

## **Porous Embargo** *Post 7/17/64*

There is a noticeable solo aria in the otherwise harmonious duet that constitutes the joint communiqué following talks between Prime Minister Home and President Johnson. "The President stressed his concern," the document read, "at the present situation in the Caribbean area and the subversive and disruptive influence of the present Cuban regime."

The absence of a concurring British voice does not mean that Prime Minister Home views the mischievous potential of Castroism lightly. It does mean that the British do not share this Government's enthusiasm for trade embargoes as a method for coping with Castro. And on this, the Prime Minister is supported by a broad consensus of British opinion stretching from his own Conservative Party to the ranks of the Laborites.

To be sure, there is perhaps in the British attitude an element of *Schadenfreude*—the German word signifying an element of satisfaction in the other fellow's miseries. The British have not forgotten Suez, and while there is emphatically much more behind the current indifference to our embargo, memory of the past contributes to popular attitudes in the United Kingdom.

Basically, the British do not see anything monstrously wrong with selling nonstrategic goods to Cuba. Nor, for that matter, do a number of other European countries, including the most ferocious anti-Communist country of them all, Franco Spain. Thus, though it may vex an American Administration during an election year, the outlook in the future is for more trade between Europe and Cuba.

How big a setback this will be for the United States depends on how much of a fuss is made. The more pious lectures that emanate from these shores, the greater the victory will seem for Fidel Castro. For short of breaking up the alliance, there is not much that this country can do when a private British firm decides to sell some buses to Cuba.

The fact is that the trade embargo against Cuba has not achieved the great purposes claimed for it. The most that can be said for it is that it has been a safer way of expressing hostility to Castroism than some of the wilder proposals advocated by the whoop and holler clique. To raise a rumpus with our allies over their disregard of our boycott would be to risk a needless feud over petty matters in behalf of a policy that hasn't worked.