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Heiteres und Weiteres. Souvenirs from Geneva, London and elsewhere

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Heiteres und Weiteres.

[Souvenirs from Geneva,
London and elsewhere]

Courtesy
Mrs. Auden

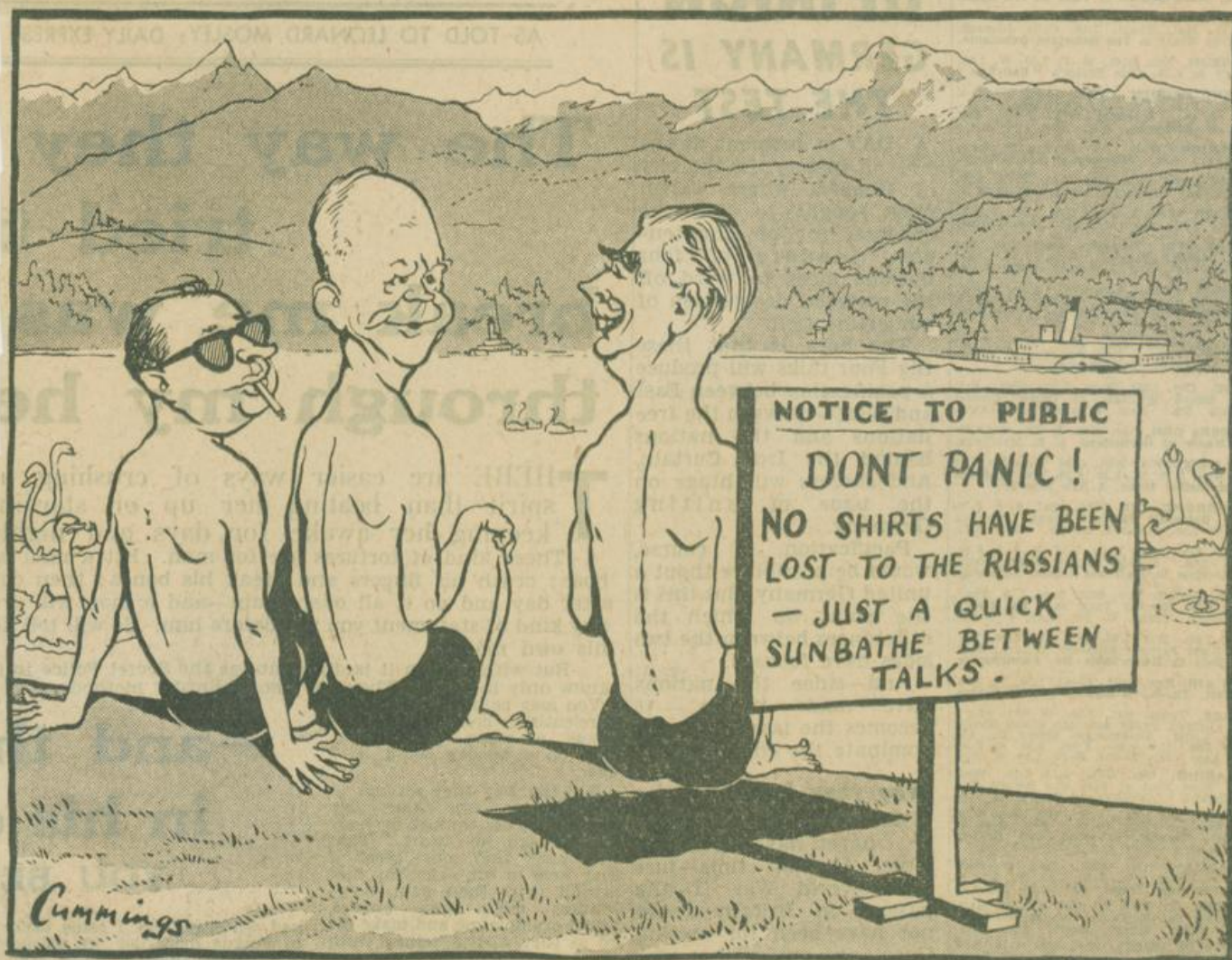
→ Ein blutjunger Bupp!





"Mm—I wonder who was responsible for the water carafes?"

THE BIG GAMBLE . . . by Cummings



an incoherent bit

→ Frage:
Warum ist Cummings hier genial?

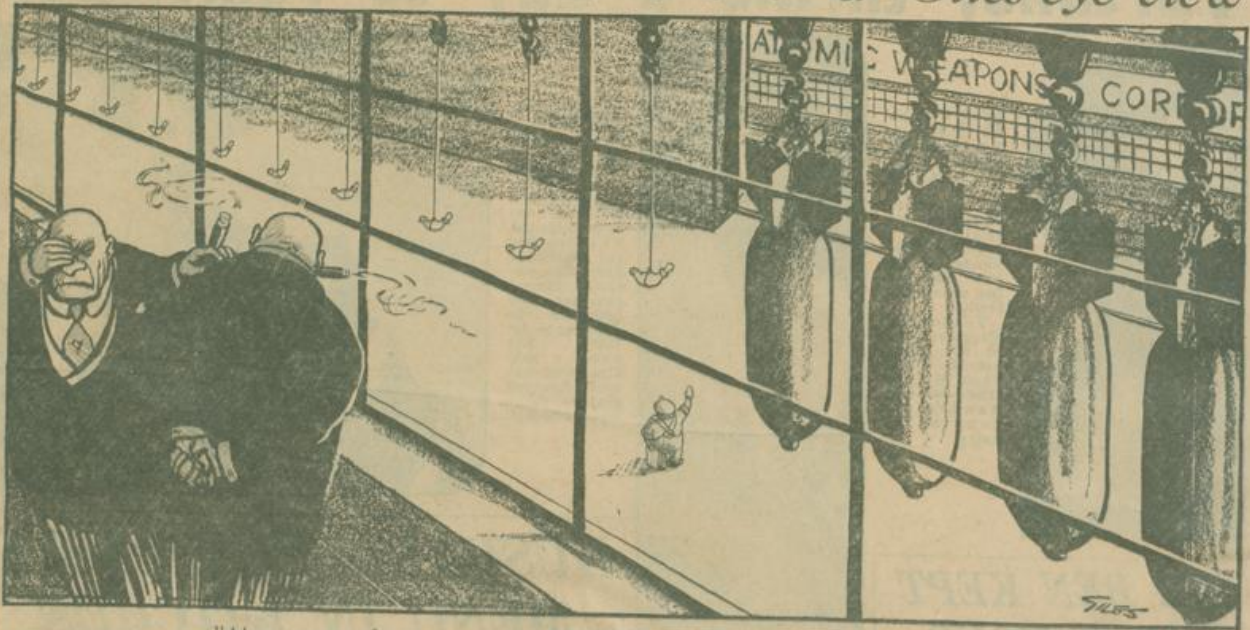
DAILY EXPRESS WEDNESDAY JULY 30 1953



IF ONLY THOSE AIRPORT ARRIVAL MASKS CAN STAY IN FRONT. . .

Antwort:
Hegen des Zwinkerns!

Geneva a Giles-eye-view



"May we wake up and find this peace scare is just a bad dream."

Mr. Apollinax

When Mr. Apollinax visited the United States
His laughter tinkled among the teacups . . .
In the palace of Mrs. Phlaccus, at Professor
Channing-Cheetah's
He laughed like an irresponsible foetus . . .
I looked for the head of Mr. Apollinax rolling
under a chair

Or grinning over a screen
With seaweed in its hair.
I heard the beat of centaur's hoofs over
the hard turf
As his dry and passionate talk devoured the
afternoon.

Thus forty years ago did Mr. T. S. Eliot, O.M., describe Earl Russell, O.M. It is a good description of the Bertrand Russell of forty years ago, and perhaps even of the Earl Russell of 1955. For when one hears that strange high cackle of laughter, which is so like the yaffle of a woodpecker, it can still remind one of "Priapus in the shrubbery gaping at the lady in the swing" and one still no doubt instinctively looks for Earl Russell's head rolling under a chair or grinning over a screen. And the dry and passionate talk still sometimes devours the afternoon.

What has changed since Mr. Apollinax visited the United States and the author of *Prufrock* icily, sardonically watched him in the wasteland of Mrs. Phlaccus's drawing-room, is that both of them have become respectable. In 1917 they were not far short of being disreputable. Mr. Eliot's *Prufrock*, indeed his *Poems* of 1920 and *The Waste Land* of 1922, were derided or condemned as pernicious by nearly all respectable people and by those distinguished and wary critics who, in weekly papers, tell respectable people what to think or say about new books. Bertie Russell, grandson of the great Lord John Russell and of Lord Stanley of Alderley, sometime Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, author of *The Principles of Mathematics* and therefore one of the most brilliant mathematicians of the century—Bertie Russell not only laughed but, in the opinion of most respectable people, acted like an irresponsible foetus. He was during the 1914 war a pacifist and supporter of conscientious objectors; in 1916 he was prosecuted and fined £100 for making statements likely to prejudice the recruiting and discipline of His Majesty's Forces. The Council of Trinity College, Cambridge, dismissed him from his lectureship. Finally he was prosecuted, convicted and sentenced to six months' imprisonment for "having in a printed publication made certain statements likely to prejudice His Majesty's relations with the United States of America." It is worth quoting the silly sentence for which he served his six months in Brixton Prison, for it shows the streak of infantile irresponsibility which Mr. Eliot had noticed in him: "The American garrison which will by that time be occupying England and France, whether or not they will prove efficient against the Germans, will no doubt be capable of intimidating strikers, an occupation to which the American Army is accustomed at home."

The Earl Russell of today is a monument of respectability; terribly English, he succeeds in combining so many contradictions that, under our all-powerful system of compromise, they iron out in the end into our traditional pattern of splendid uniformity and conformity. His Order of Merit is not only the ultimate testimonial to his respectability, but is a testimony to the British system of sublime inconsistency. The Order is one of the greatest—some would say the greatest—honour that the monarch or government can bestow on a distinguished citizen. It is notorious that we British dislike, distrust, and despise the intellect



How right!

vick

Bertie, VII, Earl of Russell

and intellectuals, particularly when they are abstract, bombinating in a logical vacuum, producing orderly systems. We like even our greatest thinkers to think in the world of plain and practical men, to deduce the most fundamental laws of the working of the universe from observation of an apple falling in an orchard. It seems absurd therefore that the man who sat in Brixton Prison at the end of the first world war should have received the blue and crimson ribbon of the Order of Merit at the end of the second. He must have been given it because he was the author of *The Principles of Mathematics*, for that book alone gives him a claim to great distinction. Yet it is so abstract and so technical that only a minute number of people can have read it or been capable of understanding it. Its subject is "pure mathematics," "fundamental logical concepts," "fundamental logical principles," none of which has anything to do with the world in which apples fall in orchards and men are given ribands to stick in their coats. In 1900 there were in Cambridge three Fellows of Trinity College whose subjects were pure mathematics or philosophy or both: the Hon. Bertrand Russell, A. N. Whitehead, and G. E. Moore. They were all distinguished and remarkable men in fields of abstract and useless knowledge. The ordinary man, a category which includes even Prime Ministers and Cabinet Ministers, has never heard of them in that capacity, knows nothing about the achievements which gave them their obscure fame. Yet this strange Trinity from Trinity College by 1950 had all received the Order of Merit.

By 1950 Earl Russell, his delinquencies and mathematical achievements forgotten and forgiven, had, of course, become known to hundreds of thousands of ordinary men and women as a highly accomplished broadcaster. If you listen attentively to him over the air, the precise and rather clipped voice, the perfectly finished sentence, the adroitly concealed or revealed arrogance, the sparkle of wit and gleam of malice combine to show almost everything in the intellectual make-up of Russell. He is the product of one of the strongest hereditary strains and most dominating traditions that have existed in Europe. He was born and remains today, at the age of 83, an unmitigated Russell, an aristocrat and a Whig. Like his grandfather, Lord John, he is one of the diminutive Russells: Lytton Strachey used to say that he belonged to the dangerous class of great gnomes. Ever since the 18th century Russells have been bred in the bone Whigs, and frequently at the same time eccentrics and Whig rebels against everything, including Whiggery. In all these characteristics Bertie has always been an authentic Russell, almost an 18th-century Russell. From the same strain or tradition comes, too, a certain emotional coldness or even iciness, combined in an odd way with a streak of intellectual sentimentality which can be seen at its worst—or is it best?—in his famous *Free Man's Worship* and some of his political writings.

In one respect he has outdistanced all his forebears. It is the astonishing quickness of his mind. The biographical broadcasts which he gave about his younger friends—Strachey, Keynes, and others—were brilliant if a little ungenerous; in one of them he said that Keynes had the quickest mind he had ever met and that he (Russell) was always apprehensive of arguing with him. This is mock modesty. Keynes, it is true, had a remarkably quick mind: he thought, let us say, with the velocity of sound. But Russell in his prime was much quicker, thinking, say, with the velocity of light. Both of them were unscrupulous in argument, and Russell has a weapon more deadly than any of Keynes's. Keynes often said amusing and occasionally witty things in argument. But Russell

has in his mind and on his tongue a perpetual flicker of the sharpest and sometimes finest wit. He uses it in a most deadly and sometimes unscrupulous manner like a rapier and with it he despatches an opponent most elegantly. That is what makes him so amusing—but also so dangerous, sometimes to himself.

Adenauer's plan to keep Russia cooling two years

SEFTON DELMER IN BAD GODESBERG

HERE I am, in my favourite seat under the 200-year-old lime tree by the side of the Rhine, watching the honest Rhenish burghers climbing into the fussy little ferry boat for their Sunday morning outing.

The sun is shining. There is the right type of mist hanging over the vineyards opposite, and the innkeeper himself has just brought Herr Delmer a glass of cool Moselle with wild strawberries bobbing at the brim.

What could be more enjoyable? What could be more promisingly peaceful... especially with those talks beginning in Geneva tomorrow from which, for the first time since 1939, the world may have a chance to build genuine freedom from war.

But no, not even the Rhine, the wine, or the sunshine can melt the misgivings I have gathered concerning the influence that our new NATO ally Adenauer and the men behind him may have on the success of the Geneva talks.

Taking a hand

Believe me, the old man is doing his best to make sure he has a hand in things. Not only is he taking up a listening post himself in a mountain chalet at Muerren, but he is sending two of his top diplomats to Geneva to give us and the Americans the benefit of his advice.

Of these two men, one—Professor Wilhelm Grewe—is a particularly significant reflection of the kind of considerations swaying the German policy-makers at this critical moment.

For the professor is a protagonist of Germany's colonising mission in the countries on its eastern borders. He wrote numerous treatises on the subject under Hitler. And although Grewe himself never served as a soldier—he was pronounced medically unfit—he is a convinced militarist.

In 1932, before Hitler came to power, he wrote an article for a political monthly laying down that "political power belongs in the hands of the men who bear arms."

The policy

What is the policy Adenauer wants us to pursue? Reduced to its simplest essentials, it amounts to this:—

① Be in no hurry to make any agreement with the Russians. Let them cool their heels for two years. By then we in the West shall be much stronger and the Russians will be in an even greater mess than they are today. In two years' time we shall be in a position to dictate our terms to them. Therefore:—

② Let there be no compromise about Germany and its reunification. The Russians must surrender East Germany unconditionally. We would rather not reunify Germany at all at this moment than trade it in exchange for a slice of our own freedom of action and decision. . . .

Now, of course, the "keep the Russians waiting for two years" policy admirably suits the ambitions of the military men behind Adenauer, who do not want to see a European settlement before Germany has an army of its own and can use it as a blackmail threat to assure that the settlement meets its wider interests and needs.

They are scared stiff that the present talks might put an end to the cold war at a moment when Germany is still without an army and could do nothing to prevent a peace at her expense.

As Adenauer's loyal paladin Herbert Schneider, of the German Party, put it in the Parliament yesterday: "It is still by no means certain whether the Federal Republic will be sitting in at the Geneva talks as an invisible partner or whether it is to be the victim at whose expense concessions are exchanged between the Big Four." That is why we must rush the Army Bill through now without any further delay."

What frightens Adenauer's men particularly is a reported



Yes, the last thing that Adenauer wants to see come out of this Geneva conference is a slackening of the cold war tension at this stage.

He is like a tightrope walker halfway across in a difficult act. If someone slackens the rope now he is in for a bad fall and the ruin of his act—possibly for ever.

Let's hope for the best!

IS the tightrope walker in for a bad fall...?

French proposal that in the framework of general disarmament the plans for the future German Army should undergo a 100 per cent reduction. Needless to say, they turn this down as "out of the question."

The dangerous trend of Adenauer's ambitions can be seen in the new powers that he

has conferred on former Nazi storm-trooper chief Professor Oberlaender.

He is the Refugee Minister in the Adenauer Cabinet who recently offered his resignation, then changed his mind and asked to join Adenauer's own party.

Adenauer has been seeing more and more of Oberlaender recently, and accepts this man, who used to be one of Hitler's colonial administrators in the conquered "Eastland," as a political expert on Soviet bloc affairs.

The Chancellor has authorised Oberlaender to make secret agreements on the reshaping of Eastern Europe, with the various refugee Governments of Soviet-occupied lands.

Already Oberlaender has been in touch with the representative of the former Premier Mikolajczak's Polish Refugee Government.

Back to 1914

Oberlaender proposed not the restoration of the old 1907 frontier with Poland but something very like the 1914 edition.

In return the Poles are to be given German support for the return of the provinces lost to the Soviet Union in 1945.

None of these schemes, of course, is possible as things stand today.