One of the main non-economic arguments in favour of Western European economic integration is that it tends to bring about closer political relationships between the nations included in the Common Market. From the point of view of the political power and influence of the EEC it would be of immense advantage if, as a result of their economic integration, the member countries were to be welded together into a European United States, the component parts of which would be as closely related to each other as the North American States that form the United States of America.

For a great many people in Britain this argument alone would be sufficient to reject the whole idea of joining the EEC. They want to remain purely British and are firmly opposed to relinquishing any essential part of their country's absolute sovereignty. Their feelings may be respected without sharing them. If it appeared to be likely that genuine and lasting political integration would be brought about by the success of the attempt at economic integration through the Common Market experiment, Britain would be faced with a dilemma whether it would be worth her while, for the sake of such prospects, to give up all hope of recovering British national greatness with the aid of a restoration of closer relations with the loyal countries of the Commonwealth.

But the dilemma does not arise. For it seems certain that the principle of 'The more we are together, the happier we shall be' does not apply as a rule to relationships between nations. Of course it would be a good thing if the nations were to get to know each other better. There should be a great deal of interchange in every sphere between them. Nations could and should
absorb small proportions of each others’ nationals. They should pool their culture and their civilisation for the benefit of the general progress of mankind. They should exchange their technical know-how. They should learn each others’ languages, each others’ history. They should exchange students; they should spend holidays abroad; they should attend international conferences and festivals of every kind. But they should not aim at merging into each other even if this were possible.

There are many historical instances of nations and races losing their identities as a result of conquering or being conquered. Possibly after a more or less long period the nations that have been merged might come to forget their separate identities and to feel like one nation. But this might take centuries, and the process might never be complete. It became complete between the conquered English and the conquering Normans, but it has never become complete between the English people on the one hand and the Welsh people, the Scottish people or the Irish people on the other, in spite of having lived together for many centuries.

It seems utterly unlikely that a high degree of integration could be brought about between modern race-conscious nations living on separate clearly defined territories, even if it were possible to elaborate and apply an economic system under which they would come to regard their economic interests as identical. The comparison with the experience of the United States is utterly false. It is true, the United States, having been originally mainly of English descent and traditions, is now a melting-pot in which nationals and races from all over the world have merged into a single nation. But this result might not have ever been achieved if the immigrants from various countries lived on separate territories from the very outset. Although there are colonies of various nationals and races in New York and in other cities, they gradually merge into each other, and people of the second generation consider themselves just Americans. Most immigrants go to the United States with the intention of merging into the American nation.

But is it conceivable that children born since the Treaty of