

photograph a professional copyist's MSS rather than those of the authors.

However, charming as these little books are to look at, they frequently have a much greater value as useful introductions to their particular subjects. Mr Martin Cooper's account of the whole sweep of Russian opera from the midwife to what appears to be the undertaker (that is, from the arrival of the first Italian troupe in the reign of Anna Ioannovna to the present gloomy and pitiable condition of leaden realism and political didacticism) is surprisingly detailed in so short a space. Moreover, it is written with a penetration and grace which stand nobly aloof from the modern trafficking in musical criticism.

Enthusiastic Savoyards will, of course, read Mr Jacob's *Gilbert and Sullivan* in spite of the fact that it would not survive the ruthless enquiry 'Is your book really necessary?' They will be quite right to do so, and I do not doubt that it will give them as much contentment as it has me.

ERIC TAYLOR

GEOGRAPHY OF HUNGER. By Josué de Castro. (Gollancz; 18s.)

The theme of this profoundly important book is human misery: the basic misery of the lack of food, or, more exactly, of the widespread lack of the forty or so food constituents needed to sustain adequate health. 'Hunger' for Dr de Castro does not simply mean 'famine'. His survey of the dietary condition of all the continents reveals a tragic record of malnutrition, deficiency diseases and premature death. This hunger is man-made; for Dr de Castro argues strongly that the world has sufficient resources to provide adequate food for everybody, and he resolutely opposes the neo-Malthusian view that the world is overpopulated. Rather, he says, the problem should be stated in terms of under-production, of selfish nationalism and the mere whims of irresponsible commerce. The answer is not to limit the population artificially but to work for a global plan for the proper distribution of food and for the development of all the possible means of increasing its production.

Lord Boyd Orr, in a foreword, urges that co-operation 'in a concrete plan to increase the wealth of the world to provide the primary necessities of life' might be the common ground on which a divided world could meet. Certainly the primary need of food and the assurance of human health transcend the ideological arguments of East and West. And Dr de Castro's book shows the gravity of a problem which a conspiracy of silence has until lately made too little known. It must be for expert agriculturists to assess the validity of his technical hopes, but anyone may agree that the picture he draws of the effects of human folly and worse should be a challenge for the future.

I.E.