

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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Threepence

"Whoever looks upon liberty to lust after it has committed anarchy in his heart."
—EDWARD HYAMS.

UNREST IN RUSSIA?

THE inability to get reliable information about what is going on inside the Soviet Union is demonstrated by the number and strength of the rumours coming through the iron curtain about student and worker demonstrations which are yet impossible to verify.

As we have mentioned before, the only intimation that opposition was being openly expressed came from ponderous official criticisms of youthful 'hooliganism' and 'enemy influence'. But recently more and more unofficial reports are coming out of Russia about incidents which could hardly be dismissed even by the Party leaders as 'hooliganism'.

For instance, according to *Reuter*, travellers arriving in Vienna, last Saturday from Budapest brought stories that fighting had broken out between students and Red Army units at Kiev in the Ukraine. A student returning from Moscow to Budapest stated that his train was stopped on the outskirts of Kiev because the station could not be used owing to the fighting. Passengers were transferred to buses and on their way round the city to another terminus saw many tanks guarding all approaches to the city.

On Monday (Dec. 31) the Viennese newspaper *Neuer Kurier* reported stormy demonstrations by students in Moscow, Stalingrad, Kiev, Leningrad and Tiflis. The report says that "extremely dangerous incidents" occurred in Moscow and Stalingrad on Thursday and Friday. Students in Stalingrad on Thursday, says *Neuer Kurier*, demanded "freedom of the spirit". Their gathering was Communist, but anti-Stalinist. Afterwards, the students marched in procession to the Second World War memorial. There they were met by police, who tried to

break up the meeting with rifle-butts. This failed, so the police then fired over the heads of the crowd. Forty students and two professors were arrested.

The following day, workers at four Stalingrad factories went on strike, demanding that those arrested should be set free. When all had been released, except six said to be foreign agents, the strike ended after 3½ hours.

The strikers received a promise that the six would have their cases proved in two days or be released.

At Moscow University, according to *Neues Kurier*, there was a demonstration and counter-demonstration by two groups of students, one strongly anti-Stalinist and strongly in sympathy with the Hungarian rebels, the other trying to restrain the first by protesting that it was dangerous to push anti-Stalinism too far.

Some 10 to 15 Hungarian and Polish students were reported arrested after these demonstrations, and 200 foreign students expelled.

There is little reason to doubt that, even allowing for exaggeration, a great deal of open hostility to the Bolshevik leadership, if not to the régime itself, is being expressed. In nearly all Russian universities there is a sprinkling of students from the satellite states who, one may be sure, take care that their attitudes towards Russian domination are made clear. They are bound to find sympathy among many of their fellow-students, especially in the Ukrainian and other national universities, where the Hungarian example has not been lost.

At Moscow University recently, Khrushchev himself rose to make a speech at a youth rally, to be greeted with tumultuous applause that went on—and on—and on, so that he couldn't make his speech. The kind of feeling which engenders that, can quite easily spill over into street demonstration and riot.

After all, Khrushchev has been promising the Russians de-Stalinisation. He'd better give it to them—or else.

Comments on an 'Observer' Editorial Political Extremism

THE *Observer* is undoubtedly an interesting, informative and well-produced newspaper; one might even add that it is well-intentioned which is more than one can say for the rest of the Sunday Press. It is only when one also has to take into account that apart from the chaotic, bitty *Reynolds News*, there is no Sunday newspaper more Left or progressive than the *Observer*, that one despairs of (even minority) movements of opinion in this country coming into being which will not only see the facts as they are but will have the courage to learn the lessons from them.

In last Sunday's *Observer* a double column editorial attempts to explain the disastrous events of recent months as a

consequence of a state of tension, of immoderation, which has increasingly possessed a part of the community over a number of years.

It is almost with surprise, one feels, that the *Observer* has discovered that "moderation has actually become taboo in Tory circles

as it has not in Labour circles". The reasons advanced for this apparent reversal of roles are that Labour recognised that "the violence of Communism discredited extremism", and that moderation lost its respectability on the Right "due to an historic cause—the failure of moderate Tory leadership in the thirties". That is

because Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain were only moderately opposed to Hitler, and in consequence nearly cost this country its existence, many Tories have honestly come to believe that moderation is a political vice.

We are also told that One of the great British political virtues, maintained during the 300 years since our Civil War, has been moderation. It has characterised not only our radical political movements, but also the conservative forces in society. Because of this, our social development has gone forward without the violence that has torn most other European countries.

And, for the *Observer*, "moderation in politics is one of the highest achievements of civilisation" for it is "all social wisdom". But if "moderation is championed only in moderation it dies". It must be defended passionately "not with violence but with strength".

America's New Middle East Policy—or The Protection Racket

SUDDENLY the Middle East springs into prominence again; great things are about to happen there once more; the quiet period of the last few weeks is over. Can it be sheer coincidence that everything is happening at once? In a word—no.

The quiet weeks have been utilised for behind-the-scenes discussions—political under-the-counter

bargaining. In common parlance these days there is a polite synonym for this kind of haggling—it is called re-appraising. America has now brought forth the results of her agonising re-appraisal; it is the "Eisenhower doctrine", for which various alternative titles could be suggested: "the protection racket" might be suitable.

The other principal Middle East event at this time is the proclamation by General Wheeler, in charge of United Nations Suez Canal clearance operations, that a channel of 25-foot draught will be open by early March which will provide a passage for ships up to 10,000 tons. By the end of May it is expected that vessels of maximum draft will also be able to get through the canal.

There is one extremely interesting point which General Wheeler made in connection with the canal clearance—so interesting as to be almost revolutionary! He said:

"I will tell the Egyptian Government when the canal is safe for navigation. After this it is up to them to decide when to open it."

These words together with the "Eisenhower doctrine" seem to be the positive death-knell of British influence and Imperial power in the Middle East, for it will be remembered that Britain entered into "armed conflict" for the express purpose of stopping the Egyptians having control of the canal—now the U.N. has given to Egypt the right to say when (which could also be whether) the canal should function.

Economic Aid—with Strings

But what is contained in the new American doctrine, who is to lose and who to gain—and why? The proposals are briefly as follows: American military power will be offered as protection to any country in the Middle East which wants it to resist aggression. American economic aid will also be provided to the extent of \$400 to \$500 million dollars. Any country which does not want the military aid may say so, but will as a consequence not get financial aid. America will not

intervene in a local war between Arab States and Israel.

In effect therefore it may be said that Anglo-French power and influence in the Middle East will be lost and the U.S. will move in to "fill the vacuum". This will cost the American tax-payer a few dollars which he can probably afford and gain for America the power she wants in that area. In case anyone should suppose that this is just a friendly gesture towards the little States concerned let us hasten to add that the basic reason for the "doctrine" is to avoid further Russian inroads in the same direction, and to provide additional strength to the "barricade of pacts" which encircle the U.S.S.R.

Blatant Opportunism

Reactions from the Middle East countries in general have so far been restrained, though it is probably fair

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LEAVING aside for a moment the *Observer's* philosophy of "moderation in politics" how accurate is its analysis of the facts? We are now being asked to believe that it was the "moderation" of the Chamberlain government which accounted for the appeasement of Hitler, and presumably to forget that at the same time 400 million Asiatics and Africans were being denied the most elementary freedoms and brutally opposed whenever they sought to organise or to manifest their will to independence. The "moderation" of the Conservatives before the war was an illusion. In colonial policy it did not exist; in foreign policy it had the cocksuredness of the Big power which strides the world and watches developments as if they were skirmishes in which many would get hurt but the Empire would remain unscathed and unchallenged. This "moderation" invariably supported reaction in its struggle against progress (Franco versus the "Reds" in Spain).

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CATHOLICS MAY FIGHT - Official

FOUR hundred million Catholics were treated to a Christmas message by the Pope. Interspersed with the usual clichés about peace, God and the angels, the Vatican attitude to war was plainly stated.

We have always known that a 'just' war was part of the Catholic social dogma but the Pope until now "had avoided calling Christendom to a crusade". He is a cautious man, and although there is a natural antipathy between the rival creeds—Catholicism and Communism—world opinion would not have taken too kindly to any pronouncements which might increase the antagonisms between East and West.

Events over the past few months however, have increased the possibilities of war, and fear of Russia, carefully cultivated by the Western powers to justify some of their own actions, is greater than fear of the H-bomb. The Pope has taken advantage of the situation to inform the flock that Roman Catholics might lawfully go to war under certain conditions, and that a Catholic citizen cannot invoke his own conscience in order to refuse to serve and fulfil those duties the law imposes:—

"What purpose is served by trying to reason with each other when there is no common language, or how is it possible to meet each other if the ways diverge, if, that is, one side obstinately rejects and denies absolute common values, thus making impossible any form of co-existence in truth?"

"It is clear that in the present circum-

stances a situation can arise in which a nation, having made every effort to avoid it, can lawfully engage in war for effective self-defence and with the hope of a favourable outcome against unjust attack.

"If, therefore, a body representative of the people and a Government—both having been chosen by free elections—in a moment of extreme danger decide, by legitimate instruments of internal and external policy, on defensive precautions, and carry out the plans which they consider necessary, they do not act immorally."

This fine regard for lawful self-defence is only applicable when the enemy is antagonistic to the Vatican. In 1936 when Franco launched his illegal attempts to seize control of an elected Government, the Pope (Pius XI) launched an anti-Communist campaign appealing for help for the Franco forces. He broadcast blessings to all those who had taken the task to "defend and reinstate the honour of God and religion". The Vatican contacted Mussolini on behalf of Franco and came to an agreement with Hitler by which Hitler was to help the "Catholic rebels" in exchange for a Vatican campaign against Communism throughout the Catholic world.

We know that in 1936 Communism played a very small part in the defence of Spain against Franco, but neither the Vatican nor the other Western powers were interested in the facts; the revolutionary forces had to be crushed at all costs even though Franco's initial attack was against a "democratically elected Government".

THANK YOU... AND PLEASE!

What appeared a desperate situation in our finances only a few weeks ago has been averted thanks to a number of generous last minute contributions from individual readers as well as two large sums received from groups in the United States.

The total of £923 received though £117 short of our estimated needs is nevertheless £257 more than was received in 1955. Our impression is that the sales of and subscriptions to FREEDOM during the year showed an increase as well as FREEDOM BOOKSHOP sales, but final figures are not yet available. We hope however to publish a detailed account within the next fortnight.

Just as FREEDOM cannot pause awhile so we hope those readers who have responded so generously in 1956 will not rest on their laurels in 1957. We need £20 a week to meet the current year's publishing deficit. We need also more readers and more activity for the propagation of freedom.

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 52

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A Change in the Climate?

WHEN we apply adjectives to decades it is always in a rather loose and arbitrary sense. We are generalising about one particular stratum of society, usually the one which sets the 'tone' of ideas and attitudes. The naughty nineties may have been naughty for the bohemian intelligentsia, cavorting in the Café Royal, but there was no saving grace of naughtiness in the strongholds of Victorian religiosity, then at its high-water mark. The roaring twenties didn't roar very loudly for the two million unemployed, and the pink thirties, as some people are calling them to-day, were only a very pale pink—not nearly pink enough to oust the old gang, the Baldwins and Chamberlains in those days when as Orwell wrote in 1940 "stuffed shirts like Eden or Halifax could stand out as men of exceptional talent".

What is the appropriate adjective for the nineteen-fifties? In the last few years a number of writers, in one of those phases of self-consciousness and self-analysis which mark a rather sterile period in the creative arts, have been looking for it. They noted the 'swing to the right', the 'revolt against reason', the 'decline of ideologies', the 'neo-conservatism', and the increased conformism of the intelligentsia, the new orthodoxy, and the pre-occupation with triviality—all the tedious social make-believe about 'U and non-U', the cult of gracious living by way of the glossy magazines, and the fashionable concern over the subtler aspects of dining and dining. And Mr. Rayner Heppenstall characterised the "new-Elizabethan age in its Edwardian décor" as "this commercial traveller's paradise with its rather sexy royalist mystique". The smug fifties is perhaps the phrase.

But just as they were settling down to this picture of the decade, with a little castigation from the angry old men, along came an angry young man in the form of the heroes of the novels of Messrs. Wain and Amis, who blew a raspberry through the *House and Garden* dining rooms. Perhaps he was going to be the man of the decade; the welfare state baby with a provincial accent seeing through all the social humbug and staging a one-man battle with the 'establishment'. But he turned out to be another sensitive chap beneath his brash exterior and either got a job on commercial television with a cynical leer, or else, like the hero of Mr. Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, nagged his missus because he couldn't find a cause to fight for. And he rapidly gave place to the

outsider, prowling like Jack the Ripper through the intellectual underworld.

AND then, all of a sudden the real world broke through. Even through the thick hides and drugged consciences of the nineteen-fifties. Instead of the inward-looking contemplation of social niceties, and instead of identification with the archetypes of contemporary literature, the generation of the fifties found itself faced with Suez and Hungary. Mr. John Beavan writes in the *Twentieth Century*:

"The two crises have moved all of us deeply, even the apolitical young who had refused to get excited about two welfare parties with a common and static foreign policy. At the universities, I am told, it has been like the 'thirties all over again—but with Abyssinia and Spain happening in the same week. These are crude analogies of course. Nobody thinks that Sir Anthony is as wicked as Mussolini or that Colonel Nasser was as deeply wronged as Haile Selassie was. But some of the moral problems of 1935 and 1936 have been forced upon a generation which may have been able to evade them until these past few weeks. After all, Eastern Europe has been in the Russian grip since they were children and it must seem almost a natural state of affairs to them. Mr. John Osborne's play, *Look Back in Anger*, is still running. Its lament for a cause must ring falsely at a moment when students are volunteering to serve with the Hungarian partisans."

With this belated discovery of the real climate of the fifties, and the recognition that our own little bit of the sky doesn't cover the whole world, came a realisation of impotence. What could they do about Suez except write letters to the *Manchester Guardian*? What could they do about Hungary except support the Red Cross? And could anything else be expected? The intelligentsia were unable to prevent the incredible folly of the Suez adventure because, after careful cultivation of uncommittedness and detachment they were in no position to become the mouthpiece or the conscience of the nation, while the people who were actually in a position to frustrate the government's policy, the servicemen engaged in it and the transport workers concerned with the shipment of war materials, couldn't care less about

the use to which their lives and labour were put. The tone of the nineteen-fifties had been set for them, and it was one of indifference and apathy.

And it was precisely because people accept the idea of the omnipotence of governments, that in the West the obituaries of Hungary were so prematurely written, and precisely because the Hungarian workers were conscious of their own power and the Hungarian intellectuals conscious of their own responsibilities, that their revolution is still holding out against Soviet imperialism.

The witness of Hungary and the shameful experience of Suez may produce the change in the climate of our time that is so long overdue. But is it really to be "like the thirties all over again"? For the outstanding characteristic of the 'leftism' of the thirties was its ultimate futility. Among the intellectuals it meant a vocal but ineffective protest against international fascism, and an irresponsible flirtation with Soviet communism in its Stalinist heyday, and among the workers a reliance on the Labour Party which when it eventually sailed into office after the war, showed itself as unable or unwilling as its opponents to make any real alteration in the structure of capitalist society. In fact the trouble with the 'leftism' of the thirties was that it put its faith in political action and in governments.

IF recent events have made a new generation discover that you can't ignore politics because politics won't ignore you, there is, unhappily, little sign of the kind of political consciousness that can lead to useful changes in the world of the nineteen-fifties. A consciousness of the need not to change governments but to by-pass them, a consciousness of the need for changes in both the direction and the control of industry if we are really to have an economy which is not based ultimately on imperialist exploitation, a consciousness that the real economic power in the land is in the hands of the industrial workers, the slumbering giant who waits waking out of his stupor.

When the current of ideas includes this kind of social consciousness we can begin to talk of a change in the climate of our decade.

C.W.

An Experiment in Community

Continued from p. 3

Jordan's handling of the matter is typical of Koinonia's approach to the conflict situations that beset it. He went to Atlanta and talked with the Negro applicants, one of whom was a Korean war widow who supports her children by secretarial work. He became convinced that the applicants were genuinely interested in securing the education and were not being used as a front in an artificial test case that might be handled in such a way as to increase the existing misunderstandings. So he agreed to sign. Together with Welden, Harry Atkinson (another member of Koinonia), and a professor of the Negro Morehouse College, he arranged an appointment with President Sparks of the Atlanta Division of the University, and, later, at Sparks' suggestion, with the Executive Secretary of the State Board of Regents. Their aim was to work out a means of handling the procedure that would be less provocative to all parties than the handling of the Autherine Lucy case had been in Alabama.

The University officials seemed to appreciate this approach. But in the end they ruled Jordan ineligible to sign the application, on the basis of a technicality: he is a graduate of the Agricultural Department of the University and the Negroes were applying at the Business School.

Before Jordan and Atkinson got back to Koinonia, the Governor of the State had already called up the sheriff of Sumpter County to ask who "this Jordan fellow" is. The evening edition of the neighbouring Americus paper carried headlines screaming that Clarence Jordan of Koinonia Farms had signed applications for Negro students to enter the University. Other papers throughout the state gave the story front-page prominence. Koinonia was accused of working with some unidentified "outside agency" to overthrow "our true democratic way of life."

Injunction against Interracial Camp

Reprisals came not from Koinonia's neighbours but from the local political machine. The first act was the serving of an injunction prohibiting Koinonia from operating its annual interracial camp, on the pretext that it would be a public health menace. The camp, which was in its third year, had been certified by the American Camping Association. It had been approved by the County Health Inspector the previous year. In 1956, the facilities had been expanded and improved at a cost of several thousand dollars. But a week before opening date, and without any inspection, the County got a local judge to issue an injunction. After the injunction had already been served, the County Health Inspector came to the camp and charged a few minor technical violations. These were taken care of immediately. But a court decision on the "temporary" restraining injunction was postponed through a series of hearings until September 24th, when camping season was safely over. Then it was dropped. Fortunately, another Southern interracial organization, Highlander Folk School, in Monteagle, Tennessee, learned of the difficulty and offered the use of its facilities. The camp was transferred 400 miles to Highlander and carried out successfully. . . .

Economic Persecution

There has been persecution enough to embitter most people. During the period of tension generated by public hearings on the injunction, came the dynamiting and the shots into the community. Then legal and economic persecution was intensified. All of the community's insurance policies were cancelled. Merchants refused to handle Koinonia's produce or to sell it supplies. The members found themselves with no outlets for the eggs from their 4,000 laying hens, with a cancelled order for \$2000 worth of peanut seed that had already been processed and therefore could not be preserved. They could not even buy gasoline to run their tractors and farm equipment. The State reversed its earlier ruling that Koinonia was a non-profit organization and imposed taxes, retroactive for five years, together with a number of burdens

they were thinking the right things at the wrong time.

That is perhaps what is so important—that there should always be some people actively engaged in keeping alive the ideas, the more the better and the more effective—for at some time or other the right time may come along and then the right ideas can be put into practice—and then, who knows but that the extraordinary anarchists will become quite ordinary.

S.B.

some and discriminatory regulations. Even gifts to Koinonia, such as a shipment of used clothing from friends in California, were declared subject to sales tax, on the basis of a previously unused technicality in the law. These and other measures have pushed Koinonia to the wall economically, but do not seem to have weakened its spirit. One by one it has solved many of the problems, through its own resourcefulness and with the aid of its friends—finding new markets in distant cities, importing fuel by "airlift", etc.

In the midst of the struggle, Conrad Browne is able to write, from Koinonia: "A number of local ministers and leading laymen have come to us 'by night' and assured us of their loving concern. In one white church, after a Sunday School lesson on the persecution of early Christians, a motion was made to take up an offering to help Koinonia repair its dynamited market. This caused an explosion."

An amazing number of local people have gone out of their way to be friendly and to let us know that though they may not be able to agree with us, neither can they agree with the methods being used against us. The Gospel is lying heavily on the hearts of many people in this county. . . . Regardless of what happens to us, may our witness be clear and true, and may our hearts be free from all malice."

This might be compared with what Martin Luther King wrote in the April *Liberation*:

"If, in pressing for justice and equality in Montgomery, we discover that those who reject equality are prepared to use violence, we must not despair, retreat, or fear. Before they make this crucial decision, they must remember: whatever they do, we will not use violence in return. We hope we can act in the struggle in such a way that they will see the error of their approach and will come to respect us. . . . We do not wish to triumph over the white population. But if we can live up to non-violence in thought and deed, there will emerge an interracial society based on freedom for all."

So the South, in its hour of crisis, has given birth to the New Negro, at Montgomery, at Tallahassee, and elsewhere, and to the New White, at Koinonia, at Highlander, Tennessee, and in a few other localities. Bridges are being started from both directions.

DAVE DELLINGER.

(Condensed from the December issue of "Liberation", New York).

VIEWPOINT

Extraordinary Anarchists

ANARCHISTS are such extraordinary people. They have a habit of mixing politics with humour; an ability to laugh at themselves and at each other. They make friends with their enemies—and stranger still, they actually like their friends too.

So far as "normal", politically conscious people are concerned, anarchists are anathema. They take nothing seriously, are irresponsible and actually admit that they are guided by self-interest. How is one to deal with this kind of behaviour? What can be made of an otherwise relatively intelligent person who not only refuses to support Eden or Gaitskell, but turns down Joe Grimond as well. On the face of it he has to be some sort of Marxist—but he is not. Neither is he necessarily a pacifist or a bohemian. Religion perhaps? Only in so far as he gives Christmas presents and knocks off work when the Christians do. He takes bank holidays as well, but who ever heard of an anarchist banker?

The anarchist is an idealist, he wants things to be as he wants them to be, and anything short of that is not good enough. However, he is also a realist; in fact he can be so realistic that it hurts. This appears to be something of a paradox, for one usually thinks of people as being one or the other—idealist or realist—but not both.

The secret of synthesising the two is of course to hold reasonable ideals—that is to say ideals which can be held in reason, and hold just as well for everybody else as for oneself. This is perhaps the essential core of the anarchist's ideas—for nothing can be so reasonable and objectively valid as a set of principles which hold good, not only for the most important person in the world, but are equally true for all the other people.

As for realism—needless to say the anarchist is generally regarded as some sort of well-meaning idiot with his head in the topmost layer of cloud. His mind is supposed to be rooted in the idea of a free society regardless of all the dismal facts of society in its present form. He

is accused of having the insane notion that human beings are capable of behaving in a reasonable way, in spite of all evidence to the contrary. This is in fact that he does think, but at the same time recognising that until more people think the same the contrary evidence will continue to accumulate.

But this is not realism say the detractors, just a matter of unproven opinion, and very doubtful at that. Not so, say the anarchists, when people are actually given the chance to behave in a responsible manner they invariably do—in this spirit of the effects of being conditioned to the present methods of society.

But it's difficult to get away from the principles of leadership and politics, property and money, capitalism and totalitarianism when there are so many raging lunatics around who insist upon being leaders and politicians, and there is so much property and money about (if all the wrong places); such multitudes of would-be capitalists, fascists, communists and totalitarians generally.

The essential factors of existence are only too real to anarchists; it is never to an anarchist who insists on calling a spade a shovel, he is the first one to recognise that power corrupts those who have it (whatever their supposed good intentions may be), that recourse to expediency is inevitable for the powerful even if that which is expedient cuts theoretical principles, that hell-on-earth paved with the good (and bad) intentions of politicians.

What then are the extraordinary anarchists doing about it? Where's the point in being right in theory with no one giving a damn for the practice? Anarchists of course do care, and their most fervent hope is that eventually (even if it takes a thousand years), everyone will care; and then in the year 2956 it will have been proved that those dim and distant people of the ancient past in 1956 were not just beating their brains out for nothing; their puny efforts at propaganda, their club and bookshop, their compromise-anarchist lives were not entirely pointless; and at the very least

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Political Extremism

Continued
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recognised the expansionism of the "overcrowded" countries (Japan versus China, Italy versus Abyssinia, and even Germany versus Austria and Czechoslovakia) so long as their expansionism avoided the territories of the British Empire. And how far was "the violence that has torn most other European countries" not a product of Britain's political role of maintaining the balance of power on the Continent? After all if one is to talk of Chamberlain's moderation towards Hitler it has to be balanced with the firm line he took against France at the time of her pact with Soviet Russia!

So much for moderation in foreign politics. And at home? With the exception of eight months in 1924 and two years from 1929-1931 the Conservatives ruled supreme. The inter-war years were years of chronic unemployment, Means Tests, strike-breaking, privilege for the few and hunger and misery for the many. How can one honestly refer to "moderate" policies in those years. Why even in the two periods when they were in opposition they used the most unscrupulous and extreme methods to drive the Labour government out of office (the Zinoviev letter scare in 1924 and the economic crisis for which they had been largely responsible in 1929 and which resulted in the National government!).

When therefore the *Observer* asks in connection with the post-war world "How was it possible that extremism had become so respectable in Tory circles" we suggest that it is a false question since the Tories have always been extremists (as, incidentally, the Labour Party has never been!) They have not changed; what has changed is the world around them and the distribution of Power.

At the end of the war they had on their hands a colonial empire seething with discontent and nationalism. The "liquidation" of the Empire was blamed on the Labour Party, but it is clear from the continuation of that policy by the Conservatives, in spite of Lord Beaverbrook and his crusaders, that not even the Tory extremists could stop the inevitable (a fact which probably Chamberlain and his City friends were well aware of when they treated Hitler with "moderation" to avoid a world war). Militarily and economically America emerged as the dominating power in the world, with Russia as the only potential challenger to this world supremacy. Britain in world politics is a satellite to whom gun-boat diplomacy (by permission of the United States) is still possible in Jamaica (incidentally we would refresh the *Observer's* memory since it seems that they associate "gun-boat" diplomacy with the nineteenth century and the recent incursions in Egypt, that not only were gun-boats sent to the West Indies in 1953, but that even in the era of "moderation" the British government replied to the Jamaican workers demand for a living wage with troops, militia, armed police and "H.M.S. Ajax steaming round the island"*) but not in the Middle East.

There, in spite of braggadocio Eden's post-mortem claim that in similar circumstances he would not hesitate to again take military action, it is quite clear that thrombosis or no thrombosis, drunkard or no drunkard, what they say goes. (M. Mollet recognised at least one half of the bitter truth when he admitted that America was kept in the dark about the Egyptian venture for

fear that if she knew she would prevent it from taking place). And we think that if nothing else, the resounding fiasco in Egypt has put an end to further British megalomaniac military sorties for, at least some time to come!

What we now need, according to the *Observer* editorial is "political sobriety". If, says this now self-declared voice of "liberalism"† we recognise that as a result of the Suez "operation" Britain is the country that has been most damaged as well as having "lost most of her influence in the Middle East" and can face these facts and draw "sensible, imaginative, unemotional conclusions" then we "can play a role in the world out of proportion to [our] size."

There is no doubt about it, these "liberals" are just Tories in sheep's clothing! What influence has Britain "lost" in the Middle East which had not been "gained" either by gun-boat diplomacy, by economic strangulation or by playing off one artificially created nation against another? What influence has been lost other than the power to prevent those countries from skimming off for themselves a larger share of the exorbitant profits currently being made by the international oil combines? That these additional revenues will be used to fatten the already bloated rulers and their entourage while the people go hungry is no argument. What is relevant is that in spite of being potentially the most prosperous countries of the world—even from the accepted capitalist point of view, since they have vast mineral resources in ever-growing demand and at the same time small populations—they are still among the most impoverished, backward and illiterate. If, in the past thirty years Britain had been more interested in the welfare of the Arabs of the Middle East and even only a little less interested in squeezing the last penny from oil profits then there might be some justification in talking of influence in its moral and human context!

★

BUT apart from this what does the *Observer* mean when it talks of Britain "playing a role in the world out of proportion to our size"? If what is meant is that this country could exert a kind of moral influence on the political fortunes of the world while ceasing to be a world power as are Russia and the United States, then something more than "moderation" in foreign policy is required. Nothing less than a social revolution in our system of economics and our whole way of thinking is needed besides the scrapping of our gun-boats!

To set an example to the world (that is to the people, not to governments which are never influenced by moral arguments) this country would first have to abolish its armed forces which it could quite easily afford to do once it ceased to dream of world hegemony or was required to defend the industrial empires of Unilever, I.C.I., Anglo-Iranian Oil et alia. In its turn this would involve a re-organisation of the economy, from one of exploitation to one of co-operation, of production for profit to production for needs. This would necessitate a development of agriculture at the expense of say motor-cars; of houses for living in at the expense of office blocks and prestige building. However it would not eliminate our need to import certain raw materials and foodstuffs which would be "paid" for by supplying in return needed manufactured goods we are able to produce here. What might be lost in living standards (so-called) would be gained in leisure which those of us who pine for the gadgets of life could use to make them, leaving their less-demanding brethren free to read, to play or simply to bask in the joys of idleness!

†"The broad division of this country between Conservative and Labour (with a floating vote of 'liberals') is not a division between good and bad, right and wrong (and this naturally goes for the liberals' too, with whom this paper belongs) . . . *Observer*, Dec. 30.

*As the review *Empire* put it in its issue for July, 1938.

AN EXPERIMENT IN COMMUNITY

KOINONIA FARMS

IN Southern Georgia, there is a co-operative community of native southerners, both white and black. The white founders were accused of trying to escape their social responsibilities by going off to live together in Utopian isolation. But in the last six months, Koinonia Community has been catapulted into national prominence. For many, it has come to symbolize the best hope for a solution to the race problem.

The members of Koinonia Farms have not "withdrawn". They merely insist that they must carry out in their own lives the revolution that they envision for the whole of society. They live in Christian communism, sharing the work and the proceeds, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". They operate a highly successful 1100 acre farm, but have no class division between managers and workers or between skilled and unskilled. They have no hierarchy of leaders or elected rulers, but make all important decisions by unanimous consent in group assembly. The members refuse to serve in the armed forces. They have been excommunicated from the neighbouring church. They have been told that they are selfishly trying to live ahead of the times, that they belong in the factories, the unions, the segregated local church, the army—in order to work with the people wherever the people are. But they have an "open door" for others to join them, and an open heart towards all humanity. In fourteen years, they have grown from four members to sixty, and have had a steadily increasing influence on a growing number of friends, neighbours, and enemies.

It is characteristic of our culture that the first widespread publicity for Koinonia came not as a result of its various

achievements in agriculture, economic organization, or the successful integration of white and Negro southerners, but in response to recent attacks made on Koinonia by its enemies. On the night of July 23, ten or fifteen sticks of dynamite were thrown into the Community's roadside market, destroying about \$3000 worth of equipment, but not causing human injury. Shots have been fired both into the market and into the community housing area. One dark night, Clarence Jordan, one of Koinonia's founders, was followed in his automobile by another car that had been waiting outside Koinonia's lane. Just before a narrow bridge, the car shot ahead of Jordan and came to a careening halt on the bridge, blocking the road. Jordan managed to throw his car into reverse and escape while the other driver was climbing out with a raised shotgun. These and other assaults have been accompanied by legal persecution and economic boycott, which have proved far more damaging.

Koinonia has always had to meet the suspicion and hostility of its neighbours, because of its complete disregard of economic and racial barriers. But during its previous fourteen years of struggle, it has overcome the resentment. It has done so by actions that flow naturally from its conviction that competition, hatred, and misunderstanding can be overcome by love expressed in material sharing as well as in patience and forgiveness. Its members have turned out in full force to help a hostile neighbour rebuild a burned-out barn, when his fellow white supremacists were "too busy". It had shared its farm produce with those in need. It led the neighbourhood's fight for telephones and paved roads. When it developed a model farm,

with new, more successful crops, improved livestock, and scientific erosion control, it did not rise above its neighbours. The farm became a demonstration and training centre for improved agricultural methods. As a result, the level of the whole surrounding area was improved. In a country in which egg production had not been considered profitable, Koinonia introduced new methods and then graded and sold its neighbours' eggs until they could gradually take over for themselves. Now the county has the highest egg production in the state.

What caused the Violence?

So successful was Koinonia by its methods that one wonders whether the outbursts of violence and economic persecution would have occurred at all except for the Supreme Court decision on integration. This fanned the ancient resentments between South and North, resentments which are based not only on Southern myopia but also on the attempt of Northerners to impose racial justice by methods natural to those who are mired in economic competition and reliance on governmental coercion.

In any case, the immediate event that precipitated the trouble was the desire of two Atlanta Negroes to study at the Georgia State College of Business Administration. To enter the University, they needed the signature of two graduates. Since all graduates are white, this regulation has been a method of denying university education to Georgia Negroes. A courageous Atlanta minister, James Welden, was the first white man to agree to sign, and in April of this year he asked Clarence Jordan if he would also sign.

Continued on p. 2

NEW YORK LETTER

Notes on Santa

WITH seven more days, six of them shopping, to Christmas you can still see the morning parade of Santas arriving from Third Avenue and the Bowery at the Second Avenue subway station. Tokens already paid for, the Santas amble in groups through the turnstiles and down the black iron steps to the platform where at the end of its line and nearly of its life the F train waits, floor strewn with the *Daily News* and seats occupied by earlier Santas and a few characters such as myself making a determined start to the day.

No Santa minds you looking at him since he is only one avenue removed from his usual thoroughfare of total indifference. No Santa bothers to look at you. His boots are his own boots. Upwards they extend into cardboard gaiters. Into the gaiters are tucked the ends of his red pantaloons. The belt around his middle is imitation leather. His tunic is of thin red cotton glued at the edges with white fluff, buttoned up high. More white fluff has been glued to his chin and cheeks. Capable of driving no reindeer he stares at the floor of the F train that is to bear him off to the portals of smart shops.

He carries one thing, a small brass bell. Later in the day you can see him outside Gimbel's ringing the bell at the shoppers of Sixth Avenue. A placard states his credentials. "Volunteers of America," it says, "Religious Division." Santa is ringing his bell to keep warm, throwing his arms across his thinly covered chest.

In the subway this morning I asked what this Volunteers of America was. "Shit," said Santa, "do I know? I came

in last week." "Some religious group?" "Religious hell. You can get a meal in the basement if you stand in line for an hour." He spotted a *Daily News* on the floor. He reached for it and studied the front page to the exclusion of all else. Three other Santas waited in gloom for the engine beneath the floor boards to start turning over. None came up with further comments on the Volunteers. Conversation is difficult on the F train. At 34th Street two got out to join other Santas dispatched by the Volunteers on the platform. One asked from the doorway, "You coming Pat?" White fluff bobbing from his chin he answered, "No I'm 59th Street to-day alongside the blind mob." Before the doors closed the other said, "Palace?" I remembered seeing the Palace alongside the Majestic as the two most prominent hotels for nightly housing of transients on lower Third Avenue.

If you stand outside Gimbel's window, the one on 33rd Street, you can watch a jolly Santa who acts as though he were drunk. Dressed up very substantially he sits in a friendly snowy scene rocking back and forth before a microphone. The crowd outside hears him laughing and sees him waving or beckoning at who knows who. He looks more like a professional Santa and does his job very well. Gimbel's, doing their bit towards generating the Christmas spirit, have vacated an entire window of goods to make way for this friendly Santa.

Santa's predilection for small children and his leaning towards moral injunction suggest a pathological sadist whom parents would do well to warn their children away from.

I have no figures to show how firm the Christmas buying trend is this year. Unofficial reports state that almost certainly there will be a fall-off from 1955. Last year's of course was the most successful Christmas ever and in an election year it is not possible to hope for an outstanding public buying response since a late start to the campaign is necessitated by the Presidential campaign. Not only this but the energies of the nation's most respected P.R. firms are drained by November 6th and a 7-10 day period is required for any new campaign to get under way. So it is evident that the 1956 campaign did not get started until mid to late November and had only 5 weeks for operation.

How closely related the following facts may be to the limited time for effective sales campaigns I cannot say, but it has been widely remarked this year that the Angel has risen in importance relative to Santa Claus. No explanation has been put forward. My own private one, based more on intuition than statistical know-

ledge, is that increasingly year by year Santa Claus is becoming rejected by the American public as a figure that has gone on too long. There is attached to him a hint of the old-world and outdated. In inverse proportion to his decline there is the notable rise in the status of the Angel. Continuing the explanation offered above it may be that the Angel is less frowzy, less European, and correspondingly more up-to-date and American figure than Santa Claus, and it is certainly true that the Angel can be made to appear more sexy than Santa ever could. It is therefore my prediction for 1957 that, following what will turn out to be a national decline in 1956 buying levels at Christmas, there will be evidence of very marked activity directed at the public purse, and barring the outbreak of world-wide hostilities, a December buying trend equalling if not exceeding that of 1955. Furthermore I predict as motif that Santa Claus will take a further step downwards and that progressive firms in Decorations and Household Novelties will place increasing emphasis on the use of the Angel. It is a daring thought, though probably not yet warranted, that we may also see a trend towards a more definite sexual differentiation of Angels.

Students of the fast-changing America may wish to see the early morning procession of Santa Clauses along East Houston Street, since in the near future this old custom may become obsolescent.

As you would expect, there is no hint of any decline of Santa Claus to be found in the *New York Daily Press*. From *Times* or *Mirror* these papers go on fondly printing what the editors imagine the public want and think. This year there has been no shortage of playing up the Santa theme. Yet even in these backward publications there is revealed a critical attitude towards Santa, and often a hint of depaganisation. The first example I think of is the caption below a photo of a Hungarian child at Camp Kilner. She has been carried across a frontier in freezing weather, her family disrupted, and is now kneeling beside an army bedspring six feet from a news photographer, posed to pray. The caption states, "— (her name in Hungarian) prays to God that Santa will fill her stocking with a lot of goodies." Apart from an extreme assumption by the caption writer that — was not asleep from exhaustion, or that if she was praying the subject was not closer to bombs and bullets, what the caption does convey is that Santa may be thought of as a Christian and that he may receive orders from the Almighty. This idea has been standard mythology for a long while but it has had to compete against some wilder aspects of Santa's nature, precisely the eccentricities that are now being played down. J.B.

DISCUSSION ON

An Anarchist International

EVER since the beginning of the Hungarian revolution I have been turning over in my mind an article I wanted to write. But so far I have only got the title, which is 'Wanted—a New International'.

For the Hungarian uprising and the inability of the anarchists throughout the world to do anything practical and constructive about it has demonstrated a very serious weakness in our movement. The plea from the Bulgarian comrades comes, then, at a very opportune time, although I suppose, since it reached FREEDOM last week through presumably two translations, it has been circulating already for several months and is not an outcome of the events in Hungary.

For the Bulgarians, however, the question will now have vital importance. If, as we have reason to believe, unrest is spreading throughout the satellites and in Russia itself, a rising in Bulgaria is not unlikely. In spite of the decimation of the movement there by the Communists, the anarchist FACB still exists and in the event of a rising on the lines of that in Hungary our comrades there would be entitled to look to the world movement for aid. It would be the task of the Bulgarian anarchists in exile to play a major part in organising that aid, and it is not surprising that they should show concern at the state of the movement.

The Hungarian explosion must be making them even more anxious, in view of anarchist impotence outside—and indeed in view of the lack of information from within Hungary itself. The quotation referring to 'armed anarchists' in Budapest in the article we reprinted last week from a Canadian daily paper was the first intimation to me that in fact there were any anarchists involved in the struggle in Hungary! And that did not make clear whether the fighters referred to were really anarchists or the name was merely being used as a swearword by the Communists.

AMERICAN POLICY

Continued from p. 1

to say that most of them approve the idea. Iraq, one of the prime-movers in the Bagdad Pact, welcomes the doctrine providing it will produce "peace with justice". Israel is also in favour for the obvious reason that any measure which stabilises the hitherto highly unsettled Middle East is a good thing.

All the Middle East states would however be well advised to reflect upon the depressing prospects for an area which becomes more and more like the rope in a tug-of-war. The rival claims of East and West for the "loyalty" of which might now be called the Middle-East-West could prove dangerous for those who have to be loyal—these States are so small, and Russia and America are so big . . .

One cannot avoid looking back upon American policy in the Middle East before the conflict, to the time when the U.S. was dickering with the whole problem generally, and in particular refused Egypt a loan for the Aswan Dam. The extraordinary change in policy (one might call it a reversal) is striking in its blatant opportunism. At that time America stood to gain little by her assistance—and so she did not assist. If she had done so it is unlikely that the crises which appeared almost immediately would have led to such disastrous consequences. Now she stands to gain enormously, at the expense of her foremost "allies" and to the detriment of her sworn enemy—and so she assists. Opportunism in politics from this quarter is of course no surprise, but we should not let it slip by unnoticed!

It remains to be seen what will happen next now that the Middle East has joined the company of those other areas which specifically lie between the devil and the deep blue sea.

One further point: if Israel refuses to retire from the Gaza strip or the islands on the mouth of the Gulf of Akaba, and Egypt refuses to re-open the canal until Israeli forces withdraw to their original lines before the war—what will the U.N. do—and to whom?

It is unthinkable that there were anarchists in Hungary who did not take an active part in the revolt. The question is: are there any anarchists in Hungary at all? And when you come to think of it, it is rather pathetic that the editors of the only anarchist weekly in English anywhere in the world have not been provided with information about the Hungarian movement at this critical time. Or at any other time.

Nor has there been issued any manifesto or declaration by any international body to which anarchists throughout the world could give support. Not even any words, let alone any organisation of mutual aid in any form whatsoever.

I have no doubt that, like FREEDOM, anarchist journals everywhere had plenty to say about Hungary. But they have all been isolated voices. Now that is all very well in that it preserves inviolate the autonomy which is a central principle of anarchism. But surely autonomy does not necessarily mean isolation? Federalism is also a central principle of anarchism, but there is no evidence of that being practised throughout the world.

One of the strongest planks of anarchism is its international character. And I firmly believe that this is an aspect of our philosophy that will grow more important in the years to come, as colonial struggles get fiercer and small countries endeavour to come out from under the shadow of large ones. Like so much else, internationalism has been cramped by the Communist states. Russia's idea of it has much in common with Anthony Eden's sudden conversion to it over the Suez issue. But although the power blocs both fear and try to use nationalism, the very necessity of existence in the modern world makes internationalism more and more essential in the organisation of human affairs.

The western world's experience of the cost of nationalism is making more and more people receptive to ideas which are not based upon racial or national superiority. The British in particular, having fought a war ostensibly against Nazism, have a bad conscience about racialism in any colonial territories. In fact colonialism itself is becoming more and more a cause of guilty apologetics, less and less something to boast about. The average Britisher doesn't swallow all that stuff about 'our glorious heritage' but he can be convinced that his bread and butter depend upon holding certain territories. If we can stress all the time that internationalism means not a worsening but an enrichment of his life, not the continued insecurity within nation-states, but the security that comes from friendship and common interest, our argument will not fall on deaf ears.

Besides that, nothing succeeds like success. And nothing appears successful like the big, the wide-spread. If we can

demonstrate convincingly that anarchism is a world-wide movement, which it is, this is impressive in itself. We who have ceased to judge the soundness of an idea by counting the noses of those who hold it, may scorn those who are impressed by size and numbers. But when we have numbers, it is a perverted snobbery not to talk about them!

I doubt very much if the numbers of convinced anarchists throughout the world is so very much less than the numbers of convinced Communists. The point is that the Communists have seized power and the means to make a noise. They are organised for the purpose of convincing the world of their strength and of conquering the world. The anarchists are disorganised—mainly because of their fear of the corruption to come from organisation, almost as though they are half convinced by their opponents' arguments that organisation must bring leadership and centralisation.

I believe that we desperately need some form of international co-ordination, co-operation, federation, call it what you will. At the very least it should provide a means of collating, sifting and distributing information about the movement to the movement. It should help to maintain contact and facilitate travel and interchange by comrades throughout the world. It should help its members to feel they belong to an international brotherhood, the beginning of a world-wide free society.

Such an organisation should find means to make pronouncements quickly on events of world importance; and to get them circulated in as many languages and countries as possible. The public here in Britain will not be impressed by a manifesto put out by the London Anarchist Group alone. But if it were supported by groups from China to Peru they would sit up and take notice. Even the Press could be impressed by something which spoke for people all over the world.

This kind of thing is the least that should be done. It should be developed into the practice of mutual aid in times of revolution—as in Hungary. It should aim at the setting up of colonies in towns and country to provide havens for the persecuted, the widowed and the orphaned of the movement, for establishing free schools, for getting anarchists thinking and acting on a world scale and laying the foundation for a free world.

It certainly will not be easy, and I would like to see suggestions and criticisms come in from our readers, wherever they may be. If there is to be an international anarchist congress sometime this year it would be a fine thing if something concrete could come out of it instead of a lot of hot air, which is the usual product of international congresses. It would, I think, be a great shame if the Bulgarian proposals were simply ignored, in view of the growing importance of Eastern Europe, although I have steered clear of discussing them here. I have done this because I think it is unfair to consider them only in the brief version outlined by G.B. last week.

I do not share G.B.'s pessimism about an international's chances of working—

provided we find the right basis for it in the first place. Maybe the Bulgarian comrades' proposals do have some 'dangerous' aspects, but I am inclined to agree with them about the decay and stagnation in the movement. Certainly it applies here, where we find more people ready to sneer at the enthusiast than to emulate him; more ready to say that everything is hopeless than to become active themselves.

If, as comrade Prudhommeaux of Paris says, the CRIA (Committee for International Anarchist Relations) is all the world anarchist movement can afford, then we are in a sorry state indeed. And to say that it is all it needs is to ignore completely the tremendous opportunities which lie ahead. In the next few years the ideas of anarchism are going to be more relevant than ever before. If we prepare ourselves to take opportunities we shall surprise the pessimists—as the Hungarians have surprised the optimists! London. P.S.

TWO CORRECTIONS

DEAR COMRADES,

The imprint on the Christmas cards for the Lord Mayor of London's Hungarian relief fund says in part "Printing presented by Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd." Your statement that Mr. D. A. Tuck "has made his profit on printing the cards" ("The Christmas Card Racket," FREEDOM 29/12/56) is not wholly false, since the prestige which Tuck's got from printing the cards free will probably boost their trade in future; but in plain fairness to the firm it should be made clear that neither their profits nor the cost of printing were paid out of the fund.

We must be grateful to Kingsley Brown and *The Hamilton Spectator* for "Days of the Anarchists" (quoted in FREEDOM 29/12/56), but Mr. Brown drops the usual clanger of the local daily journalist when he writes "Anarchists like the German, Max Stirner, were criticizing the Communist 'struggle for power' as far back as 1904 . . ." In fact, of course, Stirner died as far back as 1856, and the principle criticisms of the Communist struggle for power were made (by Bakunin) at least as far back as 1870. D.R.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

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Every Sunday at 7.30 at THE MALATESTA CLUB, 32 Percy Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.1.

JAN. 6—Arthur Uloth on THOUGHTS FOR 1957

JAN. 13—Philip Sansom on HUNGARY

Questions, Discussion and Admission all free.

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Weather Permitting HYDE PARK, Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

MANETTE STREET (Charing X Road) Saturdays at 5.30 p.m.

Malatesta Club

SWARAJ HOUSE, 32 PERCY STREET, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, LONDON, W.1. (Tel.: MUSEUM 7277).

ACTIVITIES

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m. London Anarchist Group Meetings (see Announcements Column)

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Britain's Economic Future

WHY is every economist in the country getting so excited at the almost certain prospect of inflation? Why are all the newspaper city editors discussing the country's economic plight with varying degrees of gloom? Why is everyone so worried that their ability to pay a week's bills with a week's pay is about to be seriously impaired? Can it be that there is so enormous a volume of smoke with practically no corresponding fire whatsoever?

The answer according to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Harold Macmillan, is to the effect that there is indeed a lot of fuss about nothing at all. On Monday he spoke in the House of Commons about the increase in the price of oil. He said:

"The addition to the cost of living caused by the increase is unlikely to be more than half a point through direct costs, and quarter of a point through indirect costs."

Mr. Macmillan is obviously a simple man with a simple creed; he apparently believes that the best way out of a crisis

is to pretend that there is no crisis. For him there will be no inflation and only a small increase in the cost of living, in spite of the fact that the present situation is a close parallel (economically speaking and on a smaller scale), to the situation which was created during the Korean war. At that time the retail price index rose from 114 in June 1950 to 125 in June 1951. A ten per cent. rise in one year. Add to this the well-known fact that the cost of living has been rising fairly steadily, and quite fast since 1950 (and before), then if we are to believe Macmillan the current economic position of the country is really quite good.

However, hardly anyone finds it possible to view the future through the same kind of rosy spectacles as are used by the Chancellor.

As one reads the newspapers with ever-increasing nervous anxiety one cannot help but notice editorials, leaders and articles describing the "only possible method" of escaping from a financial fate worse than debt. Some of the methods are eminently reasonable, others make somewhat reactionary reading.

Quite apart from the accelerating effect which the Suez crisis has had upon an already dubious economy, there are one or two obvious factors which have steadily become more and more obvious in the last decade, but which have been consistently ignored by each succeeding Government and Chancellor.

In terms of a world economy such as exists to-day, Britain is no longer a "Great Power", which means that Britain cannot afford any more to regard herself as a Great Power or act as if she were one. Since the end of the war the British Government has continued a policy, regardless of expense, of retaining Britain's world-political Power, although economically it has been an untenable position. Steadily, the resources which might have been used to build a higher standard of living have been drained away on enormous armaments expenditure and costly defence pacts. And finally the Egyptian war, which has been sufficient to tilt Butler's price plateau into a steep, upward gradient.

Needless to say so far as anarchists are concerned the whole economic mess in which this capitalist world perpetually finds itself is ruinous and catastrophic, but one might have supposed that even second-rate, patriotic politicians could have made a better job of Britain's economy than they have. They have managed to bring the country to a position where unemployment is imminent, petrol is rationed, Britain is hated and despised by more people than ever and even her allies no longer trust her. And still self-congratulation continues.

One knows that the free society is probably not just around the corner, but is it so unreasonable to hope for a modicum of sanity on the way? Apparently it is—for economic lunacy is a guiding principle, and politicians do not seem to have even a glimmering of their own self-interest, let alone ours.

BOOK REVIEW
DEATH IN STALINGRAD

LAST LETTERS FROM STALINGRAD, translated by Anthony G. Powell. Methuen, 6s.

IN January 1943, the last German aircraft left Stalingrad. The German troops were surrounded, there was no hope of being relieved. On board the plane were seven sacks of mail; the German Supreme Command confiscated these in order to check up on the morale of the troops. The letters were handed over to a propaganda officer to edit and produce a book which would be, in Goebbels' words, "a fanfare". Goebbels suppressed the book as being "unacceptable to the German people", but a number of the letters have survived and they were published in Germany in 1954.

The letters were nearly all written with the realisation that there were only a few days left to live. Nearly all the writers were disillusioned: either in their belief in a God:

"I no longer believe in God's charity, otherwise He would not tolerate so great an injustice. I no longer believe in it because if God were charitable He would have brought light into the minds of the men who started this war and kept talking about peace and the Almighty in three different languages. I no longer believe in God because He has betrayed us. I no longer believe in anything, so you will have to manage with your own beliefs as best you can."

"No Father, there is no God. I write it once again in the knowledge that I am saying something terrible and irreparable. And even if there should be a God after all, He will only be found among you people—in your hymns and Prayer Books, the pious sayings of priests and parsons, the peals of bells and the smell of incense. He is not here, in Stalingrad."

or in the Fuhrer:

"All my life . . . I have believed in the Fuhrer and taken him at his word. It's terrible the way people out here are doubting, and so humiliating to hear things one cannot contradict because the facts support them."

or in the heroism of a soldier's death: "Death [on the stage] always had to be heroic, inspiring, thrilling; it had to be for a great cause and based on conviction. And what is it here, in reality? It means to perish like cattle from cold and starvation—just another biological process like eating and drinking. Men are dying like flies, and no one ever takes the trouble to bury them. They are lying all around us—some without arms, legs or eyes and others with their bellies torn open. Someone ought to shoot a film of it, just to discredit the Noblest Form of Death once and for all. It's a filthy way of dying—and one of these days it will be glorified on granite pedestals in the shape of 'dying warriors' with their heads in bandages and their arms in slings."

Many myths were shattered, they were faced with bed-rock reality. Their last thoughts and hopes were almost all on the small things of their own and their families' lives—"Are you sure you've got enough coal? Just go and see A., he got some wood from me for his furniture. Now he can give some coal in return."

There is no English self-conscious sippancy in these letters, no German talk of standing by the flag or dying for the Fatherland, rather there is continuous criticism of the "strategists" who were responsible for their terrible situation and a realisation of the stupidity of the war.

This is a demoralising little book: it should be in every regimental library.

M.G.W.