

and again his awareness of the difficulties is acute enough to inspire confidence in his report. On the other hand, the readiness with which he discovers the 'essential character' of the Russians would make a sociologist smile. Further, critical as he has shown himself to be of America, he remains enough of an American in outlook for his comment on Russian life to appear occasionally merely American. And one of the results of his visit has been to bring home to him the unique value of American institutions. 'This discussion . . . and a number of other incidents, had made me feel as I had never done before, that being American did mean something unique . . . ' 'I feel convinced, since I have been to Russia, that American republican institutions, disastrously as they are always being abused, have some permanent and absolute value.'

With all these limitations the book remains a valuable piece of reporting (some of the best sections were printed in *The New Republic*) ; and in writing of the 'decided hysterical edge to the upper reaches of Moscow life,' of the general atmosphere of suspicion, the difficulties of writers, the position of Stalin towards the public, he presents an order of facts which can only be successfully approached by a man of his gifts and by the use of his methods.

H. A. MASON.

THE OLIVE TREE, by Aldous Huxley (Chatto and Windus, 7/6).

In their spring list (one or two pages of which incidentally provide a little innocent fun for the suitably cynical) the publishers of *Everyman's* announce that a selection from Mr. Huxley is to be added to the library. It will consist of half a dozen stories and a number of essays. Publishers presumably know their own business best, and it might be rash to assert that a different selection would have sold better. But from another point of view that kind of anthology is not particularly welcome ; a volume of essays only would find a market which is closed to the new *Everyman*.

It's commonplace to say that the gap between the latest developments in art, literature, sociology and so on and the study of these in places of education is so great that you can't see from one side to the other. And we need scores of Angells, Huxleys and

Stuart Chases to do the ferrying. It is in this capacity that Mr. Aldous Huxley is most interesting to the pedagogue who finds in the essays some needed criticisms of the contemporary scene. Not that the stories haven't a use—they often serve as a tonic in the growth of the adolescent. But they couldn't be included in the kind of selection from Mr. Huxley that one wants ; it would consist of about half *The Olive Tree*, some of the items from *On the Margin*, the pacifist pamphlet, especially if it could be arranged to print Mr. Day Lewis' reply after it, and a speech made at the Albert Hall towards the end of last year.

The conditions (journalism) under which most of the essays in *The Olive Tree* appeared require that there shall be plenty of topical illustration and not too much hard chewing on one page—a diet which may not suit all adults, but good for the boy of sixteen or eighteen who has been kept uncontaminated by ideas. Nor in any ordinary sense of the word can they be called propaganda, which again is fortunate, because on the young and intelligent propaganda always works by counter-suggestion. The short note on *New-fashioned Christmas* is characteristic; it describes the commercialization of that season, and stimulates observation of other festivals and emotions which are tapped for profit. Another comment that one is glad to see in permanent form is the excellent deflation of the excuses made for the purchase of the Codex Sinaiticus at £100,000 ; the manuscript is forgotten, but the behaviour which it occasioned is perennial and typical.

The essay on *Justifications* falls on the dilettante side. The title promised something more serious—an examination of the mechanism in, say, industrialists, the clergy and others during the war, and the bellicose kind of pacifist to-day. As it is, it consists of an account, amusing enough, of the goings-on of one H. J. Prince—a case of justification too eccentric to prompt in the reader a habit of examining motives. The most ambitious piece in the book, *Writers and Readers*, discusses the nature and limitations of the influence of books upon those who read them ; and is interesting more in the questions it raises than it answers. He points out, as others have done, that political propaganda in the press does not always produce results in proportion to its volume : but he does not mention the extensive indirect results—habits of thinking and feeling—brought about by the newspapers, which must surely come under the heading of propaganda.

D.T.

THE ENGLISH PRESS, NEWSPAPERS AND NEWS, by Jane Soames, with a Preface by Hilaire Belloc (Stanley Nott, 3/6)

There isn't space to do much more than recommend Miss Soames' excellent little book. On the whole she confines herself to clarifying, documenting and reinforcing 'what everybody knows'—things that can't be too well known. The main insistence is on the control of the press by a very small ring of profit-makers, on the almost complete lack of a real opposition press (there are some enlightening asides on the Odhams *Daily Herald*), on misleading selection and emphasis in the presentation of 'news,' and on the way in which the law of libel—an effective censorship—strangles necessary comment on matters of public interest ('the defence of fair comment . . . is all too often a broken reed'). Perhaps the most important chapter is on 'Some Omissions'—things which the public are not allowed to know: how many people, for example, know anything about the recent establishment of a large body of voluntary police in London? 'In this country we are never told why prominent people are given their posts, or by whom; by what methods well-known persons have made their money—and above all are we totally unaccustomed to anything like real attack on the Government, its personnel, policy and methods.' There are some useful comparisons with French newspapers, and with the English press in the nineteenth century. ('There is nothing to replace the lively uncensored comment upon public affairs which our great-grandfathers assumed to be essential to the formation of public opinion'). And those who believe that the dissemination of information of this kind is only useful in conjunction with an educational effort will find some fodder in these pages; a comparison of the vigorous *Times* leader of 1831 (p. 105) with its modern equivalent is not, I know, beyond the powers of an average W.E.A. class.

L.C.K.

U.D.C. PAMPHLETS:

A Catholic Looks at Spain, José Maria de Semprún Gurrea.

Survey of the International Committee of Non-Intervention in Spain. Union of Democratic Control, 34 Victoria Street, S. W. 1.

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