

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Flaherty, in short, has thrown a bomb labelled 'Sea' from the Western rim of the European world, just as Pudovkin threw one from the east in 'Earth.' He may not have meant to throw a bomb; probably, like the great artist he is, he was interested only in recording what he saw, and the disruptive effect of his record never occurred to him. Nevertheless, whether it occurred to him or not, Flaherty has packed a few reels of celluloid with the most frightful form of sociological criticism that exists, the criticism that consists, not in attacking, but showing a different way of life—a way of life that sends most of us out into the sunlight again feeling decidedly shoddy. That is the first point to note about *Man of Aran*—that it is, on reflection, first-rate sociological criticism. Western machine civilization cannot go back upon itself now because of the men of Aran, but a glance at their way of life is enough to confirm us in the knowledge that our present phase is only a bad smell—that we must go through to something else, or stew in our own cocktail juices.

PENGUIN.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

DEAR SIR,

'Penguin' in the current issue of BLACKFRIARS records Mr. Edwin Muir's theory that Bolshevism is the modern equivalent of Calvinism. Actually does the analogy hold, beyond the similarity existing between any one intellectual revolution and another? The fact that Bolshevism and Calvinism are both 'anti-traditional, anti-romantic, functional and exclusive' hardly urges us to institute a useful analogy. Psychologically Calvinists and Bolsheviks may in many cases be similar types. But what is Mr. Muir's counterpart of the collective consciousness and co-operative basis of Bolshevism? Moreover, the determinism of Bolshevism is of a totally different origin from that of Calvinism, a symptom of a totally different psychosis, functioning to an altogether different end.

As your contributor Mr. J. F. T. Prince has frequently pointed out, a more provocative analogy is the double and paradoxical one which indicates to our shame (a) the parallel sureness, asceticism and zeal of the ideal Christian and Bolshevik; (b) the Materialist, earth-bound vision which relates Bolshevik Theory to 'Christian' practice, which we cannot lay wholly at the door of the Reformers.

DAVID MACKENZIE.

Buckfast.