

THE ARGUMENT as well as the subject of Oliver Smedley's new booklet is well indicated by the title: *Out! UK in EEC spells DISASTER* (Classic Press Ltd; 79 pp.).

Oliver Smedley is a man of great personal and political courage. Wartime MC, a persistent Liberal candidate in the darkest and most desolate days of the Party, he resigned his prestigious office of Party Vice-President and also his Parliamentary candidature in 1962 — at the very moment when the Party's fortunes were beginning to improve substantially.

That resignation was given on a matter of deeply-held principle; for the Liberal Party had just declared itself in favour of Britain joining the EEC. Whether he was wise or unwise in acting as he did is irrelevant; there is no doubt that he acted on principle, and only on principle.

Nearly a quarter of a century on, his judgment, at least on the substantive issue of whether Britain should join the Common Market, has been vindicated up to the hilt. Where will you find an enthusiastic supporter of the Common Market in Britain today? What politician will willingly assert that he advised Britain to join?

To most Britons of all political persuasions, the EEC is seen as something between a hole in our national pocket and a major catastrophe. In this booklet, a massive bulk of argument is adduced for the view that the second opinion is nearer the mark.

Right from the start, there has been a degree of confusion, even of schizophrenia, on both sides of the divide on this great Common Market issue. Membership of the EEC demands reciprocal free trade with the countries of Western Europe; but on the other hand it also includes the obligation to impose tariffs and other economic restrictions similar to those imposed by the EEC countries.

Some free traders supported membership, believing

that the former element would outweigh the latter; other free traders took the opposite view. In the same view some protectionists wanted Britain to join because they correctly judged the true character of the institution.

Oliver Smedley adduces overwhelming evidence for the view that membership of the EEC was very much a move in the protectionist direction. He also shows that for a country in Britain's economic position — dependent far more than most countries on trade for her prosperity — it was a peculiar disaster to join the EEC.

At the core, Oliver Smedley's booklet is splendid stuff. I must admit some hesitation about his readiness to accept the "Whig view of history", and I don't think that his digressions in that direction are necessary for his main argument.

What we now need — and who better than Oliver Smedley to provide it? — is a sequel which will tell us what to do next. To say that we should never have gone in isn't quite the same thing as saying that we are now able to get out, or that we should be wise to do so.

My own view, for what it is worth, is that we can and should get out; but it is impossible to deny that this would involve a serious upheaval and considerable international difficulties. The matter requires close study and argument.

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mic value of nature be collected (by the State or otherwise) for the benefit of the entire citizenry.

SO, the criteria against which the degree of justice existing within any society can be measured comes from a train of thought that evolved through intense scientific investigation by two of this country's most distinguished intellectual figures. Adler and George show us that:

- We are all equal in our humanness; and, therefore, possess rights to those "goods" necessary for survival and to a truly human existence;

- The earth is essential as the source of such goods; therefore, each individual has an equal right of access to the earth and all of the natural universe;

- Liberty is the exercise of one's rights, by definition the actions involved in no way infringing upon others' liberty;

- License is the resort to action which restricts the liberty of others; and, therefore, requires some type of corrective action

by the State to preserve justice;

- There are two primary categories of license, the first of which is sanctioned by positive law and creates unnatural property (primarily, private appropriation of the value of nature but secondarily monopolistic sanctions granted in production); the second of which violates moral and ethical restraints on individual behavior and must be terminated (i.e., what we think of as criminal behavior).

- Positive (man-made) law meets the test of justice by the extent to which it is consistent with the principles of protecting the individual's rights as described above and prevents the unbridled exercise of license.

Certainly, our founding fathers, tutored by English and French radicalism (repeated in the writings of Franklin, Paine, Jefferson, Adams, Hamilton and Madison) recognized many of the structural defects inherited from their British heritage. But Americans were not of one mind and possessed

less than perfect judgment.

The political structure they finally endorsed resulted from long debate and compromise, but ignored altogether the fundamental issue involving each man's right to equally access nature. Change to that original structure began almost immediately, often the result of subterfuge (as individuals and factions sought to satisfy their desires by concentrating political and economic power within themselves).

Once those original "defects" have been identified as inconsistent with just principles, the analysis of subsequent changes in positive law and its implementation becomes a much easier task. As does the posing of those measures necessary to bring positive law in greater harmony with natural rights and, hence, justice.

Such an investigation, relying on the criteria established under the Adler/George test, will assist us in determining for ourselves whether we are closer to or further from establishing that elusive republic built on just principles.