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Threepence

MAO'S BRINKMANSHIP

IN Mao Tse-Tung, it is possible that John Foster Dulles has met his match at brinkmanship.

For too long Dulles has been able to put the world in a state of jitters by leading America to the brink of war, peeping down into the abyss and then drawing back with or without a diplomatic victory. It is a game rather than a par with one played in London streets called 'Last Across' in which children dash across the road in front of a car and the winner is the last one over. A horrible game, but it has at least the virtue that it is their own lives with which the kids gamble. Dulles' brinkmanship involves the lives of countless millions.

And here is where Mao can win. In a recent article in the *New Statesman* a writer pointed out that Mao is the one leader of a great country to-day who can afford to be undeterred by the Hydrogen bomb. Countries don't come any greater than China, with its three million square miles—about 33 times the size of Britain—and its 600 million population—12 times that of Britain.

In calm and measured sentences the *New Statesman* writer argues that because of the colossal area of China and its tremendous population it could weather nuclear war better than any other State. If 400 or 500 million Chinese were destroyed in war it would still leave 100 or 200 million survivors who might be able to start again. In a world nuclear war no other country could survive to that extent.

Chance for Survival

For one thing the major contestants—presumably Russia, America and Britain—would have to concentrate on each other (and little Britain wouldn't last long) and for all the size of the first two they would be made virtually uninhabitable. Although vast areas of China would be contaminated chances for millions to survive there might be better than anywhere else.

For this reason a leader as careless of human life as Mao Tse-Tung may be prepared to go nearer to the brink, or even jump into the abyss, than any of the statesmen who have trodden that path before.

The question is: Why would Mao do such a thing? On the face of it there is no issue before China which could possibly justify the sanguine contemplation of the destruction of 400 million of her people. Yet in the rarefied atmosphere of world power politics some issues assume strange importances.

Mao Tse-Tung is clearly growing very impatient at being kept out of the gatherings of the great—the United Nations. It was he who put his foot down on Krushchev's happy little schemes for a summit conference, for it was after a flying visit to Mao that Mr. K. withdrew all his various suggestions. What Mao obviously said was that there were to be no more summit talks without him; that arrangements of world importance in which representatives of a quarter of the world's population could not take part should not be condoned or taken part in by his Russian friends.

America's stubborn refusal to recognise that the effective government of China is seated in Peking and not in Formosa makes her look stupid in the eyes of the world. And

her ready recognition of the rebel government in Iraq makes her look hypocritical when she claims it is the violent means used by the Chinese Communists which govern her principled refusal to recognise them.

Pride at Stake

America is committed to the defence of Chiang Kai-shek on Formosa; China is growing impatient at being kept out of the United Nations. Pride and loss of face are at stake on both sides.

To draw attention to himself, Mao orders the guns to start barking across the straits of Amoy, pouring thousands of shells into the Nationalist-held islands of Quemoy and Little Quemoy. It is all built up into a preparation for the invasion of Formosa and the settling of accounts with Chiang Kai-shek once and for all. Concentrations of planes appear at bases along the mainland shores of the Formosa Straits, while the U.S. Seventh Fleet steams into position and Chiang's air bases stack up with planes also.

In this situation anything can happen. A false move, an over-zealous airman, and the balloon can go up. We hardly think that Mao would risk a world war over For-

mosa, an island which was under Japanese rule from 1895 to 1945. The islands off-shore from Amoy, however, were always Chinese. The smallest of them, Tatan and Erhtan, are 2½ miles from the mouth of Amoy harbour, but are held by Chiang's forces, to the evident embarrassment of the Peking government.

These smaller islands, together with the Quemoy and perhaps even Matsu, might be taken by Peking's forces without any real intervention by the United States, leaving Formosa in Chiang's hands.

Thus might honour be satisfied for all sides and costing the death of only a few thousand fighting men and the uprooting of only a few civilians. A trifling cost for governments.

But for the Chinese people? How many of them approve of Mao's brinkmanship—or even know what is going on? How many of them care whether Chou En-lai can or cannot go to United Nations conferences? What can it matter in terms of the satisfaction of their real needs?

But then, they are only the expendable millions, providing the backing for Mao's negotiation from strength.

REFLECTIONS ON

The 'Riots' - and a Suggestion

AT East London Juvenile Court last week a fifteen-year-old boy pleaded guilty to wilfully interfering with a passenger's comfort and to behaving in a disorderly manner. He was alleged to have approached a coloured man in a railway compartment at Liverpool Street Station and shouted: "Here's one of them—you black knave. We have complained to the Government about you people. You come here, you take our women and do all sorts of things free of charge. They won't hang you so we will have to do it."

"We have complained to the government", "you take our women",—coming from the lips of a fifteen-year-old, can hardly be taken as an expression of personal opinion or as fact. Where did this boy learn his hymn of hate and prejudice to be chanted at the sight of a coloured man? Where indeed has the man-in-the-street gathered his "facts" to be able to say with monotonous regularity to the news-hounds, whether in Nottingham or Notting Hill, that the major causes of the recent "riots" were the exploitation of vice by coloured immigrants?

Obviously some "whites" in Notting Hill have seen with their own eyes white girls carrying on their trade as prostitutes from houses run by coloured people; obviously some "whites" have been forced out of their houses by coloured landlords. But these isolated facts have now been passed on, elaborated and exaggerated through gossip and by certain sections of the press, until it is believed throughout the length and breadth of the country that "vice" is a monopoly of the coloured people! And the next step is that whilst most people will disagree with the violence, the flick-knives and the milk-bottles, they nevertheless temper their disapproval with almost sympathetic under-

standing for the Teddy Boys turned crusaders against vice! (Note: Soho in the past thirty years has changed from a residential area into one big brothel. There are a few coloured pimps there too exploiting our girls, but why no Teddy Boy crusade to clean up Soho?)

★

MOST people of course dislike pimps, but they also consider that a coloured pimp living on the earnings of a white prostitute is much worse than a white pimp exploiting "his own flesh and blood". (The coloured prostitutes in the Bayswater Road and in Hyde Park: is it possible that some of them are run by white pimps? And is that, by this strange scale of morals, considered as bad or not quite so bad?). Apart from the fact that most people seem to think that "foreigners" living in this country should possess all the qualities of saints or keep out, they make a distinction between white and black pimps not because the latter are any more cruel or demanding than the former, but because everybody here believes in racial equality except where the sexes are concerned. The exploitation of white prostitutes by white pimps is bad but their exploitation by black pimps is that much worse.

It is not only male jealousy which is manifesting itself but the ingrained prejudice that a black skin is the sign of biological inferiority as well as of a degenerate and backward people. After all, male jealousy has been in evidence here in regard to Polish and Italian immigrant workers and American (white) servicemen stationed in this country, but as between equals and the offspring from these liaisons are "normal" even if illegitimate. The coloured baby of a white mother is a permanent stigma on the woman* and

LETTER FROM FRANCE Paratrooper's Eyevue

SINCE the success of the military rebellion in Algeria, the corps of French paratroops, which has been responsible for many of the excesses and most of the tortures committed there, has become one of the most influential bodies in the political life of the country.

A few days ago, I happened to meet, at some friends of mine, an ex-paratrooper, who had been trained by the British in 1943, had fought against the Germans, then in Indo-China, and had only been kept away from Algeria by an attack of T.B.

As he had not taken part in the Algerian war, he did not speak of what was happening there; but what he told of his past experience was interesting in that it gave one a glimpse of the paratrooper's typical mentality.

When asked, in the course of a harmless conversation, what he thought of the paratroopers' behaviour in Algeria, he immediately smelled a rat: "Ah! I know your type! You read *L'Express* too much! You don't know what you are talking about. I do, and I'll tell you something. These people, the Algerians, are just like the Indo-Chinese, they only respect brute force. If we had taught them a lesson in the beginning, we wouldn't

"Where anarchy has slain its hundreds, despotism has sacrificed millions upon millions, with this only effect, to perpetuate the ignorance, the vices, and the misery of mankind."

—WILLIAM GODWIN.

have all this trouble now." He went on to speak about his own experience of guerilla-fighting in Indo-China, where he had been taken prisoner and tortured ["Needless to say I put what they taught me to good use, later on, and 'gave it back' to them with interest, and improvements.], then proceeded to explain what he meant by "a lesson".

"One day, I found three of my men, nice young lads, murdered in a gutter. Their hearts had been ripped out, their eyelids sewn together and their testicles shoved into their mouths. What would you have done? In a case like this, there was only one thing to do. I warned the population of the village that I had ordered it to be burnt down. Some of the women (the men had gone over to the Nationalists anyway) took their children and fled. The rest did not believe me and stayed. There were 200 dead. There was no helping it. I acted on my own responsibility. I would do it again to-day, and if we had done the same in Algeria in the beginning, there would be peace by now."

The horror of this tale still haunts me to-day. What is perhaps strangest of all, however, and most disquieting for the future, is the perfectly clear conscience this man continues to enjoy.

He had nothing of the pathological "killer" about him. He had, of course, that aggressive virility which often goes with moral narrow-mindedness, and recalled with nostalgia, in front of his girl-friend, the happy times when mothers, in Indo-China, came to offer him their virgin daughters for sale—while remaining himself all the while violently opposed to any degree of sexual freedom for white women, and above all to any inter-racial marriages. Yet, as far as one could judge, he was quite a sincere and even upright man within his own terms of reference, very friendly and apparently likeable to many people.

He had enlisted during the war, "because in my family we couldn't stand the Boches", and fought for what he probably thought was a just cause. After the war, having learnt no trade, he went on fighting in Indo-China, simply because fighting had, it seems, become his job.

It may be that German and Asian atrocities, and the necessities of modern warfare in general, have suppressed or completely transformed whatever military "code of hon-

Continued on p. 3

Do No Sympathetic Readers Mind if 'Freedom' Ceases Publication?

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!
WEEK 36

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THIRD OF THE L.A.G. SUMMER SCHOOL LECTURES ON WAR AND PEACE

TO-DAY we live in an era in which rationalists, humanists and pacifists have suffered a sad defeat. They can no longer be optimistic about the future...

ruled the different political divisions of the world, although they might be ruthless, greedy and dishonest, at least they were not insane, and hence international war was a thing of the past.

Those humanist intellectuals who have looked upon war as a disease of the Nation-States and painstakingly sought for its cure, were fundamentally mistaken in their basic premises.

War was looked upon as a sickness of the Nation-States, something extraneous to their essential nature of which they must be cured, just as the human organism may be cured of disease without affecting the essential nature of the organism itself.

Realization of this fact has of course led to the campaign for World Government. The advocates of World Government say that the only way to secure a lasting peace is the establishment of a World State.

ment an entirely unrealistic business appealing to the governments of the World to do that which is utterly opposed to their intentions? On the contrary the campaign has had a strong backing in the U.S.A. by many influential people connected with the United States government.

"Until to-day throughout its entire history, the world was too vast to be conquered by a single man or by a single power. Technical means have always lagged behind the objective.

Now only, for the first time in history, the conquest of the world by a single power is a geographical, technical and military possibility.

As discoveries ended, the growth of the world was suddenly brought to a standstill. Technical developments rapidly caught up and made the globe smaller and smaller.

Modern science has made war a highly mechanized art which can be mastered only by the major industrial powers. Only three of these are left.

We see then that the campaign for World Government is in fact the campaign for world conquest, the United States of America being designated as the conquering power.

The Bolsheviks put forward a similar ideal, and we know where the seat of the supra-national authority is to be.

That a supra-national authority cannot come into being by the joint action of the sovereign Nation-States we know from the experience of the League of Nations and the less ambitious post-war project of U.N.O.

TONY GIBSON. (To be continued)

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BOOK REVIEW

Adventure in Teddy-boy Land

TEDDY BOYS' PICNIC, by Elizabeth Stucley. Blond, 16s.

THE humorous-sounding expression "Teddy Boy" has become charged with fear for many people. The cover of this book shows "teddies" in their native costume, armed with their national weapons, the knife, the razor and the bicycle chain.

The authoress took over the care of a seventeenth century house in one of the non-U districts of London. She let out part of it to lodgers, retaining the ground floor for herself and son.

should do something to help these young people and agreed.

The Adventurers' Club, as it was aptly named, lasted several years. The boys remained wild and undisciplined to the end. Elizabeth Stucley has no special theories about self-regulation and so on.

Their first camping trip, in the yellow van of course, it is almost one of the characters in the book, ended rather disastrously. The boys had never been to camp before, they despised the Boy Scouts too much to join.

Later on things got better. But she never tamed them. It was exciting but exhausting. She took them to the Tate Gallery, and they used the polished floors as slides.

As time went on they came to a better understanding of painting and architecture and drama. But it must be admitted that they really did not reach a very high level.

The dark colours of Journey into a Fog, despite the murder in the first chapter, are not repeated here. The knives are brandished, but are not plunged again. The children, when we first meet them they are mostly pre-adolescent, explore a beach and find a prehistoric monster, a new coelecanth they hope, but it turns out to be a skate.

They camp on an old motor-torpedo-boat, which had been roughly converted into a houseboat. (The boat oddly enough was attacked by country roughs, armed with shotguns. The children were away, but the owner drove them off with his own gun.)

Smile and the Advertising World Smiles with You

EVEN those of us without television are aware of the trends in advertising. The game of happy families still goes on. What seems to be a bad half hour of our time at the cinema is occupied by a danse macabre of consumers of peanuts, ice-lollies, milk-shakes, furniture, wallpaper, cars, perms, cornflakes, all madly smiling in technicolor.

Henry Morgan, an American TV comic, has this to say in the Saturday Review of Literature: This is the best of all possible electronic worlds, doc, and don't be dissuaded. Happiness is a thing called Dough, and with a smidgen of moo, you, too, can reach the euphoric Tor.

and gents bust out all over in smiles when shaving, looking at bottles of beer, and eating wonderful TV snacks made of pressed milk. Oh, the lip-smacking, the yum-yumming! The delighted tots cramming their tiny pussies with bowlsful of Sawd Ust and plenty of cream and sugar!

These indeed are the truly halcyon days. Smile at the bread that nourishes twelve ways; grin at the toothpaste containing DC-7B, the only ingredient made of real atoms; snigger along with happy "Dads" as he loses his vile headache with a compound that rips through his gastro-intestinal tract like an aspirin in orbit.

If you still feel a mite sulky, friend, consider: there is a coffee which claims it has "The most happy flavour in the USA." And the actors who drink it on TV laugh right in one another's faces.

Good night, ladies and gentlemen, and remember our slogan. . . "The night shall be filled with people grinning at our product, and the cares that infest the day are for the poor." That should bring the roses back into your deep-pore clean cheeks.

So smile, darn you, smile!

J.R.

being no actual proof that they were firing on the houseboat).

As time went on, and the boys grew older, they introduced their girls into the club. Some of these girls also carried arms. Generally though it was the rowdy ones who were to be preferred.

Eventually running the club became too exhausting, and it had to be closed. Its founder had married, and began to yearn for a more domestic life, without children all over the place.

"The Church is always saying it wants to attract the young," I said, "well here's your chance. About thirty teenagers, and all yours. A club that is a going concern."

The curate blanched and turned pale. "No, no," he cried, "I wouldn't touch them. I know your crowd. Besides, I've got plenty to do already. Why can't they join the scouts or a proper club?"

"They don't want to. They don't like rules and regulations." "Nobody," said the curate sarcastically, "would allow them to—well would put up with what you do."

So the club came to an end. But it has probably done some good. It gave the young people something to do. It gave them happiness. A feeling of being wanted somewhere. Of having status and somewhere to go where they could do as they liked, short of absolutely wrecking the place.

The truth seems to be, as one might have guessed, that most of the "teddies" are pretty harmless if well treated. They come from sordid or at least drab and uninteresting surroundings, from overcrowded flats and dull streets. Their gangs and national costume are ways of bringing colour into a colourless world, but the puritanical English have come to regard bright clothes with suspicion.

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

Reflections on the 'Riots' - and a Suggestion

Continued from p. 1
bitterness, the frustration that sex can and does cause among the races of that unhappy continent.—Yours &c.

What in fact has the colour of one's skin to do with competition in one's job or with the pleasantness or unpleasantness of one's neighbours? After all, does not the writer of the letter admit to sharing his flat with a coloured friend, so obviously it's the person inside the skin that he wants. That West Indians arrive in this country penniless is surely an indication of the miserable economic conditions in the British-controlled colony from which they have escaped and a responsibility we cannot shirk if we have a grain of honesty left in us.

As to sexual fear of coloured people, the writer has got the wrong end of the stick. In no report we have seen so far has it been suggested that white women in Nottingham or Notting Hill fear the coloured men, but many of them clearly prefer them to white men, to the annoyance of the latter, and this gives rise to the quite different problem of male jealousy.

THAT a handful of Teddy Boys can stir up the trouble they have is less a reflection on the efficiency of the police force to "keep order" than a sad commentary on the general public's confused feelings on the problems of colour prejudice, which amount to a kind of passive support of the riots. In some cases it is more than passive. The chairman of the Nottingham magistrates' court, for instance, commented that

It is despicable that, when the police are handling a desperate situation, the public can do no better than to obstruct them and actually take sides with the rowdies.

Like so many social problems of the day there is no easy solution. The *New Statesman* suggests that

This is one of those rare instances where exemplary fines and sentences can act as an effective deterrent. Youths who regard colour-baiting as a new and cheap form of entertainment should be made to realise that they indulge in it at their peril. Those who consciously encourage and exploit such behaviour must be treated even more severely. We have cited evidence that the British Fascists are at work in the Notting Hill districts. Such activities will undoubtedly spread to other danger areas unless these political hooligans are quickly taught that excitement to riot is a serious offence.

Perhaps the N.S. pins its hopes on the deterrent value of imprisonment on this occasion (and for the rest of the year publishes documented articles to show that prisons breed criminals) because it also believes that "virtually all educated people in this country deplore colour prejudice". But whatever they may feel intellectually are they free from colour prejudice when it comes to the point? The letter we reported above came from an educated man. Lord Salisbury is an educated man as is Mr. Rogers, Labour M.P. for Kensington North.† Do they strike one as being free from colour prejudice?

PERHAPS this is an occasion when a public demonstration by individuals who neither feel nor think in terms of colour under any circumstances, could be of value.

†Mr. Rogers after his meeting with Mr. Renton, the Joint Under-Secretary at the Home Office, said that he had told Mr. Renton that it was wrong to say this trouble had been started by hooligans. It was the reaction of people, very sorely tried by some sections of the coloured population.

Mr. Rogers objected to the unrestricted

OUT OF SEASON

These reflections on the psychology of political motivation are quoted from a long article by Robin Marris in the September issue of *Encounter*, under the title "Socialist Thoughts Out of Season".

THE basic problem of the radical in any society is to find enough allies to be politically effective. Social psychologists have long been aware of a general personality trait which may be described loosely as "radicalism," to be contrasted with small-c "conservatism," varying from individual to individual and seeming to govern his complex of political attitudes. In other words, a person who holds radical views in one field, say penology, is likely to hold them in others, such as socialism-versus-capitalism, religion-versus-free thought, or sex. In addition, such a person is likely to be less ethnocentric than other persons, which means that he is less likely to be anti-Semitic, colour-prejudiced, or nationalistic (quiet pride in national achievement is not a form of ethnocentricity). All this, of course, accords pretty well with common observation, but the replies to questionnaires which have been devised to measure individual radicalism have shown something which is not quite so obvious—that most people are pretty conservative. It has been found that the only significant group of natural radicals in this country, apart from Communists and other eccentrics, are the middle-class people who vote Labour. This is the only group in which the "radical" reply was received from at least 50 per cent of the respondents to all of a wide range of questions covering race prejudice, nationalism, hanging, flogging, corporal punishment for children, religion, religious education, Sunday observance, divorce, trial marriage, abortion and private property. But these people, who, needless to say, I regard as the backbone of the country, apparently represent no more than about one twentieth of the total electorate: a statistic whose implications remain virtually unaffected by the appearance of a minute group of radical Tories.

Of the conservative majority, the most conservative of all, as is well known, are the working-class Tories. They are in

But such a demonstration must not be organised (nor allowed to be "captured") by the political parties nor by the opportunists of the Left. To be effective it must stem from small beginnings and take its time to grow. There is, after all, no desperate hurry; the problem of colour prejudice has been with us a long time and in spite of recent statements from Downing Street and Bournemouth will be with us for some time yet!

The objectives of such a demonstration must be clear and unequivocal. We must not fall into the error of encouraging a colour prejudice in reverse which creates as many new problems as it solves. We must express our solidarity with the coloured immigrants of this country as ordinary human beings with the same rights as the other 50 million inhabitants of this island; we must help them to help themselves by suggesting methods of defence against the racials and Teddy Boys which avoid the violence used by their would-be persecutors. We must encourage them to respect the rights of the "minority" in those districts where they are in a majority. And, finally, we must encourage in them a healthy distrust of the sharks and exploiters in their midst.

What do you think of the proposal?

ted licensing of derelict basements as clubs, which he said were used for vice. . . . Action should be taken, he added, to limit the number of coloured people who settled in an overcrowded area such as this.

Mr. Rogers thought the British Government should find out before people left the West Indies whether they had criminal records, and whether they had jobs and accommodation waiting for them in Britain. He wanted the Government to take power to deport immigrants who had committed crimes in this country. Mr. Rogers also protested that when he had tried two days earlier to see Mr. Butler he had been told that the Home Secretary was not available.

general the greatest floggers, hangers, beaters of children, fearers of Jews, repressors of sex, despisers of black men, and protectors of the rights of private property in the whole nation. However, the qualification, "in general" is important, for as we shall see, on some of these questions they appear to be outdone in nasty-mindedness by their fellow voters in the middle classes. (An example in point is colour prejudice: Mr. John Profumo knew what he was talking about when he lamented that colonial students coming to Britain seemed to make more friends among Labour people than among Conservatives.) Another thing about working-class Conservatives, perhaps the most interesting, is that they are apparently more religious than any other group, even more so than middle-class Conservatives. Religion apart, however, the attitudes displayed by working-class Conservatives are—let us face it—very much what one would expect from the facts of the working-class environment, especially before the war. Ethnocentricity is essentially a childish attribute, needing a positive educational stimulus to remove it: many manual workers, even to-day, have received insufficient education for the purpose. Similarly, crude methods of disciplining children are the natural response of overworked parents in overcrowded homes, and these in turn lead directly to crude retributive views about adult penology. The latter are reinforced by the fact that the disputed punishments (hanging and flogging) relate specifically to crimes against the person, to which the working classes are more exposed than to crimes against property.

IT is not surprising that, given their environment, some sections of the working classes are ethnocentric and generally nasty-minded, and presumably there is inevitably a time lag between any improvement of the environment and change of attitudes. But it is surprising that the Labour Party should have persuaded so many others to adopt non-conservative attitudes towards a number of important issues, not all of which arise from direct economic class interest. It is also surprising (or would be to a man from Mars) to find that despite their educational and material advantages, the great bulk of the middle classes are little less nasty-minded than their working-class brethren. Not only do the middle classes overwhelmingly vote Conservative, but they are as a whole almost as hot on hanging, flogging, discriminating against Jews and black men as the Conservative working classes, and only a little less religious. Mr. H. J. Eysenck's* now ten-year-old data on these points are annually reconfirmed by the sounds which emanate from the conference of Conservative Women; also by the unpopularity which Conservative M.P.s who supported the abolition of capital punishment experienced in their constitu-

encies: to have been an abolitionist is almost as bad as to have been an anti-Suez, and to have been both together leads to Bournemouth West. Presumably the radical potentialities of the middle-class material environment are suppressed by a cultural environment born of vested interest in the status quo: child-rearing practices and educational institutions are specifically developed to militate against radical tendencies which might otherwise endanger class survival. This all sounds rather crude and Marxian but I know of no other explanation, and presumably it is the characteristic of top-dog classes through the ages, though there is some indication that things are different in America.

THE combination of environmentally-produced conservatism in the lower orders, with culturally-produced conservatism in the upper, inevitably attenuates the possibility of effective radical politics. To succeed in becoming an effective force, radicals must persuade a frustrated class that its interests and aspirations can only be achieved by radical changes: hence the theory of the Party of Protest. This is precisely what the Labour Party did for the British working classes. Middle-class radicals, allied with powerful personalities of working-class origin who by fighting their way up the educational ladder rid themselves of some of their natural conservatism, persuaded a large section of the working-class electorate to support not only a programme of self-interested economic radicalism but also to repress their conservative attitudes in other fields as well. Thus by 1945, working-class socialists, besides voting Labour and being laudably irreligious, were also, at least in principle, less anti-Semitic and less anti-black than were Conservatives. Since then the colour question has become a more real issue in the home country, but nevertheless a considerable divergence of working-class feeling evidently persists,

*H. J. Eysenck, *The Psychology of Politics*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1954.

Paratroopers Eyevue

Continued from p. 1
our" might have survived until the last war. The fact is that, confronted with the enemy's ruthlessness, his business had become the business of killing, his brutality being justified, and his conscience cleared, by the enemy's own cruelty. True enough, he was aware of the corruption of French administration and quoted himself many examples of it*. But that was a completely different matter, and of no concern to him, who at the time was there to fight—to hit back and hit harder.

A Reminder on Racial Prejudice

Just a year ago the following paragraphs appeared in a FREEDOM editorial on the Roots of Racism (now reprinted in Volume 7 of "Freedom Selections") which are a reminder that whatever may be said of the official line regarding the absence of racial prejudice, in practice it operates every day without much protest from the top—or the bottom for that matter.

ON the cross-channel steamer from Boulogne to Folkestone last Thursday week the "Class" system, which is so rigidly adhered to even when the boat is loaded to capacity, and a thousand second-class passengers are squeezed into the rear half of the ship, while the 300 "First" enjoy the spacious lounges and the padded seats of the other half—last Thursday, the "Class" system was dropped though less than five hundred travellers boarded the ship.

The reason was not far to seek. On that Thursday there was a third class: some hundreds of West Indian immigrants who had arrived on an earlier

train from Genoa were in occupation of the rear end of the ship, and British Railways, normally so zealous in extracting the excess fifteen shillings from those who dare to cross the line which divides their ships as obviously as the paint line divides a newly decorated semi-detached house from its shabby neighbour, felt unable to insist that we second class whites be herded with these third class citizens who are British, yes, but BLACK! So for a brief hour and a half (white) mankind was united as one . . . against the black invasion. The "class" line was replaced by a "race" line, an invisible but effective barrier to fraternization. And as the ship tied up at Folkestone the loudspeakers told the "West Indian party" that they should remain on board until the other passengers had disembarked as "special arrangements have been made for your journey to London." It mattered little to British Transport that our train was three parts empty when it left Folkestone. What mattered was to make clear to all, that there are only two classes in Britain . . . except when there are three!

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and I strongly suspect it is associated with political affiliation.

I do not know whether the lesser degrees of race prejudice which apparently exists among working-class Labour voters is due to natural inclination or to moral propaganda. Is it that working people with a natural leaning to ideas of brotherly love (coloured people and Jews being included as brothers) are thereby attracted to the Labour Party, or is it that they are normal persons who, having identified themselves with what is in essence a humanistic cause, bravely suppress certain natural prejudices as a matter of duty? The point is vital, because it may be observed that on all other questions (except religion) on which at the time of asking there was no official or semi-official Labour Party line, working-class socialists exhibited attitudes which were very much nearer to those of working- and middle-class Conservatives than of middle-class socialists. Thus, on enquiry, they proved as keen on hanging as any group, and only a little less keen on flogging than working-class Conservatives (who were nearly 100 per cent solid on this issue). They were conservative about sex and only 40 per cent of them did not agree that sparing the rod spoils the child. Significantly, unlike middle-class socialists, only a small fraction agreed that in an ideal society private property should be abolished and all goods held in common. Finally, of great practical importance—although, as we have seen, they suffered less from race prejudice—they had by no means dropped all the ethnocentric attitudes natural to the environment; the majority believed that war was inherent in human nature, were anti-internationalist, and refused to accept that in the modern world patriotism was a force which could sometimes work against peace. These findings are confirmed by common observation and by the Labour Party's own misfortunes over Suez and Cyprus. . . .

For, in effect, a radical party can, and does, overcome the internal contradictions of its political psychology by getting the majority of its supporters into a state of mind where voting for the party in question no longer seems a particularly radical act.

The conditions of war had thus gradually transformed what could have been a normal young "citizen" into a kind of unquestioning, self-righteous, blue-eyed murderer.

The tragic thing is that this same process, which seems to be irresistible, is constantly at work in Algeria—where any youth can be changed into a killer by the sheer logic of a policy of reprisals, and by the intense brain-washing of the Army's psychological services. This type of man will no longer be, as now, a rarity in France within a few months' time. More dangerous still is the neo-fascist aggressiveness of those who come back. The main political activity of this ex-paratrooper was, in his own words, "foutre le bordel dans les réunions de gauche" (violent obstruction of Left-wing public meetings)—just as the Nazis did before 1933. So that there are potentially as many S.S. in the French population today as there were in Germany 25 years ago.

Whatever hopes might have been entertained that the prolongation of the war would open the eyes of the para-troopers, as well as of the rank-and-file, appear now to be completely dashed: far from leading them to question the aims and methods of the war, to realize its absurdity, the stagnation of the conflict has driven the majority to resent the constant hesitations of the French government and its political defeats as humiliations inflicted on the army. The success of the Algiers rebellion, last May, and de Gaulle's return to power have shown but too clearly to what dictatorial purpose this discontent can and will be exploited. Now, the paratroopers have become, according to the Right-wing press, the new elite of the nation, the strong arm and torch-bearer of our "regenerated" State: the gloomy shadow which they cast threatens to expand all over the political life of the country—and soon, perhaps, over our personal lives as well. C.D.

*To-day he is even in favour of independence for Algeria: "It's their country. Let them have it."

