

FIVE novels are to be dealt with in the ZB Book Review session on May 31. Dorothy White (below) will discuss two of them: "The Ultimate Shore," by Charles Mitchell, and "Alys at Endon," by Rosalind Wade. George Camden will review "Betrayed Spring," by Jack Lindsay; "Blanket Boy's Moon," by Peter Lanham, is to be reviewed by Greig Royle, and Lau Shaw's "The Drum Singers," by James Bertram.



South Korean Government to the United Nations in the early stages of the Korean dispute, a position she well deserved to hold because her life has been one long struggle for Korean independence. This autobiography is one of the few modern books to give a picture of Korean life prior to the present trouble. Thousands of newspaper columns about the military situation have left the general public no wiser about the background and traditions of this nation. Most English readers will be astounded to learn in Louise Yim's pages that Pyongyang, Korea's first capital, was founded in 2257 B.C., that the world's first astronomical observatory was established at Kwanju in about A.D. 500, and that in Korea the use of moveable type predated Gutenberg.

—D.N.W.

DIFFICULTIES

GIANT, by Edna Ferber; Victor Gollancz. English price, 12/6. *WATER-LILY*, by F. Y. Thompson; Jonathan Cape. English price, 12/6. *ROWANBERRY WINE*, by Dorothy Cowlin; Jonathan Cape. English price, 12/6. *A PLACE TO LIVE*, by George Buchanan; Faber and Faber. English price, 10/6.

THE difficulties of a refined woman married to a Texas beef baron who is wedded to his several million-acre ranch are the theme on which Edna Ferber hangs a regional survey of the Lone Star State, replete with nutty quips and much well-cooked information. Leslie Benedict also upholds traditional middle-of-the-road American liberalism against the reactionary habits of power-polluted ranchers and oil men. This is a vigorous, well-constructed, graphic novel, with a faint background noise of grinding axes.

Water-Lily also gives a good picture of a society, the Chinese-European business community in Bangkok, Thailand, and its fringes. The hero is a lonely Dane whose main difficulties are due to his impulsive adoption of a stray half-caste child.

Two elderly archaeologists excavating in Yorkshire stray into some unbecoming emotional entanglements with their student helpers among the funeral barrows. The difficulties caused by late-middle-age unfaithfulness are explored in *Rowanberry Wine* with competence, if not with much force.

In *A Place to Live*, George Buchanan describes the difficulties a young airman has in settling down in civil life, due largely to his having more talent than his job of hotel management demands. This novel does not realise its possibilities and seems like an impatient sketch for the book its author will one day write.

—David Hall

A HOME IN TAHITI

THE ISLAND BEYOND THE HORIZON, by Sverre Holmsen; James Barrie. English price, 12/6.

THE author, a Swede with travel fever, had had four years before the mast and in the Canadian lumber camps be-

fore setting out with his young wife to find a place to settle in the South Seas "far from the warped materialism and growing unrest of the civilised race." After some years in and about the Society Islands they got possession of a virgin jungle valley in eastern Tahiti and proceeded to establish a home and to live more or less as the natives, adopting their customs and attitude to life. In the long run they were defeated, mainly by tropical storm and sickness which led to the death of their younger child. Mother and the elder child returned to civilisation; father remained to fight, with Scandinavian courage and Polynesian philosophy, a battle against French policy to realise what he could of his assets. There are some pretty pictures, and incidentally a very interesting account of a personal experience of a fire-walking ceremony.

—L.J.W.

THE COMMONWEALTH

CONSULTATION AND CO-OPERATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH, by Heather J. Harvey; Royal Institute of International Affairs; Oxford University Press. English price, 30/-.

THE Commonwealth "is a singularly lawless association." The members are not even anywhere legally enumerated. In each successive year, it is something different—Ireland out, India in. All that anyone can do is to pin it down at a moment of time and say, for example, "This was the Commonwealth in April, 1951." And that is what the author has done. No opinions, no analysis; just references, quotations, sources—400 painstaking pages on the Crown, nationality and citizenship, the Imperial Conference, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, meetings of Prime Ministers, standing machinery, collective defence, co-operative action for the control of atomic energy, participation in international organisations, the ratification of treaties, regional co-operation. This is a very good handbook.

—W. B. Sutcliffe

MESSAGE TO UNBELIEVERS

THE REALM OF SPIRIT AND THE REALM OF CAESAR, by Nicolas Berdyaev, translated by Donald A. Lowrie; Victor Gollancz. English price, 15/-.

BERDYAEV'S last book was prepared for publication after his death by a group of friends. The philosopher looks at the relationship between man and society, and between man and God, and goes on to examine the nature of Communism, the fallacies of Marxism, the weaknesses of internationalism, and finally the concept of the "new" man, which he sees as an error unless it "presupposes spiritual movement and change." A social order by itself cannot create the new man; it can only produce new types, of which there have been many in the past, leading up—or down—to the "technical man" of the 20th Century.

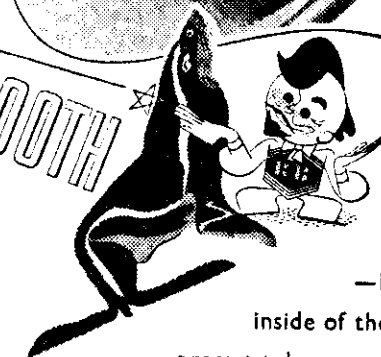
Berdyaev's thoughts are thrown out with prophetic energy, and also with a prophetic disregard for the usual methods of analysis. He asserts instead of explaining, and he uses words which apparently have no meanings outside his own books; but his intuitions, when they can be grasped, are never shallow and are often profound.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND THE WEST, by Percival Spear; Home University Library; Oxford University Press; English price 6/-. The second edition of a useful book first published in 1949. An additional chapter covers events of recent years.

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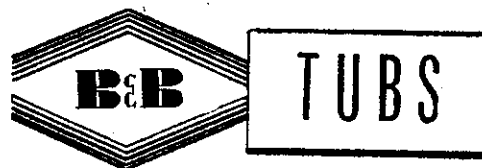
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