

was a year of surprise

1963 was a year of surprise, no one had foreseen the death of President Kennedy . . . again nobody prophesied that both leading political parties would have to find new leaders . . . the political scene in other countries changed too, Erhard replaced Adenaur in West Germany. We lost our first chance of entry into the Common Market . . . Christine Keeler rivalled the Beatles in coloumn space . . . Chief Enaharo was deported, and the Great Train Robbery was planned and executed.

'No Nhus is good news,' (New York Times) and '63 saw the overthrowal of the Diem régime. But it only came after seven Budhist Monks had burnt themselves to death. Madame Nhu's comment was 'All the Budhists have done for the country is to barbecue a monk.'

In this year Pope John XXIII died. To all the world he was known as the 'Good Pope'. He knew that his time was up, he had said 'Don't worry about me, my bags are packed and I am ready to go.' He had reigned four and a half years and was eighty-one years old. Cardinal Ottavani said the historic 'Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum, habemus papum.' 'I announce unto you a great joy, we have a Pope.' This was to announce the accession of Paul IV.

The sphere of entertainment held much for us, Elizabeth Taylor rocked the film-world, with Richard Burton's help in the financial flummox 'Cleopatra'.

It was a year of human suffering. Skopje and Longarine being two of the greatest disasters. The Alabama race-riots became more vicious. Nearly a quarter of a million negroes and white sympathizers marched through Washington. Birmingham, Alabama was the worst centre for erupting racial tension. In May six hundred and fifty negro children were arrested and in September four negroes were killed when a bomb exploded in a church where they were worshipping.

In South Africa the central machine went on. The torture was always in the background, but house arrests were daily happenings. The School in a debate, some time ago decided against Apartheid but failed to find an answer to the problem. It will be interesting to see what the United Nations Security Council say about it when they have finished their commision.

There were many reports, on varied themes, on the Nation's state: Robbins, Crowther, Newsom, Trend, Buchanan and Denning.

Cuba did not provide any crisis but the man who had just a year before averted world war through it, died. This tragedy overshadowed the world for some weeks after the assassination. President Kennedy during his electioneering campaign in Dallas had chosen to travel in an open car without any bullet-proof roof. Security arrangements were therefore lifted for the moment. This cost the President his life. It is said that while the odds for an American serviceman being killed are 100-1 those of a president being assassinated are 7-1, too small an odds for another President to gamble his life. After President Lincoln's assassination in the 1870s his successor was named Johnson. Peculiarly enough Kennedy's successor was also to be called Johnson, Lyndon Baines Johnson. U.S. Presidents in the future had better beware if they have a vice-president named Johnson. Few will forget that bloody Friday. John F. Kennedy died for his cause the ban on segregation, and as he once said 'There are no white or coloured signs on the graveyards of battle'.

There are several bright spots despite this great tragedy. Such as the signing of the Test Ban Treaty by one hundred countries notably excluding China and France. It took a long time but 'even a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.'

Perhaps it was a bitter year but in some respects one of concord. Russia and the West signed that test ban treaty. This perhaps out-balanced all the year's ill. When Mr. Macmillan, who was the driving-force behind the treaty, announced it in Parliament it was his greatest moment of triumph.

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