

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

SUSPECT THEIR PROMISES WHEN THEY START

## Going a-Wooing

AS the electioneering racket begins to get under way, the various baits which the politicians hope will encourage us to swallow their hooks, begin to make their appearance.

And the baits are pretty stale. If there is anything which confirms us in our opinion of the poverty of thought current in politics to-day, it is the staleness and superficiality of the policies of the electioneering parties.

Fundamentally, both parties are making their appeal to the people on the record of the government of the last six years. The Conservatives are attacking it and the Labour Party are, apparently, smugly convinced that they have a good record, and can afford to rest on their laurels—admitting, perhaps, some short-comings, but claiming that no other party would have done better.

With the latter point we are inclined to agree. Anarchists do not reject politics only because politicians are dishonest. Most of them are, but our criticism of existing systems—which might be answered if that idealistic conception, the honest politician, could ever be produced in sufficient numbers to be effective—goes much further than that. We maintain that any political party, taking on the government of a capitalist state, has to act in certain well-defined ways. The rules of the game demand it, and although superficial differences may be apparent in the various political programmes, in practice—they operate very much the same.

### Labour's Tory Policy

We pointed out last week the growing similarity of the party programmes, and as their sham arguments develop, the differences become less and less.

For all the years of the Labour Government, we have had operating in our name a Tory foreign policy. This was admitted from the very beginning of Labour rule, when Ernie Bevan took over the Foreign Office and announced his policy of "continuity". And certainly, for the British soldiers, sailors and airmen who since 1945 have had to carry out on the battlefields of the world the "continuity" policy of the men who sit in offices, the fact that we had a Labour Government instead of a Conservative must have seemed a very academic distinction indeed.

As the nationalisation of industry after industry took place, too, a retreat from the so-called socialism which inspired the first take-over began to be apparent. The structure of the iron and steel industry—the last to be taken over—is very different from that of coal-mining—the first. Not all the steel industry has been

nationalised, to start with, only the biggest firms having come under State control, and among them, competition, on the good old Tory principle, is encouraged.

### The Tories' Labour Policy

On the other side, the Conservatives having realised that the Welfare State is here to stay, are claiming that they thought of it first. While maintaining their opposition to nationalisation, they are announcing that they will hand back to private hands only two of the State's industries—steel and road transport. And it is interesting to note that these were the only two which were, before nationalisation, completely in private hands and were making a profit. The power industries—gas and electricity (and water)—were partly under municipal control, and the railways and coal mines had been either losing money for years, or growing steadily more inefficient through lack of capital replacement. These industries the Tories are quite happy to leave in State hands.

And while Labour are wooing the middle classes, to get their votes, the Tories are now wooing the workers, to get theirs. The latest stunt from Conservative headquarters is not only the suggestion for an Excess Profits Tax—except on profits ploughed back as capital—but also the plotting of a "Workers' Charter", to be worked out with the employers and the unions "to secure greater unity and co-operation in industry by giving work people security, incentive, and status, and to encourage co-partnership and profit-sharing". Are we really expected to fall for that sort of stuff?

Incidentally, in his speech at the recent T.U.C. Conference, Hugh Gaitskell suggested that maybe production bonuses and profit-sharing schemes might be the answer to the Socialist search for incentives in an inflationary period.

For years the Liberal Party has been the only one putting forward co-partnership and profit-sharing as parts of their policy. Now both the Labour and Conservative Parties are picking at the rags of Liberal thought, seeking patches for their own threadbare theories.

### Ignoring the Fundamentals

What a farce it all is! All the arguments, all the venom, the mud, the hullabaloo of an election—what does it all mean? The fundamental questions are the very ones which the parties choose to ignore.

We, the ordinary people, who seek nothing but the satisfaction of our simple needs in return for our just contribution

to society; who seek to live in peace with the peoples of all nations, neither exploiting nor being exploited; who have our creative abilities and would find satisfaction in using them to the full for the benefit of all—what have we to gain by choosing between one set of masters or another?

The nagging fear at the back of all our minds of another world war, is a fear which the continued existence of government—no matter what its label—will make a certainty. Both Tory and Labour are agreed on re-armament—even the "rebels" in the Labour Party object only to the degree of re-armament—and they both carefully skate over the obvious fact that none of their promises can come to fruition because—to put it in a nutshell—they are hell-bent for destruction.

We shall do well to resist the advances of those who woo us with such tawdry offerings, for such dangerous ends.

### CHARLIE CHAPLIN SAYS HE IS AN ANARCHIST

FOR years the Communists have claimed the great film comedian, Charlie Chaplin, as, at least, a fellow traveller. And the current American hysteria, which labels as Communist anyone not a patriotic enthusiast for the American way of life, has helped the illusion.

Now, however, in an interview with Paul Holt, published in the *Daily Herald* 25/9/51, we get Chaplin's own admission. Holt writes:—

"I asked him if he was a Communist. Down in the valley men hate him because they believe he is.

"'Communist? I'm a comic!' he said, as though to be a comic was more important. 'I can't understand Karl Marx, so how can I be a Communist? I think...' he said, pondering, 'I am an anarchist. I wish... I wish governments would go away and leave people alone more. People can get along without governments. I can'."

### SYNDICALIST NOTEBOOK

#### Co-operation Through Authority

SIR GEORGE SCHUSTER, speaking at a Ministry of Labour Manpower Exhibition last week stressed the need for a new attitude to Industrial Relations. He said, "The ideal objective, should be to make each industrial unit a harmonious, live co-operating community spontaneously working together for a common purpose."

This may sound very much like an anarchist attitude to industry. But in case anyone is under the illusion that Sir George is putting over an anarchist "line", let us pursue his remarks a little further. He assured the meeting that he was not advocating what was usually known as workers' control, as it was "impossible to conduct a modern industrial enterprise successfully without the exercise of authority, without the guidance of leadership, and without the practice of discipline. The rank and file could not themselves supply the creative leadership which was required."

When Sir George speaks of spontaneously working together, for a common cause, we know he means the successful "exercise of authority". How meaningless can words become?

#### WHY DO THEY DO IT?

WE have, when necessary, deplored the "workers right or wrong" attitude so prevalent in left-wing movements. We think that organised labour often behaves in a very foolish way. We had, for example, recent strikes against foreign labour in industry, and whilst we recognise that unity is strength, we believe it only to be so when it is the unity of all workers, in all industries and in all countries.

There is another case in point, where two thousand workers from a Glasgow engineering firm struck against the refusal of a fellow worker to rejoin their union (Amalgamated Engineering) after he had resigned for personal reasons. The man left his job after eleven years, rather than rejoin. We do not yet know the

### DISHONOURABLE ARMIES

MILITARISM is seldom subjected to dispassionate examination. Those who regard war as a necessary evil are content to leave it at that and discuss it no further. For anti-militarists it is so self-evidently wrong that again there can be no real discussion, only denunciation. Of course, such a generalisation is only incompletely true. FREEDOM tries to examine the place of war in modern life and so examines some aspects at least of militarism. Then there are those, like Mussolini, who expound a philosophy of war as not an evil but the cradle of certain virtues. Herbert Read, in some chapters of *Poetry and Anarchism*, examines this view as put forward by an Englishman, Douglas Jerrold. But FREEDOM at one end and Douglas Jerrold at the other are exceptions. In the main, it remains true that militarism is generally undiscussed, only supported or denounced.

A recent correspondence in the *Times*, however, has broken through this general rule, with the rather surprising (to some people) result that the views of anarchists have been to some extent vindicated by people who certainly do not share anarchist general convictions.

#### Honour of the German Soldier

The subject blew up following some remarks about the honour of the German Army in the course of comment on whether Germany should contribute to Europe's defence. Obviously, if the European defence forces are to contain elements of the German Army, it will not help co-operation much to stress the atrocities, brutalities, war crimes, etc., committed by German Generals. But the storm broke when Mr. R. T. Paget, K.C., M.P., declared that the German Army fought well and honourably and compared its commanders to Field-Marshal Montgomery or Alexander. He has also published a book attacking the trial of General Manstein (for whom he acted as defence counsel), which has called forth a lofty, if somewhat unconvincing

rebuttal from the former Attorney-General, Sir Hartley Shawcross.

Paget's letter provoked a storm of criticism. One writer, Mr. D. P. Waley, quotes Mussolini's dictum "Believe, fight, obey," and declares that German soldiers who carried out atrocities in obedience to orders from above were guilty: "If the men who serve in a European army are to have a code of 'Crede, combatte, obbedire,' they will not be soldiers of a 'free' Europe in any sense."

#### Occupation Authorities

Louis Lévy, writing as vice-chairman of the Socialist International, reminds readers of the shooting of hostages and the mass execution of civilians carried out by the German Army. "It is not even necessary," he adds, "to refer to Poland." Stuepnagel, the Commander-in-Chief in Paris during the occupation, writes Lévy, "was not a member of the S.S., nor of the S.A., and was probably not even a Nazi: he was a general of the regular army, believing certainly in the honour of the Wehrmacht. The trouble is that the sense of honour of General Stuepnagel, of the great majority of the German generals, and of their champions like Mr. Paget, is quite different from the sense of honour of the common people in Europe."

Another writer, C. J. Hamson, points out that German militarism kills the "soldier's sense of personal moral responsibility." But, unlike the other writers so far, he seems to have an uneasy feeling that unexpressed nationalism is present under all this argumentation, for he concludes his letter thus: Mr. Paget indulges in comparisons between the Wehrmacht and the Allied armies. It is probably true that the Allied armies committed atrocities. But, if he believes in comparisons which seem to me irrelevant, would he cite a single instance where any of the forces in the west systematically committed atrocities in pursuance of superior orders?"

#### Allied Atrocities

Paget, himself, thrown on the defensive was able to come back with some powerful body-blows, but at the same time exposed the weakness of the militarist position. In an able letter of 28th September, he wrote: "Mr. Churchill has said that the Germans must contribute (to European defence, that is) on honourable terms. Captain Liddell Hart has quoted General Eisenhower's statement recognising that the Wehrmacht fought honourably, and Mr. Eden has endorsed that statement. This and the release of the Wehrmacht commanders is necessary if German soldiers in a European army are to respect themselves or be respected by their own people." Such is a logical position for those who see armies as the essential elements of alliances and political line-ups.

Paget scores in drawing attention to the fact that "the honour of a soldier"—which he admits to be "an inadequate creed for a fully civilised human being"—nevertheless has "on countless occasions caused soldiers to mitigate the savagery of political directives. The student of military history is constantly being struck by the fact that in war the politician is almost invariably more savage than the soldier, and this includes democratic politicians."

#### "War is Horrible"

Finally, answering Mr. Hamson's challenge regarding allied atrocities committed under orders, Paget declares: "A second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, at a time when it was known

### THE POPE ATTACKS SEX

THE Pope has recently launched a vigorous attack on "sex books" urging Catholic fathers of families throughout the world to unite to combat "this plague". He is reported to have declared that "this sexual propaganda exaggerated beyond all measure the importance and the significance of sex in normal life".

The Roman Catholic Church in every country is the main bulwark against progress in regard to legislation affecting sexuality, or provision of facilities for birth control advice. The "Catholic vote" deters all political parties from campaigning for progressive sexual ends. Despite all this, it is fair to say that sexual morals have undergone something of a revolution in the past thirty years. Abstinence and ascetic codes of behaviour are gradually being recognised for the life denying forces they are.

Nevertheless, despite the enormous volume of books on sex (and

sometimes because of them) the attitude of society is still predominantly anti-sexual. The Pope shrewdly plays on this when he declares that the "sexual propaganda... seemed to take no account of the experience of the ages that sex initiation and instruction could only be gravely unhealthy and prejudicial unless closely linked to constant discipline, to vigorous self-control and, above all, to resort to the supernatural forces of prayer and the sacraments."

It is necessary to say once again that "discipline" and "self-control" (meaning abstinence rather than the proper realisation of natural desires in healthy love associations) are the seed bed for neuroses, sexual delinquency and sadistic crimes. And that the sex-denying teachings of religion lay the foundations for the almost universal unhappiness in marriage.



## AFFAIRS OF REPUTATION

IN his films, Charlie Chaplin's main stock-in-trade is the situation of a man, weak and pathetic figure though he may be, never endingly up against huge forces of convention and its various guardians, whether the rich or the police themselves. The few films he has made during the past twenty years have had an increasingly apparent social flavour culminating in the frank satire on private versus public murder which is "Monsieur Verdoux". It was no surprise therefore when a recent biography claimed for him that Chaplin was an anarchist. Now comes his own reported statement to the same effect.

No surprise to the informed student of his films and of the political world, perhaps. Yet for many years it has been whispered that Chaplin was a Communist, or had Communist sympathies. Inevitably, he was to some extent tainted by the general attitude towards Communism.

Now the Communist Parties have long made an established practice of claiming all sorts of progressive and admirable characters of eminence as their own. In France, for example, they unblushingly claim Louise Michel, the heroine of the Commune and an outspoken anarchist. In America to-day they imply that Joe Hill, the I.W.W. songster, was a Communist, though few organisations are more bitterly hostile to Stalinism than the I.W.W. Even more blatantly they claim the anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti, while Durruti, the outstanding revolutionary figure of the Spanish Civil War, and an open opponent of Soviet intervention, would have been "if he had lived" say the Communists, "one of us". Their claims for William Morris as a devoted follower of Stalin are, perhaps, more ludicrous still.

The effect of such whispers, however, is to tie up any progressive with the cause of Stalinism. But to be effective it requires ignorance on the part of the public. The reaction is quick to use the same implication against revolutionary or progressive individuals and so becomes the ally of Communism. Meanwhile, there are not lacking those in the progressive ranks who imagine they can "use" Communism, or influence it; whose vanity makes them easy game for the Party.

In everyday parlance one is often surprised to hear someone say of the bearer of advanced ideas that he is "a bit of a Communist". Now quite apart from the identification of an independent individual with a party whose face and reputation and policy and tactics are continually changing, this kind of thing is utterly confusing for the cause of advanced ideas. Instead of being judged for what they are worth, they become obscured behind a hedge of political prejudice and loyalties. Nothing could well be more damaging to the cause of progress in ideas, which demands before everything more clarity of thought, not less.

Communist taints have a way of sticking, and it is often not enough for some well-meaning progressive figure to deny that he is not a communist at a time when Communism is unpopular. In general, it is more convincing for a man, instead of saying what he is not, to state unequivocally what he is. Communism is not healthy in America at the present time: Chaplin shows his courage when he declares himself

## DISAPPEARANCE OF A PEOPLE

WHAT has become, after ten years, of the 450,000 Volga German colonists whom Stalin by a secret decree of September 24th, 1941, had deported to Siberia and to the Asiatic possessions of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the Russo-German war?

What is the fate of these peasant settlers from the banks of the great river in the provinces of Saratov and Tamara, who ten years ago still constituted their own "Soviet Republic", and of whom the *Great Encyclopaedia* published in Moscow in 1929 said these words:

"The development of the economy and the rational culture of the Volga Germans makes rapid progress towards a better and happier livelihood. The Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic of Volga Germans has become a flourishing Republic of socialist culture."

Where now are the members of this little nation, who were suddenly uprooted en masse and whose "Soviet Republic" has been "Russified"?

The first news on this subject has been made public in Germany by a former engineer from the Junker works, who was deported to Russia in 1946 with several hundred German technicians

from the Eastern Zone, and who after his return to Germany, escaped and reached the West.

The *Stuttgarter Zeitung* of 8/8/51 gives the following account:

"Working in an aviation factory near Kuibishev, during the year 1948, this engineer one day met a score of young women who were waiting for the boat to take them back to their place of work. They spoke German correctly with the slight Swabian accent which the Volga Germans have never lost since Catherine II in the years 1764-1773 made them settle in Russia. They told him that their families had been taken away in the autumn of 1941 from the villages of Marienthal-Friedensfeld, Warenburg, and Wiesenmüller, for an unknown destination. The operation had been sudden and unexpected, without any warning. Nothing could be taken with them, neither household goods nor personal effects. The older children were separated from their parents, husbands and wives were parted and the long journey into the unknown began for each, under the charge of the Soviet Government. From a few letters received later by the girls, they learnt that their parents were in Siberia where they worked on the collective farms in very poor conditions.

"The girls themselves worked, they said, in a cement works forty kilometres from Kuibishev. In all there were 500 German girls there, in a work camp. In the evening at nine o'clock everyone was to be in her numbered bed, where they were counted like cattle before being shut in until morning. None of them had any of the personal documents indispensable for moving about in Russia. To go as far as Kuibishev they had to have a special permit. They were compelled to do the heaviest work for the lowest wages in conditions inferior to those of the Russians employed in the same factory. It was forbidden for them to marry. Thus they were all filled with the sense of being slaves with no hope of any possible amelioration of their lot.

"When asked whether the Volga Germans had, after the declaration of war, shown any opposition to the Russian authorities, the girls replied with a categorical 'no'. The Volga Republic was run with absolute loyalty. The Russians envied its inhabitants because of their relative prosperity.

"Thus the Soviet state, needing to find room for the refugees from the eastern provinces had seized the opportunity to 'liquidate' the Volga German colonists—whose autonomy had been

proclaimed by Stalin himself—and to settle in their lands the refugees from the frontier regions.

"The engineer had another encounter with a Volga German who was employed as a truck driver. His wife, with four children, was on a *kolkhoz* near Kasakstan, while his parents had been deported to Usbekistan. His family had lived before the war near the town of Engels (formerly Pokorvok) the capital of the Volga Republic. He himself, as a driver-mechanic had been sent to an industrial district where he had been attached to a state building enterprise at Biesmyaka. He lived there in a labour camp with thirty of his compatriots whose families were scattered throughout Siberia. The driver and his companions had, naturally, no right to change their jobs, he could not drive on any road but that between his workplace and the town. He had been promised that his family would be permitted to join him, but this promise had not been kept.

"Such are the thanks of Stalin to the German peasants of the Volga, who, in their zeal, had offered, from January 31st, 1926, to make their republic an example to the whole country in the modernisation of Soviet agrarian economy!"

## FOREIGN COMMENTARY

# FREEDOM IS GROWING . . . ?

SPEAKING last week at a ceremony in Washington, at which the United States Constitution and Declaration of Independence were sealed in new protective cases, Mr. Truman said that "by resorting to the worst evils of ancient tyranny the Soviet rulers have held their citizens in terror and bondage, while freedom is growing in the rest of the world." And though the report of the speech does not add between brackets [*loud applause*] we do not doubt that in fact his words were received with smug approbation by those present. There can surely be no stronger opponents of the Russian system than the anarchists, who were among Lenin's first political victims. Yet we would never be so stupid as to put forward as an argument against the régime in Russia that "it holds its citizens in terror and bondage". It is just not true, at least within the meaning given to these words by Mr. Truman. There are obviously millions of people in Russia who are—to a greater or lesser degree—fanatical supporters of Stalin and his leaders, and who are convinced of their own happiness within that régime. It may be argued that they cherish illusions about Stalin and of the true meaning of happiness, but no more than those who agree with Truman that "freedom is growing in the rest of the world".

Mr. Truman also said "Soviet citizens live in fear. Their society is a jungle through which the naked power of government prowls like a beast of prey making all men afraid." From this sentence it is clear that Mr. Truman wants us to believe that all men are afraid in Russia and from the previous sentence quoted that in all countries outside Russia's sphere of influence "freedom is growing".

How ironical such a statement is just when the whole world is in the process of preparing for another war (though we have yet to discover a single person in any country who wants war) and peacetime conscription has now become the rule even in those countries such as America and Britain where up to 1939 it was unknown. *Internationalist's* revealing article in last week's *FREEDOM* should be carefully read because he effectively explodes the Truman myth that "freedom is growing" in the anti-Communist nations. As he rightly points out, we must face the fact that if the present trend continues, in a generation or two there will be no more civilians; all will be soldiers.

Nowhere in the world in fact is "freedom growing"—for everywhere in the world government is becoming stronger, more ruthless, more centralised. And

to be an anarchist, unpopular and illegal for three-quarters of a century. But, whatever the official American attitude towards it, Anarchism in America as elsewhere is clearly differentiated from Communism or any other political organisation in having an entirely honourable history.

freedom can only "grow" where men are in control of their lives, for as Herbert Read has so well put it, "freedom . . . is a positive condition—specifically, freedom to create, freedom to become what one is." And how can that be when we are being herded like cattle by those who think they know best what is good for us?

## THE KOREAN INFERNO

THE *Manchester Guardian* has been publishing a series of outstanding articles under the main heading of "The Korean Purgatory" which make no attempt at whitewashing what is really happening in Korea, and the picture that emerges is so ghastly as to be almost unbelievable. It is impossible to summarise them; the descriptions of the plight of the refugees should cause a wave of indignation which should place the politicians responsible for the Korean war and for the delay in declaring an armistice in the same category as the German war criminals. Also in that category should be placed those journalists who are urging that the war shall be continued. The *American New Leader*, which sees Communists lurking in every corner, has come out with an hysterical article on "Appeasement in Korea" (10/9/51) in which it accuses the American political leaders, Republican and Democratic of joining in "tacit appeasement because each fears that it will be accused by the other of needlessly prolonging the Korean war . . ."

"The necessity for the cease-fire is ac-

cepted without debate, although there is no evidence that the public demands it and much evidence that our wisest leaders of both parties fear its consequences. After all, only two months ago, the Gallup poll showed a majority in support of General MacArthur's militant proposals, and it is hardly likely that the majority supports the opposite policy today. As so often in recent years, the political leaders, not the public, have failed." (Our italics.)

Listen to the *M.G.* correspondent's description of the Korean inferno: "The first wave of refugees—I was about to say of the attack—broke over the province of Seoul under the impact of the Chinese invasion. From Pyongyang, the Communist capital, alone, three hundred thousand Koreans fled southward. In the frightful cold they died in their thousands on the roads. Babies on their mother's backs became little frozen corpses, thrown by and by into a ditch. Children at death's door were dispatched by their parents. Files of refugees passed over the frozen rivers and were drowned when the ice collapsed beneath their weight. As the old people came out of an ice-cold ford, the veins could be seen bursting on their legs.

"In Seoul there are five [hospitals] crammed with patients and lacking everything—medicaments, beds, doctors, staffs. In one which I visited there were a hundred patients, with two doctors, three assistants and fifteen nurses to look after them. Dying people lay in the corridors. Children covered with blood

lay on stretchers; they had been struck by fragments from exploding mines. There were victims of napalm bombing, their bodies one vast burn."

We suggest that the *New Leader* and their "democratic" buddies send Dr. Gallop to Korea to enquire what "the public demands" there. And to Mr. Truman one might ask, "Is this an example of the 'freedom' that 'is growing in the rest of the world'?" Who knows but that in our world of atomic and bacterial warfare, "freedom" will become synonymous with death?

LIBERTARIAN.

## ITALIAN LAND SEIZURES

Land was yesterday occupied by peasants in a wide area to the south of Rome. The action was on a larger scale than any that has taken place for some time, and the obvious co-ordination behind it suggested careful planning.

Some tens of thousands of peasants took part, and police, sent from Rome in large numbers, intervened to remove the men from the land; 34 were arrested.

The occupation was apparently organised by the Confederterra, the Communist-dominated agricultural union, whose notices *Terra e non guerra* (Land and not war) have recently been prominent in the areas concerned.

One of the main regions occupied was north of Rome, around Civitavecchia. Here, according to the union, the reason was that, though land there was due to be expropriated under the land reform law, not one acre had yet been distributed.

*The Times*, 25/9/51.

## THE KOREAN WAR

# Document for the Record

"ONE of Pusan's worst tragedies, and one of the most significant ones, was the scandal of the 'reserve army'. Credit must be given to the Assembly for its courage in putting an end to the scandal. At the time of the first retreat of the Northerners in face of the advance of General MacArthur's troops in the autumn of 1950, the Communists had taken with them to the north the whole of the youth of Seoul: all the boys and men between fifteen and thirty years of age and all the girls and women of sixteen to twenty-five—in all a quarter of a million young people. When the great Chinese thrust southward came in January 1951, the Syngman Rhee refugee Government at Pusan took alarm at the prospect of a further mass kidnapping, and ordered the call-up of all the young men and their transfer to the south. This had a double advantage: they would be out of reach of the Northerners and they could be formed into a second army alongside the Regulars. The organisation and training of this "reserve army", as it was called, were entrusted to the "National Guard", the paramilitary youth organisation which the Syngman Rhee Government had called into being.

"This mass call-up took the form of an immense police raid, which was especially drastic in the regions near the 38th parallel. It is said to have rounded up 700,000 young people, but in the absence of any sort of official record, the figures cannot be checked. The round-up took place mainly in the winter, amid frightful cold. In the panic of the retreat the men were herded to-

gether and sent under strong guard, on foot, by road to the south. Thousands fell exhausted on the way or died of cold, or fled. Those who reached the south numbered a little less than 400,000.

"In the environs of Pusan and in the northern provinces, they were parked in camps surrounded by barbed wire. The number of camps is stated to have been 54. The recruits remained there for five months, doing nothing, and dying of cold and hunger. Nothing had been organised for them: nothing had been planned, and there were no instructors, apart from a few National Guards in charge of the camps. There were no arms for this future army. Above all, there was no clothing, there were no blankets, and the food was appalling. The unfortunate young men died in the camps like flies. After a few months the 'reserve army' was composed of starving hordes among whom dysentery and tuberculosis were rampant.

"The National Assembly was horrified. It was found that the head of the organisation, Brigadier-General Kim Youn-keun, a soldier of long service who had risen from the ranks and who had been honoured by the President's confidence, had dipped deep, with a number of accomplices, into the fund of twenty milliard wons (almost four million dollars) provided by the Budget for the reserve army. They had actually sold the rice intended for the camps, and millions supposed to have been expended on clothing, feeding, training, and arming the recruits had gone into the pockets

of the principal leaders or had served to reward their accomplices.

"The Assembly enforced the resignation of the Defence Minister and the dissolution of the National Guard. The new Minister of Defence cut out the abcess, in spite of every official effort to hush up the affair and protect those responsible. General Kim was arrested. On July 19th he was court-martialled at Taegu and sentenced to death, with four accomplices. The guilty persons had pocketed five milliards of wons (nearly a million dollars). For how many deaths had they been responsible? An opponent of Syngman Rhee gave a figure—fifty thousand. This, no doubt, was greatly exaggerated. But, since no list of the recruits had been drawn up, the exact number of victims will never be known. It should certainly have been possible to count the survivors as they left the camps.

"For they were simply turned out; the gates of the camps were opened and they were put once more on the road. Most of them were ill and withered to the bone. They were abandoned, without resources and without regular rations, for they were no longer anybody's business. Many died in the overcrowded hospitals of Pusan. Others wandered about the regions of the South. The rest returned northward. They kept together in gaunt, violent bands, singing the 'Internationale'."

—By Robert Guilan, special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* and *Le Monde*. (See also *Foreign Commentary*.)

