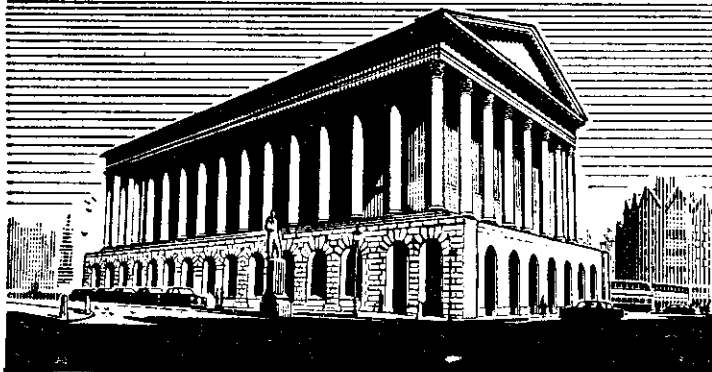


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## BOOKS

# A Parcel of Atlases

THE FABER ATLAS, edited by D. J. Sinclair; Faber and Faber, English price 32/6. THE LITTLE OXFORD ATLAS, THE OXFORD HOME ATLAS, THE OXFORD REGIONAL ECONOMIC ATLAS OF U.S.S.R. AND EASTERN EUROPE; Oxford University Press, English prices 9/6, 15/- and 30/- respectively.

(Reviewed by D. W. McKenzie)

FOR a long time German and Swiss atlases have led the world in the most difficult of problems the maker of maps has to face, the representation of the relief of hill and plain, mountain and valley. While the British have been content to use layer colours, usually of greens and browns to indicate altitudes, the continentals have used in addition the techniques of hill shading, as though a light were shining obliquely across a model of the land leaving shadows in the valleys. When properly used this gives a wonderful impression of relief, both when it is done by the skill of the draughtsman, as in the Faber Atlas, or by the photography of actual models, as in the three Oxford Atlases.

The Faber Atlas has gone to Vienna to have its maps made and they are as magnificently drawn and lettered as any Continental atlas, and give a superb picture of the relief. The photography of models for the Oxford Atlases is much less happy, as the models themselves are so coarsely made that the Appalachians seem to be as high as the Rockies, for example, and the whole impression is much inferior to the German atlases using the same techniques.

The Faber Atlas has a map coverage which could hardly be improved on at the price. Structure, relief, climate, land use, population, economies and industries are followed by sectional maps which include large-scale details of characteristic areas of most countries. It is an atlas one would have liked to have recommended unreservedly, but . . .

But the inaccuracy! Take New Zealand, for example. The editor is on the staff of the London School of Economics, whose professor of geography, R. O. Buchanan, is a New Zealander, and the New Zealand errors are doubly unpardonable. The maps are not even consistent in error; one has Hawke Bay, the other Hawke's Bay, one has Devonport in its correct place, the other spreads it across Kaipara Harbour. In the main map of New Zealand the numerous errors seem quite beyond explanation. Why show Mokai near Taupo with a population of 300 odd, and not Taupo? Why show towns near Kaikohe with a tenth of its population and not Kaikohe itself? Why show places with populations of 30 and 50, and not Otahuhu or Papatoetoe? Why, of the Sounds shown leave out Milford, of the rivers, the Manawatu? Place after place appears on this map, which is not important enough to appear on the 1:2 million Lands and Survey's Map of New Zealand at two and a half times the atlas scale.

The economic map is equally incomprehensible. Iron is shown at Onakaka and Taranaki—and in the middle of the Kaimanawa Range, with the same sized dot as is shown for the great iron fields of South Australia, wheat is shown only in the Bay of Plenty, and fruit is grown north of Dargaville and in Southland, not at all in Nelson or Hawke's Bay.

In short, what the atlas lacks is scholarship. In place of a preface which should describe on what basis the economic maps were constructed, and what the symbols mean, is a fulsome preface by Sir Dudley Stamp of lavish praise, which says precisely nothing. It is a great disappointment to have to write thus about an Atlas which is the first British example of a type which I most admire and use, but inaccuracy is the one unforgivable sin.

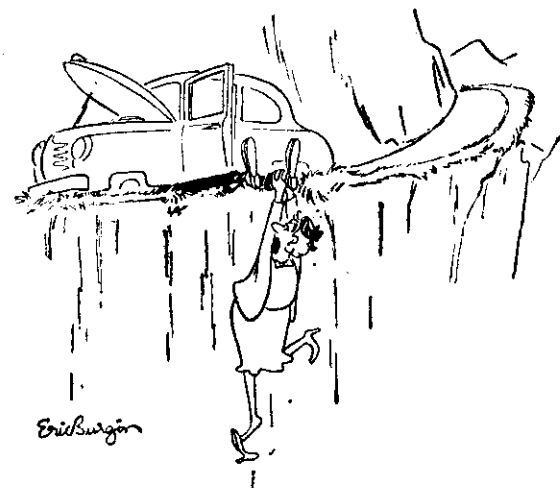
Both the Little Oxford Atlas and the Oxford Home Atlas are very cheap and much ingenuity has gone into making them useful. They have not too many names, and the Home Atlas has many tiny inset maps of surprising usefulness. It knows also, for example, that to cross the Southern Alps one goes through Arthur Pass, and not Arthurs Pass, as the Faber Atlas has it.

The Atlas of U.S.S.R. is much more than an atlas alone, in that it includes a very useful and extensive text also on the geography of Russia. Its defect is inherent in its subject. The U.S.S.R. is so vast that the areas of interest appear very small on the rather small format. It is an indispensable book for anyone interested in the problem of Russia and Eastern Europe.

## FREE, UNIVERSAL AND COMPULSORY

EDUCATION IN NEW INDIA, by Humayun Kabir; Allen and Unwin, English price 21/-.

WHEN India became free in 1947 only about 15 per cent of the population and a smaller percentage of adults was literate. Nevertheless, the Constitution boldly declared that universal compulsory free education should be provided for all up to the age of 11 within ten years. The difficulties ahead, apart altogether from internal disturbances and the impact of world events, were enormous. Expansion of services at the primary level depended on a vast increase in the supply of teachers, and this in turn depended on a reconstruction and



Eric Burgeon

(C) Punch

"Don't just lie there, stupid! Do something!"

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 5, 1957.