

of the matter has come his way. The publication of this book presumably marks the moment when this state of affairs will come to an end. The truth, or at any rate the main facts, about the Russian labour camps cannot now be hidden. As the *Manchester Guardian* put it in a leading article: 'Yet the total impression is so convincing that an impartial reader is forced to conclude that if only half is true it still remains a damning account of an inhuman system'.

The book is divided into fourteen chapters and into two parts. Part I deals with the Corrective Labour Camps, Eye-Witnesses' Reports, Milder Forms of Forced Labour, The Number of Camps and Prisoners. The Essence for Forced Labour and the Arctic Camps. Part II traces the origin and development of the system up to the present day. There are some admirable maps and diagrams and a good bibliography.

The book should be read in conjunction with Pius XI's *Divini Redemptoris* and also with Dostoïeffsky's famous novel *The House of the Dead*: these will give perspective and balance. It must be emphasised that we in Western Europe are in no position to read this book at our intellectual and moral ease. Marxian Communism originated and was incubated not in Tartary and Siberia but in the brutal and self-confident commercialism of nineteenth century industrialism. This is a book which no student of contemporary politics can afford to leave unread.

T. CHARLES EDWARDS

PROPRIETE ET COMMUNAUTES. By Lebret and others. 2nd Edition. (Editions Economie et Humanisme, Paris; 200 fr.)

Slowly and gingerly, in the footsteps of the Jarrow hunger-marchers or through the more learned pages of the Barlow Report, the idea of stable communities has been creeping back into favour over the last fifteen or twenty years. The policy of driving workers from Wales or Scotland to the shapeless new towns of the south, though still acceptable to an occasional liberal economist, is for practical purposes as dead as Queen Anne. The herding of two-fifths of the population into million-cities where everything conspires (outside the slums) to discourage family life and the growth of social roots is today universally condemned. And the Town and Country Planning Act has recently marked one more stage on the road back to community and civilisation.

But, while stability for the community is coming back in this way, stability for the individual family within the community—the stability of the family not merely assured of a stable living, but planted in its own house or on its own corner of land and among its own neighbours—has actually tended to diminish. The housing experts talk of mobility from house to house within a district as the size of a family alters. The planning legislators have done their worst to turn freeholders into a disappearing race and to plant in Crawley

or Stevenage the leasehold curse of South Wales or North Oxford. And it has become a social crime to sell a new house even to a family entitled to its allocation on every ground of priority.

It is this curious contrast between growing public understanding of the need for stability at the level of the community and growing incomprehension at the level of the family which makes a textbook of this kind, on the Catholic view of property, particularly welcome. For *Propriété et Communautés*, while dealing with both these levels, is rightly concerned mainly with the second. Roughly half the book consists of studies of the nature of property and of its relation to theology and to moral and social philosophy. The rest is made up, except for one final and superfluous chapter on a Croat version of Owen's parallelograms of paupers, mainly of studies of property as it has appeared in history. There is one chapter on the local parish community as the first link binding the stabilised family to higher political and social organs. The treatment is penetrating, complete and well-balanced, and refreshingly free from the once (though, thank heaven, no longer) familiar back-to-the-land verbiage of distributism. And the authors may be forgiven an occasional misguided *obiter dictum* on the history of capitalism of the kind more usually associated with that heroic warrior of Stalinism on the statistical front, Jurgen Kuczynski.

This is a thoroughly sound and careful text, and should be invaluable for teaching. Is it too much to hope that it may be translated?

MICHAEL FOGARTY

IS EVOLUTION PROVED? A debate between Douglas Dewar and H. S. Shelton with an introduction by the editor, Arnold Lunn. (Hollis and Carter; 18s.)

The subject of this book is well expressed by its title. The protagonists in a series of letters on various aspects of the theory of evolution, discuss the scientific evidence for and against it. The book naturally displays the faults of the method; there is too much sparring and acrimony, too much repetition and tedious efforts to clear up misunderstanding. But at the end of it all there emerges a fairly clear picture of what is to be said for and against the theory. The principal argument for evolution is that it connects and so affords an explanation of many and various biological phenomena: the principal argument against it is its incompleteness, its inability to demonstrate many matters which it asserts. The theory by its nature cannot be proved in the sense that e.g. the atomic theory of matter is proved: the title of the book is therefore unfortunate. The real question is whether the theory is an account of the history of life probable enough to be accepted without serious doubt, on scientific, as distinguished from metaphysical grounds. To the reviewer it seems that Mr Dewar has not raised objections sufficient to outweigh the general total of evidence, which is thought adequate by the great