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COMMENTS

Latin America

First Contacts with the EEC

On January 19, trade talks began between the EEC Commission and Argentina. The aim of the negotiations is the conclusion of a non-preferential trade agreement. It is intended that there will be arrangements within this trade agreement of special importance for Argentina's export, among other things of beef. Talks about a trade agreement with Uruguay are already envisaged, and loose contacts with other nations planned. As a further contribution towards better relations with Latin America the Community has decided to bring forward by one full year the last Kennedy round of tariff reductions that was due on January 1, 1972, to New Year's Day of 1971.

The EEC has thus very quickly and positively responded to the Buenos Aires declaration of July, 1970, in which the Latin American countries asked for an intensification of mutual relations. Nearly all governments have welcomed the EEC's readiness to stimulate the co-operation between the two groups of countries. But it would be a mistake for the developing countries in Latin America to stake unduly high hopes in this co-operation because of the fact that, in view of the growing criticism particularly by the USA, it will be quite impossible for the EEC to extend its preferential policies in the Mediterranean area and in Africa now also to Latin America. It is therefore the task of Professor Dahrendorf, the responsible member of the European Commission for external relations, to warn the Latin American countries not to expect too much. Exaggerated hopes could prove unrealisable and thus result in negative reactions apt to cast their shadows over the initiated improved relationship.

crm.

Pakistan

On the Road towards Progress?

The elections for the constituent National Assembly in Pakistan were, at least in East Pakistan, entirely under the influence of the impact of the devastating consequences of the century's worst flood catastrophe. Wherever electioneering did not convince, the catastrophe did: the East Pakistanis felt once more thoroughly left in the lurch by the Central Government. The advocates of partition gained in weightiness, and Sheikh Majibuz Rahman with his Awami-Legion obtained the absolute majority in the Central Parlia-

ment, which was generally commented upon as a sensation. The graves on the Gulf of Bengal threatened to become the grave of Pakistan unity.

All the while, Rahman was wise enough not to exploit the euphoria of the first hours for the separation of East Pakistan from the rest of the country. For the same reason that West Pakistan would, in the opinion of many, welcome a secession of Bengal, or at least not oppose a declaration of independence of Pakistan's eastern part by force, co-operation with the western part works out to East Pakistan's advantage. The majority in the Central Parliament offers the chance of intensifying the utilisation of West Pakistan's economic strength for the development of the eastern part.

Pakistan which finds it difficult to keep its head above water should less than ever feel inclined to invest in fancy prestige undertakings, such as the new capital, Islamabad. The most urgent problems which should at long last now be tackled are found in the hitherto much neglected eastern part of the country: regulation of the three big rivers, adequate protection of the coast line and intensified industrialisation so that it will become possible for East Pakistan, too, to participate in the country's progress. Rahman's most difficult task will, however, be to rid the population in his region of the fatal fatalism.

divo.

Europe

Waiting for Britain

It has been reported more frequently in recent weeks and months that Great Britain intends to withdraw from European large-scale projects or even refrain from participations in the first place. So, the British Government under Premier Edward Heath follows the line not to help finance the new projects of CERN, the European Nuclear Research Centre. The United Kingdom will furthermore not take part in the European Airbus project. London has also given up a participation in the American "Post-Appollo-Programme".

Many convinced Europeans believe that London could best display its preparedness for co-operation in Europe by financial participation in common scientific and technical large-scale projects. But economic difficulties render a deeper engagement of the British Isles on the Continent of Europe impossible. The price that had to be paid for overcoming the balance of payments crisis

was higher unemployment. Although the rate of unemployment in Britain is, in comparison to Germany, now inconceivably high, the level of prices continued to rise at the same rate as before. These are symptoms of structural weakness of the British economy; a weakness shown even by the "national monument", Rolls-Royce. It is therefore quite understandable that London tries first of all to solve its national problems. It seems fairly certain that in the event of a positive outcome of the EEC-entry negotiations, the question of participations will be investigated anew.

The projects mentioned above are of great technical and scientific importance for Europe. Only by common endeavours will it be possible to avoid that the lead of the USA and the Soviet Union in these fields will become even greater. It is therefore to be hoped that the tiresome bargaining at the negotiations for Britain's EEC-entry will soon come to an end and that Britain will then consistently steer the European course also in the field of technical and scientific operation. ma.

Far East

Deeds Must Follow

The journey by the Head of the Roman Catholic Church to Teheran, the Philippines, Australia and Hongkong was an excursion into the world of Catholic minorities. Additional accents were provided by rumours about a meeting with Mao, an attempted murder in the Philippines and an one-hour sojourn in the catastrophe region of East Pakistan. It remains to be seen whether the journey has brought the "menfisher and missionary", Paul VI., nearer the yearned-for objective. The moral and political authority of the Catholic church is under attack, not only in Europe. Appeals, regardless of their origin, sound hollow and in themselves do not show a useful way towards peace and justice in the world. Pomp and splendour spread with the Pope's visit, however, without one hungry person being helped. The Pope's visit resembled the pattern of official visits by heads of State or the goodwill tour of the heroes of space travel rather than a missionary journey.

True, though, a solution of all problems cannot reasonably be demanded from the Catholic church any more than from any spiritual power. But this should and must not lead to a flight from the world. The ethical obligations of the churches, to the contrary, call for a functioning of the

churches in this world of ours. Visible deeds must now follow in the wake of the Pope's visits lest the Catholic church jeopardise its own work in the Far East and run the danger of it becoming the victim of oblivion. Spectacular scenes and mass demonstrations are a long way from securing the future of the Church. mk.

Poland

A Sad Inheritance

Hardly a fortnight after reaching the climax of his political career, the conclusion of the Agreement between Germany and Poland, Wladyslaw Gomulka, was overthrown by the very same workers who, after the unrest of October 1956, had carried him to the leadership of the Polish Communist party and celebrated him as the country's saviour. It is not bare of a tinge of irony that the workers' demands last December exactly resembled those they had fought for sixteen years ago: foremostly the desire for more bread. Even a party chief of the political calibre and popularity of a Gomulka could in the long run not escape the consequences of the system-immanent complexity of a planned economy such as prevails in Communist countries.

For many years Poland's economy—similar to that in other East European countries—has been in a permanent crisis of adjustment and structure. It is true, Poland succeeded during the last 25 years in developing from an agricultural and commodity producing country to an industrial one, occupying today the tenth place among the industrial nations. But industry in Poland generally works at rather low profitability, and its rate of manpower employed is too high. Furthermore, the productivity of agriculture has, during this period of a quarter of a century, worsened rather than improved.

Hidden unemployment of considerable size and agriculture able to exist only on the strength of high subsidies, are the sad inheritance of the new party leader, Edward Gierek. He, too, was unable to reverse economically necessary higher food prices which were the cause of the December riots, but found himself in a position merely to lessen the effect of higher prices for the lower wages' brackets by means of a programme of economic reliefs for the section of the population with the smallest income. But the hope remains for the Polish people that Gierek, who ranks as an expert economist, will be able better than his predecessor to accomplish the essential reforms of the Polish economy once again on the programme for 1971. kw.