

A Boom Month for the POLITICAL INDUSTRY

THE ten-nation disarmament conference which has been taking place for the past seven weeks in Geneva announced last week that it was suspending its meetings for a period of six weeks. Needless to say no progress was made during those seven weeks of wrangling; indeed, the delegates could not even agree on the text of their adjournment communiqué! Now the Western delegations are reporting to the Nato Ministerial Council which commenced its discussions in Istanbul last Monday. From these discussions will emerge the Western line on disarmament (assuming that the conflicting "interests" of the Nato powers can, in fact, be reconciled into a "line"), which in turn will form the basis for the Summit meeting starting next week.

We are confident that the Top Boys will be affability personified, each will utter the usual platitudes about peace and prosperity, but at the end nothing will be changed. Perhaps they may decide that the political industry must present the public with at least one concrete achievement to its credit. After all it is the most heavily subsidised industry in all countries of the world, and produces nothing but strife and tension though its alleged purpose is to give us milk and honey, peace and prosperity! So one may expect the Summit to at least achieve a measure of agreement on the ban on the testing of nuclear weapons. Since, (apart from France, whose Sahara tests are in terms of fall-out still in the nursery stage) the Big Three have in effect suspended tests these past two years, the powers can be magnanimous and officially agree to ban further tests for, say, a period of five years (with an option to renew the agreement). From the point of view of practical politics they can afford to make these concessions, to offer these sops to "public opinion" and the vocal biologists and geneticists, for, if war is the ultimate instrument in power politics, then today the problem which is taxing the technicians is not how to destroy their country's potential enemies (the H-bomb is the last word in destruction) but which is the most effective method of delivering that concentrate of death and annihilation which three of the

Big four already possess (and which probably Eisenhower told de Gaulle during his present American visit that he could have if he accepted to respect an official ban on testing).

Today the "deterrent" is not the H-bomb but the transport system for delivering it to the enemy's doorstep, and if what we have been told about the destructive power of the H-bomb is true, then it is reasonable to assume that future research and development in the war industry will concentrate on new, more accurate and swift ways of delivering H-bombs, and, since the "enemy" will be doing likewise, of evolving mobile delivery bases. Hence the development of atomic-powered submarines, and of missiles launched from submarines (the American Polaris) which in turn calls for the development of the anti-submarine submarine. The following B.U.P. report from New York (April 27) does not come as a surprise:

The atom-powered submarine *Tullibee*, designed to hunt enemy submarines, was launched at Groton, Connecticut, today. A large part of the United States submarine force is now dedicated to anti-submarine work.

The *Tullibee*, 260ft. long with a displacement of 2,600 tons, has been called the Navy's "big ears" because of its record number of sonar tracking devices. (It is clear that in the wars of the future, if they occur, the Mata Haris will be replaced by much less romantic figures in the form of elec-

tronic devices; Big Ears and not sexy silhouettes will be used to ferret out the enemy's plans, or rather, his location).

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THE navy and the shipbuilding yards which only a year or two ago seemed doomed, have a future after all. The Stock Exchange will undoubtedly reflect the trend for the benefit of shareholders and those workers in the industry, who cannot think of themselves other than as wage-slaves, will sigh with relief at the thought of a steady job for at least the next ten years—building submarines. Only last week the Scottish Trades Union Congress in conference at Perth

called on the Government to negotiate with other nations supporting the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade for a "scrap and build" policy under which ships over twenty years old would be scrapped and replaced.

The resolution was passed as an attempt to avert a possible slump in the shipbuilding industry. The Congress also called for an ending of trade barriers to facilitate the securing of fresh orders, the strengthening of the country's economy, and the raising of the standard of living.

Mr. Ted Hill, general secretary of the Boilermakers' Society, welcoming the "scrap and build" idea, said that in 1954 the Russian Government had asked the shipbuilders of this country to build 95

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The Disarmament Fiasco

WE have often stated in this paper that the disarmament talks at Geneva seemed to be getting nowhere, although political speeches might persuade unthinking or trusting people to the contrary.

We have been criticised by angry people, who want to believe in the good intentions of their political leaders, for our pessimistic and negative approach to the Geneva circus.

We can only say in our own defence that we do not criticise lightly but base our views on what is actually happening.

Discussions between East and West on which should come first, disarmament or control have been in 'progress' since 1945 (FREEDOM, April 23rd). If after fifteen years no agreement can be reached on this one issue we think it is reasonable to doubt the good intentions of the contenders.

Latest reports from Geneva tend to confirm our 'pessimistic' views, and we quote from a *Guardian* editorial to avoid repeating the similar points we made ourselves several weeks ago in FREEDOM.

"The disarmament conference at Geneva adjourns to-day, with few achievements to its credit. The Russians no longer insist on an inflexible time limit of four years; apart from that, the conference's main contribution towards bridging the gulf between East and West has been to show how wide the gulf really is. For this, both sides are to blame. At the beginning of the conference, each put forward grandiose plans which the other was almost bound to reject. Mr. Zorin must have known that the West would never accept the Soviet plan for total disarmament without in-

sisting on measures of control too sweeping for the Soviet Union to accept. The West must have known equally well that the Soviet block would reject the Western plan for an international police force, for in a disarmed world the international police force would amount to a world government. East and West disagree as bitterly over the preliminary stages of disarmament as they do over the final stages, and for the same basic reason."

A SEXUAL 'CRIME' IN SOUTH AFRICA

JAMES SHOLTO DOUGLAS (a relation of Lord Douglass of Kirtleside) was jailed for four months in the Transvaal because an African woman bore his child.

This is only one of the many cases we do not hear about because the people involved have generally no news value.

The woman, Lydia Ndau, was tried separately a month ago and sentenced to four months imprisonment, two of which are suspended.

Mr. Douglas gave notice of appeal and was released on a £100 bail.

The fact that they both say they love each other, and are the parents of a child, does not interest the South African Government which makes it a criminal offence for a white man to love a black woman or a white woman to love a black man.

In spite of this some courageous people from both races continue to mix, socially and sexually, even although it may mean jail.

CARYL CHESSMAN

IT is of course the mouse's fault if the cat plays with it. In the first place he shouldn't get caught; but if he does, then he should lie perfectly still and allow himself to be eaten without a struggle. Sensitive humans would then be spared the revulsion they feel at seeing the cat-and-mouse game in action.

We could not help feeling, when we heard of Lord Birkett's admission of revulsion at the final execution of Caryl Chessman, how he must have felt proud of British superiority in this, as in so many other things. The British way is so much more considerate of all our sensibilities; our condemned prisoners either get prompt remission to life imprisonment or they are equally promptly polished off after the prescribed three Sundays and their file quietly closed. The English hate a fuss.

And miscarriages of justice never take place. If doubts arise among any members of the public, a judicial enquiry can sometimes be arranged to confirm that no miscarriage of justice has happened.

In America, things work differently. The mouse is allowed to wriggle; he can try to get away. But the cat gets him in the end just the same.

Sacco and Vanzetti

For seven years, between 1920 when they were arrested on trumped-up charges of robbery and murder, until 1927 when they were finally electrocuted by the State of Massachusetts, Sacco and Vanzetti fought to prove their innocence. It was proved to the satisfaction of millions of people, powerful and humble, throughout the world. But they were anarchists and had to die, in spite of petitions, pleas, stay after stay of execution, strikes and demonstrations.

The same monstrous pattern has been repeated in the Chessman case—except that it has dragged on for nearly twice as long as the Sacco and Vanzetti torment. For 12 years Caryl Chessman has fought for his life. In that time, in the words of Alistair Cooke in the *Guardian*:

"he has developed his impressive mental gifts beyond the usual persuasive force of educational systems. He has become, in the judgment even of an eminent justice of the United States Supreme Court, a distinguished lawyer. He has applied his misguided childhood talent for brooding to a career in the history of philosophy that would ensure him a "chair" in a reputable university. To newspaper interviewers, of whom

there has been a morbid flock in the last week or two, he has analysed the pathology of his childhood with frightening insight and a Faulknerian lack of self-pity. He has become proficient in four languages. He is, by any healthy standard, a greatly gifted man."

But Alistair Cooke, usually one of the most perceptive of professional journalists, also wrote:

"He is also, by any measure known to civilised countries, a perverse and chronic criminal. . . . In any Western country that inherited Roman law, the just penalty for his frightful crimes is death. The evidence of rape and kidnapping in the substantive episode, quite apart from a criminal record that reaches back to childhood, is overwhelming."

Apart from being factually untrue (in 52 countries which 'inherited Roman law' death is not the penalty for any crime and in many others is not the penalty for kidnapping or rape) this report overlooks completely the differences that have taken place in Chessman himself over the last twelve years.

Not the Same Man

How could Alistair Cooke write that Chessman 'is a perverse and chronic criminal'? For 12 years the condemned man had hardly any opportunity for criminal activity, but instead had written books and developed latent talents in a way which presumably had been denied him previously.

The Chessman that was killed by the State of California was not the same man as he who had been condemned by it. In a highly intelligent editorial comment the day after Cooke's superficial cable, the *Guardian* wrote:

"Any argument for the death penalty must assume that the condemned man is unworthy to live—and is bound to remain unworthy. The uses to which Chessman put his years in the condemned cell have refuted that assumption."

But the law takes no account of this, when its answer to the transgressor is to eliminate him. Capital punishment, in its brutal and ignorant suppression, for ever, of the offender, also snuffs out, for ever, any chance of rehabilitation.

We can only conjecture, now, on what society has lost in losing Caryl Chessman—twice, for it lost him before when he turned criminal—and what we might have gained had the people of California been as intelligent as he obviously was. But they matched him only in his perverse criminality.

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE V-BOMBERS

In the Debate on Blue Streak the Minister of Defence, Mr. Watkinson, explained the advantages of the airborne missile in these terms:

"The flexibility of the V-bombers which will be still further improved by measures now in hand to permit a higher state of readiness and better dispersal, clearly gives them a great advantage over fixed missile sites which are tied to particular areas in this country.

"The V-bombers also have the advantages that they can be launched without necessarily committing us to a nuclear war and, though primarily designed to carry nuclear weapons, they are also available for use in a conventional role if needed—which fits well with our world responsibilities. It would be madness not to exploit this great British asset to the full."

We specially draw readers' attention to the paragraph we have italicised.



