

# THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

## The Week-end Review

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## God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

TO the statesmen whose task it is to strengthen the defences of Western civilisation the Christmas holidays will provide only the briefest respite. A few days of family life, a few hours of festivity, a few moments perhaps after dinner musing nostalgically over the Christmas story—then they must return to their labours. Before those labours were interrupted, Sir Anthony Eden and Mr. Dulles could claim two successes. First, since the island of Cyprus provides one of the bases from which the Soviet Union can be vaporised, they contrived that the United Nations Assembly in New York should refuse to listen to the Cypriot plea for self-determination. Secondly, in Paris they persuaded the Nato Council to agree that the defence of Europe's civilisation against the threat of Communism requires that its armies should be rapidly equipped with atomic cannon, atomic rockets and atomic bombs. As soon as the season of goodwill is over, Sir Anthony and Mr. Dulles will resume their labours. Their first task in the New Year will be to prevent any peace conference with the Russians from taking place before a peaceful solution of the German problem has been rendered almost impossible by German rearmament.

A hundred years ago Charles Dickens enlivened a Victorian Christmas with the tale of how an old miser was miraculously converted by the spirit of the season. If only

we had a novelist today capable of writing a Christmas Carol about a British statesman who suffered a comparable conversion! He would describe how the Rt. Hon. Ebenezer Scrooge, returning to Whitehall from his Christmas plum-pudding, tried to practise the precept of peace on earth, decided that his country's policy would be based in future not on fear and suspicion but on goodwill towards men, and boldly proclaimed that Britain would abandon the atom standard and devote her resources to the war against want in her own colonies.

We fear, however, that this new Christmas Carol could hardly have a happy ending. In the short interval before its hero was disciplined for disloyalty by his party machine, he would have been magisterially rebuked by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the *Manchester Guardian*, Mr. Herbert Morrison and the *News Chronicle* for the heresy of neutralism and the shame of pacifism. Peace, he would have been told, can be achieved only through thermo-nuclear strength, and civilisation defended only by men sternly prepared to see us blown to smithereens. As for the benighted heathen of Asia and Africa, they must be persuaded and, if necessary, compelled to accept these blessings of Christian civilisation.

Perhaps it is wiser, after all, not to spoil the holiday by recalling its serious message. As we hear it from the carol singers and see it on our pretty Christmas cards, the story is

an ancient legend worth re-telling once a year. But those who rudely tear it out of its traditional framework and seek to make it come true are troublemakers. Why listen to voices which tell us that, if someone in Moscow or Washington presses the wrong button, this will be the last time we eat turkey and plum-pudding before destruction falls from the air? Christmas is not the time to remember Sodom and Gomorrah!

### Nato's Atomic Commitment

As we predicted last week, the question whether the soldiers or the governments should give the order for the use of atomic tactical weapons was nimbly side-stepped by the Nato Council. A more than usually fatuous official communiqué explained that, while the governments would, of course, have the final decision, the precise method of reaching it would be kept secret. Meanwhile, it was announced, the equipment of the Nato armies with atomic tactical weapons would proceed. This means that very soon the Nato Powers will have made themselves unable to fight anything except the kind of thermo-nuclear war which would end civilised life in Europe. No wonder Mr. Bevan observed last week that our answer to the Russians is: "If you are aggressive, the rest of us will all commit national suicide."

That this was really the conclusion

# JAKE AND THE BEANMAST

## A Telepantolette by Sagittarius

### CAST

SIR JAKE (*Knight of the Charter*) Sir I'n J\*c\*b  
GIANT ENTERPRISE Lord R\*th\*rm\*re  
LEWISHAM CHAMP  
The Right Hon. H\*rb\*rt M\*rris\*n  
ASSISTANT POSTMAN Mr. L. D. G\*mm\*ns  
ITANIA, A Fairy Sir K\*nula Cl\*rk  
DAME BESTBeCareful Herself

### FIRST TRANSMISSION

*Fade up on the foot of the Beanmast outside Broadcasting Cottage. Enter Dame BestBeCareful.*

DAME: Now Langham Place is filled with snores,  
Everyone's tucked up in doors;  
I'm the only soul awake,  
Sitting up for awful Jake.

(*Sir Jake slides down the Beanmast.*)

He's up the Beanmast, I'll be bound!

JAKE: Hi, Mum! You can't guess what I've found!  
A giant's castle in the air!

DAME: I've told you not to climb up there,  
The Giant will tear you limb from limb.

JAKE: Who cares? I'm not afraid of him.  
I'll knock the blighter out, and then  
I'll carry off his magic hen  
With all the golden eggs it lays,  
And we'll be rich for all our days.

DAME: No, Jake, that you must never do.

JAKE: Why not? It all belongs to you.

DAME: O dear, I see the time has come  
When you must learn the truth from Mum.  
I only serve the Corporation  
In a caretaker's situation;  
My weekly wages, far too low,  
Are doled out by the G.P.O.  
I've had hard work to make ends meet  
And keep Broadcasting Cottage neat,  
And so I planted magic beans  
To supplement my slender means.  
But when my Beanmast reached the skies,  
Along comes Giant Enterprise,  
And half my Beanmast wants to rent  
For broadcasting advertisement.

JAKE: What? Take your Beanmast, and your hen?  
I'll beard that Giant in his den,  
I'll bash him up, his head I'll break,  
Or I'm not Giant-killer Jake!

DAME: Do nothing, boy, till you have tried  
To see things from the other side.  
That Giant has been sent to try us,  
But BestBeCareful can't show bias—  
I say now, as I've always done—  
Each question has two sides, not one.

SONG. THERE MUST BE A REASON.

*So there must be a reason I've never been told  
Why the B.B.C. Beanmast may shortly be sold.  
To a Giant who's ready to buy.  
There may be a reason, though goodness knows what,*

*Why the Postmaster joins in the bad Giant's plot,  
Yes, though I can't guess if I try,  
There must be a reason why.*

JAKE: There's every reason I can see  
For a showdown with the P.M.G.

DAME: The Postmaster I daren't offend.  
But in the House I've got a friend  
Who helps poor widows in a jam.

JAKE: Yes, Mum, the Champ of Lewisham!  
He'll see you get your Charter rights,  
In Parliament your cause he fights.  
I bet you with one blow he'll kill  
The Giant and the TV Bill.

GIANT (off): Fee! Fo! Fi! Fum!  
I'll grind the bones of Jake and Mum!

JAKE: All right, big bully—just you try!  
I'll show you what you'll get, tough guy!  
You'd best not show your ugly face!

DAME: Hush, Jake! Don't wake up Langham Place!  
(*Fade out as she pulls Jake inside.*)

### INTERLUDE.

### SECOND TRANSMISSION

*Fade up on the humble interior of Broadcasting Cottage. Enter Itania, singing.*

*Little ads. need a lot of room*

*Little ads. make a pot,*

*So Enterprise must televise*

*For Tele-ads mean a lot.*

Fairy Itania is my name,

Artistic adverts. are my aim.

I'm snooping for the I T A

While BestBeCareful is away.

I'll soon be giving her the push—

But here she comes from Shepherd's Bush.

(*She conceals herself. The Dame enters.*)

DAME: Jake? Mum's back! Jake, are you there?

He's up the Beanmast, that I'll swear.

Why, that's the Postman's rat-tat-tat,

My Postman Gammans likes a chat.

(*Opens door to Postman Gammans.*)

POSTMAN: I've brought your pension. Kindly sign.

DAME: Step in. How nice it's turned out fine.

I'll put the kettle on the stove.

We're doing lovely at Lime Grove

I've just got back from there.

POSTMAN: Can't stay.  
I've got another date to-day.

DAME: Another date? You've got a nerve.

POSTMAN: I was obliged to use reserve.

SONG. MY SECRET LOVE.

*Once I had a secret love,*

*Secret from the B B C ;*

*Could not tell my secret love*

*For commercialised TV.*

*Now the Post Office the beans can spill*

*In the Tory Television Bill*

*Fair Itania I adore*

*And my love's no secret any more.*

DAME: If I understand your song  
The Post Office has done me wrong.

POSTMAN: On with the new, off with the old!  
(*Jake runs in with the hen.*)

JAKE: Mum, here's the hen with eggs of gold.  
You catch! The Giant's after me.

POSTMAN: Hi, that's Post Office property!

JAKE: Sez you! This bird belongs to Mum,  
So just you try to get it, chum.

(*The Lewisham Champ enters.*)

CHAMP: What's going on here, I'd like to know?

POSTMAN: Jake's stealing from the G.P.O.

DAME: He ain't. That hen is mine, you scamp;  
Now don't you let him get it, Champ.  
And give him one for all he took  
Out of me Postal Savings Book.

POSTMAN: That loan the Giant will re-invest  
To feather the Post Office nest.

CHAMP: Come on! You shan't finance his racket  
Out of Mum's savings and pay-packet.

(*He takes off his coat. Itania enters.*)

ITANIA: Hold! Or I'll swipe you with my wand!

DAME: My word, here's Gammans' fancy blonde.

CHAMP: So you have ditched the Dame, you cur?

DAME: By cripes, I don't think much of her.

POSTMAN: This lady is Itania fair!

Sponsored TV is in her care,

She'll keep the advertising screen

Refined and tasteful, sweet and clean.

CHAMP: That's bosh! Your Giant and his crew  
Will turn Great Britain's air bright blue.  
Poor BestBeCareful you've betrayed!

JAKE: Mum, just look here! The Hen has laid!

GIANT (off): Fee! Fo! Fi! Fum!

I'll get that hen from Jake and Mum!

(*The Giant enters. Jake aims with the golden egg and stuns him. Fade out.*)

### INTERLUDE.

### THIRD TRANSMISSION

*The scene fades up on Broadcasting Cottage. Jake enters, carrying an axe.*

DAME: Where are you going, Jake, so fast?  
I've told you not to climb the mast!

JAKE: No, Mum, I'll chop it down instead—  
The Giant will fall right on his head!

DAME: Our humble cottage you may wreck.

JAKE: No matter if he breaks his neck.

(*Itania enters*)

DAME: Well, here's the Postman's lady friend!

ITANIA: Dear Dame, our quarrel let us end.

Make I T A and B B C

All one big happy family!

I've come to make a friendly call,

For aren't we sisters, after all?

DAME: I definitely wish to state  
That you are illegitimate.

ITANIA: If that's your line, you dowdy Dame,  
Well, two can play the cursing game.  
May all your panel stars forget their parts,  
Your weather forecasters mix up their charts!

DAME: May interference blot your glossiest ad.  
And calls from angry viewers drive you mad!

ITANIA: May cars without suppressors wreck  
your drama

And make an earthquake of your Panorama!

DAME: May all your samples be by fire consumed,  
May normal service never be resumed!

ITANIA: May hiccups afflict your titled team,  
And Sound and Vision both go up in Steam!

DAME: And may your Popsies' plunge-lines be too  
low!

ITANIA: May you fade out for ever! Down you  
go!

(*Enter the Lewisham Champ, the Postman and Giant Enterprise*)

CHAMP: I'm glad you ladies now agree,

DAME: Indeed we don't.

CHAMP: No more do we.

But Christmas-time must bring good will!

Besides, this 'ere unwelcome Bill

Is not a Bill now, but an Act—

We must, *pro tem.*, accept that fact.

POSTMAN: A joint festivity we've planned,  
To televise throughout the land,  
A Beanmast beanfeast, Christmas night,  
To which all present we invite!

JAKE: You've never asked the wicked Giant?

POSTMAN: My boy, he's a respected client!

DAME: To like Itania I will try!

ITANIA: And to like BestBeCareful, I!

Hurrah for mutual assistance,

And peaceful TV co-existence!

*The Beanmast breaks into a coruscation of Kildowarts and Megacycles as Big Ben joyously chimes at Very High Frequency. Sound and Vision fade.*

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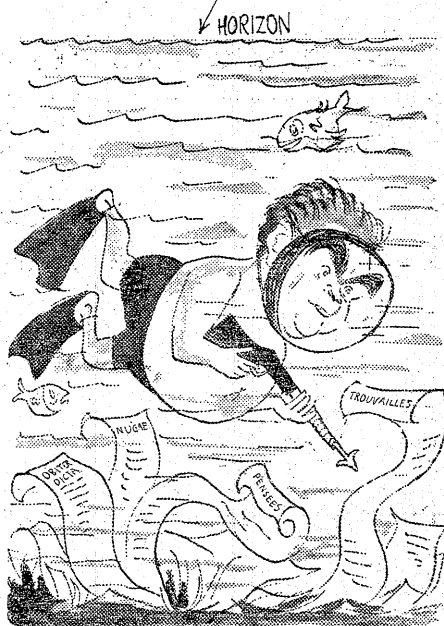
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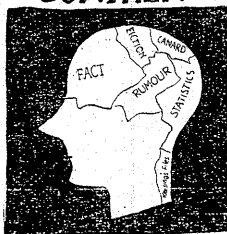
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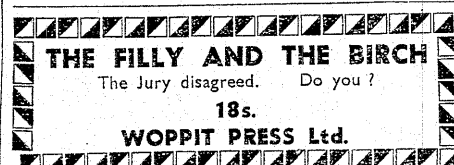
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