THE EUROPEAN

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ANALYSIS

"NOTHING is so fatal as an army just big enough to be beaten," observed some time back a Chief of the Imperial General Staff who was gifted with an exceptional lucidity in expressing the logic of military matters. It is better to have no army than an army which provides an excuse for attack, but is not strong enough to win. If you have an army at all, it must be strong enough at least to have a reasonable chance of success. In fact, the complete pacifist position is less foolish than the muddled compromise with pacifism which produces weapons foredoomed to failure. These views, of course, related to the conventional armies of that period. But they apply with even greater force to modern weapons.

It is no use having nuclear weapons if they may not be tested to the point where you are certain they are effective for the purpose required. It is no use having the great deterrent of aeroplanes capable of carrying H-bombs, if you place them in a position where they may all be destroyed on the ground at one stroke by an enemy surprise attack because you refuse the only means of avoiding this which is continual patrol by aircraft carrying H-bombs. Consequently, in this view, official Labour Party policy is even more disastrous than the full pacifist position of Lord Russell and the Aldermaston marchers. Such is the logic of these military matters, and there is no easy escape from it.

The fatality of facing both ways.

The official Labour Party has placed itself in a position as politically ridiculous as it can be nationally disastrous through its habit of facing both ways; this time the game of make believe does not work because the situation is real. Messrs. Gaitskell and Strachey tried to assure the rank and file of the Labour Party, and its rearguard who has been recently designated as the next Foreign Secretary, that they were passionately opposed to the defence policy of the Government. At the same time they tried to assure the sensible majority of electors that they were not prepared to place Great Britain at the mercy of Russia. The result is precisely the situation described by this military opinion as the most disastrous: all the expense of maintaining defence

forces, and all the excuse they provide for war, combined with the certainty that they can be entirely destroyed by surprise attack at any moment if the enemy so decides. Such will be the defences of Britain under Labour. If that party were in power today, the life of Britain would be entirely dependent on the justification of Mr. Bevan's belief that no such malevolent intentions exist in the communist leaders, whose party has been built for over a century on the declared doctrine that communism should be imposed by force whenever opportunity offers.

Credit where credit is due.

In the matter of defence the attitude of the Conservatives has been as admirable as that of Labour has been contemptible. The Government in this instance has firmly resisted a silly clamour, and set the interests of country before the immediate advantage of party. In so doing it will in due course represent in this matter the certain majority of Englishmen who are unwilling either to surrender to communism or to dispense with the precautions which prevent its victory. A tragedy can occur if after the next election that will of the majority be displaced by a minority government which represents either surrender or the weakness that invites defeat. Conservatism in power should crown its patriotic record in this matter by a simple change in the voting system to enable the majority will to be continually effective. The alternative vote can be easily introduced, will not lead to a multiplicity of parties, and at least can prevent the death of Britain by the folly of a minority. It is both an English and an European duty in this case to ensure that the will of the majority shall prevail.

World opinion could be mobilised to secure disarmament.

The West must match the Russians weapon by weapon until we can secure effective disarmament, and in the meantime must not place our weapon in a position where it can be struck from the hand by a surprise blow. Disarmament cannot be effective and practical until science can devise the means for a mutual inspection which can give mutual security. There may be serious hope that these conditions may soon be present. Directly they occur either side can enforce disarmament, if it be serious in the desire to secure it. Either West or East could then publish a clearly practical plan to make disarmament safe by an effective mutual inspection, and could then mobilise the overwhelming public opinion of the world in its favour. Which-

ever side then resisted disarmament and peace would be politically lost. And it is the political struggle—the battle of ideas—which will settle the future, now that military paralysis is virtually complete. America gained much politically by the offer concerning the Arctic Circle; it should have been followed by a barrage of interrogation and propaganda.

The probabilities of war and peace.

Until the decisive moment when the disarmament of nuclear weapons can be carried through with the certainty that the other side is also disarming, we must live with the uneasy equilibrium which the Prime Minister has described as a new balance of power. It is not nearly so dangerous as it looks, because fights do not occur when they involve the death of both sides. War is only certain when the victory of one combatant is certain; particulary if the side in question has always held the doctrine of imposing its creed by force, whenever possible. War is also probable when one side is completely armed and determined, and the other side is incompletely armed and irresolute. Thus regarded, the attitude of Lord Russell and the Aldermaston marchers makes the victory of communism certain, and the attitude of the official Labour Party makes the victory of communism probable. On the other hand, continuance in the present policy of mutual armament pending mutual disarmament, makes peace as certain as anything can be in an uncertain world.

As for accidents, they are always possible in human affairs, though the precautions taken against them in this case seem thorough and massive. But the long and short of this matter are that the risks of accident are far less than the risks of war if we do not possess weapons which are always ready.

And nuclear tests can end when the West, like Russia, has had all the tests it needs to be satisfied that it is properly armed. As the final tests are likely to concern tactical weapons necesary to check invasion by Russia's immense land armies, a date for their termination can probably be announced at a more moderate point than the final felicity of pacifism's champion and hero, Mr. Khrushchev, who recently stated that he needed no more tests because he now had weapons enough to blow up the world seven times over. Also, it should be remembered that continuing these tests to the point of perfecting A-weapons of purely tactical application can enable us to check Russian land power without the use of the main deterrent which can lead to world destruction. In fact, the development of such weapons by the West can

eliminate one of the main dangers of this age. As usual the practical effect of ninny opinion is to impede the thing it most desires.

The base of the summit.

Meantime the extraordinary comedy continues to be played round the base of the summit. Some paralysing protocol impedes all reality and, at present, all progress. Once again we say with crude simplicity: cut the cackle, get into the ring with the Russanis and stay there. Conference is now necessary, not just once, but again and again. It is absurd to believe that everything can be settled at one short meeting between heads of states, whether or not the questions involved have all been settled in advance by diplomats, who, in practice, never get beyond the perpetual minuet of minutiae.

The problems are too big, too complex and too continuous for any such procedure. At least we require something like another Congress of Vienna, where statesmen can meet each other during months and really thrash out a serious settlement. At best, we want continuous meetings between the ablest minds of West and East in private conference, and when necessary, also, clashes in public debate, until we can achieve some regularity in the affairs of a world which has shrunk under the impact of science to a point where physical proximity imposes method.

The battle of ideas can be decisive.

And we must not be afraid of differences and rows at conferences. They would not lead to war, because we should have war already if the military paralysis were not so complete. However angry anyone gets in debate, neither side can shoot when it means the death of both. On the contrary, we want lively discussions when we cannot get reasonable settlements. By this means of public controversy we can mobilise the opinion of the world in our favour, in the cause of disarmament and peace.

We shall advance by two means; the first is through understanding of the necessity to live together in a dangerous world without destoying it, and the second is through rendering the political position of our opponent untenable if he becomes too unreasonable. It cannot be too often repeated that the side which loses the political battle will lose the future.

Let us not be afraid of these facts, but face them. Let us meet the Russians with real good will in private conference, because we must find the means for both systems to live side by side without destroying

the world; that is a mutual interest which sane men can seek together. But when a clash of interest or opinion occurs let us always be ready to face the communists in public debate. For these purposes we need a stronger idea, and statesmen capable of sustaining it in hard controversy. For all the purposes of the modern age we need virtually continuous conference with the Russians, not an occasional puppet parade.

The Christian pacifists plus Lord Russell.

From a correspondent whose opinion we usually much value, we hear that our proposal to make Europe, as an answer to the argument that every small power must not have H-bombs, is quite unpractical because it will take too long; therefore the only practical proposal is that of Lord Russell and certain Christians who want Britain to set a moral example by renouncing the H-bomb. But the doctrine of turning the other cheek has been preached for nearly two thousand years while the world resounded with slapped cheeks; and many of the heartier smacks during many centuries were administered by the armed representatives of the Christian churches who were engaged in fighting each other. It is, therefore, a little hard to be dismissed by Christian pacifists as unpractical dreamers because we have not yet succeeded during a decade of agitation, in persuading the European peoples to uproot some of their most cherished national and economic institutions during a period of unparalleled prosperity.

In fact, it is surprising under these conditions how much support has been found for the idea of Europe and how much practical progress has been made. Every indication is present that the necessity of deepening economic crisis will now bring Europe, in a relatively short time, behind the swing of a great popular movement. On the other hand we repeat the question, does anyone believe that any small nation will renounce the chance of dealing with a hated neighbour because Britain has first made the moral gesture of committing suicide?

Turning the other cheek to Bill Sykes.

It may be necessary to deal with the matter of small nations having H-bombs before Europe is made, though the pace of making Europe in coming conditions is likely in practice to exceed the pace of science in placing such weapons at the disposal of very small nations. But, even in that case, the matter can be quickly and easily dealt with by agreement among the great powers on the lines we suggested. In this

affair at least we and the Russians have a complete community of interests; neither wants the world blown up either by accident or by the petulant action of someone in charge of a small, backward country which does not like its neighbours. A very short conference—if such a danger began to develop—could quickly divide the world into spheres of influence between America, Russia and a consortium of the main European powers who would at least be united on that matter, even today.

There need really be no question of some less beneficent successor of Dr. Nkrumah going beyond the gentle practices of local concentration camps, and dropping a bomb on Johannesburg any more than there is at present a question of a representative of the Georgian Republic dropping a bomb on Moscow. Already on the Russian side no possibility exists of any such nonsense occurring in their sphere. And long short of making Europe, one paratroop brigade could eliminate any possibility of such nonsense on our side; once the great powers agreed to prevent the world being blown up by accident, which is the easiest agreement to secure when the method is obvious.

But none of these things can be done if force can never be applied anywhere by anyone. The logic of that position is not merely the early suicide of Britain, but the immediate liquidation of all police forces and the turning of the other cheek to Bill Sykes. This is the final escape from a world of trouble into a dream phantasy. We prefer to stay in the world as it is, and to strive for the best which is Europe; meanwhile we shall not put down our gun until we have persuaded the other man to do the same.

The recession; crisis or crises?

The incipient economic crisis in the western world is now entering a very interesting phase. The decisive upturn foretold by President Eisenhower for March has not occurred, and a worried administration is still hesitating to apply measures like the tax cut, which would have been more effective if applied at an earlier stage. The basis of the trouble in the 1950s is the inadequacy of market to production, exactly as it was in the 1930s. This phenomenon of over-production has recurred despite the heavy armament expenditure, and despite free gifts of so large a proportion of American production for the purposes of charity or of gaining influence in the political struggle—which is now worldwide. In fact, all the arguments used by Sir Oswald Mosley when he resigned from the Government and analysed the eventual breakdown of the western economic system, are proving true in a

situation which shows their strength to be even greater than he claimed.

It is, of course, probable that various remedial measures which are still available, and diverse fluctuations of a fitful demand, will cause many short term up and down movements within the main trend of crisis. Mosley always held the view that the situation would develop in a series of crises whose gradually increasing intensity would finally convince the people that a fundamental change of economic system was necessary, rather than in one short, sudden crisis which Britain would surmount by a sharp, brief effort, or would succumb. Large, historic events are usually complex and protracted rather than short and simple. We are now entering the very first phase of a crisis which in essence is caused by the failure of America and Europe to find any means to enable their own people to consume what their own people produce.

The wage-price mechanism and concomitant measures.

Mosley's answer is the operation of the wage-price mechanism within an area large enough to be viable because it contains all necessary food stuffs and raw materials and, therefore, a potential market which can be organised in independence of the world cost system. In our case the area in question is clearly Europe-Africa, and he describes with detail in his forthcoming book* how the wage-price mechanism within that area can not only equate production and consumption but can guide the whole economy in a steady development to an ever higher standard of life. The same measures could, also, operate within any other area large enough to be viable, like the American continent.

In answer to such thinking a superficial but interesting point may be derived from the present American situation: American purchasing power has never been so high, but Americans are not spending it. For instance, during the last year American personal income declined by only 1.7 per cent., but sales of such goods as motor cars, household appliances, heavy machinery, etc., fell by 12 per cent. that year. (A study of American statistics can be very interesting at the present time. For instance, in another context, military expenditure is expected to rise by about three billion dollars by the end of this year, but it is

* *Europe: Faith and Plan.* A way out from the coming crises and an introduction to thinking as an European (Euphorion Books. 302 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W.1.: 12s. 6d.) Publication date June 23rd 1958.

already predicted that repayment of instalment debt will deflate the higher purchase system this year by precisely the same figure; an illustration of how quickly in present circumstances market movements could outstrip government measures.)

Such variations in consumer demand, and fitful changes in spending habits, are, of course, bound to occur even when the economic system has resolved the main problem of generally equating production and consumption. But they become immaterial if that main measure is accompanied by the considerable variety of concomitant measures which Mosley proposes, and all the constructive factors which are involved in a planned investment policy.

After all, it is just such a moment which gives a government its greatest opportunity for real creative work that can greatly serve the future, if it is ready to give economic leadership with measures prepared in advance. In such a period public works and public investments on a scale beyond the concept of present society can either provide the basis of a future increase in production with consequent acceleration in the raising of the standard of life, or can produce things of beauty and amenity which can be the glory of a future civilisation. The incidental prevention of unemployment and restoration of normal demand will also serve the purpose of the moment, but in principle these phases should be regarded by dynamic government not as a disaster but as an opportunity. Yet all these great possibilities await acceptance of the simple principle that definite economic leadership by government is a prime necessity of the modern world.

The Prime Minister's economic obiter dictum.

The Prime Minister in a speech reported in *The Times* on May 10th last stated: "no government can fix people's incomes." But what else have he and his friends been doing in recent years, when they have first inflated and then deflated to a most variable tune. Are not both these processes in economic effect a transfer of purchasing power from one pocket to another by action of government, and therefore in some degree a fixing of people's income? What else is taxation, the fixing of rents, the payment of subsidies, the creation of a welfare state as a charge on the whole community and all the other devices whereby modern government chooses, or is obliged, to intervene in economic matters? In fact government in varying degree is continually "fixing people's incomes."

The difference between what government now does and the opera-

tion of the wage-price mechanism suggested by Sir Oswald Mosley, is that the former is belated intervention to mitigate disaster after trouble has arisen, and the latter is timely action not only to prevent trouble occurring but to organise a higher standard of living. The difference is between a government which lags behind economic events picking up the pieces of catastrophe, and a government which exercises a definite economic leadership not only to forestall catastrophe but to release and to direct the beneficent and creative forces which modern science has brought into existence; forces which can build a higher form of civilisation if controlled and guided but can wreck present civilisation if abandoned to the chances of chaos. The age of government fixing people's incomes in one way or another has long since arrived. Let government do it now consciously and deliberately with the clear vision of considered policy, rather than belatedly and ineffectively as an unconscious reflex to the kick of events. Such in broad outline is the modern argument, and we shall hear much more of it. Mosley's book discusses these matters, inter alia, in concise but detailed form.

The wave of strikes and the industrial future.

In present conditions ever-recurring industrial unrest is certain. The workers see that the present policy holds production down well below its full potential, even on the restricted basis of industrial organisation within a small island system. They are well aware that modern science could provide a far higher standard of life if industry were organised for full production to a larger, assured market. In particular, men working in the basic services like busmen and railwaymen feel their wages are pinned down by the inexorable laws of a faulty system. The result is bound to be increasing unrest which the present system can do nothing to allay.

If wages in these basic services were substantially increased our productive costs in export goods would, of course, increase in much the same proportion; we would fail to compete, and we would fail eventually to sell enough abroad to buy the imports of food and raw materials which are necessary even for the present restricted national life. The men are right in saying wages are too low; the government is right in saying wages cannot be increased without disaster.

The result must be ever-increasing strife, and also risk of a head-on collision which can destroy the precarious balance of the island economy. In short, this is the nemesis of blindly and obstinately maintaining an obsolete system.

Co-operation with trade unions but firm answer to anarchy.

In these conditions the answer is not to promote class war by setting the middle classes against the trade unions, but to show them both the way out into a larger and saner system which is Europe-Africa. For that reason we never join in the hymns of hatred against the trade unions. On the contrary, we seek their co-operation in a creative task which is vital to the future of all.

On the other hand, the threat from certain trade union elements to "take all the measures necessary to stop the installation of rocket bases in our countries" (recorded in the *New York Herald Tribune* of 5/5/58; we observed no mention in English papers) is an intolerable challenge to the authority of government and the safety of the state. Any government which failed to meet it with the full weight of national power would be unworthy of the name. We need a far stronger hand in government for dealing with such threats. On the contrary, we need far more sympathy and a far more constructive policy when faced with a natural demand for the higher standard of life which modern science can certainly provide when government becomes capable of economic leadership.

Algeria.

In a situation of great confusion nothing can be said about Algeria which we have not said already. One point matters: Algeria is of vital importance to all Europe. It is the natural bridge between Europe and Africa, and over it must pass the developed riches of Africa in commerce between the two continents. It was therefore the duty of all Europe to support France in that position. British Government and also America have failed in that duty. The result is a tragic situation in which we should stand by France until a settlement just to French and European interests can be reached.

Suez was a shadow of the past; a lifeline already cut in the last war, closed for good by an H-bomb in the next war if it ever occurs, and anyhow a line leading nowhere since the Empire at the other end of it was given away. But Algeria is a lifeline to all Europe's future, which can bring new industrial life to us all in oil supplies and other requirements of modern civilisation. The true policy always was and always will be friendship with, and economic assistance to, the main body of the Arabs in the Eastern Mediterranean, and in return their goodwill and assistance in securing this vital interest of France and of all Europe in Algeria.

The responsibility for violence in British politics.

A recent case in the Courts was of considerable interest not only to the present but to a past which has been much discussed. We refer to the fact that before the war the followers of Sir Oswald Mosley were accused of initiating violence. The recent case related to certain incidents on May 1st last. Counsel prosecuting for the Crown said, according to the *Daily Mail* report, that "The Trades Council had arranged to hold a meeting but the British Union Movement got in first with a meeting beginning at 7.30 a.m. It continued until midday, when the Trades Council men arrived with a rostrum . . . Phelan and Lawrence had to be pulled off their platform," while another man "rushed toward the other meeting shouting: 'Kill the fascists.'

"Chief Superintendent Beresford Paull said he told Mr. Phelan that only one meeting would be permitted . . . Phelan continued to speak. There was cat-calling and booing and he was arrested. He was at once replaced on the rostrum by Lawrence. He was told he could not go on. He replied that no one was going to stop him speaking and he continued. He was again warned to stop, but this had no effect and he was removed from the rostrum." Lawrence and Phelan were both convicted of obstructing the police and fined £3 each and three guineas costs.

The evidence given by Councillor Lawrence in the box is not only interesting but decisive in the controversy is question. When asked if he was annoyed because the other meeting got there first he said: "Fascists always annoy me. If I know the fascists they would have scarpered out of it. They would not stand up to the trade union movement—they would have fled." What is this but a flat statement in the witness box that a political meeting being legally and peacefully held to explain a different policy in the streets of Britain, would have been closed down by violence or some form of intimidation?

This is precisely what men of Mr. Lawrence's opinions did all over Britain before the war, until the Blackshirt Movement was organised. When the Blackshirts did not scarper but threw them out of meetings they howled blue murder in their complaints about Blackshirt brutality. But the result was to restore complete order at indoor meetings throughout Britain for three years before the war.

Since the Public Order Act the duty of maintaining order at outdoor meetings is placed on the police. But the right to maintain order at indoor meetings by means of stewards using the minimum force necessary for the purpose still remains. We are obliged to Councillor

Lawrence for illuminating both the past and the present. The younger generation will now know the truth which has been kept from them, though this has by no means deterred them from joining Union Movement.

The present voting strength of Union Movement.

The work of testing Union Movement's voting strength in continuing conditions of unparalleled prosperity goes quietly ahead. Local elections are used for this purpose, because the expense is relatively negligible. Results in recent times range from an 11% of the votes recorded in an East London test to a 2.4% in Manchester, where a popular local independent drew off most of the normal discontent votes. So a Watford vote of 7% seems to represent about the average; a district which would not have been regarded as a natural Union Movement vantage point. These results have been secured without any of the effort of a great national campaign which would accompany a parliamentary election. But they would give a parliamentary strength of over 40 members if the full proportional system of some continental countries were applied in England. That is a very solid base from which a new Movement can advance rapidly in more suitable conditions. (How quickly a new movement can advance from a lesser base, even in comparatively normal conditions, was illustrated by a retrospect in *The Times* on May 20th last. The Liberal Minister Masterman just lost to the Conservatives in a 1914 bye-election in South-west Bethnal Green, because the Labour vote had increased to 316 votes from a previous vote of 182 in the whole constituency!)

And these figures do not include exceptional results in exceptional conditions. For instance, in the by-election in the Moorfield Ward of Shoreditch, where housing conditions created great local unrest, the result was Labour 48%, Union Movement 33% and the Conservative 16% of the votes recorded. Such events at least illustrate what can happen when the people become really angry.

What can be done by ability and character surmounting old prejudice was shown at the County Council elections last March in the West Country, where a well known Union Movement member actually captured a seat from Labour in the face of that party's victory swing in the county elections. He stood as an independent farmers' representative, but his position as an outstanding Union Movement member was never concealed before, during or after the election, and was known to the whole area. If these things can be done today, what is there that cannot be done tomorrow?

EUROPEAN.

REPLY TO A FREE-TRADER

by BERTRAM PEEL

THE April issue of *Encounter* contained an article "What's Wrong with Economics?" in which a sustained attack is made upon the inability of British economists and politicians to keep up with events and adjust their policy in sufficient time. With the grudging exception of Lord Keynes, no one in the last fifty years is spared, the author charging them with "criminal irresponsibility," "mild insanity" and "mental aberrations," implying that they have always applied their remedies twenty years too late. It is not until three-quarters of the way into page five that the specific remedy for 1958 is made known. We are advised to return to free trade which, it is said, worked very well in the middle of the last century. The following article is a brief reply to *this* aberration, which now constitutes official Government policy and has succeeded in being widely accepted as the one bright spot in a dark world.

If it is agreed that economic policy must vary to meet changing needs, the notion that free trade, like world government, is an ideal to be worked for, does not hold good; the fact that all industrial nations have at one time passed through an era of almost pure free trade does not carry with it the implication that one day we shall return to it. In modern history the most successful examples of free trade in operation are to be found in Britain and America, at times when aggressive free enterprise brought benefits to all and disaster only to the completely reckless; this was also the time when British power was greatest, and the coincidence is important. Nineteenth century free trade continued triumphant only so long as the market was voracious and there existed a power capable of arranging the market, i.e., Britain, who led with the industrial revolution. Free trade will work again only under similar conditions, which now means nothing less than a world market under a world authority of an effective kind. Meanwhile we have to live.

Since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when Germany began to challenge our industrial supremacy, free trade and protection have contested for influence; the free trade principle has remained strong owing to the need to make full use of modern production methods, and protectionism has come into play at times of market saturation. Yet it is true to say that the technique of political economy should be more than the finding of a convenient point between the two at any one instant, because the imperfections of economists and politicians bring results that are far too serious. Free-traders will never admit to the pattern of boom-slump-war which we have experienced this century: protectionists have never been able to accept the logical consequence of isolation, and have denied others the right to protect themselves similarly. This is best illustrated by the extremely complex situation between the wars.

So much effort and loyalty was involved in the war that it is hard to admit that economic anomalies were among the prime causes of it. Allied policy at Versailles deprived Germany of an oversea outlet and ensured that that country would suffer most when the post-war boom ended. By deliberately cooping up seven million unemployed in Germany while they had free play in the markets of the world, the democracies brought the war upon themselves, and by an active dislike of all forms of government different from her own, Britain did little to help the tension. Despite the ostensible causes of the war, however, it is doubtful if the situation would have deteriorated so badly had Germany been allowed to form her own protected unit with Italy and certain North African territories, and Britain had made a determined effort to develop the Empire. In this way both powers would have kept out of each other's way. Instead, the British Government pursued the middle way between free trade and Imperial Preference while denying the Axis powers an outlet. In due course the war was fought and Europe's economy reduced to a state of ruin.

It will be recalled that the Second World War was originally a "capitalists' war" to Russia. The U.S.S.R. was quite content to watch Britain and Germany destroy each other and then effect a coup in the resultant "revolutionary situation." No secret was made of this intention, which is in accordance with orthodox Marxist-Leninism, and against it genuine capitalism has no case at all. In the event, Russia was involved in the war, and gained only a third of Europe at the close of hostilities, being herself as exhausted as the European powers.

From 1940 until 1945, and for a long time subsequently, our

economic life was unnatural. We lived in this period neither by free trade nor by protection, but by charity; it is only in the 1950s that Europe has regained its feet.

The position in the world now is almost exactly as it was thirty years ago, with two very important additions: military stalemate, and the vastly increased economic power of the U.S.S.R. Germany is again powerful, and has reached a position of economic supremacy in Europe as a result of hard work from "scratch" and a lack of military and oversea commitments. Japan is once more striving for trade mastery of the East which she must have in order to live. An all-round slump in commodities accompanies the U.S. recession which now closely resembles an old-fashioned slump. Meanwhile the United States, prime capitalist nation, is trying to decide which of the uncommitted nations of the world shall be the first to benefit from her overproduction, and the communist bloc uses capitalism's own weapons in a trade war again the West, offering long credits, forming consortia and bidding at prices deliberately below the cheapest Western tender. In this, she is to some extent assisted by capital equipment sold to her by Western companies.

This is a very tense situation, and it seems inevitable that somebody is going to suffer badly in the near future. The communist group has nothing to fear, being completely self-sufficient. The American continent possesses all that it requires and is ultimately not dependent on world trade for its existence. Japan will certainly gain Eastern mastery because she uses the same machinery as the rest of us but at cheaper cost. Continental Europe will soon also be largely self-sufficient through the mechanism of the Common Market and the associated overseas territories. This leaves Britain, Australasia and South Africa—all that remains of the Commonwealth as an economic entity, India and others having become a burden to the Sterling Area and contributing little to its economic health. The position of the Sterling Area today and that of the Commonwealth is too complex to deal with in detail here, but it can be said that the whole concept of Imperial Preference implies the provision of capital by the mother country which she has been unable to supply since the war. It also entails the provision of an adequate U.K. market for Empire produce, which we are no longer able to offer. Australasia is becoming increasingly concerned about the percentage of her new factories that are U.S.-financed—in Australia some 50 per cent. of foreign capital is from America today—and at the lack of an adequate British market. South Africa is differently placed and we are, in fact, each other's

best customers; there is a natural economic union between the two countries that may well develop in the future if political considerations do not alienate the two nations.

In a world of power blocs, economic groups and cultural loyalties, the present British administration has been pursuing for some time a policy of free trade, linked to the idea of liberty and freedom, with such good effect that those who desire even a basic measure of protection need to apologise for holding the views they do. It may be seriously questioned whether free trade in mid-twentieth century can rightly be called a policy at all. The existence of a military deadlock and the continued decline of spiritual influences mean that political and economic factors, acting together, entirely dominate events. As the struggle for markets becomes fiercer, as it has done for two years now, is it enough for a government simply to tell Britain: "Sell wherever you can"? Is it not rather a surrender of responsibility actively to encourage trade with Russia, China, India, Japan, America and anywhere else where a buyer can be found? If the terms of trade change, would not that be Government responsibility?

Just at this moment free trade is paying off. Japan has bought marine engine test equipment, cable machinery and other equipment from the U.K., and an atomic power station may be supplied in the near future; China has taken delivery of vast numbers of lorries and a good deal of other transport material from the West; Russia has bought electrical equipment and a whole tyre factory; India is supplied with steelworks, communication apparatus and rail material from Britain; America is buying an increasing number of our cars. These are a few of Britain's export achievements—Operation Britain Organisation could doubtless cite many more—and if commodities keep down we may expect even more successes in the near future.

But the more distant future could be tragic. Japan is beginning to flood a contracting world market with inferior goods made on British machinery, China has already used Hong Kong to upset the textile market, India is to cut down imports from the West and will soon enter the Eastern market, and America will not see Detroit go hungry while Coventry prospers, or to be more accurate their Dagenham and Luton subsidiaries. As to Russia, is it not worth asking why this leading communist country should offer us more trade just at the time when we need it most? After all, this is the moment that Marxism has been awaiting for a century, and but for the Second World War and the Korean boom it would have come earlier.

Why should communism throw a capitalist country the life-line of trade at this critical juncture? One or more of the following explanations may be valid. The Russians are even better copyists than the Japanese, and it is possible that it is intended to take just "one off" of the equipment she is interested in. If she can also make British industry substantially dependent on Soviet trade, the U.S.S.R. has a weapon of immense effectiveness if used at the right moment. Again, she may well succeed in keeping Britain out of Europe by offering an attractive market, and thus divide the Continent politically. Yet another explanation may be found in the future of Africa. Much of this continent is now ripe for communism, and the only serious obstacle to Soviet advancement is the possibility of a joint European effort to develop its vast resources; this is in some measure provided for in the Common Market scheme. But if Britain should combine with the other European powers to develop African possessions jointly, and *then* link up with South Africa, that could alter the entire prospect. Hence Russia has much to gain by diverting Britain from the idea of commercial integration with the body of Europe.

It is surprising that the author of "What's Wrong with Economics?" should have made no reference to the European Common Market. Developing naturally from the Coal and Steel Pool, this scheme, taken with its associated Euratom structure, is really the most significant economic event in the world since the introduction of Imperial Preference. Its principle is, in effect, the one answer to the so-called Marxian dilemmas—the formation of a Europe-African bloc to make Europe independent of what has been nicely described as "rouble dump and dollar slump."

For political reasons the British administration has declined to join this project, and proposes instead to associate us with the Continent in free trade pure and simple. The European F.T.A. is taken as being a means to promote free trade throughout the world and therefore as a means of keeping The Six within the world trading system. Since this system has been stagnant for some time and is now declining, it is not really surprising that The Six show reluctance to participate in a contracting struggle for markets. Many in the United Kingdom, including the writer, feel it would not be so bad a thing for British industry to be exposed to Continental competition, and British industry itself has expressed willingness to join in a free trade zone as long as it means fair trade also; in addition to the well-known condition of equal wage rates, they seek harmonisation of export subsidies, monopoly regulations, formation of consortia

and other matters. British industry is not afraid of fair competition from Europe but what it does have good cause to fear is undercutting from the East, extended credit from Moscow and dumping from America. Free trade unfortunately acts both ways, and in the past British industry has never really gained in the end; the benefits of free trade in the long run go chiefly to those who make their living from the flux of world conditions.

There is, then, nothing wrong with economics if it is linked with political ideas. Professional economists necessarily tend to compute for an ideal situation, and if real events fail to measure up, it is hardly fair to say " Economics is no good, let's go back to free trade." In this country we are quite proud of our new Restrictive Trade Practices Act and of the fact that free trade is encouraged; but it is necessary to remember that if the situation becomes out of hand the Government can always step in to iron out the difficulties. Similarly in the international scheme, free trade is only safe when operated within a truly viable area under some ultimate control, and the scheme for a Europe-Africa self-sufficient community under supra-national bodies is a grouping of this kind.

Britain is accused of wanting the best of both worlds, Europe and the Commonwealth, but in fact they want free trade as well. On the other hand the U.K. negotiators claim that The Six are asking them to choose between Europe and the Commonwealth. There is a way out of this deadlock: it is for Britain to join the Common Market as a full member together with those Commonwealth members who wish to join in also. In this way, Europe, Africa, Britain and the Commonwealth would have all the markets they want, and the safeguards as well.

THE UNION OF EUROPE AND THE BRITISH FARMER

by R. REYNELL BELLAMY

ALL historical turning points have their origins in other events which preceded them. The conflict started in 1939, with the pious but hopeless intent of "saving Poland," soon got completely out of control, attained world-wide proportions and finally achieved a victory more than Pyrrhic in the magnitude of its disastrous consequences. Its promoters in this country certainly never visualised the chain of calamities they were to set in motion, not only against Britain and her Empire and the countries which they chose to make enemies, but all civilisation.

From out of the holocaust emerged two new colossi who, glaring at each other across stricken Europe, plunged into their preparations for a third war which each felt convinced the other contemplated. Another war now would extinguish life in our divided, torn and almost worn-out continent. Men everywhere, who had once shown courage, spoke of the "inevitability of communism," escaped into existentialism or, as did the majority, shut their eyes tight and pretended that except for increasingly punitive taxation, things were much as they always had been.

Thanks be to God there still survives in Europe a handful of men with vision, courage and leadership, who know and can interpret history and from the lessons of history plan for the future. These men are united in their desire to unite Eurpoe. Today all the nations between the Iron Curtain and the Atlantic coast are comparatively small nations. It is folly for them to continue to exist as feeble national entities, overshadowed from the East by the U.S.S.R. and from the West by the U.S.A. Europeans must combine if their homeland is to survive. When Europe achieves nationhood she will not

only live again but lead again, with the civilised heritage of more than 2,500 years, besides which the refinements of life of North America are those of a parvenu, and those of Russia scarcely disguised materialistic barbarism. In material strength she would be second to no other power.

This coalescing of the peoples of Europe may seem at first to present problems of almost insuperable complexity; but it is a concept which, once understood, fires with new enthusiasm those who saw their beliefs and hopes shattered in the last war. It is a practical purpose that appeals both to the genuine patriot and to the abstract thinker. As is usual when new ideas and ideals have been propagated, it is the younger generation which is prepared to accept them with least reservation. Where the union of Europe is concerned this has so far manifested itself mainly in the shouting of slogans and the throwing down of new frontier signs. These are only the beginnings, but they do indicate the direction of thought of the younger people, particularly students, on the Continent. Often economic necessity outdistances thinking among "the powers that be"; thus we find that what youngsters acclaim as a noble vision is already a reality, even if still only in the embryonic stage.

The uniting of Europe began when Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg set up a customs union in 1948, known as Benelux. There is complete free trade within the three states covered by the treaty, and importers within that area pay identical dues on goods and merchandise brought in from non-Benelux countries. Later in that year the Organisation of European Economic Co-operation (O.E.E.C.) was established with permanent offices and staff. This was followed by the European Payments Union (E.P.U.) to foster the flow of trade between the states of Europe, which had been slow to get moving again after the war.

In 1951 the next step forward to European unity was taken, when France, Germany and Italy joined with the Benelux countries in setting up the European Coal and Steel Community. This agreement has since been eclipsed by the same six countries' Common Market contract which came into operation on the first of January this year, with the object of eliminating eventually all national discrimination in the marketing of goods produced and sold within the treaty zone.

So much for what has already become history. But before proceeding to demonstrate that this country stands to benefit in every respect, inclusive of agriculture, from full incorporation within a united Europe, I must mention that already the prosperity of the iron

and steel industry of the European Coal and Steel Community has increased by 169 per cent. Let that be a pointer.

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There are several reasons why this country hangs back from entering Europe. Ossified brain tissues joined with political timidity doubtless explains much of the reluctance of Government and Opposition to press forward to unification. The political leaders also explain their reluctance to enter into full economic partnership with our friends on the mainland by citing the wrath of the British farmer.

For their part the farmers recall only too vividly the pre-war dumping of foreign farm produce on our shores; which dumping process is being re-enacted, so far in restricted form, today. From past experience the farmers suspect the foreigner every time they are left with unsold produce on their hands. Our present political leaders also quail before the probable fury and dismay of the Dominions at the prospect of sharing the British home market with the primary producers of Continental Europe.

Now, most farmers are busy men with little or no time to think and ponder matters away from their immediate problems of sowing their seed, getting in the harvest or how to prune the wages bill. In consequence they like their daily papers to be terse, newsy and sensational; and they like their editors to do their political thinking for them. In short, most of them love the *Daily Express*; wherefore their outlook on Common Markets and Free Trade Areas is bleak, black and hostile. There are some farmers who think independently, even in political matters, and whose vision is broad. Fortunately, some of these have won places in the councils of the National Farmers' Union. This far-sighted minority realises that it is inevitable that the country sooner or later will have to enter Europe fully and completely, and that, as she will have to go in—even if for no nobler motive than not to be left out in the cold—the sooner she does so the better.

This point of view was well expressed in the words of Mr Peter Smithers, V.R.D., Ph.D., M.P., in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr E. M. H. Lloyd, C.B., C.M.G., on his address last November to the Farmers' Club on "Agriculture and the Free Trade Area."

Mr. Smithers said: ". . . the Common Market is, in my view, a real danger to this country. If it goes ahead, and we pay no attention to it, it means that we shall be confronted by a nation of 163 million

people on the continent of Europe, led undoubtedly by Germany. It means that they will erect tariffs against our products in favour of their own products. It means, in fact, that we shall have a most dangerous commercial enemy next door to us on the continent of Europe.

"The only sensible course open to us, in my view, is to find some way in which we can share in and increase the prosperity which they are building for themselves, rather than find ourselves destroyed by it; and hence it is that the concept of a Free Trade Area, a much wider concept embracing all the nations of the O.E.E.C., 250 million people, has come about.

"In that Britain would play a full part. Our industrial exports would find a market throughout the area, we would share in it, and of course politically we would find ourselves a member of a very powerful community well able to stand up for itself in the modern world . . . It is against this urgent necessity to reorganise the free world for its own defence that the farming community has to see its own problem of its relationship with farming in other countries. You cannot just draw together with your friends for some purposes and not for others . . . it is to use our own land to the best advantage in consultation with other free countries also using their own land to the best advantage."

Mr Smithers is plain and cogent, but he has not gone sufficiently far to prevent most farmers' teeth from chattering. He failed to show how British agriculture, with the highest-priced labour in Europe, could hope to hold its own against continental agriculture. This can be done only by the complete integration of Europe with strong central Government, whose duty it would be to ensure that there is a levelling up of farm wages throughout Europe. Industrial and all other wages should be brought into line too. There should be no more cheap food as we know it in this country; but all wage earners should be so rewarded for their skill and industry that they could afford to buy without stint the comestibles of their choice and the manufactured articles produced in yet greater quantities by automation. Higher wages all round, and no undercutting, would create a vastly increased demand for almost all manufactured goods as well as for foodstuffs.

Too long has this country been retarded by an out of date liberal philosophy and economics. "Export or die" . . . "cheap food for the masses," so that our exports could be cheaper than those of our competitors. In the past cheap food, mainly imported, cost us dear, for it ruined our own agriculture, and with it a magnificent market

at home for our manufactured goods. Today much the same circumstances prevail. The New Zealanders are raw with us on account of the poor price we pay for their butter. Their own income shrinks, so they can no longer buy from us the machinery, textiles and electrical equipment they want. They begin to consider trading with Japan. In fact the quest for cheap food could lead ultimately to starvation.

The British Dominions must be reassured that the impending nationhood of Europe does not mean the end of their export trade in beef, mutton, bacon, wool, butter, sugar and tobacco, but that every door in Europe will be made open to them once the supplies of locally-grown food are consumed. No country in Europe is self-sufficient agriculturally. I suppose that Spain, for all her poverty and erosion, is the country in Western Europe that most nearly feeds and clothes itself. Denmark and Holland have a plethora of dairy and kindred products, but not in sufficient quantities to satisfy the wants of all Europe. On the other hand, countries like Italy and Greece are badly under-fed. It must also be remembered that all Europeans will have had their wage-packets increased by Government action expressly to encourage them to demand more and better food for their tables, and more manufactured goods for their own use and wear.

France grows wheat in excess of her needs, much of it uneconomically in regions not really suited for its cultivation, but where there is a tradition of self-sufficiency among a populace of small peasant proprietors. Uneconomic crops should be discouraged, except where they are needed to fulfil a rotation, or to prevent erosion. With its hundreds of millions to feed (particularly with a rising birthrate as better conditions arrive) Europe is likely to be a large-scale importer of cereals for many years to come. Years hence, possibly, with the development and co-operation of North Africa, once Imperial Rome's granary, Europe might no longer require Australian and Canadian wheat. Although it is equally possible that, with faith and confidence restored, the European birthrate will have increased immeasurably and there would remain a great demand for agricultural produce from those Dominions.

Without a doubt the complete integration of Europe will bring about radical changes in the pattern of farming, particularly of horticulture, in Britain and elsewhere, when it will no longer be profitable to raise, let us say, tomatoes, cucumbers and melons, etc., under glass, with artificial heat, in competition with those grown in the open under the Mediterranean sun. On the other hand, it is possible that with

soil heated by cheap atomic-produced electricity, and with cheap artificial light, it will be possible to grow crops to compete with those of kinder climates, but far distant from British and North European markets.

It is impossible to prophecy at this juncture what exactly will be the change in farming which will follow the new political economy. Dairying will not be likely to be other than affected beneficially. An entire continental populace with plenty to spend will not be likely to stack its larders with margarine. Neither is pig farming, the concomitant of dairy farming, likely to diminish. Rashers of bacon will become more commonplace on breakfast tables than they are today. Nor will those ghastly bags of mystery, misnamed sausages, be likely to survive for long, when well-filled genuine pork sausages will be within the reach of all. There will be a demand for better quality in all comestibles. Many consumers will expect their milk to show an improved butter-fat content. It might be worth considering whether in Britain it would be policy to increase the numbers of cattle of those breeds which yield richer milk, at the same time reducing the number of Friesians.

Beef cattle and sheep should be rather more profitable than they are today; but the emphasis should always be on quality rather than on quantity. In this country too many people have become content to eat the rather indifferent meat of a Friesian steer, and have forgotten how superlative can be the flavour and texture of a properly-fed, yarded and boxed Hereford, Angus or Red Poll bullock. As in these small islands no grass should be wasted, it may prove more profitable to the farmer and to the national economy to encourage a revival of the dual-purpose breeds, notably the Red Polls and Shorthorns, famous in the past for rich milk, and plenty of it, and for high class beef.

In France, that land of gastronomes, Jacques Bonhomme pays nearly twice as much for his beef, which he insists must be tender and tasty, than does John Citizen, who has grown indifferent to the abuse of palate and digestion. Because of a more discriminating consumer-public the French farmer sells his prime cattle at almost £13 per live hundredweight, compared with the £6 or £7 per live hundredweight received by his British counterpart.

It has been suggested that, except for top-grade malting barley, and those special wheats grown on the chalk, which are eagerly sought by the biscuit manufacturers, England may lose her ancient corn-growing tradition. We know now that it is a very ancient tradition

indeed, and that the Roman Army on the Rhine was fed on British wheat supplied from East Anglian ports. Drying kilns where the grain was prepared for shipment to the Continent have recently been excavated at Caistor-by-Yarmouth. English wheat continued to be exported throughout the Middle Ages, through Tudor, Stuart and Georgian times, until the Industrial Revolution depopulated the countryside, and the Whig owners of the "satanic mills" imported yet cheaper corn from the New World to keep down their wage bills.

It would be a tragedy if this country were now to cease to include cereals in their rightful place in the farm rotation. Personally, I do not consider it necessary that the amount of English-grown cereals should be reduced. The bakers may continue to demand hard wheat from abroad; but the softer, higher-yielding wheats and coarse barleys, and of course oats, will be wanted for grinding and rolling for an increased livestock population, particularly of pigs and poultry. It has also been pointed out that in grain growing this country will be able to hold its own with any in Europe on cost of production, as it is more highly mechanised than the mainland; it can also compete with the rest of the world because English yields are so much greater than elsewhere.

Much the same applies to grass-land farming, of which there is still so much to be done, particularly in East Anglia. Throughout Europe, Holland alone can match our Midland, West Country and above all Wessex farmers in grass-production. With the levelling up of wages by Government action, English grassland farmers would have little to fear in competition from those quarters.

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Any farmer reading these conjectures may complain with justification that the author has little precise information to encourage him to vote at the next Parliamentary election for the candidate who advocated "full entry into Europe, and at once." It is impossible at this stage to lay down details as to who shall grow wheat and where; but the assurance that with the unification of Europe will come a "managed market" and the end of that chaos and doubt which at present accompany so much of our agricultural production and selling, should help to set his mind at rest. This too can be said with certainty: the Union of Europe will lead to an ever-increasing prosperity, and whatever alterations may have to be made to the British tradition of farming, Britain will be participating in the general prosperity, already

apparent in the coal and steel community in Europe, and the British farmer will have his share of the commonweal.

The only alternative to entering Europe is to keep out; the consequences of this are not pleasant to contemplate. If, because of opposition by some farmers, or the farmers of the Dominions, this country holds back from joining Europe, the approaching depression will hurt her grievously. There could be three or four millions, or more, unemployed; imports of raw materials for industry, or "cheap food for the masses," would be cut seriously. The British farmer would be expected to feed the overcrowded cities at the barest subsistence level, and for little reward, with no likely replacement of tools and tackle as they wear out, and with fuel for the tractors dwindling to a trickle. We would all, farmer, farmworker and townsman, live as if in a state of siege—the "siege economy," foreshadowed by the Labour Party.

There is no practical alternative to joining Europe. Britain must go in or go under. Furthermore, how much better to join a club as a foundation member and help to draw up the rules, than to wait until one has to beg for membership.

RUSSIAN AGGRESSION
A Lesson from the Past

by PHILIP M. EDEN

TORY and Labour politicians persist in believing that we have only to sit down at a table with the Russians, and all the problems and difficulties which have directly resulted from Russia's aggressive and uncompromising policy will be solved. Indeed, on March 1st of this year, while talking to a Women's Conservative Association, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd himself stated that he considered the Russians 'would keep agreements providing they were sufficiently clear-cut.'

These men are afraid or incapable of facing the menace of communism and accepting its challenge. The communists have stated clearly and unmistakably that the one aim which dominates and directs all their actions is their determination to communise the world. Since 1918 this aim has never changed or wavered; in peace and in war, using any and every means within their power, the communists have sought to achieve this one objective. Due to the incredible stupidity of the politicians of the West their efforts have met with considerable success.

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The history of the relationships between the Soviet Union and the small Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia provides a remarkable illustration of the worthlessness of promises or guarantees given by the Russians; it is at the same time a damning indictment of Britain's 'wonder politician of the century' Winston Churchill, who

forced us to accept the Russians as our allies a matter of months after they had broken, in respect of the Baltic States, the most solemn obligations ever made by one country to another. He is the man who, after we had gone to war on the pretext of 'defending the sovereignty of independent European nations,' proceeded to endorse Russia's violent seizure of all three Baltic States, large areas of Poland, Rumania and Finland, by stating in a message to Roosevelt in 1942 that 'the principles of the Atlantic Charter ought not to be construed so as to deny Russia the frontiers she occupied when Germany attacked her in 1941.' Seldom has a politician so condemned himself out of his own mouth.

The Baltic States proclaimed their independence forty years ago. Although Lenin, for the benefit of Soviet propaganda, declared that 'the self-determination of nations was one of the basic principles of Soviet policy,' as early as 1918 *Izvestia,* the Communist Party newspaper, stated that an independent 'Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were an obstacle to world revolution.' In 1920, after an abortive attempt to seize these states by force, Russia signed a peace treaty with them, recognising their freedom and independence 'voluntarily and for ever.'

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This was the beginning of an interesting and now familiar pattern of Soviet imperialist policy; first an attempt at quick domination by force, if this should fail a long and intensive series of statements of good will, treaties and pacts of friendship, made solely with the purpose of allaying the proposed victim's fears and putting him off his guard; the apparent open hand of friendship which at a moment's notice becomes the mailed fist of aggression. On Russian initiative non-aggression pacts were concluded; and further, to avoid the slightest misunderstanding as to what constituted aggression, a special convention for the definition of aggression was also signed on July 3rd, 1933. For the benefit of Mr. Lloyd, a more clear-cut agreement could scarcely be found in the entire history of mankind.

The Baltic States, having received such complete and unqualified assurances of good will from the Russians, were at pains to avoid offending them in any way; their efforts were a waste of time. In September and October 1939 the Baltic States were forced by direct Russian pressure to allow the establishment of Soviet military bases within their national frontiers. Mr. Molotov thereupon hastened to

declare that the Soviet Union stood for an exact and honest fulfilment of her agreements, and that foolish talk of sovietisation of the Baltic States was useful only to anti-Soviet provocateurs. In April, 1940, he again declared publicly that the stipulations of the recently signed pacts were being strictly adhered to. Two months later, in June, 1940, the Russians occupied all three Baltic States with overwhelming Soviet forces. The farce was over; within a matter of weeks they were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union. In 1941 these countries were freed for three years by German forces, then the Russians returned.

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These countries may seem small and insignificant, but the history of the brutal enslavement of their peoples by Russia teaches us two vital lessons which we cannot afford to forget or overlook if we intend to maintain our sovereignty, independence and self-respect in the future. Firstly, Russia and the communists generally are untrustworthy, they respect strength and strength alone, paper agreements made with them are worthless unless backed by military guarantees; that is, physical occupation of strategic areas of land enabling such agreements to be enforced. Secondly, it is our responsibility and our duty to regain the confidence and trust of those peoples of Eastern Europe who were betrayed by the wartime British Government, in order that their resistance to communism may be kept alive, and that eventually they will be able to take their place in the Great United European Nation which will be established. Unless we give such assurances to the people of Eastern Europe, hope of freedom from the communist yoke will fade and die.

The Curtain Corroded
I—THE SOVIET UNION

by ROY MACGREGOR-HASTIE

I THINK it will always be difficult for the English of the island to understand the Russian; this is not because English people are either stupid or insensitive, but because England is a country with some centuries of metropolitan standards behind it, with an urbanisation of the average attitude to life which has made for a homogeneity of outlook from Lands End to John o' Groats. First with an Industrial Revolution, the countryside is seen in England as a function of the town. The reverse is true of the Soviet Union, the greatest of the peasant nation-states of the world—and perhaps it takes a background of years spent in the other peasant nation-states, Australia, India, China, to condition the mind to a proper appreciation of why the Russian is as he is.

The revolution of 1917 was remarkable not because it saw the birth of a nearly stillborn communism—the idea of the community responsible for, and more important in the last analysis than, the individual is not a new one, the "sobornoct" of the Russian Orthodox Church breathed the same atmosphere. The revolution was remarkable, and successful, simply because Lenin saw what Kerenski missed, that the urban aristocracy was foreign to the Russian idea, that the Peasant State had the only chance of survival, and he brought back the climate

of living peculiar to Peter the Great—the man who went abroad, left the village and came back with a head full of strange inventions. Or rather Lenin brought back first the Russia of Ivan the Terrible, to give way in our time to a new Peter the Great in Nikita Khrushchev.

When I arrived in Moscow I did so already indebted to the Soviet Union. Like a shearers' bus to the city or a market train anywhere in the peasant world, the express from Minsk carried a crew of stewardesses whose first thoughts were for our stomachs; I never saw the two who lived in a small compartment at the end of my carriage except through a cloud of steam as they carried in an inexhaustible supply of glasses of tea. On a mainline express to a Continental European town, the leaflets come first, then the whispered or shouted information about the location and fixed eating times of the restaurant car.

Mr. Khrushchev was certainly the first Russian politician I had ever seen; yet he reminded me of no one so much as an M.H.R. from an outback constituency in South Australia — a blocker perhaps, turned politician, popular with the bushboys for his prowess at log splitting, elbow lifting or even skill with the shears. In fact the Muscovites, who were always a shade superior about Nikita, told me over and over again that his first claim to fame was as village dancing champion; they hinted that an urban Muscovite found this sort of thing beneath him and had always resented the influx of folkdance ensembles the revolution had brought with it.

But his popularity was unquestionable. This is reasonable enough when you realise that the village headman goes on being headman for as long as he both commands respect of other headmen and keeps the village in good order; if I may draw another parallel sketch here — Sir Thomas Playford, the market gardener Premier of South Australia, has held that office for twenty-one years, and will stay there, Labour majority in theory or no, for as long as South Australia continues to be the most prosperous State in the Commonwealth. All peasants are alike; as long as the cow gives milk it is one of the family, when it goes dry it is shot.

I found a uniformity in speech among the Russians which I should have expected; they are slow to get an idea into their heads and as slow to get it out again as any Australian. For years before the war they were taught to like the Germans, then, when the political switch turned and Germany was the enemy, they found it difficult to follow the switch at village level—the German Army was almost welcomed into the Ukraine. Similarly, everyone (and there is a uniformity in

the intellectual content of a reply to a question in Russia) has thought the British to be fundamentally good for twenty years, and is surprised to think that we might think they disliked us, suspected us. The friendliness to the foreigner, if he can match them with a command of their language at least as adequate as the near perfect English many Russians speak, is a genuine and respectful friendliness. If a friendliness all of the same pattern, from the busman up. In a Russian home you are the honoured guest, and whatever you want you ask for and get.

I was prepared for this, but not, I think, for the monumental bad taste everywhere gorgeously evident. I knew that the ideal of comfort in a Russian household was the plush *gemütlichkeit* of a Victorian drawing room, but I was not ready for the crosses between a mosque and a Manhattan skyscraper they call the University and the Foreign Affairs buildings, and I have never seen anything like the permanent Agricultural Exhibition. Ten kilometres from the Kremlin, covering an immense acreage of land fit for anything, is a planet of Cupids lit up in limegreen at night, rural schemes of light bulbs, ornamental parks, tractor stations in miniature, and restaurants off a Hollywood set—the whole illuminated at a vast wattage-cost in every repulsive shade of pastel lighting.

The hotels are on the same scale. Inevitably the exterior belies the interior where chaos and inefficiency are rife; the unhurried peasant in the fields has no conception of time, and he has imported his disordered clocks into Moscow. When a Russian says to you he will bring your breakfast to your room *seichaszhe* (immediately) it will turn out to be lunch; *teperzhe* (now!) will make it dinner, and a simple *it will be done*, means you can forget about meals for that day in your room. And if something goes wrong with the lighting or heating they are just as unhurried as the Community Hotel at Berri in the Murray Valley catering for the unwelcome complaints of a welcome visitor; the baths on my floor and the floor below were electrified, due to a fault in the wiring, and stayed that way for three days.

When I went to see Ulanova and Dr. Chulaki of the Bolshoi, I had already supposed that the restoration of the peasant standard had had an effect on the arts, too; the peasant keeps his dancers for showing off to other peasants, even townspeople, and they mirror his mind. I was not surpised to hear that the purely lyrical tradition in ballet, to which Ulanova belongs, has given way to a lyrical-dramatic atmosphere, more people on the stage at one time, more theatricality, more

action-drama and a re-gilding and re-ornamentation of the decor. The new ballerinas I met graduating from the ballet school behind the Bolshoi were typified in Maria Gorotskaya, a muscular thick-shoulder mistress of technique who looks as graceful as a nimble bullock, though an excellent dancer. Ulanova did suggest to me that with a growing prosperity and a genuine deeprooted urbanisation over the years, the lyrical, metropolitan tradition would be re-established, and we saw together one of the girls she said would do this, an exquisite sixteen year old, Maximova. But a fuller stage and a longer play, more noise and fewer solos, pas de deux, trois, and less individual grace were the rule, and the authentic Russian rule.

The Russian has no love for authority other than his own formidable self-discipline, and it was not hard to persuade my driver one day to go through the distance limit round the city with his accelerator flat to the boards of the Zim and make for Klin. There I knew I should find Yuri Davidov, Tchaikovski's nephew and only surviving near relative. An impressively active 82, with a beard and a frightening resemblance to the death-mask of the composer on his bedroom wall, Davidov talked to me about his uncle, who wrote the Sixth (Pathetique) Symphony for him, played it to him before any concert at their country home near Kiev where Tchaikovski spent his summers. Prokoview, Shostakovitch and Katchachurian, he said, were interesting as musicians, but no contemporary composer had realised what his uncle knew, that music for the Russian must be inevitably melodic, with no orchestral confusion and a palatability which does not depend on some transitorily fashionable degree of intellectualisation; music for listening to pleasurably, for dances of a simple Swan Lake beauty, were Russian, and though the material welfare of the musician was obviously a concern of the central government, Davidov believed that the recent withdrawal of directives inciting composers to compete with the " intellectuals," who would once have been sited in Paris or Berlin, will be the beginning of a return to the manner of music-making his uncle perfected.

Contact with a share of Tchaikovski prompted me to urge my driver to break the law again and take me out to Yasnaya Polyana, Tolstoi's home. I went to see if I could find traces of the magazine he edited, to see if I could find a clue to a new pattern of prose and verse now forming in the U.S.S.R., but I left having learnt more about the educational system he founded. Understanding better than most men do today the natural bent of his fellowcountrymen, Tolstoi, in setting up the first chain of free schools in Russia, concentrated on a ' literate

technology' as the aim of his curriculum; the success with which he harnessed the energy latent in his human raw material can be judged by the ready banning of the whole idea, the closing of the schools and jailing of Tolstoi himself, by the Tsar who had never felt he had anything to fear from the voluntarily maintained lycee in the capital. Tolstoi knew that his people were capable of an immense technical cunning, that any project aimed at classicising them was predestined to failure; his schoolbooks—he wrote many of the textbooks himself—are still preserved at Yacnaya Polyana and show this bias in favour of technical cunning evident in contemporary Soviet education. I met a young student in Red Square, out for a last fling with a guitar and what he called a serious young woman, found him to be a geology student; conversationally I asked him what he thought of the progress made during the International Geophysical Year—he told me coolly that he had no time for intellectual games, he was too busy with a thesis on the weathering of rocks in Siberia, hoped to revolutionise the growing of winter wheat.

It seemed to me after some days in and around the University that the Russian brilliance at chess was paradoxical in an atmosphere of anti-intellectualism—until I realised that 'clever boys,' though not typical of the Muscovite in the street, are revered in the Soviet Union, much in the same way as the boy from the backblocks of New South Wales would be looked at in envy and awe in Australia. The intellectual is not despised as he is in England; he is admired, but the personal preference and natural aptitude of the Russian is for what can best be described as 'practical intellectualism.' This is a fundamental 'village elder and wise man' relationship, typical, too, of India and China.

I was offered an interlude of a series of visits to factories and workshops and, having the same sort of reverence for the mechanical toy, I accepted the invitation to three large and expanding engineering establishments; the floor of the workshop was in every case spotless (I was reminded of the Dutch farmwomen I had seen scrubbing streets with soap and water), and everything gleamed with the prescribed film of oil on the moving parts. I had an American engineer with me, whose principal interest was in Russian pirating of American machine design; he was impressed not so much by the appearance of Westinghouse machinery in disguise as by the development of the pirated early models along much the same lines as in the United States. The Russian worker, always anxious to learn new techniques, though attached to the old by ties of affection in use, mothers and

fathers his lathe as his forebears must have beribboned their horses. Not that there was any evidence of 'not seriousness' in the workshop —all the pennants given to factory hands for fulfilling their quotas were hung from the machine at exactly the same height from sea level, not a suspicion of 'decoration'; affectionate grooming with cloth and oil is perhaps the best way to describe it.

I had a longstanding invitation to visit Radio Moscow and the Writers' Club, and as soon as I had got through the routine social calls I made for Radio Dom; there is an atmosphere of Heath Robinson improvisation about the technical broadcasting in the Soviet Union—not as extreme as that in Radio Cadiz where none of the programmes started in time and the turntable was the most essential piece of equipment, but similar. In what they called their English section I found a number of renegade Englishmen without radio backgrounds, editing and producing; the clocks were all slow; the studio equipment was a jumble of home-made, German and American, and a studied air of controlled panic hung around the heads of the staff. I noticed a dozen or so portraits of Stalin still hanging.

The radio people were neither productive peasants in an urban setting nor obviously prestige worthy, so they were not much respected by the Russians I met; none of them believed that people in Western Europe took the slightest bit of notice of their propaganda broadcasts, most of them mistrusted their amateurishness-without-display.

Nobody, though, disparaged any artist in the public eye, at home or abroad, and certainly nobody begrudged Soviet writers their high standard of living; among the few who own private cars (most people, when they need one, get an official car with a chauffeur), with dachas in the beautiful countryside around Moscow, the poet and the novelist are both enjoying a busman's honeymoon. Mischa Lukonin, the poet and assistant editor of *Novy Mir*, who threw a party for me at his well stocked 'shack,' told me that after the confusion of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party the Writers Union took over the publishing and editing once controlled by the Party's nominees; this meant that writers themselves had to do all the proof reading, manuscript selection and rejection, even decide on size of imprint, book titles and format, but it was worth it to get away from an uninspired censorship.

He told me solemnly that in the first few months of relaxation of tension they had gone a bit too far, had accepted just about everything rejected in Stalin's time, including a series of near-pornographic short stories which had found their way into a magazine for adolescents.

Full of vodka and singing pleasantly with his friends, Mischa said everything was well and getting better. He was not afraid of the dancing peasant in the Kremlin, who, he said, knew his business and was learning to leave them alone.

One evening at the Writers Club in Vorovski Street I asked the inevitable question: "What do *you* think of *Not by Bread Alone*?" This was received with roars of laughter; Diudinsteff's chief virtue in Lukonin's eyes is that he is an even ruder man than Khrushchev, never answers the phone (Moscow G6-55-55) and frequently makes for Odessa whenever there is a suspicion of a garden party at the Kremlin.

I left the Soviet Union for the next stage of my journey to Bucharest after a dinner out with the Eastern European correspondent of an English newspaper. He was, as far as I could judge, well informed and reasonably intelligent; his conversation was full of analyses of the dynamic of Russian society which he tried to assess in the terms current in a remote University—the rate of industrialisation, the intellectual dynamic of Marxism, the personal propulsion of the outstanding individual. But he had tried and failed, perhaps understandably, to find out the why and the how of the behaviour of the Russians as a unit.

Perhaps the best epitome of the Greater Slav—you can find it in any of the nineteenth century Russian authors, especially in Gogol and Tolstoi—is one compounded of tremendous energy and an oriental spiritual stoicism; how can you put this in words—a vital vulgarity—certainly—but the vital vulgarity not of the pushing proletariat, but of the peasant mystic still overwhelmed by the vastness and indifference of the extent of the land on which he builds and grows.

Ronsard's
ODE TO CUPID

Translated by

ALAN NEAME

Day urges darkness on
  And gloomy night
Urges on day to banish
  Dark by light;

Autumn follows summer;
  The sharp fury
Of winds persist no longer
Than their flurry;

But the fever of love
  Tormenting me
Burns in me ever
  At the same degree.

Lead back to clarity
  My darkened ways,
By liberty offset
  These sackcloth days.

The arrow that you flighted
  Was mis-shot,
Others deserved it, GOD,
  But I did not.

Hunt out the sluggish-witted
  To bemuse;
Not me, not those in favour
  With the Muse.

Alas! deliver me
  From this she-flint
Who laughs to see me rouse,
  And more, submit.

AMOR, to my resolve
  Lend your support
And guide my battered ship
  To better port.

The more I sue, the more
  Her snubs increase;
I plead my suit the more
  She listens less.

However pale from love
  My colour grow
Does not excite to pity
  My she-foe,

Nor playing my guitar
  Outside her doors,
Nor for her sake the nights
  Slept out of doors.

Crueller is no strife
  Of fractious water,
Than she, when the wind sets
  I' the stormy quarter.

She, armed in her own beauty,
  Does not look
  To see her cruelty ever
  Brought to book.

Fall on her as AVENGER
  And enflame
Her heart (make an example!)
  With such flame

As warmed one sister
  To so rash a heat
And burned to death the other
  Queen on Crete.

A DIARY

ONE of the great advantages of age is that you begin to know by experience the kind of thing you are likely to abominate. International exhibitions I long ago learned to avoid. The newspapers are so clever at making them sound wonderful that after a bit the most unlikely people suddenly announce that they are off to, for example, Brussels. A nightmare day-trip from Paris is highly recommended by the railways; it allows many weary hours for seeing all the sights.

Nothing would induce me to go; I have never forgotten how, as a child, I longed to see the Prince of Wales in butter at Wembley, where this original piece of sculpture was the high-light of the Empire exhibition. Having waded through dust and crowds to reach my objective in either the Australian or the Canadian pavilion, I forget which, I found the butter Prince slightly less lovely than I had pictured it in my imagination. From that moment of disillusion dates my aversion to these exhibitions: what you see is almost never worth the struggle involved.

At Wembley the amusement park quite made up for the disappointment, but now I should not care much for that either. In fact, I would prefer to trudge from pavilion to pavilion all day long rather than be one of the thirty-five people in a Brussels amusement called The Round Up, who: "centrifugés dans le vide, voient apparaître successivement, dans un tourbillon de couleurs variées, les milles visages curieux de la foule tournés vers eux, puis le ciel vers lequel ils plongent tour après tour."

The English pavilion appears, from photographs, to be made like a group of rather measly pyramids—a sort of *retour d' Egypte*, 1958 style.

★ ★ ★

The competition in the *Figaro* to choose thirty great Europeans for a Panthéon d'Europe has been very enjoyable. The international jury, by secret ballot, elected the following: Beethoven, Dante, Descartes, Goethe, Newton, Pascal, Shakespeare (those each obtained the maximum possible number of votes, eleven), Michaelangelo,

Rembrandt, Spinoza, Leonardo (ten), Galileo, Molière (nine), Darwin, Erasmus, Kant, Racine, Thomas Aquinas (eight), Bach, Victor Hugo, Luther, Montaigne, Pasteur (seven), P. and M. Curie, Grotius (six), Christopher Columbus, Fleming, Thomas More, Titian, Wagner (five).

It would be impossible to make a list that could satisfy everybody; but it certainly seems absurd that Voltaire should not be numbered among the thirty elect, and almost equally strange that Victor Hugo should be so. Even if men of war are to be excluded, Napoleon ought to be there in his capacity as law-giver. Many people might think Freud's contribution to medical thinking earns him a place; the fact that neither he nor Einstein was mentioned made me wonder whether Jews were ineligible (I missed the issue of the *Figaro* containing the rules of the competition). But this cannot have been the case, since Spinoza was a Jew. The *Figaro* spells his name Spinozza, which gives it rather an Italian air. The list in any case only covered Common Market countries plus England; Greece, Spain, the Slav nations and Scandinavia were outside, and we have not yet seen the result of the public voting.

★ ★ ★

How curious it is that the English Royal Academy, which organizes splendid winter exhibitions every year (last winter's French 17th Century pictures were to be seen at the Petit Palais in Paris before dispersing to their various museums and collections) should, in summer, choose such degraded exhibits for its own show. It seems quite content, at the annual dinner, to listen to speeches attacking distinguished foreign painters, while next day crowds mill round the waxwork of the year. Not much harm done, probably, but none of this has anything to do with art. It might re-name itself the Royal Academy of anti-Art, and hold its exhibition in a less ambitious setting. At present it is rather as though Liberace were invited to play at Covent Garden complete with real gold threads in his suit and candelabras on the piano.

★ ★ ★

Last month I wrote about the new chrysanthemum women who are fashionable this summer. It is a couple of years or more since young men completely changed their silhouette. Teddy clothes are not very

quite humdrum and normal; and he says that what I wrote, based much like men's wear in the reign of Edward VII, they are more like, perhaps, Edward II fashions. Cotton trousers, skin tight from waist to ankle, and bulky short leather jackets give a medieval look; so does the hair, cut the same length all over their heads. Visiting old castles in France recently I thought how well the young men among the tourists fitted into the surroundings.

Less becoming are the long jackets called fingertip drapes. During a brawl at Birmingham the other day a twenty-year-old man was arrested. He was wearing skin tight scarlet trousers with black turn-ups and a draped tartan jacket. A police inspector is reported in the *Daily Express* as having commented: "Fantastic, but he says it is his best suit." It would have been more fantastic still if it had been his everyday suit.

Narrow trousers annoy older men just as much as wide trousers annoyed the older generation when they first appeared in the twenties. Noting the resistence of men towards fashion changes it seems remarkable that anything so terrific as a full-bottomed wig could ever have been adopted by them. I suppose it was entirely the doing of Louis XIV, that supremely self-confident man.

★ ★ ★

Attacks on Teddy boys continue to fill the newspapers, and an M.P; Mr. James Dance, is reported in the *Daily Mail* as having suggested in Parliament that if they have been found guilty of insulting behaviour, unless they pay their fines on the dot they should have their "revolting curls" cut off. Some people might think that, however much insulting behaviour is to be deplored, this is scarcely the way to persuade a group of people to be more civil. Of course nobody would have dared to suggest that Louis XIV's curls, or even Charles II's or William III's, were revolting, or that a single ringlet from all those cascading locks could possibly be spared. If I were a rich Ted I would grow longer and longer curls, or even get myself a wig like theirs, just to tease Mr. Dance.

For, according to the newspapers, the Teds are very rich indeed; much richer than public school boys, who, as a result, are inclined to give up their "missions" to the East End of London. A good thing too, I should imagine. No self-respecting Ted wants "missionaries" from public schools, foisting cricket, scouting and other distasteful games upon him. On the other hand (in order that contact, supposed by the do-gooders to be so valuable, should not be

lost between the East End and the public schools) a few of the more affluent Teddy boys might well take a day off from work occasionally and send themselves on a mission to Harrow or Eton or some other suburban school. They could give the school boys a good feed (often much needed), and lend them their Elvis Presley records. As a special treat they might bring a pin-table, or even a few girls, along with them.

A mission of that sort would have an enormous success; the school boys would learn to look forward eagerly to a visit from the Stepney Mission, or whatever it might be called. Probably life-long friendships would be formed. And the Teds would enjoy the glow of self-righteousness, knowing how much they had done to brighten the drab term-time lives of their less fortunate contemporaries.

★ ★ ★

The *Daily Mirror* of the 17th May gave a very distorted account of Paris on the 16th.* I went into Paris by one road in the afternoon and left it by a different road in the evening of that day, and both times the traffic was normal. There was no sign of an exodus from the capital or of traffic jams caused by cars hurrying away. People were going about their business in the usual manner; and although the day before, Ascension Day, had been a bank holiday, the shops were no more crowded than they generally are.

The Times of the 17th published a photograph taken in the Champs Elysées. It showed rows of empty chairs on the pavement before a café, and rows of black marias parked in the street. The black marias were there all right, and the chairs were empty: there was a very cold seventy-mile-an-hour gale blowing, and although there was a mammoth queue in front of the cinema showing *Mon Oncle*, rather naturally people did not feel disposed to sit out in the bitter wind for drinking an aperitif.

This photograph, of which the implications were clear, served to show that pictorial reporting can be inaccurate and unfair, and it was more effective in its propaganda than the *Daily Mirror's* sensational story of an exodus.

A correspondent tells me that the photograph of the Aldermaston marchers rocking and rolling on Good Friday which *The Times* published was unfair, since it implied that the marchers were strange in dress and behaviour whereas in fact they were, for the most part,

* The *Daily Mirror* subsequently apologised for this news item saying it had been misinformed.

on that photograph, was also unfair. I made it clear that I was in France and did not see the march, but I am sorry if I was unfair, although even if, instead of bearded men and women in thin trousers, there were clean shaven men and women in thick skirts, it is what went on in their heads that matters, not their garb. And another eye-witness, just as truthful as my correspondent but against unilateral disarmament instead of in favour of it, says he never saw such a crew as these marchers in his whole life. All of which only proves that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and that what is true for one person is untrue for another, so that objective reporting is an unattainable ideal.

★ ★ ★

I have been reading the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna's letters to her husband, the last Tsar, written during the war between 1914 and 1917. They are love letters, but they are also full of advice about the conduct of the war, the appointment of ministers and so on, handed on from " our Friend " the Holy man of God, Rasputin. She wrote in English, signing herself Wify, Sunny, and sometimes Girly. She continually urged the Tsar to assert himself, be more of an autocrat, make people tremble—the last thing poor " Boysy " was capable of doing. He spent most of the time at General Headquarters, where " Baby " (the Tsarevitch) often accompanied him. Do not allow Baby to put his elbows on the table, or throw bread pellets at meal-times, writes the Empress.

Knowing the end of the story, and that in a few months " our Friend " is to be poisoned and shot, and not long afterwards the whole imperial family taken to Siberia and murdered, it is pathetic to read of the optimistic prophesies about her children's future happiness—the four Grand Duchesses married, Baby reigning over all the Russias —in which the Empress tried so hard to believe.

Her bitter hatred of the Grand Duke Nicholas, much the ablest member of the royal family, dated from his telegram to " our Friend " when the latter proposed visiting the troops: *Viens, je te ferai pendre.*

Deeply religious, she firmly believed in the power of prayer. When Goutchkov, a minister whom she particularly disliked, was going on a tour of factory inspection, she went to church and prayed that his train would be de-railed and he alone killed; but, as so often happened, her prayer remained unanswered.

D.M.

ENTERTAINMENTS

John Mortimer's DOCK BRIEF

AND

PORTRAIT OF CAROLINE

LYRIC THEATRE, HAMMERSMITH

Wolf Mankowitz' EXPRESSO BONGO

SAVILLE THEATRE

by MICHAEL HARALD

SUSCEPTIBLE as I am to the charm of its towpath, the innocent gaiety of its Broadway and the fine old Irish hospitality of its taverns, no considerations (I plead) of an extra-theatrical nature urged me again this month to Hammersmith. Duty called. I had been advised by a correspondent who is also a critic that the Lyric Theatre's new author wrote comedy of a kind to match exactly my somewhat finicky taste—serious comedy, no less, or satire, if you prefer that label. This was exciting news, for only the day before I had expressed my conviction that no period in the past 350 years has been so poor in playhouse satire as the present. It struck me as strange that the play had been granted a licence. Satire (i.e., objective truth) must always be subversive; and if it is to match my taste "exactly"—or even approximately—it should be inflammatory and explosive as well: properties which the law wry-facedly tolerates from preachers and philosophers, but which are usually forbidden in the theatre—presumably on the grounds that it is in the theatre that they blaze the fiercest and bang the loudest.

I must now explain that Mr Mortimer is neither French, nor Norwegian, nor 19th-Century Irish nor ancient Greek. Like Mr Mankowitz at the Saville, he is a modern Briton, and is therefore obliged to write his plays with one eye at least on the censorship. But —sad to say—this obligation in no way inconveniences him; and I implore forgiveness for having aroused expectations in my first paragraph, only to douse them in my second. In *Portrait of Caroline*, Mr Mortimer depicts a polyandrous *ménage*. This seems a sufficiently promising subject, bringing, as it does, fugitive, romantic fancies of von Bülow, Cosima and Wagner; of Emma, Nelson and Sir William; as well as other trios of contemporary fame. He throws in also, for good measure, the confident sexuality of a *jeune fille en fleur*; but as neither theme is graced, on the highest level, by anything better than a clubhouse joke, nor, on the lowest, by anything worse than the caption to a Brighton postcard, he is unlikely to offend the Lord Chamberlain, and might easily please him. He clearly pleased the first-night audience. We laughed for two minutes (yes: a compound of horror and servility in my case) when Mr. Denham (the husband) told Mr. Hordern (the reluctant lover) his pre-marital dreams of bliss: "I wanted a chum, you know . . . long walks, a pipe, a chat over a pint (laughter) . . . but sometimes I thought how splendid it would be occasionally to spend the whole day in bed with her, getting up from time to time to eat bread and marmalade."

In neither of these two short plays does the author demonstrate any interest in or understanding of the real world; though having contrived an attitude towards it, he is obviously aware of its existence. I judge his private world to have been founded on an enormous literary appetite and an eclectic taste: it is an enclosed world of dead ideas and dead air—an impossible world for a satirist. Mr. Mortimer's Aunt Sallys vanished long ago—if indeed they ever existed outside the literary fancies of some other writer. His comedy is distilled, not from life itself, but from aspects of life which his favourite authors have delineated for him: his writing reveals the pleasure he has found in reading. The result provides an oddly old-fashioned and nostalgic theatrical evening; not an unrewarding one for the connoisseur of acting and the amateur sociologist, as I shall show; but a disappointment to the student of comedy. All the same, I should like to examine the core of this curious author; for I believe that it is only partially revealed in these plays by the love of clowning to which he sacrifices one or two genuinely moving moments in *Dock Brief*, and by the nauseating whimsy of *Portrait of Caroline*.

The acting was, all in all, the best I have seen in years. Nobody minds a tendency to overplay material of this kind; and Mr. Michael Hordern indulged it freely as the scarecrow barrister of *Dock Brief* and the Earls Court amorist of the other play. I would only fault him for his failure to conceal awareness of the fact, (a) that the curtain has just gone up, and (b) that it will shortly be coming down. Mr. Maurice Denham was predictably amusing as the philosophical prisoner of *Dock Brief:* what—to me, at any rate—came as a surprise was his emergence in *Portrait of Caroline* as a serious creative actor with a definite style. It is true that here he had the advantage of being partnered by Miss Brenda Bruce, but his work was so brilliant that the best comedienne in London is probably congratulating herself on being partnered by Mr. Denham.

The plays were rapturously received by an audience for which they might have been—and possibly were—expressly written. Authors of Mr. Mortimer's sort have in the past few years constructed a Never-Never-Land for the doomed generation of adult children born between 1920 and 1930 (my lot, I'm afraid). We were all there (it seemed) on the first night, looking as if we'd been rolled along a giant conveyor-belt from Hampstead to Hammersmith. We never missed a joke. The " serious comedy " which my critic-correspondent recommended to me took place, not on the stage, but in the auditorium.

★ ★ ★

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, I shall assume that there is only one Wolf Mankowitz at large in London, and that the author of the entertainment at the Saville Theatre is also the political economist and advocate of free speech who was until recently president of the Students' Union at the London School of Economics. (It will, perhaps, be remembered that Mr. Mankowitz resigned in protest against the students' desire to invite Sir Oswald Mosley to address them on urgent topics of the day.) *Expresso Bongo* is a musical satire levelled against the seamy and spurious aspects of our modern civilisation: the targets (symbolical, I assume) are selected, not from the world of politics and economics, but from the *demi-monde* of light entertainment.

Mr. Mankowitz must be congratulated first on his perspicacity in detecting the absurdity inherent in the rock-'n'-roll craze with its concomitants of pop-disc stars and their seedy agents (who else would have thought of this?), and then on his fine sportsmanship in missing

his target by yards with rubber-tipped darts. His amiable propensities, however, have resulted in the most inept and vulgar exhibition I have seen in a London theatre for some time. On the credit side, I can only instance the tunes (Mr. Julian More) which were more or less tuneful, and the fact that the lyrics, for the most part, failed to reach my seat at the back of the auditorium.

I *confess* to being sorely puzzled by the whole thing; for I feel I can speak of the satirical imperative with some assurance. Why, I wonder, has Mr. Mankowitz neglected Houghton Street in favour of Tin-pan Alley? Has the L.S.E. contributed less to the *malaise* of the 1950s than non-stop revue and teen-age dervishes? Was there not even a spur to satire in a recent resignation from the Union of the house that Webb built? It is none of my business to invent plots for Mr. Mankowitz, any more than it is to suggest to him that the next time he has an opportunity of hearing Sir Oswald Mosley, or any other distinguished and eloquent person, he should take it. But he might do worse. The wit and style—not to mention good manners—in which *Expresso Bongo* is so markedly deficient are the hallmarks of Sir Oswald's performances.

CINEMA

Violent Playground, Innocent Sinners, Calabuch, Carve her Name with Pride

by VINCENT MURRAY

ONE of television's most interesting qualities is its knack of revealing just where its big brother, the cinema, has gone wrong. Recently in Liverpool there was a series of interviews on the subject of **Violent Playground,** a film set in this city and concerned with juvenile delinquency. The interviews produced characters whose authenticity belied the surface naturalism of the film. In fact they pointed to a basic defect in the film's approach: in an attempt to marry the treatment of a contemporary problem with that of a conventional thriller the atmosphere, the feel of the city has been utterly

neglected. Thus, despite extensive location photography in the district, the city stubbornly refuses to come to life; its delinquency problem exists without reference to any solid background (except, perhaps, a vaguely American one). Any serious intentions the scriptwriter (James Kennaway) may have had at the outset must have been abandoned at an early stage in the production, for the dramatic shape of the film hardly lends itself to sociological treatment with its attendant emphasis on character. The story never rises above formula: the detective on junior liaison work has to fall in love with the sister of Johnny, the gang-leader suspected of arson; she, the heroine, battles with her allegiance to lover and brother, and finally resolves the action by persuading Johnny to give himself up after a long, tense siege-sequence. I can find no excuse for a film which uses a contemporary problem as a peg on which to hang escapist entertainment. By doing so the makers encourage their audience to condone (or at least take pleasure in) the incidents described, and to sympathise with the offenders. Johnny is not to be pitied; he is to be studied and made responsible for his actions.

Philip Leacock tackles children of a different age in **Innocent Sinners**, those whose activities range no further than the mischievous and (the film permits us to see) the malicious. Lovejoy Mason is thirteen; she ekes out her lonely life cultivating a flower garden on a bombed site. A gang of boys comes to destroy the garden; but then their leader helps to restore it with soil from a nearby square.

The film has little shape, but it rambles pleasantly. There is a certain amount of sentimentalising in its approach to the children, but much of the script depicts children as they are, wrapped up in a world of their own. Leacock has had plenty of experience with child-actors, and directs them extremely well. The adults, though, seem a peculiar bunch; maybe they feel this is a children's film and agree to stand on the side-lines, as it were. At any rate they do not spoil a most enjoyable film, whose description of working-class milieu adds an element which, in a more seriously minded film, would certainly have jarred.

A more determinedly warm-hearted film is Luis Berlanga's **Calabuch**, about an atomic scientist taking time off in a tiny Spanish fishing village. We have little chance over here of seeing films from Spain, and must be grateful for Bardem's *Death of a Cyclist* and Berlanga's *Welcome Mr. Marshall*, two films that have so far been the only representatives of Spanish cinema in this country. *Calabuch* is therfore very welcome, though it is a slighter work than *Mr. Marshall*. Its structure is episodic, its movement rapid (there has been some shortening of episodes, one feels) and its mood one of gentle humour. There is little of the satirical tendency of *Mr. Marshall*; Berlanga is content to look with affection at the villagers and the eccentric professor (Edmund Gwenn) who helps them to improve the visual and explosive quality of their firework display. A general

sharpening of humour all round would have prevented some dull patches, but on the whole the film makes agreeable entertainment. Gwenn is required to do no more than give yet another of his lovable old men characterisations, and Valentina Cortesa as the schoolteacher is very decorative. The ending, where officialdom once more takes control, is not as shattering to the genial mood as one might expect. Such a bumbling old chap will go on bumbling about, no matter where he is.

Back to Britain with **Carve her Name with Pride**, another in the series of interminable war-films which somehow never seem to tire the public. This one bears some resemblance to *Odette* in its story of a young woman actively engaged in fighting the enemy. It differs however, in its superior technique, but not, alas, in its general attitude and treatment. Obviously designed for female audiences, the non-fictional basic plot is 'adapted' to make an easily acceptable blend of make-believe romance and heroic endurance. The final insincerity is all the more patent to me, for I have just availed myself of the opportunity of seeing again Bresson's superb *Un condamné à mort c'est échappé*. There is no compromise here, and other war-films pale into insignificance beside it. Of *Carve her name* I will just comment that Virginia McKenna in the lead as Violette Szabo plays with tremendous zest. The rest is very far from reality.

TELEVISION

New Developments

by JAMES CUNNINGHAM

HOW far-reaching will be the effects of V.E.R.A., the B.B.C.'s new Vision Electronic Recording Apparatus, on magic-box programmes? The system as recently demonstrated on a news broadcast and 'Panorama' certainly has remarkable qualities. The picture definition looks about equal to that of the conventional tele-film, and the speed of reproducing the recording is but a fraction of the time spent in developing and printing film. We may even have our cinema films photographed (if that is the word) in the same way, once the magnetic-tape machine is in mass-production. Imagine, too, 16mm. cine-cameras for home-movies!

More hum-drum has been the opening series of spring programmes on B.B.C. television. The intriguingly titled 'You Are There' series

has never really found its feet. The idea of a television news-coverage of an important historical event is a good one, and probably the B.B.C. alone possesses the facilities and technique upon which to draw. The interviews, however, though period detail and décor may be correct, rarely come alive. The Trial of Christ, General Gordon at Khartoum, the Zimmerman telegram have been three of the most interesting, but all have suffered from the same drawback. A certain heaviness in the period episodes is always apparent.

Why do animal-programmes have such a tremendous appeal? A new Attenborough series is beginning and another 'trek' film-series, *To Bakut for Beef*, has just finished. Film actors have always realised the difficulty of competing with animals (or with children, for that matter) and in these programmes wisely stay away.

With its spectacular World Drama series now at an end, B.B.C. plays settle down to the contemporary. Plays written exclusively for the medium at least have the merit of novelty, as indeed did Charles Morgan's last play, *The Confession*, televised some time ago. It opened the new series pretty appallingly, for, bogged down in dialogue right from the start, the play never recovered from characters who knew a great deal too much about what they knew. Novelist-as-playwright is in any case not a promising set-up, and the wordiness here became overpowering. Television thrives on character-development in intimate drama, but the operative word is drama. Without it no production can come alive.

NEW BOOKS

Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch by Henry Miller (Heinemann, 30s.).

AN attempt to assess—to explain, even—the work of Henry Miller is rendered difficult, if not impossible, here by the laws relating to morals, decency and sundry other abstractions often lumped together under the heading "Good Behaviour" in England and *l'hypocrisie anglaise* in France. Mr. Miller's best-known books were written and published in Paris in the 1930s, and as I may not (I believe) discuss them here in detail, I think it best to leave *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn* alone. Messrs. Heinemann cannot supply them; nor can any other British publisher—the Customs shed at London airport seems the likeliest place to apply for a copy (do not be fobbed off with *Lady Chatterley* or the unexpurgated Beatrix Potter) . . .

Bosch's painting supplies a title, a dust-cover and several illustrations. Nothing more. The book is mainly an account of Mr. Miller's day-to-day life in California, his home since the war, and for much of the way it is enervatingly dull and self-conscious. I found a lot of Part 2 (*Peace and Solitude: a Potpourri*) quite unreadable; and this section comprises more than half the book. Chapter headings like *The Cult of Sex and Anarchy, Bringing up Father* and *The Task of Genuine Love* proclaim Mr. Miller at his sententious worst. In this mood he might attract, but could never hold, a Hyde Park audience; and the solitary constable would sleep at his post:

> "If a woman looking like Salvation Nell should happen to knock at your door, don't send her about her business *toute de suite (sic)*. Let her bend your ear, if that's what she's a mind to do. People often speculate on what the Saviour would look like should he decide to pay us another visit. (I can tell you confidentially that He won't look like a Da Vinci portrait! This is *ex-cathedra,* of course.)"

Like all publicists, he is an incorrigible generaliser:

> "Let me say at the outset that the most vapid letter-writers are the British . . . They are congenitally incapable of coming

> out with it, whatever it may be that impelled them to write. There are exceptions, to be sure. As epistolary virtuosi, no one can equal Lawrence Durrell, the poet, or John Cowper Powys, the returned (*sic*) Welshman."

(The poet and the Welshman extol Mr. Miller on the back of the dust-cover.)

He is better in Part 3 (*Paradise Lost*); though still below his best; and I don't think the restoration of all the four-letter words—erased from this edition, but surprisingly intact in the American one—would help. (The obscenity of the *banned* books tends to make them penultimately a bore, and finally a mad joke.) But here, Mr. Miller and his subject, a French astrologer called Moricand, come vividly alive; the writing is colloquially direct, brilliantly uncouth. Moricand is an old friend of the writer's *rive gauche* period; diseased now, and destitute. Mr. Miller imports him into Paradise (California) and takes him under his roof. It doesn't work, for Moricand is a home-wrecker and hand-biter on a scale that makes Rolfe Corvo's little essays in the *genre* seem positively genial. Finally, the now unwelcome guest is deported by the immigration authorities. He dies in an institution in Paris, "*seul comme un rat, nu comme le dernier des clochards*," as another friend of his writes in a wonderful obituary notice which Mr. Miller nobly quotes.

Paradise Lost is weakened by the author's refusal to let the reader alone. We are constantly buttonholed and invited to contrast the generosity of the host (labelled U.S.A.) with the base ingratitude of the guest. When Mr. Miller leaves the witness-box to conduct the Prosecution's case, I cannot take him seriously. Parasite and paranoic, Moricand is built to Balzac scale; but he loses size and gains sympathy when Mr. Miller denounces him for preferring "filthy French cigarettes" to seven-inch cigars and demanding a high price for the dirty drawings which shock Mr. Miller but attract one of his rich friends. I am left wondering how Mr. Miller would have reported these incidents twenty years ago, at the time of the *Tropics*. I think it likely that in those days he would have been leading for the Defence.

M.H.

NAPOLEON IN EGPYT

A Chapter from Desmond Stewart's new book "Young Egypt" to be published by Allan Wingate on 16th June, 1958.

POLITICAL geniuses more often resemble firecrackers which boys throw in the street and which run at crazy tangents, than they do careful gardeners. Little usually remains from their policies, and what little remains is not what they sought for or imagined.

Napoleon's invasion of Egypt was intended to break down the forces of reaction, as the previous year they had been broken down in the Papal States; Napoleon aimed to establish an enlightened Egypt at the key-point of the Mediterranean, where it could most threaten English connections with the East. In result, one tyranny was overthrown, and a new started. He intended to defeat the English, but he opened their minds to the desirability of taking Egypt for themselves. He came as a would-be Moslem, and was spat out as a pork-eating Frangi; he came as an emissary of applied science, and left Egypt in a state of chaos worse than he had found.

Yet no conqueror ever came with better intentions. The French expedition was not merely a sordid collection of ships and murderous weapons. It was the high tide of the revolution: no disillusion had totally soiled the mood in which months were renamed, the sensation that for once history was taking a new start. A hundred savants were included in the argosy: mechanics, engineers, architects, hydrologists, authors, interpreters, archaeologists: nor are they anonymous, like the retinues of the ancient conquerors: their names are found in an appendex to the *Journal et Souvenirs* of Villiers du Tirage. And just as arms for soldiers, so as arms for the savants Napoleon brought with him something truly revolutionary: printing presses in the two

once-sovereign languages of the East: Arabic and Greek. Twenty years before Byron, a half century before the missionaries of Beirut, Bonaparte envisaged the written word, in the languages of Sophocles and Ibn Khaldun, as more powerful than gunpowder in the destruction of the dreariest and stupidest empire that the world had known.

The expedition departed in secrecy, escaping by a miracle the interception of Nelson. It arrived on the Egyptian coast, where Alexandria was a village. Egypt was ruled in name by a Pasha, representing the Turkish Sultan, in fact by the Mameluke *beys*. The word Mameluke means in Arabic "the owned," and the first *beys* had been imported slaves, used as pretorians by feeble Caliphs. As in Rome, the owned had soon become the owners, and the *beys* ruled Egypt: extravagantly, without conscience, conscious always that life for a Mameluke was short, and should therefore be gaudy. On the 18th of July, 1798, the Battle of the Pyramids was fought between these glittering armoured slave-rulers, and the austerer soldiers of the Revolution. In one sense, modern Egypt was born on that hot summer day. But in another, modern Egypt was born on the 21st October that same year, when the people of Cairo barricaded themselves in their city and revolted against the French.

Napoleon's success was due to himself, his imagination, his deliberations; his failure, to the men through whom imagination had to work, and to forces stronger than himself against which no deliberation could avail.

Napoleon's intentions were good; at this time, still only thirty, his Egyptian adventure was his *Romeo and Juliet*, just as his Russian campaign was to be his *Lear*, and St. Helena his bitterer *Tempest*. A toast was drunk only a few days before the Cairo rising: the place, the newly opened Institut d'Egypte.

"We are giving the world the first example of a conquering legislator. Until our time, conquerors always adopted the laws of the conquered. We are winning the triumph of reason, a more difficult triumph than of arms, and are showing ourselves as superior to other nations as is Bonaparte to Ghengis Khan."

Napoleon, so far from having the patronising insolence towards the East of some later empire-builders, was in love with Egypt, and in love with Islam. He believed intensely in certain principles; his patriotism for France was not for motives of gain, or chauvinism; but for these ideas, of which France was the bearer: whether to the heirs of the Caesars ruled in ignorance by the Popes, or the heirs of the Pharaohs ruled by slaves from Georgia and Turkistan. Inevitably,

as a man, his motives were mixed; as a statesman, he was not always candid; but as a genius, he believed what he did believe with more than ordinary passion.

Yet his interest in the Egyptians, and his desire to drag them forcefully into the Kingdom of Liberty, was twin-born with other interests and other desires, which were to throttle disinterestedness as ivy throttles an oak. For the expedition was no cultural picnic, secured by force. The Directorate authorised this great expense so that it should be a blow against the English. It had long been an official conviction in London "that the possession of Egypt by any great European power would be a fatal circumstance to the interests of this country." Napoleon never disassociated the invasion of Egypt from the invasion of England; while stationed in Cairo he signed despatches, his secretary Bourienne tells us, as "commander-in-chief of the Army of England."

In his speech at a military review, Toulon, May the 9th, Napoleon had promised his soldiers "six acres of Egyptian land." At the same time, his directives from the Government were double: to chase the English from the Red Sea, or wherever else he found them, and "to ameliorate by all possible means the lot of the Egyptian peasants." Thus from the start exalted motives, political motives and low motives were interwoven.

A concern with the lot of the Egyptian peasants was to be the profession of all foreigners in the 19th century. It is true they were in dire straits; it is equally true that they came out of the 19th century, as they entered it, in dire straits. But despite the mixed motives and the hypocrisy, something of the early glamour of the Revolution hangs round the French invasion of Egypt that is lacking from later occupations. Napoleon's speeches and proclamations were written by himself. They echoed his studies of the Koran, which as a deist he genuinely admired, and his youth, which he had spent as a revolutionary. They read better in French than they did in the Arabic translations of Lebanese camp-followers. And years later, in a candour very different from Cromer's admission, that, for the best of reasons, he might have made mistakes, Napoleon reread them on St. Helena, and admitted: "C'est un peu Charlatan."

Not only in self-honesty was Napoleon remarkable. Every invader (or imperialist) seeks in a country he invades some class on which to rely. The Romans had depended on client kings, as well as those whom the glamour of Rome attracted to the status of *civis Romanus;* the Turks had depended on their nominal subjects, the Mamelukes;

in the 20th century, the French would depend on the Maronites in Lebanon; the British, and later the Americans, were to favour the Beduin in Jordan. In his policy for a new Egypt Napoleon made a curious and yet profound choice. He had no use for the Beduin, whom he regarded as dangerous marauders, to be suppressed as firmly as the Mamelukes. Dissident and corrupt, they were opposed to the very spirit of civilisation. The people who would be the intermediaries of the Napoleonic Egypt, the ambassadors of the ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau, were the Moslem religious leaders: the Ulema. For with a shaft of wisdom that was to remain his alone throughout the century, among those wielding power, Napoleon saw that the religion of Muhammad was not, in essence, reactionary, as Cromer was to die believing, but contained in its simple propositions and practical outlook, a firm basis on which a new order might be raised. The Ulema were prosperous, essentially civilian, and therefore unlikely to lead military revolts; they loved justice; and they lived morally. He also found that they shared a vision of a better Egypt. In his own words, " C'était un fibre de laquelle on pouvait un jour tout espérer." As to the Levantines, usurers and dishonest traders, they were to be kept under firm control, since any support of them, against the local population, would lead to indignation, and eventual revolt.

But the weakness of imperialism germinated in Napoleon's invasion; just as the possibilities of imperialism were also shown in his vision of what a well-ruled Egypt could become—this land of two million people living in what had been the richest province of the Roman Empire.

Napoleon could not attend to everything at once. He could invoke the ghosts of the past as guardian angels to his soldiers. But his soldiers were ordinary men transplanted from their own climate to this different land. They lacked the intuitions of their leader. Once his back had turned, and he had hurried off to address his Institut on how drinking water could be purified, or whether windmills or watermills were more effective for irrigation, they turned to alcohol to assuage homesickness, and to Moslem women, whom they seduced, arousing in one evening the sternest taboos of the Egyptian people. For while the Mamelukes had been hated, and the Turkish overlordship despised, the Mamelukes and Turks were yet Moslems. They might execute, they might flog; but they would not violate so flagrantly those particular taboos of the simple Moslem mind: the notions that alcohol is as haram as pork, and that the honour of a family reposes in its women.

Napoleon himself, half superstitious, half sceptical, had found in the uncomplicated religion of the Koran a new faith to replace the Papism which the Revolution had repudiated: something more immediate than the cult of Reason, something more austere than the cult of Rome. But his soldiers were men whose boyhood had seen the overthrow of a dynasty and a church; they were little inclined to pay much heed to the susceptibilities of a people whom they found remote and alien, whose drinking water, they complained, was covered with slime, and whose language was as unintelligible as the chatter of starlings. They stabled their horses in the Great Mosque of Cairo. After all, had not a courtesan been enthroned in Notre Dame? And in their dealings with the local people, they found useful the Christians of the East, with their friendly servility.

While Napoleon remained in the east, the attitude of the easterners was ambivalent towards him. On the one hand, the people of Cairo had revolted, barricading their narrow streets and huge medieval gates, and as a tyrant Napoleon had mounted his guns on the Moqattam hills; on the other hand, when he came back from his campaign in Syria, a popular Arabic song attested that he was also a liberator.

Oh seed of the pomegranate, how good you are!
When you proclaim peace,
When you bring in your hands the edict,
You make the people happy,
Ya salaam!

We missed you, General,
Oh beautiful with your hanging cloak,
Your sword played havoc in Egypt
With the Mamelukes,
Ya salaam!

O beautiful Republican
With the lock of hair,
Bringer of light to Egypt,
Blazing in like a lamp of crystal,
Ya salaam!

But when he left Cairo, recalled home by his brother, aware that a struggle for power in Paris would either destroy the victor of Egypt,

or raise him to new heights, he left behind two successors who, lacking his double genius, as military leader and creative thinker, soon brought the imperial venture to a squalid end. Kléber was a good soldier and a bad man, while Menou was a perceptive man, but no leader. Kléber had not been an admirer of Bonaparte: he had volunteered for the Egyptian campaign because, in his own words, he was "curious to see what the little bugger has in his stomach." To all problems, his was the short-sighted, purely military approach. France needed allies in Egypt: the Syrian Christians and the Copts presented themselves. "We are Christians, just like you." The statement so fatal to the eastern Christian who uttered it, and so dishonourable to the western Christian who encouraged it, was heard for the first, but not the last time. The Copts were a proud minority, who claimed to be the true descendants of the original Egyptians; on the whole, they had been well treated by the Moslem majority. But naturally, as with all minorities in all countries, there had been unpleasant memories. These Kléber exploited, and used the Copts in order to squeeze tribute out of the Egyptians, just as in the Middle Ages the kings had sometimes used Jews for the same purpose. The Copts became equally unpopular. So did the Lebanese.

Kléber was assassinated in Ezbekiah Gardens by a young Syrian, Suleiman al Halebi. (Haleb is the Arabic for Aleppo.) He was succeeded by General Menou, whose corpulent, unmilitary posture and bald head were as unsoldierly as his ideas were unlike those of the officers he had to control. Without any of Bonaparte's military gifts, he fully shared his leader's enthusiasm for the East; and staying longer, went further. He took the name of Abdullah, and contracted a marriage with an Egyptian woman of good family. His attitude to the eastern Christians was as hostile as Kléber's had been friendly. "I realise now," he wrote later, "that the Christians were the vilest and most contemptible inhabitants of the country. The Syrians—avaricious, cunning, cowardly, vindictive and low. We arrived, and they believed they had found in us French and Christian Mamelukes, who had taken the place of the Georgian and Moslem Mamelukes they knew before." Determined that the high idealism of the Revolution should be reaffirmed, he issued an arresting proclamation on the 22nd December, to the people of Cairo:

> "Who has given the great and the powerful the right to make the people unhappy? Is it the Koran? No, for it teaches help to the unfortunate, compassion towards the poor, and the giving of charity. If you have forgotten your religion, I, in the name of

> the Republic and of the celebrated Bonaparte, will remind you of it. I am here to free the people from oppression."

The proclamation is not much different from those made by many other rulers of Egypt. "I am here to free you from oppression." The only difference is that Menou intended to do what he said: though his intentions were to be frustrated by the officers of the high command. Menou may have known the Arabic proverb: "Not all that a man wants can he get: the winds do not blow as the ship wishes."

Most farsighted of Menou's projects was the setting up of a committee to industrialise Egypt. This committee never achieved anything: the French occupation itself came to an end, and during its remaining months, there was no achievement, only intrigue and squabbling. The French revolutionaries, of middle-class origin, had the middle-class interests of their own country at heart. Egypt, they decided, was to remain an agricultural country, better drained than before, with better canals. But the commodities which the Egyptians would need, as order and economic growth improved the internal market, would be imported from France, or from French Europe. Hence, of Menou's industrial committee the only legacy was the idea, which was not to be forgotten. The idea was to be taken up by Muhammad Ali, and again thwarted by external pressure, this time from Britain. His grandson Ismail was to revive it, and was again to be opposed: in his case, his expenditure being urged as an excuse for the occupation of Egypt. Under Cromer, another 'protector of the Egyptian peasant,' industry was to be as frowned on as higher education. Only with the Revolution of 1952 was Menou's vision to be shared by a government with complete power to act.

In the event, neither the imperialism of generals like Kléber, Damas and Reynier, nor the idealism of Menou, achieved immediate results. Certain seeds were scattered; some of which were to perish, others to take root. Even the destruction of the Mamelukes was not complete, as a large part of them managed to escape into Upper Egypt. They regrouped there, waiting for French departure, and though they did not know this, for a rendezvous with massacre. The Egyptian campaign exhibited the aspiring ambition of Napoleon, with its fatal concomitant: a lack of realism. In Egypt, the disaster of Russia was writ small: just as in Shakespeare's early works the later themes can be discerned. More a poet than a practical politician, Napoleon had dreamed of the expedition, then tired of the dream. A French army controlled Egypt, invaded Syria. But to what good? New motifs

for interior decoration were taken back to the drawing-rooms of France; the savants had compiled volumes of valuable research, which could now be published. But the army itself, cut off from home by English control of the sea, had one preoccupation only: how to escape, honourably, back to Europe. And thus preoccupied, the army commanders hardly noticed that the country they had come to deliver was in the grip of famine and disorder, as it had been, when they arrived, so full of good intentions, three years before.

Yet the seeds had been sown; the shock had been given; and stagnant societies need new ideas and shocks in equal proportions. Egypt could never stagnate again: men of action, such as Muhammad Ali, men of thought like the young sheikhs who had attended the meetings of the Institut, were going to make of it a country where Islam and Arabism would combine with modernity to produce the chief Arab nation. Arabi Pasha, the near-Nasser of 1882, always carried with him a life of Bonaparte. Muhammad Ali ordered every last writing of the French leader to be translated into Turkish. The father of Anwar Sadat, one of the leading members of the revolutionary junta, admired Napoleon, and shared Europe's dislike of England and Sir Hudson Lowe. And while Gamal Abdul Nasser himself dislikes the imperialist in Napoleon, the man who mounted guns on the Moqattan Hills, he would probably admit that the rational quality of the Revolution, its lack of religious intolerance, its lack of massacre, owes something to the collision between an immemorial Egypt and a revolutionary France, a century and a half ago. No one, and no country, can collide with genius and remain untouched: though the genius himself is the last person to know what his touch will achieve, and how.

ART SCHOOLS

To the Editor of *The European.*

Sir,

As 'Temporary Head' says, the reform of the art school system must start at the top.

I am not so sure that the situation improves the nearer one gets to London; neither would I imagine does Chelsea School of Art!

Superficially, Metropolitan Duffle - coaters and Professional Aesthetes may put up a better show than their provincial relatives, but their cocktail esoterics are just as much phoney art as the more local show of water-colour snap-shots. Heads of secondary schools are not necessarily to blame for misundertanding the artistic issue, for the educationalist hierarchy (the professional amateurs of ministerial and local government) have decided that art should be: 1—a play-subject; 2—a popular potted edition of hobby making and commercial design which by its very vulgarity ensures financial returns and public prestige; 3—a state system of indoctrinated pedagogy which assumes that you need not know a subject in order to teach it (what in America is called a Mickey Mouse course).

The public, including state-teachers, is not necessarily to be blamed for being critically confused, for the camp followers of the arts—the fashion pedlars of Bond Street novelties, the Burlington House set who mock tradition, and the glamour portrait industry—present a comical picture. In the jungle of professionalism, or self-preservation in the commercial field, it is obvious that too many people profit by the present situation to support any possible change.

Yet the main fault does not lie with those who are ignorant enough to support a profitable chaos, but with those who admit its falsity and yet are prepared to accept it. Such 'intellectual' pessimists, pacifists, and sceptics satisfy their ego by making mild anarchistic remarks in arty journals and discussions, yet have not the least intention of taking part in any possible reconstruction. Is the 'intelligentsia' mesmerised into petrified inaction by visions of the present chaos and future crisis? The impotence of dream security seems to have caused a general sleep of apathy. Youth, lacking the leadership it desires and merits, fritters away its formative years on publicised rubbish.

There must be an intelligent public somewhere, and it is their duty to re-establish the art of living—to give sense, ethics and meaning to a life which is now ruled solely by science.

I have tried to define and circulate opinions which might meet limited approval because I am convinced that consolidated opinion is capable of effecting a reform in at least this one aspect of ministerial mismanagement. Whether or not I am successful in obtaining numerical support, I am satisfied by the evidence at my disposal to know that this is not a 'hopeless cause.'

Yours faithfully,

BRIAN BRADSHAW.

Next month in *The European*

The second of ***Roy* Macgregor-Hastie's** articles on literary activity behind the Iron Curtain:

The Socialist Carnival

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