

# An Anglo-American Dilemma

Lionel Gelber

The people of Britain will soon vote on Britain's terms of entry into the European Economic Community. Although the consequences of that referendum will be highly significant, it is difficult to predict the outcome of the balloting. It is possible, however, to anticipate what some of the consequences will be if the British accept the renegotiated terms of entry.

For Britain, Community membership may entail diminution of her own sovereignty; a weakening of the valuable Anglo-American relation; the creation of a neutralist, anti-American Third Force; and a dislocation of the British economy. Each of these must be very seriously evaluated before the vote is taken, before the die is cast.

Indecisive though her people have been, Britain has a second hour of decision. There will, on this topic, be no third. Those who oppose readherence to the European Community have always been disparaged as Little Englanders. But a political credo of Europe First may be as parochial for Britain today as America First once was for the United States.

The British housewife and the average man generally assess so complicated a project by its effect on the cost of living. A handful of parliamentarians, Left, Right, and Center, have had an opportunity to explain that much else is also involved; but other serious critics on both sides of the Atlantic have not been able to obtain an adequate hearing. The fact is that Britain has had too much on her plate—from the civil war in Northern Ireland, by which England itself is now afflicted, to the class war which so hampers British industrial productivity. Yet now she must examine a series of vital questions.

Demands for international cooperation, which lies behind the Community, are increasing. Such cooperation inevitably entails some loss of national sovereignty. But Community membership may forbid the British people from modifying that sovereignty through their own representative institutions, by

democratic consent. Voluntary cooperation is one thing; involuntary coordination quite another. Other major Community members do not have the same governmental traditions as Britain. Britain's cannot be flouted without loss. Nor, as a member of the Community, could Britain be the valuable partner in the Anglo-American relation, playing a role that no other country could. Let us recall, in this respect, some events of recent years.

The pioneers of the Community envisaged for it a many-sided status. They proclaimed that success in trade could entitle it to speak as an equal to the lords of the earth and even be numbered among them. Yet the EEC is unable to stand fully on its own feet. It has been made secure by the North Atlantic Alliance with the United States in the van and by other non-European means, American and Canadian. There may be grave trouble in the West before the Community can stand by itself. Nevertheless, what happened during the fall of 1973?

In the autumn of 1973 America's major European allies—nations whose safety is underpinned by the United States—withheld from the U.S. facilities for an airlift to the Middle East. Portugal alone enabled that airlift to proceed and, if no American base in the Azores is available on another similar occasion, a substitute will have to be obtained. Certainly it is imperative for the West that Russia, operating through Arab client states, be denied a more solid footing in the Middle East. But through its diffidence Western Europe did not do what it might have done to forestall an oil embargo. In letting down the United States over the Middle East it might have badly shaken its own defense. But the chance of such a result did not appear to bother major West European capitals.

What did this brief episode signify? Despite preliminary anti-Israel talks within the European Community, it might have arisen from an accidental misunderstanding. It might also have been a spontaneous clue to an ever recurrent tension between the United States and her European allies. By refusing facilities for an airlift the chief European allies of the United States were (apparently) doing what comes naturally. For the U.S., as leader of the West,

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LIONEL GELBER is author of *The Alliance of Necessity* and of numerous essays on the subject of economic community that have appeared in books and magazines on several continents.

this mortifying experience raised an unanticipated danger. Even loosely knit, the European Community may serve as a neutralist, anti-American Third Force. Before it congeals institutionally it can, through a neo-Gaullist regional consensus, still dislocate the West.

There is, however, the possibility of a countervailing process. We have only to consider World War I and its dire sequel—crucial times when English-speaking allies fought side by side in 1917-18 and, after Pearl Harbor, did even more together. As a positive accomplishment the Anglo-American factor which emerged at the turn of the century was, for the next fifty years, the most important of modern diplomacy. Fashionable historians either ignored it or long failed to set it in full perspective. Much that put scattered peoples all over the world in touch with each other was taken for granted. A Pax Britannica had kept the seas open since the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte and thus allowed many non-European countries either to achieve independence or move toward it. Only in such a world order was the United States able to concentrate on her own expansion. There existed between the English-speaking peoples a special relationship quite a few decades before its great advocate, Winston Churchill, coined the phrase. The foundations were laid for a trans-Atlantic power structure in the West, but one that must always have a profound sense of mutuality.

No longer can defense be planned within traditional frontiers. Two European wars during the first half of the twentieth century demolished the classic balance of power. There is now a global balance that keeps two coalitions led by nuclear-armed superpowers, one Eurasian and one North American, at bay. Yet the West should never let itself be harassed by intramural anxieties as its gargantuan rival; as distressed as the USSR is by China and by the captive states of the Soviet imperium. If the West allows this, if the power structure of the West deteriorates, its capacity to hold its own may diminish irreparably. That is why even the faintest glimmering of a Third Force should have stirred more unease than it did in 1973. The West did not build up its power structure overnight. The toll, in blood and treasure, has been an incalculable one over many generations.

Nevertheless, in an approach that could be self-defeating the United States itself has long urged a European Community enlarged through Britain's entry. A curious anomaly lies at the heart of American promptings. Many feel the Anglo-American factor is outdated, yet its persistence is assumed. Before the Bonn Republic overshadowed France, Americans (and the Community's own lesser components as well) fancied that, as a counterpoise, Britain could shift back and forth. With the Anglo-American factor as a postulate, that is to say, it would maintain in the Community a pro-American stance. But how will

Britain do this if, against the rest, Paris and Bonn exercise joint control? And what will Britain gain if she finally renounces her untrammelled oceanic heritage for the irksome constraints of a continental role?

The wise policy for Britain is thus the reserve of that which her own allies have exhorted her to adopt. Recent statements by Secretary Kissinger suggest that, under President Ford, Washington has been shedding illusions about Western Europe that it had cherished for many years. Britain has more to do now than engage in perpetual controversy (or, as a member of the Community, to reckon constantly with a neutralist, Third Force anti-American potential which some or all of that entity may generate). We have seen how the EEC can express itself in a regional consensus even before Community institutions have matured. What will Britain let herself in for as a permanent member of the European Community? Where will she be dragged along?

France and the Bonn Republic, of course, carry most weight within the Community. If it is essential that the power structure of the West be preserved, any differences, in attitude between them or between them and the U.S. should be singled out.

Toward the end of 1974 there was a meeting at Martinique between the Presidents of France and the United States which could have clarified what the British people, by revalidating its membership in the EEC, will ceaselessly be up against. In the news reporting of that conclave dissension was played down. France and the United States had, for once, heads of state who were well-disposed toward each other. Messrs. Ford and Giscard even concurred over a dialogue with oil producers and over how petrodollars should be handled. France, nevertheless, is only to exchange information with the International Energy Agency and its sixteen members; she will not join it. Now it is her Arab friends who must not be offended. But even French antineutralists have long purveyed a neutralism of their own.

In France every President must so rely on Gaullist and other anti-American support that no Atlanticist President, if M. Giscard is one, dare voice his own convictions. And the situation would be the same if M. François Mitterand, with or without Communist backing, were ever invited by M. Giscard to form a government. Dissatisfaction in the French Army, moreover, accentuates an underlying French instability—an instability which, through Community ties, may affect Britain more than it does non-Community signatories of the North Atlantic Alliance. In 1968 the French Army saved the regime of Charles de Gaulle from social unrest. That it would do anything like this again is now doubted even by General Boissieu, his own son-in-law and presently Army Chief of Staff. The French Army wants France to spend less on nuclear weapons and more on itself.

If French troops prefer coordination with allies, they may also be restive over the fact that none of them share in that forward defense of the Western front on which their own countries depend.

Then there is the Bonn Republic. It gravitated toward the West strategically under the auspices of the North Atlantic Alliance, and to that Britain has been making her contribution. The EEC rounds out the job in other spheres, but does not require Britain as a member. And while the Bonn Republic may be less awkward than France to get on with, it too offers a clouded picture.

Under her constitution West Germany still pursues that reunion with East Germany which only a deal with Russia can provide. Yet against a Soviet advance to the Atlantic, the Bonn Republic is nowadays the chief European bastion. As long as Russia has China to preoccupy her in East Asia a greater Germany in Central Europe is not in the cards. The idea might be revived, though, if there were a post-Mao reconciliation between Peking and Moscow. To have the two Germanies reunified but neutralized would again be the Kremlin's minimal formula. The Soviet Union could thus break up the North Atlantic Alliance and remove from the West the West European sector of the global balance—one for which, in a global contest, rival camps vie most. Nor could such a disaster be resisted by the North Atlantic Alliance with nuclear weapons. That would only erase Western Europe from the map when, for both sides, the purpose of the struggle is to get it or keep it as it is.

But even if Moscow leaves the European status quo unaltered, the Bonn Republic may not always be consistent. During August, 1974, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt granted Italy's floundering economy a loan which, it was believed, might further exclude Communists (the most effective of Italian political parties) from office. Yet as neutralism penetrates and weakens the southern flank of the North Atlantic Alliance, there have also been indications that West Germany would do less than ever to expedite another wartime passage of American supplies to the Middle East. The need for Arab oil clearly intimidates Western Europe more than the threat of Soviet missiles and, as Bonn emulates Paris, cooperation in the West may dwindle.

Britain, with oil from the North Sea, will have no such excuse. She too begrudged the use of British facilities for the American airlift to the Middle East in 1973. With new Ministers at Downing Street, this might not happen again, for the global stakes are too vast. Even now, though, Community transactions imply logrolling and bargains struck between components of the EEC. Once Britain is enmeshed with them beyond recall she must adapt her priorities accordingly. And neither for Britain nor the West is the prospect reassuring. Neither could anything go as much against the grain as for Britain to let itself

become a mere outer island province of a semicontinental grouping and to do so irrevocably.

There are, after all, alternatives to such a fate. Now that the American Congress has passed the Trade Reform Act, GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) may conduct fresh negotiations for liberalized trade. A few years must pass before anybody can determine what the result will be. One observation might be made, however. No upheaval in Britain's status—like EEC membership—will overcome her trade deficits. If Britain is to benefit from any new treaty negotiations, she must take West Germany as an example, a country where concord between employees and employers, with unions and management in consultation, did most (until the present economic setback) to ensure productivity. But even now there is business to be done with EFTA (the European Free Trade Association), which at one juncture revolved around Britain and which consists of smaller European countries that have not joined the EEC. Nor can the Community itself debar British goods, less privileged though their tariff charges may be, if it signs a new universal treaty for freer trade. This must be stressed even as one acknowledges that such a pact will not be easy to achieve.

Two other questions must be touched upon. Western Europe, it has often been claimed, will offer British manufactures the biggest available outlet for sales. But the argument for the European Community as a home market loses some of its thrust when the Bonn Republic, successful at stemming inflation, is suffering from unemployment and when in France inflation as well as unemployment is rife. Certainly trade statistics demonstrate that Britain's chief markets are still well beyond the European Community and not solely within it.

In addition, if trade barriers are lowered further, would Britain be exposed to a flood of imports from the United States, Japan, and the EEC itself? She well might. But reciprocal trade competition with countries of the European Community is, in any case, a prerequisite for Community membership. The advantage of freer trade with yet more industrial countries is, of course, that all other great markets will be as open to British sales. And there is always the plight of poor countries for richer ones to consider.

Britain, infirm though it is at the moment, may not always be in such a condition. Yet as a member of the EEC she would not only lose political and strategic autonomy; there is also the possibility the EEC might wrest rights to Britain's North Sea oil. The European Community, now dependent on oil from the Persian Gulf, is vulnerable to that region's primitive codes, while Britain, with Norway, is happily more detached. A Community that must live on bended knees, or which tries to exploit its own ignominy, should be as circumscribed as possible. And that is another reason for Britain to stay aloof.