

admit. There was the argument of "the last half hour." If an employee works ten hours a day, and his master makes 5 per cent profit, it is hard to explain to the master that his profit will not be blotted out if the hours of work are reduced to nine and a half, and turned to a loss if they are brought down to nine. What blew these arguments sky-high was not so much dialectic as events.

We are all much too prone to read the past in the light of the present—to feel ridicule or even hatred towards men who were living lives or proposing arguments which seemed valid in the context of their own time and place. It is all too easy to regard the solution to a mystery story as obvious when one has surreptitiously read the last chapter of the book.

When we read the Hammonds' book today, we derive from it a message which may be very different from what the authors intended. We observe that most people will accept the values, assumptions and beliefs of almost any society in which they happen to find themselves. When change does occur, it frequently occurs for reasons which bear little relation to the intellectual or moral arguments which are advanced for that change.

Home Truths on the Common Market

VIVE LE GENERAL! To those of us who believe that de Gaulle is the best friend this country has in Europe, here indeed is the full substantiation of our opinion. To those who feel doubt on the subject, here is a most formidable exposition of the calamity from which we have been delivered.

Douglas Jay writes with great lucidity, and with what one might call the cold passion of the scholar. Here is the very book for which we have all been waiting so long: a book which deals, point by point, with all the arguments advanced in favour of Britain joining the Common Market. If it receives the readership it deserves, the Common Market, so far as this country is concerned, will be as dead as mutton, and the rank-and-file of all three parties will turn and rend their leaders for the deception and the half-truths and the woolly platitudes and the jolly-along which persuaded them to endorse this most dangerous proposal.

I do not pretend that all the arguments that Douglas Jay advances are acceptable to libertarians. There is no doubt that he approaches the subject from the standpoint of a man who believes in a degree of state planning that would appal many readers of this magazine. He makes idolatrous genuflexions towards many sacred cows, and burns incense before many false gods. Yet he contrives to present the free trade objections to the Common Market with unanswerable force.

After the Common Market.—A Better Alternative for Britain, by Douglas Jay. Penguin Special. 4s. 0d.

The author deals with the political arguments as well as those formulated on economic grounds. He believes in world government and in the eventual unification of the human race. He shows, with devastating skill, how British membership of the Common Market would increase and not reduce the political and economic divisions that sunder the human race.

The positive alternative which Mr. Jay proposes is a sort of glorified EFTA embracing Western Europe, North America, and perhaps Australia and Japan. The member states would gradually eliminate tariffs against each other while retaining the right to put tariffs as high or low as they please against the outside world.

One is left with the impression that the author is a man with a great and incisive mind; a man who by and large, talks the same language as libertarians understand; and that the logic of his reasoning would lead him to free trade. He has already shown himself a man of principle, who has sacrificed a high position in the state, and the prospect of a higher one, for the beliefs which he holds. When the party to which he still belongs crashes in irretrievable ruin at the next election, one of the men whom one would wish to salvage from the wreckage for the general good of the nation is Douglas Jay.

A Long Way To Go

A NEW PAMPHLET published by the New Orbits Group of Liberals is aimed essentially at what I might call an "in" audience; at people who are members of the Liberal Party—and Liberals, furthermore, who think that what happens at Party Assemblies, and what is written in magazines which Liberals read is really of importance. The main thesis seems to be that much of the current arguments among Liberals about "selective" versus "universal" social security benefits is unreal to the extent that it betokens a difference of approach rather than a difference over substantive policies. With this conclusion one is entitled to agree.

I felt a good deal of admiration for the perceptive brain of the author—an Oxford University Liberal, aged 21—and his pamphlet would get a very good mark as an undergraduate dissertation in one of the social sciences, but he has not got the answer to the real problem. We have a system of social security benefits of one kind or another that is not organised in accordance with any underlying principle. Like Topsy, it just grewed. What is now needed is a revision of the whole thing from top to bottom, in the light of the many profound social changes that have taken place since Beveridge. Personally, I should like to see a review of all the rest of our taxation and government expenditure for good measure. But perhaps that is asking for a degree of political radicalism which simply is "not on."

Fair Welfare by Philip Goldenburg. New Orbits Group (Liberal Publication Dept. 2s. 0d.)