

IN THE
Commonwealth
Cause

by
D. J. KILLEN, M.P.

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Introduction by

Rt. Hon. The Lord Balfour of Inchrye, P.C., M.C.

*"Great causes are seldom lost because they find enemies.
They are lost when they lose their friends."*

THE CASE FOR POSITIVE
COMMONWEALTH ACTION

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FOREWORD

By Lord Balfour of Inchyre

I feel privileged to write a foreword to this trenchant booklet.

Mr. D. J. Killen, M.P., writes as an Australian legislator on Britain's Common Market negotiations.

It is good for us to know how others see us and our problems. Mr. Killen presents an Australian viewpoint which will find an echo in our thinking and a response in our hearts.

I need not agree with all Mr. Killen's trimmings of language and ways of expression: but this does not matter because these are essentially individual characteristics. What does matter is the substance of the booklet and with this I am in complete agreement.

As I write, the gloomy forecast and results of breakdown from the pro-market enthusiasts have not come about. The economic skies have not fallen about us. The £ is strong. Reserves are up. The economy is stirring. Confidence has been restored.

The veto by General de Gaulle of Britain's application to join the European Economic Community has I fear not ended the controversy. Whether terms which Her Majesty's Government would have considered satisfactory would have been obtained will never now be known. What is certain is that negotiations can never be picked up from where they stopped.

There are still many pressures in this country and in some other quarters for Britain to re-open negotiations at the earliest possible date. Meanwhile little appears to have been done to set in motion really dynamic trading policies for Britain and the Commonwealth.

It is important that this issue of the tremendous Commonwealth opportunity we now have should be kept before the public in this country and throughout the Commonwealth. Mr. D. J. Killen, a Member of the Australian Commonwealth Parliament, has therefore done a fine service in preparing this booklet which provides a striking challenge. The author's message should be read and its implications understood by all those genuinely interested in the future of the Commonwealth.

There are many in this country who have cause to be grateful to Mr. Killen, for during the height of the campaign on British entry into the Common Market Mr. Killen came to this country from Australia and made many eloquent and passionate speeches in favour of a Commonwealth policy as against the proposal to enter the Common Market. He has a very full understanding of the implications of the Rome Treaty and the impact which the acceptance of this would have had upon the future of Britain and the Commonwealth.

It is good to read the words of one of the younger members of a British Commonwealth Parliament arguing in such robust language that the peoples of the British Commonwealth still have a great and decisive role to play in world affairs. Mr. Killen's booklet restates in direct language the true meaning and purpose of the Commonwealth: He puts forward practical proposals by which the Commonwealth can not only be revived but given a new coherence and a new purpose. In this he gives support to many of the proposals put forward in this country from the Commonwealth Industries Association. I have no hesitation in recommending this booklet and trust that its publication will play a part in the great work of re-education which is essential if Britain and the Commonwealth are to remain true to their heritage and to fulfil their destiny in the world of today.

BALFOUR.

THE CASE FOR POSITIVE COMMONWEALTH ACTION

The negotiations by the United Kingdom to enter the European Economic Community have failed. Why they failed is a matter of argument. But there can be little argument that in the closing stages the negotiations represented the greatest humiliation ever inflicted on the British people.

Whatever may be said by those in high places — and a lot has not been said — it was clear that the terms which loomed as the likely terms of admission of Great Britain were an utter repudiation of promises given to the British people and to the Commonwealth.

An irredeemable mixture of deceit and ignorance has kept from public scrutiny many aspects of Great Britain's possible membership of the European Community. Her application to join the Community has, I believe, done the Commonwealth a tremendous amount of harm. Yet it is by no means too late to take up the task of reviving the Commonwealth and giving back to it its role in world affairs. But the first thing to do is to put paid to that articulate group of people throughout the Commonwealth who have been doing little else for years other than run down every worthwhile British and Commonwealth institution. Their cynicism, their pessimism, their warped sophistication, have found their way into the whole character of the British world. They have torn at respectable tradition. They have cried down every movement which has sought to spread the influence of British ideals and principles. Every weakness, every adversity, every setback that has struck at the British world has been received by them as invigorating news. Patriotism and sovereignty have been represented by them as vulgar words. They have despised those qualities that made Great Britain great

and they have sought in aid every means to enlarge the sphere of their infection.

It would be idle to pretend that the Commonwealth, of which Great Britain is yet the centre, has not suffered. But the Commonwealth is not dead and, despite the hopeful prophecies of some people, Great Britain is a power to be reckoned with.

MEN NOT SLAVES OF EVENTS

One of the most remarkable facets of the Common Market controversy was the cultivation by the protagonists of British entry of the "It's inevitable" doctrine. The doctrine was spread with malignant zeal. It was not surprising that in every country of the Commonwealth there were those who supported the doctrine, and who were not moved by argument and fact. The best that can be said of these people is that they have a shallow understanding of history and a poor perspective of the future.

Determinism is a quality expressed by the materialist and the Marxist. One hesitates to believe that a people whose whole history is an exhilarating testimony to the fact that men and ideas are not the slaves of events, were reduced to a state of apprehension and servility that they meekly accepted the false and malevolent doctrine of inevitability.

A people who follow their fate without fear are to be admired. And a people who set out to fashion their fate, to be conscious of their nationhood — not in any jingoistic vulgar sense — but with a keen awareness of their responsibility to the whole of humanity, are deserving of every encouragement. But what of a people who have it that nothing they can do in the affairs of men will matter? Few qualities are more indicative of a ravished will than a belief that the individual cannot play a decisive role in shaping his own destiny.

SUDDEN DISCOVERY

The "inevitability" doctrine, as it applied to British entry into Europe, had some strange aspects. And what could be stranger than the fact that none of the more vigorous supporters of the doctrine espoused it until some time after Britain made application to join the Community. The assumption, therefore, is that the doctrine was conceived with remarkable suddenness. Let it be conceded that some circumstances well up very quickly and swift changes have to be made. Even so, there is ground for believing that if it was "inevitable that Britain should become part of the European Community", someone of account should have taken that view, say, ten years ago. And yet, the contrary was the case. Mr. Macmillan himself, who glowed with enthusiasm for British entry into Europe, has not always been an anxious supporter of the concept. Mr. Macmillan underwent a metamorphosis that is quite inexplicable, and no public utterance of his serves to provide the slightest clue as to why he changed his mind.

As Chancellor of the Exchequer, he said in the House of Commons on 26th November, 1956:

"I do not believe that this House would ever agree to our entering arrangements which, as a matter of principle, would prevent our treating the great range of imports from the Commonwealth at least as favourably as those from the European countries. So this objection, even if there were no other, would be quite fatal to any proposal that the United Kingdom should seek to take part in a European Common Market by joining a customs union."

To say the least, his views have come a long way since then.

WHY A CHANGE?

The first question that comes to mind is, what happened in recent years to warrant Britain going into Europe?

When that question is put, it inevitably touches off an incredible amount of double talk. You will be told that, for defence purposes, it was essential that the move be made. There was the argument (and presumably it still exists) that Great Britain's trading position was so precarious that to become part of the European Community was the only solution to difficult economic problems. And, allied with this last-named argument, you will be assured that, whereas the European Community is dynamic, the Commonwealth is static and, in a word, the European Community offered infinitely better opportunities for trade expansion than did the Commonwealth.

Great Britain's application to join the European Community was the most stupendous event in British history. That point should be conceded by all. As such, one would have imagined that the supporters of British membership of the European Community would have been able to formulate with some precision and particularity their argument. Such was not the case.

"NOT A DEFENCE ALLIANCE"

There is no British Minister who ever made the slightest pretence that British membership of the European Community was required for defensive purposes. Indeed, Mr. Macmillan said in the House of Commons on 2nd August, 1961: **"I must remind the House that the E.E.C. is an Economic Community, not a Defence Alliance or a Foreign Policy Community, or a Cultural Community."** To be true, there were faint references to the view that the European Community would be a bastion against Communism, but the over-riding fact is that no British Minister ever said so with any measure of explicitness.

What of the argument that the Community would be a bastion against Communism — is there any substance in it? The dominant characteristic of international Com-

munist is that it is international in its ambition. It is not confined to one area of the globe. It would seem a curious exercise in logic that, if the European Community had been able to increase its strength by British membership, that strength should have been achieved at the risk of creating disruption elsewhere in the world. And the risk of doing precisely that was very real.

Those who have taken this view have pointed to specific dangers that would have arisen. None of those who hold that the Community will be a defensive mechanism against Communism, have allayed the fears expressed, quite apart from the fact that they have not pointed to any part of the Community's machinery which could be construed as representing a defensive instrument.

Then, there is the question of disposing of Mr. Macmillan's views. Whatever anyone may think of his change of mind and heart, and his apparent yearning ambition to get his country into the European Community, one would imagine that he spoke with the complete backing of his Government when he said that the E.E.C. was not a defensive alliance. If it is claimed by some people that it is a defensive alliance, then either Mr. Macmillan is lying or he does not understand what the Community is about.

NUCLEAR REALITIES

Again, on the defensive argument, there is the consideration of weapons systems which have been derived from the modern philosophy of war and the grim creation of the research laboratory and factory.

For many years now the whole of the defence of Western Europe has rested upon the nuclear deterrent. If another war were to engulf Europe, it would be reasonable to assume that it would be a nuclear war, and however horrific the contemplation of such a prospect may be, it

would seem a dangerous illusion to look upon the waging of such a war by conventional arms. How then, one may ask, can the European Economic Community provide an answer to inter-Continental ballistic missiles fitted with nuclear war-heads.

No person should fail to understand the annihilating character of modern weapons, least of all those upon whom rests the responsibility of Government. The causes of world tension must be removed, and they will be removed if there is a firm will to that end. But to rest the hopes of mankind upon a treaty or, for that matter, upon a series of treaties is plainly suggestive of a dreadful misconception of the outstanding problem in the world today.

AVERTING "THE FINAL WAR"

No peace has yet been founded upon a paper arrangement. And it seems incredible that there are those who will not face the fact that, if harmony is to replace discord, and trust to supplant distrust in the conduct of affairs, then it is the mind and heart that counts, not what is committed to paper.

The most frightening feature of the apparatus of Communism is the way it has secured pacific conquest, and all the time its adherents assuring all those around them that they have no territorial ambitions. The Communist aggressor has come a long way and there is nothing to be gained from not acknowledging the fact that he has now brought the world to the point of its greatest anxiety. No form of reproach or recrimination as to who or what influence was the cause of the present distress contributes one iota to settling the outstanding issue of our day. Because Communism seeks world domination, there is suspicion and tension in the world. It is around this stern and inescapable fact that the effort must be made to avert "the final war".

TOLERANCE OF IGNORANCE

For far too long now have those of us in democratic countries tolerated without complaint a raging form of ignorance concerning the motives and basic objectives of the Communist movement. It is, of course, absurd to imagine that we can survive as people with free traditions if we are content with little or virtually no understanding of what the struggle involves. We cannot hope to go on stumbling to safety and success. It is not too late to look at the enemy with a fresh eye. He is as conscious of the world's dilemma as we are. Yet, whereas he has made, and continues to make, a startling appeal to the millions in the world who like their thinking done for them, and flaunts his accomplishment in our faces, we seem unconscious of the danger of our indolence and ignorance. There seems little purpose in building strong defences if we allow the vitality of those defences to be sapped from within by an incipient ignorance of the enemy, his doctrine and his methods. Democratic Parliaments abound with Members with an infinite array of opinions on Communism. It is something more than a pity that so little of these opinions reflect any acquaintance with Communist text books.

Mr. KHRUSHCHEV AND THE TREATY

There is precisely nothing in the Treaty of Rome which has any defence connotation. Mr. Khrushchev has criticised the Treaty. Yet to regard that criticism as a reason for giving vigorous support for the Treaty, is strange reasoning. Moreover, it is dangerous. "I support Marxism-Leninism" is a sentiment often expressed by Mr. Khrushchev. Accordingly, Mr. Khrushchev embraces the Communist concept of dialectics. That concept enables him to speak and act in a way that should never be appraised at face value. To the non-Communist, the dialectical approach may appear as double talk and as deceit. But

the Communist sees nothing wrong in this, and failure to grasp this point is one of the most significant blunders in contemporary political thinking.

FACILITATE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER

If anything, the mechanism of the European Communities is designed to permit a Communist takeover. Firstly, it is a highly centralised system of control, and a bid, backed by Communist enterprise, to capture such a system would be far easier to carry out than one directed against a decentralised system. Secondly, the structure of the European Communities represents a thorough-going piece of totalitarianism, and that is to be readily demonstrated. The Commission of the European Economic Community can be taken as an example. It is comprised of nine Commissioners. In the carrying out of their duties they are not to accept instructions from any Government or from any other body. This is laid down very clearly in the Treaty. Frequently it is suggested that, if the United Kingdom had joined the Community, she would have been able to lead it. That could not be possible under the terms of the Treaty, and it is useful to bear in mind that Mr. Heath, the British Minister in charge of negotiations to enter Europe, told the Ministers of the Common Market countries in Paris on October 10, 1961, that: "So far as we can judge at this stage, we see no need for any amendments to the text of the Treaty, except of course in those Articles where adaptations are plainly required consequent on the admission of a new Member."

INDEPENDENCE OF COMMISSION

Under the E.E.C. Treaty (and it is the same with the E.C.S.C. and Euratom Treaties) the Council of Ministers represents the nations. This Council cannot act on its own initiative. The Council may request the Commission to undertake any studies which the Council considers desir-

able (Article 152), but the singular feature is that if the Commission does not make a recommendation, the Council cannot act.

In a publication, *The Common Market*, published by the European Community Information Service, September, 1961, the independence of the Commission is summed up as follows: "While the most important decisions must be taken by the Council of Ministers in the last resort, the latter can act only on the proposal of the Executive Commission."

The only sanction that can be imposed on the Commission is that which is contained in Article 144. Under this Article, if a motion of censure of the Commission is adopted by a two-thirds majority of members of the European Parliament, then the members of the Commission shall resign their office in a body.

UNIQUE CONSTITUTION

The relationship of the Commission to the Parliament is most unique. It has no parallel in modern Constitutional history. The idea is one which is completely foreign to British Constitutionalism, the whole character of which is stamped with centuries of struggle to attain Parliamentary control of the executive. No doubt it was a consideration of this circumstance that prompted Mr. Heath in a speech to the Conservative Party Conference in 1960 to say: "To Europe we say — do you want us in fact to continue to take part in the unity of Europe? . . . If you do, we are here with our Commonwealth, with our agriculture and with our well-known Parliamentary system and our known attitude to supra-national institutions."

A CHANGE OF VIEW

Of course people can, and in many cases should, change their minds, for obstinacy frequently multiplies difficulties.

And there is no shame or meanness in admitting to a change of mind. What, however, taxes patience and indignation quite beyond the point of concealment is the person who refuses to own up to a change of mind. It is not merely cause for annoyance but for alarm that Mr. Heath has never been persuaded to say why he changed his views on the British Parliamentary system and the British attitude to supra-national institutions.

COMMUNISM ON THE CONTINENT

It is not beyond possibility that the European Parliament could succumb to Communist control — more particularly when the machinery for direct election to the Parliament is put into action. Italy and France both have powerful Communist Parties. It can not be gainsaid that General de Gaulle's great influence has kept Communist strength to a minimum, but his passing could see France plunged into great violence and strife.

The Communist Party in the United Kingdom, compared with Continental countries, is not strong. The reason is not hard to find. It is no offence to European countries to observe that they have a social structure which is quite different from that in Britain. The British have their institutions, which to the outsider seem cumbersome and inefficient, yet they have had a peculiarly stabilising effect.

A FALSE ARGUMENT

The argument that a United Kingdom in Europe would lead to a major bulwark against Communism is a false argument. It ignores the realities of modern warfare, it makes no allowance for the existence of N.A.T.O., it takes no account of the nature of Communism, it dismisses the bitter danger which resides in a centralised administration, it scorns the consequences of giving great power

to people who have no direct responsibility to those over whom they wield power, and it treats with pitiless disregard the outcome of separating a nation from its traditions and its institutions.

THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

The most singular fact about the economic argument that Great Britain should go into Europe, was the lack of information offered by those who said it was necessary. Certainly no economist has been prepared to stake his reputation by compiling a list of economic gains and losses which would have flowed from British entry into the E.E.C. Most economists were content to admit that the gains were so speculative as to prevent a list being drawn up.

In political circles precisely the same hesitancy to suggest specific economic advantages of membership was found. The British Prime Minister, Mr. Macmillan, in a pamphlet presented to the Conservative Party Conference in 1962, admitted that: **"Some radical changes in the pattern of British industry and commerce are inevitable if this country is to hold its own, whether we join the Community or not. But we believe that the economic opportunities which the Common Market offers to Britain greatly outweigh the risks involved."** What, of course, was plain was that Mr. Macmillan was not prepared to list what the economic opportunities were or were likely to be. He was by no means alone.

BRITAIN'S TRADING

One of the reasons given by those who insist that Britain should have joined the E.E.C. was that British trade with the E.E.C. was increasing tremendously, while trade with the Commonwealth was declining alarmingly. The argument was usually put with such slickness as to create

the impression that the Commonwealth no longer represented a worthwhile market to Britain. The E.E.C. on the other hand was depicted as a glittering prize. The facts warrant some examination.

In 1961, 16.7% of British exports went to the Common Market countries, 43% went to the Commonwealth and 13.1% went to the E.F.T.A. countries. British exports of textiles to the Commonwealth in 1961 were seven times greater than to the Common Market countries, iron and steel exports were four times greater, electrical machinery four times greater, railway rolling stock eighteen times greater, aircraft four times greater. In short, the whole of British industry does far more business with the Commonwealth than with the countries of the Six. It is understandable therefore that the argument that "it is economically desirable" that Britain should have joined Europe should have been treated with suspicion.

COMMONWEALTH ADVANTAGE

If immense commercial benefits could have been seen coming from British membership of the E.E.C., then possibly some of the opposition to the move would have fallen away, even though the issue was not a mere material issue. But the truth was that in every Commonwealth country the gravest misgivings were expressed as to the effect on Commonwealth trade.

It should not be imagined that the historic trading relationship which has grown up within the Commonwealth is advantageous to one Commonwealth country. It has been and it remains advantageous to every Commonwealth country.

During the fifties, every Australian bought £34 per head from the United Kingdom. In the same time, every person in the Common Market countries bought £3 per head from the United Kingdom, and every person in

the United States £2. Australia, with its relatively small population, has bought more goods from the United Kingdom than has the United States with its massive population.

British exports to the Commonwealth in 1960 increased by £451 million over exports to the Commonwealth for the year 1950. A comparison of British exports to the Common Market for the same period shows an increase of £285 million. Taking this trend as an indicator, British exports to the Commonwealth in 1970 can be expected to approximate £2,000 million and to the Common Market £850 million. The difference between the two markets gets a firmer emphasis on reflecting that trading conditions for the United Kingdom during the 1950's were generally unfavourable.

THE DYNAMIC ARGUMENT

A number of pro-marketeers, when forced to admit to the truth of Commonwealth trade, protest that the opportunities for expansion in the Common Market are greater than those offered by the Commonwealth. It would be manifestly unreal to overlook that fact that the 1950's was a decade in which Europe enjoyed a spectacular capital investment boom. By contrast, very little attention was given to the Commonwealth. And a number of Commonwealth countries were passing on their way to self-government — a path which is a very difficult one. Yet, despite the vastly different circumstances between the countries of the Six and of the Commonwealth, during the 1950's Commonwealth trade did not decline and the Commonwealth did not stand still. Growth within the Commonwealth has indeed been remarkable. Between 1953 and 1960, Australian imports rose by 83%, Indian by 57%, and Pakistani by 86%. The growth within the Common Market, however it may be measured by imports,

by gross national product, or by industry, was faster in the five years 1950-1955 than in the following five years.

The "dynamic argument" is an attractive one, but it cannot overwhelm the facts. The idea of a vigorous, surging Europe is commendable, and no person should hesitate to support it. Nevertheless, there is little virtue in being completely captivated by a fashionable and deserving cause to the point of extinguishing both old ties and commercial sense.

INDUSTRIAL GROWTH IN COMMONWEALTH

One of the most superficial arguments which the opponents of British entry into Europe were invited to accept, was that because there was industrial growth in Commonwealth countries there was less opportunity for export.

The validity of this argument was not merely doubtful. It was an utterly fallacious argument, and one is entitled to be sceptical as to motives of some who used it. The Six as a community are not merely a growing industrialised community. They are in fact a highly industrialised community. Assuming that there is validity in the point of view that the growth in manufacturing industries in Commonwealth countries cuts back trading opportunity for the United Kingdom, one is left to wonder how it is that trading opportunities for the United Kingdom would have been increased by entering a highly industrialised community.

The history of every country is that as it industrialises it imports more. It is the history of Britain herself, of Japan and of Germany. This point was admirably summed up by the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Maudling, in a speech to the Primrose League in May, 1962. Mr. Maudling said: "I sometimes see it said that because Commonwealth countries are developing their secondary industries—making their own cement, their own motor cars or

their own door frames — it means our trade with them will reduce. That is nonsense. It is faint-hearted and short-sighted. As countries like Australia, for example, produce more for themselves, they will grow richer and they will have more to spend abroad."

EFFICIENCY THROUGH COMPETITION

Competition provides its own stimulus to efficiency. British industry faced with stiff competition from E.E.C. industry will no doubt see a dramatic improvement in efficiency levels. Yet, it is a shocking simplification of the issue to suggest that the United Kingdom should have entered the E.E.C. merely to provide her industry with greater competition. "The bracing cold shower" treatment referred to by Mr. Macmillan can be overdone. Some sophisticated British manufacturers were optimistic that they would be able to go into Europe in a big way. But the Treaty of Rome was not intended to be a one-sided arrangement and Britain would have been thrown open to sophisticated Continental manufacturers. The real crunch for Britain would have come when she was faced with the prospect of paying for dearer supplies of raw materials than is her present circumstance.

It would be fatal politically for any British political leader or practitioner to espouse that membership of the E.E.C. would enable industrial problems to be solved by a body outside the United Kingdom. That such thinking exists, however, cannot be doubted. It is a heartless form of thinking and beyond that, it is rank cowardice. Industry in Great Britain does face problems, some of them of great complexity, yet there are none that could not be solved, given leadership and a will to that end.

NEGLECT OF COMMONWEALTH

Since the end of the war, a great number of organisations and institutions have been set up in the world for an

infinite variety of purposes. Yet, by contrast, precisely nothing of a specific nature has been done with the Commonwealth. We have preferred, and by we, I mean the people of the Commonwealth, to devote a very great deal of attention to world and regional organisations and to do nothing with the Commonwealth. This preference has been a tragedy, not only for the Commonwealth, but for the world.

The aftermath of war saw a great change in Commonwealth relations. A time of great adjustment was experienced. Mistakes were made. Conflicts raged. There was anguish. And, yes, there was bloodshed and misery. Yet, the Commonwealth concept took on with a fresh purpose. It was never abandoned. To be sure, that concept is not easy to define and it is here that one feels that a great mistake has been made. What the people of the Commonwealth have done is to allow the Commonwealth to become too vague. This is not an argument for a highly mechanical-like structure. But we have allowed the sophisticates and pseudo-intellectuals to push altogether too far the theory that there is splendid virtue in allowing the Commonwealth to drift into a meaningless collection of countries, having no principles of conduct and not capable of being identified at any one time with any cause. "Loose knit association" has been a slogan that has been interpreted to mean no association. Diversity has been given a false quality of glamour, and the instincts of the people of the Commonwealth to work for a common purpose have been weakened. Fortunately, they have not been destroyed. I can vividly recall one Minister at Whitehall whose face disclosed what was a sort of gloating disrespectful smugness when he said: "Oh, well, you know you can't describe the Commonwealth." The distinct impression I got was that it would be proper behaviour for a clergyman, instead of intoning "dust to dust" at the graveside, to have invited the mourners to have joined in three rousing cheers.

NEW APPROACH

To many people, a formula represents finality. Life to them is a very comfortable thing, providing it can be surrounded with a myriad of formulae that throw up the answer to every trifling problem. The Commonwealth is not in need of a mathematical formula to rescue it from its present plight, *but it is desperately in need of a reformed approach to issues which threaten its very existence.* We cannot go any longer being enthusiastic supporters of nothing in particular.

Those who doubt that there would be support throughout the Commonwealth for a new approach to Commonwealth problems would do well to have a good look at what the Common Market controversy has done. In Britain, the uncertainty and speculation of effects of membership of the E.E.C. has deeply stirred the British people, even if there is a searing conflict of opinion. But let no-one under-estimate the feeling that has been aroused throughout the United Kingdom. No political issue has ever before convulsed the electorate as has the Common Market issue, and even if generous concessions are allowed for the absence of precise and informed opinion, one cannot but be impressed by the intensity of frank passion. And then look at the Commonwealth countries themselves. In practically every country there have been expressive displays of anxiety. Let it be insisted that the anxiety throughout the Commonwealth, and the disturbance in the United Kingdom, was spurred on by no finer motive than conjecture of financial gain or loss. But the insistence would be proved to be a hollow sham. What was the fount head of concern was that if the United Kingdom had gone into Europe, then the Commonwealth would have perished.

As always, there are those who have a robust degree of cynicism, and who will dismiss the attitude of those

who put Commonwealth before Common Market as a pretentious and unwelcome exhibition of sentiment. But they are in grave error. Sentiment can be despised but it should never be dismissed. In two terrible wars sentiment was stronger than realism and the people of the Empire and Commonwealth fought "for a dream in a herdsman's shed and for the simple Scripture of the poor".

The British people are heartily fed up with being treated with contumely and disdain, of being encircled by a pack of prophets who champion every sign which suggests their impending ruin. They are tired of being depicted to the world as a trembling, cowering people afraid to look even their kinsmen in the face — the shuffling inheritors of an estate which can only find rescue and salvation by becoming a province of Europe.

Here then is something of the true British character. It is not influenced by a vain and self-deceptive exultation. It is in fact an encouraging proof of Burke's belief: "He that wrestles with us strengthens our will, and sharpens our wits. Our antagonist is our helper."

There is a welling up of the spirit of old in the United Kingdom. It may be sentiment — half religious — half heroic — it's hard to describe it, but it is the energising agent in a "back to greatness movement". Possibly it is the prerogative of a people who have given so much to the world that when they should appear to have reached the point of utter exhaustion, their concealed reservoir of spiritual strength influences them to the threshold of new attainments.

The Commonwealth is multifariously diversified and even though the British are the worst instructors in the world, their example is followed in many ways, even though imperfectly. This has meant, among other things, that there is the same reaction to intimidation, the heeding of the same traditions of Government, the vindicating of

the same doctrines and a readiness to respond to a challenge. It is a consideration of these qualities that convinces me that the people of the Commonwealth are ready to subscribe to a programme that will restore those instantaneous instincts for cohesion in those matters affecting the corporate whole, while in no way seeking to impose the elements of an unwanted dogma.

For an individual and a private Member of Parliament, it is not practicable nor desirable for a detailed policy of Commonwealth co-operation as I envisage to be propounded. *What can be done is for broad suggestions to be made and that I do, hoping that those whose beings have in any way been washed by the seas of our people's history will be persuaded at least to reflect on the consequences of continuing to neglect the Commonwealth.* Upon each of us then hangs the future of the Commonwealth. It is now upon the scaffold of our conscience.

ECONOMIC RETREAT — THE BEGINNING

In a report agreed to by representatives attending the Commonwealth Economic Conference at Montreal in 1957 the following declaration was made: "Commonwealth participation in the preferential system has proved to be of mutual benefit, and we have no intention of discarding or weakening it." However acceptable that declaration was, the inescapable fact remains that the preferential system was, even when the 1957 Conference was in session, badly weakened. The history of the malady is a long one, but a few of the features deserve some brief mention.

With the collapse of France in 1941, the Commonwealth stood alone against an enemy that had been given the tremendous advantage of years of preparation. Led by a man whose make-up was an amalgam of madness and genius, the enemy was flushed with a staggering series of

successes. Great Britain had, right up to very last, hoped that war could be averted. She was not prepared for war, and let no person be too eager to apportion blame for that. The truth was she was unprepared, and that circumstances were terribly exacerbated by the subsequent heavy losses in France.

Faced with a struggle that was lonely as it was desperate, the Empire and Commonwealth urgently needed the weapons and material to carry on. The Lend-Lease Agreement between the United Kingdom and the United States went a very long way to providing what was needed. But the Agreement held a clause which provided that the terms and conditions "shall include provision for agreed action by the United States of America and the United Kingdom . . . directed to . . . the elimination of all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce, and to the reduction of tariffs and other trade barriers." The impact of the Lend-Lease Agreement was immediate, however some of its provisions were not to become apparent for years to come. The provision to which I have referred was one in this latter category.

Decision making when you do not have the responsibility of actually deciding is easy. It is tempting to be critical of responsible authority that permitted the insertion in the Lend-Lease Agreement of what has proved such a ruinous provision. But the prevailing circumstances must be recognised. Great Britain desperately wanted the materials. There was a price to be paid. It was paid and it was later confirmed when the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was signed in 1947.

KILL EMPIRE PREFERENCE

Even though one passes no censure on those who allowed the United Kingdom to be committed to policies that were to go a very long way towards dismantling Empire prefer-

ence, there is nothing to be gained by quibbling about putting on the line the simple fact that the United States of America has for a very long time been out to kill Empire preference. The situation can only be put bluntly and without offence.

One of the grounds upon which American industry was persuaded by President Roosevelt to give support to keeping the United Kingdom in the war was the promise of greater markets at the end of the war. When the United States was plunged into the conflict, the circumstances changed. In retrospect, the importance of the change was never exploited by British and Commonwealth negotiators at international trade meetings.

I have never been able to understand why it is that the United States has had what amounts to a virulent opposition to the system of Empire preference. After all, the United States has had some experience with preferences and for years operated virtually watertight preferential tariff agreements with Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines—to mention but a few countries.

One can and should look back on the past, avoiding bitterness wherever possible. Maybe looking back cannot contribute to the present and to the future. Even so, some principles never grow old and there is no value in pretending nothing has happened.

The Lend-Lease Agreement, the Anglo-American Loan Agreement and G.A.T.T. plainly consolidated American influence in international trade. In one way and another, the provisions in these Agreements against discrimination have just about killed Empire preference.

FRANK ADMISSION

The objective of American trade policy was frankly put by Mr. William Clayton, the leader of the United States delegation to the International Trade Organization talks

in January, 1948. In a prepared statement Mr. Clayton said: "British Empire preferences will eventually be completely eliminated. That will be the effect of the working liaison between the International Trade Organization and the Marshall Plan to aid Europe. Britain was willing at the Geneva Conference to freeze all existing preferences and then dissolve them in the course of the next few years." It is not completely accurate to say Britain "was willing . . . to freeze all existing preferences . . ." The fact was Britain had been forced into that position by American diplomacy.

PREFERENCE IMPORTANT

Not only was Great Britain's post-war position greatly weakened by wartime commitments and post-war agreements, her trade measured in terms of customers had fallen enormously. This had been captured in great measure by the United States. The G.A.T.T. just about ensured that the United Kingdom would never get her trading strength back.

All of this could not have happened at a worse time. With inflation and declining terms of trade, and profound political changes occurring throughout the Commonwealth, the system of preference would have been invaluable for adjusting to face the difficulties. But the scope for manoeuvre was limited.

The real importance of British preference has not always been appreciated. There is an incredible naivete—no, let us be honest—there is an incredible ignorance about the system of preferences. "It's about time we grew up"—is the sort of stupid thing one often hears said. As long ago as 1660 Britain had navigation laws for giving economic aid to the American colonies. For nearly three centuries preference has existed in one form or another. As the Dominions grew in strength and status, Great Britain entered into reciprocal trade agreements with them.

Canada in 1906 introduced legislation to give effect to this policy and Australia in 1908. And then in 1932 came the Ottawa Agreement, which was a real turning point in economic recovery. Now, whatever may be said of the Ottawa Agreement, it had one great advantage—it worked, and it brought to the Empire and Commonwealth, right down to the most minute part, great benefits.

THE ROAD BACK

The territorial sovereignty which the peoples of the Empire and Commonwealth protected at such great cost (and let no man forget they stood for a time on their own), was offset by the grievous losses in economic sovereignty.

Possibly the heaviest blow of all has been struck by G.A.T.T. This turgid document has been an utter disaster for the Commonwealth. The language of the Agreement reminds one of Alice chiding the Mad Hatter when he was using words that did not have the correct meaning, and the Hatter's reply: "Words mean what I want them to mean." G.A.T.T. has always been interpreted in a way wholly unfavourable to Commonwealth countries, and this apart from the mechanics of G.A.T.T.

Article XXIV of G.A.T.T. makes provision for Customs Unions and for Free Trade Areas. Now, a Customs Union within the Commonwealth is simply not practicable, at least not one along the lines of the European Economic Community. The Commonwealth with its great differences, its various standards and stages of development, just could not equip itself to comply with the requirements of a Customs Union within the terms of G.A.T.T. But on the other hand, the Commonwealth is admirably suited to a system of tariffs and preferences. These are, in essence, the gears which enable the Commonwealth to move.

It was too late in the day for the Commonwealth Economic Conference in 1957, in referring to the preferen-

tial system, to declare: "We have no intention of discarding or weakening it." The truth was that at that time it had been very much weakened, and the first requirement on the road back for the Commonwealth is for a recognition of that truth.

At the 1952 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, there was discussion around a move to seek a restoration of the value of preferences which were expressed in pre-war terms. There was not much enthusiasm for the idea at that time. Then at the Review Conference of the G.A.T.T. in 1954, an attempt was made to have the G.A.T.T. provisions amended to enable the United Kingdom to adjust preferences. Again, there was not general enthusiasm and the attempt failed.

With great respect to those who have sought to have the G.A.T.T. amended, the attempts made have not been as determined as they might have been. And more particularly they have been made at a time when the trading security of many Commonwealth countries was not openly threatened by a Customs Union of the character of the E.E.C. Today there would be a totally different attitude towards G.A.T.T. and to the problem of preference review.

ECONOMIC AND TRADE CONFERENCE

It is just nonsense to say it is impossible to get a Commonwealth approach to the problems of world trade and economics. Half the struggle for victory is invariably over once there is a will to win. If there is no determination, no implicit confidence, no sense of optimism and no disposition towards perseverance in what one does, then of course one should not cry with complaint about failure. Far too many people say "it can't be done" just to get out of doing anything. Far too many ideas are put away into safety zones and labelled "Danger—Do not touch". And far too many deserving causes are abandoned because they present difficulty.

Speaking to the 1953 Conservative Party Conference, the present Deputy Prime Minister of Britain, Mr. Butler, said: "The Commonwealth has never been more in touch nor more determined to develop the massive resources which they command, so that . . . this great unit shall by its strength show not only the free world, but the world as a whole, that we have the resources and the strength to regain our economic independence and stand together on our own feet. We shall go forward in good company. This is our doctrine. Be strong—keep free—give hope—and bring all together in a great cause . . . If we practise these things, stick to our moral principles and preach them, we shall not fail." There are those I know who would be happy to look upon Mr. Butler's declaration as bold but empty sentiment of the 1950's. But I know there are also those who see his declaration as an irresistible challenge of the 1960's. And so, confident that the Commonwealth is not wanting in materials, nor in invention to use them, nor in energy among its people, nor in hope, nor in dauntless determination, I know that the Commonwealth can regain, to use Mr. Butler's own language, "economic independence and stand together . . ."

A policy of Commonwealth economic co-operation is practicable. It carries no economic threat to other countries. Surely by now it must seem bewildering, even to the most un-enquiring, that whereas the United Kingdom played a leading role in the development of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation, no Commonwealth country has sought to promote a similar organization for the Commonwealth. Even the unrelenting supporters of British entry into the E.E.C. should not hasten to condemn the idea of Commonwealth economic co-operation. After all, a lot of their argument was based on the "there's no alternative" notion.

An imaginative approach to Commonwealth trade and economic problems can be made. It should be made not

only to preserve the Commonwealth and to advance its future, but to maintain our self-respect.

COMMONWEALTH CO-OPERATION

The problems raised in getting effective Commonwealth co-operation in trade and economic policy are great. The problems to be faced once there is agreement are also great. But to say that they are insurmountable is just plain nonsense. Look at the position within the E.E.C. There are problems which are extraordinarily complex. The whole of the Rome Treaty oozes out problems. Yet have any of the ardent marketeers who say Great Britain should have joined, ever suggested those problems could not be solved? Again, I come back to the question of a will to face up promptly and realistically to whatever difficulties may confront us. If there is no will to rebuild the Commonwealth, then there is no hope of rebuilding it.

A Commonwealth Economic and Trade Conference meeting not for a week or for a month, but for a worthwhile time, should direct its attention to a consideration of the following:

- Securing Commonwealth initiative in getting the G.A.T.T. amended so as to enable greater flexibility in Commonwealth trade.
- The drafting of proposals aimed at a comprehensive review of the Ottawa Agreement.
- The establishment of a Commonwealth Payments Union.
- The setting up of a Sterling Area Board.
- The establishment of a Commonwealth Development Bank.
- The formation of a Scientific and Technical Resources Committee.
- The undertaking of a survey of raw materials throughout the Commonwealth similar to the Paley Report.

COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC COUNCIL

The 1957 Montreal Conference established a Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council. The Council has had little influence. It would seem both urgent and practicable to establish this Council on a permanent basis to meet the day to day problems of the Commonwealth. The Council could be reformed on lines similar to that of the E.E.C. Commission, but without that body's bureaucratic overtones. The Council could be made responsible to a Conference of Commonwealth Ministers, if need be through a Commonwealth Secretariat.

The Council, among other things, could undertake:

- A study of the movement of capital within the Commonwealth and make appropriate recommendations on the drafting of an Agreement on the treatment of capital.
- The preparation of a priorities list for development within the Commonwealth.
- Research in marketing techniques.
- The compiling of recommendations relating to the medical and technical requirements of the Commonwealth.
- The submission of a plan relating to the educational needs of Commonwealth countries.

DEFENCE AND THE COMMONWEALTH

The need for a new approach to Commonwealth co-operation is also clearly apparent in the field of defence. It is startling, to say the least, that Commonwealth countries have been brought to the stage where they can look with seeming indifference upon the threat of armed attack on a sister Commonwealth country. There was a time when an attack or a threat of an attack on one Commonwealth country would have roused all Commonwealth countries.

I find nothing exhilarating in seeing the most powerful force for stability in the world being dragged into a state of utter indecision and confusion by people who have little if any genuine affection for Commonwealth institutions and traditions. The rot must stop. It must stop now.

Commonwealth co-operation, I contend, does not presuppose a policy of "meddle" in the affairs of Commonwealth countries. What such a policy aims at is the protection of mutual interests and the advancement of those interests.

The Commonwealth is supposed to be made up of like-minded people who hold that liberty and justice should not be allowed to be suppressed by evil influences. I believe that to be a truth, and because of that belief, I am not prepared to desert it because it may give offence to someone.

The Commonwealth has a capacity second to none to achieve independence in defence matters. That there should be collaboration in defence matters with other free countries in the world I do not deny. But for the Commonwealth to depend for its survival on other countries is both cowardly and dangerous.

British defence systems, alas, have through weakness been grievously stripped of a great deal of their effectiveness. That is a tragedy not for Britain alone, but for the Commonwealth, and I believe, for the whole of the free world.

It is not too late in the day for Great Britain and for the Commonwealth to regain effectiveness and independence in defence matters. This is not merely a question of prestige. It is, in essence, a question involving the protection of the Commonwealth.

It is a matter of profound regret that the United States has not always seen Commonwealth interests from

the viewpoint of those within the Commonwealth. This has led to some most unfortunate results. The Suez Canal dispute is a classic example of the sharp and divergent points of view that have arisen. Now, while these differences can and should be discussed with the utmost frankness, they must also be considered realistically. If Great Britain is to depend upon the United States for her defence, then the Commonwealth must also depend upon the United States for its defence. A conflict of interests between the Commonwealth and the United States, with the United States retaining the ultimate control of defence systems, could well result in an intolerable circumstance for the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth is not lacking in inventiveness and in a quiet and sturdy genius, nor is it lacking in those qualities which contemplate with apparent equanimity the risks of exploration.

This century has been filled with accomplishments of British invention and development. I denounce those who say that our people no longer have the will nor the capacity to contribute to the maintenance and progress of their interests and of the integrity of all free men.

The peace of the world will not, I fear, ever be guaranteed by a pact or a treaty. That end will intervene only when the mind and heart will it.

The Commonwealth is an experiment in brotherhood and in understanding. That it has failed in some respects I do not deny. But I am proud to recall that it has not abandoned its central ambition because of adversity and failure.

It is upon the Commonwealth concept that I believe a world order can be fashioned, and for this reason I hold that the Commonwealth concept should not be regarded with contempt but should encourage us all to give it our unsparing attention.

CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

**This island never did, nor never shall
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it first did help to wound itself.**

Those lines of Shakespeare's are often quoted without the third one, which makes the first two nothing but a brazen boast. Does the significance of the third now require any emphasis?

Great Britain is not, as the faint hearts have it, a crowded off-shore island of Europe, riddled with quaint traditions and offered no finer prospect than that of a museum. Great Britain is yet the centre of the Commonwealth, and she yet has the power to give leadership to that Commonwealth and a matchless example to the world.

The centuries past are filled with great events that have been honourably shaped by the energy and blood of those whose roots sprang from the British Isles. Time has dimmed the importance of those events, but they should not be eclipsed by the wounding blow of a fit of irresolution. There are those who will tell you that history offers no future to us. I claim that without our history we have no future. And the whole of that history challenges us not to succumb to the scandalous and tawdry allurements of mere commercial gain. If we do succumb, then that is the end of the Commonwealth.

No nation that has been called upon to fulfil the role that Great Britain has, that has developed such a constitutional genius, that has defended with such selfless vigour liberty all round the world, and that has contributed so much to the dignity of man, can flourish if her people are to be infused with enthusiasm for nothing other than material reward. But even if it is commercial enterprise and markets that attract the attention of the present Government of the United Kingdom, why is it that the Commonwealth is to be shunned? Here is a market

of 700 million, and to increase the purchasing power of the members of this market by one penny per day is to find a market that increases in value by more than £1,000 million per year. Here surely is a challenge and an opportunity that cannot be despised.

But the real challenge and opportunity of the Commonwealth lies in other fields — in the spreading of understanding and of tolerance, the building of self-government, the encouragement of liberty, the uplifting of the weak, the helping of the poor, the conquering of disease and of famine, the inculcating into the minds of all generations of Commonwealth people the sceptred truth that the Commonwealth is a great cause, and that great causes are seldom lost because they find enemies. They are lost when they lose their friends.

