THE EUROPEAN

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ANALYSIS

IT is idle to cry over spilt milk, and in this harsh modern world it is useless even to lament spilt blood. The best we can do in this age of diverse and pressing menace is rapidly to assess mistakes and resolve at least not to repeat them. That is the purpose of an issue given mostly to a retrospect of Suez. The object is not to attack opponents by a reminder of their errors but to examine a state of mind which in a greater sphere could lead to irretrievable disaster. When this is done the sooner we English forget our divisions over Suez and unite in face of greater problems, the better for our future and that of all Europe.

The prime causes of the trouble were vanity and petulance leading to action without thought. The best example are articles now being written by leaders of the Suez Group to explain the great advantage of using the Cape route with large tankers in comparison with the obsolesence, limitations and dangers of the Suez route. These, of course, are the same men who used to cry, traitor, when others used the same argument a few years back ; these are the same men who were ready to risk a world war, and succeeded in alienating the whole opinion of the Arab world from Britain, for the sake of an objective which they now declare to have no purpose. After the event they did some thinking ; before the event they gave the matter no thought at all. The government and its supporters moved into action as a bundle of emotional reflexes reacting to stimuli of a century and more ago, without the least consideration of what they were really

doing in modern conditions.

This action in its whole nature was not merely so inherently dangerous, but so innately ridiculous that it led to consequences of incredible fantasy. A British Prime Minister, with the whole weight of Britain and France behind him, made a challenge in the field of your-life-or-mine, he challenged an Egyptian ruler who at the time had only a fraction of his own Arab world behind him. Yet so misconceived was the whole action that in the result the Egyptian became the powerful leader of all the Arabs, and the British Prime Minister became a broken fugitive in search of health but not of office. When we consider the balance of forces available at the outset, even the long record of human absurdities and tragedies can provide few parallels.

The Failure to Consider the Consequences Before Action

The prime cause of this fatality was the failure even in official circles to think before action, to consider the consequences. It was obvious to anyone who considered the matter for a moment that both America and Russia would react vehemently. America was bound to apply the maximum pressure, short of destroying an ally who is indispensible to the whole structure of the West. Russia was bound to apply the maximum threat, short of risking a world war which could result in H-bombs on Moscow. It was this restraining factor which made it as certain that Russia would not in fact bombard London with rockets as it is at the moment certain that Russia will not use the overwhelming strength of her land armies to march through Europe. The wrath of America and of Russia were both calculable risks. America would in time get over it, and Russia in the actual test would not dare to shoot. Any sane man would reckon that both these risks had been calculated and weighed before British Government took action, and that it had yet been decided the action was worth while. But it is now clear that neither risk had been considered in advance. At the first sound of the whistle and the first sight of the stick, British Government turned round and ran.

Eisenhower on the telephone and Bulganin's midnight note cut short that little scamper in double quick time. Before they did it, no one apparently had sat down for five minutes and worked out what might happen. When the inevitable occurred, they were taken completely by surprise. They lost their nerve, and again scuttled. Consequently, they incurred again the worst

of all worlds : the loss of Arab friendship and the loss of British prestige, without any objective gained. The tragedy turns finally to the usual farce as a justly soothing balm — labelled " Suez is quite obsolete " — is publicly applied to the well-kicked posterior of retreating adventure. The lesson of it all is the reiterated admonition of the competent nurse to the heedless lad who keeps falling into puddles : " think of what you're doing ". The same state of mind can one day cause a bigger splash, in fact, a drowning.

American Policy in the Middle East

America now enters the Middle East, and at least begins with precisely the policy which Britain should have pursued. A balance is held between contending forces, aggression is not supported but compelled to withdraw, and the rule of law and respect for international obligation is impartially enforced. It is idle to reply that America has the strength and Britain had not, because Britain and France together had plenty of strength for that particular purpose. The trouble was that the whole policy and attitude of British Government was fundamentally mistaken. As usual they were not ready to act in time, and when they were ready they appeared — rightly or wrongly — to intervene as an agent of Israel in support of international aggression. They consequently lost the balance of the Middle East and irretrievably alienated Arab sentiment, so far as the present Government and the Conservative Party are concerned.

The impression in the Arab world that Britain always sides with Israel, irrespective of the merits of the dispute, was strengthened by the really servile sycophancy of prominent journals and personalities of both left and right whenever Jewish interests are concerned ; it is clear that to a number of well-known men and organs of opinion in this country the Jews can do no wrong. And nothing creates anti-semitism so rapidly as such an attitude. Those who hold the principle, " the Jews right or wrong " are the most powerful propagandists of anti-semitism. They provide food for the illusion that an all-powerful Jewish conspiracy rules the world ; an illusion which sends extreme anti-semities burrowing in the next rabbit hole in chattering fear of the master's hand, and sends many politicians and publicists of right and left in a dreary pilgrimage of perpetual search for Jewish boots to lick. In fact, of course, there are not sufficient able men in the world

to conduct with any hope of success such an omnipotent secret conspiracy, and the anarchic character of many Jews prevents effective organisation in their own ranks as much as it tends to disintegrate societies which are ripe for dissolution.

President Eisenhower delivered the hardest blow ever received by anti-semitism when he took a stand against Israel in the last week of an American election, and subsequently compelled that country to withdraw to its own boundaries by a latent threat of sanctions. World Jewry was successfully affronted, and Eisenhower and his government still live and gather strength. Nothing ever did so much to relieve World Jewry of anti-semitism by proving that its power was not so great after all. Such are the curious paradoxes by means of which sense eventually penetrates human heads. But we British are left with the sorrow that — for all their youth and naïveté — it was left to the Americans to play the part of a man and a great power.

EUROPEAN

THE COST OF SUEZ

by BERTRAM PEEL

WHAT has been the cost to Britain of the Suez adventure ? It would be unfair to blame everything that has happened in the last four months on this single blunder ; after all, much of it would probably have happened in any event sooner or later. There are certain anomalies in our existing political and economic system which cannot be circumvented except by artificial means, such as the waging of a war, the establishment of a National government or borrowing money. Consequently it is proposed to give a commentary on what has followed the conflict, adopting the same method of day-by-day narration as was used in a previous article *Suez : What Happened*,* which ended at the point when the cease-fire in Egypt became effective. Lessons can be drawn from the events themselves, and hope conceived from what they have obliged us to admit.

The position at November 6 is that the Canal is blocked with fifty-odd wrecks and the pipelines of the Iraq Petroleum Company out of operation. The I.P.C. lines carry 25 million tons of oil every year, or 20 per cent of the U.K.'s supply. On the same day as British and French tankers are being turned away at the Lebanese seaboard, tramp shipping freight rates for transatlantic grain trade rise appreciably as a direct result of the requisitioning of ships by the U.K. Government. P. & O. passenger fares go up 20 per cent and outward Java freight rates 25 per cent. All

* The European No. 46

shipping lines operating between U.K.-Europe and E. Africa, India and Far East impose a surcharge of 15 per cent for round-the-Cape routing. Today on the New York stock exchange oil jumps about $2 giving the best levels since mid-September. Today is also American election day.

In the *Financial Times* the following comment is made : " The total cost of the Suez emergency in Budgetary terms was still probably less than £15 million up to the time of the Anglo-French action ; the largest single item to date has been the cost of requisitioning ships, running at £1 million a week since the crisis began. This, together with the transport of troops and supplies, accounted for 60 per cent of the total military cost. Obviously, the ultimate size of the bill to be met by the British taxpayer depends on the speed with which the operation in the Suez Canal can be completed and handed over to someone else. Apart from oil, the feeling among officials in Government departments appears to be that there is no major administrative problem in the economic or financial field calling for urgent action. Everything so far seems to be based on the theory of a short and comparatively inexpensive action." The cease fire is announced in the Commons tonight.

In the next issue of the same newspaper, estimates are given of the extra cost of the Cape route, based on a 10,000-13,000 ton cargo-only vessel. The figures are : To India, extra running costs £11,700, loss of deadweight due to extra fuel carried £10,000, interest and depreciation £7,000, total £28,040. Most of the cost is, of course, due to the extra time to be taken. " Wayport " business, *i.e.*, chance business en route, and loss of earning days are not allowed for, it will be noticed. Shares on November 7 on the London Stock Exchange, generally, fell to their lowest level since the previous March.

On the next day, November 8, the Ministry of Fuel announce the 10 per cent cut in petrol and oil. British tanker companies divert many tankers to the U.S.A. and Venezuela, since existing tankers cannot take more than two-thirds of normal supplies if the Cape route is used ; consequently the use of the shorter route to the Western Hemisphere is inevitable. Baltic Exchange tramp rates are now almost equal to the all-time record 6 years ago during the Korean war. Member lines of the Europe to E. Africa shipping conference impose a 25 per cent freight surcharge.

Substantial purchases of oil now take place in the U.S.A. by U.K. buyers. Britain's annual oil needs may be roughly assessed from the 1955 consumption figures in '000 metric tons : private motoring 3,048, other transport 6,764, agriculture 1,246, domestic 629, industry 6,832, refineries 2,093 giving a total of nearly 21 million metric tons. Caribbean oil prices now leap 25 per cent in anticipation of rising demand ; Shell, Creole and Esso are included. There is a new 6-year peak in transatlantic coal rates on the Baltic. It is not surprising that the *Financial Times* remarks that Sterling had a difficult day, referring specifically to the balance of payments problem. It is not merely that the U.K. needs 21 million tons, but the Sterling oil firms have commitments to supply vast quantities of oil normally obtained in the Middle East to customers in W. Europe and elsewhere against payment in Sterling. " Even on the most favourable assumptions " says the *F.T.* " the net cost of the whole operation is likely to run into several tens of millions of dollars. With good fortune it might be possible to keep the total within $100 million."

By November 10, the " wide boys " (and the honest dealers) are beginning to feel the pinch as used car prices fall 5-7 per cent at a time when the seasonal fall has normally settled. The eyes of the public are suddenly riveted on the cycle and motor cycle show, due to open shortly. A big challenge to Continental scooters is expected ; the Continent have taken the cream of the English market over the past 12 months, scooter imports in the first half of 1956 being 18,000 against 12,000 in the whole of 1955.

All this time, of course, Anglo-French troops are remaining on Egyptian soil, and the U.S. Government declines to put into operation an emergency oil supply programme for Europe ; America is unwilling to be identified by the Arab bloc as supporter of Britain and France at this juncture, and this may have had much to do with the subsequent success of American relations with the Arabs, culminating in King Saud's voyage to the U.S.A., returning via Spain, Morocco and Egypt.

First sign of trouble in the motor industry now appears, when Vauxhalls reduce output because cars for export are piling up at the docks and at the factory. Rootes are trying to charter their own ship. Dread of all dreads, Japan soon appears on the scene ; the view is expressed in Tokyo that the Middle East situation could " play directly into Japan's hands by isolating much of Asia and Africa from European countries ". Sales

effort by Japan in Asian market is to be intensified, private capital investment, with Government backing, is to be temporarily increased. Although Japan's trade with Europe will also be affected, this represents only 10 per cent of her world markets.

On November 13, Mr. Macmillan, then Chancellor, estimates that Britain's intervention in Egypt is likely to cost the Treasury £35-50 million in additional military expenditure in the current financial year. This figure is shown to be too low when the Services produce figures a few weeks later. But in any case, it is of little importance compared with more serious developments now beginning. Since the end of July, single voyage rates from the Persian Gulf to U.K.-Continent have risen from Scale plus 100 per cent to Scale plus 325 per cent. Over the same period single voyage rates for crude oil from the Caribbean to U.K.-Continent have risen from Scale plus 60 per cent to Scale plus 300 per cent. The Canadian Minister of Trade, Mr. C. D. Howe, returns from Japan today with a strange message. He says that Japan has a good supply of dollars and is gradually overcoming her big Canadian trade deficit. Canada's exports to Japan this year 1956 may be about $100 million while Canada's imports from Japan may rise to $50 million. He also says that Japan might buy an increasing quantity of Canadian oil, and might replace the United Kingdom as Canada's main wheat buyer.

Prices of most commodities arriving at U.K. import markets have risen sharply in the last two weeks. With July 1 1952 as base 100, the *F.T.* Commodity Index shows a figure of 86 just before Nasser's " grab ", followed by a sharp rise to nearly 90, a peak in mid-September of 90, and a gradual settling to 86 at the end of October. As a result of the Anglo-French intervention in Egypt, the Index figure now leaps to over 90.

Paris, on November 15, sees the arrival of Mr. Macmillan, who is to preside at a special O.E.E.C. meeting called " to try to achieve a better co-ordination of economic policies among member countries in face of new pressures causing disequilibrium in European trade and payments ". They mean that Germany's strong creditor position is threatening to overstrain the E.P.U. system. The Indian Government now comments on the crisis, and observes that any diversion of production in the countries of Europe from normal peacetime channels could have important consequences for India. On what slender threads does the British hold of India now rely !

It is revealed, next, that the German motor industry expects an output figure of 1.1 million units for 1956, which is below Britain's 1955 figure but probably above our 1956 figure. Germany's lead over Britain in passenger cars has been appreciable during the last few months. In England, the major car groups are studying how to avoid redundancy. An official of the Pressed Steel Company in Oxford observes quite simply: "We have been striving for several months to keep our people on a 5-day week, but with reduced schedules it is obviously impossible to keep men if we have no work for them". Details of continuing world oil price rises constitute the main news of November 16.

The "officially-backed" dollar rate is now around $2.78, but "security sterling", which reflects U.S. valuation of British stock, is around $2.49 which is practically $1/2 below the official rate. Conversely, the London premium on dollar stocks is centred around 12 per cent.

French refineries cut output by 25 per cent, and Germany reduces by 10 per cent. M. Georges-Picot, director-general of the Suez Canal Company, says the Canal blocking is costing £54 million extra per month to Europe because of the need to go round the Cape. The United States, incidentally, is still with holding emergency aid to Europe "until stability has been achieved in the Suez Canal Zone". Many people in Britain become rather piqued at this, which is inappropriate considering that we are about to go down on our knees.

Redundancy is the spectre now. Talks have begun between British Road Services and the T. and G. W. Union on the effect of the 10 per cent cut in operations, and meat haulage drivers at Smithfield strike unofficially against a redundancy threat, the Steel Company of Wales had begun discussions with union officials, Rootes and Pressed Steel announce dismissals. The Unions are worried since, although there were only 70,000 on short-time before the intervention in Egypt (of which a half were in the motor industry), the T.U.C. has previously estimated a figure of 1 million eventually unemployed if the canal were closed.

By November 21, new all-time record freight rates are established on transatlantic dry cargo and oil runs. A new 25 per cent shortfall in U.K. oil supplies is followed by the announcement of petrol rationing. Normal supplies have now dropped a total of 40 per cent. The monthly trade returns for October, published today, reveal that trade terms deteriorated

by 2 points after being stable for three months ; main increases on the import side were fuel 7 points, food and beverages and tobacco 4 points. It should be remembered that this took place before the canal was blocked. October car and commercial vehicle output is stated to have been the lowest since 1952.

Some people realise, and rightly so, that a degree of benefit to industry may derive from the crisis. Mr. A. A. Shenfield, economic director of the Federation of British Industries, says : "It would be disastrous for Britain to solve the problem of maintaining employment by applying physical controls on any large scale. It is possible that the great jolt of Suez and its effects might make the British people more ready to make fundamental changes. There may be an opportunity to cut out a very great deal of the elements from the economy which were operating inefficiently."

Kuwait oil production is now cut to a quarter of normal owing to the tanker shortage, British refineries experience cuts of up to 25 per cent. Garage employees, taxi drivers and commercial travellers are more than a little worried now, and considerable confusion arises over the issue of petrol coupons. On November 22 in London, 4,958 dockers could not be found work, compared with 4,685 on the previous day, 4,453 on the day before that and 2,814 a week ago ; the surplus is 16 per cent of the total register.

About this time, Kenya trade authorities state that while sales of Vauxhall, Morris and Austin cars continue to decline, those of Opel, Volkswagen and Mercedes are increasing considerably. In 1956 Ford show 3 per cent rise, Morris declined 11 per cent, Vauxhall 19 per cent, Austin and Standard 20 per cent.

An estimate is now put forward of British assets that have so far been sequestered by Egyptian law. The *F.T.* put the total value at £55-60 million excluding our interest in the Suez Canal Co. (worth 43 per cent of 200 million gold francs 75 years ago)* and the value of the Suez base. In the Commons, the Fuel Minister says that our oil requirements in 1957 are likely to be 29 million tons, costing around £2 a ton extra by way of the Cape. The Chancellor says that petrol and oil rationing may mean a loss of revenue of about £6 million a month.

The turn of the month brings short-time working throughout the motor industry. A daily average of 11,174 dockers are out of work during the last week in November, total register being

* The company still has £60-65 million of assets in various countries

80,000. Trade unions in Coventry-Leamington believe nearly 20,000 are on short time in the area, 6,000 having lost their jobs entirely since June last. On December 1, there are further increases all round in fuel oil prices, as fifteen U.S. oil companies announce pooling of resources to supply Europe. Since the canal was blocked a month ago tramp shipping rates have risen by 40-60 per cent to present all-time peaks.

A spectacular plunge in the U.K.'s gold and dollar reserves during November of $279 million to $1,965 million is announced in the Commons by the Chancellor on December 5. There was also an E.P.U. deficit of £24 million. The Chancellor states he will forthwith put 1s. 5d. on petrol, seek a waiver of December interest payments on U.S.-Canadian loans, arrange to draw part of our $1,300 million from the International Monetary Fund, use some of Britain's $1,000 million U.S. dollar securities, sell $30 million of short term U.S. Government securities, impose further credit and H.P. control, and budget for a deficit. We have reason to have a measure of confidence in a man who, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was not willing to shirk the issue, and who now holds the position of Prime Minister. It is clear why Cecil and Churchill chose Mr. Macmillan rather than his rival.

The Engineering and Allied Employers National Federation on the same day referred to " danger signals " in our engineering exports including agricultural machinery, aircraft engines, boilers, clocks and watches, cycles, diesel engines, electrical equipment, locomotives, marine engineering, machine tools, motor cars, communication equipment and textile machinery. This view is confirmed on the following day by the West German Economic Minister, who states that in 12 months his country's foreign orders for capital goods rose 34 per cent, consumer goods 13 per cent and basic materials 34 per cent. Since there was also an all round decline in home demand, it is easy to see why Germany is taking a leading part in the formation of the European common market of 250 million people. It was very sensible of the French and Germans to bury the hatchet.

Dunlop Rubber Co. raise their tyre prices by 10 per cent, and road haulage rates go up by a similar amount. Bus fares increase in London. West Germany makes arrangements to buy Russian and Roumanian oil.

The British Government has now obtained the go-ahead to

draw $561.47 million from our $1,300 million quota in the International Monetary Fund, and completed a standby arrangement by which $738.53 million may be drawn in foreign currencies over the next 12 months. Freight rates do not rise today, for the first time since the crisis, but the halt is only temporary as will be seen later. Short time working in the car industry now affects 5,630 workers. The Ministry of Labour say that in manufacturing industry as a whole there are now 9,530 on short time, an increase of 50 per cent in a month. Fords are now to work a three day week as a result of a set-back in sales. On December 21 the Government at last reduce from 50 to 20 per cent the minimum hire purchase deposit on cars. Car output in November is stated to have been more than a quarter below normal ; output for the first 11 months of 1956 is down no less than 19 per cent, and exports down 14.5 per cent.

As if that is not depressing enough, we learn the next day that a $500 million loan from the U.S. Export-Import Bank is made official today. Shortly after this, Briggs and Morris pay off hundreds of men and Rootes put 6,000 on a 3-day week.

The New Year begins with a sad picture in oils. Texan oil companies have declined to increase " allowables " for January, which will result in a shortfall of 2 per cent from the 500,000 barrels a day for Europe under the new emergency plan, the object being, of course, to create a shortage in crude oil prices. Shell of Venezuela bring their prices to 19 per cent above pre-Suez prices and other companies follow suit. The Humble Oil and Refining Company, affiliate of Standard Oil, raise prices of Texan crude oil from $2.9 to $3.25 a barrel, being the first general price rise in the U.S. industry since mid-1953, when prices rose 25c a barrel. Wall Street oil shares leap today.

Outstanding among industrial matters at this time is the proposed sacking by Briggs of a further 1,000 men. There are 7 million workers with pay claims outstanding, which, if conceded, would cost the country £290 million. On January 7 a meeting of motor and allied trade shop stewards in London calls for mass lobbying in the House " in the light of the Government's failure to solve the motor industry crisis ". They note that during 1956 some 45,000 workers either left the car industry or were dismissed.

The continuing rises in freight and oil prices are now becoming tediously regular. Fords say that they may now sack a total of 3,000 men. Unemployment in Coventry assumes serious

proportions.

Sir Anthony Eden resigns on January 10 and, as all sectors of the car industry report production cuts of 40 per cent, a big demand arises for economy cars, notably the Citroen 2 CV (French) and the Goggomobil, Heinkel, Isetta, Lloyd and Messerschmitt (all German). These cars are being flown in as well as being transported by sea. On January 11, it is announced that there are now more unemployed than there are vacant jobs in the United Kingdom.

Egypt nationalises British and French banks and insurance companies on January 16. Not a sound comes from the British Government ; once bitten . . . ! The German bank rate is reduced to 4½ per cent. Further motor industry sackings are accompanied by strike action, but a bright spot appears in the form of an announcement that Germany produced 15 per cent fewer cars in December than in November, though it hardly compares with the enormous drop that U.K. production is even now experiencing.

All this time the United Kingdom and the United States are "re-negotiating" the 1945 Anglo-American loan agreement, in an effort to meet Britain's request for relief from the $81-6 million interest payment that became due on December 31. The Eisenhower Administration, however, is not prepared to grant a waiver, although a postponement is considered. A Parliamentary statement says that the extra defence expenditure in the current year due to Suez will be around £35 million. Lord Mills on January 30 pledges there will be no further cut in oil for industry beyond the existing 10 per cent cut before April, and the month finishes with 6,700 of Fords' 15,000 men being sent home, the Canal still blocked, and the I.P.C. pipeline about as much use as a screw with no head.

Through February the trend of events alters slightly, hinting at greater changes of mood to occur in March. It is true that, during February, many of the Suez chickens come home to roost, but there is a noticeable stirring in the spirit of British industry, temporarily stunned in the course of growing achievement.

The month begins with 1,000 workers being dismissed at Tripoli by the Iraq Petroleum Co., who are said to be thinking of ceasing operations in Lebanon. At home, the Blackburn and General Aircraft Company dismiss 250 men "because of the degenerating position in the industry as a result of defence cuts". We may

hear a lot more of this kind of thing in the next few months, it is to be feared. On February 5 it is revealed that gold and dollar reserves in January declined another $49 million to $2,084 million, following the drawing in December of $561 million from the International Monetary Fund yielding a net $168 million addition that month. A big tanker programme is announced by Shell on February 6 and B.P. follow suit.

A little late in the day, certain U.S. oil companies appeal to the U.S. Department of the Interior to investigate " the failure " of the Government-approved Middle East Emergency Committee and other oil importers to divert Caribbean oil from the U.S. East Coast to Europe. This is the signal for another wave of anti-American feeling in this country, which is unreasonable since Americans, " bloated capitalist " or otherwise, have no obligation to help anyone in Europe, especially as America is effectively self-contained and independent.

On February 7 the bank rate is brought in to 5 per cent. This naturally gives rise to a multitude of warnings and explanations. The reason is actually very simple : Germany brought her Bank Rate in, last month. On February 12 and 13 two very sad facts become known : unemployment is stated to have risen in January to its highest point for three years, namely, 382,600 persons ; and a long-term lease is signed for Brighton locomotive works where German Isetta scooters are to be turned out at a rate of 10,000 a year, half for export. The Ford company the same week announces price rises for all models. Car production in January is now known to have been no less than 42 per cent down on January 1956.

Our partner-in-Suez, France, seems to have been not quite so vulnerable as we have been over the past month or two, because it is not until the third week of February that she draws her first dollar credit under the I.M.F.'s loan. The quantity is $262.5 million, and additional drawings will be made over the next twelve months.

As the doctors begin rocking the National Health boat, the Government put 10d. on the weekly National Insurance contribution and raise the price of school meals and milk, thus unashamedly demonstrating the true nature of our weekly contributions. This 10d. increase, coupled with the doctors' " revolt ", is more important than is generally realised ; it is just as fundamental as the offer of £13 a week for doing nothing made to McLoughlin

at Briggs, and the power engineers' work-to-rule threat over differentials, which also occur this month. In these three disputes are contained the basic anomalies of our postwar liberal-socialist way of life. In the matter of the skilled power engineers who seek a restoration of differentials is reaped the inevitable reward of Labour's post-war egalitarianism ; in the matter of the Health Service is met a comparable steamrollering philosophy of equality coupled to its attendant bureaucracy ; and in the offer of £13 for doing nothing is embodied the *reductio ad absurdum* of management's enforced and continual surrender to labour over a decade and more. It is almost certain that these problems will arise with increasing frequency if we carry on as we are.

And whilst we are on the subject, this month the Federation of British Industries issues a report in which they comment : " Our Balance of Payments difficulties and crises reflect collective decisions to consume more than has been produced ". In an urgent tone they call for public expenditure to be kept below 30 per cent of the national income, immediate reduction and redistribution of tax burdens, and demand a stimulus to revive investment.

Another body issues a report, the U.K. Chamber of Shipping, protesting that the interests of the world shipping industry have been pushed into the background in the Suez dispute, and pointing out that the International Chamber of Shipping, representing 80 per cent of Canal traffic, has not yet been asked by U.N.O. to give its views on any of the practical issues involved in the re-opening of the waterway. (It is a too frequent error of Western statesmen these days to form committees duplicating what industry can do much better.)

The turn of the month brings front page news that the average weekly wage for all workers — men, youths, women and girls — now exceeds £10 in this country. They rejoiced too soon, for the very next day the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, answering a Parliamentary Question, says that the pound is now worth 16s. compared with five years ago.

And that is as far as it is proposed to take this account. During the early days of last month a revival of car output was noticeable, Britain associated herself in a positive way with Euratom, a revised and increased U.K. nuclear power programme was announced, and a quicker rail electrification schedule implemented. It is sincerely to be hoped that in a few months

time an article may be written looking back on March as the month when Great Britain woke up again. After all, even a pessimist may hope.

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In the foregoing no mention has been made of a number of matters outside the realm of economics. These include, at random, the expulsion of Britons from Egypt, the trial of British " spies ", death of Lieut. Moorhouse, emigration queues including a sizable proportion of valuable men, India's contempt of the United Kingdom, the absence of any retrospective support for our action from the Commonwealth, Dr. Summerskill's visit to Port Said and certain long term results relating to Franco-British prestige and influence.

Apropos of this last, it is interesting to hear what M. Georges-Picot, director-general of the Compagnie Universelle du Canal de Suez, had to say at a recent luncheon (unreported) of the French Chamber of Commerce in London. M. Georges-Picot is a man noted for speaking his mind and, if it is true that he plans to leave his present post and take up a position with a banking group, it is likely he spoke as he felt on this occasion. He made the point that during the course of the years a great many Egyptians had been brought into the working of the Canal but Egypt's benefits from the latter had not been comparable with those of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and others. Add to this the sheer mathematics of the Aswan Dam project, and the " grab " of the Canal is seen to have been inevitable. Since 1949 the Suez Canal Company had been warning the world's governments ; it was a pity the Canal Users' Association had not been formed in time, in a peaceful atmosphere. Now we had fallen between the two stools of Force and Negotiation.

The speaker considered the main consequences of Suez to be loss of Franco-British economic and political influence, and loss of confidence in the canal as a waterway. He recalled that de Lesseps' original wish had been to form an international company, but this had been frustrated. In M. Picot's view the lessons of Suez were : the need for an international court for commerce, The Hague being only at the governmental level ; the necessity of foreseeing major political trends ; and the danger of putting all Europe's interests in one place, where, moreover, she had no

political influence. He ended by emphasising the need to develop oil sources in France and the Sahara.

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Despite the considerable cost of Suez, it may turn out to be one of the luckiest of our historical errors. We have been warned in time of our fool's paradise. In the last six months we have had to ask ourselves whether the Commonwealth exists in any shape or form, whether U.N.O. or any similar world body is going to work here and now, whether we can any more arrange the balance of power single handed to suit ourselves, and whether our present system can of itself arrest our half-century of economic and general decline. The answer in every case must be in the negative.

The world's power blocs are now in process of readjusting themselves, and in the midst of it Great Britain is rediscovering the continent of which she is a part. This will be a hard process over the next ten years, following 400 years of independence, but eventually we shall have to go right into Europe to form the Euro-African bloc which the Continent is now taking steps to establish. At the moment Britain is veering towards an Atlantic Community, while certain forces in Africa are inclined towards an Afro-Asian bloc. The tension between these three concepts may well be the dominating interest of the next few years. If Britain can now bring herself to face the future instead of the past, Suez will have been cheap at the price.

THE CHARNEL-HOUSE OF KAFR QASSEM

by ALAN NEAME

THE Israeli attack on Egypt and subsequent refusal to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and positions on the Gulf of Aqaba have given rise to much loose thinking and looser talking and writing on Middle Eastern politics and the status of Israel.

The *Observer* of March 3, 1957, in its editorial entitled "Illusions", pointed out the recent growth of a belief that "Britain has found in Israel a natural ally against a hostile Arab world — an ally who should be supported and encouraged to assert her position in the Middle East". The editorialist went on to show that this belief flattered the delusions of the two chief political groups in England. That this delusion is widespread will surprise no reader of the correspondence columns of the *Times*. It is however a wholesome sign of returning commonsense when one respected English newspaper denounces the belief for the phantasy that it is.

As far as Right wing opinion is concerned, support for Israel is based on the assumption that Israel is a brave and efficient little military power surrounded by and hostilely engaged with countries that seem to threaten Britain's interests as well as Israel's survival. Leaving aside nineteenth century notions of chivalry, admitting that this partiality may be fostered by private financial considerations, which always weigh heavily with the Right, we can see the folly of this belief when we reflect that the

immediate effect of Britain's military support for the Israeli adventure in Sinai, was the closing of the Suez Canal by Egypt and the breaking of the oil pipeline by Syria. These two calamities for the British economy were not the causes of the Conservative Government's intervention ; they were the immediate effects. In exchange for these two facilities that depend upon a friendly and peaceful Arab world, it is hard to see what gallant little Israel had to offer to the British people at large, or the Tory financier in particular.

By supporting Israeli aggression in the Suez Canal area, Right wing interests have in fact produced the result that they claim to have been trying to avert, that is a consolidation of Arab opinion against Britain, have undoubtedly undermined the position of our remaining sympathisers in the Middle East vis-a-vis their own people, and have accelerated the day when traditional bonds of friendship and clientship will be sharply repudiated. Barring an Israeli military occupation of oil-producing areas, a suggestion as chimerical as it is contrary to the spirit of the age and the temper of the United Nations, the continuation of oil production, oil flow and oil profit must depend on friendship with the oil producing countries — of which Israel is not one.

The hostility of the Arab world is a hostility partly of the Conservative Government's own contriving, and, before Suez at any rate, largely of its own imagining. To counter this hostility by hostile military alliance is merely to attempt to rectify bad by worse, and to give every encouragement to those elements in the Middle East that would reject Western friendship out of hand.

Left wing support for the Israeli state depends on the belief that Israel is a progressive, pacific, socialist democracy, a bastion of Western political idealism, threatened by reactionary and inefficient semi-medieval Arab war-lords. Leaving aside the question of whether the surrounding countries are indeed as backward and chaotic as Left wing sympathisers with Israel suppose, it must be remembered that the pacific state of Israel has been condemned by the Armistice Commission upwards of seventy times for aggressive acts against her neighbours since her foundation in 1948, and that she has two known massacres to her discredit. The names of Deir Yassin and Qibya are not glorious in Israel's brief history.

It is assumed by the Left, reasoning from the socialist

democratic premise, that the Arabs in Israel have equal rights with Jewish citizens, are better off and therefore happier than they would be under any alternative Arab government. It is supposed that in Israel the Arab minority enjoys what we in Britain understand by the full rights of a citizen in a parliamentary democracy. They are indeed citizens. They are indeed represented in the Knesset, but they are not first class citizens and are subject to rigid control of movement and constant surveillance.

The illusions of the Left about social justice in Israel cannot stand before the evidence contained in the following document, which we reproduce in full, omitting only the lengthy casualty list with which it ends. This is not the report of a foreigner hostile to Zionist aspirations, but the unedited report of a Member of the Israeli Parliament, addressed to his fellow representatives. The victims of the massacre were Israeli citizens, living within the protective frontiers of the Israeli state. The massacre took place on the same day that Israel launched its attack against the Egyptian army in the Sinai Peninsula.

On October 29, 1956, an Israeli "Frontier Force" killed 51 (Arab) citizens of Kafr Qassem village, near Pitakh-Tikva, and of other villages of the Triangle, and dangerously wounded another 13.

News of this ghastly mass massacre committed against innocent citizens, which leaked out from the authorities in an ambiguous and intermittent manner, raised the grave concern of every person hearing of this dastard crime.

Realizing the gravity of the crime, the Prime Minister's Office issued a statement, on November 11, 1956, (two weeks after the committal of the crime) in an attempt to kill it and to cover those primarily responsible for it.

The statement said : "On October 29, 1956, following extensive fedayeen activities, (in fact, when the invasion of Egypt began) curfew was proclaimed in a number of villages on the eastern border to safeguard the lives of the inhabitants of those villages. A contingent of the Frontier Force was charged with the enforcement of the curfew. The villagers observed the curfew imposed on them from 5 p.m. till 6 a.m.

"In certain villages some villagers who returned home after

the curfew hours suffered casualties at the hands of the Frontier Force. When the Prime Minister knew of this, he formed a committee on November 1, 1956, headed by Judge Zohar, with Aba Khoushy, Mayor of Haifa, and Hoter Yishay, lawyer, as members. Their terms of reference were to inquire into : (1) The causes of incidents in villages on October 29, 1956, (2) The degree of responsibility of members of the Frontier Force, (Officers, NCOs, and Guards), and their presentation for trial, if necessary, (3) The compensation Government should pay to afflicted families as a result of the Frontier Force's behaviour.

"The committee heard testimonies from representatives of villages and from members of the Frontier Force and the Army. As a result of its investigations, the officer in charge of the Frontier Force and a number of his men were referred to court.

"The Government decided to pay immediately the sum of 1,000 Israeli Pounds as advance payment to each afflicted family, and charged the committee with the responsibility of fixing the sum to be paid as compensation for those families. An additional amount will be paid in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee."

These vague terms in the Prime Minister's statement are intended to conceal this ghastly and heart-rending incident whose responsibility falls on the shoulders of the authorities.

In the face of the Government's banning of the publication of the details of the incident, and because of the use of vigorous censorship in an attempt to hide this barbaric murder so that public opinion may not know of it, I consider it my duty to present in this note the facts as they are and as I became aware of them during my visit to Kafr-Qassem village on November 20, 1956, in the company of Knesset Member Mayor Wilner. I therefore give the well-established facts as they were told by the villagers, among whom were those who saw the massacre and who were of its victims (wounded).

On October 29, the day hostilities against Egypt broke, a unit of the Frontier Force arrived after 4 p.m. in the Triangle and informed the village notables, mukhtars and chairmen of local councils of the curfew imposed on the villages as from 5 p.m., and that the inhabitants should remain indoors. The mukhtar of Kafr-Qassem told the officer who notified him of the curfew at 4.45 p.m. that there were many labourers working outside the village, and that they will return after 5 p.m. The officer answered :

" The Frontier Force will ' take care ' of these labourers ".

A unit of the Frontier Force took positions at the entrance to the village, awaiting the workmen returning from their work by trucks and other means of communication. The first to arrive were four labourers on bicycles.

Samir Budair, a labourer of Kafr-Qassem, said : " I arrived at the village entrance in the vicinity of the school, together with three other workmen on bicycles, at 4.55 p.m. (that is before the curfew began). We were halted by a group of 12 Frontier Force guardsmen with an officer in their cars.

" The workmen greeted the officer by saying : ' Shalom '. He asked them : ' Are you happy ? ' The workmen answered : ' Yes '. Immediately the guardsmen dismounted and ordered the labourers to stand by.

" The officer then ordered his men saying : ' Mow them down ' As the guardsmen fired, I (Samir Budair) threw myself on the ground and began to roll towards a pit by the road. I was shouting, but I was not hurt. I then ceased shouting to feign that I was dead. The guardsmen continued to fire on the labourers who fell.

" The officer then said : ' Enough. They have been killed. It's a pity to waste more bullets on them.' I remained motionless.

" Afterwards a cart arrived carrying three labourers.

" The guardsmen stopped the cart and fired at the labourers who were killed instantaneously. Leaving the bodies on the street, the guardsmen moved away tens of metres and took positions in another place on the street leading to the village. Other labourers on bicycles and a truck full of labourers arrived. Taking advantage of the guardsmen moving away. I stood up and began running towards the village. The guardsmen fired at me, but I was not hurt. I then hid myself in the outer houses on the entrance to the village until the curfew time elapsed."

Among the trucks stopped by the guardsmen on the entrance to the village was a truck carrying 13 women and girls whose work is the gathering of olives. They were accompanied by two labourers from the same village, and the truck driver Mahmoud Habib from Tayibeh Village.

Hana Suleiman Amer, between 15 and 16 years of age, was among the group and was the only one who survived. She is now at Belinson Hospital, suffering from wounds. This girl told some of her visitors at the hospital the following :

" The Frontier Force guardsmen stopped the truck that was carrying me at the entrance to the village, ordered the truck driver and 2 men labourers to alight and told them that they intended to kill them. As a result of this horrible threat, the women began to scream, beseeching the guardsmen to release the labourers. The guardsmen answered ; ' You, too, we shall kill ! '. Having fired at the 2 labourers and the driver and killed them, the guardsmen seemed uncertain as to what they should do with the women."

This girl (Hana) related how she heard the officer contacting his chief at Ras el Ain police station over the wireless, seeking guidance as to what should be done with the women. The guardsmen immediately began firing at the women, all of whom (12 in number) were killed. Among those killed was a certain Fatima Daoud Sarsour, who was 8 months pregnant, a number of old women between 50 and 60 years old, 2 young girls : Loutfieh Issa and Rashiqa Budeir, 13 years old each.

Hana Amer, the girl who narrated this atrocity had fallen wounded among the heap of dead bodies. The guardsmen believed she was dead.

Three trucks were dealt with by the guardsmen in this manner : men and women labourers were made to alight and killed on the main road with guns, stenguns and other weapons.

Other victims of this ghastly mass massacre were car passengers, persons returning to their village, walking or on cart, a number of shepherds, and young boys who had gone to the fields to call back their fathers before the time of the curfew.

When another truck (the fourth) approached the village carrying four workmen, it was ordered by the guardsmen to stop.

Seeing the dead bodies from afar, one of the labourers shouted, urging the driver to continue running. The truck passed by the guardsmen's position in terrific speed towards the village. The guardsmen fired at the truck, killing one of the passengers, but the others survived.

During the murder operations, the guardsmen used to search among the bodies in an attempt to kill those who were still alive. In certain cases they used to tread upon the heads of the dead with their boots, and to stab some wounded women with their bayonets.

A number of workmen survived as a result of their hiding among the heaps of the dead bodies of their friends and brothers.

The survivors whom the guardsmen failed to detect gave the aforementioned painful details.

In addition to these murderous acts, the officers and guardsmen of the Frontier Force, "the guardians of law and order", took watches from the wrists of their victims, searched their pockets and stole away their monies.

These "acts" went on for an hour and a half, until an army unit passed by and saw the painful scene. It summoned an ambulance and removed the victims to Belinson Hospital and others.

Some of the wounded who were themselves among the dead bodies remained all night until an ambulance car arrived next day and took them to hospital.

Othman Salim Budeir, 17, remained among the dead all night until the following day, suffering the night cold and the pain of his dangerous wounds, without uttering a single word for fear of being killed.

Assad Salim Issa, 25, was among the cyclers who were fired at. He sustained dangerous wounds in various parts of his body, but he hid himself under the body of one of the dead. He remained all night till 3.30 p.m. the following day, when he was found. He was removed to Tel Hashomer Hospital, but he is still in bed at the village, wrapped in gypsum from his chest to the tips of his feet fingers. His brother, Abed, was killed.

Among those who were saved on the following day was Abdurrahman Sarsour, 16, who is deaf and dumb.

Ismail Iqab Budeir, 18, succeeded in flying away towards the neighbouring olive groves despite his leg wounds. He hastily climbed an olive tree and remained in this hiding place until Wednesday afternoon, that is for 2 days, until a certain shepherd passed under the tree. He asked him for help, and was transferred to a hospital. But the condition of his injured leg had deteriorated so much that an amputation became necessary. He is still at Tel Hashomer Hospital.

One of these painful events took place inside the village.

Talal Shaker Issa, a child 8 years old, went out from his house to let his goats in. Frontier Force guardsmen fired at him, killing him on the spot. When his father, Shaker Abdullah Issa, went out to see what happened, the guardsmen fired at him. He was wounded. His wife Rashmie who also went out was fired at and wounded. This was also the fate of his daughter Noura. The

grandfather of the family was the only one who received no injury. But he died the following day from a heart attack as a result of this grave tragedy.

Curfew was imposed on the inhabitants of Kafr Qassem all day long on Tuesday, October 30, 1956, until Wednesday afternoon, October 31, 1956. During this time the guardsmen recruited a number of Jaljoulieh village inhabitants to bury the victims of the massacre.

The victims of this bloody massacre at Kafr Qassem were 49 killed and 13 wounded.

Among the dead were 12 women and girls, ten boys from 14 to 17 years old, and seven from 8 to 13 years.

Some of the victims of this bloody massacre were fathers and mothers with their sons and daughters.

Safa Abdallah Sarsour, 45, was killed with her two sons : Jumaa, 16, and Abdallah, 14.

Othman Abed Issa, 30, a shepherd, was killed with his son Fethi, 12, as they were returning to the village with their flock.

Zeinab Abdurrahman Taha, 45, was killed with her daughter Bakrieh, 17.

This barbaric massacre was not confined only to Kafr-Qassem. It reached other places also.

At Taibeh village, Mahmoud Aql Jaber, 14, was killed when he went out of his house at about 6 p.m. to his neighbours' house to get something for his child.

At Tireh village, on the same day, Nimr Abduljaber Sultan, 60, a field-watchman, was killed as he was returning to his village, unaware of the curfew imposed.

At Baqa (Western) village, a young boy, 14, has been missing ever since.

This is a picture of the atrocities the Government attempts to kill by all means, thus banning the public from knowing the truth about the events that took place on October 29, 1956, in the villages of the Triangle.

I consider it my duty to lay bare these ghastly facts before the public through this message after the Government had attempted in various manners to conceal this massacre

Rigorous censorship prohibits the publication of facts in the press. (A Member of the Knesset made an attempt to raise the case in the Knesset on Tuesday, November 13, 1956, but she was stopped, and everything she said about the case of Kafr-Qassem

was wiped out from the minutes of the House.)

For these reasons, I consider it my humane duty — my duty as a person elected by the people, as well as my duty towards the people of Israel, towards the Arab citizens of Israel and towards the inhabitants of Kafr Qassem village, who asked that their tragedy be conveyed to public opinion — to send this message, urging every noble person with a live conscience to combat this crime of murder and to raise his voice against the Government's policy towards the Arab citizens in the country : the policy of racial persecution and military rule, which cultivates a feeling of contempt towards the Arab citizens and that everything against them is permissible.

By publishing its statement the Government attempts to evade responsibility for this ghastly massacre of which tens of law-abiding Arab citizens were victims and to attribute the offence only to " the Officer of the Frontier Force unit and some of his subordinates who carried out an illegal order ". No doubt, the Frontier Force men who are directly responsible for this ugly crime should be referred to court and given the severest punishment.

But not those who directly committed the crime are alone responsible for it. Those primarily responsible are the makers of the policy of persecution against the Arab inhabitants — those who follow the policy of racial persecution and have for eight successive years been imposing the horrible military rule, treating the Arab citizens as enemies who have no rights and who should be harassed and persecuted. The ugly crime of murder at Kafr Qassem village is the result of the official policy of the Government towards the Arab citizens, of the continuous disregard of their rights, and of the racial indoctrination the State authorities promote against the Arab citizens.

The government has no moral right to take a decision referring to a closed military tribunal the officer of the Frontier Force unit. Yehuda Alexandrovitch, and some of his subordinates.

These criminals should be tried before a public court to expose everything that lies hidden behind this dastard crime of murder.

It is in no way sufficient to stage a secret trial before judges from " our own clique ", appointed by those who impose military rule on the Arab citizens. Justice and Israel's reputation require the appointment of a broad people's committee to investigate this crime and to detect those responsible, and to find out its fundamental cause which is the Government's policy towards

the Arab citizens, and to present the results of its findings to the Knesset and to public opinion in Israel.

Every noble person with a live conscience cannot but revolt against the murder by " the guardians of law and order " and by the official representatives of the authorities of tens of the peaceful Arab citizens of Kafr Qassem.

This crime is not only the " injuring " of a number of citizens, as the Government statement said. It reminds us of the crime of the Nazis against the Jewish people and against other peoples in Europe during World War II, it reminds us also of the Czechoslovak village of Lidice.

This crime of murder represents a grave threat to all the Arab citizens in Israel who are now concerned over their fate and existence.

This is a crime against the whole people in Israel. It is not confined only to the internal perimeter of Israel. In the present situation predominant in the Middle East, the crime of Kafr Qassem represents a world scandal which is disastrous to Arab-Israeli relations.

I call upon all noble people not to stand handcuffed before this ghastly act of murder at Kafr Qassem.

I appeal to you to rise in protest against this horrible act. If the perpetrators of this crime and those responsible for it succeed in concealing it, they would thereby be committing another crime and would jeopardize Israel and its future in the Middle East.

I hope that the whole people will not allow the proponents of equality of the brotherhood of peoples, and of peace to succeed in the conspiracy of concealing the crime. They must struggle with all their strength for the institution of a people's enquiry and for the exposition and trial before a civil court of all those responsible.

Above all, a limit should be put to the Government policy towards the Arab citizens : the policy of discrimination, persecution, military rule and disregard of democratic freedom and the fundamental rights of the Arab citizens.

I expect you to take the necessary action and I should be grateful if you would inform me accordingly.

(Sgd.) TOUFIQ TOUBI Member of Knesset

This astounding document composed by a Member of the

Israeli Parliament shows clearly enough that inside the state of Israel, social justice is a unilateral concept. The Arab minority has not been integrated into the body politic, and Israelis do not intend that it should be. Having read this record of brutality, the reader will quickly grasp the reason why the Palestinian refugees living, however wretchedly, in the Gaza Strip, had no wish to be incorporated either by force or by international settlement into the unjust and discriminatory society.

It is realised that the retailing of atrocity stories does no good to any one, but it is hoped, by reprinting this report, that some illusions about the reliability of Britain's new friend may be dispelled. Those political thinkers who support the idea of admitting Israel to the British Commonwealth might do well to consider the internal as well as the external problems to which such an incorporation would immediately give rise, while those who champion Israel through thick and thin as a democratic example to the other nations of the Middle East should seriously ask themselves whether they are not basing their thought on the delusions examined above rather than on a realistic consideration of true conditions in Israel and Britain's true interests.

PRESIDENT NASSER

by DESMOND STEWART

SHAME is not perhaps an emotion which Anglo-Saxons commonly feel ; but there can have been few Englishmen living in the Middle East in November 1956 who did not become its close acquaintances. Theirs was an emotion at opposite poles from that felt by the Hungarians ; both may have been helpless and hopeless, but for the Englishman, there was the agony of being hopeless in a wrong cause. Was there even a cause ? It seemed as though the maddest extremism of one's Arab friends (who have always believed that English politicians were cynical machiavels, and that Israel was their instrument for dividing the Arab world) was an understatement: no one doubted that there had been collusion ; it was as though the monk had produced a tommy gun and tearing off his tonsure—revealed as a cheap theatrical wig—had invaded the sanctuary and run off with the chalice. No, this image is too ecclesiastical. There was nothing of the church in this charade. For once, even Canterbury was shocked by what its patron, the State, was doing. It was a cynical game of poker by well dressed gentlemen with small moustaches and smaller souls. Day after day one heard the nauseous British voice over the BBC—yes, the British voice had become deeply nauseous—still talking of barbarism (as being what the Egyptians did) and honour (being what we did). And all the game was so evidently not clever : and a machiavel, at least in Elizabethan usage, was clever, if wicked. Even a child of eight could see that the result of Sir Anthony's moment of greatness was to be ruin : a shut Canal, a dynamited pipeline, a smirched reputation, and a divided commonwealth. What, in his most optimistic moment, had this worker for peace envisaged ? Not, surely, his own January departure for the obscure Antipodes.

But one goal was clear, behind all the changing excuses : the destruction of Gamal Abdul Nasser, as man and as symbol. His voice, *Sawt Al Arab*, was one of the first targets to be attacked. Suddenly the radio became a monopoly of British voices : a woman from Cyprus who announced sentences of whipping or visits of Lady Harding to municipal hospitals with the same smooth satisfaction :

and far worse, sinister British voices in Arabic warning from an echoing studio that doom was coming, that Nasser had gone mad and that Britain had it in its power to crush Arab resistance : a mad loquacious policeman, warning the victim of a holdup that if he did not lie down and let himself be jumped on, he would be bludgeoned to death. These stern admonitions were then followed by pre-October Arab songs about love. (*Sawt Al Arab* had been broadcasting marches and patriotic songs, in tune with the moment). Why was the Egyptian radio station bombed, if all that Eden wanted was to separate two armies and to preserve the Canal ? The answer was clear to everyone from Morocco to Baghdad : the voice of the Arabs had told the truth, and Eden and his accomplices wanted to silence the truth. (One remembers other voices which the official upholders of free speech have tried to silence !). When after a few days the bombed station came on the air again, with the triumphant phrase : *Huna al Kahira* ! Here is Cairo ! the Arab world rejoiced. People had been killed and wounded ; buildings had been destroyed, including mosques and churches ; but the voice was not silenced. Gama Abdul Nasser was not dead, deposed, or in allied hands awaiting trial as a " war criminal " (He deserved such a trial as much as Hess, no doubt.) Instead, a new, calmer Nasser addressed a crowd of twenty thousand people in the Al Azhar mosque on Friday, at noon prayers. (The BBC which to my knowledge told twenty lies throughout the period of crisis, described the Azhar as the " hundred year old Egyptian university ". In fact, as the literate world knows, it is a thousand years old). His speech was calm, unvindictive, and empty of the rhetoric which befogs much Arabic oratory. He even admitted that the best part of the British and French peoples were against the action of their governments in attacking Egypt. He repeated as a refrain throughout that Egypt wanted peace, but not submission, making a play on the Arabic root which is common to both words. He sounded tired, but with a different tiredness from that which was to waft Sir Anthony to Montego Bay a week or two later. As he spoke, I thought of Nietzsche's dictum : What does not kill us makes us stronger. This was true of Nasser. It was also true that, as so often in life, the plans of the malicious misfire, and what is meant as a blow turns into a caress. Nasser's standing in his own country and in the world was an Everest higher than it had been before Ben Gurion and his allies embarked on their assault. They had tried their worst ; and the result was that a man who till then had been

regarded with hostility or contempt had emerged from the ordeal of fire as the first Arab since Salahuddin to be a world figure. Some such result had been clear from the moment Eden issued his ultimatum and from the moment when Nasser had summoned Sir Humphrey Trevelyan and told him bluntly that such terms were unacceptable under any circumstances. It had been clear then that the issue of the action would make of Nasser either a martyr or a hero. The Azhar speech showed that it had made him both to the eyes of every Arab.

Since President Nasser has survived the attack despite Sir Anthony, it is worth while examining him closely, and as with so many victims of the press, peeling away a few of the clichés which have put a papier maché of untruth around his real self. For in reality, he is not a particularly complicated character : his strength lies in the sincerity with which he holds certain simple beliefs : beliefs which commonly have lip-service paid to them in many countries but which are rarely the bedrock of so strong a personality.

The commonest cliché about Nasser is that he is a " dictator ". The people who call him this wish to swill over him a little of the stale water of the 30s. In America, these tactics, applied to liberals, would be called a smear. The concept of what a dictator is, or is not, needs perhaps a little examination.

The people who coined the word were Romans, and on their lips it had no pejorative sense. (Unlike the word *rex* which is acceptable to British people.) A Dictator was a man regarded by his fellows as outstanding, who was given supreme power for a limited period in order to confront a supreme challenge to the life of Rome. The word was solemn, and the power of a dictator was great ; but its meaning was not synonymous with tyrant, and its work did not imply the suppression of Roman freedom. On the contrary, the dictator was the saviour of his people : the man who in great danger took the decisions which were too urgent to be left to a committee. Our own Cromwell, who has fared so badly in Mr. Churchill's recent history book for children, was a dictator of this sort.

" Dictator " in modern times, however, has an unpleasant savour. It suggests someone of dictatorial manner, suppressing freedom with the help of a secret police. It is significant that while the communists have not avoided the concept (in their phrase 'dictatorship of the proletariat') European dictators have preferred to call themselves Fuehrer, Duce, Caudillo or President. The word " dictator " is used to condemn someone who is opposed to the fundamental

principles of democracy. It is in this sense that his enemies have called Nasser a dictator.

Before we decide if the word applies to the Egyptian leader, we must ask what the principles of democracy are, which the dictator is said to menace. Are they the habits of a particular parliamentary apparatus ? If so, which one ? The French, with its multiplicity of parties ? The English, where one of two giant parties captures power in the Commons for five years ? The American, where no one can define the ideological differences between two immemorial groupings ? Or the Czech ? Or the Liberian ? Or is the essence of democracy the triumph of the popular will ? This is what it meant to the Greeks, who invented the expression. To them, the rule of the people could express itself as often through the personality of a man in whom the people had confidence, as in a system of representation. Indeed, Aristotle said that pure democracy was not possible in large states : only where everyone who wished could make himself heard in the market-place. In more complicated states than those ruled by Pericles or Solon some form of representation is inevitable : and once the remove is made from what may be called first degree democracy (the free citizens being addressed by candidates for power in an open space) there are many opportunities for the people's will to be thwarted between the hustings and the legislature. And the apparatus of modern democracy, parliaments, parties and elections, is often a screen let down between the people and those rich men who control real power.

What about Egypt ? Before the Revolution, Egypt certainly had a democratic facade. There was a parliament ; there were parties ; there was office and the fruits of office. But did the governments responsible to King Farouk really express the will of the Egyptian people ? Those who visited Egypt in those times could see little connection between the great patient people who tilled the soil and the mercenary pashas who formed the cabinets. Indeed, not only were the cabinets unsupported by the popular will ; the Egyptian people themselves were not represented in the ruling class. The majority of the rulers were either foreign, of Turkish or Albanian blood, or the product of the great cosmopolitan cities, where the word " Egyptian " hardly meant anything at all. Part of Nasser's appeal to this inarticulate people is his own simple origin : he is, in fact, the first Egyptian to rule Egypt since the Pharaonic dynasty collapsed under the invasion of the Greeks. In the period between Egyptian independence, after the first world war, and the Revolution,

four years ago, Egypt was ruled by a class as remote from the people as the French aristocracy in the decade before 1789 ; with the important difference, of course, that the French aristocracy was French and did embody many noble and worthwhile qualities.

Today, no observer, however hostile, has denied that the great majority of the Egyptian people solidly support Nasser. They are behind him in a task that would have baffled Hercules : on the one hand of raising the dignity of Egyptian life to the level it enjoyed before the Mamelukes and Ottomans, and on the other, of overcoming the economic disasters of a far too rapid increase of population during the last century. In such a situation only those who worship indiscipline and chaos would argue : " Yes, I agree Nasser is popular. That is the point—he is too popular. You must invent an opposition, even if there is none (except for the landowners) so that the system can be called genuinely democratic." That would be to sacrifice order and the possibility of advance to a mere word which has no particular meaning to the mass of Egyptian workers. On the morning of his Azhar speech, President Nasser drove through the crowded streets of Cairo in an open car, with no pretorian guard. The people were coming out of their mosques, their city had been bombed by British aeroplanes, just as their ears had been bombarded by British attacks on their " dictator ". Would General Harding drive in an open car through the streets of Limassol, one wonders ? Nasser's popularity with his people is a hope for Egypt's future ; just as Harding's unpopularity in Cyprus shows that British evacuation of the island is but a question of time.

Granted then that he is popular, granted then that he is regarded by his people as its spokesman and as its defender, is he a communist ? This question is fantastic to anyone who knows the Arab Islamic world, but it needs asking in a country where politicians produce excuses one after another from their top hats, and where this excuse, that Nasser is a communist and needs suppressing, was the last in a month of conjuring with words. Nasser has one thing in common with Kruschev : an outstanding frankness. Both men can say undiplomatic things when roused which they probably regret afterwards. The violence of Nasser's language about America, after the sudden withdrawal of the offer for assisting in the Aswan Dam, was an example of this verbal impetuosity. It is certain that if Nasser were a communist, he would say so, without embarrassment. In fact, the most cursory reading of his book and his speeches,

as well as the barest acquaintance with the type of nationalist he is, shows that he is far removed from being a dialectical materialist. Nationalism has often been a cloak for unworthy motives : for this reason, no doubt, Nietzsche called it " this nationality madness " : and in this sense Dr. Johnson warned us against patriotism. But just as there are genuine patriots, so there have been in this century genuine nationalists : men in whom the image of their own life has been fused with the sufferings and grandeurs of their nation. The young Nasser, in his photographs, was not the handsome, burly figure of today. Then he was tall, thin, sullen, brooding : a boy who could not be happy while his people were oppressed. Only in this sense, I think, does he bear comparison with Hitler, with the young Hitler, who would pace the streets of his Austrian town, shabbily tidy, obsessed with the vision of building a greater Linz, with finer opera house, museum and university than in any other German city. The fusion between Nasser and his people is so intimate that there is no room left for self-interest or peculation : hence his incorruptibility, which is perhaps the quality in him which his enemies dislike the most. This incorruptibility will govern his relations with communists as well as with capitalists. He will not willingly become a satellite. Only if he is driven into a position where he must surrender or fight to the death will he allow Russian volunteers to assist him. And the party whose leader made a pact with Stalin can hardly blame this Egyptian nationalist if he makes a pact with Kruschev. Complete reliance on Russia is not what Nasser sought, or seeks. When he was newly in power, he asked for arms from the West. He received evasive replies. He could not rebuild the dignity of Egypt without an army capable of defending its frontiers. He took arms from Russia. The only criticism which he might reap on that score among the Arabs is that he took too few, and too late : for the legend that Israel is a peace-loving state has been exploded by Ben Gurion once and for all. (Even if there was a Torah in the jeep which first crossed the demarcation line into the land " where Moses communed with God ")

An attack on Nasser which has been whispered widely by his enemies, particularly inside the Arab world, is that he is a fanatic. By this they mean that he is a Moslem who wishes to persecute those who belong to other religions than his own. For example, the BBC correspondent in Cairo announced on his return from Egypt that " Nasser was not popular with everyone : in particular non-Moslems were worried about their future." They have no need to

worry, so long as this kind of propaganda does not evoke the very devil it pretends to fear. Nasser has gone out of his way since the Revolution to extend the utmost assistance and friendliness to Christians, and even Jews, living in Egypt. He has visited religious leaders of various sects on their feasts ; at his orders sixty thousand copies of the New Testament were ordered from England for the use of Coptic soldiers in his army. And during the recent crisis, radio plays in Arabic which I heard from Cairo made a great point of having, in the patriotic ensemble, characters called Gabriel or Yohanna. In being tolerant Nasser is in the Salahuddin tradition of Islam, which has always been a more tolerant religion than Christianity. (The best evidence for this is Lebanon, the country from which I write, still largely Christian amidst thirteen centuries of surrounding Islam.) This attack on Nasser could be laughed off, were it not so wicked. The English gentlemen who tell their Christian Arab friends, that if they don't look out, they'll be massacred by Gamal Abdul Nasser, take no great risk : no " fanatics " are likely to invade Surrey or Buckingham. But while they sleep softly on foam-rubber beds, the Christian minorities begin to worry, begin to suspect the sincerity of Moslem friendship, and finally produce one of those outbursts of sectarian violence (as often started by the minority as the majority) which do no one any good. But there are encouraging signs that sectarianism is beginning to die. The Christian Arabs from Palestine, in particular, know who their friends are, and who their enemies. They are some of the most active supporters of Nasser : they are also the vanguard of an Arab future where foreigners will no longer be able to exploit religious differences so as to divide and rule.

Many who might agree with this picture of Nasser as not a dictator nor a communist, nor yet a fanatic, might say : " Yes, but he is anti-western, and we are of the west ". There I think is the greatest error of all. Of course, Nasser is not a friend of the west, if by friend you mean bought tool, servile stooge, obsequious shoe-licker. The British Government has relied on this kind of friend for many decades. But does it still think the money wisely spent ? A bought friend can turn overnight into a bought enemy ; if you are outbid. Nasser would never consent to be such a " friend ". For him, as for any sincere man, friendship must be on a basis of equality. And this sense of equality is what no British statesman has been prepared to accept. There must always be a measure of talking down, of patronising, when dealing with Arabs ; that is the

impression our ablest diplomats have given. Treaties of alliance have been fashioned in accord with this principle. If England is involved in a war, the Arab state must immediately become involved. On the other hand, if Jordan is invaded by an Israeli task force (as has happened frequently in the last year), we merely ponder whether this constitutes aggression, and lift not a finger to help. Or as the Lebanese delegate to UNO said on November 21st, there is a different attitude to Hungarian refugees and to Arab refugees in Ghaza. Sympathy is felt for both, but while everything is done for the Hungarians (and no one would grudge it), nothing is done at all for the human beings who have lost their homes in Palestine. At the best, it is somehow assumed that they can be resettled elsewhere, as though they were so many herds, that could be moved on to another pasture. And while no European power would allow an Israel to be hacked out of its territory, it is assumed by western diplomats that they will find Arab friends prepared to allow an Israel to be hacked out of their lands. No such friends exist. Even Nouri Said, most constant of British allies, declared in November that the only solution was a reshipment of all Jews in Palestine back to the countries whence they came. As for Nasser, he will never be the friend of the west while we demand of him things which no self-respecting nationalist can concede. But if we are prepared to see his point of view, and to recognise that Egypt has interests as well as we have, then he would be the kind of friend worth having : a man of such stature among his own people that his agreement when secured would have some meaning. To this, followers of the displaced Sir Anthony might object " But we tried to be his friends when we evacuated the Canal Zone : and he immediately played us false." The answer to this is that we did not evacuate the Canal Zone because we genuinely recognised Egypt's right to its own territory, but because the cost in guerilla warfare had become too heavy to be profitable. (It was also recognised that in modern war " bases " of this sort, in unfriendly territory, are no longer worth the having.) And we did not make any attempt to solve the real problem of the Middle East, which we ourselves have caused : the injection into the Arab East of a militant, expansionist Israel. We continued to argue two opposed viewpoints : first, that the Arabs should all join us in an anti-communist pact (such as the unpopular Baghdad Pact) and second, that the total armed strength of the Arab nations should not rival the armed strength of Israel, a statelet of less than a million and half persons. Even a corporal, let alone a colonel, could see the fallacy it is.

COMMUNISM: ORTHODOX OR REFORMED?

by KENNETH T. DUTFIELD

ESSENTIALLY, Marx appealed to the working classes of Europe to imitate, to adopt and to take possession of as their own, the supra-national outlook of the European nobility. For this internationalism, rooted as it was in the common Germanic origin of most European aristocracies, was in 1848 still a reality that the French Revolution had attacked and wounded but not succeeded in destroying. The delayed triumph of the democratic ideal hindered the conquest of the last vestiges of European unity by patriotism, that virtue which the people had, since 1789, made peculiarly their own.

It is useless to discuss whether Marxism would have evolved otherwise, had the relatively pure internationalism of Marx remained immune from the infection of nationalism, for the conquest of Marxism by nationalism has been progressive and cumulative to a degree that seems to confirm Gurdjieff's view : men are automata who are free only when they are talking or thinking about their ideals, and every attempt to *realise* them results inevitably in a perversion, an *enantiodromia*, a metathesis into the polar opposite of the revolutionary dream.

It is tempting to regard Tito, as supposedly the first successful Marxist tyrant to wed Marxism to nationalism, as the Luther of the Soviet Pseudo-Church, as the instigator of the reformation

which has destroyed the hitherto unchallenged right of the Initiated in Moscow infallibly to pronounce for the benefit of their universal believers on what is orthodox and unchallengeable, and what damnably heretical. From this point of view I must confess, for all my detestation of Marxism, to a certain sympathy with the Old Believers : a pure supra-national ideal is praiseworthy, and internationalism is to such an extent the very essence of the Marxist ideal that every attempt to reconcile or reform it in accordance with the ancient tribal prejudices of nationalism is reprehensible. (Especially in view of the dubious motives which have led, and still lead, all too many of the Titos, the Gomulkas, the Nagys, to " national communism " : less a sincere, if rather too newly-awakened, concern for the value of their own national traditions, than envious and ambitious resentment of the restraints imposed upon their own local capacity for tyranny, as sub-tyrants, by their subjection to the wholly irresponsible arch-tyrant, or his successors, in the Kremlin.)

Nevertheless, Stalin was as clearly the betrayer of the Marxist ideal in this respect as Tito is. Except perhaps during the very earliest years of the Soviet revolution, every attempt to realise socialism in the Soviet Union has been closely involved with the pursuit of Russian national interests. Suppression of every manifestation of nationalism in Soviet Europe and Asia has been carried on with consistent ruthlessness and brutality since Lenin's death ; the genocide of the Crimean Tartars, the Kalmucks and the Chechen Ingush after the end of the second World War was only one episode in the programme.

If the Soviet Union has nevertheless been able to masquerade as a supra-national state to the satisfaction of the majority of non-Russian communists, that is because the very size of the U.S.S.R., and the fact that the majority of its population is non-Russian, have obscured this intensive russification.

Soviet Russia has now progressed so far as to feel impelled to identify the " historical inevitability " of the victory of communism with an imagined historical mission of the Russian people as such : if socialism and communism are admirable and desirable, that is due not only to their intrinsic worth, but in large measure also to a unique, mystical virtue inherent in the Russian people, of which their many-sided inventive genius, the splendour of their music and poetry, the grand spectacle of their glorious history as liberators of lesser tribes without the Law (even long before the first beginnings

of the Soviet Revolution, of course) and so on, give witness.

This whole imperial mystique represents a pattern familiar in history, and one moreover which has proved itself again and again to be the *temporary* source of a tremendous and all but irresistible power. As far as historical inevitability is concerned, there is therefore undoubtedly a certain prescient truth in the Russian vision ; but the fountain-heads of the dynamic necessity are of such an unruly and refractory kind that they cannot possibly be mastered in the long run by such men as the Soviet communists are. We can control history only in the measure of our ability to understand the nature of its motive forces, and there have never been men less willing to learn from history than precisely the communists.

Nationalism is a factor of such explosive potency in the world that the Russians have yet to learn that there can be no compromise between Marxist internationalism (either as an ideal, or as the meretricious imitation which is current) and simple nationalism, no matter how the latter may be glorified into empire-building, except at the expense of the former. All the evidence of recent history suggests that where nationalism conflicts with any reasonable interests whatever, nationalism will prevail.

Even if the Russians, by continuing the extirpation of all non-Russian national consciousness in the U.S.S.R., should eventually succeed in making one Russian nation from the Gulf of Finland to Vladivostock and from Armenia to Tadzhikistan, the *Pax Scythica* will be no more than a nation. We have no reason to suppose that it will be spared, by reason of its size, the destiny of all nations in history : to find no rest from the turmoil of war and change except in disintegration and death or in transformation and rebirth. The apparent inevitability of some or all of these changes in the course of time is not of a kind that can give much comfort to thinking communists. Granted that the Pax Scythica is inevitable its eventual downfall is no less so.

How can Marxism affect these probabilities in the slightest degree? The " national communism " of Tito or Gomulka, or the imperial communism of Stalin's heirs, have proved one thing at any rate : communism offers no solution to the problem of war, and therefore no prospect whatever of a cessation of the historical process. The " inevitable " flood-waters of communism will not hold or subside at the command of dialecticians when and if they have fertilised the vast territories of the Soviet Union and its dependencies : they will turn out not to be the flood-waters of " communism " at all, but the

all-devouring deluge of history.

If we suppose that communism can lead to world peace nevertheless, we are misled by the communists' own naive view that wars are chiefly due to economic causes, and that therefore the perfect justice of the communist economic order will of itself automatically remove the causes of war. That wars are due to irreconcilable conflicts is true only in the sense that the world's traditional economic disorder is but one aspect of human irrationality.

Demagogues who find in communism (by whatever name they choose to call it) a *Weg zur Macht* of historically hitherto unparalleled efficacy, provide a most striking proof of this unreason. An equally striking one is the steadfast refusal of communists to see money and its power as the keys to this traditional economic disorder.

Most striking of all, because it demonstrates most perfectly the hollowness of communism, is the combination of mendacity, illusions and hypocrisy on which the philosophy of the communists themselves is based, and above all the boundless and invincible stupidity which leads them to suppose that nationalism and imperialism cease to be such if we decide to call them " Progress ".

HOW
TO BE AN EXISTENTIALIST

by R. MACGREGOR-HASTIE

IF you have seen photographs of the friends and admirers of Jean-Paul Sartre, and been surprised at their outward appearance, and at the inner condition of their minds which has led them to their beliefs, perhaps you will have wondered how you too could become the life and soul of an Existentialist party. It is my pleasure to be able to give you a few suggestions, which you may think over and perhaps put into practice.

The first thing you must do is to cleanse your mind of any ideas of Marxism, Christianity, Bhuddism, Mohammedanism, or anything else and approach the whole business without any of the prejudices these ideas will have given you. Reject the idea of ever having an idea. Look at yourself. Restrain yourself from commenting to yourself on your obvious beauty and intelligent appearance, which you had not noticed for years. Look at yourself again. The only thing you know now for certain, is that you exist. You can say without fear of being contradicted that " you are ". I cannot say that " you are ", because the only thing that I know is that " I am ". Having agreed with yourself that you, in fact, are, you must then examine the other tenses of this verb, to be, and see if they make sense in the light of your new discovery. You cannot say I shall be, that is obvious, the future being uncertain. You can however say I was. Say to yourself the magic words, I am, twice. Then the

first I am, at the time you are saying the second, will have become I was. If you say the spell four times, I am, I am, I am, I am, then there are three I wases and two inverted I wases. That is the only way you can ever be certain of the value of saying "I will be"; to an "I am" that has become "I was", the I am to follow is as good as an I will be, or is it I shall be ?

Having found out that you are, you must then try to come to some conclusions about the universe around you. Not that you know there is such a thing. But there may be. You are entitled to use the subjunctive, but of course never the conditional because there is nothing on which anything can be conditional. There may be an "it is" and there may be a number of "I ams" equally certain of nothing else. What is the ideal relationship between you, who know who you are, and the other I ams, who know they are but have no idea as to whether you are or are not ? If you can say "you are not". I have never worked that one out yet.

Laws and morals and conventions mean nothing to you at this stage. They may exist, but you do not know. Therefore if it is a warm day, and you prefer to stalk the streets, which may or may not exist, without any clothes, whatever they may be, then you are perfectly at liberty to do so. In this world of intellectual solitude nobody has any right to tell you what to do ; they are unaware, or at least unsure, of your existence. Of course, should you feel that to make your Self bigger it is a good thing to shout, sing, or write, then you may do so, but always by yourself. If you go along to one of the Existentialist cafés in St. Germain-des-Près to sing or play, you will find a formula used there to co-ordinate the activities of all the I ams ; you sit there on seats which may or may not be comfortable, drinking liquids which may or may not quench your thirst. When a group of Existentialist musicians is gathered together the, to the others, non-existent leader shouts loudly—ALLONS—and everyone begins to play at once.

The noise is deafening. It sounds horrible to my untutored ear, but of course no one knows that anyone else is playing. To have discord there must be more than one note played simultaneously. In the harmonious world of the Existentialist this is impossible. There are no chords with which to be discordant. None of which you are aware, at least, and that is the important thing.

One of the problems the Existentialist has to face is that of Education. If he is not sure of the existence of either schools or teachers then he could possibly waste thirteen years of his life being

lectured to by a non-existent person in a non-existent institution. On the other hand if he does not develop his mind it will be ill-equipped to face the world of itself, and the quality of his existence will fall to a low level, just as on becoming one of the faithful, of which there is only one, to his knowledge, he reduces living quantitively to one.

If he surmounts this hurdle and succeeds in receiving an education without the aid of those who help the normal or abnormal to some degree of understanding, he must decide what to do with his knowledge. If his I am, or I know that I am, becomes an I know very well that I am, and who and what I am, then presumably in the normal course of events this discovery should be communicated to others. They would like to know to the same degree who they were. But of course the Existentialist is unaware of them, and unaware of anything of which he should be aware, or of anything of which anyone else might or might not be aware, if anything—or anyone. Only the very nimble, mentally, ever sort this one out. And even they are more concerned with the I ams who are concerned with them in the introverted world they inhabit together. Inhabit but not cohabit.

The only thing I know about Existentialism that really cheers me up is that a bona fide Existentialist must carry his mental hermitage to the grave, its floor unmarked by the tracks of a mate in search of a way to the " we are ". They can never, in theory, reproduce themselves. Which is why you never see any Existentialist children, playing alone, without toys, in the middle of an empty space. All of Sartre's friends become I ams at a stage of near physical maturity and remain his friends until either they look into a mirror and see their faces other than their own, or they become he wases.

But of course they never know this epitaph. None of their friends could write it, being even less aware of someone who no longer exists than they were of him while he still possibly existed.

So they still are, when he is not.

'WHEN THIS FLAME....'

by PETER WHIGHAM

When this flame, this vital spark, this life that
is us,
Suddenly goes out

When the Spirit of our flesh
Disappears

When *You* cease from our knowing
Or from our way of knowing

Consider the fire on the bough.

When blood, water, the body's moisture
Evaporates

When the tissues of flesh
Shrivel

And the slender sun-golden limbs,
Foot, hand, face,
Disintegrate

WHEN THIS FLAME . . .

Consider the fire on the bough ;
Consider the daffodil flame ;
Consider the flower-knots which pattern the
orchard grasses
Before the blossom has yet come.

When the flame is quenched
And your fingers no longer move over the familiar
objects ;
When your imprint is invisible in the armchair,
And the outline of your body
Standing so finely in the garden
Is at once real and illusory ;
When your Spirit disappears
And *You* cease from our knowing,
We can use but the worn phrases of sorrow
And we say, " When the flame is quenched . . . "
Or, " When the echoes have settled . . . "
" When the last ripple is stilled . . . "
It is the natural language of sorrow,
These pictures of space and time.
—And of them ?
. . . A way of experiencing eternity.
When the body dies
The subsistent forces of the body,
The forces of tension within the atom,
Reform in the stalk, leaf, petal.

Your Spirit reappears.
It is the Spirit of a Japanese cherry.
Or a snail.

And we say a cadence has closed.
But this is not so.
There can be no addition to Heaven.

Remember the bright buds.
Consider the fire on the bough.

CINEMA

Ill met by Moonlight, Man in the Sky Anastasia, La Traversée de Paris The Rainmaker, The Great Man

by VINCENT MURRAY

I DON'T suppose anyone will remember *The Secret Place* in a few months' time. It is, after all, a minor British thriller with stock situations and a conventional climax. The only noteworthy point about it is its setting—the East End, photographed (especially in the opening sequences) with a harsh candour that is reminiscent of the Italian neo-realists. The production-team, under director Clive Donner, is a young one. Indeed, this is Donner's first film. Although it is too early yet to say whether anything will come of his talent (for individuality is ruthlessly suppressed in British cinema) it is at least plain that his future work will be worth watching.

A comparison of the best moments in *The Secret Place* with any moment in **Ill Met By Moonlight** is a sufficient commentary on the general state of British cinema today. This story of the kidnapping of a German general in Crete is in the long-established tradition of escapist, war-time adventure. Contemporary life terrifies producers, or so it would seem from the efforts they make to get away from it. Powell and Pressburger, the team responsible for *Ill Met*, must be the most venturesome of British production teams when one considers the stylistic quality of their films, but their choice of subject (opera, ballet, operetta, war-thriller) is as escapist as it could possibly be. When one thinks of Powell's pre-war *Edge of the World* the full extent of his capitulation to commercialism becomes apparent. Even Ealing Studios, whose films maintained at least some contact with reality, have been taken over by M.G.M. and the worst must be feared. Admittedly their first film under the new master, **Man In The Sky,** is not as bad as it could have been, but it falls down in its attempt to be both a study of character and a surface thriller. The thrills are there, certainly, but how easy such excitement is to conjure up in the cinema ! The character stuff fails to blend, though on its own perhaps it could have been interesting. The scenes on the ground are well-written (by William Rose and John Eldridge, who are by now well known in British cinema), especially those between the test-pilot and his wife. Jack Hawkins plays the pilot with fewer of those fatal mannerisms than usual.

I notice that Litvak's version of **Anastasia** carries British credentials, though it might have been made anywhere. It is a smooth, very assured translation of the television play about a supposed daughter of the last of the Tsars. There are good performances from Ingrid Bergman as the young girl and from Yul Brynner as her instructor. The colour photography (Jack Hildyard) is suitably soft-toned, and the whole is as solid, respectable and dull as a truly native product. If you are fascinated by the legend that has grown up around the girl and intend to see the film make sure you see the right one, for there is a German version also available (starring Lilli Palmer) which is heavy-handed in the extreme. I recommend the lesser of the two evils.

After *Gervaise* there has been little of interest from French cinema. Bresson's *Un Condamné à mort s'est échappé* has been completed, and I hope we are not kept waiting for this as long as some of his previous films. Renoir's *Elena et les Hommes*, too, is ripe for release. Meanwhile Claude Autant-Lara's version of Marcel Aymé's **La Traversée de Paris** has reached us under the title *Pig Across Paris*. The story provides an ironic commentary on life during the last war, and on black-marketeering in Paris in particular. The plot construction is episodic and variable, but the sense of period (one of the virtues of this director) is stamped clearly and firmly on every sequence. This is no deliberately escapist film turning its back on reality in favour of war-time heroics. It is concerned with comment (always incisive, frequently bitter) on the behaviour of men under stress, and of two in particular played by Bourvil and Gabin. The former, a professional crook, teams up with Gabin, a disreputable painter, to smuggle the carcass of a pig across Paris for the price it will fetch. The episodes are their adventures, and I would have preferred a firmer control over the weaker ones, which receive equal emphasis throughout with the better. The performances are very good, Gabin finding his match in the incomparable Bourvil.

Two recent American films are both adaptations : **The Rainmaker** from a play by Richard Nash, **The Great Man** from a novel by Al Morgan. Both are designed especially to give maximum prominence to the players, one of whom (Katharine Hepburn in *The Rainmaker*) is worth watching. Hers is a beautifully shaded performance as a plain girl faced with the problem of the onset of love (by now a standard theme in American cinema). The rest of the film easily betrays its origin and Burt Lancaster's rugged masculinity does nothing to offset it. José Ferrer's *Great Man* might be described as the ordinary filmgoer's *Citizen Kane*, for the story resembles that of the Welles film but lacks the quickening touch of the virtuoso which made *Kane* such a flop with the ad-mass. Ferrer adds to the resemblance by writing (in part), directing and playing the lead in his film, which means, considering his lack of experience in film-direction, a marked absence of discipline in the acting. Interesting, though, for comparison with Welles' methods.

NEW BOOKS

The Life and Times of Herod the Great, by Stewart Perowne (Hodder & Stoughton, 21s.)

MODERN biographies of the Ancients and the Infamous are full of surprises. Recent lives of James II and Richard III have revealed charming personalities behind the mudpacks of hostile propaganda. Robert Graves' biography of Our Lord and his more sympathetic work on the life and times of Adam and Eve have been perhaps the most ambitious to date of this type of re-interpretational biography.

Herod the Great, with his beastly female relations and his still more beastly sons, with his romanising politics and his full-blooded massacres, is just the subject for a really sympathetic treatment. From Mr. Perowne Herod gets it :

> " Of his features we have no direct record. . . . Both his parents were of Arab stock. That he had dark hair we know. It is not hard, therefore, to imagine him as he was, with the fine features of the Arab, the golden complexion, the thin, sensitive lips, the delicately-moulded nose, the small, crisp ears, the large, liquid, oval eye, shaded by fernlike lashes, beneath sable eye-brows."

Vintage writing !—Herod, the loveliest child-murderer in history.

As far as the public acts of Herod go, Gentile historians, at least, have never found much amiss, beyond perhaps the Massacre of the Innocents. This lapse Mr. Perowne extenuates. A dissident Bethlehem would have been inconveniently close to Herod's own uneasy headquarters. He gives palliating examples of mass-infanticide in antiquity : the first at the orders of the Roman Senate affrighted by prodigies announcing the birth of Augustus, when Herod was about nine years old ; the other at the orders of Nero to neutralize the malign influences of a comet, some fifty years after Herod's death.

Now, if I were bent on rehabilitating Herod, I should emphasise the following facts. There is no extra-scriptural record of the Massacre of the Innocents. In B.C.4, when the Massacre is said to

have taken place, Herod was suffering from advanced arteriosclerosis with dropsical complications. He was also completing the tenth seven-year span of his life, a period in a man's life of deep magical significance. Had not his royal predecessor declared that the days of our life are three-score years and ten ? We have noted that the other two examples of mass-infanticide were to avert the effects of prodigies and planetary influences. I should argue that Herod, in ordering his massacre, far from committing an unscrupulous atrocity against the City of David, was performing a routine magical action to avert the baleful rays of the Christmas comet from his own sickbed. Granted this, the Three Wise Men assume a different function. No longer tribute-bearers, they are the court astrologers, who, having warned Herod of the magical precautions necessary to ensure survival of the critical seventieth year, set out for Bethlehem in the capacity of Commissaries Royal to inspect the ritual victims and supervise the holocaust.

Even if Mr. Perowne is not expert in the magical interpretation of history, archaeologically speaking he knows his Palestine, mound by mound. The photographs clarify Herod's military art. Particularly good are the illustrations of surviving Herodian architecture beneath the Temple Area in Jerusalem. No index. Only one genealogical table, omitting all Herod's children, but offering in compensation a list of Nabataean kings, fully dated.

General impression : that in another century, Herod would not have disgraced Winchester.

A. J. N.

Look Back in Anger by John Osborne (Faber, 10s. 6d.)

JIMMY PORTER'S view of life, his unmotivated " anger ", has the genuine, if often boring, ring of autobiography. But the background and much of the action of the play ring false. The hero's working-class origins, " white-tile " university and occupation (he runs a sweet-stall in a Midlands town) seem to have been chucked in as an afterthought, a belated effort to inject a shot of the *Zeitgeist* as invented and publicised by Messrs. Amis, Tynan and Wain.

Look Back in Anger is a young man's frenzy, a stew of bathos and bile. Of a quartet of neatly-differentiated but tedious *jeunes gens*, one—the angry one—has become according to the blurb " a central figure in contemporary mythology ". The claim is exaggerated ; but is is safe to hazard that no assidous reader of weekend journals and the " serious "—known to Jimmy Porter as " posh "—Sunday

papers can have failed to note in recent months the emergence of a tiresome new gimmick : the Angry Young Man joins Lucky Jim, The Outsider and the crazy mixed up kid as a gift to the sub-editor in search of a headline and the reviewer in search of a phrase. Though not a "central figure" (not one in a hundred English adults can be aware of his existence) he is arguably a peripheral one.

He is certainly a lifelike figure, far more credible, if less entertaining than Mr. Amis's Lucky Jim. Life borrows from Art ; and this modern malcontent crackles with a sort of malevolent jauntiness which I would guess owes a lot to Dickens's Quilp. Unlike Quilp, he is soft centred; self-pitying as well as uninventive in his sadism. He persuades himself that his spleen is provoked by aspects of modern *sottise* and old villainy ; but his tirades are formal and lack conviction. He is better when he relapses into misanthropical spite and complaints about the weather. He is, finally, a supreme egoist, shrewdly aware of his limitations, careful to choose a *milieu* just below and not uneasily above his real level : superman in a pig-sty.

The plot is feeble, and the construction poor. The title, too, could be improved—*Look Back To Arcady* would be better. Mr. Osborne has grafted a nostalgic vision of upper-class Edwardia on to the middle-class background of Alison, Jimmy's wife, who was born, by my reckoning, no earlier than 1932. (Too young, even, for Betjeman ; though what an opportunity Mr. Osborne misses here ; how savagely his working-class hero could have lashed the poor girl with sneers about the *Kinderstube*, Faithful Nanny, angel-cake and Evensong !) Alison's father is introduced as "an old plant left over from the Edwardian wilderness". He is "about sixty". In essence, Jimmy's trouble is that he's twenty-five with the world before him and the Welfare State behind him, instead of seventy-five with gout and a drawerful of dog-eared invitations to ancient balls.

M. H.

Verhaeren by P. Mansell Jones..

Flaubert by Anthony Thorlby.

Ortega y Gasset by Jose Ferrater Mora.

(Bowes & Bowes, 7s. 6d. each.)

WE are all familiar with Flemish painters, but few of us know about Flemish poets. Mr. Mansell Jones writes so well and enthusiastically about the work of his friend Verhaeren as to

make one hope that there will soon be a revival of interest in this remarkably individualistic poet. Verhaeren's first published book *Les Flamandes* seems to have been an attempt to achieve by means of words the atmosphere of the old Flemish painters ; its memorable first lines concern

> " Craesbeke, Brakenburgh, Teniers, Dusart, Brauwer,
> Avec Steen, le plus gros, le plus ivrogne, au centre —— "

who proceed to perform feats of gluttony for the length of a hundred alexandrines. Later on, Verhaeren became very much the poet of his age, that is the pre-1914 Twentieth Century, his favourite theme being Progress with an accent on the Industrial Revolution, which he sang with a sort of inspired materialism in works like *Les Villes Tentaculaires* (one of his qualities was an ability to select striking titles for his books). His attitude towards the contemporary scene was one of Dionysan affirmation, to the extent of being able to greet a black industrial landscape in Wales with the cry : " que c'est beau ! que c'est beau ! " Mr. Mansell Jones suggests that the cinema might well turn its attention to *Les Villes Tentaculaires* and *Les Campagnes Hallucinées* ". At any rate, let us hope that many people's attention will be turned to this excellent study.

Flaubert's masochistic attitude towards his art ranks in the same class of literature's " gimmicks " (apologies for this revolting expression) as Schiller's rotten apples and Balzac's all-night coffee consumption. Unfortunately Mr. Thorlby has allowed himself so to be swamped by Flaubert's pessimism that he gives the impression of regarding the latter's works as a painful intellectual exercise rather than a means of enjoyment. Which is a pity, since the greatest paradox about that most paradoxical of men is that someone with such a boring outlook on life should have produced such pinnacles of European literature as *Madame Bovary* and *Un Coeur Simple.* We are indeed given a workmanlike analysis of Flaubert's writings and state of mind, and this is the best that can be said of what is, on the whole, a dispiriting book.

Those with a bent for philosophy would do well to read the study of *Ortega y Gasset.* It is rather breathlessly written, with very short sentences, and one feels that the author is tripping over his own mind, but the general effect is one of lucidity. In addition to explaining the various doctrines of the Spanish philosopher, the author succeeds in making Ortega's seem a very attractively forceful mind. He was determined to keep abreast of the times, to be mentally ahead of fashionable ideas ; as early as 1916 he remarked that he no longer felt compelled to bear the label of " modern man " because he wanted to be a " 20th century man ". He was exceedingly fond of using the newspapers as a means of communicating his thoughts to the public. In view of the above, it is strange that nothing is said about Ortega's position in the ideological struggles of the mid-twentieth century.

R. B.

As It Was and World Without End by Helen Thomas (Faber, 12s. 6d.)

No one so much as you
Loves this my clay
Or would lament as you
its dying day . . .

I READ Mrs. Thomas's book at one sitting, with her husband's clever, sad little anthology-piece rhyming through my head. Older people may know this book already ; some may love it ; but I commend to all the present re-issue, well-printed on good paper, at a low price.

Edward Thomas scratched a precarious living as a free-lance journalist. He was killed at Arras in 1917. He began to write poetry only in the last years of his life ; his poems (there are about 150 of them) were refused by editors in his lifetime, but had a great vogue after his death. On the evidence of his wife's book, he seems to have been a brooding, boring man ; a frustrated writer, a perpetual adolescent. But to her he was godhead. Her love for him suffuses every line she writes. Love like this, truthfully set down, transmutes plain words and platitudes into gold ; the critic is disarmed ; querulousness would be unpardonable. And in the later chapters the good wife becomes a good writer. Her account of her husband's last leave (they both knew that he would not return) would be poignant if done in the style of *Woman's Own* ; but the writing here invites comparison with the early Lawrence. I dare not quote, for if I return so soon to these pages, I shall end this review in tears and perhaps convey the impression that Mrs. Thomas plays for pathos. She does not. It is her brisk courage, her sincerity, her gentle gladness which have induced in me the melting mood.

M. H.

A DIARY by D. M. will appear next month as usual: — Editor

FESTIVAL IN NEPAL

by ROGER PEARSON

An account of blood sacrifice in a modern Himalayan kingdom

AMONG the many eastern countries which in recent years have opened their frontiers to visitors from abroad is Nepal. Half-hidden among the Himalayas, the Kingdom of Nepal has for centuries been a closed land, preserving intact its own culture, a fusion of Mongolian and Indo-Aryan civilisations in the distant past. Guarded from the north by the impassable ranges of Annapurna, Makalu and Everest, and protected from invasion from the plains of India by smaller mountain ranges to the south — and by the jungle of the *terai*, teeming with buffalo, tiger and malaria-carrying mosquitoes — Nepal has for centuries remained a remote country, in whose rich valleys the civilisations of India and China intermingled, and produced, with the passing of ages a flower of their own — rich, elaborate and cruel.

Just as the cultures of India and China have inter-mingled in Nepal, so have their two religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. Few of the cheerful, stocky Nepalese know exactly whether the customs they keep are Hindu or Buddhist ; in consequence religious practice is observed with a happy-go-lucky attitude. Holy days are truly holidays in Nepal, and typical of them is the Hindu ceremony of Dasera, in honour of the Goddess Durga, the guardian deity of War and Destruction.

The origin of the Dasera festival is more than two thousand

years old, and dates from those ancient times when tales from the tribal past inevitably acquired an overlap of religious and moral interpretation and were passed on to later generations in the form of mythology. Its story comes from the mythological history of the Ramayana, which tells of the victory of the god Rama over the demon King of Lanka, and this in turn is believed to be an allegorical account of the conquest of Ceylon by the ancient Aryan invaders of India, as they slowly extended their domain over the thick jungles and fertile valleys of the Indian sub-continent.

In the Ramayana, the demon King Ravenna is described as the monarch of Lanka, a country which has been identified by historians as Ceylon. The demon Ravenna abducts Sita, the wife of the god Rama, while the latter is engaged in a hunting expedition, and Rama, after several unsuccessful attempts to retrieve his wife, eventually enlists the aid of the Monkey King and his numerous tribe to invade and capture the Kingdom of Lanka. The Aryans were a fair-skinned people, with clear, angular and finely cut features, whereas the people of Southern India have a great deal of Negrito blood in their ancestry, and their prognathous jaws would clearly have been suggestive to the ancient Aryans of man's ape-like ancestors. Moreover, it is known from historical records that the Aryans conquered Ceylon with the aid of the tribes and princes of southern India, and so the deduction is fairly reasonable, that the story of the subjugation of Lanka and the rescue of Sita with the aid of the " monkey people " is the story of the conquest of Ceylon by the Aryans, aided by the darker-skinned peoples of the south Indian lands.

In keeping with the gay Nepalese spirit, the festival of Dasera is preceded by a week of merrymaking and generous hospitality. During this time the priests plant young barley seeds, and water them daily with sacred water until the morning of sixth day, when they are uprooted and offered up in the temples, in a ceremony which has vague fertility-implications, but which seems unrelated to the main theme of military triumph and the victory of good over evil.

As the actual day of Dasera draws nearer, the narrow medieval streets of Khatmandhu, the capital of Nepal, become increasingly crowded with pilgrims from the neighbouring towns and villages, and from mountain hamlets, perched high on the crests of barren Himalayan peaks. Heavily muscled Tibetan tinkers from the

other side of the mountains jostle with sturdy Ghurka hillmen and the more sophisticated jodhpur-clad and waistcoated citizens of the capital, as they bargain and haggle in the market places over the purchase and sale of sheep, goats and bullocks for the coming sacrifice. As the general air of excitement and tension rises, vast quantities of "rakshi", a potent local rice beer, are consumed ; the women can be seen happily watching the turmoil in the cobbled streets from the safety of timbered balconies, which hang out from the buildings above the crowds beneath, each story further than the one below, until the eaves of the houses almost meet and shut out the sky.

An excuse for military ceremonial, beloved by the warlike Nepalese, is provided by the procession which bears the sacred branches of a Bel tree from the distant town of Ghorkha, the ancestral home of the renowned Gurkhas, for consecration to the Goddess Durga at Khatmandhu. When the time of the procession approaches, the visitors from the neighbouring towns and villages throng the narrow streets. Shouldering his way through the tightly packed mass of humanity the visitor to the Dasera festival is surprised to hear the sound of irregular firing above the noise of the crowd, distant at first, hidden behind the maze of streets and alleys, but gaining in volume as its source moved slowly in his direction. His first thought may be of revolution, for times have been disturbed in Nepal since the *coup d'état* of 1951, when the hereditary Prime Minister was dismissed by the then reigning King, but scarcely has he time to speculate upon the possible allegiance of the numerous bodies of police who are stationed at each street corner than another outburst of firing, this time at the far end of the alley in which he is standing, heralds the approach of a train of khaki-clad troops, and these, it soon becomes apparent, are responsible for the disturbance.

The procession everyone has come to see is, in fact, disgorging itself from one of the narrow streets which lead from the main square, and in its van a troop of ruffian-like soldiery stroll in joyous and unconcerned disorder, firing their ancient muzzle-loading flintlocks into the air as they approach, in a sort of ragged *feu de joie*. Far from heralding a break-down in civic order, this is in fact a sign of temporal authority, and gives everyone concerned a maximum of pleasure, not least the military themselves. Each soldier, having discharged his musket, halts

for a while to ram a fresh charge down the barrel while his companions straggle on, then breaking into an amble, he trots forward to take up position before again pointing his weapon in the direction of the roof-tops and discharging it in a cloud of flame and smoke.

Close on the heels of this guard of honour, and indeed, frequently mixed up with those who take longer than the others to recharge their muskets, comes a western-style brass band, gorgeously clad in the utmost disarray, and intent upon playing their instruments with similar abandon — their music, of course, being the usual impromptu combination of Hearts of Oak and Colonel Bogey so common to Asiatic countries. Following the band, the devotional character of the procession is represented by a young girl — clad in a richly worked Benares Saree — of handsome, yellowish features, whose cheeks are heavily adorned with a startlingly white powder overlaid with brilliant rouge, giving them a poached egg appearance. Above her head, a round, orange-coloured umbrella is carried by an attendant as a symbol of her divinity, while attached to her gold-embroidered clothes by means of ribbons is borne a flower-decked bowl, containing a quantity of water from the very filthy but very sacred Ganges, many hundreds of miles distant in the Indian plains. This bowl precedes the procession of the branches of the holy tree itself, with its attendant monks, robed and shaven, each weighed down by heavy, Thibetan-style books, the pages of which are made of wood.

Following all this, the Hindu character of the procession is re-asserted by a palanquin containing a large image of the many-armed Goddess Durga, carried on the shoulders of female guardians, each brightly clad and heavily rouged and powdered. Gaiety rather than solemnity is the keynote of the procession, which being but loosely knit is inter-mingled with numerous lay devotees, and at times seems almost in danger of losing itself amid the onlookers.

After the main parade is finished, preparations begin for the culminating act of the festival : the seventh night of Dasera — the night of sacrifice. To the common people the rite of sacrifice has scarcely more religious significance than the merry-making which precedes it, and the meat thus slaughtered is not wasted, but is consumed in a final, even greater feast. The old and grisled, and the young and virile, who have been kept busy

in the past few days haggling over the sale of livestock, now prepare themselves for a night of bloodshed, and as darkness creeps over the brick-red roofs of Khatmandhu there begins in every courtyard and on every doorstep a mass execution of the assembled animals, so that the streets literally run with blood, and the smell of the slaughter-house pervades the entire city.

The privilege of ritual execution does not belong by right or tradition to the members of any particular caste. Instead, in Nepal the person who offers the sacrifice is expected to complete the act himself. For his weapon he uses the *Kukri* — famous as the weapon of the conquering Gurkhas but common also to the Newars of the Khatmandhu Vale — although oxen and buffalo are decapitated with the aid of a somewhat larger instrument, of similar design, known as the *Kora*. It is an unwritten law that no matter how large the animal might be the head must be swept from the body with a single, swinging stroke ; for unlike the plainsmen of India, whose religious scruples demand that sacrificed animals should be made to bleed slowly to death by severing the arteries of the neck, the peoples of the hills delight to display their dexterity with the weapon on which they put so much faith in war. A neat execution brings praise to the lips of onlookers, while the clumsiness of a novice who fails to strike off the head with a single blow is deemed to have brought ill-luck upon the proceedings and to have disgraced the name of the Goddess who alone can grant success in war.

In all this welter of bloodshed, amongst which the visitor may wander freely, the most spectacular scene is provided by the regimental sacrifices which take place in the historic Kot, or Palace Courtyard, which ironically enough was the scene of the massacre of the ancient nobility in a palace revolution just over a century ago. Here the slaughter of several hundred beasts takes place in the early light of the eighth morning, in order that the regimental colours of the Nepalese armed forces may be marked with the sacrificial blood, and that the goodwill of the Goddess of Destruction might thereafter follow the nation's soldiers wherever the call of war might take them.

The old palace is a delightful timbered building, with painted lattice-work windows and pagoda-like roofs, nestling in the very centre of the capital. The Kot is not large, being perhaps twenty yards by thirty, and so admission is limited to a privileged few. Into it are paraded the regimental flags, and opposite them

are herded the animals to be slaughtered — each the gift of an officer to his own regiment. Two gaudily attired groups of bandsmen huddle together in the cold, on the third side of the square, enshrouded in the damp early morning mist ; a couple of platoons of khaki-clad soldiers enter and line up behind the colours, which hang listless in the still air ; and opposite them stand small gilded images of the Goddess Durga herself, heavily wreathed in mountain flowers amongst which the bright red petals of the mountain poppy and the scarlet of the hibiscus stand out boldly.

Tension rises as everyone waits the arrival of the senior officers, then the bands break into wild and discordant music which is augmented by ragged but deafening volleys from the assembled soldiery. To the accompaniment of this barbaric imitation of Western military ceremonial, the terrified animals are dragged forward, their legs pressed out before them as they strain away from their warders, towards the small stake to which they are ultimately tethered. As each strains backwards from the reek of the blood which already covers this post, its tail is grasped from behind, and the animal is held firmly into a position in which its outstretched neck offers an easy target for the executioner's blade. Flexing his knees and moving his weight slightly forward onto the balls of his feet, the officer who has donated the animal raises his kukri high above his head, and then brings it forward in a deep, smooth, swinging movement ; a crunching sound mingles with the unholy notes from the band, and as the head of the animal falls to the ground its legs crumble, and the decapitated body slumps to the cobblestones in a pool of blood.

Score upon score of animals are sacrificed in this way, the task of decapitation being occasionally undertaken by the regimental Sergeant Major, on behalf of the more westernised officers who nowadays prefer to depute this task, and the carcases are stacked in a heap in one corner of the courtyard. The blood from the bodies is meanwhile carefully drained off and collected in large urns, in which it is subsequently dried, and after being cut into strips is later eaten as a great delicacy.

When the massive task of decapitating the large numbers of waiting animals has been completed, the Commander-in-Chief (an hereditary official) enters the yard from the palace, heavily garlanded with the wreaths of flowers beloved of these remarkable hill-folk. The efforts of the bandsmen rise to a new peak, and

then, in a sudden dramatic silence, the Commander-in-Chief solemnly dips his hand into the warm sacrificial blood, and slowly, and with as much dignity as he can muster, crosses the Kot towards the limp, bedraggled colours, and presses his wet hand onto each, leaving behind a sticky dull-red impression of five fingers and a palm — the mark of the Goddess Durga.

This act concludes the ceremony, and also the religious obligations of the army to the festival of Durga. The platoons standing in attendance inside the Kot then shoulder arms, and march out through the narrow door, to join the regiments assembled in the outer square. From there they march away to their quarters, to the accompaniment of more firing, proudly displaying their newly sanctified colours at the head of each column. In the streets of the city, however, the blood still flows, and the sacrifices continue as the sun rises overhead, when the inhabitants, tiring at last of bloodshed, sit down each in their own family house, to gorge themselves in a final hour of feasting and merriment until eventually the stupor of the well-fed overcomes them, and as sleep claims one after another, a peaceful afternoon calm descends upon the city. The lust of the Goddess of War and destruction has been temporarily satiated with the blood of the animals destroyed, and must remain so until the earth has completed a circuit of the sun, and it is time once again to celebrate the festival of Dasera in the remote mountain valleys of Nepal.

LETTERS

EUROPE A NATION

To the Editor of *The European*
Sir,

Sir Oswald Mosley says, " We believe always in reaching our objective with the minimum possible disturbance ; particularly in these days it is a pity to disturb anything which works for reasons of doctrinaire theory ".

This is a valuable political precept.

A maxim of the chemists seems to be relevant. It is the Principle of Le Chatelier, to the effect that, " If a change occurs in one of the factors under which a system is in equilibrium, the system will tend to adjust itself so as to annul, as far as possible, the effects of the change ". Physicists also use this principle and it has its counterpart in biology under the name of homeostasis, defined as " the maintenance of the constancy of the internal medium ".

Homeostasis has played a dominant role in evolution, as the great Claude Bernard pointed out. It works like this : Protoplasm can only maintain itself within very narrow limits, and so, when the surroundings of a living organism change, the organism makes some adjustment to bring the internal medium around the protoplasm back to normal. It can work at all levels and an example is given by the American palaentologist Romer in roughly the following words : A relative of the Devonian Coelacanth of 300,000,000 years ago developed limbs and the ability to live on land, not to get away from water but to get from one drying muddy pool to another pool where water was more plentiful.

The concept of homeostasis has also crept into psychology where, though it is of general application, its meaning has been much restricted.

How far homeostasis has been applied in the study of animal and human social behaviour I do not know ; but of its relevance there can be no doubt at all. Thus to all major political upheavals, revolutions as they are called, there is an inevitable reaction, the counter-revolution or the " betrayal of the revolution ". It would even seem that Revolution runs counter to Evolution ; yet, at the same time it remains an evolutionary stimulant because, despite the reaction, the environment can never be the same again.

That wilful change for the sake of mere change and that planned political upheavals are bad is the ineluctable conclusion. (It is the conclusion that Wyndham Lewis reached from entirely different premises.) This does not mean that drastic political

change may not be called for as compensation for such extensive upsets as the development of electronics and atomic energy, the defeat of Europe and the almost catastrophic run-down of Britain : all it means is that any such change must be in the main evolutionary current and not a revolutionary backwash. European Union seems to be a natural evolutionary corrective to the present disturbed situation. It is a magnificant stimulant and carries about it an aura of historical necessity.

Yours, *etc.*,

CYAMITES

EURAFRIKAN MIGRATION

To the Editor of *The European*

Sir,

Before giving details of the Eurafrikan Highway project, Edward Bourke-Haliburton stresses the attraction of overland travel in large scale voluntary migration, which to compound its attributes, is " genuine organic spontaneous rhythmical migration by the natural logical feasible and practical route ". This category of migrants, " activated by a collective urge ", includes those who will eventually surge to the South along Eurafrika Highway and those who developed the Wild West in North America ; but those who crossed the Atlantic as refugees or slaves and settled on the coastal fringe, are classified as artificial. However arbitrary this distinction may seem to those with scant knowledge of geopolitics, it provokes further consideration of certain of Europe's overseas settlements.

What is the hallmark of the greatest classic overland migration amongst them ? It was undertaken by a *Union of Americans* " activated by a collective urge ". These formerly assorted Europeans had worked off their grudge as Puritan dissenters and refugees against the Old World in a classic war of " Independence " and they have now gained a blatant material ascendancy over the Old World and its underpopulated and undeveloped overseas territories . . . yet they are culturally bankrupt.

Shall we not get the best of both worlds when forming a Union of the Old World to undertake the migration envisaged by Edward Bourke-Haliburton ? In Union Europeans will regain the inspiration of our heritage, and migrate with a positive mission in a larger life, not seeking escape and separation. The extension of our patriotism before migration will strengthen our attachment to Europe, while modern means of communication and travel will enable us to keep in close contact with our homeland : Migration from Europe a Nation will mean, not adieu to the Old Country but au revoir to the Old Continent. (Incidentally the same means of communication can banish the remoteness of Government control

which was responsible for the Boston tea party.)

Our rulers are still absorbed in the migration of money, just as they were in the Boer War which subordinated the " collective urge " of the Boer farmers to alien exploitation of gold and diamonds : " expeditionary forces " are sent in as bailiffs. The leaders of Europe a Nation will send out a pioneer Afrika Korps to implement the Eurafrika Highway projected by the Vortrekker Association today.

Yours, etc.,

C. W. DODS

99 Canonbie Road,
London, S.E.23.

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by

MICHEL MOHRT

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