

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Freedom is the indispensable condition of successful co-operation; without it, co-operation is only a fine name for bondage."

—JOSIAH C. WEDGEWOOD.

## THE COST OF SUEZ

AS far as we are able to judge, the main reasons given for Eden's plunge into the Middle East are twofold: firstly he wanted to maintain the safety of the Suez Canal as an imperial waterway, secondly it was his aim to secure the continued supply of Middle East oil to Western Europe.

It does not require a very detailed perusal of the news to discover that not only has he failed completely on both counts, but it is also quite plain that his precipitous action actually brought about the disasters he wished to avert.

As we go to press we are informed that there are no less than 49 wrecks which block the canal from end to end!

If we examine the many and various reasons which the British Government have given for entering into an "armed conflict" on Egyptian territory it will be found that none of them can be regarded as morally feasible (or lawful for that matter), particularly if they are viewed in the light of the events which actually occurred. The reasons were:

1. To keep the belligerents apart. Anglo-French forces went in miles behind the frontier.
2. To protect Suez shipping from the Israeli forces. The twelve-hour ultimatum called for Egypt to withdraw 100 miles from the frontier, but not Israel; the greatest threat to Suez shipping quite soon proved to be Anglo-French forces.
3. To act swiftly before Israel upset the whole Middle East, because the United Nations would not act quickly enough. Evidence of

collusion between Britain, France and Israel is overwhelming, and it is certain that Eden knew of Israel's plan well in advance.

4. To act on behalf of the U.N. in time to be effective. The U.N. deplored the whole affair and voted against it 64-5.

5. To foil a Russian plot to take over the Middle East: Peter Thorneycroft (President of the Board of Trade), said: "We intervened to stop the war, and we have perhaps stopped it in the nick of time before the Egyptian air force, organised by Russia, ran amok in the Middle East." The 'war' was much more nearly started by Anglo-French intervention than anything else. The Foreign Office afterwards said that rumours of Russian grand strategy in Arab countries were mostly started by Russia herself, for propaganda purposes.

### Financial & Human Cost

So much for the reasons, and what of the results? Only half the canal was captured; Nasser is still in power; the canal is blocked; most oil pipe-lines from Arab countries are out of action for one reason or another; Britain's hitherto untarnished reputation (sic) in the world is in shreds; Russia was assisted in her own imperialist designs; Britain faces another economic crisis and her financial position is lower than for many years.

The whole operation, we have been informed by the Tory press, has been a huge success, and Britain has once again proved that it is only possible to save the world from it-

self by taking strong action in defence of freedom.

What has been the cost in terms of human life, and what has resulted from "the careful concentration on purely military targets"? According to the Minister of Defence, Anthony Head, British casualties "did not exceed 85, of whose no more than 20 were killed."

Only 20 British. The Egyptians were not so lucky. The estimates vary. According to Premier Nehru the casualties ran into thousands. The *New York Times* said that "more than 1,000 soldiers and civilians were killed in Port Said, according to hospital officials." The correspondent for *Time* magazine cabled his editors just after the battle for Port Said:

"In normal times, the Egyptian General Hospital at Port Said can take care of 40 patients in each of its eight wards. Last Wednesday night when I visited the hospital it had no light, no water, no food and no medical supplies. According to the chief surgeon, Dr. Ezzeldine Hoseny, more than 500 Egyptians had died in his hospital during the two days of fighting in Port Said. At one point corpses were piled

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## The Communist Crisis

THE British Communists and their paper the *Daily Worker* are on the run. The official party line on Hungary is clearly not acceptable to a large number of the comrades and daily the list of those who are withdrawing from Party and paper grows. As was to be expected much is being made of the split in the communist ranks in our national Press and by the politicians. We too for different reasons though, welcome this revolt in the Communist ranks, but we are not so sanguine as to the final outcome. We somehow doubt that we are witnessing the final liquidation of the Communist Party or that the *Daily Worker* is in its death throes.

Double-think and double-tak are not a Communist monopoly, nor are they phenomena which first manifested themselves with events in Hungary and Egypt. The suppression or "cutting" of dispatches—over which Mr. Fryer resigned from the *Daily Worker*—are nothing new in the D.W. office or in Fleet Street. And for the national Press to give this resignation so much publicity reflects just as much on their hypocrisy as on the duplicity of the Communist newspaper which has for so long professed to be the only paper which prints the facts!

If there were objectivity among the Communists and the public in general it would be recognised that there is little to choose between the positions adopted by the hierarchies of the Communist and Conservative parties. They are both concerned with ends and not means and rely on the successful achievement of ends (even modified somewhat!) to stifle the criticisms to which they have been publicly subjected over the means.

How else can one explain the survival of the Communist Party following the Stalin-Hitler Pact except by the subsequent entry of Russia on the side of the allies when the war, it was explained, then became an "anti-fascist" struggle. And the political setback represented by the de-Stalinisation bombshell was turned to advantage by representing the *volte face* as a triumph for the forces of freedom. It mattered little if it meant condemning all that one had dogmatically defended for years, so long as one could convert the new line into a kind of virtue, the turning over of a new leaf. In the present issue, if the C.P. and the *Daily Worker* can hold out long enough they will again weather the storm.

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## Choose Your Weapons Carefully

IN the days of relative "calm", before Eden and Khrushchev made the headlines and murder on a large scale once again became a daily event, the arguments for and against the death penalty in Britain were front page news and the retentionists argued horrifically in favour of the gallows as a deterrent against brutal killings and a just punishment for those who commit illegal murder.

Having satisfied some of their lust for blood on the Egyptians, the Conservatives seem to have modified their approach to the enterprising individual murderer. Within the terms of their new Homicide Bill which has now had its second reading in the House of Commons, while still stubbornly clinging to the hanging tradition in Britain, there are a number of reforms in the present hanging laws for certain types of homicide.

Mindful of the judgment of history, the Tories are not going to be outdone by allowing an individual member's bill from the opposition to go through before their own, thus changing the laws of England and bringing her up to date with other countries which have abolished hanging (with consequent reductions in murders). Aware too, of a determined movement amongst an effective section of the population to have the death penalty removed, they have cunningly wangled a hearing for their own Bill which offers a number of compromises more or less acceptable to most Tory abolitionists, and which they hope will satisfy the Lords, Bishops and hanging supporters within their own party. They have moved a long way from their original position by taking out of the category of murder:

"Homicides about which opinion has long been uneasy—homicides which are murder only by virtue of

the doctrine of constructive malice; homicides by people who, although not insane, are gravely abnormal; homicides under grave provocation by words alone and homicides in pursuance of a suicide pact."

By doing so however, they have logically weakened their own case for retention by categorising murders.

The point was made to the Home Secretary by Mr. Sidney Silverman who said: "If the death penalty was not a unique deterrent he should reject it for all forms of murder: if it was a deterrent he should accept it for all murders. He illustrated this dilemma by saying that 'under this Bill another Ruth Ellis would not be hanged if she used a hatchet but she would be if she used a gun'."

While agreeing with Sidney Silverman on the logic of this argument there is a clear implication contained in the Bill, however reluctantly accepted, that the old emotional arguments cannot be applied indiscriminately to all those who commit murders. We ourselves cannot theoretically accept the kind of compromise offered by the Government, but it is difficult to argue against a new approach to those people at least, who commit murder under extreme circumstances although not actually insane.

### Police Protected

The theoretical protection of the police, prison warders and the doubtful interests of property have been given much consideration. The Bill proposes confining capital punishment to:

"Broadly speaking to murder by professional criminals; murder of the agents of law and order, the police and prison officers; murder by shooting or causing an explosion (Anarchists please note.—Eds.) methods which are peculiarly dangerous and indiscriminate and are associated with gang warfare and

with political terrorism; and murder by a man who makes a practise of murder."

It is unlikely that a political murder will take place in Britain, but killings are daily events in some part of the colonies, and the clause about political assassinations only makes sense in relation to the British civil servants and soldiers serving in places where they are unpopular. In other words the Government is prepared to make a progressive step providing the administration of Government is not interfered with.

The above categories are loosely phrased which should make the job of getting round them easier. This of course can work either in favour or against a man charged with murder.

The Home Secretary argues that the Government has no desire to keep the death penalty for its own sake, but that it is the job of the Government to maintain peace and order, hence the retention of the gallows for those categories of crimes which tend to violate the peace. In arguing this way they have ignored events over the last twelve months.

There have been no hangings in Britain for more than twelve months. During that time the rate of murder has been below the average over the last five years.

Is it not worth considering that there is some connection between hanging and the number of murders committed? (There has been a lot of evidence to show that the excitement of a hanging or the anticipation of one arouses impulses which otherwise might not be in evidence).

If the Government is only concerned with the maintenance of peace and order why are they ignoring the evidence of the past twelve months, apart from the overwhelming experience of other countries?

M.

## Nehru: Moralist or Politician?

IT is amazing how, even at a time when world affairs are being conducted with a more than usual cynicism, people are so far from dispensing altogether with the system which brings it about that they pin all their hopes on a kind of world saviour, a totally just and disinterested politician who can lead the world to safety. At the present time it is not only pacifists who sincerely believe that the last refuge of world sanity is in India, and that it is the role of Nehru to bring the leaders of the opposing powers together by his example. Just the man in fact for international commissions and deputations.

In the past fortnight the staggering events have shown marvellously the complete immorality of politics, reliance on brute force as the ultimate decider, and a disregard for small nations which is all the more callous since neither Russia nor Britain are attempting to be convincing in their excuses. At just a time like this the Asian nations can be relied upon to keep a clear head and point the way out of violence. The story of the past week shows to what extent this is true.

On November 5th, at a UNESCO conference in India, Mr. Nehru commenced by openly condemning both the British action in Suez, and the Russian invasion of Hungary. The two examples of violence were "an outrage on human dignity". That is the moral authority that is expected of a man such as Mr. Nehru.

In Calcutta last Friday, according to the *Times* (12/11/56), he confessed that phrase and idea and therefore not merely he had been unable to follow the "very confusing situation" in Hungary until Mr. Bulganin had been "good enough to send a fairly long account". This account, apparently avoiding extremes of a Soviet press handout, said that Russia had reluctantly accepted a request for help from the victorious of the two opposing factions in the civil war.

Finally, to reinforce words with deeds, in the General Assembly of the United Nations India was the only country to side with the Communist bloc in voting against the Italian resolution calling for free elections in Hungary under United Nations supervision.

One obvious reason for the sudden change in stand would be that Mr. Nehru had suddenly realised how near to India were Russia and China, and that if he were to take sides he might do worse than side with the greatest power mass in Asia. Of course it may be that he felt genuinely in favour of the necessity for settling internal disputes once and for all. He remembers his experience with the people of Kashmir who also wanted the chance to decide their own future. His non-violent reaction was to threaten Pakistan with troop movements. There is however one piece of information which throws an interesting light. It seems that the External Affairs Ministry in Delhi had no previous knowledge of either the speech of Nehru or the action in the United Nations. That there may be a parallel in the Foreign Office over Suez does not alter a situation in which the world outlook of a country the population of India is determined by one man without reference to anyone else. Prominent visitors to this country from India have remarked that Mr. Nehru is a man with a very strong will. Whether this will accords with the will of the Indian people as a whole loses much of its relevance.

Nevertheless, it is probable that Mr. Nehru is influenced by national considerations and a desire for peaceful co-existence in Asia, and therefore shows an unwillingness to help Russian opponents. This inevitably means that considerations of moral right are left far behind—which is only stating the obvious.

P.J.H.



# Looking for a City: Sheffield

"The awakened citizen studies his own town's growth, its history and cultural resources, and remakes it, not by passing ordinances, but by expressing in his own life his contribution to its renewal and reintegration."

—PATRICK GEDDES.

SHEFFIELD grew up in the valleys of four tributaries of the river Don, and around the point where they meet. The district was full of the raw materials for metal-working—iron ore, coal, wood for charcoal-burning, refractory materials and sandstone for grindstones. Even in the 14th century Geoffrey Chaucer had heard of Sheffield knives. In the 18th century Thomas Boulsover invented silver plating there, and Benjamin Huntsman gave the town its leading position in steelmaking. High quality steel is still produced by his crucible process. A hundred years later Henry Bessemer invented his method of large-scale mild steel production there, and to-day Sheffield is the centre for all kinds of high grade steels—stainless, manganese, magnet, heat-resisting and high-tensile steels, and for the products using them, machine tools, saws, files and springs.

The site of the town is shaped like a saucer, rising again in the middle, and from almost every street you can look across one of the river valleys and see the houses climbing up the hillsides beyond. For centuries those hills cut off the town from easy communication with the outside world and the only ways into it were by water and over pack-horse roads. To-day, though the city is even larger than Leeds, its hilly site brings the moors of the Peak District National Park into the city on the West, and the Derbyshire Dales on the South. Bodies like the C.P.R.E. and the famous Sheffield Clarion Ramblers strove for years to get public access to the moors and mountains, and are to-day seeking to preserve Sheffield's Green Belt from further urban expansion.

When Kropotkin visited Sheffield in the eighteen-nineties he noted that: "By far the greatest number of the cutlers work in their homes with their relatives, or in small workshops supplied with wheel power, which they rent for a few shillings a week. Immense yards are covered with buildings, which are subdivided into numbers of small workshops. Some of these cover but a few square yards, and there I saw smiths hammering, all the day long, blades of knives on a small anvil, close by the

blaze of their fires; occasionally the smith may have one helper, or two. In the upper storeys scores of small workshops are supplied with wheel power, and in each of them, three, four, or five workers and a 'master' fabricate, with the occasional aid of a few plain machines, every description of tools: files, saws, blades of knives, razors, and so on."

The tradition of the 'Little Mesters' dies hard. To-day the bulk of the cutlery trade, and of its 10,000 employees, is in the hands of the large and medium sized firms, but of the 600 firms engaged in the various stages of making forged cutlery, over four hundred employ ten workers or less. Few of these firms provide working conditions which satisfy the factory inspector or meet the requirements of the Factory Acts. For cheapness forged cutlery cannot compete with mass-produced goods stamped from sheet metal, and in rationalising their production the Sheffield firms have to decide whether they are aiming at the 'cheap' or the 'quality' trade. (In one of those retail shops which are filled with a glistening display of scissors and knives I bought two pieces of cutlery. Both were made in Solingen).

★

AS a city Sheffield is very conscious of its own identity. On the occasion of the British Association's meetings at the city this year, an exhaustive volume was published, *Sheffield and its History*—

a *Scientific and Historical Survey*, and among the many extramural courses at the University this winter is a series of ten lectures on *Sheffield: The Growth of its Life and Work*. It is also a city with a radical past—there is even a statue of Ebenezer Elliot, the Chartist rhymist.

At the Central Library (where the committee recently turned down a request by six Sheffieldians that they should stock FREEDOM), there was an exhibition last month called 'The Radical Conscience' consisting of material relating to H. J. Wilson, a famous Victorian liberal non-conformist of the city. Among the exhibits were six anti-Boer War pamphlets with a note of Wilson's that 5,000 of each were distributed in one day. I wonder what success you would have in distributing 30,000 anti-war pamphlets in Sheffield to-day? There are also a handbill of a great "indignation meeting" held in Pool Square (which was presumably the site on which the new City Hall was built) in October 1909, to protest at the execution of Francisco Ferrer, and there were letters to Wilson from William Morris and Edward Carpenter about the case of the Walsall Anarchists and the imprisonment of Fred Charles in 1892. Carpenter lived at Sheffield and his papers are in the library. He was a sort of minor Whitman, and a pioneer in penal reform, an advocate of industrial democracy and of 'non-governmental society'. One of the pam-

phlets in the Carpenter Collection is his 1889 lecture on 'The Smoke Nuisance and Smoke Prevention Appliances'. Sixty-seven years later Sheffield is beginning to do something about it. Dr Roberts, the Medical Officer in his annual report last month, declaring that "it is difficult to speak dispassionately about the blemish of unclean air" notes a slight decrease in atmospheric pollution in 1955.

In the early eighteen-nineties there was an anarchist paper in Sheffield started by an Irishman, Dr. Creaghe, who later emigrated to Buenos Aires where he founded a more famous anarchist paper *La Protesta*, which is still being published to-day. Mat Kavanagh writes of Dr. Creaghe's Sheffield days:

"From his slum surgery he started a 'No-Rent Campaign' amongst his neighbours. His surgery was barricaded up against the attacks of the bailiffs reinforced by the police, and the struggle continued through the police courts to the Leeds Assizes, where, after brilliantly cross-examining the prosecution Creaghe finally won his case. Every Sunday, wet or fine, he was to be found at the old Monolith with his black and red banner bearing the words 'No God nor Master'. With the aid of the brothers John and Robert Bingham he started a monthly paper *The Sheffield Anarchist*, which appeared regularly as long as he remained in the city."

This summer anarchist propaganda was revived in Sheffield; the Libertarian Forum was formed, and began holding its open-air meetings on Sundays at Barker's Pool by the City Hall.

★

AT the end of the war, Dr. Joseph Walter and his architect wife invited Dr. Scott Williamson of the Peckham Health Centre, and later Dr. Kenneth Barlow who started the Family Health Club at Coventry, to address audiences in Sheffield on the ideas behind their ventures—the cultivation of health, as opposed to the treatment of disease, by means of a social centre

attracting the family as a whole. The very interesting and important results of the investigations of the Peckham biologists will be known to our readers. At Coventry Dr. Barlow's group sought to extend the Peckham idea of building a whole residential neighbourhood and running a farm, a venture which made a brave beginning but eventually petered out. At Sheffield a small group, lead by another member of the Bingham family, Mr. J. H. Bingham, set to work on similar lines. "We want," they said in their original manifesto in 1946

"to go beyond the old idea of health as meaning the treatment of sickness, we want to cultivate well-being, physical, mental and social. We want to found a health centre on these lines and we want the members to form a new neighbourhood of their own, with the Centre as its focus. The centre will have a full range of tools for social health, communal rooms, cafeteria, swimming pool, nursery, etc.—It will be the declared enemy of loneliness, selfishness and frustration. We want a genuinely co-operative spirit and willingness for team work . . . We want to see our members developing their latent abilities by using the opportunities the many-sided activities the neighbourhood will provide."

The group formed a Housing Society in order to qualify for the same subsidies as local authorities and found a site at Dronfield, a small town over the Derbyshire border, which is virtually a residential suburb of Sheffield. The Dronfield Pioneer Health and Housing Society proposed to build a neighbourhood of 1,500 dwellings, and in 1953, nine years after the original enthusiasts had discussed the idea with Scott Williamson, the first houses were occupied. To-day there are 74 houses and 12 flats. I walked around the neat lawns and closes, with their open front gardens and trim houses. On the notice-board of the Dronfield Pioneer Social Club the dramatic society declared that it "urgently needed new blood".

"What about the family centre?" I asked one of the residents who was hanging out her washings. (The society had proposed to have central heating and a communal laundry, but these were cut out by the Ministry in granting the subsidy). "Well," she replied, "there used

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## THE END OF STALINISM?

FORMS of oppression change, although the nature of oppression, it may be argued, remains the same. The anarchist cannot rest satisfied until all forms of oppression are abolished, but if he cares for living men and women more than principles, he cannot watch with indifference trends and events which alter the methods and scope of oppressive forms together with the possibilities they open for the enlargement of freedom. Thus, although the anti-stalinist campaign was officially started by a body of oppressors, and although events in Hungary show that the present Russian leaders are ready to resort to the most ruthless methods in order to retain their power; the transformation taking place in the communist-dominated part of the world is not to be dismissed as a mere struggle between rival power groups, leaving the conditions of the oppressed basically unaffected; nor must any rejoicing it produces in the oppressors of the West make one discount its relevance to the fate of the masses all over the world.

The process of de-stalinization may precipitate a third world war, but it can hardly be included as one of its causes. Apart from this possibility (not a probability) it is a process which affords many reasons for hope. Let us not forget that the apparent success of stalinism led many idealists and devoted friends of the oppressed to inactivity and desertion, to the spreading of the gloomiest thoughts about the future of mankind, and to mistaking "1984" and similar nightmares for the only possible world in store for our children. The sensitive and the aware lost faith in man by the thousands because the evidence was that man would submit to anything if enough pressure was applied, and that pressure could be so clever and so thorough as to make the slightest rebellion not only impossible but unthinkable. It looked as though the methods of oppression had reached, or were about to reach, absolute perfection. But the break with stalinism on the part of those whom one expected to be the most interested in its preservation, and then its latest consequences in Hungary, have proved beyond doubt that the spirit of freedom is unquenchable and vigorous as it has ever been. Or, if we mistrust enthusiasm, let us soberly read the recent events in the light of what Simone Weil wrote as far back as 1934: "If we want to consider power as a conceivable phenomenon, we must think that it can extend its basis only up to a certain point, beyond which it comes against an unsurmountable wall. But still it is not given leisure to stop; the goad of rivalry forces it to go farther and farther, that is, to go beyond that which can effectively be exerted. It extends beyond that which it can control; it gives orders beyond that which it can impose; it spends beyond its resources. Such is the internal contradiction which every oppressive regime carries within itself as a seed of death; it consists in the opposition between the necessarily limited character of the material basis of power and the necessarily unlimited character of the race to power as a relationship between men" (*Oppression et Liberté*, p. 103).

Khrushchev and his faction in the Russian communist party are not to be taken for immaculate champions of freedom, but their rebellion shows how deeply Stalin's methods were resented even by his closest associates. While themselves under Stalin's tyranny, they had golden opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge of the weaknesses and dangers of stalinism as a system of oppression. They probably came to fear a catastrophic collapse of the system as they feared Stalin himself. Stalinism was repudiated by the Russian leaders because it had ceased to work with advantage even for the leaders themselves. The repudiation took a trend towards democratization because the gulf between rulers and ruled had become so great that they all but ceased to understand each other. Over and over again the wishes of the rulers were being frustrated by the distracted zeal of the ruled to satisfy them. It was a necessity, both for the toiling masses and the managerial class, for both the raw material and the machinery of power, that oppression and exploitation should at least make sense, that the living human capital to be exploited should not indefinitely be overtaxed or capriciously wrecked.

Two facts stand out as an indication of the mortal blow which stalinism has received. The open condemnation of Stalin the man would not be of any significance if another man had taken his place. But he has been replaced by a team of men, and this team is far from being united. In their attitude towards Poland and Hungary contradictory and alternating policies are clearly discernible, and Tito can openly refer to a split within the Russian Politburo. The other fact is that the secrecy enveloping all-important political decisions and events is rapidly dissipating, and the myth of the omniscience and all-powerfulness of the central power is therefore untenable no longer.

In China at the moment stalinism is as strong as ever, perhaps stronger than it ever was in Russia itself, but even in China things are moving at a terrific pace, so that there the stalinist phase will probably be shorter than in Russia. Beria, the man who might have made Russian stalinism last a little longer, has been crushed, while thousands of his victims have returned to public life, and hold now places of command. There are still many stalinists about. The Thorez' and the Togliattis have their counterpart in many countries, including Russia. They think that the difficulties now besetting all communist parties are due to the process of de-stalinization which the Kremlin officially started. They stolidly refuse to see, in spite of their training in the interpretation of historical events, that these difficulties are the cumulative result of years of stalinism, and that the struggle between oppressors and oppressed is no longer one between stalinism and anti-stalinism, but one that has to take place within the framework of de-stalinization. They will not put the clock back.

Nov. 18, 1956.

G.B.

## 70 YEARS OF FREEDOM PRESS

THE two different views which seem to emerge from the review of anarchist achievement in this country over the past seventy years considered as a guide to future activities, are those expressed by George Woodcock—that the role of those seeking a change in society should be to find the "various positive tendencies that emerge in society" with a view to transforming them "into a trend towards growing liberation from the trammels of the state . . ."—and the opinion that our job is to continue propagation of the anarchist ideal with regard to changing conditions which might necessitate a shift of emphasis and a change in language only.

If, like George Woodcock, one has not abandoned the idea of building up a movement and encouraging people to do "their own thinking by reaching our fellow beings through the written and spoken word", his own view, nurturing the positive trends, is part of the propagandist's material which helps to strengthen the anarchists' case by reference to these libertarian ideas wherever they have taken hold.

None of the active anarchist propagandists in Britain to-day ignore or minimise trends which are positively expressive of a freer attitude in education or other fields, but as long as governmental authoritarianism remains the basis of organised society positive libertarian achievements are always in danger of being abandoned and trends reversed. It seems essential therefore for anarchists to keep before the people they manage to reach, the vision of the ideal society, and constantly to remind them of the threat to freedom inherent in a governmental capitalistic society; because it will be government in defence of capitalism and power politics which will take us into war, which keeps a large proportion of the population either below subsistence level or just above it, and which will deprive people of their liberty. These are not outmoded concepts. These are the things we live with from day to day; Malaya, Cyprus, Egypt, Poland and Hungary, all a result of the basic defects of our society which remain untouched by these libertarian ideas which manage to permeate a few fields of human activity.

Certainly anarchism has never been applied on a universal scale, and it is a difficult task trying to persuade people to take individual responsibility seriously. This is not surprising considering that generally they are not encouraged to think for themselves nor take major

decisions affecting their lives as citizens within a state.

Consequently the propagandist finds himself up against a solid wall of conditioning. Although it is often conceded that our ideas are 'good', people lack faith in their own ability to take decisions independently. It is therefore much simpler for them to put their trust in a leader and give up their power to the state. The majority boggle at the thought of running industrial society without centralised control, leaders and policemen.

But we cannot help them towards responsibility if we are merely content to move with the trends; we have to be ahead of them, propagating, harrowing and keeping our own vitality alight otherwise we will all slip into the easy way of giving up our power to the state whilst clapping our tied hands quietly when the 'positive trends' make their appearance.

The answer is not to "abandon all ideas of perfectionism", even though the attainment of these ideas is unlikely, but to encourage people to work for the ideal society. Without vision man would be a poor creature indeed and would never try to achieve anything; it is the lack of any idea of perfection which causes inertia.

I often think of the words of Camillo Berneri written a few hours before he was shot by the communists while on watch over his sleeping comrades during the Spanish war:

"I am watching over all of them, working for those who will follow. This is the only thing which is wholly fine. More absolute than love, more true than reality itself. What would man be without his sense of duty, without being moved at the thought of his oneness with those who have been, with the unknown men of the past and with those who are to come . . . One can lose one's illusions about everyone and everything but not about what is affirmed by conscience. If it were possible for me to save Bilbao with my life, I would not hesitate a moment . . . And this is enough for me to feel a man, to console me whenever I am unworthy of myself, of the esteem of my finest comrades, of the love of those I most value and cherish."

These words were written by a man with a vision of the future, and will not be wasted if read and valued by those who come after him. He would not have considered that his life had been thrown away because anarchism had been "overlooked by history".

R.M.

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## COMMUNIST CRISIS

Continued from p. 1

Their future depends on a solution by Moscow of the Hungarian issue quickly, or at least, more quickly than the West and the United Nations can pacify the Middle East. For then they will be able to "forget" Hungary and concentrate on the Imperialistic venture in the Middle East. They would be able to "demonstrate" how Moscow democratically bows to the wishes of the people unlike the Anglo-French Imperialists whose policies "threaten world peace" and thus hope to win new supporters among disgruntled workers whose livelihoods, the Communists will be able to show, have been threatened by the British Government's aggressive policy in Egypt.

Such tactics are not however used exclusively by Communists. Eden has done just the same thing. His critics accused him, among other things, of having betrayed Hungary by distracting attention from the struggle there with his Egyptian adventure. Sir Anthony has taken this criticism to heart! Aided by the Press, and the Lord Mayor he has spared no efforts to bring the plight of Hungary to the forefront. Medical aid is being mobilised for Budapest and our doors opened to 2,500 Hungarian refugees. So successful have his efforts been that the Press has forgotten the thousands of Egyptian casualties and the homeless as a result of Anglo-French bombing and the destruction accompanying the landing in the Port Said area where the civilian dead and maimed ran into thousands. The public is even forgetting the political circumstances which were responsible for the death of so many innocent people.

★

**BOTH** the Communists and the British Government use arguments to support their actions in Hungary and Egypt which rely on the absence of moral principles among their supporters and the public in general. They believe fear to be a more potent argument than humanity and justice. Thus Eden has sought to justify an action which could not even be defended legally let alone morally, by painting a picture of the dire consequences that would have resulted from allowing the Israeli-Egyptian struggle to continue. Firstly our whole economy would be upset, and unemployment would follow, if the canal were closed to our shipping (the fact that it has been closed as a result of British intervention does not seem to unduly upset him!); then he discovers that Russian supplies of arms to Egypt had assumed huge proportions and that but for British intervention now we might have been involved in a third world war later!

In last Saturday's *Daily Worker* the editor, J. R. Campbell uses exactly the same arguments for justifying Russian intervention in Hungary. He wrote:

The reactionary danger was there and this [intervention of the Russian Army] was the swiftest way to deal with it.

The policy of 'leave it to the armed people to deal with reaction' was a policy of acquiescing in a possible prolonged civil war.

This would have been a situation pregnant with the terrible danger of a third world war.

Was the Soviet Union expected to wait until the intervention from the West in such a war reached massive proportions before it began counter-intervention?

★

**AT** present the Campbell-Gollan-Palme Dutt line does not appear to be meeting with the support of Communist members and fellow travellers. With the whole Hungarian people including the Army ranged on one side and Kadar, the Russian tanks and the Security police on the other, it is even a little difficult for a Communist stooge to

swallow the Party line; the bait, the hackneyed clichés which sent the now posthumously rehabilitated "Titoists" to their death, sticks in their throats. Some way out of the impasse in Hungary must be sought by the Russians. And as we write there are signs that a formula is being found to "warrant" the withdrawal of their troops. Last Saturday Budapest radio broadcast an announcement to the effect that Soviet forces will be progressively withdrawn from Hungary as soon as "Workers' Armed Units" begin functioning. These units are to be manned by Hungarian workers and their task—according to Budapest radio is to preserve order when the Soviet troops withdraw. The statement added that these "Workers' Armed Units" will be a permanent institution and the Soviet forces "will be withdrawn in proportion to the strength of the new forces".

Is it not interesting and significant that the face-saving formula is almost word for word the one used by Eden simply by substituting "United Nations Police" for "Workers' Armed Units"? Just as the implementing of the United Nations formula has produced a swing in "public opinion" in favour of Eden's original policy so is it reasonable to assume that the implementation of the Russian formula in Hungary will result in the rehabilitation of the present Communist leadership and the straying sheep will return to the fold contrite and ashamed of themselves that they didn't take the Pritt position of infallibility of the Russian line (see *Daily Worker*, Nov. 9). D. N. Pritt being an eminent lawyer has no difficulty in arguing any brief. (*A good lawyer is expected to win the case for his client by every means at his disposal. Whether he thinks his client guilty or not guilty is of no consequence to him. Which probably explains why so many Members of Parliament are also lawyers.*)

But in pointing to the opportunism of the Communist Party let us not shut our eyes to the fickleness of that public opinion which only a

few weeks ago seemed determined to throw overboard Eden and his government for their act of aggression in Egypt, yet now appears to have been won over.

The *Manchester Guardian* (Nov. 15) refers to a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party at which Mr. Gaitskell attempted an analysis of the reasons for the movement of opinion.

He thought the government had gained credit for having stopped a war; suggested that the Government's references to Soviet aid for Middle Eastern countries had mobilised in support of the Government much of the hostility to Russia aroused by events in Hungary; and pointed to a widespread dislike in this country to President Nasser's policies.

This analysis vividly confirms the point we made earlier. The government which lost public support because it started a war in Egypt now regains that support for "having stopped a war"! Apart from the fact that it was probably stopped by Russia's threats of "volunteers", and American economic pressure on Israel, it seems to be already forgotten that there would have been no need to stop the war if Anglo-French-Israeli politicians had not started it.

★

**THAT** the actions of politicians are unprincipled comes as no surprise. No man of principles would ever think of becoming a politician. But what is saddening in the present struggles is the weakness of informed public opinion. The tragedy is that the people of this country are as unprincipled as their governments. The poor "cannot afford" to have principles, the intellectuals find them restricting and "unpractical". Principles to-day are the profession of "cranks". Yet there is no escaping the lessons of Hungary and Egypt: that governments will not be deterred from perpetrating similar crimes until they feel that public indignation is not only vocal but militant. Russia can defy the United Nations but she will yet bow to the will of 10,000,000 Hungarians resolved on a general strike to the bitter end . . . for a principle!

## Who Betrayed the Hungarians?

**THERE** are three interested parties, apart from the Hungarian people, with vital interests at stake in their revolt. The first is obviously the Soviet Union; the second is the American-dominated West, and the third is the people of the world.

A cry has been raised in certain directions that the Hungarians have been betrayed—and certainly they feel, according to many reports, that they have been let down by the West. Correspondents have told us that as the people of Budapest waited for the onslaught of Russian armour, they asked "What are the United Nations waiting for?" or "When are the Americans coming?" And disillusionment and bitterness slowly set in as the realisation grew on them that there was not going to be any intervention from the West.

Now we could hardly believe that there would be. True, the weekend before the Presidential election, the *Observer* reported that rumours were rife in Washington that America would intervene as soon as the election was safely out of the way, but in view of the tremendous risk of a world war that was obvious in such an event, it did not seem likely the Americans would act—at least on behalf of the Hungarians. It would take a stronger motive than the desire for freedom of a mere nine million people to move the capitalist powers to take the plunge. Even so, some of us spent a few anxious days, for after all, when they are good and ready for a war, any excuse will do.

### The Rulers of Russia

The first party immediately interested in the Hungarian revolt was obviously the Soviet Union, as the power behind the throne, and the power for whom Hungary represented a vital defence link. We have explained before, perhaps unnecessarily, just how important it is for Russia to have the East European states as buffer zones against the West.

Just as before the war (i.e. the Second World War) the British rulers were very concerned to build up Germany as a bulwark against the East, so, since that war, while the western powers have created

their ring of bases around the Communist land block, the Russians have considered their satellite states (and even China, we may be sure), as bulwarks against Western aggression.

With this in mind we can see just how stupid—from the Russian viewpoint—has been the Stalinist attitude of domination and exploitation. And how much more effective would have been Khrushchev's policy of wooing the satellites, playing upon their national pride, giving them their head in matters of less than vital importance for the U.S.S.R., and trying to tie them to the Socialist fatherland by ties of gratitude and friendship in a semblance of equality.

But Khrushchev's attempts came too late. The accumulated bitterness and hatred of the Stalin era could not be softened. At the first sign of softening the people burst their bonds. In Poland the Communists saw it coming (Poznan was a pretty broad hint!) and jumped into the lead just in time—fortunately having a Gomulka still alive to pop quickly into the saddle. But in Hungary they were slower—with the results we have seen.

Russia therefore had to face a serious gap in her defence system. The ideological damage that her action has done throughout the world is incalculable—but the rulers of the Kremlin have never counted that against their own actual power interests—not, apparently, realising that had they always considered the working class of the world as an ally they would have done more to weaken the capitalist states from within than their bombastic sabre-rattling, actual military might, or intrigues in the game of power politics has ever been able to do.

But the Russian leaders are imperialists and acted in the true nature of the beasts. They can be said to have betrayed the Hungarians only inasmuch as they played their trick of pretending to withdraw only to come back with greater strength—pretending to yield to popular pressure only to return with greater repression. The Hungarians can hardly have been surprised either at their duplicity or their brutality.

to be a lot of talk about it, but I don't suppose it will come to much."

I discussed this with Mrs. Marianne Walter, the architect. "It was clear from the start," she said, "that there would be a great danger that the question of housing would swamp the question of family health, and personally, I have not seen a great deal of evidence that the Society is still pursuing the wider idea. It has not yet made any plans for the building of the Family Centre, and how far it will achieve the social purpose of its original founders, it is perhaps too early to say."

And it is too early to say whether this hopeful venture will diminish into being just another 'housing estate', more attractive than many, but socially as empty as one of the Sheffield Corporation estates studied by the University's Department of Social Science in the volume *Neighbourhood and Community*. The authors of this report found the same symptoms of lonely isolation, 'suburban neurosis' and the stultification of people's socially creative faculties, that the founders of the original Peckham Experiment had observed in outer London.

★

**HERE** we have the physical crux of the problem of Sheffield and of the other big Yorkshire cities. How to rehouse the population of the blighted and overcrowded central areas and to accommodate the increase in population, without overflowing still further into the 'Green Belts', actual or proposed, with still more miles of residential suburb? The annual report of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, issued in October, says that in the next 15 years both Sheffield and Leeds, will have to rehouse 70,000 people outside their city boundaries. Will this not mean even longer journeys to work from dormitory estates in or beyond the Green Belt? Meanwhile industrial expansion in these cities and in the area between Sheffield and Rotherham is continually drawing in more people.

Any solution is a question of reversing the trend of the last 150 years towards concentration of industry and population. Sheffield (or Leeds) is an example of a town whose enormous expansion was set in motion by local advantages which were long since worked out and their expansion continues simply because of existing capital installations and the presence of skilled labour. The West Riding County Development Plan seeks to reverse the drift of population into the great conurbations but neither the

County Council nor the Board of Trade is bold enough to apply enough pressure to influence the location of industry, nor, fortunately, ruthless enough to try to enforce movement of populations (the 'decanting of population overspill' in the awful jargon of town-planning).

The only real change will come when people reflect on what living in cities ought to be like, and compare it with present realities.

C.W.

## Relief for Hungary

### CORRECTION

**WE** apologise to those readers who responded to our call for volunteers for relief work in Hungary last week. We were misinformed on the situation with regard to the Red Cross supplying equipment if teams were created by volunteers.

The Red Cross have plenty of qualified personnel on call and would take on further volunteers only if they had special qualifications for Hungary—could speak Hungarian and/or Russian and other languages, and were experienced in relief work, and so forth.

In an interview at Red Cross headquarters we were told that in fact the individual volunteers who are taking carloads of food and clothing are doing things in most inefficient way—for they, too, have to be fed and housed when they get to the Austrian-Hungarian border, and are not allowed visas to get into Hungary itself.

Individual initiative is a fine thing and we felt the same desire to do something to help the Hungarians as those who left immediately on their own. It does seem, however, that the most effective help can now be given through the Red Cross which has facilities for getting right in to where help is needed.

They have plenty of clothes and plenty of voluntary helpers this side. What is needed still is more and more money to buy supplies in Austria or West Germany.

The best way after all in which we can show solidarity with the Hungarian rebels, who now face starvation to drive them back to work, is to give the Red Cross the means to get them food.

All donations should be sent direct to the Red Cross, 14 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1. If collections can be made among friends or workmates to make one large sum instead of many small, office work is saved.

aries nothing to indicate that anyone in Hungary desired a return to old-style capitalism, still less to a Horthy-type fascist régime. One can also almost say that the fact that the Americans did not intervene is a sure indication that they saw nothing for themselves in the direction the revolutionaries were looking. It was a people's revolution, and the Americans (like the Russians with regard to Spain and the Warsaw uprising of 1944) have no interest in that.

### The World's People

There remains the third interested party: the peoples of the world. It is perhaps misleading to say they were interested; truer to say astounded, surprised, unready, ignorant of what to do.

Revolution has been talked out of the workers of the West in favour of reformism and political democracy. With the result that when workers somewhere do revolt, nobody knows what to do. There is no international working class body capable of organising any kind of aid—either with arms, food or bandages. There is no international solidarity unconnected with politics—the politics of the state. How easily indignation has been switched in this country from Suez to Hungary! Where are the relief organisations for the bombed out of Port Said or Cairo? Where is the international working class organisation which cares for people as people and not as potential voters, allies, cannon-fodder, card-holders or propaganda capital?

The nearest is the anarchist movement, and that is so weak as to be practically helpless. The best thing we can suggest to help the Hungarians is to send money to the Red Cross! Yet if there were strong anarchist movements in all countries—what a power for international solidarity that would be. Then there would be people everywhere who understood what was needed by people anywhere when they rose against their masters.

But as it is, the Hungarians have been let down, not by the Russian or the American governments, who ran true to form, but by the workers of the world, who won't unite, so keep their chains.



## Fear of Politics

THANK you very much for the copies of *The Anarchist Weekly*.

I hesitated because I could not in truth agree that General Strike to stop Eden as late as November 10th (date of your paper's issue) could be effective in achieving anything but chaos. I know that I may have been wrong in that hesitation. Creation can come out of chaos, but it cannot come out of organized evil. I know that.

Anyway, I am now sending my year's subscription for *FREEDOM*; mainly because of the article signed S.F. (p. 4) "Viewpoint on 70 Years of Freedom Press".

I loathe and fear, "politics". Few men are not diminished, sooner or later, if they take active part in politics. To become an M.P. is a vow to limit vision, for all but a handful of inspired individuals. And it's not those individuals, as a rule, who become Ministers—(though always two most honourable exceptions to all this stand out in my mind: Lansbury; and Mr. Attlee).

"Propaganda" has come to imply something limited by prejudice, and condoning trickeries—and only too often it is indeed cheap stuff, and nauseous. Ideally, it would be best to do without it altogether, and for all men who deeply love truth to be artists, or "religious", or both; I think: The absolute anarchists.

One does have to find one's own way, although not entirely without guides: I fear my impatience is too often the wrong sort, which forgets that to win the battle is not the important thing, but to be on the right side, and to keep on. One wastes a lot of energy and time being impatient, especially with politicians I suppose, and with the Press. Even a politician may be finding his own way, for all I know.

Goveton, Devon. FRANCES BELLERBY.

### Editorial Comment:

We must agree to differ with our new reader about the 'honourable exceptions' among politicians as regards Lord Attlee at least, and hope that long before her year's subscription has run out she will understand our viewpoint more clearly than we could possibly hope her to do after reading only one week's issue.

In the case of Lansbury, our point is that those politicians who do retain their principles remain impotent in the political arena. The only justification for going into politics is in order to do something in terms of the practicalities of here and now, but success can come in that only by the abandonment of principle in favour of expediency—or worse. Lansbury more or less clung to his principles—and was finally bundled out of office in the Labour Party by bully Bevin. In politics you can be principled or effective—you can't be both.

## H-Bomb Danger

THE horrifying facts presented in "Heed These Warnings" (*FREEDOM* 10.11.56) concerning the widespread effects of radiation from H-Bomb tests raise an extremely difficult problem that I rarely hear discussed.

Is it in fact ethically justifiable to bring children into the world when there is now such a grave risk of strontium poisoning in their bones? It goes without saying that if the birth-rate fell suddenly and dramatically as a result of this fear the governments concerned would immediately call off the tests. Not that this is likely to happen of course, the majority of people have a psychological stake in the existing order, if not an economic one, and they are completely conditioned to authoritarianism.

However, whatever the behaviour of the vast unthinking mass may be, the responsibly-minded must consider this problem. It is not a new one as a matter of fact. Victor Serge in his *Mémoires d'un Révolutionnaire* records how in Paris before the First World War a socialist girl, who had been trained as a midwife, gave up her profession because she said it was a crime to bring new life into such a world of poverty and misery.

We don't have so much poverty and misery in Western Europe now, but The Bomb recreates the moral dilemma in a new form. This question is practically never discussed in circles considering themselves "progressive". Apparently it

is too "hot" a topic. (It is not the only one either). Whenever I have brought it up I have been met with a fine fury of objections and incoherent arguments. Sentimentality is never far away. I am accused of being "anti-life", though why it is "anti-life" to object to children being brought poisoned into the world I cannot see.

I am told, "Well, the children must work out the world's problems when they grow up", but this seems to me a callous attitude. If we cannot solve these problems why are we to assume that our children will be more successful? It is natural for people to want children, but it is also natural for them not to want those children to be hurt. The human race does not want to die out, but the sort of life that is offered to future generations, judging by the way we are now going, is just not going to be worth living.

Mottingham. ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

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## The Bohemians on Our Shirt-Tails

A QUESTION: If, as you state in your editorial (*FREEDOM*, October 27th, 1956), "That the propagandists of anarchism have failed to convince even a small minority of people . . ." after a programme of 70 years, then perhaps the men handling anarchist propaganda are extremely inadequate?

Having already witnessed a show of anarchism here in the U.S., I can only quote an intelligent and disillusioned impartial friend after he had visited one anarchist spectacle: "How could these people hope to prove to any audience that they are responsible, honest representatives of an advanced philosophical movement, when they themselves behave so utterly irresponsibly and slovenly?"

Truly, how does one prove excellence with something less than excellent? I suggest one answer to be a complete removal of a *passé* bohemian stigma from anarchist activity in order to gain the serious attention of honest and discriminating people. As long as an irresponsible bohemian is attached (for various reasons) to the shirt tails of anarchism, very few responsible people will be attracted to the movement.

Cordially,  
San Francisco. LESLIE WOOLF HEDLEY.

### Editorial Comment:

Is it fair to judge anarchism by anarchists? Still less by those admittedly attached only to 'the shirt-tails of anarchism'? Is 'bohemianism' a relatively harmless expression of protest against bourgeois society—as delinquency is a relatively harmful form of rebellion? If people are honest and discriminating can't they honestly discriminate between the responsible and the irresponsible. What is responsibility anyway?

What do our readers think about this? Particularly, since the above complaint comes from America—what do our American readers think?

## 'Any Questions?' on Wages

DEAR COMRADES,

During the radio programme "Any Questions?" recently the members of the panel were asked if they thought that the new wage claim on behalf of railway workers was justified. No-one said "yes", although they were well aware of the financial position of the lower-paid railway workers.

Various arguments were put forward. If one set of workers asks for an increase *x*, another set will immediately come along and ask for *x+1*, then another set for *x+2*, inflation sets in, and the first lot is back where it started. If only the workers would let the lowest-paid amongst them "catch up" (Ted Leather). Superficially, this is sound, but Mr. Leather may also have in mind the increased profits which the money-makers would rake in if wage claims were to cease. He is a Conservative M.P., after all.

Everyone in this country should be paid more (said Dr. Bronowski), but the increase should be tied to higher productivity, as in the United States, so that standards of living will rise higher and

higher. (He did not elaborate on the means by which higher productivity was to be achieved, whether by harder work or by further automation).

It is obvious that the wealth for increased wages has to come from somewhere—the cake has finite size, even if it can be increased yearly by applied science, but no-one criticised the present method of cutting the cake. No-one questioned the fabulous profits made by "private enterprise", or noted that higher productivity was no guarantee against poverty (e.g. the U.S.). No-one asked the question "Productivity of what—for what?"

The members of the panel did not appear to imagine themselves trying to care for a family on a meagre wage. They sailed peacefully on to the next question in their comfortable dinghy. Cheltenham. H. R. LEWIS.

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

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### Malatesta Club

SWARAJ HOUSE,  
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(Tel.: MUSEUM 7277).

#### ACTIVITIES

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## THE COST OF SUEZ

Continued from p. 1

nearly as high as a man's head in three sheds and covered the entire back lawn of the hospital. When Dr. Hoseny showed me around two of the sheds were still well filled as was much of the garden." Only armed conflict, not war—but the difference is hard to discern.

Anglo-French forces softened up Port Said before the attack with bombs and machine-gun fire from planes and heavy guns fired from ships. Tanks and troops then fought through the town "cleaning-up the remnants of the Egyptian army and the irregulars of Nasser's liberation army, some of them children no more than twelve years old." At the finish much of Port Said was rubble—some of it 10 to 15 feet deep. Military targets? "It was all like a bloody good exercise, a lot of fun and very interesting", said a British paratroop colonel.

And what is the damage to the

British economy for which we must now pay? What will be the cost of all the "bloody good fun"?

An estimate was given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Harold Macmillan of £50 million. This can only be an approximate guess, but the sum mounts up all the time the troops remain in Egypt, and one cannot tell when they will return. It is probably safe to say that twice that amount will eventually be spent in direct costs on the Middle East adventure.

But there are many other costs which will have to be borne by an already shaky economy. Many dollars will be spent on American oil to replace the oil we shall not get from Arab countries, and Britain will also lose the foreign currency normally earned on selling that oil in Western Europe. This can have a serious effect upon sterling, and in fact this has already started.

### Damage to Britain's Economy

Cuts in capital expenditure will be made—but of course these will not apply to armaments. First to be cut will be expenditure on schools and houses. Then industrial investment will be curtailed and production is affected. Inflation becomes worse and the vicious circle starts an ever-increasing spiral. Exports will be held up by shortage of shipping and the balance of payments situation will deteriorate, but America who is Britain's biggest competitor in many items will not be affected in the same way. Middle East markets are bound to disappear for a long time and these are of considerable value.

Prices of imported goods must inevitably rise. Freight charges have already gone up and will go higher, insurance rates have increased. As stocks run lower so prices will rise. Further inflation. Unemployment is sure to get worse; already the dockers are affected by the drop in im-

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