

## CRITICAL PHASE IN BUS STRIKE

# 7 MILLION HANDS OUT

THE eyes of seven million workers are on London's busmen this week, as their strike enters a critical phase.

At long last the busmen's leader, Frank Cousins, has decided that something must be done to counteract the strike-breaking effect of the Underground workers continuing to run the trains—carrying something like a quarter more passengers than usual. After three weeks of Londoners being able to get to work even though in great discomfort, the man who was hailed as a militant leader a year ago has recognised that for a public transport strike to be effective people have to be prevented from travelling so that other employers begin to put pressure on the transport executive to get the strike settled so that their workers can get to work.

So Mr. Cousins has approached the leaders of the Underground train drivers 'drawing their attention to the effect which the excessive use of London's Underground trains is having upon the bus strike, and asking for their views on the problem'.

Apparently this tentative approach is not a request for a sympathetic stoppage. It might lead to simple restrictive action like a ban on overtime, but London Transport Executive have claimed all through the bus strike that no extra service is available on the Underground, and the unions also instructed their members to do no more than normal working.

### Little Effect

The result of Mr. Cousins' guarded request for consideration of his members' plight is therefore, not likely to be very effective. And

having left it until after the Underground workers have been awarded a three per cent. rise in line with the railmen nationally, there is little chance of whipping up much indignation among them. Even though their raise is pitifully inadequate and doesn't operate until the end of June!

The fact that the Underground men have got this small raise might, however, provide the key for the deadlock which exists at the moment, since it is probably the point at which Mr. Cousins and Sir John Elliot could meet for a settlement. The LTE has already announced that it has yielded on one point: that the time for consideration of the 'country' busmen's wages should be brought forward from the autumn to the summer.

If agreement could be reached for a three per cent. increase for all busmen, town and country, on the same basis as the railmen, that could be a means of saving faces all round, and would have the appearance of being fair. For the busmen it would mean a raise on their basic wage of slightly under the 6s. 6d. which Frank Cousins offered to accept before the strike began!

By the time this appears in print, these may be concrete proposals. Certainly the LTE will make some move to prevent the busmen getting any real support from the Underground men, however unlikely that appears to be. We shall see.

### A Long Queue

Also waiting to see are nearly seven million workers who are putting out their hands for wage increases. These include the miners,

the provincial busmen, municipal manual workers, building, chemical, gas, and three-and-a-quarter million engineering workers.

All these have claims in, for 'substantial' rises in most cases, and will be watching closely to see the result of the busmen's struggle. The feeble way in which the railwaymen's leaders have accepted the meagre increase, and the ineffectual way in which Cousins has led the busmen has not been lost on the militants either in these industries or in those awaiting their turn.

The seven million in the payline have been warned: the Government, for its own purposes and those of its friends in industry and commerce, has attacked the living standards of the workers. The busmen were first to be forced to a fight, and if the result is an unsatisfactory one the attempt will be made to make that a pattern for the rest.

So far the union leaders can hardly be said to be earning their pay. But in any case we feel that the rank and file should be doing more themselves to ensure the success of their own struggle. If they don't, they can't grumble if the leaders continually let them down.

## Who Said This?

"For Glory gives herself only to those who have always dreamed of her."

"For the sword is the axis of the world and greatness cannot be shared."

"... the military body is the most complete expression of the spirit of a social system."

1. Napoleon Buonaparte.
2. Adolf Hitler.
3. Joan of Arc.
4. Alexander the Great.
5. Joe Soap.
6. General de Gaulle.
7. Joseph Stalin.

Answer: No. 6!

## Crisis in Lebanon

THE legacy of the Suez débâcle continues to be violence and strife, this time in the Lebanon. The supposed idyll of this small country with a population of 1,500,000 as a stable and peaceful democracy devoted to commerce, under a liberal and benign President is rapidly disappearing under the stress of internal dissent and rioting, the external pressures placed upon it by East-West power rivalry and the driving ambition of Egypt's Nasser in full flight at the head of the newly-formed United Arab Republic.

Although the Lebanese crisis has been generally reported as a sudden outburst, signs of trouble have actually been appearing for many months. The cause of the rioting is now seen as a political struggle between President Camille Chamoun and the Opposition—Imperialism against Nationalism. Complicating the issue lies the fact that the Lebanon is theoretically run on the basis that it is half Moslem and half Christian. (Chamoun is a Maronite Roman Catholic). But the real cause may be clearly traced back to Suez and the further emergence of Nasser as the prophet of Arab unity, anti-Imperialism and a vague "affiliation" with Communist countries; and at the same time the "take-over" by the United States of the ancient British rôle of Imperialist in the Middle East, the Eisenhower Doctrine and of course the Sixth Fleet. The spark which fired the trouble at this time however was the attempt by Chamoun to alter the Lebanese constitution so that he might run for a second six-year term as President when his current term expires in September. (At last year's elections he won a three-quarters majority). This was too much for the Moslem Opposition. Three weeks ago a general strike against the régime was engineered by the pro-Egyptian National Front. (The excuse used was the murder of the pro-Nasser editor of the newspaper *Telegraph* outside his home in Beirut. Although the assassin is believed to be a Communist taking orders from the

Party, it is anyone's guess as to which side did in fact assassinate him). At this point ex-Premier Saeb Salam issued his war-cry: "Crush the despot and save Lebanon."

In Tripoli a mob appeared to pillage, fight and burn, one of the first buildings to go being the U.S. Information Agency library—an essential in this day and age for any "self-respecting" mob. As Radio Damascus informed the world: "The people of Lebanon has risen as one man against imperialism." And Radio Moscow also got into the act: "The Lebanese people have had enough of the American system."

Saboteurs blew up the Iraq Petroleum Company's pipeline to the Mediterranean, five customs guards who had arrested a gun-running millionaire in a Cnevrolet (the Belgian consul-general) were knifed to death. In Beirut gangs of thugs with clubs patrolled the streets; fires, barricades and destruction were familiar scenes. The government made an attempt to arrest Saeb Salam but the policeman was driven from his sandbagged villa by supporters. A Druze sect of tribesmen, devoted to the downfall of Chamoun, headed by a self-styled pacifist named Kamal Jumblatt, went into action, 2,000 strong from their headquarters in Mukhtara.

So far what remains of the government under Chamoun has retained power. Two of his Ministers have resigned, but the army under Brigadier General Faud Shehab remains loyal, despite a call from the Beirut newspaper *Al-Masa*: "O Chamoun resign. O Shehab take over." The President has backed down to the extent of issuing a statement on May 23rd that his Government has no intention of amending the Constitution so that he may run for a second term of office.

Whether or not the uprising will continue depends largely upon the actions of the U.S.A. and Nasser's

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## Religious Politics

A FEW days after Sir Hugh Foot's visit to London from Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios received an invitation from the Archbishop of Canterbury to visit London.

Naïve observers seem to think that the invitation is a conciliatory gesture emanating solely from Dr. Fisher. It seems obvious to us that Fisher must have got permission from above (and we don't mean the heavenly Father) and that the Lambeth Conference, which takes place next month, and to which Makarios is invited, will be used as an excuse to cover up the real purpose of the invitation—to persuade Makarios to accept the proposals for Cyprus on which the Government will make yet another statement on June 17th.

It is also useful to the British Government to get Makarios in a friendly state of mind before his planned visit to Egypt takes place which has been preceded by a message of love to the "gentle people of the United Arab Republic". Much sympathy will be felt for the martyred Makarios in Egypt who will no doubt also have the blessings of the Russian Orthodox Church backed up by the Russian State. In power politics popular religious leaders have their parts to play.

Meantime, in Britain, a super patriot, Major-General Sir Edward Spears, is investigating the legal possibilities of applying to the Court

for a warrant to arrest Archbishop Makarios when he arrives for complicity in the murder of British soldiers. This quixotic gesture is unlikely to go much further. Even if the Government and the Archbishop of Canterbury would like to see Makarios locked up they could not possibly risk censure by other countries, or the outrage which would be expressed by the Cypriot people, by allowing him to be arrested when he steps ashore.

All political leaders who take sides in wars are guilty of instigating or supporting violence, but we are not impressed by the charges of murder made against Makarios by Major-General Spears who, after all, as a British patriot, is only concerned with the lives of 'British boys' lost while attempting to dominate by force the people of Cyprus whose violent reactions are understandable enough.

From our point of view the Cypriots will be no better off under Greek-Cypriot rulers than they are under British domination. However, they have demonstrated that they wish to be ruled by men of their own choosing. They have been frustrated by a foreign army under the orders of a foreign Government, and this is the reason why many Cypriots are giving their support to EOKA even if they do not all approve of the methods they adopt.

## Pflimlin Phades Out but the Real Crisis Remains

# Democracy on Trial

THE heading of last Sunday's *Le Journal du Dimanche Soir*—a journalistic and typographic monstrosity worse than the worst examples of our popular press—is sandwiched between two banner headlines. The one above reads: "Football: Nancy, Rennes and Limoges in the 1st Division". The one below: "Corsica: Ajaccio, Corte and Calvi in the hands of the Committees of Public Safety". In a rather twisted way the headlines sum up the apparent public indifference to actions which only the night before the prime minister, M. Pflimlin had described, in a nationwide broadcast, as on a "slope which leads to civil war". These grave warnings however were not allowed to interfere with the Whitsun holidays, and not even the theatrical *coup* in Corsica deflected Parisians from their ritual exodus to the *banlieue*, the riverside and the seaside. And the armada of small craft that could be detected bobbing up and down all along the coast were filled not with Gaulle-Bonaparte irregulars from Ajaccio or Algiers

but Mr. & Mrs. Frenchman out on the spree\* Civil wars are made of sterner stuff!

★

AS we pointed out last week the Algerian *coup* will remain a flash in the pan so long as the generals are unable to establish a bridgehead in metropolitan France. This they have signally failed to do so far. The Corsican revolt, directed from Algiers appears as a desperate act of defiance, a move in the war of political nerves rather than a new threat to the "security" of the Republic.

The French government so far

\*Indeed, according to the *Journal du Dimanche* the General himself spent his Sunday morning attending a children's communion in his village of Colombey-les-deux-Eglises. With his wife and (captain) son he occupied his pew in the sanctuary which we are told "echoed the sound of the bells, the chords on the harmonium and the fragile voices of the communicants singing a hymn". If only the song of the birds could have been heard too, the scene would have been idyllic *n'est-ce pas?*

has, in the words of its critics, been "falling backwards" to placate the Army. Whilst it is understandable that it should, since a government without an army has lost its obvious authority, yet to go on placating the army leaders when they not only do not reciprocate but are in open revolt, must end in a clash with all the initiative in the hands of the insurgents.

In this respect there is a parallel between the events of the past weeks, and the situation in Spain between February and July 1936. The Popular Front government not only took no steps when it came to office to remove those military leaders whose loyalty was suspect, but persisted in its attempts to reach a compromise with them even when they were in open revolt in Morocco and in every important city in the Spanish peninsula. It was, in fact, the people in arms independently of the will of the government which defeated Franco's *coup* in two thirds of the country in the first week of the uprising.

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# REPORT ON THE CO-OPS - 3

(Continued from previous issue)

ON any view the *Co-operative Independent Commission Report* is a landmark in the history of the movement. The decision to set up an independent body—somewhat daring when one considers the movement's traditional suspicion of 'outsiders'—has paid off. Never before has the movement been subjected to such critical scrutiny or its defects so scrupulously exposed to friend and foe alike. The report is couched in language an intelligent layman can understand but at the same time the argument is conducted on a recognisably academic (in the best sense) level. For these virtues of the report, co-operators may well thank those electors who turned out Mr. Anthony Crosland in the 1955 election and thus made him available for the job of secretary to the Commission. If any person's name deserves to be attached to the report, it is that of Crosland: the report bears all the hall-marks of a first-class product of the Oxford P.P.E. School.

In all, the report makes 51 recommendations affecting the structure and trading policy of the movement. Many of these are of a minor or technical character but others are of major proportions. The initial reaction in the general Press that the report advocated 'sweeping' changes and, if implemented, would lead to a thorough 'shake-up' of the movement, were well justified.

As one might expect from the circumstances which led to the setting up of the Commission, the report is dominated by the spectre of the private 'multiples'. Since the war, particularly, leading co-operators have been scouting round for means of laying this apparition. To date, such efforts have been unrewarding. Out of numerous discussions and conferences has emerged a number of 'buying groups', com-

posed of societies in different areas, whose object has been to 'co-ordinate retail demand' so that the co-ops may enjoy the advantages of scale similar to those possessed by their rivals. But such groups have touched only the fringe of the problem and in some respects have even exacerbated it—for there is no guarantee that, when a number of societies have 'co-ordinated' their demand, they will go on to place large orders with co-op factories, many of which are to-day working far below capacity. The report recognises the failure of such *ad hoc* attempts to meet the problem and advocates a more radical solution.

Although marked weaknesses are to be found in the Co-ops' handling of the grocery trades, the main deficiency lies in its organisation for the sale of dry goods. The movement possesses too few specialist shops for furniture, clothing, footwear, etc., many societies are too small to run anything more than an odd drapery store alongside, or even combined with, the grocery shop, and even the largest societies cannot hope to provide the number of dry goods outlets comparable with those provided by many of the private multiples. The problem is a national one and requires, argues the report, a national solution. It proposes, therefore, that a new national federal society, organised jointly by the C.W.S. and the Co-op Union, should be set up. This Co-operative Retail Development Society would have the job of establishing throughout the country a chain of specialist co-op shops—footwear shops first, followed later by clothing and other dry goods shops. This proposal is not altogether novel. There already exists a subsidiary of the C.W.S.—National Co-operative Chemists—run on similar lines. But the report clearly envisages something more ambitious than has so far been achieved in the pharmacy trade, in which in any case the development has partly been due to especial legal requirements. It wants, in effect, to see a co-op footwear shop to match every shop run by Dolcis or Freeman, Hardy & Willis. The radical nature of the proposal to establish co-op multiples paralleling private multiples lies in its abrogation of what has hitherto been regarded as a basic principle of co-op organisation—that one society, and one society alone, should have the monopoly of co-op trade in any particular locality.

This proposal is in line with another recommendation in the report that the movement should concentrate for the next few decades on developments in the retail sphere. This implies a new attitude towards both wholesaling and production. The wholesaling function in distribution generally has declined markedly in recent years with the trend towards direct despatch from factory to shop. This trend is also noticeable in the Co-op Movement in which many of the larger societies find it more economical to by-pass the C.W.S.—a fact which partly accounts for a very evident tension

which exists between many local societies and their off-spring, the federal C.W.S., which they formally own and control. More important, however, is the implication for co-operative production.

In the 19th century, co-operative production was generally regarded as 'the better half' of co-operation on the ground that the application of co-operative principles to production involved a more radical change in social relations than was involved in co-operative distribution. But by 'co-operative production' was meant the organisation of production by the producers themselves on the basis of self-governing workshops. In the 20th century this form of organisation has made no progress at all in Britain and to-day the 40 or so Co-operative Co-partnerships account for only a tiny proportion of total co-operative production. The great bulk of co-operative production is now carried on by the 200 odd factories of the C.W.S. organised on the basis of 'consumer control'. This development involved the abandonment of the original co-operative principles but was made easier by its rationalisation in the Fabian theory of consumers' co-operation. In any event, the development did not involve abandoning the idea that co-operative production itself was of prime importance. The idea remained that co-operative distribution led on naturally to co-operative production and that the movement should seek, wherever possible, to produce all the goods it sold. The co-op store might for a long time have to retail privately-produced goods but the objective was still the Co-operative Commonwealth in which everything—at least all individual consumer goods—would be made and sold by co-operatives.

A number of Continental Co-op Movements—notably the Swedish—have long abandoned this policy. They avowedly reject the rhetoric of the Co-operative Commonwealth. They produce many of the staple goods they sell but they are quite

happy about retailing private manufacturers' goods so long as these do not involve exploitation of the consumer. The fact that a commodity is demanded by co-operators and that it could be produced economically provides no justification in their view for producing it under co-operative auspices. Production will be entered into only when to do so will clearly benefit the consumers e.g. when otherwise the market would be controlled by a private monopoly.

The Independent Commission has clearly been impressed by the record of the Swedish Movement which, although proportionately no larger in membership than the British Movement has captured over 15% of the Swedish retail trade and which, by its monopoly-busting and low dividend, active price policy clearly makes a formidable impact on the Swedish economy. The Commission has not recommended a slavish imitation of the Swedish model. It discounts the notion that there is much need at present in Britain to engage in co-operative production to break private monopolies. It suggests also that the Rochdale practice of co-ops selling at market prices, rather than the Swedish practice of aiming to be price leaders, is still a good one—provided that the market price adopted is that of the most efficient private trader in the locality. (This, in practice, would mean in many societies a significantly lower dividend on purchases than is at present paid.) But it advocates that Co-op factories should cut down the number of lines they produce and concentrate on improving the efficiency and expanding the output of remaining lines. The C.W.S. factories on the whole make a reasonable job of producing foodstuffs and household stores: their dry goods products, especially fashion clothing, are notoriously less praiseworthy. The Commission in effect recommends that co-operative production should stick to the lines it does best and leave the rest to private producers. In this way the co-ops would make the most efficient use of their resources and would probably be able to step up their production of basic

foodstuffs, so that total co-op production would increase rather than decrease. As a rider to this new policy, the Commission recommends that decisions on investments for production should be based on expected return to capital, rather than on say the demand of co-op members—a criterion which has in the past been used to justify making a heterogeneous collection of products of varying degrees of profitability or, in some cases, rank unprofitability.

Both the recommendations about a chain of co-op multiples and production policy are not likely to meet fierce opposition in the Movement. In these respects, as in a number of others, the Commission has looked at the Co-ops from the point of view that might well commend itself to an Isaac Wolfson. It has pointed at what the most efficient capitalist traders are doing and said, in effect: "Go, thou, and do likewise!" The advice may implicitly entail the abandonment of a number of long cherished Co-operative visions—or illusions—but that is likely to cause no more than a few raised eyebrows on the part of most present-day Co-op leaders. At this day and age, it requires a very strong pair of rosetinted spectacles for anyone to see the British Co-op movement as anything other than a vast, if peculiarly organised, trading movement. For over a generation now, talk of the Co-operative Commonwealth has been sheer rhetoric, an image to adorn harangues at co-op *conversations*, not a guide to action. If the price of abandoning it is a little more pep in the organisation, who is brave enough to say that it is not worth paying? Surely, it may and no doubt will be argued, the Commission is only asking the co-ops to face realities...

The same attitude, however, is not likely to be evoked by some other of the report's recommendations—notably those concerning managerial policy and amalgamation. For, as I hope to make clear in my next article, these touch not only ideology but very real vested interests.

GASTON GERARD.

(To be continued)

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## A Letter from New York

"I thought you might like to know how I came to be killed . . ."

I THOUGHT you might like to know how I came to be killed. It happened this morning. I had the day free. My only port of call was the employment bureau, though to appear less lazy I have taken to allowing Mary the impression that I have an extensive round of interviews to make each morning.

I left the house without the least idea that we were in for an air raid. When you have the number of items that we have being paid off each month and a nice apartment to enjoy them in you don't feel too good if you get outside in the morning and just walk somewhere. A ride in the subway makes the gall less bitter. It is fifteen cents well spent on your outlook for the whole day. And if you pass up a coffee later in the day you know damn well there isn't a place now that is not using one of those cheap, bitter brands.

Once in the subway the question is where the hell to get out. You see I'm one of those lazy bastards they talk about that really doesn't want to work. Although I was sore when they closed down the plant where I was making an easy 90 a week, the air outside smelled very sweet and in practically no time I was thinking why should I go back to the same place somewhere else? There's 45 a week guaranteed, they'll never take that away from you. All they can take is the television, the washing machine, the Toast-o-mat and that gadget where you put the vegetables in and a sort of excretory juice comes out. And I forgot the Chevy. Well the Chevy we don't drive much anyway, that'll probably be the first thing they'll want back. We have a number of other items of course. And with the general situation in the country I feel there's a long way to go before they start cutting the unemployment. I mean the unemployment money.

The place I got out at happened to be Queen's Plaza. It's really a hell of a

place. Mary's word for it is commercial. I walked along under the elevated. Not a dog or a cat in sight. Just a million cars and taxi drivers doing 60 with not a passenger inside. The left-over rain dripped through the holes above. Then it started raining again, so I ducked into one of the department stores.

That's something I really get a kick out of, watching people buy things. That store must be making millions the way everything is a Special or a Super-special. Fabulous sale of this and a gigantic clearance of that. Or someone else's close-out they've bought up the entire stock from. I saw a million Marys picking at the store like sharks at a skeleton in one of those monster movies.

Then the music went off the public address system. A man from upstairs announced, "Ladies and Gentlemen, in ten minutes when you hear the sirens sound please remember that instructions are to remain where you are. Every member of the public is to be in a shelter area. The store will maintain normal service for your convenience during the fifteen minutes except that until the all-clear is sounded the elevators will be out of operation. Thank you."

I took the elevator down and ducked out into the street. Sure enough at 10.30 off went the sirens. Everyone outside knew exactly which store to duck in to. There were line-ups to take them through the revolving doors which were revolving at full speed. Before these passers-by began to dodge inside, the centre of interest was the roadway. Just like one of those old French movies where they thought it was cute to show the life of a city suddenly ceasing to move.

All the cars which moments before had been racing along the Plaza came to a halt. I won't say with screeching brakes but fast enough to make you think the matter was serious. The first

thing was to find a spot to park. Habit I suppose. A red car braked, wandered past the occupied meters and disconsolately trailed off round the corner only to back up away from a policeman's whistle. This caused the drivers in the lane behind to wish to honk him out of the way, until the cop showed up and yelled something. This meant one whole lane of double-parking which is an offence under the traffic regulations. Several doors opened and slammed shut. I couldn't decide whether the drivers of these cars were hurrying off to the shelter area or they just plain didn't want to be present when the cop gave them a ticket.

Actually in an air raid the cops do not give out tickets because by directive from the traffic department the parking rules are suspended.

Of the drivers who remained in their cars there may have been some who did so in order to protest that they were not at fault. Others believed that the law required them to remain in their autos until the all-clear.

Exactly what the legal requirement was—stay in or get out—I did not determine, because at approximately zero hour plus 30 seconds a second cop appeared on our side of the road and began ordering us pedestrians to shelter. I was damned if I wanted to go back through the revolving doors I had a minute before escaped from but there it seemed I was destined to go. The furthest of my neighbours found themselves stuffed into the A & P; next there was a small shop where they sold bras or something; now my group were being turned in to the shelter selected for them by providence, i.e. wherever they happened to be standing.

Spurred to quick action I crossed the street. The first cop joined me as I landed on the other side. "Where do

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## Democracy on Trial

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But just as in 1936 the Popular Front government could not think in terms of resisting an army *putsch* by mobilising public opinion and the forces of organised labour, so to-day the Pflimlin government, in spite of the fact that it exists only because all the parties from the Centre to the Communists have given it their vote, continues to think in terms of bringing the generals to heel by meeting them halfway instead of denouncing them and inviting the people to organise themselves in readiness for any *coup* that might follow a clean-up of the military cadres.

The Algerian crisis is after all only used as an excuse for the *putsch*. It has existed as an open sore for more than three years. One government after another has sought to solve the problem in military terms, and in favour of the million<sup>+</sup> European settlers and without regard for the aspirations of most of the eight million Muslims. So much so that to-day there is an army of nearly half-a-million men in Algeria which in spite of General Massu's military genius and his torture squads, has not succeeded in breaking the Muslim resistance. Recent "unity" demonstrations in Algiers which have been described by some French politicians as a "miracle" are as phoney as the fact that the French government has made the necessary arrangements to lift the maritime and air blockade (and ships are at this very moment arriving from France to ports in Algeria with reinforcements and supplies to permit the Army to continue its war against the *fellaghas*), is a reality!

As the *Observer* put it in its impressive editorial last Sunday<sup>†</sup>:

The Muslims who have joined them [the French settlers] in these demonstrations are lured by the promise of complete equality within France. Yet no one knows better than General de Gaulle that these two demands are inconsistent. The "miracle" of Algiers, which has carried away some Muslims, is understandable in terms of what is being promised—the full integration of Algeria in France with equal rights for Muslim citizens—but the promise itself is fraudulent. If Britain shrinks from the cost of "integrating" Malta, how could France absorb Algeria?

To our minds any threat to democracy in France comes not from mutinous generals in Algeria and ambitious politicians in Corsica who could all be left to stew in their own juice. (All the Paris government need do to hasten the process is to demobilise the army in Algeria and send a fleet of merchant ships to Algeria to transport the conscripts back to France and their families. One would then see how much popular authority Massu and his henchmen enjoyed in Algeria!). The real threat comes from the Bill outlining proposed constitutional reforms which the government submitted to the Assembly on Tuesday.

The preamble, published last week, asserts that the Bill is intended to put an end to "government by Assembly", for the major changes would (1) Shorten Parliamentary sessions so that for half the year the Assembly would be in recess. (2)

<sup>†</sup>CORRECTION: In last week's article on Algeria due to a printer's error we referred to the "millions of *colons*". Actually they number 1,200,000.

<sup>‡</sup>One suspects that the *Observer's* outspoken anti-Gaullism is influenced more by considerations of the effect of a de Gaulle régime on Western strategy (NATO) and common markets, than on its repercussions in terms of civil liberties, etc. . . . in France. However, in spite of this its arguments are impressive!

Delegate to the Government the right to make and change laws subject to *post facto* Parliamentary approval. (3) Make the Prime Minister irremovable except by a vote of censure which contains the name of his successor.

SINCE these lines are written before the debate, we must defer our comments on French reactions and our opinion of their significance. But even without them, the proposed changes are to our minds of great significance, for are they not in fact an admission that there is no practical way of equating *government* and *democracy*? Democracy which is defined as "government by the people, direct or representative", at its highest, means the direct participation of the people in the organisation of the community (which is anarchy in our sense of the word); at its lowest it means an Assembly or Parliament in which the members are empowered to speak and act on their constituents behalf, subject to their control. Theoretically the French Assembly contains the seed of Democracy which for instance the English Parliament does not. The fact of there having been some twenty governments in France in the past twelve years far from making true democrats despair, should be a source of satisfaction. That it is not, that at the present time it encourages some of the popular support for the return of de Gaulle is as much a reflection on the weakness of real democracy as a philosophy and a way of life, at least for thinking people, as on the undeniable fact that the French Assembly in spite of its power to make or break governments is the mouth-piece not of the people but of Industrial Trusts, financial interests and, in the case of the Communists, of another country's political ambitions.

The real crisis of France—and not only of France but of our civilisation—is a crisis of the individual. The potentialities of science gave meaning and reality to the utopian dreams of the socialist pioneers of the 19th century. To-day mankind has realised the scientific potentialities but lost its dreams. Science, the road to Utopia for our spiritual grandfathers, has become, in the hands of politicians, the weapon for the enslavement of the individual. Science which has made possible mass production, health and leisure, has also been used to plague mankind with mass communications and Mass Man.

Perhaps we are incorrigible optimists when we believe that human beings will survive and emerge from this process of dehumanisation. But then without this optimism we should cease to believe in mankind . . . and in ourselves!

## TRADE UNION NOTEBOOK

THE first day of the conference of the Union of Post Office Workers (May 12) saw the national executive gain a formal victory over a group in Central London who have been taking direct action in protest against the nationally concluded agreement on wages and working conditions. Apart from causing postal delays which had angered business men, the work to rule movement had little effective power and was not well publicised, and now that it has been condemned by the Union, which reaffirmed its position that the Executive Council holds the exclusive right to "initiate matters involving industrial action", it does not seem likely that anything will have been gained by the workers concerned. Nor were the employers put out, or forced into a position of opposition, for they had no need to condemn the action, the Union leaders did it for them. The U.P.O.W. is regarded as one of the "left wing" unions.

The lack of success of the movement in Central London may be seized on by many socialists as proving the futility of direct action, but what it shows is that direct action cannot work, if the group is embedded in a larger mass who, in general, look on it as something to be avoided at all costs.

THE NATIONAL Union of Agricultural Workers (May 14th) saw a debate on the problem of wages structure. Unfortunately, the executive motion was carried setting out that the executive should present their plans for such a structure to the Central Wages Board as soon as possible. A counter-resolution asking that the question should be submitted to a ballot of the membership was rejected by 86 votes to 67. (As an incidental point of democratic procedure, why should anyone be in a position to refuse a ballot of the membership on such a question, when 44% of the conference delegates want one to be held). The body of opinion who opposed this resolution did so because of the dangers inherent in the differential wage. Mr. W. H. Clough of Cheshire referred to the dangers of dividing the workers into two

classes which the farmer could play off against each other. This point could have been illuminated by reference to the current dispute of the London busmen, which was discussed by the delegates the following day. Miss Joan Maynard, Thirsk, alleged that the resolution had been "gerry-mandered" on the conference from the top. (A similar one had been rejected by the conference two years ago against the advice of the executive. She said that it might benefit some but not all, and their job was to fight for all. A wages structure was the reverse of equality. Mr. J. J. Waterman, Dorset, thought the executive (?) would not be helped by a wages structure—better to take the opportunity of improving their organisation, for, in a society where justice played no large part, what mattered was how powerful you were.

No doubt the executive would like to be powerful, but experience has shown that the more powerful the executive, the less powerful are workers in the union, and that they wield their power with very different objects. A differential wage structure, with a minimum rate, plus allowances for special skills, would perhaps put the farm workers in a position equivalent to that of workers in other occupations, with the "privilege" of cost of living revisions, statutory recognition of skilled work and so on, but is that what the farm workers want? Are there any who have a vision of controlling the agricultural work to which they devote their working lives, and, since they roundly condemn the government's policy, of making sure that food production was organised to meet the needs of people, and not to make profits and affect foreign policy?

THE PRESIDENT of the A.S.L.E.F., at its annual assembly at Folkestone (May 13) said that the union would "never adopt the view that the workers employed in a nationalised undertaking should be expected to subsidise the rest of the community by foregoing reasonable and proper standards of living". Thirteen years after the nationalisation of the railways, one of the main plans in the

policy of the Labour movement and the trade unions, which was to bring socialism to England, and happiness and prosperity to the workers of those industries fortunate enough to be brought under the wings of the beneficent state, the union president finds himself protesting that they are being used by the state to subsidise the economic policies of the government. Any more for nationalisation?

THE ELECTRICAL Trades Union, which with its guerilla strike tactics some four years ago seems to know more about industrial action than most of its contemporaries discussed it in three contexts at the Morecombe conference (May 19th—24). A motion was accepted, expressing the usual concern about the cost of living, and promising strike action to maintain standards (presumably by demanding compensatory wage increases?). The executive, after supporting these, discouraged the militants who urged that the power supplied to the tube should be cut off, as a gesture of solidarity with the bus workers. Undoubtedly it would be a mistake to take this action without consulting the bus men, but does this mean, as Mr. Haxell suggested, waiting until the Transport & General Workers' Union make an official request? The important thing is to find out whether the workers would welcome solidarity expressed in this way, and that should be possible without getting mixed up in Mr. Cousins' power politics. After all, he doesn't seem to be doing anything to obtain a successful outcome of the dispute.

Moving the motion calling for the mobilisation of Labour to compel the government to suspend nuclear tests, reject the installation of rocket bases, and demand the withdrawal of American troops and bases from Britain, the general secretary said that long-distance communications between Khrushchev and Eisenhower were not enough. Action was necessary. He explained that the union's recent agreement with French Electrical Trades Unionists on action against the installation of rocket bases was not propaganda. It was intended that members on both sides would attempt to convince building and civil engineering workers to join them in refusing to instal the bases. This is very heartening news. Perhaps the E.T.U. could extend its field of operation, and get in a little practice, by refusing to work in conventional armament installations as well. Since a resolution calling for nuclear disarmament in all countries was rejected it seems unlikely that the E.T.U. will seek to enlist its brother organisation in the Soviet Union in its anti-rocket activities.

SYNDICALIST.

## Famine in Brazil The Dry Whip

"We had nothing to eat but cactus, and after five days my mother said she could not go on," recalled Ernesto da Silva, 17, sitting in a rocky field in the drought-burned eastern state of Pernambuco. "She was a widow but not old. She lay down by the road and told me to go. A man gave me 40c. for a day's work. I bought food and hurried back to my mother, but when I got there she was dead."

Through rolling backlands in the five states that form Brazil's eastern bulge, crops of beans, corn and sugar cane were dead; 2,000,000 people gnawed cactus, dug holes in dry river beds for water or joined a dogged, starving march to the sea. The *flagelo da seca*, the dry whip that lashes the bulge country on the

average of once a decade, was in its third month of fury. Some 370,000 *flagelados* (whipped ones) supported themselves and their families on relief wages of 30c. a day—half the food allowance of a Brazilian army horse.

BUSY GRAVEDIGGER. As the refugees fled to greener lands, they buried their dead along the way, piling stones to keep off animals and topping the graves with crude wooden crosses. "We are working hard," said a gravedigger in the parched town of Juazeiro do Norte, where funerals can be bought for 4c. "We have twelve children to bury every day. It used to be one or two." Health officials estimated that in the worst drought areas half of all children under a year old would die.

President Juscelino Kubitschek has shipped in 7,000 tons of food and 10,000 tons more is *en route*. But corruption is commonplace among the local relief agencies that give out the supplies. In one town political bosses pocketed a flat 25% from each man's 30c. In other areas the government farmed out relief projects to private contractors who paid off *flagelados* in unwanted goods, e.g., hair oil, then bought it back at half price.

SCANDAL IN RIO. The scandal reached all the way back to Rio. Politically ambitious Finance Minister José Maria Alkimim announced a special government advance of \$6,000 to afflicted towns—and gave that amount to every municipality in his own green state of Minas Gerais. In Rio Grande do Norte, Carlos Cabras, who has been in charge of building a long-range irrigation project for the past two years, confessed that \$1,000,000 had been looted and said part of it had gone for payoffs to a Senator and two Deputies in Kubitschek's own party.

Though he apparently cannot stop corruption, Kubitschek has made his relief effort an all-out try. The government has appropriated \$15 million and plans to add another \$30 million, or a total of 5% of the budget. This will keep most of the *flagelados* alive until December. If the drought follows its historic pattern, the first crops will then begin to bloom; the refugees will trek back and enjoy a few fat years until the hot, dry wind starts up again.

Time, 26/5/58.

## New York Letter

Continued from p. 2

you think you're going Jim?" he asked. "Didn't you hear the warning?" "Sure I heard it," I said.

"Well git," he ordered.

Just for the hell of it I thought I'd play him up. "Sure I'll git, I'm gitting the hell out."

He grabbed my arm. "Mac you get into a shelter area or I'll book you for a violation."

I thought of allowing him to take me down to the Precinct and charge me for whatever it is you're violating in an air raid. What the hell, was it worth it? After all I was unemployed, it would cost me all of a week's hand-out.

Then he let go of my arm and gave me the old line. "Look Jim the bomb goes off at 10.35. That's just 90 seconds from now. Now will you please get off the street. Don't make my job tough."

I followed his finger into Stanley's Variety Mart. Christ you'd think the world had gone crazy. A forest of arms in sleeves of every colour jabbing at the cash registers from every angle. The cash bells sounding off like a telephone exchange. Everyone saying Miss, Miss, Miss, and the sales girls pumping the cash registers to get the change out quickly enough. Bumping, pushing, struggling from counter to counter, you couldn't get through them.

"Well for Christ sake I call that smart," I heard the cop behind me again. I looked up at the banner unfurled from wall to wall.

STANLEY'S GIGANTIC AIR-RAID SPECIAL.  
HALF-PRICE SLASH TO-DAY  
10.30—10.45.

And that's how I came to be among the 489,000 deaths they reported, or it might be the 2 million casualties.

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## More Like Neighbours than Friends

# Nixon's Goodwill Mission Fiasco

THE Vice-President of the United States, Mr. Richard Nixon, and his wife will long remember their good-will visit to South America in the Spring of 1958.

If good-will there was, it appeared to be all on his side, for he got just about the roughest welcome any American diplomat has ever got anywhere—even including General Ridgeway's reception in Paris at the height of the cold war.

In every country of his eight-nation tour he had been met by demonstrations and in Venezuela the hubbub started as soon as Nixon's plane touched down at Maiquetia Airport, where, as they walked between troops towards their limousines, he and his wife were spat upon and howled at by the angry mob. Before reaching Caracas, where he was to lay a wreath on the tomb of Simon Bolivar, his car had been nearly overturned and all its windows were smashed by stones.

The road to Bolivar's tomb was barred by a crowd of rioters 3,000 strong and Nixon's chauffeur ducked down a side street to get him to the shelter of the US embassy residence.

Wiping the spittle and splinters of glass off their faces and clothes, the Nixons stayed out of sight until next day when a bullet-proof limousine with a guard of six truckloads of armed troops got them back to the airport and away.

### Long-felt Resentment

They are probably still wondering what hit them, but the reasons behind the dreadful welcome are not simply the activities of the Communists, although they certainly played their part.

Throughout South America there is resentment, fear and envy of the powerful and rich United States. In Ecuador US-educated ex-President Galo Plaza told Nixon: 'You can-

not be a basic power and be loved', but it isn't only that smaller nations tend to hate and fear large ones, it is that the US treats South America as a poor relation and does little to help, from its colossal wealth, the abject poverty of its southern neighbours although at the same time it expects good-neighbourly policies towards itself.

In Caracas there was special resentment, for there the people remember ten years of ruthless dictatorship under Marcos Pérez Jiménez who was all along supported by the US. In South American eyes the United States is seen as the supporter of reactionary régimes and vested interest. And that's hardly likely to be popular in countries where half the population get no schooling, and a far larger proportion scrape a very meagre living from the soil.

Even in its distribution of foreign aid and loans, the US seems to discriminate against South America. *Time* magazine gives the following data:

Of total U.S. aid and loans, Europe

received \$18.8 billion, Asia \$4.3 billion, Latin America \$2.9 billion. Of the \$3.6 billion voted by the House last week, Latin America got \$100 million. In 1957 straight loans to Latin America by the Export-Import Bank, chief U.S. lending agency to the area, were only a little more than half the 1953 figure.

For the last few years the U.S. has replied to appeals mainly by urging the virtues of the free-market economy. From the Latin American view this amounts to hypocrisy; the U.S. maintains artificial levels for its own farm commodities by price supports at home and dumping surpluses abroad. And free-market fluctuations can nearly wreck such one-product economies as that of Chile (copper), Peru (lead and zinc), Brazil and Colombia (coffee). Moreover, the prices of the manufactures Latin America buys from the U.S. stay high.

Not that the South Americans are necessarily consistent in their attitudes. The fact is that they need help but resent like hell having to ask for it—and resent it even more when they don't get it.

That resentment was poured on to the heads of Mr. & Mrs. Nixon, who personified US superiority and tight-fisted charity. Perhaps their reception will open US eyes?

## The 'Ordinary People'

THE cult of the "decent ordinary man", some of whose aspects were so well analysed by P.H. (FREEDOM 17/5/58), is a product of bourgeois democratic society in a state of transition into a more managerial one. It would have had little meaning in earlier societies, even in early bourgeois society, with its cult of "rugged individualism", for though in the old days it was not uncommon to sentimentalise the "poor" or the peasantry, it was not suggested that all men should aspire to be "ordinary", even if all men were equal in the sight of God.

The ideal "ordinary" person is a revolting creature, devoid of spirit, originality or sense of independence. Of course one has to realise that this ideal, which is fostered by the newspapers, films, books and T.V. shows, bears as much relationship to reality as does the average detective novel. In other words, it has a certain resemblance to reality, but it is a pretty long way from it. Luckily.

No doubt there is a tendency for people to think of themselves as just "decent ordinary people" nowadays, but of course no one wholly conforms to this ideal, nor is it an ideal which is striven after by everybody. Practically everyone has some bizarre element in his character, some eccentricity, which, if it were known, would disqualify him forever from the title of "ordinary".

## Reduce the Deficit

### PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!

WEEK 21.

Deficit on Freedom	£420
Contributions received	£305
DEFICIT	£115

May 16 to May 22

Dublin: Anon. £3/0/0; London: J.A. 2/-; London: J.S.* 3/-; London P.F.* £1/0/0; Los Angeles: J.E. £5/5/0; London: D.S. 2/6; New York: I.R. £2/9/0; Liverpool: C.D. 1/0; Vale: B.S. £1/0/0; London M.J.R. £2/5/6; Castle Douglas: J. & M.A. 11/-; Macclesfield: H.W. 1/-.	
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... and increase the readership of FREEDOM please!

Much "ordinariness" is really only a veneer.

The ideal of "ordinariness" is fostered in the same way that the ideal of each man doing his duty in his "proper station" in society was fostered in the feudal age. It is fostered for the same purpose, to keep people in a state of submissiveness and acceptance. It is perfectly true, as P.H. makes clear, that a certain amount of rebelliousness is allowed the "ordinary" man. So long as the rebelliousness remains on a superficial level it is an important outlet. At the present time the "angry young men" are in rebellion against what? This sort of thing does not threaten the essential basis of society.

The majority of human beings are not admirable, not by their own fault, or not principally, but because they have never had a chance to develop properly. Progressive or libertarian writers have a tendency to write about "us" "we", "you and I", as if they were no different from the common run of humanity whom they are actually engaged in criticising. This is pushing the revolt against aristocratic privilege a shade too far. The truth is that a man who has reached an anti-authoritarian position is superior to those who have not, by sheer virtue of the fact that he has reached that position. Those who have not been able to reach a libertarian outlook on life may not be to blame. Circumstances were too much for them. Those who have achieved it may well have been lucky. Nevertheless the anti-authoritarian is about the "ordinary" person. (I am assuming that his libertarianism is sincere and goes "right through" his character. That he really feels libertarian, not just thinks it intellectually, or is engaged in suppressing authoritarian feelings of which he is ashamed). If there is to be a free society, he is the pioneer of it. He has a right to feel proud of himself.

The "ordinary" man is expected to:

1. Accept society as it is, without any desire to change social institutions, but to accept a belief in technical "progress" is obligatory, on the other hand;
2. Obey the law and the authorities appointed to enforce it, however cruel the law may be or however arbitrary the acts of its enforcers;
3. Be ferocious and mild, turn and turn about, like water being switched on and off in a tap. In war a lion, in peace a lamb. It is obligatory to be gentle and submissive to one's boss and to all who, from their superior positions in the social hierarchy, are in a position to vex, harass, hinder and annoy, but it is also obligatory to be ferocious against abstract enemies who have not done one any personal harm. The criminal and the national enemy are scapegoats for bottled-up personal hatreds. Against them almost any amount of hatred and aggression is permitted;
4. Rebel when young, but only against superficial abuses, against excessive puritanism, excessive authoritarianism and so forth, never against the thing itself. An elderly rebel however is altogether

## Unconscious Ladies

WE have never attended a Conference of lady Conservatives and feel that it is an experience we can well do without. Unfortunately, these middle-class ladies, in spite of us, continue to have their yearly get-together where matters of extreme social importance are discussed from the point of view of a highly prejudiced section of the community. There is no great harm in discussing, but when recommendations are made to change the law for the worse the babblings of these women become a little more serious.

A lady from Sussex, answering to the name of Mrs. R. A. A. Frith, was applauded by her Conservative sisters when she demanded the return of the death penalty for sexual murder and the "cat" for sexual offences. (One can imagine the horrified blushes from this well-brought-up lady if her unconscious motives for desiring to see the "cat" in use were suggested to her). Referring to the recent cases of sexual assault, Mrs. Frith said that these attacks could only be cured by the penalties being made so severe that those who committed them would be deterred by the threat of subsequent punishment. We will give the lady the benefits of the doubt and assume that she has not read the impressive amount of evidence in this country, and from other countries, which tends to show that there is no connection between crimes of this nature (either murder or assault) and the subsequent threat of punishment. The reason being, as rational people can understand, that however horrible sexual murders (or any other type of murder) may be they are committed by people who cannot be described as being "in their right mind". They are, in other words, pathetic characters who are in need of mental care.

Miss Pat Hornsby-Smith, Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Home Office, played her political cards well. She did not oppose the motion but tried to straighten the ladies out on their facts. Six to eight children, she told the Conference, were murdered yearly by people other than their parents, but 700 were killed on the roads. We wonder why these ladies so concerned with the lives of children do not table a motion pleading with the Government to "do something"

unacceptable, unless he can make himself a popular writer. An elderly person is expected to accept things as they are with a humorous shrug;

5. To have no, or very little, love of beauty, beyond a vague sentimental emotion. To regard all displays of feeling as "weak". To enjoy what are hideously called "beauty spots", but to display one's "ordinariness" by leaving tin cans and bits of paper behind, to show that fundamentally one is not impressed. . . .

6. To submit to authority in fear and guilty trembling, but never to allow oneself any sense of awe. After all, this is the age of the "common man". Is he not the master? Then destroy the works of earlier generations! Be not overawed by anything, neither the works of man or of nature! If one cannot equal these works one can destroy them. Bang off a few bombs!

If the above conditions are fulfilled one can consider oneself as one of the "decent ordinary common people".

Since the "ordinary" man is vicious and servile it is no consolation to be told that he is the one who controls the H-Bombs.

A book has recently been published showing Napoleon as he was seen by his contemporaries. He emerges as a vulgar bully. No doubt he was. He was the ideal of countless "little" men. An incarnation of all they really felt. Which explains why they followed him.

Hitler is generally described as "mad". Possibly towards the end of his career he was. During his more successful years however he too was the "little man" incarnate. Real lunatics are rarely dangerous. The madman, the eccentric, the "odd" person is usually harmless unless persecuted. In present society it is the face of sanity that is terrifying.

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

about road or traffic conditions, or lack of proper playgrounds, which might help to decrease the numbers of children killed.

Pat Hornsby-Smith added:

"Let us consider the cases of child murder. It is not true that there has been an considerable and continuing increase in murders since the Homicide Act of 1957. It shows how well you have been misled by propaganda, because the figures are there. There was a small increase in the three months April, May, and June, 1957, but thereafter the figures fell and the average since is no higher than before the Homicide Act."

If these females were really anxious to prevent murders and sexual offences would they not be prepared to investigate the causes, and study the evidence which we pointed to, rather than concentrate on a sadistic policy of punishment?

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

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

### LECTURE - DISCUSSIONS

JUNE 1.—Alan Albon on THE PLACE OF AGRICULTURE IN HUMAN SOCIETY

JUNE 8.—Tom Curran on JAZZ AND ANARCHISM

JUNE 15.—Philip Holgate on WHAT CAN ANARCHISTS DO?

JUNE 20.—Donovan Pedely on Subject to be announced

JUNE 29.—Tony Gibson on PARANOIA AS A SOCIAL FORCE

Questions, Discussion and Admission all free.

### HAMPSTEAD LIBERTARIAN GROUP

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