THE EUROPEAN

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ANALYSIS

THE outstanding fact in the British scene is that the new government has declared for Europe, and that its leading personalities seem for some time past to have been thinking to some extent in a European way. This is so important that if it be true—true in the sense that it will be followed by any form of effective action—all lesser things should be set aside. In such event it would be the duty of all who stood for Europe, and sensed the urgency of the coming British situation, to refrain from all attack and even to defend any government engaged in such a task ; no matter what memories and disputes of the past, or policies of the future, may divide us. All controversy on other subjects should attend completion of this essential work, without which other subjects and, indeed, we ourselves may not long exist. When, therefore, the Government declares in any fashion that it stands for the basic principle of a United Europe and that it means to implement it, the only question is whether it is genuine or not. And the first duty of a commentator is in some measure to define the genuine.

Action without dogma

In that definition we should not fall into the myopic error of insisting on our own method in all things. We have always stated, in contradistinction to the old habit of politicians which often erects an economic device into a religious principle, that in practical affairs there are usually several ways of doing the same thing. In fact we have often stressed that during our time there have nearly always been several different ways of doing the things that needed doing ; the fatality has been the failure ever in time to adopt any one of them, the inability to take any effective action at all. In Britain during time of peace there has been not so much lack of the brain that devises, as of the will that implements. This was certainly true until quite recent times ; now the situation becomes so novel in so many aspects that for the first time perhaps creative mind is as rare and as necessary as driving will. But when new thought has done the necessary work, it will almost certainly remain true that in practical affairs several ways usually exist of doing the same thing. Let us

therefore, in this great age, reject a narrow dogmatism even more decisively than during the lesser periods in which rigidity paralysed agreement on action.

Far enough and fast enough to make Union work

How, then, can we define the genuine desire to unite Europe ? Surely the answer is a determination to go far enough and fast enough to make union work. And again we do not insist on our own method ; we only insist that in one way or another certain realities be faced. The realities are briefly these : wherever we turn—whether, for example, in the economic sphere or in the field of European defence—we are faced by the fact that the measure of union must be very complete if it is to work. Otherwise the whole plan falls to the ground and the critics triumph ; not only the critics within, but the enemies without, triumph. Timidity, hesitation, half-measures merely confirm the critics. For instance, the critic is right that common market means the import of unemployment and the exposure of British industry to unfair competition, unless common market is accompanied by common government. Again, we admit that our thorough-going principle of Europe a Nation may not be the only way of averting that immediate calamity, even if it be the only ultimate goal of those who really believe in the future of European civilization. But we insist that without a very considerable measure of common government the critics will be proved right in maintaining that common market will mean unfair competition and unemployment. The only answer is the power in one way or another to raise the condition of the areas of Europe at present on a low standard of life to the level of the areas which at present enjoy a high standard of life.

Similar conditions of wages and hours in similar industries

That is the answer to unfair competition, because similar conditions of wages and hours would prevail in similar industries throughout Europe ; it is the answer too to the " import of unemployment ", because a sufficiency of common government to level up purchasing power would by the same process provide a sufficiency of market to absorb production by the labour of all. In principle the answer is very simple, once the basis is accepted of a large measure of common government. It is well from the start, without dogmatism, to insist on the recognition of certain basic facts. Otherwise we risk muddling towards the discredit of a great

idea. We will back a great idea, no matter in what hands fate reposes the task of implementing it. But we will not back the discredit of a great idea by timidity and indecision. That is why we state at this early stage certain basic tests of the genuine will to implement the Union of Europe. If government makes up its mind to do it, let it be done with a will. British government should now at least have learned that a great people, like a great horse, will forgive everything except a loss of nerve.

A measure of common government the only answer to the critics

Failure to move rapidly towards some effective measure of common government will inevitably discredit the idea either of common market or of a free trade area, and will menace the whole idea of European Union. There is no real answer to the argument which Lord Beaverbrook deploys in Britain, and Mr. Mendes France unfolds in more detail on the Continent, except something approaching European government. It is plain, too, that the doctrinaire political elements in the Labour Party, headed by Mr. Bevan, will soon, consciously or unconsciously, be making common cause with Lord Beaverbrook in this matter. Already the *New Statesman and Nation* suggests that commitment to Europe by Conservative Government may traverse the preparations for a planned economy in the British Isles which the leaders of the next Labour Government are now devising. When the doors are finally opened to the wider life of the Continent it will be impossible again to make an island prison. The more nimble witted among the prospective jailers are already sounding the escape alarm. They may not find it so easy to mobilise all the Trade Union leaders to bar the exits, which are in fact the entry to a wider life, because the Trade Union leaders are up against the daily facts of industry and feel some responsibility for the livelihood of their members which is threatened by the coming storm on world markets. The next split in the Labour Party is more than likely to arise on this subject. Where stands Mr. Gaitskell in all this ?—he " must have notice of that question " —we anticipate will be the reply of so adroit a parliamentarian at this stage.

How can the critics meet unfair competition on world markets or within the Empire ?

The advocates of European Union should be ready with effective counter attack when the Bevan-Beaverbrook combination moves

into action. If they complain of unfair competition in Europe—which we have it in our power by effective action to eliminate—how are they going to deal with unfair competition on world markets which they have no power whatever to prevent ? Any present competition within Europe from such countries as Germany and Italy is a picnic in comparison with the competition we shall soon meet on world markets. All production costs in Europe are much higher than those of Eastern countries like Japan, while the Soviets have virtually announced their intention of dumping on world markets at prices we cannot touch, with the deliberate object of breaking our economy ; America, too, in a slump can well afford to dump her relatively small margin of export surplus abroad at below production costs, when the home market fails. How would the Bevan-Beaverbrook combination meet such competition on the world markets to which they cling, since the war destroyed any effective alternative in the Empire ? The answer is they cannot meet it, and the Trade Union leaders know they cannot meet it. That is why the more egregious nonsense is confined to the political wing of the Labour Party. Let us press the question : what measures these Socialist politicians intend, to deal with unfair competition on world markets ? Can they control the Soviets ?—can they control America in a slump ?—can they control the migratory western capital which has already departed to make fat profits from sweating Eastern labour, much of it resident in what is still called the Commonwealth ? They have no control of any kind over world markets; their position is hopeless and helpless in face of that unfair competition. And yet they have the political impudence to talk of unfair competition within Europe. We Europeans, on the other hand, can take effective measures to deal with unfair competition in Europe, directly we have the courage really to enter Europe with our whole body instead of just feeling the water with our big toe. Common government is the answer to the problem of unfair competition on the common market. The new idea has an answer to the problem, but the old idea has none. Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Bevan now personify the old idea.

The irrelevence of nationalisation in present conditions

What does it matter whether an industry is nationalised or privately owned, if it has to compete on world markets against Soviet dumping or sweated labour competition ? The socialist concern in these conditions is likely to go under even quicker than

the capitalist concern. The clerks in Whitehall will be even less competent to deal with it than the clerks on Thames Embankment.

The failure to sell sufficient exports to pay for our present level of food and raw material imports will mean a drastic cut in such imports, and a consequent lowering of the standard of life within the controlled island economy. Very quickly we shall be back on the siege economy of wartime, and worse ; because in these conditions we cannot count on the dollar aid which has so long saved us in war and peace.

A siege ecconomy cannot be a permanent system

The answer of Mr. Bevan to all problems is more nationalisation, which simply makes industries less effective for the cut-throat struggle on international markets. The more sophisticated answer of Messrs. Gaitskell and Wilson is a controlled export-import system, which might be necessary in a temporary siege economy to bridge the interval during a sudden crisis before the solution of an European economy can be effectively established ; it would not only be intolerable as a permanent system but also increasingly ineffective as the ever rising tide of competition on world markets washed away all controls, protective devices, and artificial stimulants to our battered export trade.

Europe is the only system we can have the power to make work

Europe is the only thing that will work ; it is the only thing that we have the power to make work. This is the plain fact which will sooner or later be seized by all practical men. Here we can create an economy so large, and so expanding, that the kind of control to which the thinking of the Labour Party has become accustomed, and which Mr. Mendes France appears to suggest may be necessary in Europe, will appear very old-fashioned devices inherited from restrictive periods. Already within Europe we have heard too much talk of planning by the power of central authority to suppress some branches of industry and promote others. In a great and expanding economy we shall need state leadership, but we shall not need state control. What is vitally necessary is to establish similar competitive conditions in similar industries ; the same level of wages, system of hours and working, the same burden of rate, tax and social service, or their analogies in the new system. That will establish fair competition within comparable industries, and they can then be left free for a natural circulation of the life-

blood of competition to do its work. Only in the case of monopoly industries is it necessary for the State to do more ; then prices must be fixed as well as wages if the community is not to risk being held up to ransom.

Wage-price mechanism versus bureaucratic controls

Over the whole great area of a self-contained and, in these conditions, rapidly expanding economy of Europe-Africa, the wage-price mechanism in the hands of a government prepared to lead is all that is necessary. Prevent unfair competition through the payment of lower wages, or the working of longer hours, by raising conditions in areas with low standards; prevent exploitation in monopoly conditions by fixing prices ; then raise wages evenly through comparable industries as science increases the power, and mass production increases the means, to produce for a far greater market: this wage-price mechanism is the method of government in a system where the leadership of statesmen will replace the controls of bureaucrats. Freedom is possible in a great system, but not in a small. The choice is between the great life in Europe, and the small life in the coming island prison.

Defence in European Union—or the whistle and the stick

The defence of Britain posits equally the Union of Europe. Again we will not blame the government for the expediencies of near bankruptcy until we know their ultimate remedies. To be dependent for the time being on American defence, is only to repeat the major experience of the last decade ; an experience, and a humiliation, for a people accustomed not merely to independence but to leadership. The question now is whether further charity is a means to independence, or another step towards making Britain permanently a kept woman. Mr. Sandys has just returned from Washington and, in the published words of one of his relations, has a " pocketful of rockets ". Let us make no mistake what this means, if we do not seriously intend the Union of Europe at an early date. In this event it means that for a vital part of our defences we are finally, completely and helplessly dependent on America. In any independent policy we can be whistled off at any time if America does not like what we are doing, because we shall be defenceless if we do not respond. That is not an appealing prospect to a people which, at Suez, rightly resented the response of its government to the whistle and the stick ; the whistle of America and the stick of

Russia, Eisenhower on the telephone and Bulganin's midnight note.

Head of Europe or Tail of America ?

If this be a temporary device to streamline the defences of the West until we can make our permanent arrangements, it is plain sense. Our situation is no worse than the position we have endured for so long, and must endure a little longer until our effective entry into Europe. We are at present dependent on America in so many ways that one way more or less makes no great difference ; in for the petrol, in for the rocket. But if this decision were to establish a permanent dependency on America in the maintenance of our vital interests, it would be a betrayal of the British people. Again at this point as in every major question we come right up against the subject of European Union. Are we serious in this matter or not? We can no longer live alone ; we can only live as a part of Europe or as an American dependency. The question was summarised recently in a speech in Trafalgar Square: " shall we become the head of Europe or the tail of America ? "

The journey of Mr. Sandys merely underlines the necessity for that choice. It is plain in the circumstances to which we have been reduced that Britain will go bankrupt, if alone and single handed she tries not only to honour her obligations but to support all the commitments necessary to her life. Things have come to such a pass that—like Egypt—we have to look elsewhere than our own manufacture for the weapons with which to defend ourselves ; the only difference is that Egypt still appears able to pay for them. If it be denied that this is our situation, let us look at the facts. It is idle to ignore them or to attempt to conceal them in a mistaken sense of national dignity. The ostrich with its head well concealed in the sand is still exposed in a most inconvenient fashion both to view and to derision ; dignity is not saved by sand in the eyes.

The four basic requirements of defence

From the welter of recent discussion, expert and inexpert, emerges nothing but confirmation of the four basic requirements which we cannot safely discard ; we summarised them in our issue of 1.7.56. They are : (1) H. bombs and the means of their delivery against the life centres of an enemy ; they remain at least a great deterrent to war, (but not a complete one, see page 14)

(2) Land forces to participate effectively in the defence of Europe ; they should consist of a highly trained force of specialists armed

with tactical atomic weapons and the guided missiles or aircraft which deliver them. Readiness for this limited nuclear war is a necessity, at least until Europe can find the leadership to evoke from her people a sufficient will in our mass to resist mass invasion from a country with half our population and a fraction of our means. Lord Beaverbrook and others who think it unnecessary to defend Europe, will doubtless in due course inform us how they propose to defend these islands against modern weapons if Russia reaches the Channel coast.

(3) A highly mobile force of long-term specialists armed with the light weapons which science can supply ; they should be in constant readiness to move into any region of the world where interests vital to our life are threatened. This task will impose the strain of defending widely scattered regions until we have gone far enough in the development of Europe-Africa to be able to withdraw into our own relatively concentrated area of life.

(4) The most highly specialised force of all—half military, half political—which will be necessary when the final tactic of the Soviets is deployed. When all hopes of military conquest by one means or another are frustrated by weapons which make war too dangerous and by European preparedness, the Soviets will inevitably go over to a modern and developed version of their classic method. They will promote the industrial collapse of the West by some relaxation of tension and consequent reduction of armaments, followed by an intensive dumping of Russian products on all world markets in a determined effort to break the economy of world capitalism. Economic measures of this character accompanied by an intensive propaganda will prepare the entry of the fourth man ; the guerilla who does not attack but infiltrates and works within the opposing civil population, not against it. His ultimate fate depends on the success or failure of the idea for which he stands ; that is why he must be half soldier and half politician, and represent a method far beyond present military thinking. He will be the last, and, in the final analysis, will prove to be the decisive weapon. It is incorrect, perhaps, to suggest that this fourth factor has been considered in any way during recent controversy on defence matters. In fact nobody discusses it, or apparently yet thinks about it at all. We shall ourselves perhaps be well advised for the moment to stop discussing it in these columns, or the plain sense we have just been stating may be discredited in the eyes of the plainly sensible people whom we hope to convince. When we ask the short-sighted to take

the first obvious step, it only creates confusion and delay if we talk about things which only the long-sighted can see.

Why surrender to a Power with half our population and a fraction of our resources ?

The point of this whole argument is, that it is now obvious Britain cannot bear all the defence burdens she will have to carry in the next few years in order to live, unless she is taken over by America or herself takes over the leadership of Europe. Britain alone and single-handed cannot provide enough nuclear weapons and their transport to supply the great deterrent, and at the same time supply men and arms to defend Europe and men and arms to defend our supplies and supply lines all over the world ; even the three prime necessities enumerated above cannot be supported by Britain alone. On the other hand the European peoples with a population ranging from 250 to 300 millions, according to your way of reckoning, can very easily support that task as a collective enterprise. In fact, if the people of Europe together cannot face the Russian people with half the European population, quite simply we deserve to die. With twice the manpower and many times the scientific capacity, the failure of Europe to face Russia would be a simple case of suicide. If this continent of genius lies down to die before this threat from the steppes, it is the most contemptible act of history. And it is equally contemptible, if we escape death by accepting a servile dependence on America.

General Norstad interviewed

Let us now briefly examine the recent statements of experts which underline the simple truth—in defence matters as in the economic sphere—Britain can only live as a part of Europe or as a dependency of America. There is nothing very reassuring in what emerges, but it is at least clear that the only hope for Britain is an effectively united Europe. Let us take as first witness the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, General Norstad, at the time of his inauguration in December last, during the course of an interview published in the *Figaro*, 8.12.56. It is sufficient to note without covering all the ground traversed in the interview, that a question was posed to General Norstad on the basis of American publications concerning " Une supériorité massive de l'URSS dans la domaine des engins téléguidés pour les armées à venir " achieved apparently " avec le concours des techniciens allemands " ; the

question was in itself a sufficient support of the view of Allied policy expressed in these pages and related writings for many years past. We are not surprised to learn that by the time he took to reply and the gravity of his words, General Norstad " accusa le gravité de ma question ". He was asked if there was a " parade éfficace " and replied " il n'y pas d'exemple qu'on n'ait pas trouvé un jour ou l'autre une parade contre n'importe quel engin ". The questioner exclaimed with some reason : " un jour ou l'autre ! "

The "parade éfficace" and its implications

General Norstad sometime later stated that the Soviets, in fact, had not yet caught up with America in offensive weapons of this character, and he reached a decisive clarity in the affirmation that, no matter what their strength might be, the West has weapons which could wipe them out. In fact, as matters stand, we have almost reached the period of the " paralysed giants " ; neither dare shoot with these weapons, because a shooting match would kill both. So far, not so bad, except this means that we must hurry with preparations to meet a Russian invasion of Europe with their land mass, in case the Soviet Command gambles that neither side dare use the H. bomb and that the road is therefore open for the conquest of Europe by their land army ; a necessity that we have often stressed.

But one possibly new question does arise out of this all too interesting interview. What happens if one side finds the " parade éfficace " before the other ?—particularly if it is the Russians who discover it with the aid of the German scientists whom Allied policy of a few years back presented to them ? Are the backroom boys on our side thinking this one out ? Is our Government giving the question the close attention it deserves ?—it is, after all, a matter of life and death. There is, of course, an answer to this question ; as there is to most questions, if you think hard enough. It is not even particularly difficult. But we should be surprised to learn that the combined wisdom and energy of Western Governments have yet done much about it. It is their duty to do, what they alone can do.

"The New Statesman's" contribution : thoughts on blackmail and the island prison

The contribution of the English Left to the discussion of these realities is highly characteristic. *The New Statesman and Nation* on February 2nd stated the confident opinion that Mr. Macmillan would " turn a tactical defeat into a strategic victory by using the Suez

debacle as an excuse for wholesale and popular cuts in British defence spending ". Clear indeed is this philosophy, and in full accord with a certain tradition : always make a small mess a reason for making a bigger mess ; have a good bankruptcy when you can, it is such a good excuse for suicide. We doubt whether Mr. Macmillan or any other man in his senses would entirely agree. But a radical overhaul of our whole defensive system is, of course, overdue, and it will lead inevitably to the conclusion that Britain and British interests can only be effectively defended by entry into European Union ; this, of course, is precisely the opposite conclusion to that desired by the *New Statesman and Nation* and by all other supporters of the island prison theory, which is the new device for imposing nineteenth century socialism upon the British people. So we may leave Mr. Martin to the happy surmise that the Pentagon will be so " sensitive to British blackmail over our N.A.T.O. commitments " that we can succeed for the first time in " buying our capital military equipment from a foreign power " ; how elegant is patriotism in the language of our literary weeklies. Meantime we may be forgiven a little further consideration of a matter which may decide the fate of our country and of the western world.

Captain Liddell Hart writes for the "Daily Mirror"

Captain Liddell Hart, in the *Daily Mirror*, recently brought his expert mind to bear on the subject how " Britain exhausted by the long overstrain—a bankrupt—dependent on American charity "—could be defended. He began by stating quite plainly that the Middle East, and consequently our present oil supplies, are indefensible with our present resources; not only indefensible by Britain, he argues, but by the combined strength of the West. Russia could easily spare " fifty divisions (including apparently ten airborne) for a double prong invasion from the Caucasus and East of the Caspian". In answer to this "Britain and France could perhaps send a couple of divisions and the U.S., a third, but only one and a bit would be airborne ". If these figures are correct, what an indictment of the system and the rulers of 450 millions of the most advanced peoples in the world, who face, or rather fail to face, 150 million Russians.

So the oil is lost if the deterrent does not work

Captain Liddell Hart concludes " the only way of keeping the Russian army out of the Middle East is by Deterrence—deterring

invasion by fear of H. bombs dropping on Russia's own vital centres". So we should renounce all hope of using land forces effectively in that area ; " why waste money by keeping forces to defend what is undefendable " ? All very simple ; a view which has the beautiful simplicity of death itself. Great as may be our respect for this expert opinion, those with the instinct and will to live longer may be permitted a few questions.

What happens when Russia has sufficiently developed H. weapons and their rocket transport for it to be absolutely certain that if we use these weapons on Russia's vital centres, all life in all the main cities of Britain, France and America would be wiped out the same evening ? This is a question which the usually acute mind of Captain Liddell Hart for a long time simply refused to face, and in this sphere apparently still refuses to face. If this question be valid, we shall clearly lose our oilfields whenever Russia likes. This is a situation which is very nearly here, if it be not here already. At that point Russia could invade our oilfields any day she likes with impunity, unless an American President is prepared to press a button which destroys the world. And will an American President provoke the destruction of New York, Washington and the whole western world to save Britain from the inconvenience of buying her oil from America ? We should be a helpless dependent of America, militarily and economically ; lucky even to be accorded the status of a 49th State if all these gentlemen had their way. And does anyone really imagine if Britain and the West so finally abdicated from life—that in the end fate would permit us life at all ? History indicates that this is not the way of destiny.

The death instinct in Europe, and its fallacy

Captain Liddell Hart in his second article on the defence of Europe faces the decisive fact that before long no one will dare to use the H. bomb ; such weapons would be " general suicide and the end of civilisation ". Yet this argument is *a fortiori* in the Middle East, for if a man will not use a weapon so dangerous to defend his own life, he will not use it to defend someone else's oilfield ; this admission makes nonsense of Captain Liddell Hart's plan to maintain our oil supplies in the Middle East.

In the defence of Europe Captain Liddell Hart finds it dangerous, and not always effective, to use tactical nuclear weapons, but necessary—if we are to defend ourselves at all—because Europe, despite a far greater man power, cannot find the numbers necessary

to face Russia with conventional forces. So he believes that Britain and the Commonwealth should join with Europe in a Third Force, not apparently in order to save ourselves by making a strong and independent life, but in order to " stand apart " from the " battle-ground between Russia and America " in a position which seems so helpless that we should be at the mercy of both. As everything is hopeless Britain should at once cut our defence expenditure by 50 per cent and hope with our burden thus lightened to struggle along a little further and earn a few crusts of livelihood. In particular we should cut all defences against the Russian preparations for submarine war, because if war came we should be finished anyhow by H. bombs long before the submarines could do their work. We hope that we do the opinion of this eminent critic—for whose analytical mind we have a great respect—no injustice, but we ask him or any readers of his article to inform us, if he does not mean that, what does he mean ? This appears to be the first expert to side with Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Bevan, except perhaps he is a little too bold for them, and the *New Statesman and Nation*, in venturing at all outside the confines of this smug little island, where they suggest greater security with lesser expenditure awaits us.

European Union can put the facts behind the life instinct

May we briefly summarise the opposite view which we have long advocated ; we claim that not only all published facts, but all the analyses cited above now effectively support it. Let us get right into Europe—not in order to hide ourselves, or live in pathetic dependence on the will and whim of other powers—but in order to be strong, and to defend ourselves and our independent life in freedom and greatness. Together we in Europe have resources enough to provide our own H. weapons and their rocket transport. Together we can provide airborne divisions with appropriate weapons to defend our oilfields in the Middle East until we can develop, as we soon can, our own oilfields in Sahara and other areas of Africa. Together we can produce sufficient divisions with tactical atomic weapons to defend Europe from Russian mass. Together we might even evoke in the European mass sufficient will and enthusiasm to withstand the Russian mass if neither side had atomic weapons after the general disarmament for which we should never cease to press. Who dares say a United Europe cannot do it ? We have twice Russia's manpower and ten times her scientific ability. If we cannot do it,

we deserve to die. None of these problems are insuperable ; nothing but the will is lacking. And the will is lacking because we have not yet found statesmen to awake the will of Europe with great ideas and a great appeal to the mind and soul of the people. We must make the European peoples understand that they are faced with death ; they will then decide to live and to live greatly.

The answer to the submarine is tunnels under Channel and Gibraltar

Of course, we cannot do it alone ; it is true the isolated island position is now hopeless. Of course, many of our defences are old fashioned, and can only be made modern within European defence. Our submarine defences are probably not irrelevant for the reasons given ; war might be protracted because neither side dare use the H-bombs. But they could be rendered an unnecessary burden by an effective Union of Europe. The real answers are tunnels under the English Channel and other tunnels under the Straits of Gibraltar. We need not bother about starvation when we are effectively linked to the great land mass of a united Europe-Africa. And as for the danger of using tactical atomic weapons, they are only necessary at present because Europe, with double the population, yet trembles in division and despair before the will and energy of Communist Russia. But—give back to Europe will and energy through a great idea, and a government capable of leadership ; then their mass can never overcome our mass. Give three hundred million Europeans something to believe in, and the Russian menace will melt away with all the dreary fallacies of communism.

Let us by all means listen to the prophets of despair, and analyse their doctrines. It is necessary that our people should know the worst, before they will face the effort to make the best. This discussion of the experts is the final *reductio ad absurdum* of the present system ; if things continue as they are, we shall experience the reduction to death of European civilisation. At last the facts are clear, in economics, in defence, in every sphere of life and death. There is only one answer : it is Europe. Let us hurry.

Britain and America : friendship and alliance without dependence

It is plainly possible for a United Europe to defend itself against a Russia with a little more than half the population and nothing approaching our technical skill, even if we are unsupported by America. In all terms except those of sheer decadence, it is ridiculous to speak of the necessity for American support ; alone,

we could be the strongest power on earth. But the acme of folly is, of course, both to deny union and to insult America ; that has recently been the position of a good many Conservative politicians, some of them fairly eminent. For our part we seek in Europe a union and a strength which would render us independent of America, but we desire at the same time to preserve the closest friendship and co-operation with that country. It is graceless to discard a friend the moment you no longer need him, and it is boorish to abuse someone who has greatly helped you the moment any difference of opinion arises. That is why the attitude of these Conservatives seems contemptible. But they pass beyond contempt and enter the category of the certifiable, when they spit insults just before the next delegation leaves for Washington to cadge cash, oil or arms. Let us hold the manners of a man who is grateful for past help while resolving to make himself independent by his own efforts in the future, rather than vent the spite of a prostitute who is humiliated by a dependent position but prefers whining for future favours to earning an honest living. There is only one basis for the enduring Anglo-American friendship which is essential to the future of the world : it is the mutual regard of equals with a common history and many common interests, who can each stand alone but is willing to help the other if need arises against the common enemy. Four hundred and fifty million Europeans and Americans can stand together in a monolithic bloc of world security against which the red waves will beat in vain.

Keynes and communism save world capitalism

Another reason for urgency in the making of Europe is an economic situation now developing to a point where even the most complacent can see the danger. Mr. Humphreys' recent utterance was ominous, if not specific ; it is at least an indication that the fantastic consumer-credit structure of America to which frequent reference has been made in these columns, may be checked before it bursts, or floats away into the stratosphere of up and up and ever-ever illusions ; it has long since soared far beyond the theories of Keynes which founded the sound prosperity of America. In the end America may well find the means of balancing her productive powers with an ordered consumption method ; something on the lines of the wage-price mechanism which we have often discussed might also meet that problem. But in the interval the curtailment of American home demand may send a flood of surplus production

washing into the markets of the world, to coincide with the return of intensive competition from Germany and Japan, and possibly also with deliberate dumping by the Soviet on world markets. So far the American market structure has been sustained by a brilliant application of monetary technique, and by an armament boom caused by fear of Soviet aggression. World capitalism has been held upright for a decade by Keynes and communism ; it is a paradoxical thought. Lord Keynes will of course continue to oblige, but it has always been doubtful whether Keynes alone was enough, whether in normal conditions something more than his monetary technique would not be necessary ; that is an old debate of long ago whose conclusions will now be put to the test.

It is very doubtful, on the other hand, whether communism will continue to oblige ; for the thought may at last have penetrated even the thickest head in the Kremlin that it is not so sensible to frighten capitalism into saving itself by armament booms, as it would be to remove these props of the opponent by pacification and disarmament, and at the same time to dump on the markets which are vital to him at well below his production costs.

The role of world banker ? can we maintain Britain and finance Nehru ?

Be that as it may, it is plainly necessary for something to be done about the British economy even in the present halcyon conditions, long before anyone has even begun to contemplate the possibility of real Atlantic storm winds. It is now recognised that Britain cannot at the same time (1) maintain her defence obligations as an independent great power, (2) maintain the high level of industrial investment necessary for her to maintain her position as a modern industrial power abnormally dependent on the free competition of world markets, (3) act as banker to the sterling area, which means, *inter alia*, financing the industrial development of very large areas of the Far East. In fact, when Mr. Nehru in the near future asks us to divert resources from our own industries, which urgently need re-equipment, to the equipment of India's sweated industries for the purpose of more effective competition against us on world markets, we may wonder whether our gratitude for his recent favours to Britain and to Europe, and our respectful recognition of his performances in Kashmir, after due consultation with Marshall Zhukov, make the rôle of world banker any longer either agreeable or profitable. Times change, and so must English banking, A new

world of really productive enterprise awaits a banking system which will earn great rewards by serving rather than exploiting ; it can promote the development of Europe-Africa into the greatest market this earth has yet provided.

Europe surmounts the problems of market, defence and solvency

Within the system of Europe-Africa we shall solve at one stroke both the problem of defence and of capital equipment for our industries ; the defence burden will be shared by Europe, and the capital resources of all Europe will be available to any industries which are efficient. Neither of these two hardest problems of recent times will any longer arise. We shall leave small worries behind us in entering a larger life of greater challenge, but also of far greater opportunity.

And as for profits in the East, that is a privilege we might leave to our American cousins ; if they really want to do it they might be allowed to finance Mr. Nehru until the Soviets are ready to take India over and enjoy the industrial equipment thus provided. But the American Congress is likely to wake up long before it gets to Colombo, and all the other happy holiday grounds of Labour politicians with other people's money to spend. These are no laughing matters, but it is well to have a look at current absurdities before the serious thinking begins.

Our own economic policy is clear cut, and has long been before the country. The time is coming when Britain will have seriously to consider her economic position ; we shall return to that subject with the persistence which is necessary. Now we state the premise that the most complete union of Europe is necessary for reasons of market, defence, and solvency ; market to sell the goods which we must sell in order to buy the goods necessary to our life ; defence to preserve our life against imminent menace of destruction ; and solvency to save us from early bankruptcy, if we do not soon share with all Europe burdens which we cannot discard because without them we cannot live.

EUROPEAN

EUROPE AWAITS BRITAIN

by BERTRAM PEEL

IN the course of the past ten years, many a Turning Point in History has been brought to our attention and been heard of no more. Round every corner, people think they see a Turning Point and then, before they have the chance to form a committee, the mirage fades and they are left with the Facts As They Are.

It is vitally important, therefore, when a Turning Point actually coincides with the Facts As They Are, and that is what is happening at this very moment. The eclipse of Sir Anthony Eden terminates a 40-year epoch in Britain's view of the world, a period during which we have lost, to put it bluntly, practically everything we ever had. There is little of positive value to be learnt from our behaviour over this period and, in reality, the major shifts in power that are now going on at such a speed, demand a complete change of outlook calling for the emergence of new men able to grasp the new ideas now being implemented.

However, with things as they are, it has to be admitted that we are fortunate Mr. Macmillan was selected from among the candidates for the premiership. His historical sense is well-known and we may be, in a measure, heartened by the conciseness with which he has expounded Great Britain's position in the world and his idea of the methods to be used in bringing about our economic union with the rest of Europe.

In a previous article on the U.K. and Europe's plans* it was suggested that the Euratom plan and the Little Europe customs-free area were practically a *fait accompli*. Subsequent events have not changed the course of these developments, and the treaties covering

* *The European*, No. 44

both schemes are due for official signing. Although these signatures will require ratification by the respective parliaments, it seems, in the words of M. Spaak, that obstacles of a technical nature involved in these unifications are gradually fading out.

In January, M. Spaak started talks in London on Britain's association in a free trade area, and also the reinforcing of N.A.T.O. and the Western European Union. There was a debate in the French National Assembly on the common market and allied subjects.

Mr. Thorneycroft, who is chairman of O.E.E.C., may decide to act quickly to form a free trade area between Britain and Little Europe coincident with the signing of the common market and Euratom treaties. On the other hand he may think it prudent to wait and see what progress is made on the Continent over the basic difficulties, namely : the special status of agriculture in a common market, the method of including overseas terriories and the adaptability of workers. At the drafting conference in the first week of January, the French are said to have shown eagerness to maintain high tariffs, whereas the Benelux countries favoured more moderate import duties *vis-a-vis* the outside world. The principle of the inclusion of the French and Belgian oversea territories was accepted ; there remained the problem of the Dutch territories in the western hemisphere, and of the investment fund for oversea possessions. The treaties in many respects will express principles to be translated into practical terms later.

In the context of what has actually been achieved so far, it is important to note the abolition of passports between France and Germany, the New-Year agreement under which the Saar became German and the canalisation of the Moselle into the Rhine was agreed upon ; also to recall a Franco-German meeting which took place in November at a stage when it was necessary to grasp firmly the main outstanding difficulties between the two countries, hampering the formation of the common market. This meeting took place at the height of the Suez armed conflict, and little has been published concerning it in this country.

Accord was reached on the main item of friction, the payment of hours above forty. Germany's method of regulating hours of work, based on a regular week of 45 hours, is by collective agreement in each sector of industry and she agreed to align herself in this matter with the French system of 40 hours plus overtime. France agreed to break down progressively, in common with other common market members, her tariff and quota system but stood by the right

to maintain her existing methods of aid for exporters ; France agreed to abrogate these discriminatory measures if she succeeded in achieving a steady balance of payment position. It was mutually agreed that after a four-year trial period during which customs would be lowered 30 per cent, a safeguarding clause would allow France to oppose for two years if she wished the commencement of stage two, involving a further 30 per cent reduction in customs dues.

Further, the overseas territories belonging to France were to be associated in the common market, their products entering the zone without customs ; but the other members of the market were not to be obliged to give priority to the products of these territories (as France now does) if they exceeded world prices. A common effort would go into the development of these lands. As it is, France can provide only 180 milliard of the 400 milliard francs yearly needed by these territories and under the new agreement the five other countries would combine to invest the remainder in accordance with a programme set out by France. The adhesion of the countries of Tunisia and Morocco to the common market would be decided by treating these countries as sovereign states.

At the close of the year, during a broadcast message to the nation, M. Pineau had this to say : " The grave events of recent months have reinforced our Government's conviction that, in order to withstand the menaces that could persist or break out again in Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and to meet the economic needs of the hour—it is more than ever necessary to bring about the unity of Europe. It could be for France a matter of life or death."

On the following day the O.E.E.C.'s team of experts produced their report which pronounced " practical " the project for a free trade area linking Britain with Little Europe.

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What does British industry and commerce think of it all ? The report referred to in the last paragraph came out just three months after Mr. Macmillan returned from Washington with his idea of the " Euromarket " on October 1st. A month later, the Federation of British Industry, responding promptly to a request by Mr. Peter Thorneycroft (then President of the Board of Trade), completed a rapid poll of its member organisations.

In their preamble, the F.B.I. said : " Entry to a limited free trade

area over a period of 12-15 years would be supported or even welcomed by many branches of industry if they were satisfied that safeguards could be negotiated, while it would be strongly opposed if they were not satisfied. Many industries would welcome competition on equal terms, but fear that such terms will not be realised in the event."

Members of the F.B.I. were invited " to express an opinion whether, in principle, they favour or oppose the U.K.'s going ahead with negotiations with a view to associating with the six Messina countries in a limited free trade area". Owing to the diverse importance and functions of different trade associations, it is no good merely to count the number of trade associations for and against. It needs to be said, therefore, that chief among the 69 trade associations in favour of going ahead with negotiations are : The British Iron and Steel Federation, Cement Makers Federation, British Plastics Federation, Shipbuilding Conference, British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers Association, Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, Society of British Aircraft Constructors, Wool Textile Delegation, Food Machinery Association, Export Group for Constructional Industries and the Aluminium Industry Council.

Of the 27 opposed to negotiations the chief were the British Ironfounders' Association, the British Constructional Steelwork Association, Cable Makers Association, Locomotive and Allied Manufacturers' Association, British Paper and Board Makers' Association and the British Pottery Manufacturers' Federation. Some 35 trade associations were unable to form decisions in the time allotted or were too divided in their own views.

Thus did Mr. Thorneycroft obtain an " amber light " from British Industry. The safeguards mentioned were similar to those in the minds of industry and commerce on the Continent, and include : imperial preference, dumping and unfair trade practices, currency manipulations by governments, unequal levels of taxation, aid for exporters, unequal labour and social conditions, and the safeguarding of strategic industries.

There is another umbrella organisation worthy of mention, which some say is even more representative of British industry's views. This is the British Engineers' Association, and at the recent annual luncheon the principal guest was H. E. Jonkheer Van Vredenburch, chief representative in the U.K. of the European Coal and Steel Community. In his view, the common European market was a

logical extension of the Benelux idea and of the European Coal and Steel Community, which had both proved to be highly beneficial. The avowed aim of the new project was the freeing of trade; it was not free trade in the classical sense. The consequences might mean hardship for some, and whoever they were, they had a right to be helped by the community as a whole, which would reap the benefit of this policy. He said it would be short sighted to believe that Continental countries wished to pull Britain into Europe and away from the Commonwealth. Incidentally, the Coal and Steel Community during 1956 increased its output from 53 million metric tons to a new record of 57 million metric tons.

The majority view of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, favours, with certain reservations, United Kingdom participation in a partial European free trade area. The association has given general support to the intention to exclude raw or manufactured foodstuffs, feedingstuffs, drink and tobacco from the goods to be affected. They unanimously agree that if the only choice lay between entering a European customs union, or standing by the Commonwealth and imperial preference, the latter should be chosen. But to remain wholly outside the proposed union with no association whatever would certainly affect unfavourably the 12.8 per cent of United Kingdom export trade going to the six countries concerned. The measure of loss would depend on the height of the remaining tariffs, which it would be desirable to have as low as possible. Safeguards suggested include protection for the balance of payments in times of emergency ; maintenance of the structure and advantages of imperial preference ; and reasonable protection against dumping and subsidies, whether hidden or not.

Somewhat unexpectedly, one Chamber of Commerce—Manchester—considers that many parts of Western Europe enjoy a better standard of living than is encountered in this country, and urges U.K. manufacturers to employ the traditional skill of their craftsmen to pass the standards demanded on the Continent instead of trying to produce inferior goods to compete with Eastern products. What Manchester thinks today . . .

Reaction of the Chamber of Shipping has been very much as expected. They assume there will be a considerable stepping up of cross-channel and short-sea traffic, and feel reassured by the Government's statement that even if the U.K. were associated with the free trade plan, 90 per cent of U.K. trade with the Commonwealth would be unaffected.

As to the Trade Unions, Mr. C. G. Geddes (T.U.C.), Dame Florence Hancock (T. and G.W.U.) and Mr. J. S. Campbell (N.U.R.) were among a group of 50 industrialists and trade union leaders who urged the Government in mid-October to proceed with negotiations, and it is known that, previous to that, Mr. Geddes had for some time been advocating closer integration of Britain and Western Europe, in his capacity as chairman of the T.U.C. international committee. It may be recalled also that when the European Steel and Coal Community was first proposed, there was a good deal of opposition to British participation from trade unions, particularly those in the industries directly concerned. Part of this objection came from dislike of the idea of subjecting British industries (particularly nationalised industries) to the dictates of a supra-national authority.

There are fears that within common market wages and conditions would tend to be forced down to the lowest level, so that progress in improving living standards would be the progress of the slowest country. There are also fears that certain industries might suffer from free competition with Western European countries and that unemployment might result. Questions would also arise on whether the social security arrangements of the different countries might need to be made more uniform. And there is the possibility that freer movement of labour from country to country would be involved. In spite of these doubts and fears, some of the more influential union leaders feel that Britain cannot afford not to be associated with a European common market.

These sundry views of the people who decide the practical issue are set down here not because they are remarkable in any way, but in order to show that these attitudes are much as were expected and to stress their similarity with the views of equivalent groups in Little Europe itself. It might be observed that, although industry and commerce show a prudent acknowledgement of traditional dangers, they are encouragingly forward-looking and have no tendency to dwell on the trade and social anomalies of decades that are dead and gone. This is in contrast with the attitude of many political men as was revealed by recent exchanges in the Commons.

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In the House of Commons it often happens that, whereas a debate will produce mere long-winded " official " statements for

the next day's headlines, the real view of the Government will often be revealed, almost by accident, in a reply at Question Time. One such occasion may well have been that on 18th December when, answering a question on the relationship between a free trade area and N.A.T.O., Mr. Macmillan said : " What we are really considering is a future European free trade area if it is organised—the wider body within N.A.T.O. I think one should say that it is hoped to work with the European free trade area through the machinery of O.E.E.C., in which, of course, the Transatlantic countries are represented."

However that may be, we now consider the full-dress debate on European Trade Policy which took place on 26th November. Mr. Macmillan's speech was heard with scarcely an interruption as he explained with admirable clarity how we had three fundamental links—with Europe, with America and with the Commonwealth—and how there was need of a third force between Russia and America. He explained that we could not join a customs union as such, since that would ruin the Commonwealth which involves 50 per cent of our trade ; and that it was not possible to have a wider free trade area including the Commonwealth, because the countries of Europe had no historical link with the Commonwealth and the latter would never remove their tariffs against European goods.

He therefore outlined a third course, which was the one the Government proposed to follow. He said :

" In accordance with the broad lines of the scheme already being studied in the O.E.E.C., the United Kingdom would enter a mutual free trade area with the Messina Powers, would reach it stage by stage with the Messina Powers and—this is important—with all other O.E.E.C. countries that wished to participate. The area would then consist of the customs union, that is the six countries as one unit, together with such other countries, including ourselves, as thought fit to join. . . . Within this free trade area (that is, the six countries forming the customs union, together with the other European countries outside the six), goods of every sort would eventually be admitted duty free. Each country which is not a member of the Messina customs union would retain its own separate and different tariffs on imports from outside the area. There would not be a harmonised tariff ; each would have its own tariffs. National freedom of action would be retained in its own tariffs. It would also be retained in the field of duties designed to raise revenue rather than to protect home industry. The removal of tariffs must be done progressively, and that would take a period of ten or more years. . . . Import quotas, too, would be progressively abolished between the members of the

free trade area subject to a strict proviso that they might be restored temporarily at any time by a country faced with balance of payments difficulties. . . . Of course, we are already committed to the progressive removal of protective quotas except in special circumstances. The reductions of tariffs of which I have spoken, the progressive lowering and abolition of quotas, under the plan we envisage would embrace a whole range of products with one major exception—foodstuffs, including drinks and tobacco."

The course of the debate was rambling, so much so that it is not surprising that none of it seems to have been published or used outside the pages of *Hansard*. In general, it is possible to say that the House agreed that (a) Britain could not enter a customs union, (b) we could not have free trade in agriculture, (c) quota restrictions must remain subject to strict rules so that no country could re-impose protective quotas under the guise of balance of payments reasons.

One or two particular observations might be made, arising from the debate. Entry into some kind of common market would very likely give British industry a challenge that would direct it along the right road for the solving of our own internal economic problems ; many hold that the present day welfare state has completely upset the justice of reward for effort, with consequent ill effect on our whole way of life. Provided industry can free itself from the stranglehold of restrictive practices there is no doubt of its ability to compete in a common market, but if we stay outside, there is little chance of us competing in Western Europe and throughout the world if Germany has a home market of 250 million people, as compared with our own 50 million. We should, of course, have to work hard, but the man has not yet been born who will not be glad to do so for a fair reward and a great idea like European unity.

As regards our Commonwealth links, the Government's action in Egypt revealed much concerning the true structure of the Commonwealth in a political and cultural sense, and there is more than a little cause for suspicion in the realm of trade and industry. The Commonwealth represents 50 per cent of the United Kingdom's trade abroad and Europe (half of it is at present cut off) represents only 30 per cent. But during 1951-55 imports from overseas markets in the Sterling area actually fell whilst in the same period imports from the Messina or Little Europe countries rose by 50 per cent, and by excluding ourselves from a common market we risk the danger of expanding even more slowly than our Continental neighbours. Again, during a twelve-month period in 1955-56,

Australia increased her trade with Japan, Germany and the U.S.A. whilst decreasing her trade with Great Britain and Canada. It would be interesting to know, too, the proportion of post-war new factories in Australia that is American financed. The writer seems to recollect a recent figure that showed the proportion in one year as 50 per cent, no less.

These remarks are made not with any intention of encouraging the decay of a great ideal, but rather to imply that we should not regard our Commonwealth trade ties as being in conflict with the idea of closer union with Europe. Especially we should be careful to keep a sense of proportion if it should ever happen tnat we must make a choice. The Little Europe plans go far beyond mere free trade in the old sense, and envisage common investment funds, adoption funds, a central bank, combined overseas investment, harmonised social policies and other integrating schemes, all of which may lead one day to the United States of Europe.

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In fact, a choice need not be made. Buried deep in the Commons debate of 26th November was a reference to the manner in which France's overseas territories are to enter the common market, mention of which is made in the first part of this article. It was suggested that, by employing the technique adopted by France, *Britain might join the common market, leaving the Commonwealth in a free trade relationship with Britain and Europe.* This is the same scheme as was recently advocated by the writer in the *Revue du Commerce* of the French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain. At a later stage, the further step might well be taken of *bringing the Commonwealth into the common market itself*, together with Africa and even Latin America, to form a source of raw materials and a large overseas market for the immense energies of the future United States of Europe. This would indeed be a third force. It is, in reality, the proposal which *The European* has advocated for several years in the face of a general tendency to think in terms of world systems which, to return to the point first made, have not coincided with the Facts As They Are !

Well, what *are* the facts ? One of them is that the French Senate recently sat up all night in order to pass the Sahara Bill establishing a Government-sponsored " Joint Organisation for the Sahara Regions ". This is no pie in the sky, but is a forward-looking

decision reached after four years intensive research by scientific groups into the extent of mineral and oil resources in this virgin part of the world. A start has already been made to the production of coal, oil, iron, natural gas, copper, manganese, tin and uranium. Initial investment in the new scheme will amount to £400 million and both capital and technical aid will be sought from other European countries. This realistic programme is launched at the same time as French export organisations are urging increased trade links between France and South Africa also.

Italy, victor in the initial Kariba Dam scramble, is another country showing interest in the same continent. The most important Italian commercial mission to visit Southern Africa spent a month last summer in Central and South Africa ; at the time, the Italian Foreign Trade Minister said the contacts they would make would lead to the creation of a well-built Italian commercial organisation in Africa upon which concerns in the home country could rely for co-operation. West Germany's Minister for Economic Affairs has also taken the trouble to visit the Union. Since 1950 Germany has become an increasingly important source of supply for the Union, her exports of merchandise and government stores having risen from about £7 million to £29 million ; South Africa's purchases from Germany are now only exceeded by imports from the U.K. and U.S.A. Germany in turn is the Union's fifth best customer and buys goods worth £16 million a year.

Aside from this, we may ask whether the vision of a North Atlantic common market or free trade area, as proposed by Mr. Selwyn Lloyd and by Mr. Macmillan in the Commons reply already referred to, does not miss completely the point behind the European or Third Force movement. It is sincerely to be hoped that Great Britain will not repeat her recent experiment at keeping the peace of the world, by playing at balance-of-power economics.

America's view may perhaps be represented by a speech by President Eisenhower on October 29 in which he declared that nothing had been more heartening than the common market and free trade area proposals and asserted that his Administration would watch this exciting new development with intense interest. The schemes, he added, should lead to a substantial rise in the productive capabilities of these European countries and make possible more efficient use of their physical and human resources. In the past the Eisenhower Administration has consistently supported European integration schemes and urged freer world trading and payments

Its present judgment is that the common market and free trade area are in accord with these objects.

As to the purely trade implications, just before Christmas certain U.S. diplomats observed that information received so far led them to conclude that an outward-looking groupment designed to further the general reduction of economic barriers would be created. They left no doubt that their country would oppose any move towards an inward-looking regional group. The U.S. offers preliminary support in the belief that the European countries are following certain principles, notably that the ultimate arrangements will be consistent with their obligations to G.A.T.T. and the International Monetary Fund.

While asserting that such ideas as are now being set in motion demand leadership capable of carrying them through, tribute has been made to Mr. Macmillan's understanding of our position, though we have yet to see his ability to act accordingly. He is known to suspect that however difficult the problems to be faced within a European free trade area, they are problems that we should have to face in any case, very largely, and would indeed be hard to solve if this area were formed and we were outside it.

In the first half of the twentieth century Great Britain has taken part in the fight for a share in a contracting overseas market, and it is more than likely that during the next fifty years there will be an expanding market in which the difficulty will be to create capital enough to meet the demand. Thus, although we have cause to be superbly optimistic about our future prospects as a whole, we should undoubtedly disappear like the old-time private trader if we attempted to stand out alone and truculent against Russia, America and Europe.

Europe awaits Britain, but it won't wait for long. Nor indeed will the people of Britain when they come to see where their best interests lie. Then, if the men of the old epoch will not take us into Europe, someone else will have to. At a turning point in history it is often as simple as that !

KINGSLEY MARTIN
and
The New Statesman & Nation

by MICHAEL HARALD

AN Air Force colleague was initially to blame for the great illusion I cherished. He was an older man and a proselytizer. "Vote for Attlee," he advised, after ascertaining that I was of an age to vote. I replied that I took no heed of politics, and sought refuge behind a newspaper. "You'll go to Hell if you read that rag," he warned me (*the Daily Express*), coarsely recommending an alternative use for it—"Here, try Aunt Kingsley on the Forces' Vote." And he pressed upon me my first copy of *The New Statesman and Nation.*

There was nothing in that issue, nothing in the issues I bought or borrowed from time to time in the immediate post-war years, to rid me of my conviction that Kingsley Martin (never "Mr."—never, at any rate, in print, or in the print I read) was a female journalist. Fact—or what I took to be fact—and fantasy coalesced, and a truly marvellous old woman appeared. In appearance she was not unlike her friend Dame Sybil Thorndyke, with a profile, good facial bones and an air of ex-suffragettism : she had in her time lashed herself to half the railings in Westminster. She lavished the treasure of her mind and heart indiscriminately upon cottage gardens, stray cats, African tribesmen, Nehru, juvenile delinquents and Harold Laski. She was cranky and comical and broadminded : I imagined her composing advertisements for her back pages—for surely nobody would *insert* these. She was intrepid, as evidenced by her trips to Asia, Africa and London, E. She was the widow of a Unitarian minister, a patient man, and her earliest journalistic

duties (self-imposed) had been to put ginger in his sermons. She subsisted on wholewheat bread and unflavoured yoghourt. I was inconsolable when after a year or two she exchanged her sensible skirt for pinstripe trousers, and became altogether less bizarre.

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Individualistic democracy has come to high tide : and it is more difficult today to be an individual than it ever was before—
(T. S. Eliot : *Religion & Literature.*)

There are those—a large though decreasing group—who take *The N.S. & N.* seriously, who plough their way through it with the despairing conscientiousness akin to that with which they attempt each summer to learn Italian from little books. (I know of one household which takes in two copies : this allows the man to get on with his weekly chore of memorising the front-page article while his wife composes pastiche Verlaine for the Week-end Competition.) These are the real victims. Their political colour mutates between pale pink and pale red, depending on the prevailing winds from Great Turnstile. They are of the professional classes ; shabby, high-principled, often endearing and kind ; they marry young, and introduce their wives to the " progressive " discussion-group corner of the Sunday pub ; at election times they collect and deliver aged and disabled Labour voters in borrowed cars. They may never have read, scarcely have heard of, Condorcet, yet they would accept unquestionably—even now—his belief in the perfectibility of Man (the more absurd the proposition, the readier people of this sort are to embrace it). They favour a principle of legislation which caters not for human beings, but for cyphers. They are what D. H. Lawrence called " social beings " ; their individuality was long ago drained off by the suction-pump wielded by Mr. Martin, his teachers and his kind. In return, they are supplied by Mr. Martin with a narrow range of interests, talking-points and prejudices which provide a pleasant if unexciting substitute for real life, vital expression and what Lawrence again called " the Holy Ghost ".

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A Methodist minister called us his second bible. . . . [1]
But there are also those—a rapidly growing group—who wear

[1] (So, at all events, Mr. Martin claimed recently on the BBC.)

their rue with a difference. They prefer *The N.S. & N.* to *Punch*; they find Mr. Martin more diverting than Mr. Muggeridge. The matter, as the leader-writers say, stands outside politics. Laugh Right, Laugh Left : a free vote. I quote from Mr. Martin's London Diary, which he compiles under the pseudonym " Critic " :

> " I am sorry to see that the Commissioner of the District of New Delhi has banned Aubrey Menen's very amusing book, *Rama Retold*. . . . This is not, of course, an example of totalitarianism, but of its ugly little sister, religious bigotry. Mr. Menen's writing is caustic and his use of the Ramayana very free. . . . Maybe his worst sin is that he makes merciless and persistent fun of the Brahmins."

The risible matter-of-factness of Mr. Martin's prose has won him a host of new admirers. (He obviously *knows* that Commissioner, and will be somewhat terse with him the next time he drops in on Delhi.) His silliness is contagious ; it has been acquired, not only by staff-writers on the political side of the paper, but by occasional contributors such as Mr. Khushwant Singh. Let me quote Mr. Khushwant Singh :

> " Strange, is it not, that the empire built and bullied into submission by the Colonel Blimps should in its new incarnation as the Commonwealth have to rely for its sustenance on a journal (*The N.S.&.N.*) which was its bitterest critic, and that the mantle of Robert Clive should thus descend on the shoulders of Kingsley Martin ! " [2]

Strange indeed !—" This England " and the lunatic-fringe, back-page advertisers cannot begin to compete. The diligent initiate will find something as good nearly every week.

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> *No wonder that Beatrice Webb . . . decided to dub me a " flibbertigibbet ". She was quite right, and if I had known that she had so christened me in her diary, I would have signed my Diary Flibbertigibbet instead of Critic.*[3]

You see !—he can be sly, too, as well as silly ! This is even better. On his guard against *la gaffe* (friend and foe alike must have repeatedly warned him) he acts—overacts—the rôle of *le gaffeur*.

[2] *The Mantle of Clive, N.S. & N.*, May 12, 1956.
[3] Kingsley Martin, *The Orchestra—N.S. & N.*, May 12, 1956.

This farce is neatly illustrated by a passage from Mr. Tom Driberg's autobiography :[4]

> " Both Tschekedi Khama and Seretse Khama came along, with Seretse's wife Ruth. . . . Kingsley Martin engaged them in earnest talk about the Bumangwato problem—and perpetrated the appalling *gaffe* of saying absently to Ruth : ' Of course, you're the real nigger in the woodpile '."

The *persona* is, to put it mildly, unconvincing. If Mr. Martin believes that to admit and then to caricature a failing is to disarm the satirist, he is mistaken : many prominent persons have made the same error. When he announced some years ago that he had been caught in the lavatory during an air-raid and had been blown off the seat whilst reading Jane Austen, he had, no doubt, a false twinkle in his eye. But even good private jokes ought not to be cracked in public : the fact that the humourless editor of a famous journal should wish to circulate a joke against himself in order to demonstrate awareness of his own reputation, must have perplexed many subscribers quite as much as it delighted others.

Back from archness to artlessness, and his confession that " It was as much as I could do to get any kind of harmony into the paper's politics and economics ", which itself follows the disclosure that

> " I combined in myself most of the inconsistencies and conflicts of a period which tried to reconcile pacifism with collective security and the defence of individual liberty with the necessity of working with the Communists against Fascism. . . . "

This is excellent fooling—and spiced with the pathos which is inseparable from all great zanyism.

★ ★ ★

He has been editor of *The N.S.& N.* since its foundation. He could hardly have chosen a better apprenticeship : lecturing at the London School of Economics, followed by four years on the *Manchester Guardian*, where, in the intervals of leader-writing, he wrote two

[4] *Best of Both Worlds.* (Phoenix House, 1953.)

books which were well-liked by the left-wing intelligentsia. (I am obliged to admit that I was easily able to resist the first[5] after Chapter 3, and the second[6] by Page 12, or thereabouts.) Here is Mr. Martin's inimitable account of the birth of a journal.

> " Just 25 years ago, in the last week of February, 1931, the *New Statesman* (founded 1913) and *The Nation* (founded after the Liberal victory of 1906) were joined in holy wedlock. It proved to be a marriage of true minds ; the old Liberal nonconformist tradition which Massingham's *Nation* had so splendidly maintained had been reinforced after 1922 by the new Liberalism of Keynes, Layton and the *Yellow Book* ; it now combined with *The New Statesman* which was already the established organ of the unsentimental Fabianism of the Webbs and Bernard Shaw. . . . "[7]

" I should call myself a Socialist," Mr. Martin informed the president of the Selection Board—Arnold Bennett, none other. " I should hope so," stammered Bennett, turning his attention to the fish which had been flown over that morning from Geneva. *Flown over*—yes, clever Mr. Martin guessed it, and guessing it had neither the wit nor the independence to keep his mouth shut ; and Bennett was pleased at Martin's intelligence. " I knew I had got the job ". Editor at 34 ; and the most crucial decade in England's history before him. I will demonstrate Mr. Martin's attitude and contributions to that decade and the post-war years by quoting freely from his article *The Orchestra.*

The Gold Standard crisis popped up very quickly :

> " True, I knew nothing about the Gold Standard, but I had a hunch that when a very great many, very important pundits all agree that something very terrible and mysterious will happen if we depart a hair's breadth from orthodoxy, the time has come to say ' Oh, Yeah ? ' Ever since then it has been a function of *The N.S. & N.* to blurt out that the Emperor has no clothes."

Did Mr. Martin inform his readers at the time that he " knew nothing about the Gold Standard " (many, of course, must have realised it) and that his writings were based on " a hunch " ?

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[5] *The British Public and The General Strike.* (Hogarth, 1926.)

[6] *French Liberal Thought in the 18th Century.* (Benn, 1929.)

[7] *The N.S. & N.*, March 3, 1956.

Spain :

> " Doctrine would never have persuaded the rank-and-file of Labour to work with the Communists. . . . Too late Winston Churchill came round to seeing our national interest as allied to those of Negrin's Spain."

No comment ; except to remind readers that this was written in 1956. (It is interesting also as a fair sample of the debased use of language, the machine-phraseology, favoured by political writers of the Kingsley Martin sort. It is possible—even likely—that George Orwell had Mr. Martin in mind when he wrote in an Essay, *Politics and The English Language* : " *Ready-made phrases construct your sentences for you, even think your thoughts for you, to a certain extent. They also partially conceal your meaning, if you have one. Today it is broadly true that political writing is bad writing. Where it is not true it will generally be found that the writer is some kind of rebel, expressing private opinions* (*which have to be thought out*) *and not a party line. Orthodoxy, of whatever colour, demands a lifeless, imitative style.*"

The War ; a serious business, some might consider ; but it has its lighter side when reviewed in Mr, Martin's ineffable prose :

> " Bombs banished private doubts and public hesitations. Two campaigns stand out particularly in my memory . . ."

(The Middle-East, perhaps ?—the Italian campaign ?—the Normandy landings ?—the first Russian advance ? No : for Mr. Martin never abandoned his Grub-street parochialism !)

> ". . . The first was a series of articles Ritchie Calder and I wrote on the condition of air-raid shelters in the East End. These articles had something to do with Herbert Morrison's appointment as Home Secretary. . . ."

More yet; and please to remember that Kingsley Martin is one of the Homers of our time :

> " Another creditable incident was our onslaught on the internment of the German refugees in the Isle of Man in the Summer of 1940. Dick Crossman . . . opened a campaign . . . denouncing the folly of locking up those who could be our best-informed allies in the anti-Nazi struggle. The campaign succeeded. . . ."

Nothing is said about the subsequent actions of some of these refugees. It is, of course, at the best of times a slimy subject—

espionage; and slimier when its practitioners turn and bite the hand that fed and freed them. On this matter there is really nothing to add to Diana Mosley's observations some time ago in her article on Rebecca West.[8]

The Peace :

> ". . . we were able to support all the Labour Government's domestic programme, but we inevitably fell foul of Ernest Bevin's foreign policy. His statements before he took office were inspiring. But in a matter of weeks he was calling Foreign Office officials by their Christian names. . . ."

It is not idleness which leads me to quote Mr. Martin so freely. He is his own best debunker, malapropos whenever he opens his mouth or puts pen to paper.

> ". . . Mr. Attlee, to whom personal credit was due, was just in time to save catastrophe in India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. . . ."

But here's the best, in view of recent happenings in the Middle East :

> "Mr. Bevin . . . allowed within himself the birth of an anti-Semitism which led to the betrayal of our one firm ally in the Middle East to whose support the Labour Party was absolutely and unreservedly pledged."

Absolutely and unreservedly!—The Labour Party and *The N.S. & N.* —and this a few months after Mr. Martin's article appeared—rightly attacked a Tory government for uniting with the governments of France and Israel in savage and foolish action against Egypt. Flibbertigibbet would seem to be right: lacking a dynamic faith, Mr. Martin has twisted and turned in pursuit of causes dubious, irrelevant and often contradictory ; has given neither lead nor support to any movement likely to be of more than curiosity interest to historians a hundred years hence. With that thought I propose to leave him for a short while, reserving the right to recall him. His journal has a back as well as a front ; a region which Mr. Martin from time to time invades.

I was unmoved by people telling me that they " only read the back

[8] *The European*, July 1956.

half of the paper" . . . I guessed that they were becoming secret New Statesman addicts. . . .[9]

The literary department of *The N.S. & N.* is famous, for there are few great names in English and American letters who have not at one time or another contributed to its pages. (A few who have not suggest themselves: Pound, Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, Hemingway, Aldington, the Sitwells; though I could be wrong here and it would be tedious to check.) But guest stars cannot set the tone and tempo ; nor, it would seem, can they disturb it. There is a stale sameness about the " back half ", week after week, year after year : a wintry bleakness. Life and literature become putty coloured and drab, like an old raincoat. (This is all the more distressing because the intention, obviously and laudably, is to present a lively, balanced selection of reviewers and reviews ; contrast and rebuke to the fake scholarship and complacent mediocrity of a celebrated literary weekly which I may not—and need not—name.) Even the admirable Mr. Pritchett whom, on the whole, I exempt from these strictures, seems often to be *sadder* than is necessary ; his light shines, but it is a wan small light.

It has been suggested to me that this overall gloom might be caused by paper, print and lay-out ; an uninteresting combination true, and one which I myself find a considerable strain on the eyes. This might well be a contributory factor but I think the real answer lies deeper than that ; that it lies in the *predictability* of most of the signed writings. Reviews which should surprise and illuminate are all too often tiresome confirmation of what we have already observed to be the reviewer's predilections and phobias. This, at best, is annoying and unfair to the reader, the publisher and the author. At worst, and in the instance of an important and highly-controversial work, it suggests that the reviewer was chosen precisely *for* the predictability of his verdict. And this—surely often a matter of policy —would appear to involve once more The Editor.

★ ★ ★

" They only read the back half of the paper " . . . I would, reluctantly, agree with Mr. Martin that " they " move on to the front. I have earlier in this article attempted to describe two sorts of *New Statesman* readers. There are, of course, others—casual addicts

[9] *The Orchestra*, Kingsley Martin : *N.S. & N.*

who defy category and card index, and it may be that they comprise the majority. Certainly they are not " serious " readers ; they are as little inclined to buy Mr. Martin's views, or those of his hirelings, as Lord Beaverbrook's. The difference here is one of degree rather than kind. Two or three million people read the *Express* ; eighty thousand read *The New Statesman* ; both combined have less influence—far less—than had, say, C. P. Scott's *Manchester Guardian* with a very small circulation forty or fifty years ago, or Massingham's *Nation* with a circulation of only 6,000, between 1906 and the outbreak of World War I. Kingsley Martin's impact on political and public opinion must be small indeed by comparison with Clifford Sharp's, who for several years in the 1920's edited the original *New Statesman* with devastating effect, even going so far as to refuse contributions by his sponsors, Shaw and the Webbs, on the grounds that these were likely to sway readers by the sheer magic of their names (one can imagine Sharp's comments on the Geneva fish). All this, though relevant, is, I agree, debatable. I present it as a topic for discussion ; writing as one who was not alive in 1906 and scarcely kicking in the 1920's.

I have tried to show how Kingsley Martin and his journal are viewed by a not (I think) untypical member of a generation which has grown up with him. On behalf of that generation, I reject him. There are men and women who, in public and private life, are informed and inspired by an acceptance of what is good in the past and what can be marvellous in the future. Their lives and their work can never be paltry. They may be Salvationists, they may be Europeans ; they are alive. Mr. Martin, who has always lived in the present, has, to my mind, dulled and deadened it : his has always been a small and slummy world empty of marvels.

I have come to realise that silliness on the grand scale should be fought on principle, even when there seems no need to fight it on the grounds of expediency. And with that thought I shall drop the lid on the *New Statesman* coffin, sigh R.I.P., and return to the world of air and light.

Men & Books

A MORNING WITH MISTER KIMCHE

by DESMOND STEWART

ONE would like to be able to say that the best weekly magazine on the Middle East is printed in Arabic, in an Arab city. But one cannot—yet. The weekly which gives the most up-to-date coverage, the fullest documentation, and the greatest *appearance* of objectivity is, unfortunately, printed in England, in English. It is edited by Mr. Jon Kimche ; it is owned by a private company, a majority of whose shareholders are the Zionist Federation, and it is called *The Jewish Observer and Middle East Review.* It sells an audited 15,000 copies a month, mostly in England, but also in America. Mr. Kimche plans soon to bring out an international edition.

" Do you sell copies in Arab countries ? " I asked Mr. Kimche, in his office off Fleet Street.

" We are widely read in Arab countries, particularly by their foreign offices. We must be read by Nasser, since he quoted the *Review* in his book. We are also quoted frequently in the Cairo papers."

Mr. Kimche deserves to be quoted. Whereas most English newspapers cover Middle East affairs in a fragmentary manner (The *Daily Mail* covered the Suez crisis on the level of reporting a battle between Redcoats and Fuzzywuzzies), the *Jewish Observer* reports in great detail such speeches as that made by President Nasser on the internal development of Egypt : a subject of little news value to the ordinary English newspaper. " We are in fact one of the last strongholds of pro-Nasser feeling in this country," said Mr. Kimche with

a whimsical little smile.

" Could you state the policy of your magazine, in one sentence ? " I asked.

" I'll try—I believe what's needed for the Middle East is common reading on the current situation that is acceptable to reformist Jews and Arabs alike." He went on, unconcretely, to speak of give and take, a non-partisan approach, and of how his " many Arab friends " were all left of centre politically.

What is he like, this author (of *Seven Fallen Pillars*), this anonymous journalist (as *Liberator* in the *Observer*), this editor who boasts that he always likes candour, and that he deliberately chose the name *Jewish Observer* for his magazine, because he wished to sail under his own flag, and to show his objectivity in his reporting, not in any formula for naming his magazine ?

There are those with whom one feels at ease quickly, even though one's viewpoint is radically different from theirs. Short, roundish, smiling, Jon Kimche is of this type ; seraphic, rather than saturnine, erudite, well-informed, and with a slight lisp, he deserves the overused epithet, charming. I stayed with him an hour and a half ; if the interview had lasted six hours I should not have been bored ; though at the same time, I think I should have found at the end of it that he was cross-examining me more than I him. He seems a humane man, a man whose magazine is far less pro-everything-Jewish (to make a portmanteau) than many non-Jewish papers. To take a small example from literature : Mr. Herman Wouk has been acclaimed by such magazines as *Time* for showing an admirable, all American (if Jewish brand of American) patriotism in his books. But the Jewish Observer slates *Marjorie Morningstar* as the " sweeping attack against intellectuals, non-conformists and bohemians " which it surely is. " Mr. Wouk's idea of a colourful Jew, Uncle Samson-Aaron, is a throwback to the days when Negroes rolled their eyes in American films. . . . " Say listen," he (Uncle) says, " if everybody vas a millionnaire, vare vould they get night vatchmen ? "

Having said this, I may perhaps be allowed to probe more critically into Mr. Kimche's policy as shown in his paper : to penetrate beyond the charm and beyond the erudition, to confront what is steely in this man, and what is not part of the flexible bonhomie. He is a man prepared to glide over the ice of conversation with you, hand in hand ; but on the fundamental question of Arab rights in Palestine, he is as fixed as Pope Innocent on the

rights of kings, or as kings on the rights of commoners. Of course, as a political man, with a political front, he is concerned about the Arabs, and about the refugees. He has a policy. He has published articles on the refugees at least as informative as those in Arab papers. And instead of the usual Zionist rubbish about how Palestinians should be overjoyed to be resettled in Iraq or Syria, one article begins : " Doubtless it would have been considered realistic to have suggested to the Jews of the captivity that a good piece of land well-irrigated by the waters of Babylon was a fair exchange for the loss of their homeland. In the expressed opinion of the great majority of the 900,000 Arab refugees from Palestine who left their homes in 1948, the similar suggestion that they be resettled permanently on the Euphrates or in Egypt is similarly unappetising." Probably Mr. Kimche's willingness to help the refugees would go further than the Dr. Simon Shereshewsky who in the issue of June 15th suggested that " the Government of Israel should declare its willingness to *begin* with a resettlement of Arab refugees in Israel by trying—under the auspices of the United Nations and with their help—to resettle the first 1,000-2,000." If in his writing Mr. Kimche avoids the hackneyed Zionist contrast of " progressive Israelis " with " reactionary Arabs " his editing of photographs is not so unbiassed : Israelis are usually chosen for their good looks, Arabs for their ugliness or picturesque backwardness. For example, an issue last August had as cover an Arab whirling a sword, his eyes gleaming with fervid fanaticism ; inside there is a picture of a sun-tanned Israeli border guard calmly protecting his grazing sheep. Nor are Mr. Kimche's contributors always as suave and broadminded as he is. In fact a detailed reading of the *Jewish Observer* might be required for a reader to uncover the considerable measure of objectivity which is Mr. Kimche's personal achievement.

We were sliding on the ice together so happily that I felt I too must be candid. Mr. Kimche is candid ; he invites candour back. " I am fundamentally opposed to Zionism," I said. " To claim a land on religious grounds, in the 20th century, and then to take it by force from its inhabitants and colonise it. . . . . "

I could not finish my sentence. Mr. Kimche gestured, " Ah, yes," —his tone, his gesture seemed to imply that the combination of religion and nationalism which went to forge the Zionism of Herzl and Weizmann meant little to him—" Zionism was never intended to be what it has turned out. The blame is Hitler's, and the death-

camps. It was a question of saving lives."

This, I find, is the intelligent Zionist's excuse ; or even more, the excuse of the British official whose conscience sleeps calmly at night, in British Embassy or British Council, despite the broken pledge *in the Balfour Declaration itself* about the rights of existing inhabitants in Ottoman Palestine. Is it a valid excuse ? There are areas of the world which are suitable for colonising, because their existing inhabitants were themselves colonists, and their way of life was built on the acceptance of immigrants from all over the world, and their integration into a new state. Perhaps some of these areas, such as America, may be reaching saturation point ; others, such as Canada and Australia, are clearly not. (Australia's western territories, as large as several European countries put together, contain smaller numbers than an English suburb). But the idea of rescuing the Jews, and settling them in Australia or Canada (a feasible solution), was brushed aside in order to squeeze them into a small, already populated country, at the sensitive heart of an organic and coherent culture, the Arab world. This solution cannot be justified by ordinary logic altogether. Mr. Kimche's unwillingness to go deeply into this shows, I think, that this is his Achilles' heel. It shows, too, the way in which the title of his magazine is not as candid as it might seem at first ; because, surely, it begs the meaning of the very word Jewish, which such men as Dr. Elmer Berger have insisted refers to a religion, and a world religion, and not to a racial mysticism about the possession of one particular area of the Levant. The copies of the Jewish Observer which I have read in every case identified the cause of Jewry with the cause of Zionism. Under the heading Another Good Year in Glasgow : " There was a report by the editors of *Hashana*, Mr. I. Green and Dr. B. Seltzer, about the launching of this new publication reflecting the Scottish Jewish and Zionist scene." The photograph of himself which Mr. Kimche gave me shows him against a map of the Zionist state. It is one thing to talk about " common reading " for reformist Jews and left-wing Arabs. It is another to build a bridge between ordinary Arabs, with or without politics, who have been evicted from their lands, and the Zionists convinced of the nobility of so evicting them in " Israel's war of Independence."

Before I came to his office, I had formulated only one question which I wished to put to Mr. Kimche : What would be his attitude to an attempt to occupy the Canal Zone ? I never asked the question, in November to be answered by history. Instead, in September

Mr. Kimche spoke generally, and widely, and loaded me with back-numbers of his review. From these I guessed then what his reaction would be : and my guesses proved remarkably correct. With one side of himself, Kimche admires President Nasser. With that side of himself, as a socialist, as a believer in candid straightforward nationalism, he would say, " Nasser is right. His enemies are the shareholders of the old company, and the imperialists." Just as he did say to me, " Eventually a nationalisation of all Arab oil would be just and desirable, and the utilisation of all oil revenues to develop the Arab world as a whole. The European companies could perhaps take a rake-off of five or ten per cent as selling agents. The accident of geography that makes some Arabs rich and others poor—that is the real test of Arab unity. Are they prepared to share their resources ? "

In his issue of November 9th, he was to publish an article from Cairo by John Gale : " What about Nasser ? After months in Egypt, I am certain that he has given the people—even those against his policies—a fibre and hope they have never had before." This is the underlying Kimche of reason : the informed expert on the Middle East, who has seen more deeply than the type of Englishman who romanticises the bedouin and who hates the students. Mr. Kimche does not have this obsession with nomads ; he is interested in, and sympathetic to, young intellectuals of whom Nasser is in a sense the symbol. He would like to influence them, to be friends with them. He has no personal axe to grind ; he would sincerely like to see every Muhammad, Hassan and George enjoying the fruits of education and prosperity. I have no doubts about his sincerity on this score.

But on the other side, precisely because he is a Zionist, he would be bound to see in a British venture against Egypt something helpful to Israel. This was my opinion in September. In the event, the Israeli attack was to come first, and the Anglo-French intervention two days later. Mr. Kimche found reasons for the Israeli invasion : the usual ones, of defending Israel against fedayeen, of opening the Canal to Israeli shipping, and so on. As to the Anglo-French intervention, Mr. Kimche's doubts about this were not moral (morality flies out of the window when Zionism raps at the door) but tactical : a fear that Israel's successes would be minimised by the fact that the French and British had helped them, and that the fruits of the action might be snatched away by the world opposition to Anglo-French hypocrisy. He was also worried by charges of

collusion ; and tried, unskillfully, I thought, to dismiss them as unfounded.

This one problem, and the two simultaneous attitudes to it, shows the dangerous doublethink in " Zionist liberalism," if one may call it that. The fanatics of the Herut have no such split minds : they have conquered, they will conquer more, or be conquered. Their brand of fanaticism probably welcomes each fate ; a form of sadism powers the one, of masochism the other. They have the simplicity of the jungle. No such simplicity is possible for Mr. Kimche. For while he says, " The ultimate disaster to Israel would be to appear as a Western agent—her future is in the East," he must also know that Israel is in the East precisely as the *colons* are in Algeria (except that the colons have not actually driven the Arabs out). He must know that Israel could never have been established but for the West ; and that it could not last now, but for foreign subsidy and foreign protection. And he must know, too, that in fact the use of Israel to the West is as an agent of *divide and rule* ; he must read with mixed feelings the frequent letters in the French and British press urging vehement assistance to gallant little Israel, " the West's one sincere friend." He must, in his heart, see the contradiction in hailing as uniquely " democratic " the state erected in territory by a minority, who evicted the majority, and then called themselves Israel.

Meanwhile, this gifted, charming man is compiling a History Of The Palestine War from all three sides, the Zionist, the Arab, and the British. It is to be published in the near future. It will be an interesting book. But I hope that Mr. Kimche will, in the course of its writing, allow himself to consider the moral, as well as the military problems, of that war. Because I am convinced that if he does so, he may find himself faced suddenly with an overwhelming need to change his politics. He may see the fundamental schism between a human love of the Middle East and its peoples, and a partisanship of militant Zionism. Mr. Kimche spoke of his desire to visit the Arab countries, I hope he will be able to do so. Like St. Paul before him, he might have a sudden change of heart. Perhaps on the road to Damascus, too. If so, he might become as astute a champion of the Arabs as he is now of their enemies. I think he is of sufficient calibre to make such a change.

A DIARY

THE note of complaint in the writings of television critics gets shriller every week. How they must envy Lord Beveridge, who said that he and Lady Beveridge looked at T.V. for a few days and did not enjoy it, and that they would not accept a television set as a gift. I suppose someone capable of writing a readable article about it is not likely to be capable of getting full enjoyment from viewing.

Nobody who had anything amusing or interesting to do, or to think about, would dream of abandoning it for the sake of tiresome T.V. Therefore the wretched critics, who view for a living, become more and more censorious and governessy as they describe the ghastly boredom of the programmes, and the way the B.B.C. is obliged to compete for silliness with I.T.V. Before we know where we are there will be an attempt to stop people wasting their time watching it. There is a lot of pleasure to be got out of interfering with the way other people waste their time.

★ ★ ★

How should leisure time, ideally, be spent ? On winter evenings, at any rate, one cannot very well be out of doors taking healthy exercise. Hobbies ? T.V. is much more harmless than most of the objects made by addicts of raffia work, barbola work and lacy knitting. A good book ? I have recently been engrossed, not for the first time in my life, in the memoirs of Saint Simon. My edition is in thirty-eight small volumes published 1840 and printed in a neat 8-point type. It is very trying for the eyes, more so than even a speckly television. I cannot pretend that it does me, or anyone else, the slightest good to read, for example, a long description of lunching with Louis XIV when he was with his armies, of how everyone kept his hat on at table unless addressed by or speaking to the King when he would doff it ; of how dukes were invited to

luncheon but cardinals were not, and so forth. But it happens to amuse me, it does no one else much harm, and in fact all the same arguments apply to it, as a pastime, as to television.

On the other hand, I can do without a critic's commentary, and so I daresay can viewers. The critics should beg to be excused and write their witty pieces about something they find more congenial.

★ ★ ★

The League Against Cruel Sports protested to the Bishop of Southwell because, in a churchyard in his diocese, a fox's brush was thrown into the grave of a M.F.H. It was " more reminiscent of a beastly pagan rite of a bygone age than the modern conception of what is seemly behaviour in the consecrated area of a burial ground belonging to the Church of England ". The British Field Sports Society made a snappy rejoinder. " Placing a fox's brush on a huntsman's coffin . . . is certainly no more pagan, as the League protests, than the firing of a volley at an Army burial ".

Very true ; and what about an officer's sword, carried ceremoniously at his funeral ? What are swords for, except to run people through ? Do modern soldiers have tiny model bombs carried in their cortèges ? " Firing a volley " sounds more like the Crimean War, so very old-fashioned.

All the same, it is difficult to see how throwing the brush in the grave can qualify as a sport, cruel or otherwise. The League Against Cruel Sports would be more profitably engaged if they troubled themselves about the wretched cattle and horses exported for slaughter to the continent, or even conditions in the markets in English villages. But these, of course, have nothing to do with sport either.

★ ★ ★

The winter exhibition at Burlington House is called *British* Portraits, but in many cases it is the sitters, not the painters, who are British. One or other must be so, and therefore some of the greatest portrait painters—Titian, Velasquez, for example—were not eligible. Nevertheless there are magnificent pictures, notably the Van Dyke of Strafford, among a vast and strange assortment of our ancestors, and in the last room there are recent contemporary efforts.

It is here that the visitor realises, as he looks at the wares they have to offer, that portrait painting is at a very low ebb. It has become the most uncrowded of all the professions. The choice seems to be between the overgrown caricature school and the satin pincushion school.

I do not know if Annigoni ever paints men (except for a self-portrait of which I have seen a photograph) or whether Graham Sutherland ever paints women, but if I were obliged to employ these artists for a pair of portraits of a married couple I should invite Annigoni to paint the man ; it would be interesting to see what took the place of the cherry lips of his women sitters (I always imagine he allows them to use their own Elizabeth Arden).

Fifty years ago it was much easier. Sargent and Boldini could both be relied upon for an elegant, flashy likeness ; there was Wilson Steer, whose lovely portrait of Mrs. Hammersley would undoubtedly have been at Burlington House except that it has just gone to an Australian gallery. Even Picasso was sometimes persuaded to paint a portrait before the first war, and so, in the thirties, was Tchelichew.

But now there is a void. A few years ago an extremely brilliant likeness of Princess Radziwill by Derek Hill came to a bad end. Perhaps he is too truthful, or perhaps people refuse any longer to be amused by the unkindness of candour. (Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell suggests that Goya's portraits of the Spanish royal family amused them, and were accepted by them for that reason. They have certainly amused and amazed everyone ever since, and it is a point in Ferdinand's favour that he did not put a match to them at the time when he re-started the fires of the inquisition.)

★ ★ ★

Under the heading PARISIAN appeared the following piece of news in the *Evening Standard* : " Guests arriving for a charity ball at the Hurlingham Club introduced a Parisian atmosphere. The theme of the ball . . . was the Left Bank. The guests eagerly played up to the theme, wearing false hair, noses and beards, Davy Crockett hats, berets, jeans and sweaters." How surprised the inhabitants of the Faubourg St. Germain would have been, could they have seen themselves as others see them.

D.M.

THEATRE IN PARIS

Jean Anouilh's PAUVRE BITOS

by JACQUES BROUSSE

A RATHER curious thing happened to M. Anouilh in connexion with his latest play. Ever since he became a celebrity with *Antigone*, in 1944, one can say that with the single exception of *Romeo et Jeannette* he has had nothing but successes. Paris critics began to find this rather insupportable, and, in well-drilled chorus, they announced last year that *Ornifle* was a second-rate play. For almost any other play this would have been sentence of death. Admirably acted by one of our *monstres sacrés*, Pierre Brasseur, *Ornifle* has passed its three-hundredth performance.

Unmoved by the decrees of our most respected augurs, M. Anouilh next began to write perhaps the most disagreeable and certainly the most provocative play of his career : *Pauvre Bitos*. As can be imagined the critics, secretly irritated that the public should be so indifferent to their opinion, at least as far as M. Anouilh is concerned, did not miss the opportunity, and aided by political passions, combined in the most extraordinary and violent attack to which any play has been submitted since the end of the war. But once again it appears that M. Anouilh will win the battle. After a few weeks of ups and downs, *Pauvre Bitos* plays to more or less scandalised audiences, but the house is full.

Before attempting to analyse the deep reasons for his condemnation let us examine the accused. Bitos, as we shall see, is condemned twice over. First as a play, in the way I have just described, secondly as a character, and this time by his own creator.

Who is he ? The son of a poor washerwoman, educated by charity in a religious college side by side with the sons of the local nobility and rich industrialists, who hated him because every year he carried off all the prizes. Hard work earned him a position in the magistracy, he had left his native town and everyone had forgotten his existence when in 1944 he reappeared as substitute to the Public Prosecutor. He immediately stood out for the ferocity with which he exercised his functions in the trials of collaborators, and

when the curtain goes up his old schoolfellows are plotting a revenge.

They have decided that one of their number, Maxime, shall invite him to a *diner de têtes* during which they will humiliate him and possibly even beat him. They are to dress up their heads only as characters of the French Revolution ; Bitos has been asked to be Robespierre. Each of the other guests has been given the character best fitting his personality or physical appearance, and the atmosphere is tense, almost explosive, when Bitos makes his entry, in fancy dress from head to foot, the poor wretch having no very precise notion of what is meant by a *diner de têtes*. Deeply vexed, he takes his place at the table among the ironical smiles of the others, and rapidly begins one of those brilliant, angry arguments which the French indulge in when a society hostess takes it into her head to invite guests of opposing opinions together. Maxime is delighted. Not content with having added to this company a young school teacher (Camille Desmoulins) who had been in the Resistance with Bitos but who loathed him for his fanaticism, he also produces, at the end of dinner, dressed as the gendarme Merda (he who killed Robespierre on the 9 Thermidor), a young hot-head of good family, Delanoue, who had committed a folly for which, for reasons both political and personal, Bitos had procured the maximum penalty. Eyes glowing with hatred, this youth, not long out of prison, walks straight up to Bitos and like his predecessor during the Revolution, shoots him full in the face with a pistol. The charge is blank ; it is therefore from fright alone that Bitos falls in a faint. While he is unconscious he re-lives the life of Robespierre, whom he is representing so willingly, and this dream occupies the second act, the best in the play and one of the finest Anouilh has ever written.

It opens with a rich dialogue between the two *sans-culottes* who are guarding Robespierre in his prison on the eve of his execution. Like the prison warder in *Antigone*, they are the perfect incarnation of Demos-Caliban : brutal, stupid, bloodthirsty and prudent all at the same time, who kills without a twinge of conscience first his late masters and then those who had set him at their throats, when he is ordered to do so.

There follow a succession of admirably brilliant and intelligent scenes : we see Robespierre as a child whipped by the priests to cure him of a spiritual pride which appals them ; with Mirabeau, to whom he cries, wild with rage because this liberal aristocrat has inadvertently wounded him in his most sensitive spot : " You

despise the mediocre, but they have power, for they are the majority ! "—which is one of the most excellent definitions of democracy imaginable—with Danton, during a country dinner party at Tallien's a few days before he sends his rival to face the revolutionary tribunal ; and lastly with St. Just, in my opinion the most extraordinary scene in the whole play, where he describes for his friend the terrible mechanism of the Tribunal, which functioned in France from 1944 to 1946 exactly like its predecessor, and exactly as it functions during any revolution.

As he begins to expose his project of law, St. Just says : "Retro-active, partisan jurors, no defence. It is a model of its kind. But who translates to the tribunal ?"

" The Committee of General Security."

" Who furnishes names to the Committee ? Its work will leave it no time for enquiries."

" An independent commission will be charged with seeking suspects in the prisons. It will only be responsible for drawing up comprehensive lists of suspects without going into details, and transmitting them to the committee. The committee will simply have to sign and transmit to the Tribunal."

" And the Tribunal ? "

" The Tribunal will judge. But if the commission and the committee have sent men for trial, it is because they are liable to be sentenced to death. The Tribunal simply has to apply the law. Care must be taken."

" But then, who actually decides ? "

And Robespierre, mysteriously, quietly, replies :

" No one. The machine of LAW. It is dangerous to allow men to decide anything by themselves. One must build from reliable material, creatures who in themselves are nothing, imbeciles if necessary, and fit them into one another like cog wheels, breaking up their power into minute responsibilities which never commit them personally ; it is essential as far as possible to eliminate the human element, so that everything appears to decide itself. I myself shall retire. I shall be nothing at all. The law will grind on alone."

We must be forgiven for this long quote from the play ; since it will not be produced abroad it may interest *European* readers to see a dialogue which sheds more light on the psychology of the revolutionary than a hundred pages of any history book could do.

In the third act Bitos regains consciousness. When he sees that he has been the victim of a practical joke, humiliated and furious

he dashes out crying that he will institute proceedings against them for gross insult to a magistrate. Maxime and his guests realise that it is young Delanoue who may have to bear the brunt of the whole affair. Brassac, an important industrialist who has taken the part of Tallien, runs after Bitos to try and bring him back. He succeeds in persuading him to return to the party. Then the ladies set to work to charm and flatter Bitos ; he is given whisky after whisky until in milder mood, giving way to their blandishments, he promises to forget all his injuries. Brassac, in order still further to mollify him, admits that as far as repressive measures go the political right has nothing to learn from the left, as witness the White Terror after the Hundred Days, and the Versailles Reaction following the Commune. Then, judging the moment ripe, he suggests Bitos might be the ideal candidate at the next election to represent certain capitalists who, like him, are animated by a true social sense. Bitos, enchanted, agrees to go with them all to a night club to finish the evening. A young girl, taking pity on him, warns him that they are all making fun of him. The night before Bitos had asked her father for her hand in marriage, and had been thrown out of the house. Deeply wounded, he leaves saying to her : " If I were in power tomorrow, the first person I should revenge myself on would be you." And just as Lucille Desmoulins, in the second act, when Robespierre refuses to grant a pardon to Camille whom he is sending to the guillotine, had exclaimed, confronted by his miserable exhibition of hatred disguised as civic virtue : " Poor Robespierre ! " so this girl cries : " Poor Bitos ! "

This is the play which has aroused so much fury, and not only on the part of critics and journalists. With *l'Alouette* and *Ornifle* (for *Antigone* in this respect appeared at first to be an isolated attempt) it demonstrates that M. Anouilh, like most of our important writers, is more and more inclined to express his opinion upon those three or four great questions to which our age, where the old certainties are in flux, is ever seeking an answer : the relationship between Justice and Authority, the existence of God, the necessity for and consequences of Revolution. Containing as it does some very clear allusions to the terrible details of certain executions in 1945, it was inevitable that this play would be judged with passion ; the more so since in the scene between Bitos and Brassac M. Anouilh has let himself go in a dialogue of rather facile violence.

But of such reactions, when it come to the intrinsic value of the play, one might say what Valery said of sensational news items :

" they are the scum on each day ". In *Pauvre Bitos* the critics wilfully saw only the political satire and its historical analogy. Yet *Pauvre Bitos* is, above all, the sharp and penetrating portrait of a type : the fanatic. The past and the present light each other up ; each scene, as in all great plays of character, reveals an aspect or a trait of this particular very special kind of human being who, in our history, is perhaps more completely incarnated by Robespierre than by anyone else. All the background is there; the humiliations of childhood, the physical unattractiveness (" Why did none of you like me at school ? " Bitos asks Maxime, " You lacked grace " is the reply) which makes them despise women and hate the idea of the happiness other men can enjoy with them ; an intelligence which may be narrow or approaching genius but which, allied to a bottomless pride, makes them shrink from no act of violence in order to impose upon their contemporaries their usually more or less theoretical conception of society, horrifying in its novelty.

It is this aspect of *Pauvre Bitos* which makes it a work of lasting value, and which will interest audiences in the future when the quarrel between collaborators and resistants (which already leaves the new generation indifferent) will be dead ashes ; in short, it is this that may make the play a classic.

The reason why this bitter, colourful, sometimes farcical play has not been better understood is, as we have said, because for the newspapers the Resistance and the Revolution are, as Clemenceau said of the latter, " indivisible "*, which it is fruitless and even sacrilege not to consider as such ; but also because the author, upsetting once again all the comfortable conventions of modern society, has only one thought : to be himself. " Ideas conglomerate in it and are inextricably tangled," wrote, to cite one example, our most influential critic M. Robert Kemp ; " more or less inexplicable in its sociological, political and philosophical tendencies, this enormous play is swollen with impure water ". If only M. Anouilh had consented to view our age with a partisan's eye, to take a recognised scale of values whether of the right or the left, how straightforward it would all have been ! But after having displayed before us with fierce precision the springs of left-wing fanaticism, in the third act he begins to satirize, in the person of Brassac, the rich industrialist who, entrenched in cynicism, survives all revolutions ! — it is incomprehensible as well as embarrassing.

For our part we think it admirable that after ten years of un-

* Clémenceau said " *un bloc* "

interrupted successes, and having made his fortune, M. Anouilh should have remained faithful to his own youth, to the romantic boy in love with the absolute, the hyper-sensitive who, in his first play *l'Hermine* twenty years ago, cried out his horror of human mediocrity, of the worldly game in which the pure in heart are always sacrificed to the vulgar and pushing He sees now as he did then the world plunged in darkness, although in his last plays a sentence here and there may shine out for a moment in a light which is quickly extinguished. And, naturally, as with all his plays, the average man and this time the critics as well have protested against his excessive pessimism.

Excessive pessimism? In *Pauvre Bitos*, among a dozen characters, there are two just ones : Lucille and Camille Desmoulins (or rather those who have taken their parts), both completely powerless to prevent evil or violence. Look around : the proportion is about right, and also the feeble efficacity of good, which is particularly striking in times of decadence like the present, when a civilisation is dying.

That would doubtless have been the thought of a poor young man who, like Anouilh at his age when he wanted to see one of Giraudoux's plays, would have dined off a sandwich to be able to afford a seat in the gallery, and whose heart would have beat faster at some of the speeches in *Bitos*. Jean Anouilh writes for him, and his approval, one imagines, is Anouilh's supreme reward. We should be very much surprised if he has not obtained this reward.

CINEMA

Hortobagy, Giant, La Terra Trema

by VINCENT MURRAY

ONCE again a re-issue of a pre-war film commands more attention than the new releases. George Hoellering's **Hortobagy** was made in 1935 and has been in the film-society

repertoire for some years. When I saw it in the 'forties it presented a beautiful, often moving picture of life on the great Hungarian plain. Its director's complete absorption with his material and the striking images he drew from it were reminiscent of Flaherty's best work. Both these points remain true when one views the film today, but the knowledge of what has only recently taken place casts a different aura over the whole. The film assumes the stature of a record of a vanished way of life, for now the magnificent herds no longer roam the plain and the attempt to grow rice on the land has left it ruined and desolate. The film's basic qualities would always have ensured its place in a list of the most personal films of the past, but the note of melancholy we find in it today makes it even more valuable.

George Stevens' **Giant** is probably the longest film now on release (though I hear that a Todd A-O version of *Round the World in* 80 *Days*, which is to be shown soon in London, will beat even this record). In spite of its length the fans will flock to see it. It makes one wonder whether Stroheim was not born before his time, for surely his original six-hour dramas would have been the perfect antidote to T.V., which is what Hollywood is now trying to find. At any rate *Giant* is aptly named, for its story of Texas is spread out on a tremendous canvas, and its action follows the lives of its characters through several generations. Stevens revealed an ability to bring out the atmosphere of a particular period in his previous film *Shane*, which, incidentally, developed still further the flowing narrative style of *A Place In The Sun*. Both qualities are evident in *Giant*. This *is* the opulent 'twenties, one says as the film progresses, but the characters, like those in *Shane*, ultimately fail to take root in spite of sympathetic direction. The failure lies in the script, so tellingly accurate in period detail, but so lacking in depth, and therefore development of character. Dick Benedict, a wealthy ranch-owner, and his wife grow older, it is true. One can see this from the greying hairs. That, however, is about all one can say. They remain on the superficial level of a glossy magazine story, and within these limits both parts are very adequately played. The lesser parts are, on the whole, more rounded, especially that of the odd-job man, played by the late James Dean (whose third and final film this is). Dean's type-casting as a rebellious teenager in various stages of sulky repression throughout three films brought him great success, mainly because of his years of training at the Actors Studio where natural tendencies are cultivated and projected. Publicity

whipped up after his death (the records, the " hit-songs "), cannot alter the fact that he was recognised, even by the younger generation, as out of the usual run of film-actors. Dean may be their only reason for going to see this film, but they may find other things in it to enjoy.

More austere, but vastly more rewarding, is Visconti's **La Terra Trema** which recently received its first showing in this country. Little of this director's work is known over here. We have seen a commercial comedy he made called *Bellissima* and have noted an episode or two by him in the compendium films, but apart from that his reputation hangs on works we had not seen (*La Terra Trema*, for example) or could not see (his massive productions for the Italian stage). Made in 1948, two years after de Sica's *Sciuscia* and Rossellini's *Paisa*, *La Terra Trema* draws heavily on the methods of the neo-realist directors : shooting entirely on location ; working out a script on a day-to-day basis ; selecting as " actors " people doing their everyday jobs ; improvising dialogue on the players' suggestions. All this had been done before—who will forget the revelation of *Open City* ?—but Visconti wanted no rough-hewn slice of life (the aim of Rossellini) which was usually the result of such methods. He brought to the neo-realist film a true sense of filmic style, a remarkable achievement when one considers the conditions under which his film was shot. One could lengthily debate to what extent " style " and " neo-realism " go together, but about this film one must admit that its style grows naturally from the subject-matter, and is never imposed from without in contradiction to it. The slow rhythm of the sequences perfectly matches the natural dignity of the fisherman, lending an epic quality to this timeless human activity. There is a slight story (of feelings of revolt against middlemen's profits, but the feelings are soon crushed and life goes on as before) which was to have been continued in two more films on the same theme, but commercial interests overruled enthusiasm and they will never be made. Nevertheless the film is complete in itself and lasts a good two hours and a half. A visit is really worthwhile. It will probably be the last Visconti for some time, as his latest film *Senso* is bound to take months to reach this country. When it does, however, it may fare better than *La Terra Trema*, for it is as stylised and deliberately artificial as the earlier film is realistic. As escapist entertainment it may even manage a general release.

NEW BOOKS

Dostoevsky: His Life and Art by Avrahm Yarmolinsky (Arco Publications, 30s.)

DOSTOEVSKY has possibly had a greater influence on writers and intellectuals in Germany, France and England than any other novelist. Mr. Yarmolinsky's life of him was first published before the war ; this new edition is completed with the latest results of research into the subject. As he shows, Dostoevsky's art is intimately bound up with his life ; they have to be considered together.

His first novel, *Poor Folk*, was published when he was twenty-four years old ; it was an immediate success and the author was lionized. The critics said there had been nothing like it in Russia since *Dead Souls*. His most important admirer was the critic Belinsky, a socialist who wrote : " to make even a small fraction of mankind happy I am perhaps ready to destroy the rest by fire and sword," and whose motto was *Sociality or death.*

Belinsky was the author of the famous letter which was to land Dostoevsky in prison ; it had been read aloud by a small circle who gathered in the rooms of the poet Pleschcheyev. Some of the group planned to set up a printing press. " The setting up of a secret press in the Russia of Nicholas I was an undertaking tantamount to planting a bomb " says Mr. Yarmolinsky.

It is by no means certain that the press ever was in fact set up and vague talk of socialism in a very small circle of intellectuals was the crime for which Dostoevsky spent ten years in Siberia. He was arrested in the Spring of 1849 ; the events in Western Europe of the preceding year had terrified the authorities and were responsible for the savagery of the sentence.

Before they were deported the condemned men were taken out to be shot and made to dress in their grave clothes. At the last moment a " reprieve " was announced, and they were told they were to go to Siberia instead. Apparently this elaborate practical joke was the Tsar's own idea ; the condemned men, he thought, would love him because he had saved them from imminent death.

For nearly five years Dostoevsky, in irons, was in the fearful penal settlement at Omsk. The description of this prison, and the thought of the ghastly sufferings of the delicate, imaginative epileptic, would be almost unbearable but for the undeniable and curious fact that in

his deep masochism Dostoevsky seems to have derived profound satisfaction from both physical and mental torment. The arctic cold, the bare hut where he lived in crowded conditions with the dregs of criminal humanity, the stench, the noise, the hard labour performed in fetters, the lice and flies and filth ; also the cruelties of which he was a not unwilling witness, savage floggings and the like, seem to have fulfilled a need and even to have cured, for the time being, his melancholia. They were to him a source of morbid satisfaction.

Where another man would have been embittered against his country for the monstrous injustice of its treatment of him, and above all against his emperor whose personal intervention had caused him moments of intense anguish as he awaited execution, Dostoevsky adopted the complete Christian position ; turning the other cheek, he loved his enemy, and spent the rest of his life as a strong upholder of the monarchy whose power he would have liked to see made absolute.

In a sense, he was never so happy as when he was being tormented. " There was one element in his situation that gave him a strange and subtle pleasure. This was the humiliation to which he was subjected." He was the perfect martyr.

Some psychologists have seen, in his strange and unnatural acquiescence in punishment, the resolving of a guilt complex. When Dostoevsky was nineteen his father had been murdered by his serfs. According to Freudian theory " in the inmost depths of his heart he longed for the satisfactions of a tender union with his father ; on the other hand he feared him, broke out in revolt against him, and unconsciously wished his death. His epileptic attack, with its premonitary moment of bliss, due to the granting of the death wish, its period of unconsciousness and subsequent distress, is then a punishment meted out to him by his own conscience and at the same time a fond identification of himself with his dead father." The epilepsy from which he suffered until the end of his life is supposed by some people to have been the neurotic consequence of his feelings of guilt, though one doctor was of the opinion that it was due to an " endocrine abnormality ".

The mainspring of Dostoevsky's character, and of his art, was guilt. Whether this had to do with his father's murder (he was hundreds of miles away from his home when it occurred) or whether it was not rather a consequence of his religiosity which made him aware of an ideal of perfect love and perfect purity although he

chanced himself to be not only the most melancholy of men, plagued with various distressing maladies, but also malicious, spiteful, deceitful and sordidly lustful, is a question that can never be answered. Like Nietzsche's Christian camel, he cries : Give me burdens and yet more burdens, that I may carry them. Every humiliation, terror, or pain that he endured has been set down in the novels ; he is an artist who appeals irresistibly to the masochistic, romantic, nay-saying, decadent West.

Only three years after his ten years of exile in Siberia (the last five he was obliged to serve as a soldier) the novelist made his first journey abroad. With the horrors of the penal settlement freshly in memory it might be imagined that he would derive great pleasure from his first contact with the West. " Europe is as precious as Russia " says one of his characters. It was mid-June when he arrived in Paris. He spent a miserable fortnight there. External beauty he never noticed, and as to the vaunted liberty, it only meant freedom to do as you pleased, and you could not do as you pleased unless you had a million. He found the French shallow and grasping, the Germans boring and barbarous ; he was wretched in Florence, and he loathed Dresden, where he and his second wife spent some years. Here he added to her anxieties about his fits, his depressions, and their debts by borrowing money and then slipping off to the nearest spa with a roulette table and losing it all.

Dostoevsky thought the world should be governed by a socialism based on Christian love, the state must wither away and be replaced by the Orthodox Church with the Tsar over all. Like many Christians, he abominated every Christian sect but his own ; in his view nothing was bad enough for the Roman Catholics and their Pope.

In his faith he was assailed by doubts. He wrote to a pious woman friend " If anyone proved to me that Christ was outside the truth . . . I would rather remain with Christ than with the truth."

From this inner conflict stemmed his art. Into his novels have gone all the dreadful experiences of his life : disease, sin and suffering have thus been turned to account by the great novelist, who added to acute observation of human nature a strong dramatic sense and above all a passionate interest in the eternal questions which preoccupy mankind : the problems of good and evil, guilt and innocence, God and the immortality of the soul.

In *The Brothers Karamazov* the theme is parricide. Ivan, in whom Father Zosima recognises a man " struggling with unbelief " did not

commit the murder, yet it is he who feels the heaviest burden of guilt, because he is aware of having desired his father's death. Can one identify Ivan with his creator ? He has a theory that : " moral law is the fruit of the belief in God and immortality ; destroy that belief and everything would be permitted ; crime would be sanctioned ; a limitless, savage egoism, to the point of cannibalism, would become the rule of conduct." This point of view might seem to be typical of the pious Christian tormented by doubts. A glance around, or even a slight knowledge of history, would teach him that it is not necessarily a belief in immortality which engenders unselfishness, or respect for moral law. Dostoevsky doubtless realized that many rationalists might be among the best of men and many Christians among the most savage. This realisation, coupled with his own doubts and added to his manifestly imperfect capacity for loving his neighbour (for he was a great and indiscriminate hater) probably accounted for the ambivalence of his attitude which, while contributing to the experiences on which as an artist he was able to draw, yet made him the haunted and unhappy man he was. This pessimist, whose artistic gifts make him one of the supreme novelists, has become (in spite of his hatred of the West and rejection of European values) the prophet of an anti-classical and anti-rational movement of what Spengler called the *second religiousness*. He represents for such people the ideally masochistic and introverted sufferer, accepting joyfully the blows of destiny, never deluding himself with any foolish notion that this earth could ever be beautiful, but living in vague hopes (sometimes shadowed by doubts) of heaven. In so far as he himself had a panacea for the world, he believed in militant pan-Slavism, and in Russia, guided by the Orthodox Church, as world ruler.

In his sad and harassed existence there were two moments when Dostoevsky must have known supreme satisfaction. The first was when the publisher to whom he had given the manuscript of *Poor Folk* dashed into his lodging at four in the morning to embrace him and tell him he was a genius ; the other was at the end of his life when he made a speech at the unveiling of a memorial to Pushkin, and was acclaimed and crowned with laurels.

Mr. Yarmolinsky's book may not be written in the purest style ; he certainly makes a rich mixture of hackneyed metaphors. I recommend it nevertheless as a full, readable and intelligent account of an extraordinary human being.

D.M.

THE FORGOTTEN KINGDOMS OF WEST AFRICA

by R. H. PARKER

ON the 6th March, 1957 the Gold Coast will become the first Negro Dominion of the British Commonwealth. The new state will not in future be known as the Gold Coast, however, but as " Ghana ".

The name is not new, but a revival of the name of one of the forgotten kingdoms of West Africa. Before the coming of Europeans this area was not just a jungle of naked savages, in fact most of it was not even jungle. Between the almost impenetrable wet coastal jungles and the desert wastes of the Sahara lies a broad belt of rolling grasslands watered by the River Niger. It was here that a number of prosperous Negro kingdoms flourished during the Middle Ages.

The first of these was " Ghana ", the basis of whose prosperity was gold, for which the area has long been famous. The royal treasure of Ghana included a gold nugget so huge that it became famous throughout the world. Early writers tell us that it weighed thirty pounds. Later travellers improved on the tale, claiming it to weigh a ton.

An old history of West Africa published at Timbuctoo contains a curious account of the luxury existing at the Court of the King of Ghana at the end of the seventh century A.D. There were one thousand horses in the royal stables. Each one slept upon a carpet and was tied by a silken rope around his neck and to his

foot. Three grooms looked after each horse. One attended to his food, the second to his drink " and the third took charge of urine and droppings ".

The power of Ghana was destroyed by a band of fanatical Moslems known as the Almoravids. Even the exact site of its capital city is unknown, but many of the present inhabitants of the Gold Coast are reputed to have come originally from Ghana—hence the name of the new Dominion.

From the ashes of Ghana arose the greatest of all the medieval states of West Africa. This was the Empire of Mali. Its greatest Emperor was Mansa Musa, a pious Moslem, who determined to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. He set out across the desert in 1324, the seventeenth year of his reign, accompanied by a great host of followers. He rode on horseback preceded by 500 slaves each carrying a staff of gold weighing six pounds. In his baggage train of camels were 100 loads of gold each weighing thirty pounds.

Wherever he went Musa showered gold. Years after he had passed through Cairo the people were still talking about the visit of this fabulous Negro potentate. Returning home across the Sahara, Musa learned that his generals had added the great trading cities of Timbuctoo and Gao to his Empire. Whilst in Mecca he had met a Moslem poet and architect from Southern Spain called Es Saheli. Musa at once commissioned him to build new mosques of burnt brick for the recently captured cities—one of which was still being admired in the seventeenth century. It was Musa who made it possible for Timbuctoo to become famous throughout the world for trade and learning.

In 1352, twenty years after Musa's death, his capital was visited by Ibn Battuta, known as the " Traveller of Islam ", a scholar whose wanderings have been estimated at not less than 75,000 miles.

" The Negroes ", he wrote, " possess some admirable qualities. They are seldom unjust and have a greater abhorrence of injustice than any other people. . . . There is complete security in their country. Neither traveller nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers or men of violence ". But their custom of allowing their womenfolk to " go about in front of everyone naked, without a stitch of clothing on them ", deeply shocked him.

Like many other great rulers, Musa was unlucky in his successors. By the fifteenth century Mali had declined and a new empire arisen —that of Songhai, whose capital was at Gao.

The kingdom of Songhai lasted well over a century, but it was

eventually destroyed by one of the most daring exploits of military history. On the other side of the Sahara lay Morocco, whose Sultan in 1590, fresh from a great victory over the Portuguese, determined to add the golden lands of West Africa to his dominions. On October 16th, 1590, his army of 600 pioneers, 1,000 camel men, 8,000 camels, 1,000 packhorses, 2,000 infantry and 500 lancers began its march south across the Sahara. Many of the soldiers were Englishmen who had enlisted in the Sultan's service. Over a third perished in the desert ; the remainder were engaged in several closely fought battles with the Negro soldiers, but they eventually obtained supremacy, largely through their possession of cannon, which the Negroes lacked.

Songhai was captured, but it was not easy to keep its inhabitants in subjection. It was difficult for the Sultans of Morocco to control a country separated from them by over a thousand miles of almost waterless desert. The Negroes resorted to a vigorous guerilla campaign. Malaria, dysentery and the tsetse fly killed off the Moroccan men and horses. The local commanders declared themselves independent of the Sultan's authority. By the beginning of the nineteenth century it was impossible to tell the Moroccans from the earlier inhabitants.

During the next hundred years British and French influence was gradually extending throughout West Africa. The kingdoms of Mali, Ghana and Songhai were forgotten. The new leaders of the Gold Coast are trying to revive interest in the former glories of their peoples but at the same time they are perfectly happy to remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Next month in

THE EUROPEAN

The Middle East

DESMOND STEWART

writes on

PRESIDENT NASSER

• • •

THE COST OF SUEZ

by

BERTRAM PEEL

Author of *Suez : What Happened*

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