

Galina Ulanova (p. 17). But faced with the Soviet people's faith in the future—which he calls almost childlike—his artist's eye almost always fails to read this faith in any line or expression, any mouth or eye or set of the head, of the quite imaginary Russians he draws.

For they are imaginary. How can these moronic, beetroot-faced, bovine, button-nosed people that he draws have the vitality, the self-confidence, the vast energy his own text credits them with? How is it that his artist's eye failed to catch the look in the eyes of the seventeen-year-old boys we saw at school in Moscow, and registered only the shaven-headed small boys, who pop up all over his pages without a single explanatory note that it is a Russian custom to shave small boys' heads in the hot summer, and that the hair had not grown back by September? Similarly, the custom that makes women wear warm head-shawls and men padded jackets with the onset of the bitter winter has somehow been transferred from their clothes to their faces. The kindergarten and other children (pp. 40, 42 and elsewhere) look shapeless about the face and head as well as the body, while the little "boy" on page 9 looks as though Vicky had "seen" him after a midnight supper darkly through a glass of Georgian wine. And although ironing-board figures are not common in the Soviet Union, did all the ladies really look like the bag-wash from the head downwards, even young girls on park benches?

As illusory as the fictitious "beggar" on page 37 were the endless "Stalins" in Georgia. A tendency to a high-bridged nose dark eyes and the occasional dark moustache—Georgian national traits—no more makes lots of little Stalins than cigars in the mouths of fat men make so many Churchills.

No, Vicky, no one followed you about in Moscow's streets and parks as you sketched. Why should they? But if the ordinary people had not had their eyes on the present and the future they might have argued the unreality of the sketches you filled your notebook with.

Not being an artist, I treasure not only my personal notebook—written records of our visit—but also the photographic record we each and all received. Perhaps, Vicky, you will go to that modest blue box, pull out the drawer, and look again into the reality of the superb, confident handsomeness of the Georgian kindergarten headmistress (your page 57), with her white crown of hair, her still-young face and sparkling, intelligent eyes; perhaps you will look again at the kindergarten children in their embroidered aprons, at the bright-eyed, fresh-faced boys and girls of Moscow and Tbilisi, and draw again.

E. FOX.

UNSUCCESSFUL POEM

Lenin: A Modern Epic Poem. James Paulden.
(Published by the author: 3/-)

RIGHTLY, Mr. Paulden wishes to express his admiration for Lenin's greatness. Unfortunately, his comprehension of the subject is narrow and inadequate, and his poetic form is cramped, weak and extremely monotonous. His work is a chronological account of Lenin's life, with occasional disquisitions on Liberty, Earth, Death, and so on; no change in form or diction marks the transitions of mood or emphasis. He seems to have gone laboriously through every scrap of information he could lay hands on, and has produced not "an epic poem" but an unevenly tendentious potted biography, a booklet like a patchwork counterpane but lacking its artificial formalised beauty. He fairly deifies Lenin; but his attempt "to justify God's ways to Man" shows the Miltonic presumption without Milton's warrant. Much of the work might have been accepted as a well-meaning if inadequate tribute to Lenin, but Mr. Paulden's starry-eyed view of Trotsky, his sour attitude towards practically everyone else he mentions, his preposterous claim that Lenin was the sole Marxist socialist extant in Russia ("all others baffled"), his metaphor of the Russian people as sheep herded by sheep-dog Bolsheviks to Shepherd Lenin's whistle, and other such touches, put him out of court as a serious witness to Lenin's greatness.

S.J.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- RUSSIA PAST AND PRESENT. A. G. Mazour. (*Macmillan*, 40/-)
- SPRING ON THE ODER. E. Kazakevich. (*FLPH*, unpriced.)
- THE DAWN OF A GREAT PROJECT. V. Galaktionov and A. Agranovsky. (*FLPH*, unpriced.)
- THE REAL STALIN. Yves Delbos. Tr. Bernard Miall. (*Allen and Unwin*, 25/-)
- THROUGH THE IRON CURTAIN BY THE BACK DOOR. U Kyaw Min. (*Ernest Benn*, 10/6.)
- WORKS, Vol. I. J. V. Stalin. (*Lawrence and Wishart*, 5/-)

SCR NOTES

LONDON MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS

April—June 1953

(All at 14 Kensington Square unless otherwise stated)

April

- 21st: Lecture. *The Classical and the Baroque Motifs in the Planning of the centre of St. Petersburg.* B. Lubetkin. Chair: John Summerson. **(Architecture and Planning Group.)**
- 23rd: Film. *Uzbekistan.* New Soviet colour documentary. Introductory talk on the Uzbek Republic: W. P. Coates. **(Film Section.)**
- 29th: PROKOFIEV MEMORIAL RECITAL. Leonard Cassini, Hubert Greenslade, Janet Howe, Frank Merrick, Tessa Robbins. At the Royal Festival Hall. **(Music Section.)**

May

- 10th: Children's Meeting and Film Show. Councillor Mary Baxter, J.P. **(Education Section.)**
- 11th: Exhibition of Soviet school text-books. Lecture: *The Teaching of British History in Soviet Schools.* Brian Pearce. **(Education Section.)**
- 14th: Lecture. *Films and Film-makers in the USSR.* George Elvin. Film: *Soviet Tadzhikistan.* **(Film Section.)**
- 21st: Film. *Armenia.* Introductory talk: Judith Todd. **(Film Section.)**
- 27th: Recital. New Soviet tape-recordings played on the magnetophone. **(Music Section.)**
- 29th: Film. *Country Doctor.* By invitation only. At Film House. **(Medical Section.)**

June

- 4th: Reception to Alexei Surkov and Madame Elistratova. By invitation only.
- 9th: Symposium on Mayakovsky. Lecture: Harold Silver. Readings: George Bishop, David Dawson, Joan Rodker, Eddie Woods, introduced by Stella Jackson. **(Theatre Section and Writers' Group.)**
- 11th: Opera Recital. Talk illustrated by recordings. D. T. Richnell. **(Music Section.)**
- 17th: Lecture. *Stalin's "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR."* Dr. R. L. Meek. **(Social Sciences Section.)**
- 18th: Film. *Latvia.* Introductory talk on the Latvian Republic: The Rev. Stanley Evans. **(Film Section.)**
- 23rd: Lecture. *The Soviet Attitude to International Law.* J. Gaster. **(Legal Section.)**
- 27th: SUMMER FAIR AND DANCE.