burdened by their labels and by their past records, good or bad. It is clearly very important indeed that this should not be just another of the many, many campaigns which those of my generation and older ones have launched in the past. It needs the freshness of new people to organise and inspire it.

Will those who feel that such an action is the only kind of response which can hope to match the terrible reality please send postcards to me, so that the strength of support may be judged? And will students, and others perhaps, begin at once to organise?—Yours faithfully,

PHILIP TOYNBEE

Lindsey, Hadleigh, Suffolk

SIR MAX BEERBOHM

SIR,—I have been asked by Lady Beerbohm, in accordance with the wishes of the late Sir Max Beerbohm, to write his life. I should be grateful if anyone with letters or reminiscences of him could communicate with me.—Yours faithfully,

DAVID CECIL

7 Linton Road, Oxford

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

SIR,—My hypotheses concerning the Teacher of Righteousness' last days are not quite so unsupported by evidence as Mr. Gwilym Griffith's amusing letter might indicate. And even 'ordinary laymen' like the writer have access to most of the evidence relevant to this particular problem. But, as his letter makes clear, any reconstruction of history in points of detail in the Qumran Sect's life must depend upon an imaginative piecing together of snippets of evidence from all sides, archæological and documentary. Whilst it is quite easy to separate out those pieces and then look around in baffled inquiry for the evidence now rejected, the onus is upon such persons to offer a picture of events in the first century as convincing and well supported as the one now 'demolished.'

To return to the specific points raised by Mr. Griffith. The cooking pots recovered near the walls of the Qumran monastery contained animal bones. The obvious conclusion drawn by the archæologists is that these are the remains of sacred meals, and their careful preservation from destruction recalls the biblical strictures against the breaking of the Passover's victims' bones. But if Mr. Griffith can suggest some other reason for these pots with their strange contents, we shall all be interested to hear it.

As for the temporary sanctuary at Qumran, there is, besides the possible cultic significance of these remains, more, as yet unpublished, evidence, which, however, again is not by any means so conclusive as one might have wished. However, that the Teacher was a priest is certain from the Scrolls, and if he were officiating at a temporary sanctuary at Qumran, it would at least give one possible reason for the specific mention of its being the Day of Atonement when the Wicked Priest pursued after the Teacher and his followers 'in the house of his exile.' As perhaps Mr. Griffith is aware, these biblical commentaries from Qumran, from one of which the phrase above is taken, are the nearest the Scrolls approach to a 'Gospel.' They refer to historic events in deliberately obscure terms as pointers to the great event of the future, the Day of Judgement, spoken of by the prophets of old. We can, therefore, at least be certain that those events were of prime significance for the history of the Sect, and every word of these commentaries is of the greatest importance. The would-be historian is thus obliged to find a reasonable explanation for every veiled allusion, and he must try to see it in the context of the history of the time.

Mr. Griffith, and my ecclesiastical critics who have pursued the same line, must not, then, rest content with saying that the explicit reference to crucifixion, and 'the man hanged alive upon a tree' in the Nahum commentary does not necessarily refer to the Teacher of Righteousness: they must find another, equally satisfactory, reason for the Sect's having mentioned the practice and its awfulness. And if they can do it without importing a little 'orange' into their writing, they have my earnest felicitations!—Yours faithfully,

JOHN ALLEGRO

12 St. Ives Crescent, Brooklands, Sale, Cheshire

WHOSE GUILT?

SIR,—Since Mr. Fraser appears to feel guilty about the fate of Berlin I can only assume he also feels guilty about the six million Jews murdered by the Germans.—Yours faithfully,

F. L. GRANT

Sandy's, Dynes Road, Kemsing, Sevenoaks, Kent

Contemporary Arts

In Time of Trouble

DURING the last weeks we've been using radio as we used it during the war—the nine o'clock news particularly must have made a big comeback in listening figures. And it's interesting to see how the new boys on television have been doing. Not too bad, most people seem to say; but certainly not as well as we might have hoped. The ITN reaction in particular has been hampered by the tighter scheduling of programmes. It's clear that at times of crisis Auntie BBC is right: the personalisation of newscasters (as they insist on calling them) that serves ITN so well when the news is dull, renders Messrs. Day, Kennedy and Brown (a useful addition that last one) too often intrusive, too often over-conscious of their own reactions as the iron history is spelled out. What gives a touch of spice to a dreary Thursday has seemed tasteless and undignified in recent days. There has also been an increasing tendency by the two news setups to dramatise the role of war correspondent. Mr. Jones, both on *Radio Newsreel* and (most uncomfortably, poor chap) in the television news on Monday, dwelt at some length on his own fears and worries while in Budapest. Mr. Jones has obviously had an unpleasant time and done a hard job zealously. But what people are interested in is the observed fact, the detailed description of conditions that only someone who's been on the spot can give—fact about Hungary, description of Hungarians' conditions, not those of Mr. Jones and his colleagues. ITN go a step farther; their commentators describe excitedly films of fighting in Egypt, giving star billing to Ronnie or Billy ('Ronnie was there when the boys let loose at . . .') or whatever the Christian name might be. Let's get back, please, to a little straight reporting and stop living dangerously by chummy proxy.

Free Speech this Sunday demonstrated again how wise the planners were who stole the admirably matched Boothby-Brown-Foot-Taylor team from the BBC. Their argument on Suez gave vocal and coherent expression (albeit fiery, and correctly so) to the current lines of opinion. But almost as soon as Hungary was touched on, time ran out. Surely at a time like this twenty-five to thirty minutes is hopelessly inadequate for four such stout, so closely followed debaters to be handed? Couldn't we maybe have managed to steel ourselves to do without Liberace for once? Sure, programmes are organised well in advance; and sure, ATV had a duty to their advertisers. But unless the medium as a whole (and my impression is that the BBC is less blameworthy in this respect) can make itself flexible enough to handle problems as important and as absorbing as those the whole country's been trying to grapple with, to handle them sensibly and sanely and to give them their proper weight, much of the influence that it has been developing through its newsreels and news programmes will be lost. Of course we want entertainment too. But in days of crisis thirty-second newsflashes every now and then, and under thirty minutes for *Free Speech*, make nonsense of the whole structure. When you look back to the splendid record of BBC reporting during the war and check it against the job that sound radio is doing now, sound radio stands up to the check; but television has a serious failure on its hands unless it pulls itself together.

JOHN METCALF

Sharp Practice

THE SWINDLERS. (Cameo-Polytechnic.)

SOMEWHERE in Dostoievski a group of people play a game in which each person has to describe the meanest action of his life. One of the characters comes out with a tale so cold-bloodedly revolting that the rest of them rise up in fury; at which the man, innocent in his way, protests, 'Well, what did you expect. . . ?' Something of the same feeling is in one's response to Fellini's latest and, I think, most remarkable film to reach us, *The Swindlers* (the title is a loose translation of *Il Bidone*, which means, not a swindler in the general sense, but specifically a confidence trickster). For Fellini is so uncompromising that at times one can hardly accept that people will go as far in meanness as he sends them: to which the answer must be, 'Well, what did you expect?' This is a film about meanness. And yet, because Fellini is an artist who dabbles in a rather grotesque morality, it is also a film about the pathos of the swindlers themselves.

For all that we have seen them at their callous worst, winkling the last lira from the pitifully poor, raising in the despairing hopes that will come to nothing, we still, oddly enough, sympathise with Picasso for his failure to paint, with Augusto for his failure to be important (Roberto, a frustrated crooner who collects Johnny Ray's records, seems merely horrid, which shows what personality does to judgement). Picasso and Augusto both have daughters they adore, Picasso's a tiny creature all squeals and kisses, Augusto's a poised and pretty schoolgirl; both have hearts warm and