people *don't* want. It's all very well and good to advocate making pictures without sex and violence, pictures that more accurately reflect life in America. But eliminate sex and violence and some of the other baser themes that are the core of dramatic conflict, and what do you have? A pretty dull story. Even Shakespeare and Sophocles realized that, and wrote accordingly.

**H**OLLIS ALPERT, in his highly amusing "The Dreams and the Dreamers," takes a much more optimistic view of Hollywood. His book is not meant to be the scholarly critique of the movie business that Mr. MacCann set out to write, but, paradoxically, it's just as informative and a good deal more entertaining. It covers a wide range of subjects, from some very interesting profiles of Marlon Brando, Jean Seberg, and Ingmar Bergman to a discourse on "Art or Obscenity," in which he comes to the opposite conclusion to Mr. MacCann's—that censorship will ultimately do more harm than good. He has also written a hilarious satire on movie clichés, in the form of an imaginary interview between a producer and an aspiring screenwriter, in which the former quizzes the latter on his qualifications by presenting certain hackneyed dramatic situations and asking how the writer would handle them.

But even when Mr. Alpert is being critical and factual, he still handles his subject matter with an incisive sense of humor that is lacking in Mr. MacCann's book, and which makes "The Dreams and the Dreamers" extremely readable for anyone who is interested in the Hollywood scene.

## Star Bright by Stage Light

**"The Great White Way," by Allen Churchill** (Dutton, 310 pp. \$4.95), *parades the glamorous Broadway personalities of the first twenty years of this century. Stephen Draper, a theatrical agent, has been an actor and film critic. During the war he served with the War Department as Expert Consultant on Scripts.*

By STEPHEN DRAPER

**"I**F YOU steal from one author, it's plagiarism; if you steal from many, it's research," said Wilson Mizner, a turn-of-the-century wit. Since Allen Churchill quotes the foregoing he must already be aware that he himself has done a monumental amount of research, for he has clipped and snipped and salvaged from a bibliography that is to literature what Cain's Warehouse is to the theatre. The result is a book that will fascinate all who have ever felt any sort of affinity for the world of entertainment.

Although his focus is upon the years from 1900 to 1921, Mr. Churchill succeeds, in a style more breezy than literary, in compressing over 100 years of American theatre into "The Great White Way." With John Drew we journey back to 1853; with Helen Hayes we journey forward, if only by implication, to 1962. The first twenty years of the century touched the lives of many great and

memorable personages. All whose names have survived were at least colorful. There were "Diamond Jim" and Lillian Russell, Anna Held, Weber and Fields, Nora Bayes, the Castles, the Barrymores, and countless others. There was Rector's, to which one went, or aspired to go, for a bird and a bottle. There was Delmonico's. There was Shanley's. There were cotillions at Sherry's. There were Monday night openings at the Met. It was an exciting world, this world of the Great White Way, enhanced perhaps by time and Hollywood musicals, but as yet untroubled by the atom or by Prohibition or a social conscience or taxes.

From vast sources of material Mr. Churchill has selected well. He has given us a variety of full-length portraits, among which are those of Mrs. Fiske, Clyde Fitch, Julia Marlowe, David Belasco, Mrs. Leslie Carter, John Drew, Maurice Barrymore, Charles Frohman (a kind of early-day David Merrick), and Maude Adams (whose salary of \$20,000 a week in the day of a \$2 top might be open to question). Around and about move hundreds of others, all of whom contributed in some measure to the glamour of the era: actors, actresses, beauties, playwrights, producers, wits.

It is an ambitious undertaking and Mr. Churchill has succeeded in building, rather than in writing, an enjoyable and illuminating book. Where he  
(Continued on page 28)



—Illustrations from the book.

(l. to r.) Weber and Fields, Mrs. Leslie Carter—  
a world as yet untroubled by taxes or the atom.

# Saturday Review

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## Inventory of Intolerables

THE big unasked question during the week of the Cuban crisis was: Who would ultimately own and operate the Cuban missile sites? The general assumption was that the Soviet intended to remain in Cuba and use it as a prime military base in the Western Hemisphere. This assumption rested on no direct evidence. People just took it for granted that the Soviet Union wanted a convenient jumping-off place next to the United States.

Indications from Soviet sources, however, were that a far more ominous situation might have been in the making. According to these indications, Soviet personnel would be withdrawn at an appropriate time and the bases would be turned over to the Cubans. These indications were made quietly, even unobtrusively, and never got into the mainstream of the news. Meanwhile, few people even bothered to ask what would happen if, after the missile sites became operational, the Soviet technicians were to leave and the Cubans were to take over. This eventuality was so fantastic and grisly that it seemed like madness even to consider it. It seemed inconceivable that Fidel Castro could acquire the means for the instant devastation of a substantial part of the United States.

The purpose of this editorial, however, is not to advance the proposition that the Soviet indications about giving the bases to the Cubans should have been taken seriously. Our purpose, rather, is to examine the implications of

the fact that so many Americans would probably refuse to believe that such a possibility ever really existed. Indeed, they would dismiss as sheer insanity the idea that the Russians would put weapons of any magnitude in the hands of anyone as explosive, unstable, and unpredictable as Fidel Castro. Consequently the question was hardly even asked: Who would own the bases?

At least one implication of this attitude is that the Americans trust the Russians more than they realize. They know that the Russians hold the power of life and death over them—as they do over the Russians; and they know that the Russians will press for every advantage. But they trust the Russians not to do anything outrageous or absurd. Certainly they would far more trust the Russians with nuclear power than they would the Cubans.

The natural question that grows out of this hypothesis is whether the trust, conscious or otherwise, reposed in the Russians by the Americans, and vice versa, might not serve as the basis for an explicit and tangible determination by both nations to make a genuine attempt to bring the arms race under control. Quite apart from Cuba, the present drift will lead to the acquisition or development of nuclear striking power by at least a dozen nations within the next few years. When this happens, the horror of the Cuban crisis will be far deeper than a week-long ordeal. Therefore, now is the time, while the memory of the terror is still real and while there

is still some security left in the world, to mobilize a total effort against the arms race.

Let us now consider another implication of the fact that many Americans would regard as insane the notion that Soviet missile sites might be turned over to Castro. What about the situation of total terror and drift leading up to Cuba? The Cuban business was intolerable, but our age reads like an inventory of intolerables. Is there anything rational or tolerable about the fact that Soviet submarines equipped with nuclear-tipped rockets operate off the east and west coasts of the United States, and that every American city is now within easy range? Ditto with respect to American submarines and their access to Soviet cities. Or that the United States and the Soviet Union, between them, now possess the destructive equivalent of almost 30,000 pounds of TNT for every man, woman, and child in the world? Or that, just in the act of staging their atomic rehearsals, the nuclear nations have pumped massive poisons into the natural environment, with a resultant toll on the health of many millions of people who are neither Russians nor Americans? Or that, finally, it will be impossible for the nuclear nations to use their weapons against each other without also producing casualties by the hundreds of millions outside both countries?

Getting past the Cuban crisis calls for thanksgiving but not for rejoicing; at least not yet. Only when there is a sustained and comprehensive attack on the full list of intolerables affecting the human condition will there be warrant for jubilation. An opportunity to mount such an attack now exists. The kind of imagination and energy required for this effort will determine whether Cuba was merely an exercise in stark terror or whether it produced an inspired response that can lead directly to the making of a safer and better world.

Such an effort, to succeed, requires more than an awareness of the destructive power of nuclear weapons. It requires an awareness of the fact that something must take the place of the weapons if the weapons are to be eliminated. That is, the quest for disarmament must be related to the quest for world order. The definition of a structured peace precedes and does not follow the decision to disarm. No matter what the entry point may be for a consideration of our peril—whether the arms race or Cuba or Korea or Berlin or the Congo—we arrive surely and inevitably at the point where only a United Nations with the responsible authority of world law can provide adequate security and keep the peace.

—N.C.