

guiding ideas represents an elementary fallacy in scientific method).

The chief difference between Mass-Observation and more familiar inquiries in psychology and sociology lies in the greater sense it gives of co-operative undertaking by the observers and their directors, and the resulting tendency for the observers' part in it to give them extra interest in the features of their daily life that they are reporting on. 'It stimulates and vivifies the observers,' as Professor Julian Huxley puts it in his foreword. And if it has this missionary effect on a wide scale that will be so much to the good. Here again, how much of the potential value of the scheme is realized will depend on the value of the investigators' critical standpoint. And this must be judged by the standards of culture ; it cannot be affirmed by the 'science' that Mr. Harrison seems to put his trust in.

But until the authors give more detail of their intentions and methods and the results that have been obtained nothing more can be said, and the reader is left to echo Professor Julian Huxley's words, which so admirably combine affability with prudence: 'I commend this pamphlet to the attention of the intelligent public, and hope that out of it big things will grow.'

D.W.H.

'THE MARXIAN ANALYSIS'

*THE MIND IN CHAINS. Edited by C. Day Lewis (Muller, 5/-).
EDUCATION, CAPITALIST AND SOCIALIST, by Beryl Pring
(Methuen, 7/6).*

'The contributors to this volume—who are neither crazy visionaries nor disgruntled cranks, but ordinary men and women eminent in their own branches of knowledge—have decided on the latter alternative. Something is preventing us from giving our best to humanity, they say ; let us find out what that something is and do our best to remove it.'

—Perhaps, one is led to conjecture from the tone and style of this, it is the Book Society Limited that is preventing Mr. Day Lewis himself from giving us at least something better (he belongs, we recall, to the Selection Committee). Actually, however, practically all his flock of contributors share his trick of relying

on the Soviet Union to fill the emptiness left in their essays by the absence of anything convincingly positive:

' *The Mind in Chains* could never have been written were it not for the widespread belief of intellectual workers that the mind is really in chains today, that these chains have been forged by a dying social system, that they can and must be broken—and in the Soviet Union have been broken . . . '

—That is Mr. Day Lewis ; and indeed one has heard that in Russian letters to-day the Walpoles and Priestleys have come fully into their own, and Book Society conditions prevail unchallenged. So that when he read in Mr. Edward Upward's essay that

' in Russia already writers are better off than anywhere else in the world '

Mr. Lewis wasn't moved, as Editor, to ask ' Which? ' Mr. Alistair Browne, as clinical psychologist, writes :

' Let us strike off the chains and see what [man] really is . . . There can be little doubt that the direct revolutionary approach has already proved itself in the one country where the experiment has been tried . . . '

Mr. Edgell Rickword writes :

' In the new civilization of the Soviet Union " government by the people for the people," that ghost which haunts the capitalist democracies with the reminder of their youthful promises, becomes a living reality based on the right of all to work and to leisure.'

And so on.

Well, we all see that something is wrong with the world to-day, and we all want, as Mr. Day Lewis says, to ' find out what that something is and do our best to remove it.' But the effect of all this reference to Russia can, to-day, only be to confirm our conviction that Marxism is not a sufficient guide. It is when inquiry is made into its provision for the humane values, for a directing and controlling humanity in social and political change, that the inadequacy of theoretical Marxism is especially apparent—and especially to literary intellectuals. So it is not surprising that Mr. Edward Upward's attempts to make a Marxist theory of culture

convincing by blurring its outlines should have been singled out for applause. It is a mistake, he says, to suppose that Marxists hold

‘ that literary “ values ” are a *bourgeois* myth, and that books should be classed not as “ good ” or “ bad,” but as belonging to and reflecting the social and economic conditions of this or that period in history.’

This must have surprised at least one of his fellow-contributors, Mr. J. D. Bernal (unless he has—like so many Marxists—changed his mind on this point). For it is not so very long since Mr. Bernal appeared to hold—my evidence is conversation with him—precisely the position that Mr. Upward disowns (and Cambridge communists in general used to jeer at the suggestion that one could seriously discuss, with reference to the history of the fiction-market, an alleged decay of standards—a cultural decline).

What Mr. Upward’s own position is it is impossible to say ; I have seldom read a more muddled piece of writing. But the intention is plain enough : it is to establish that there can be a specifically Marxist criticism that is at the same time intelligent and disinterested literary criticism and not the Marxist ‘ criticism ’ we are all familiar with. By way of illustration he tells us that D. H. Lawrence, though he

‘ was unquestionably aware of and tried to describe the outside forces that were undermining the bourgeois society into which he had made his way . . . saw those forces mainly from a *bourgeois* view-point, as destroyers to be combated ; consequently he misrepresented reality . . . ’

Lawrence, like Proust and Joyce, ‘ shared the life of a social class which has passed its prime . . . ’ Mr. Upward himself, a biographical note informs us, was ‘ Educated at Repton and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Became a schoolmaster ’ (in an Elementary—or perhaps County?—School?).

The jibe is invited ; but I don’t offer it merely as a jibe. That the middle and Public School classes should produce so much Marxist enthusiasm, thus calling attention to aspects of human nature that Marxism tends to slight, is an important fact. More important than the Marxist enthusiasm is the element of disinterested humanity that is represented by education in its accepted and

actual nature—even as it is in a capitalist country. The peculiarly difficult and responsible position of the teacher is discussed by Mr. Rex Warner, though he is too much occupied with the Marxian generalities to get much said.

Miss Pring devotes her book to insisting on the capitalist bias in education. She admits, in a puzzled and reluctant way, that 'capitalist education' is not all capitalist bias. And she remarks ruefully that

'It is one of the problems of the socialist thesis to reconcile the economic theory of class-war with the common decency latent in most individuals of all classes; it is probably true to say that capitalism gives fewer natural opportunities for its display than socialism.'

(—Is it socialism that obtains in Russia?). She might in fairness have said that this common decency is apt to be more than latent in societies where there has been a long experience of 'bourgeois' security. It is because of what is recognized in Miss Pring's admissions that we can work with some hope for a better social order and a finer civilization. She, however, explicitly refuses to consider the problem of the transition to the new order, and so is able to achieve a familiar kind of superiority. She says of *Culture and Environment*:

'Many illuminating indictments of this state of advertisement will be found in *Culture and Environment* by Messrs. Leavis and Thompson, though it is difficult to understand how the authors can seriously imagine that such an environment can be successfully counterbalanced by a few enlightened teachers of literature in the capitalist schools.'

It is indeed. However, Miss Pring, who has written the book that really makes a difference, admits to having found some illumination in the other little book, and that is perhaps something the authors may modestly count as achievement.

Mr. Edgell Rickword's contribution to *The Mind in Chains* is the only one to show any distinction of mind. But it's a mind, we have regretfully to remark, hampered by its voluntary Marxism more apparently than by any other impediments.

F. R. LEAVIS.

THE ARTS IN TOTALITARIAN RUSSIA

THE SEVEN SOVIET ARTS, by Kurt London (Faber and Faber, 15/-).

This is a depressing book, and I do not see how anyone but an invincible optimist could find it otherwise. Dr. London's general hopes are all but negated at every point by his exposition of particular facts and by his comments thereon. He himself seems to be a typical representative of the educated classes who can no longer live in Germany. He has no political bias and he attempts to give a disinterested survey of as many facts about the position of the arts in Russia as he could collect in a few months' stay as a privileged guest, and to comment on achievements up to date. He does not however pretend to be more than a journalist and apologizes that, for instance, he does not analyse systematically the work of the contemporary Russian novelists whom he discusses. Actually one has the impression that his critical methods in all the arts would be disabblingly academic. He might be described as a liberal-minded don with a 'Teutonic' range of interests, who is still diffident about mentioning the connections between art and economics, or the possibility of propaganda being of artistic value. His writing is often distressingly vague and slapdash, though here his translator may have served him badly.

The author's limitations are obvious from the first few pages, and in spite of them one can learn much from the book. It should, in fact, be read by everyone interested in any way in the future of civilization. His conclusions correspond closely, except in their greater optimism, to those of M. Gide, and he provides the documentation which *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.* lacks. The tale told in every chapter is similar: unbounded enthusiasm for art and letters, ideal material conditions, emotional and intellectual stultification, meagre and mediocre results. I don't think one can conceive of a more damning indictment of the cultural life of a country, let alone one which is just settling down to enjoy the results of such a reorganization of the bases of life as the Five Year Plans, than that provided by the examples of the visual