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PAGES

# Buchmanites

## And the

# Britannica

The Mystery of Moral Re-Armament. By Tom Driberg (Secker and Warburg).

The Myth of the Britannica. By Harvey Einbinder (MacGibbon and Kee).

SOME who have seen Moral Re-armament advertisements may, without being converted, feel a certain sympathy for the movement's seemingly worthy ideals. Those among them, however, who would survive a fair reading of Tom Driberg's book with a vestige of that sympathy would, I suspect, be few.

For this searching study of Frank Buchman and his movement presents a well documented and just appraisal that convinces by its balance and progressively intensifies one's sense of distaste.

The author is at great pains to give the Buchmanites their due, but the overall impression the book leaves is that the fervour displayed by MRA adherents masks a hysteria more unwholesome than holy.

## Another Exposé

"The Myth of the Britannica" is another exposé, and here again American hard-sell techniques are involved. In the promotion of MRA salesmanship plays on religious credulity in the service of a cult. In the promotion of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" Mr. Einbinder suggests, salesmanship plays on the snob value of learning in the service of commercial profits — and to the disservice of contemporary scholarship.

His book is a detailed examination of the Encyclopaedia's shortcomings, set against its pretensions to being a repository of modern knowledge.

He claims that "the 'Britannica' is not an adequate synthesis of current knowledge. It is an enormous jumble of facts; a collection of old and new articles; a mixture of legends and science, outmoded views and modern ideas".

There is more to the book, however, than merely a critique of the "Britannica". It is at the same time an entertaining survey of the progress of knowledge in many fields over the past two centuries.

Hedley Pockock