

*From the London End***COMMONWEALTH MEMBERSHIP
-ANTIDOTE TO COMMUNISM!**

LONDON, April 2.

"Scratch an Englishman", it used to be said, "and you'll find an imperialist." More to the point at the moment would be—"Scratch an imperialist and you'll find an anti-communist." The emergence of new nations in Asia would almost certainly have meant a much more serious threat to the Commonwealth than it has done if it were not for the 'red menace'.

The meetings of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London on the 21st of this month are to be in private but it will require no inside information to be able to say what will be the general forces which have to be reconciled at this meeting. The new nations are naturally anxious to emphasise their freedom to run things their own way. But this feeling of independence is greatly modified by a contrary feeling of dependence and need for unity in the face of the 'communist threat'.

Anyone who wants for any reason to see the Commonwealth become stronger finds it useful to stress this danger from the 'reds'. One has the feeling, for example, that the railway strike in India was almost welcomed by some people here as being something which would reinforce India's desire to remain closely connected with the Commonwealth.

That seemed to be one of the implications of a recent talk 'by Mr. H. V. Hodson, the B.B.C./s regular commentator on Commonwealth affairs. Almost in so many words, he asked whether the internal conflicts within India and Pakistan between their Governments and the Communists would

act as a sufficient deterrent to the attempt of these countries to become free from entanglements. He clearly hoped that this would be the case.

We have argued for some time in these columns that one of the hopes for world peace lies in the establishment of a real third force mediating between America and Russia and we have further suggested that pressure from the new Dominions could succeed in fashioning the Commonwealth into such a force. But it is clear that such an idea is completely destroyed if Pandit Nehru and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan allow themselves to accept a close relationship with the Commonwealth precisely because they want to join an anti-communist front.

It becomes clear, in other words, that the real issue before the meeting on 21st April is not so much unity or disunity but rather unity behind a 'red scare' or unity behind a policy of independence from both blocs. The important question is not whether there can be a republic within the Commonwealth but what the Commonwealth including India and Pakistan is going to stand for.

Yet although that is certainly the main question, this republican issue has a real importance too; it is not merely a game for the legal experts and a matter of words. The vital question which is posed by the proposal to admit a republic into co-operation with the Commonwealth is the possibility of there arising an inner and an outer circle of members.

Will those Dominions who retain the crown as a symbol of their association feel that India and any who follow her course should be excluded from certain rights and

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