

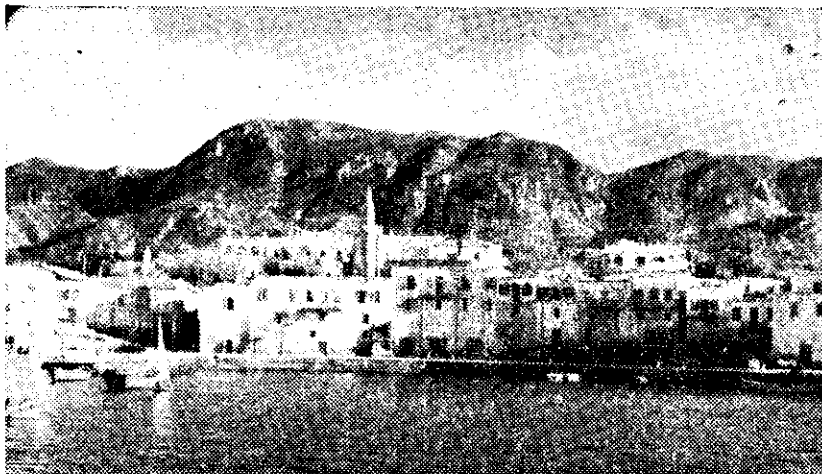
ISLAND STORY

BITTER LEMONS, by Lawrence Durrell; Faber and Faber, English price 16/-.

• (Reviewed by James Bertram)

CYPRUS may have dropped out of the headlines; but the unresolved problem of the future of this historic Mediterranean island is likely to haunt the British Foreign Office, and the councils of the United Nations, for many years to come. Most of us are as unhappy as the Cypriots themselves about recent developments there, yet few of us know why the political situation should have deteriorated so suddenly and so tragically. Mr Durrell's book is a delight to read in itself, and it does illuminate the Cyprus Dilemma—at first by flashes, finally by a steady concentrated beam that is focused, I feel sure, on the very heart of the matter.

A poet who loves the Mediterranean, who loves Greece and the Byzantine tradition and who first went to Cyprus in 1953 to buy a house and live in the mountains among Greek-speaking villagers, is probably a more reliable guide to the true feelings of this island people



KYRENIA, a small seaport on the northern coast of Cyprus

than the most high-powered political commentator. For his last two years, the years of crisis, Mr Durrell was Press Adviser to the Government of Cyprus; he has an immense admiration for Sir John Harding, and every sympathy with the British troops in their ungrateful task of trying to restore order. But his lively and often moving account of the phase of violence and terror merely underlines the basic contention of his book: that the tragedy need never have happened. Where many were at fault, it seems clear that the heaviest share of blame—for mis-

understanding, obtuseness, and failure to develop a real policy for Cyprus until it was too late—must rest with Sir Anthony Eden and the British Cabinet.

Mr Durrell did not set out to write a political book, but rather an "impressionistic study of the moods and atmospheres of Cyprus during the troubled years." His earlier chapters on tavern acquaintances, on buying a house with the aid of a Turkish merchant and rebuilding it with the help of a team of Greek villagers, on teaching sixth-formers in a gymnasium in Nicosia, are

full of human comedy and revealing personal insights. Even when the scene darkens, when his former pupils become bomb-throwers and his Greek school-master friend falls victim to terrorists, he retains a poet's eye for beauty, pity, and obstinate evidence of the abiding affections. The quality of the writing alone would make this an outstanding Mediterranean travel-book. Because Mr Durrell cares deeply about the fate of his island friends in Cyprus, it is also a personal historical document of lasting value.

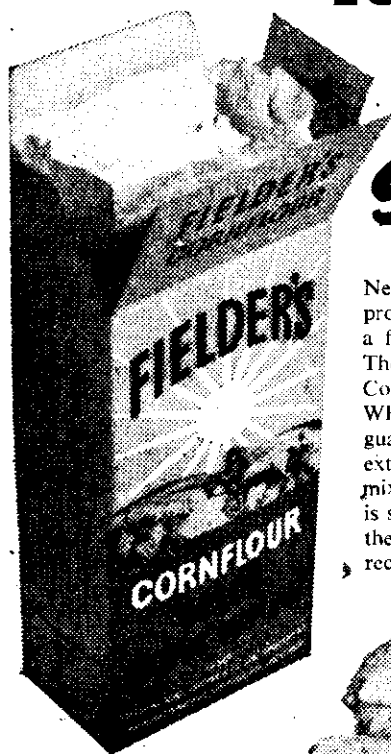
ROGER CASEMENT'S REPUTATION

THE ACCUSING GHOST, or *Justice for Casement*, by Alfred Noyes; Victor Gollancz, English price 15/-.

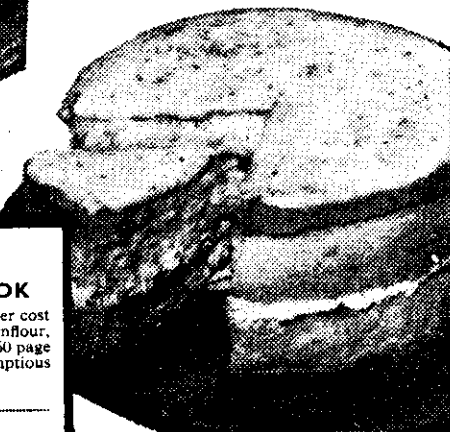
IN four respects official Britain has made a martyr of Roger Casement. It hanged him in the face of petitions for reprieve signed by eminent persons of all parties. Immediately after the trial it clandestinely circulated reports, followed by documents, that Casement was a sexual pervert. This was done, so it is charged, deliberately; to damp down sympathy for the prisoner. Successive Governments have declined to allow the alleged Casement diaries, the foundation of the perversion story, to be impartially examined. If the diaries exist, they are apparently held by the Home Office. Fourthly, transfer of Casement's remains to Eire has been refused.

This was all featured in Rene MacColl's lengthy biography, reviewed here some months ago. Now Alfred Noyes, the veteran poet, in a shorter bio-

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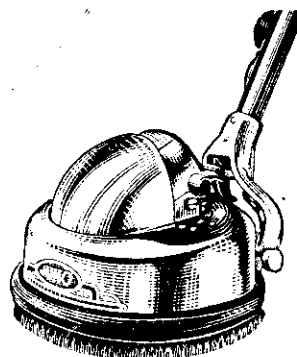
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