Comfortable Pew: A Comfortable Book

Pierre Berton's new book, The Comfortable Pew, promises to be he most satisfactory publication on religion in many a year. Mr. Berton will be satisfied; his reputation as an iconoclast and as an outspoken controverstalist will be strengthened, Mc tensions to Absolute Rightness." Clelland and Stewart, the publisher, will be satisfied; the book browsing should suffice to imbibe will receive a great deal of free Mr. Berton's message. He blasts publicity from ministers the attitude of the Church towards throughout the land, and should

net them a tidy profit. The Anglican Church, which sponsored the book, will be satsfied; its leaders can assert that they have submitted themselves and their church to a public penance, from which all will arise refreshed and strengthened. Clergymen throughout the country will be satisfied; the book solves Church's lack of understanding of their sermon problem for the the problems of the "New Age". coming year, and will give them plenty of straw mentotilt against

or some time to come. Atheists, agnostics, and others opposed to organized religion will be satisfied; here they see in print their own sentiments, long suppressed or only feebly voiced in the past.

SOUNDS OF BATTLE

Of course, there is going to be one hell of a row over this book n Canada. Already the theolocical artillery is being pushed nto line (a counterblast to the book is in course of preparation). Soon the religious trumpets shall sound, and the faithful will gird up their lions. All will be ready for the assault of the philistines, and soon we shall hear the sounds of battle as the religious and antireligious clash in personal and public debate.

The book will be damned and praised, reviled and hailed. It here we have an advanced clergymay even be burnt in some of the remoter parts of the Bible Belt.

And yet, there seems to be something rather odd about the book -- the combined work of a crusading journalist, a religious sect, and a commercial publishing house. In his book, Mr. Berton accuses the Church of

failing to make use of the modern arts of communication. And yet, the Anglican Church sought out Mr. Berton and asked him to write it -- surely an indication of their mastery of the media.

The book has a singular advantage. It does not have to be read in full; the chapter headings tell the tale. Three parts, headed "The Abdication of Leadership", "The Tyranny of the Religious Establishment", and "The Failure of Communication" are each subdivided into five chapters with like "What Color was much more encouraging picture titles Christ?" "The Ecclesiastical Caste System", and"The Pre- ago.

THE RELIGIOUS TRUMPETS SHALL SOUND, THE FAITHFUL, GIRD UP THEIR LOINS, ALL IN READINESS FOR THE PHILISTINES' ASSAULT ...

Fifteen minutes of casual war, sex, automation, business, race problems, his famous article in MacLean's magazine and the CBC play "The open Grave" among other things.

He claims that the modern church is out of step with the 20th Century, and that it is apathetic when not downright reactionary. He cites many examples of the

The writing in the book occasionally rises to great heights. Without a doubt Mr. Berton is one of Canada's ablest writers. He has a real talent for communicating his ideas, his enthusiasm, his opinions and his prejudices to the reader.

MINOR HERETIC

And yet the book left me strangely unsatisfied and unmoved after reading it. Mr. Berton had done an excellent job of flailing the church, and has demonstrated its inability to grapple with modern problems. In another age he would doubtless have been burnt as a heretic and later canonized as a saint. But he would have been a very minor heretic and saint.

spirit

God.'

MISSES BASIC PROBLEM

One reason is that too many of his arguments lend them selves to easy refutation. Has some preacher thundered against sex? Then man who says that sex is a good thing! Have the southern clergymen supported racial segregation, even in the churches?

Then look at the work of the Reverend Martin Luther King! In the months to come, such arguments will be widely used.

They soon degenerate into vast games of semantic chess, with each side trying to checkmate the other with some "fact" that proves its case, and effectively demolishes the others.

What Mr. Berton says has been said before many times and in ways. Edward Gibbon many chronicled the triumph of barbarism and of Christianity with more wit, elegance and fact than Mr. Berton some 200 years ago. Whatever may be said against the Established Church its min-

isters, on the whole, present a

than they did 100 or even 50 years



moral fence sitting in the of such a society. The Church, as such, is not a churches is still marked, but the Ecumenical movement and the separate Establishment; it is a of reform evident at part of that system of ideas, the Vatican Council show the pos- values, opinions and actions that sible shape of things to come. form the Establishment. Perhaps Clergymen have become increas- people get the sort of church ingly involved and committed to and sort of religion -- they decauses. Mr. Berton, in the serve. Mr. Berton's book merely proves, skillfully and eloquently, manner of one trying hard to stay that vet another system built by in the forefront of a movement, mentions some of these clergy- Man is inadequate for Man's men. He also draws extensively present needs. upon the ideas of such theologians

The great religious delemma of and religious thinkers as Paul this century is related, not to Robinson, author of "Honest to the problem of individual sal- mistake in the past it has been in destruction. And the Church is and too little in Man. becoming increasingly aware of this. It is becoming more and Somehow, Mr. Berton seems to more willing to admit that it no miss the main point-and the main problem. No century has seen as much universal horror as this one. The Church, together with many other organizations and individuals, is struggling desperby action.

ately for answers and solutions to The Church, as an organiza- and of modern society. the many problems of our time. tion, is Man's work, not God's. Christianity has never really made up its mind whether it is And the horrors of the 20th propagating an ethic or promoting a personality. In an acquisitive society it is easier to preach the necessity of accepting a dead saviour, who can rid people of their sins, than it is to attack the forms them into instruments of duty. great and unbelievable destruccovetousness, self-seeking and snobbery that may well be tion and evil.

IDEAS FOR REFORM It is when Mr. Berton puts forward his ideas on how to reform the system, and bring the Church into the New Age, that he reveals his weakness.

Many of his ideas are sound -worker priests, clergymen freed from routine parish duties, a greater sense of commitment to those causes of the day which involve moral issues. But on the last page he calls for a new Messiah -- "one man, of some spiritual genius, who will take the incredible laws, postures, and myths of today's Church and turn them inside out so they will have some relevance in the New Age." Mr. Berton's Messiah sounds suspiciously like a charismatic political leader, a new Hitler, convinced of the absolute rightness of his ideas.

It is not to the actions or to the promise of a single man that mankind must look; men must look to themselves. There are no more easy answers, no more facile solutions, no more magic words, no more problem-solving rituals that will overcome the great difficulties and dangers that lie around us. It is worth quoting here the words of Homer W. Smith in "Man and His Gods":

"A man can lose his god but he cannot lose himself. His fate was not decreed in the temple of Osiris, or written on the tablets of Marduk, or settled by Olympian conclave or predestined by righteous Yahweh. He has always had it clinched in his own hands; he need but open his fingers to read his lifeline, he need but close them resolutely upon the task to turn his dreams into reality. Then he will pronounce life good and cease to worry about that which at present lies beyond his ken, nor look back at the phantasmagoria that marks his past."

If the Church has made vation, but to the fear of universal placing too much faith in God,

Mr. Berton has written an longer has the right answers. In entertaining, stimulating and a world that is still seeking to im- provocative book. But, some plement the values preached by how he has missed the mark. He Christ, the Church is starting, has judged and condemned the however feebly, to show its ideals modern church; but too often the failings of the modern church seem to be those of modern men

However, if his book focuses Century show that when Man ab- attention upon our common probdicates his responsibilities and lems and our common failings gives blind allegiance to the or- religious and secular, and not just ganization, the system, the bur- upon those of the Church, it will eaucracy or the state, he trans- have performed a worthwhile

Coming Campus Culture

MUSIC - Wallace Art Collection

THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE Page Four Hopping Thru The Pasture doesn't bother me. I know all

eous. They start picketing and ly-

ing in the streets and all that.

The singing is what you might

call the "spark what sets off the

GAZETTE: What, exactly, is the

point in setting off the fuse?

HOWIE: Don't I get through to

you at all, man? Like how can

Like the fuzz think we don't

like to get arrested but we love

to get arrested 'cuz then we got

body has the right to try and make

GAZETTE: Did do do any singing

HOWIE: One song in particular

that I felt fitted the occasion.

Oh there ain't no freedom in

Sing derry-derry-down, uerry-

Oh if there ain't no freedom

Sing derry-derry-down, derry-

Sing derry-derry-down, derry-

Sing derry-derry-derry-der-

I wrote this myself, you might

say, on the spot. It kinda grabs

you, especially the second verse.

I remember when I got arrested

arrest" got to do with it?

fuse"

arrest?

movement.

prostitution?

a buck.

in Jersey?

It goes like this:

derry-down,

don't nobody care?

ry down.

dare.

down,

judge.

ry-down.

this town,

down,

Author's Note: Several days ago the Gazette office was honoured by an unexpected visit from opportunity to interview this con-

troversial figure who has travelled as far south as Pittsburg. "chain reaction". When I start Penn., and as far north as La- strumming my "axe" and singchine, Que. Howie Seegram, using the guitar as his passport, the ballad as his communion, and the open road as his home, has become the materialized image of human freedom, brotherhood, equality, and, that ultimate and infinite desire in the soul of mankind, world peace. Howie Seegram's messages in song are heard by the bank executive in Chicago, the Negro in Harlem, the student in Boston, the steelworker in Hamilton, and the salesman in Toronto. Howie is loved and he is hated, but human emotion is Howie's breath of life, his shrine of incentive. His intense dedication to the cry of humanity and the unconquerable striving for self-justification are vivid in Howie's response to the following interview.

GAZETTE: Mr. Seegram: HOWIE: Just call me Howie. Everybody does. GAZETTE: What brought you to Halifax, Howie?

them right where we want them, HOWIE: A Volkswagon. I got a on a violation of the Bill of ride out of Saint John. Nice Rights. Dig? I'll never forget fella. He was only going to Truro the night in Jersey when they but he drove me all the way when out the hoses on us. I just kept I told him who I was. on strumming and singing "Cool GAZETTE: What were you doing Water"

in Saint John? GAZETTE: What were you pro-HOWIE: They were starting a littesting against? tle "Ban the Bomb" movement HOWIE: Prostitution. There was up there so I thought I'd go and a hell of a lot of prostution in help out, you know, sort of like Jersey and the fuzz was giving a professional advisor. the girls a rough time so I GAZETTE: What exactly did the

movement do? HOWIE: Well, we carried a few signs and lay in the streets a little.

GAZETTE: Was the movement successful? HOWIE I look at it this way.

They haven't bombed Saint John yet, have they. GAZETTE: Do you credit this to the "Ban the Bomb" movement? HOWIE: I'd have to give a little credit to President Trueman. GAZETTE: Where were you be-

fore Saint John? HOWIE: Up in Three Rivers. Somebody told methat they were having a real bad Negro problem up there so I thought I'd better make the scene and sing about it

a little and stir up a little resentment on both sides, maybe clear up the problem with one big demonstration. GAZETTE: I wasn't aware of the

Negro problem in Three Rivers. HOWIE: A lot of the French cats call it "Trois Rivieres". It pays to be bilingual.

GAZETTE: How serious is this Negro problem? HOWIE: Oh man. They've got a

for vagrancy in Winnipeg, they terrible situation on their hands. were gonna give me thirty days, It's like, if you want to get so I sang that song right to the folksy, a volcano what you never notice until it erupts. Man, you GAZETTE: What happened? got to plug that hole before it blows.

forty days, but I let them know GAZETTE: How did you plan to, as you say, "plug that hole"? iOWIE: I was gonna sing songs how I felt. GAZETTE: Changing the

Cuddle up an' don't feel blue,

with Weedy about freedom from religion. GAZETTE: What exactly are

something to sing about. It gets your political views? Howie Seegram, the folksinger. the ball rolling, makes 'em aware HOWIE: When somebody asks me I took this once-in-a-lifetime of the frightening situation loomthat question I just say, When I was just a little boy, ing before their very eyes. It sets up what you might call a My father said to me, Come here and take a lemon from ing something downright ethnic The lovely lemon tree. like "Oh You Can't Get to Hea-Don't put your faith in P.C.

ven on Roller Skates" or "Take son, Me Out to the Ball Game" the Liberal or N.D.P. cats get all moralistic and right-

Just sit and suck the lemons from

The lovely lemon tree. GAZETTE: Do you have a religion, Howie?

HOWIE: As a matter of fact yes. I'm hip on religion.

"Just give me that old-time religion . . . GAZETTE: What do you believe,

society survive without free-Howie? HOWIE: I believe that somewhere dom and equality and all that? up there is a Supreme Almighty Haven't you read the Bill of Rights, Daddy-o? Haven't you Cat who runs a hip Coffee House and plays a Twelve-stringer. heard of freedom of arbitrary When a folksinger on earth kicks off he gets to sit in on the Happy GAZETTE: What's "arbitrary Hootnanny. He even gets to go

HOWIE: There's gonna be lots surfing once in a while. GAZETTE: What are you planof arbitrary arrest when the cats start lying in the streets. ning to do in Halifax?

HOWIE: I'm gonna help build the Cornwallis Shopping Centre. GAZETTE: Isn't that a little out of your line?

HOWIE: Like no, man. When I start singing those stirring, moving ballads like "Tie me Kangaroo Down, Sport'' and "Mexicali Rose" and "When Irish Eyes are Smiling", the job will be virtually finished. If we have to we'll lie in the streets.

There's one song in particular that would fit the occasion. It's what you might call a "soulsearcher". moved in and started a protest Do it now,

Do it now,

GAZETTE: Do you agree with Why wait for spring, Do it while men are available, HOWIE: Well, like, Ithink every-

Do it now. Sing derry-derry-down, der-

ry-down.

The last line is what you might call, "Self-constructed".

GAZETTE: And where do you plan to go after leaving Halifax? HOWIE: Probably Montreal. I've got a few letters I want to mail.

GAZETTE: Eh? HOWIE: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

That's a little F.L.Q. joke I Sing derry-derry-down, derryknow. Ha, ha. ha. GAZETTE: Are you envolved Sing derry-derry-derry-der-

with the F.L.Q.? HOWIE: Not really. But those

cats sure as hell know how to protest, don't they? GAZETTE: I don't think that's

particularly funny. HOWIE: You're just like all the

rest. GAZETTE: What do you mean

'all the rest''? HOWIE: You're against freedom,

and equality, and the Bill of Rights.

We shall overcome, We shall overcome,

We shall overcome, by George, Sing derry-derry-down, derry down.

GAZETTE: What are your plans HOWIE: They jacked it up to for the future?

HOWIE: Probably go over to South Vietnam. I hear they're ot a real problem over there

The love of Jeanne Ney

As not infrequently happens at the movies, the short subject proved to be more entertaining than the main attraction at last week's screening by the Dal. Film Society. THE EXPERIMENTAL FILM, made by the NFB in 1962, is a very interesting examination of this type of film from the point of view of both film-makers and critics, whose comments are interspersed with a generous selection of the type of picture they're talking about. This sort of letting-the-audience-see-toritself is very helpful in educating critical sensibility, and the NFB deserves commendation. When exposed to NFB material as a child, I used to think it was perfectly terrible; it's amazing how the product has improved with age.

Gazette

From the point of view of its story, THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY seems to me repellent. The film is vintage Communist propaganda, of the same type as MIRACLE IN MILAN twenty years later, and purports to prove the same point: that money is the root of all evil. No one since the time of Chaucer's Pardoner has been able to convince an audience of the truth of this proposition; at any rate, THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY falls far short of being convincing. The novel upon which the film was based was written in 1924 by Ilya Ehrenburg, a Soviet writer who later in life was twice awarded the Stalin Prize. The film was made in 1927 and the novel was translated into English two years later, so we may assume that the story was something of a best seller at the time. The plot, in terms of the film, is basic corn: Jeanne, whose father is investigating the political life of Russia during the Revolutionary period, falls in love with Andreas, a young Bolshevik. Duty forces him to become involved in the murder of Jeanne's father.

She returns to Paris, but a jolly commissar makes possible Andreas' assignment to Paris on a subversive mission. Meanwhile, the sinister villain appears in Paris to thwart the lovers' hopes by implicating Andreas in another murder, this time of Jeanne's greedy uncle. Like Nancy Drew, Jeanne sets out to solve the mystery, and by cracky! she does, too. We may assume that they lived happily ever after.

If this plot were done without ideological decoration, it might make (indeed, it has made) a good B grade Hollywood melodrama. But when we see the ommunist element portrayed as spotless in vire, while the capitalist class and their hirelings ssess all the vices (they smoke, drink, and inlge in sexual aberrations -- Jeanne's uncle tries commit incest with her), all credibility vanes. Jeanne's uncle, for example, is not a charer but a caricature. He is portrayed as the pical" fat, fish-eyed capitalist too stingy to electricity (candles are cheaper), who has no inpathy for the working class (he abruptly fires elderly female typist to make room for Jeanne his detective agency) and who indulges in luxes (he enjoys his ESCARGOTS). At one point. goes into a positive frenzy counting in panto-

mine the money he expects to receive as a reward for recovering a diamond (another evil lux-ury). That this sort of thing could be offered as serious social commentary seems incredible, yet there is every evidence in the film that it was intended to be taken seriously. The only character who lays claim to believability is Jeanne herself. Her mobile and expressive face almost hypnotizes the viewer into sympathy with her, in spite of one ridiculously out-of-place smirk she makes at the audience on the prospect of spending a night at a hotel with her lover.

Reviews

If the film has little to offer a modern audience in terms of plot, it does present several interesting technical aspects. The year in which it was made marks the beginning of the sound era, and this film illustrates the silent in just about its most developed stage. At several points the film appears to be on the very verge of breaking into sound. Effective use is made of a moving camera, both for panoramic shots (rotating the camera about a fixed axis) and for tracking shots (following the action with a camera mounted on a moving vehicle). These developments (which had come about some years previously) were essential if the cinema was to become a medium for telling stories visually, in terms of action and reaction. This THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY does; titlecards are kept to a minimum, and the director might even have done with one or two less. When the scene of the action shifts to Paris, the location photography is done tastefully and well, without the obviousness of "What landmark shall we photograph next?" which mars almost every Hollywood movie with a foreign locale. The two technical innovations which contribue most to the picture's visual effect, however, are the use of close-ups and the skillful cross-cutting throughout. "Cross-cutting" is a technical term for the splicing of lengths of film together in the process of film editing, which illustrate an action sequence from two or more points of view. An excellent example occurs when Andreas and Jeanne are about to reunited in Paris: the camera follows the running Andreas, then shifts to Jeanne in a taxi, then back to Andreas. By making successive "cuts" shorter and shorter, the illusion of impending climax can be achieved. We see this in the sequence in which Jeanne's uncle is counting his imaginary wealth. The camera shifts from his fingers to his eyes to his gasping mouth in a seies of fast cuts which seem to catch the man's frenzy.

The idea of "zeroing - in" on the action was quite new; it was also an extremely happy innovation because it made possible the exposure of psychological nuances which before had remained hidden. With regard to the film's psychology, an interesting use is made of mirrors and reflections to punctuate the movie's more turgid emotional passages. Recently we have been learning a good deal about mirror-images, from Bergman and others. Apparently, there's nothing new under the sun.

ebruary 21 -MUSIC FOR ORCHESTRA Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Vaughan Williams): The Halifax Symphony Orchestra. King's Gym, 3.00 p.m. FREE! Same Date -

ACADIA UNIVERSITY CHAP-EL CHOIR; Leonard Mayoh, conductor, Eugen Gmeimer, organist. (St. Mary's Basilica, Spring Garden Road, 8.30 p.m., student admission 75¢)

ART February 26 -CULTURAL POVERTY IN AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY, a lecture by John Reppeteaux, Nova Scotia College of Art. (Dunn Physics Theatre, 8.30 p.m. FREE!)

Until February 27 -Paintings and drawings by Miller Brittain in the Dalhousie Art Gallery.

ebruary 23 - March 5 -Maritime Art Association Annual Exhibition in the Men's Residence Library. ARTFILMS

Tonight (February 19) -ART TREASURES IN GREAT MUSEUMS (Dunn Physics Theatre. 8.00 p.m.)

- Art Heritage

- Your National Gallery

UNIVERSITY ART EXHIBITION

The twelfth Annual Exhibition of art work by members of the student body, the alumni, the members of the staff (and wives or husbands) will be held in the Men's Residence Library beginning on Monday, March 1, 1965. All works must be delivered to the Men's Residence Library on Friday, February 26th between the hours of 10 a.m. to p.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. For further details please see "Instruction Sheet for Annual Exhibition Entries" which will be available in the following places: The Campus Co-ordinator's

Office, Arts Annex Dalhousie Art Gallery, A & A Building

Men's Residence Library

- Chinese Shadow Play FILMSOCIETY

February 24-25 -TRIUMPH OF THE WILL (judgsome signs saving "Brothering from the model parliament hood" and "Equality", etc. election results, should be of GAZETTE: Could you give me an special interest to Dalhousie example of a "brotherhood students) Dunn Physics The- song' atre, 8.00 p.m., free if you're HOWIE: There's one in particular that I feel has a real stira member.

DRAMA ring message ... Come to me my melancholy Tonight (February 19) -Last chance to witness IN-HERIT THE WIND, King's Gym,

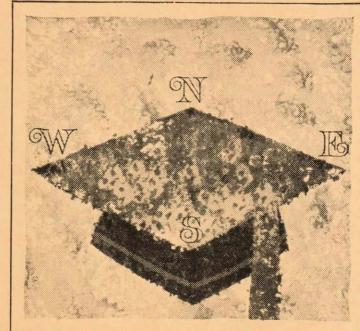
Black, white, or yellow. 8.15. February 24 - 27 -It sort of grabs you, don't it. DGDS production of L'IL AB- Like, when I sing it to a crowd

NER. Capitol Theatre, 8.15, of maybe nine or ten cats I can admission \$1.10, \$2.20, \$3.30 tell they feel it. I've got what (1) Phone 429-1966. you might call "audience rap-RELIGION port''.

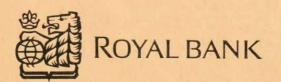
baby.

GAZETTE: And you expected February 24 -STUDY GROUP ON MODERN to solve the problem just by THEOLOGY, lead weekly by singing?

Dr. Chalmers, Women's Com- HOWIE: Hell no. The singing mon Room, A. & A. Building, gives them what you might call, 6.00 p.m.



Wherever you're heading after graduation, you'll find one of Royal's more than 1,100 branches there to look after you. Meanwhile, anything we can do for you, here and now? Drop in any time.



ject, what are your views on about brotherhood and all that jazz? For example, what do you and get a coupla cats to carry

think of Louis Armstrong? HOWIE: He's pretty hip, but he's got a lot to learn about blowing in the wind, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. GAZETTE: Yeah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

HOWIE: Us folksingers got to have a sense of humour. GAZETTE: A lot of people have called you an extreme socialist, Howie.

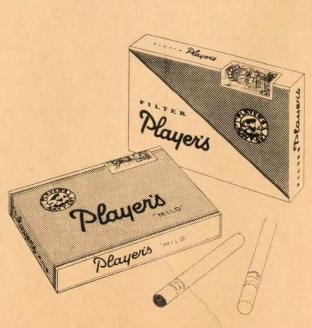
I figure I'll make the scene over there and boost the cats' spirit with a couple rousing ballads like "I'll Die Tomorrow" or "Death at Dawn and You'll be Gone''

GAZETTE: Thanks for dropping by Howie.

HOWIE: Don't mention it. Say, if you aren't doing anything tonight how's about joining us? We're gonna sprawl out on Spring Garden Road and sing "On the

HOWIE: That's true, but it Street Where You Lie".

You can't beat the taste of Player's



Player's... the best-tasting cigarettes.