

Freedom

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In this Issue:

The British General Strike of 1926 - p. 2
Schools and Prisons - p. 2
The Place of the Foreman - p. 4

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Threepence

McA.'s Statement

GENERAL MCARTHUR'S testimony before the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees in Washington, which is still proceeding as we go to press, has so far revealed little new information about the Korean war. But it has clarified and underlined certain issues so that the outlines have become more sharply defined.

Some of these are, indeed, so general that they tend to be overlooked. The frankness and clarity with which the antagonism between Russia and the United States has been discussed would have astonished the diplomacy of even twenty years ago. Both General McArthur and the Administration have considered in the most practical details not merely the fighting problems of Korea, but also the strength and ability of Russia to fight a land war in Asia, or to supply adequately Chinese land forces; the direct threat of Russia towards Japan and the Philippines, and even the ability of Russian submarines to attack Singapore; the indirect threat to Japan caused by the drawing off of its defensive troops to the mainland in Korea; the relationship of the struggle in Asia and the Pacific to the defence of Europe; and even the possible dangers of Russian attack on the Canadian and American north Pacific seaboard. All this has been openly discussed. If it has done nothing else it has brought out into the open the kind of consideration which State administrations are continually preoccupied with.

In parenthesis we may remark that all this is relevant to the disillusionment of the reformist socialists. Those who have been disappointed with the performance of the Labour Party in office, may ask themselves how any government is to side-step these problems of power politics. Those who supported the great marxist social democratic parties before 1917 may well look back in the light of the power activities of the Russian section

Third Challenge to Franco

A B.U.P. report from Madrid last Saturday states that "Sitdown strikes have been declared in a number of factories and shops in Vitoria, capital of the Alava Province of Spain.

The high cost of living was claimed as the reason for the new strikes, which started yesterday and continued to-day despite a decree by the governor of the province that the strikers would be dismissed if they did not return to work to-day.

Nearly one-third of the workers in Vitoria are understood to be involved. There has been no violence, although about 40 workers are reported to have been arrested for questioning."

This strike is the third large-scale protest in the past few weeks by the Spanish people, against conditions under Franco's régime.

With each strike the opposition movement emerges stronger and more determined, and as one correspondent puts it, the strikes "appear to have been a test of the strength and efficiency of the clandestine organisation and the reaction of the Government and the public."

Franco has obviously been shaken but quite impotent in doing anything about ridding the country of its corrupt administrators and of improving the economic conditions of the workers. And he is also faced by a possible split among his own supporters in the Church and the Army. Not that they oppose Franco's methods, but because, more likely, they are seeing the danger signals ahead and feel that in the event of an upheaval it would be unwise for them to be too closely associated with Franco's régime.

The minister of Industry and Commerce, Señor Suanzes, has told newspapermen that Spain's economic position was "difficult but by no means desperate". He also added that the Spanish Government had no intention of subordinating its far-flung programme of industrialisation to greater agricultural rehabilitation.

of the social democracy to-day.

The Murder of Korea

But there is also the inter-Party strife in America, with the Republicans hoping to make maximum capital out of McArthur in discrediting the Democratic régime, while Truman's supporters hope to gain by justifying their dismissal of the General. There is no point in elaborating this, but an instance may show how far it penetrates into the voting structure. The Republicans, who were successful in capturing some of the Roman Catholic votes last November, have been counting on continuing to do so. Hence they are very upset because the *Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper has not been very friendly to McArthur, declaring that his policy is not "the way to peace". The Democrats, in their examination of McArthur hope to rub this in (McArthur himself has assisted them considerably with his reiterated viewpoint that Korea is only an incident in the global struggle and that the Administration should therefore not be too shy of risking extension of the war by bombing North Korean supply bases in Manchuria, or even assisting Chiang Kai-shek's troops on Formosa to invade the mainland)—to rub this in, and so capture the Catholic vote for themselves. For the politicians these are important, perhaps the most important aspects of the McArthur affair.

Party Strife

Now that the war in Korea brings the threat of the third world war nearer, it is easy to forget the issues on which the war was begun—to help the South Koreans to repel "wanton aggression". *Freedom* pointed out right at the beginning (cf. Belgium 1914, Poland 1939) that the war would destroy Korea instead of safeguarding it.

McArthur estimated U.N. casualties in Korea at a quarter of a million, without taking into account the civilian casualties, while he put the enemy losses at three quarters of a million, including 145,000 prisoners. In all, a million men lost in less than eleven months fighting. He truly remarked that "you cannot brush

that off as a 'Korean skirmish'."

McArthur declared roundly that the war had destroyed the Korean nation of twenty millions, and he went on:

"I have never seen such devastation. I have seen, I guess, as much blood and disaster as any living man, and it just curdled my stomach the last time I was there. After I looked at that wreckage and those thousands of women and children and everything, I vomited. Now are you going to let that go on, by any sophistry of reasoning or possibilities? What are you going to do? Once more I repeat: What is the policy in Korea? If you go on indefinitely, you are perpetuating a slaughter such as I have never heard of in the history of mankind."

Now that is plain speaking on the matter of war. It is clearly something to ponder on, for in supporting or undertaking a war to-day this is the responsibility which is incurred. In the general framework revealed by the scope of the enquiry, however, it is clearly inadequate to be "wise after the event" and say that we should never have become involved in Korea. The hard fact to grasp is that if one is content to continue a mode of social and economic organisation which includes international rivalry and competition with resort to war as the ultimate sanction (and General McArthur has correctly described war's function thus), then one must accept the devastation in Korea.

Famine and the Problem of Food Supply

THE Indian famines are disasters on a scale too huge for us to grasp, and it is a temptation to put them out of consciousness altogether—to try and forget them. The vast majority of people in this country are probably unaware that the Indian people are short of food; those who read the kind of paper which reports such matters mostly regard it as very terrible but do not care to dwell on it. For only very few indeed does it start a train of thinking about the whole problem of population and food supply, not simply in India, but throughout the world. Yet if we were sane enough to put first things first we would be more concerned about this most basic of all problems—that of supplying the means to live—than about any other.

For it is a plain fact that very few people the world over have enough to eat—enough in the sense that no additions to their diet would help their physical and mental wellbeing. People die in millions in Indian famines, yet between the famines the population is less dramatically starving, but is nevertheless appallingly underfed.

And even in the best-fed nations, England and America, malnutrition, though less prevalent than in the thirties, is still very common. And it is not only a question of hunger and suffering and diminished resistance to disease; it is also that unless people are fully and adequately fed they cannot give of their best to society. What are the potentialities of the Indians? We do not know until they are all well enough fed at least to have the physical energy of health. It requires imagination to grasp the loss of human capacity caused by world-wide underfeeding.

The Problem of Relief

This is the background against which the solution of the famine problem in the Indian sub-continent has to be considered. But we shall see as we go on how relative some of our standards are and how much it is necessary to adjust "practical" ways of thinking.

Consider, for example, the question of emergency relief. It is obvious that the American surplus should be rushed to India to stop the immediate gap. But since famines are recurring events in India, and that they only punctuate a permanent malnutrition, surely American surpluses (which are a serious "problem",

soldier who played bowls in Plymouth many years ago?) But Franco, it seems to us will be fishing in very troubled waters, and we agree with the *Observer's* Spanish correspondent that it is difficult to see how Franco can cope with internal situation without substantial American aid.

For this reason every effort must be made to prevent any help reaching Franco from his admirers on the other side of the Atlantic.

THE MINERS DO IT AGAIN Where's the Next Crisis?

THE British ruling class has much to thank the British miner for. Whether the British miner has much to thank the ruling class for is another matter, but certainly, whenever there has been any sort of crisis in Britain's economy, it has been the miners who have felt it first—either by having not enough work, or by having too much.

In what the Tories choose to refer to as the "good old days" there were many mining villages and towns in Britain where anything up to 90% of the men-folk were idle for years, their only activity hunger marches to London.

That evil was solved—not by the constructive ability of the politicians or their good will, but by the outbreak of war, and to-day it is the other end of the stick which is beating the miners.

At the beginning of this year, Mr. Attlee made a personal appeal asking for an extra three million tons of coal by the end of April. Wasting no time (time-wasting is strictly reserved for wage-negotiations), the unions encouraged the men to work an extra Saturday shift. They did so, and despite the fact that there are to-day 6,500 fewer miners than there were a year ago, the target Attlee set has been exceeded by 78,000 tons.

We have no wish to carp or sneer at this magnificent effort by the mine-workers. But we do claim the right to ask—why? Not only why have they worked like this, but also why is it necessary for them to work like this?

It was Neurin Bevan who once said of the Tories—"On an island built on

coal and surrounded by fish it would take an organising genius to produce a shortage of both at the same time!" but since the Labour Government took over we have had one disastrous fuel shortage—in 1947—and one very bad scare last winter when it was suddenly discovered we had exported too much. (As for fish—that has been rationed by the purse, so no shortage has been in the shops—only on working-class tables.)

Leisure and Well-being

The miners have been working at full pressure since 1939. First for the war effort, then for the export drive, and now for both the export drive and the re-armament programme. They have reached their targets only to find each time another target further on. It is to the miners the State turns to pull its chestnuts out of the fire, and the leisure and well-being they thought were going to be theirs when the Labour Government took office and gave them the five-day week are as far off as ever.

There is plenty of evidence that mine-workers are losing their illusions about nationalisation. Perhaps it will become clearer to them now that it is socialisation that they really wanted; that nothing less than workers' control will give them leisure and well-being at the same time.

But for the moment, as they straighten their aching backs, the miners can reflect upon the fact that the N.C.B. will shortly be able to start large-scale export again—in time to create another crisis for next winter.

though of a marketing kind, in the U.S.) should be shipped to India every year until Indian agricultural economy has solved its problem? For should not international co-operation arrange that excess anywhere be transferred to areas of shortage?

But what is this American "surplus"? How can a country which admits to widespread malnutrition itself have a "surplus" which does not strain the meaning of words. Clearly surplus here means the food which the producers and the food corporations cannot sell. It does not at all mean the surplus which a satisfied American population have no appetite left for. The truly practical question arises: if Americans had enough to eat, would there be any surplus for export? If not, could the productive capacity of American agriculture be increased to give relief to food shortage areas? Obviously, such a question only possesses reality if the existing reality of markets and exchanges and restrictionism and currency allocation and ability or inability to make payment in kind is done away with. If any country has a surplus its moral duty is clearly to make that surplus available to save Indian (or any other starving peoples) lives—in total disregard of the "practical" issues of payment, transport costs, effect on the home market and all the other inhuman claptrap that gets in the way of rational distribution to-day.

Agriculture and Population in India

Let us turn to the question of Indian agriculture and its capacity to meet the needs of the population. It is taken as axiomatic that Indian food should be home grown. But we should remember in passing that this is less because it is the simplest and most straightforward method of dealing with a basic problem, than because India is too poorly industrialised to require food imports as payment for industrial exports. In industrialised Britain it is not thought desirable by the practical folk that English food be grown at home—indeed they always ridiculed such an idea.

If we accept that it is desirable (and this is the writers' opinion) that the population of India should be fed from Indian soil, then there are two ways in which existing food production can be increased: (1) by increasing the area under cultivation, and (2) by increasing the yield per acre.

Given adequate capital the first method has produced good results in the past. Before the end of the nineteenth century the British carried through a vast irrigation scheme in the great plains of the Punjab, converting a waste of sand and thorn-scrub and poor grazing land into a rich and productive countryside. But this was a favourable area—that is, one from which some return could be expected for the capital invested in it. In the immediate past about one-fifth of British India was officially classified as "cultur-

able waste", and it is now said that some 90 million acres could be reclaimed. But a recent writer has doubted the feasibility of these figures, remarking that in a country where famine is so imminent a danger all the time "if this waste were in fact culturable without an altogether prohibitive capital outlay it would have been cultivated long ago". The Government of India apparently only regards 10 million acres as reclaimable, and has proposed some large-scale tractor schemes. Once again the words italicized above—"without an altogether prohibitive capital outlay"—indicate that the cold hand of finance is adding to the natural difficulties. Of the cement, steel, machinery and electrical equipment which development schemes require, India can produce only cement and steel. But if these schemes will save lives from famine does it not become a moral duty for those countries which can supply machinery and equipment to give them to India? According to the *New York Herald Tribune*, when independent India opened the doors to American capitalist investment "few capitalists came and most of those who did went away convinced that they could do better elsewhere. It is apparent that private American capital is simply not interested in new investment in India."

Actually, the problem of large-scale development projects contain serious problems within themselves. Intended to improve food production, by the second method, that of increasing yields per acre, less satisfactory results may ensue from the upsetting of traditional farming practices. Speaking of the great irrigation scheme and dam at Mettur, south of Madras, which has replaced a thousand-year-old irrigation system, O. H. K. Spate remarks that, "among the results of the new system are the overcharging of the natural drainage lines, leading to increased malaria and a rise of the ground-water, which endangers the valuable orchards of

TO PAGE THREE

MANCHESTER DOCKERS STILL OUT

(From a Correspondent)

MANCHESTER, Tuesday.

THERE seems little prospect of an early settlement of the dispute here, involving some 2,300 dockers, which started with the suspension for three days of two dockers who refused to work overtime.

The stoppage is now in its thirteenth day, and unloading on 30 ships has been held up. At a meeting attended by more than a thousand dockers, Mr. George Norman, chairman of the unofficial Port Workers' Committee, demanded that the suspension order should be lifted and lost wages made up before the workers would resume work. But it seems unlikely that these demands will be met.

