

AMERICA and BRITAIN

THIS ISSUE explores an international relationship of long standing which is at present undergoing considerable strain.

Just fifty years ago Theodore Roosevelt was writing of Anglo-American friendship that "we must try to foster it, but not by hothouse methods." The editors of *The Saturday Review of Literature* are eager to foster that friendship, but do not believe that hothouse methods—a phrase which embraces a good deal of official propaganda on both sides—are ever very effective. They believe rather that understanding and cooperation are the products of necessity and of knowledge, and that the more the American and the English peoples know about each other the livelier will be their appreciation of their common heritage and their common destiny.

Anglo-American relations, as both Sir Oliver Franks and Professor Denis Brogan point out in the pages that follow, have for a century and a half been something like a chart of undulant fever; they are always having their ups and downs. Crisis after crisis seems to afflict the relationship: two wars which left a heritage of suspicion and misunderstanding, the Oregon dispute, the Trent crisis, the Alabama claims, the Venezuela boundary dispute, the Panama Canal tolls question, the eternal Irish question, and a score others. What other peoples bicker and quarrel so regularly—and are so regularly reconciled? For somehow the quarrels are always patched up, the recurrent crises always resolved.

The student, looking back over the history of this stormy relationship, must conclude that on the whole the ups predominate over the downs, that certainly in modern times Britain and America have been partners, and that the ability of the relationship to survive the buffetings to which it is exposed proves that it is deeply rooted, logical, and tenacious.

Against this background of the triumph of harmony over discord, current differences over such matters as, for example, British recognition of Communist China or American overtures to General Franco's Spain seem negligible enough. We might be tempted to say of

these and other comparable misunderstandings what Longfellow wrote in the "Building of the Ship":

Fear not each sudden sound and shock
'Tis of the wave and not the rock,
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!

Surely the historian, a century from now, will accord little attention to present differences!

Yet it is by no means clear that we can take refuge in the comfortable assurance that the present crisis will pass just because all previous crises have passed, and that we need not be overly anxious about the consequences of even a temporary breach between the two great English-speaking peoples. Never before, except in the fateful years 1939-1941, were the issues confronting these peoples so prodigious, never before was time so pressing. The nineteenth century, after all, could afford the luxury of misunderstanding, confident that reason would triumph over unreason, and that all would come right in the end. But we can no longer console ourselves with such naive reflections. We have no assurance that time will be given us to iron out present differences and fashion common policies; we are not even sure that there will be an historian, a century from now, to chronicle the outcome of the present crisis. In short our generation cannot afford the kind of irresponsibility to which Sir Oliver and Professor Brogan both refer.

The editors of *The Saturday Review* believe that the long-standing partnership of America and Britain is founded not primarily on sentiment, but on common interest, common experience, common values, and a common faith, and that as long as the American and the British peoples cherish their traditional values and sustain their faith the partnership will flourish. To the prosperity of that partnership this issue of *The Saturday Review of Literature* is dedicated.

HENRY STEELE COMMAGER,
Guest Editor.

BACKGROUND FOR PARTNERSHIP

1. A Declaration of Interdependence

SIR OLIVER FRANKS



—Harris & Ewing.

ONE hundred and seventy-five years ago Thomas Jefferson wrote into the Declaration of Independence the principles of democracy. With the passage of time the principles have gained a wider sig-

nificance: they have been accepted as a Declaration of the Independence of Man. The great truths they proclaim still hold good, but today their application has to take into account the division of the world and the threat of expansionist, aggressive Communism. It has become apparent that the liberty of man is dependent upon his ability to resist aggression.

The division of the world by the Iron Curtain has thrown into sharp relief yet another basic truth: that upon the close and fraternal association of the United States of America and the British Commonwealth of Nations rests the hope and destiny of the free world. The inner strength on which this association depends is the relationship between the United States and Britain. In its long history, its emotional complexity, and the firmness and strength it has developed with the years this relationship is unique.

Good relations, close relations between any two governments or peoples one would normally regard as an excellent thing. Any relationship between countries which helps to strengthen the delicate fabric of international life and promote understanding and trust across national frontiers is to the good. Why do Anglo-Ameri-

can relations matter so much? Why does any strain in the relationship between the United States and Britain and the British Commonwealth immediately arouse concern among many on both sides of the Atlantic, people in the United States, in Britain, in the other countries of the Commonwealth, and among many too who are citizens of nations outside this great group? Why is it taken for granted that a special and particular importance attaches to good and close relations within the English-speaking world?

In one quarter the fundamental importance of the firm relationship between the United States and Britain, of the close association of the English-speaking peoples, has never been doubted all through the troubled years which have succeeded World War II. At first sight it is perhaps an unexpected quarter: it is that of expansionist, aggressive Communism. At all times it has been completely clear to the Communists that there is one supreme obstacle across their path of expansion, one unyielding force which has blocked any easy success for their policies, their tactics, and their ideas.

They have concentrated their attack on the Anglo-American partnership in world affairs, dubbed for purposes of propaganda the partnership of the "Anglo-American capitalists and imperialists." They have sought by every means in their power to divide Britain and the United States, to weaken and, if possible, destroy their working partnership in the grand design to preserve the sanity and freedom of the world. To them, at least, Anglo-American relations are fundamental to the course of human affairs.

What do the Communists see that is so dangerous to their designs and that warrants so sustained and concentrated an attack? They see a great combination of spiritual and material power, bound together by strong ties and dedicated to a range of values and

a way of life different from and inimical to those habits of thinking and living which dominate the Communist totalitarian state. The Anglo-American relationship is rooted in a common heritage of very simple ideas, laboriously worked out and applied over the centuries to the pattern of living. The key ideas of Western civilization—the unique quality of the individual human life, liberty, justice, and the rule of law—all these have slowly, by painful experiment and at times by costly sacrifice, become part and parcel of the social structure and background of the individual life. From them has flowed the inspiration which has led to the gradual achievement of political democracy. From Magna Carta on there is a glorious story of experiment and innovation, of learning the greatest and most difficult thing in the political life of nations, the art of responsible government. The process is never perfected, for like all life it faces the alternatives of advance or decay. Effort, patience, ingenuity, modification are the continuous price of the democratic process.

IT IS from these roots that the English-speaking peoples have developed. Thanks to their common heritage and the use made of it, the United States, Britain, and other countries of the British Commonwealth are the homes of free men with free ideas living in free societies. It is with reason that the Communists distrust this long tradition, the steady development and the deep and passionate attachment of the British and American peoples to the great freedoms that they have written so deep into their institutions. This spirit is the strongest thing in the world: it is what makes the partnership between Britain and America the sure foundation of the defense of freedom.

Out of these nations has come a great revolution in man's control over nature. Scientific discovery, technical

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