

# The Lazy Giant

THERE is some consolation in the thought that much of what has been happening in these last, horrid weeks is the result of our own mistakes. Since the trouble is within ourselves—the mental laziness of that giant that is America—Americans can take care of it.

We, and not we alone, have been indulging in the free coinage of symbols proposed as cure-alls for international difficulties. Symbols have indeed a great if always limited curative value, particularly in the conflicts of power. The latest symbol now stands guard along the Suez Canal. Its name is the United Nations Emergency Force. In that force, membership is restricted to the minor powers: The last are first. The new law for the world and the force destined to make it effective are born at one and the same time. The millennium is at hand.

A first step out of the fog is to look at UNEF, that symbol embodied in no more than the minimum requirements for corporeal entity. Once the three invading armies have left the sacred soil of Egypt, UNEF is supposed to take over. Take over what? If we can manage to wipe from our eyes the mist of happy tears over this new world aborning, we will see that there are only two ways in which UNEF can act. It can clean house in Egypt, see to it that the canal is run in the interests of the international community it was dug out to serve, see to it that the resources of the entire Middle Eastern region are made to profit the peoples of this region rather than a few old or new-fangled tyrants. Or UNEF can act as an urbane, better-mannered substitute for the Russian volunteers.

It is plain which of these two roles UNEF now is playing. It was precise-

ly in order to prevent the Israelis, the British, and the French from doing the housecleaning job that it was sent to Egypt in the first place. It is in Egypt courtesy of Nasser. Its major and not negligible virtue is that it saves the miserable people of Egypt from the ordeal of the Spaniards at the time of their so-called Civil War.

Yet UNEF as a symbol expresses something real. What it accurately and tragically renders is the present imbalance of power in which Communism, with all its Asian, African, and American allies, is on the rampage—while the democracies of Europe are close to collapse.

THERE is one thing for which we can be thankful: The pious, unthinking, lazy moralism that for too long has been the lingo of our government and propaganda has brought matters to a head. Now, here we are. If we make the effort to see through the soul-lifting myths and look at the facts, we can get on the road to sanity and security.

What really happened?

The Administration's diplomacy drove Britain and France to such a point of distraction that, for their own salvation, they felt compelled to do a thing that was slightly against the still hazy principles of the United Nations, and more than slightly risky. Therefore Britain, France, and Israel as well had to be brought to account and their behavior submitted to judgment. But if the Administration had possessed a minimum of common sense it would have recognized in the U.N. Assembly that the three nations had indeed been guilty, with extenuating circumstances, of a sort of international misdemeanor, not a major crime,

and it would have urged at once that something radical be done to clear up the whole Middle Eastern mess. As this magazine has suggested, the only way to reach any real result is to have the whole region neutralized, and to negotiate that neutralization with Soviet Russia.

The Administration is reluctant to recognize the Russians' role in the Middle East and shies away from negotiating with them; that would be appeasement. Therefore, to avoid appeasement, the Administration follows the Russian lead and acts as a Russian satellite.

It does this for high principle. There is nothing it will not do for principle—including being unmerciful to the allies on whose strength we depend. For principle, too, the Administration is desperately searching for grandmothers with colored pigmentation so that we too can make the grade at the new Bandung Conference.

WHEN the people of Hungary rose against their masters, our country and the United Nations acted once again: They issued a declaration. This time it was followed by no international army, no U.N. investigating committee; no one from the U.N. even peeped into Hungary. This time, what the U.N. declaration symbolized was a universal funk for which, once again, the major responsibility must fall on our nation.

Is that enough? Do we need further evidence, can we endure further evidence, of the cowardice and stupidity that have made these last weeks so unbearable? We do not think so. Americans are not stupid. And the Hungarians have shown us what men can do who are not cowards.