

to be able to appreciate its solid virtues, and, in view of the experience of our own times, to wonder at much of its confidence. It is too easily supposed that there was a uniform liberal optimism that characterised what is discernibly a distinct era in English history. If there was a Herbert Spencer, there was too a Ruskin; and Newman is as Victorian a figure as Darwin. Perhaps the most enduring factor in this ambitious series is its warning against generalisations. They are usually false, and rarely can they survive the impact of a humane judgment.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

WORLD REVOLUTION. By Lionel Curtis. (Blackwell; 7s. 6d.)

EUROPE UNITES. (Hollis and Carter; 3s. 6d.)

It should be said at the beginning that although Mr Curtis's book is well-intentioned, it is nonetheless extremely boring. His aim is to contrast the completion of the American Revolution in the eighteenth century with the problem of Western Union in the twentieth century. In itself such an aim is admirable. The book is divided into three, and by easy stages an account is given in the first part of what led to the completion of the American Constitution, as drafted by the Philadelphia Convention of 1787. The second part is contemporary and mainly documentary: it includes a chapter on the Hague Congress of last year. The third part is interpretative: it draws a number of conclusions, contrasting the earlier American scene with the present European one, and attempts to formulate from these conclusions the precepts for true peace. Now although these precepts as they are stated in this book read as a string of platitudes, the fact that they are platitudes does not invalidate their original truths. On the contrary, what these platitudes do is merely bore the reader in exactly the same way, and for the same reason, that today so many political speeches bore their audiences. One knows political responsibility, social welfare and a balanced economy can only become realities when the threat of war is abolished—it has been the cry of all the three parties for the last twenty years: one knows too that the threat of war can only be abolished by international means—it has been proclaimed again and again at conference after conference; it was the purpose of the League of Nations in the 'thirties and it is the purpose of the current European movement towards Western Union. Yet these remedies at best are only half remedies: the real revolution must lie elsewhere—in the soul of man. Mr Curtis, in his plea of good heart for peace, only skims the surface of the problem in his book. In making a number of obvious points, he omits to mention the one point which really matters: that politics cannot be divorced from religion, save to the detriment of men.

This point is brought out far more satisfactorily in the short preface which Mr Churchill contributes to *Europe Unites* (a hand-

book of the Hague Congress). He writes: 'By our combined exertions we have it in our power to restore the health and greatness of our ancient continent—Christendom as it used to be called'; and again as Pius X once said: 'Civilisation has no longer to be discovered, nor the new city to be built in the clouds. It has existed and it exists; it is the Christian civilisation. . . . It is only necessary to keep on founding and rebuilding it on its natural and divine foundations'. Taken together these two comments might provide excellent epigraphs for future writers on Western Union; yet even better would it be if they might be taken as a cue by statesmen of the world before it is too late.

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE.

WEST OF THE DECLINE. By Frederick Jellinek. (Alliance Press; 12s. 6d.)

One sure way of making a literary reputation nowadays would seem to consist in forming a circle of friends who are eager to indulge in mutual back-slapping: the pattern can easily be detected no matter what kind of circle is formed, whether left-wing or young Tory, whether Catholic or Anglican. The general public suffers from the lack of intersection between these circles and waits anxiously for a sign from an angry man who is sickened with them all. Mr Jellinek is an angry man, not disinclined to punch offending noses, and he is thoroughly disgruntled with the contemporary economists of comfort. Wearers of the noses which he handles so severely include Crowther, Beveridge, Laski, Koestler, Kingsley Martin 'e tutti quanti'.

A plain statement of fact provides a summary of the book, that there is not sufficient food produced in the world to afford each inhabitant a comfortable, or even an adequate, standard of living. This means that the primary problem is not one of distribution but of production; Jellinek's elaboration of the theme also shows how we Westerners, even the poorest amongst us, have been living upon the backs of slaving Indians, Chinese, Africans, etc. How we are to change the situation is a question which Jellinek scarcely answers, but his vigorous writing certainly helps us to recognise the need for change. It would be a pity if his ungainly literary style were to dissuade prospective readers from learning the lesson which he has to teach.

D. NICHOLL.

KEVIN O'HIGGINS. By Terence de Vere White. (Methuen; 18s.)

Injustice to a people, besides inflicting suffering, is apt to breed tragedy. Too often the injured party not only endures wrongs from its oppressor, but, in its efforts to redress them, becomes itself divided by internal feuds.

There have been minor instances of this in the differences that have arisen amongst the Poles in their struggle against Soviet injus-