

**SPECTRUM**

**Yes-man  
bobs up  
as No. 1**

TODAY the new French Cabinet meets for the first time. ANTONY TERRY in Paris and PETER KENYON in Brussels piece together a sketch of President Giscard's surprise choice as Prime Minister.

FRANCE'S Left-Wing daily, Liberation, owned by philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, pointedly summed up the new political situation in France last Thursday morning with the headline "Giscard appointed Prime Minister."

The wisecrack is not unjustified because it symbolises Mr Raymond Barre's back seat role in the new French Government despite his nominal appointment as Prime Minister. The man President Giscard d'Estaing has brought in to beat inflation is more used, to being a "yes man" and in the past when he worked for Georges de Gaulle he is on record as having put his foot down only once. This was when he persuaded de Gaulle at the last moment to rescind an order to devalue the franc on "all Pools Saturday" in November eight years ago.

Until his sudden elevation, Barre, aged 52, was better known elsewhere in Europe than his native France. For six years, from 1967-1972, he was a vice-president of the Commission of the European Communities in Brussels. His appointment as PM owes more to his time in Brussels than to any other period in his long career which has so far led him to steer clear of joining any political party.

As a young economics professor 26 years ago at Chen University Barre is recalled by his students of that time as "kindly, polite and always willing to consider criticism." His round, smiling face and rotund figure are in sharp contrast to the tall, lean and austere Mr Chirac who he replaces. Unlike his colleague he still drives an outdated Citroen and lives in the suburbs in preference to central Paris. Unlike Chirac, Mr Barre has no ambition to become President of France and still less to step out of line with his autocratic presidential boss.

Barre's most famous utterance, which not unnaturally sent the French Left into a fury, was to describe as "an illusion of our times" the idea that everyone could be guaranteed a minimum wage sufficient for his needs.

He describes himself frankly as "marked by the original sin of Gaullism" a confession which no doubt went some way to ensure his Brussels job when French domination of Europe was at its height and de Gaulle needed a man whose opposition to British entry into the Common Market was uncompromising.

**PROFILE**



print of further European integration since the Treaty of Rome itself, the Plan for Economic and Monetary Union.

His first encounter with Giscard was in the EEC council chamber following Giscard's re-appointment as finance minister in June 1969. Their relationship continued to develop even after Barre had left Brussels, when he took an appointment as a Director of the Bank of France, and while Giscard was still Finance Minister.

Barre earned his reputation as de Gaulle's "Yes-man" in his first few months in Brussels. Members of the Press corps at the time recall how he invited them all for supper at three separate sessions—40 at a time—in the hope of gobbling them all without too much ado. At each sitting he delivered a mini-lecture about the folly of grandiose plans for a United States of Europe.

At the end of 1967 de Gaulle vetoed Britain's second attempt to join the Market. In defence of this move, Barre maintained that it was necessary to complete the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy, engage in further integration through economic and monetary union before applications from new members could be seriously considered. He coined the expression "achievement, deepening and enlargement" which pundits at the time rudely described as sex in reverse. Or the "French position".

Also to justify the go-slow on British membership, Barre steamed ahead with plans for economic and monetary integration. The need for this was underlined by the French economic crisis in the aftermath of the events of May 1968. It was then that Barre successfully persuaded de Gaulle to drop the idea of devaluing the French franc, which could have wrecked the Common Agricultural Policy.

**BIOLOGY**

**Sex-change in a monkey's womb**

RESEARCH on sex changes in monkeys reported in a conference of biologists in Cambridge last week, could mean that scientists are one step closer to giving pregnant human mothers the chance to choose whether they have a boy or a girl.

Dr Robert Goy, of the Wisconsin Regional Primate Centre in the United States, told the International Primate Society Conference that he had given pre-natal injections of two different hormones which affect male characteristics, to 17 pregnant rhesus monkeys. If the foetus is male, he said, the hormones have no effect. But if it is female, he has found that the mother will give birth to a hermaphrodite, with a scrotum and a penis. In both cases the hermaphrodite has ovaries, and when it matures, at the age of three and a half, is capable of menstruating through the penis.

If further testosterone is given to the infant hermaphrodite as it grows up, then the penis will develop to almost the same size as a normal male. This has been tried on three monkeys, and one of them has become very sexually active, showing advanced mounting behaviour of a normal male, and even ejaculating seminal fluid. The seminal fluid, however, contains no sperm because no testes are present—the scrotum is empty.

Similar experiments on fish and frogs have produced males that can excrete sperm, but it has not been achieved in mammals yet. Nevertheless, with the current intense research into hormones, it is feasible, says Dr Goy, that other hormone derivatives will be found that could produce a complete sex change in a primate foetus.

He is also interested to know which stages of the six



Left, a two-day hermaphrodite monkey; right, close up of the chemically induced male sex organs.

David Dugan describes the astonishing progress of some controversial experiments reported to an international conference in Cambridge last week

East Germany were trying to stamp out homosexuality by administering androgens to pregnant mothers, when her own male foetus was not producing sufficient androgen for the "proper" development of male psychological characteristics.

Hypodermic needles are inserted into the uterus of the pregnant mother, to draw out amniotic fluids. If the embryo is male the fluids will contain higher amounts of androgens but the East German doctors have estimated what the "normal" level of androgens for a "normal" male should be.

To claim that male homosexuality is a result of insufficient

androgen during pre-natal life is completely untenable according to Dr Goy. "I cannot see how, if they have sufficient androgen to bring about full genital masculinity, they don't have sufficient for full psychological masculinity. The problem is not that too little androgen is present, but rather that some unknown factor prevents what is there from acting in a typical fashion on the developing male."

There is no question but that the scientists at last week's conference are regarded as the best in their field. That their activities appear so extraordinary stem more from the fact as Dr Goy says, that our technical knowledge is outstripping our social knowledge so that many of us still don't know what attitude to take to such experiments.

But we'll have to make up our minds. For in private many more strange experiments are under discussion by the scien-

tists. Perhaps the strangest was described by Dr Geoffrey Bourne, an Australian who used to be at Oxford, but now heads the Yerkes Primate Research Centre in Georgia.

Bourne has plans to try to produce chimpanzee-gorilla hybrids, and possibly even human-gorilla hybrids. Later on this year, the Primate Centre hopes to cross-breed a chimpanzee with a gorilla. The only thing that has held them back so far has been the problems they encountered with artificial insemination of chimpanzees. But earlier this year, Dr David Martin and Dr R Gould perfected the technique of inserting the ejaculate plug. But the prospect of a female gorilla mating with a human male, or even artificial insemination of a female gorilla with human sperm, is bound to land Bourne in hot water. His views are not cut and dry on the subject. "I'm ambivalent. From a scientific point of view, it would be incredibly intriguing, but I wonder whether I have the right to bring a creature into the world that would be neither fish nor fowl."

The possibility of a human-gorilla hybrid is much less likely than that of a chimpanzee-gorilla hybrid. Chimps and gorillas have the same number of chromosomes. But man has two less chromosomes. For this reason some people have ridiculed the idea. Dr Bourne does not think the difference in chromosome numbers need necessarily preclude the experiment from working.

In the Soviet Union they are certainly very keen for him to carry on, with his work. He has had two letters from the Darwin Museum in Moscow urging him to try to mate man with gorillas or chimps.

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