

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"The basis of all political action is coercion; even when the State does good things, it finally rests on a club, a gun or a prison, for its power to carry them through."
—VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE

Vol. 20, No. 52

December 26th, 1959

Threepence

T.U.C.'s APARTHEID COMPROMISE

ONE of the most despicable bits of doublethink to come even from the Trades Union Congress for a long time is likely to provide the outcome of the attempt to introduce an industrial boycott of South African goods in this country to back up the consumers' boycott already being supported by many individuals and some organisations.

The matter—the proposal to the TC that all British trades unionists should boycott S. African goods in transit to this country—is to be debated by the international committee of the TUC this week, but already trade union leaders have shown themselves to be, well, lukewarm, to say the least.

According to the *News Chronicle's* industrial correspondent, the dockers fear they would have to bear the main brunt of any industrial boycott of South African goods.

For this reason Mr. Frank Cousins and the other Transport Union leaders are likely to oppose such a boycott if it is called for as a protest against apartheid.

An industrial boycott would mean that seamen would refuse to man ships carrying South African goods and dockers would have to declare South African produce black and refuse to unload it.

The international committee is likely to oppose industrial action to enforce a boycott but to favour advising trade unionists not to buy South African goods in the shops.

Earlier this month the international conference of free trade unions decided at Brussels to support a massive consumers' boycott and to consider "the practicability of reinforcing it by an industrial boycott."

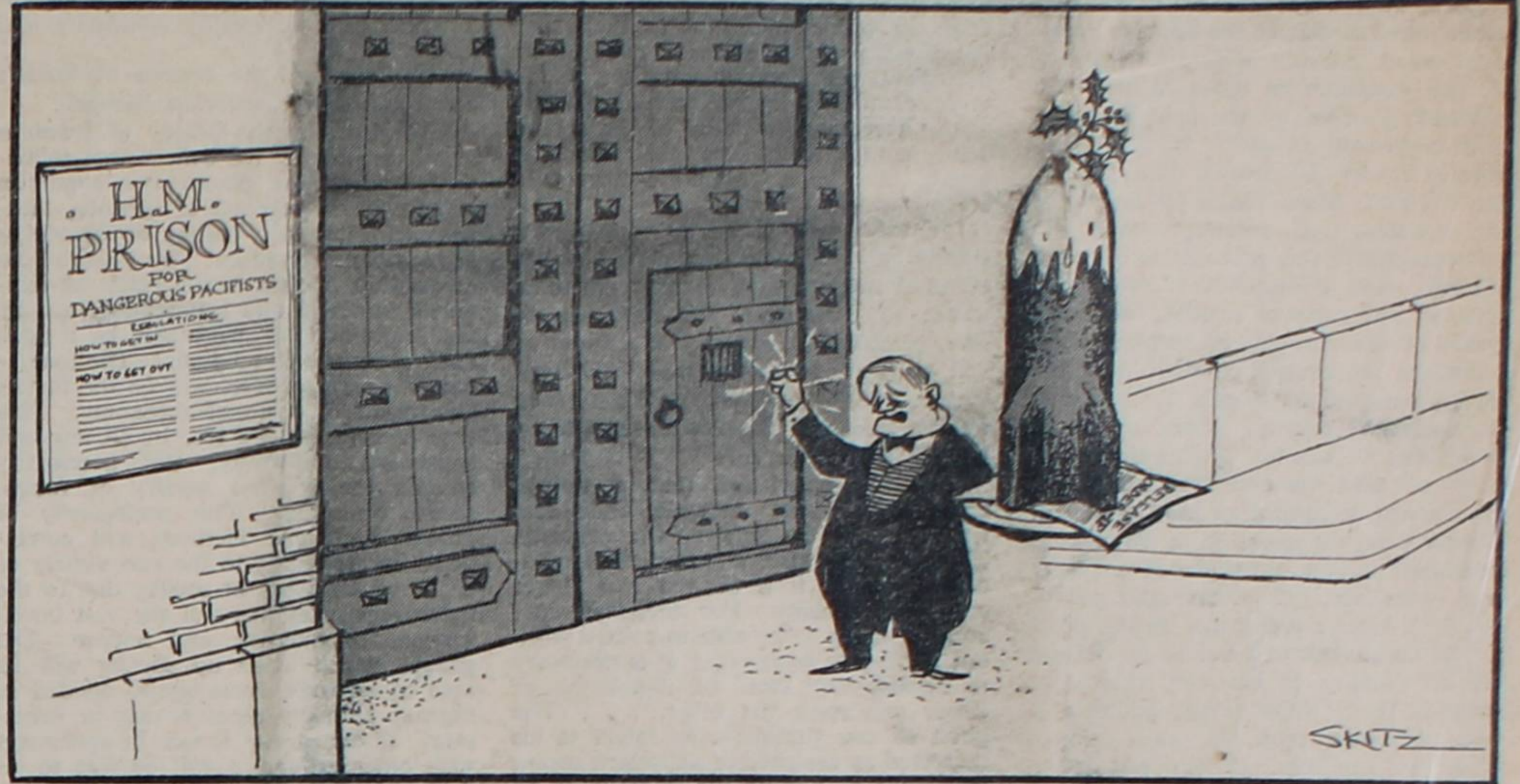
Despite their hatred of the apartheid policy many TUC leaders have private doubts about the wisdom of the whole move. They were lukewarm in their attitude at Brussels and pointed out the practical difficulties in taking effective action.

The recent threat of retaliation by

the South African Government, which might lead to the loss of a valuable market for British exports, will add to their concern.

The slimy attitude of the TU leaders, then, would amount to this: that they will do nothing that will lose any of their members a day's pay in the cause of combatting the Apartheid which they "detest". Instead, good trades unionists will work to get South African goods to the shops and then boycott them, after they have made money out of the transport of these products of slave labour. Could hypocrisy be more blatant? Could narrow self-interest be more damaging? Could internationalism be more corrupt?

Let us hope that the rank and file trade unionists will once again teach their leaders a lesson in the principles they are all supposed to uphold.



WE DON'T WANT YOUR CHRISTMAS PUDDING!

People & Ideas takes a

LAST LOOK ROUND AT THE 50's

TO look at history in terms of decades is usually misleading, and the epithets we apply to them are often partial. The gay nineties, the roaring twenties, the pink thirties, are not very complete or accurate adjectives for those days: only the hungry forties sums up the truth, whether in this century or the last. What are we going to say about the fifties?

Although there has been less actual warfare for a very long time, and although the word peace has been on everybody's lips, you could hardly call them the peaceful fifties. The last ten years began with the Korean War, and continued with warfare in Malaya, Indo-China and Algeria, Kenya and Cyprus, palace revolts in the Middle East, the Sinai and Suez invasions and the Chinese invasion of Tibet, the Hungarian revolution, and the usual punitive expeditions and police actions.

The most considerable movements against war and war preparation in this country have come right at the end of the decade, in the Aldermaston marches—a constitutional exercise for the troubled many, and the acts of obstruction at missile bases—symbolic acts of the determined few. To the imprisoned members of the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War, who will see the end of the year and the end of the decade in jail goes the honour of introducing to this country the techniques of civil disobedience which may develop to greater effect in the sixties.

The fifties which began in the period of post-war "austerity", and the fag-end of the Labour government, with rationing still in force, and Lord Woolton crusading for "More Red Meat", end with the third Conservative electoral victory in succession and the Prime Minister's observation that we've never had it so good. There years have seen the rehabilitation of the prestige of big business, and they end with a burst of mergers and take-overs. At the beginning of the period the emphasis in industry was on re-tooling for the competition in export markets. Today the interest of a firm is in its potentiality as the subject of financial speculation. From

"Britain Can Make It" to "Make Me An Offer" sums up the ten years. Present industrial prosperity is confined mainly to consumer goods, and of course, to the armaments programme which absorbs up to a tenth of the national product. The British share of the world market has steadily declined since 1950 and production has been stagnant since 1955. In the trade union world the prospects for a movement agitating for workers' control are slighter than they were ten years ago. "People's Capitalism" on the American model offers more attractions.

★

LOOKING for the keynote of the fifties, a number of observers noted the 'swing to the right', the 'decline of ideologies', the neo-conservatism and increasing conformism of the intelligentsia, the pre-occupation with trivialities—all the tedious social make-believe about 'U' and 'non-U', the cult of 'gracious living' and the fashionable concern over the subtler aspects of wining and dining. A few years ago Mr. Rayner Heppenstall described this "new-Elizabethan age in its Edwardian décor" as "the commercial traveller's paradise with its rather sexy royalist mystique".

Then just as we were getting used to the idea, with an occasional outburst by 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 underneath 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*, nagging his missus because he couldn't find a cause to fight for. For a mercifully brief period he gave place to the Outsider, who quickly died of anaemia.

Then in 1956 the real world broke through. Instead of the inward-

looking contemplation of social niceties, and instead of identifying itself with the archetypes of current literature, the generation of the fifties found itself faced with Suez and Hungary. Mr. John Bevan wrote 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 . . . 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."

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 *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 actually were in a position to frustrate the government's policy, the servicemen engaged in it and the

Continued on p. 3

.. and your last chance to wipe out the Deficit!

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!
WEEK 51

Deficit on Freedom £1,020
Contributions received £878
DEFICIT £142

December 11 to December 17

Monton: P.H. £1/3/0; Woldingham: F.B.* 5/-; Glasgow: M.W.K.* 5/-; London: Anon.* 10/-; Auckland: K.J.M. 11/4; London: D.O. £1/0/6; Dereham: J.B. 1/-; Slough: E.C.* 10/-; Peterborough: A.W. 7/-; St. Mawes: J.W. 11/6; Glasgow: D.F. 6d.; London: P.D. £1/1/0; Leicester: U.S.S. per C.T. £1/0/0; Wolverhampton: J.G.L.* 4/-; Gateshead: G.D. 4/6; London: B.L. 17/-; San Mateo: J.O. 14/-; Coleman's Hatch: O. & D.M.* 7/-; Rugby: P.W.C. 18/-; Westhoughton: E.M. 5/-.

Total ... 10 15 4
Previously acknowledged ... 867 15 10
1959 TOTAL TO DATE ... £878 11 2

GIFT OF BOOKS: London: P.C.

*Indicates regular contributor.

Manifesto

SPAIN'S POLITICAL PRISONERS

Through the efforts of a few anarchists in this country the following manifesto has been signed by over 60 people in protest against General Franco's treatment of political prisoners in Spain. The list of names was released to the press in the hope that it would coincide with General Eisenhower's visit to the Dictator in Madrid on Monday, 21st December. But at the time of writing signatures are still coming in which we have added to the list.

It is still our view that only the Force of a social revolution will once again change the Face of Spain and remove Franco from power, but we are gratified that the following have associated themselves with the struggle against tyranny and hope that the protest will have some

"In support of the group of Spanish intellectuals, led by Menendez Pidal, effect.

who have deplored the fact that thousands of their compatriots who could otherwise join them in their efforts to secure a better life for the Spanish people and for Spanish youth are still in jail or exile;

We insist that the Government of General Franco be obliged to honour the pledges which it gave on joining UNESCO; to abandon, according to the charter of this organisation, every measure contrary to the freedom of

thought and expression; to make prison conditions more humane; and to release from prison every person now detained on political charges."

Signed:—

A. J. Ayer; Isaiah Berlin; Beveridge; Phyllis Bottomo; Alan Bullock; Lewis Casson; L. Evelyn Cheesman; Richard Church; L. John Collins; Alex Comfort; C. Day Lewis; Ronald Duncan; H. J. Eysenck; W. Russell Flint; Max Gluckman; William Golding; Barbara Hepworth; Trevor Huddleston; R. S. Hutton; Augustus John; Pamela Hansford Johnson; Ben Levy; Compton Mackenzie; Wolf Mankowitz; W. R. Matthews; Nathaniel Micklin; Henry Moore; Eric Partridge; Arthur N. Prior; Ethel Mannin; John Piper; William Plomer; Herbert Read; Henry Reed; Russell; Sacheverell Sitwell; C. P. Snow; Stephen Spender; Graham Sutherland; Sybil Thorndyke; Philip Toynbee; John Wisdom; Herbert G. Wood; Hugh MacDiarmid; Eden Philpotts; D. W. Brogan; Ben Nicholson; Bishop Leslie, Sheffield; Laurie Lee; James Hanley; Olivia Manning; Norman Nicholson; Vernon Watkins; Ivy Compton-Burnett; Graham Greene; Richard M. Titmuss; Stevie Smith; J. Bronowski; Max Beloff; Charles Madge; John Wain; Kingsley Amis; F. L. Lucas; Norman Nicholson; Vernon Watkins; Josephina de Vasconellos; Austin Clarke; John Freeman; Leslie D. Weatherhead; H. Bondi; Rebecca West; J. B. Priestley; Kathleen Lonsdale; Angus Wilson, Arthur Koestler.

