

'Bureaucracy is a giant mechanism operated by pygmies'
HONORE DE BALZAC

THE WASTE LANDS
WITHIN THE TRAP
TALKING SYMBOLS
THE BEARS
CORRESPONDENCE

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Signpost to Nowhere

SIGNPOST for the Sixties is a statement of Labour Party home policy to be submitted by the National Executive to the Annual Conference to be held in Blackpool in October. In the words of the authors of the statement, they "have not tried to draw up a comprehensive manifesto". There is time between now and the next general election for the "situation to change" and "we would regard it as folly to anticipate at this Conference the Party's election programme". In a previous Party publication the general secretary, Mr. Morgan Phillips, had written however that

"What the party needs today is not another batch of policy documents or detailed blueprints but a clear statement both of our distinctive attitude to post-war capitalism and of the new direction we should give the nation's affairs".

And with this view the authors of *Signpost for the Sixties* "concur" and they declare that their "single aim has been to make good [that] important deficiency in the formulation of Socialist policy". To this end they have

highlighted five themes—planning and economic expansion, the use of our land, a new approach to social security, equality and educational opportunity and fair taxation. These issues, we believe, are becoming increasingly significant and they illustrate both our critique of the Tory Affluent Society and the Socialist remedies we recommend.

In the foreword of these two references in the Foreword to "Socialist policy" and "Socialist remedies" the pages that follow are as barren of socialism as they are of what Mr. Phillips referred to as a "distinctive attitude" to post-war capitalism or of "the new direction" he thought the party should give the nation's affairs". If

one can describe *Signpost for the Sixties* in a sentence: it is an attempt to save capitalism in this country and "to prevent Britain from becoming a backwater" which is our fate if our affairs remain in the hands of a Tory government and a handful of industrial monopolists.

We are told that "we live in a scientific revolution". That in the past fifteen years "man's knowledge and his power over nature" have grown more than in the previous century. It is "an epoch of revolutionary change". But far from concluding that the "scientific revolution" can only be matched by a revolution in our thinking the Labour Party pundits cannot see beyond the ends of their noses, and we have to read this kind of stuff:

In such an epoch of revolutionary change, those who identify *laissez faire* with liberty are enemies, however unwitting, of democracy. The enlargement of freedom which we all desire cannot be achieved by opposing State intervention but only by assuring that national resources are wisely allocated and community services are humanely planned.

It should be unnecessary to state that anarchists are not opposed to planning. Whenever we write that production should be geared to satisfying human needs we are clearly

expressing a belief that production (and services, of course) should be planned in the interests of the consumer who is at the same time the producer. Such a planned economy however does not require centralised government, experts, executives or technocrats, however humane, determining for us what are our needs, if the power lies with the people, (and it should be pointed out, since most "socialists" seem to have forgotten, that this is what democracy is supposed to be!). But the Labour Party "socialists" are really not concerned with the relationship between production and living however much they may defend Health services, education for all, housing for the people and security for the aged. Their statement is a long apologia for the capitalist system with large doses of State control to counteract the crises of capitalism.

Our rate of industrial advance has been faltering; and the rapid and continuous expansion required to keep abreast of our competitors has been frustrated. Every time production has increased, we have run into an export-import crisis and industrial production has been halted once again by a credit squeeze and by other governmental restrictions.

The seriousness of these "crises" is not so much their effect on the ordinary people whose lives are not all that much upset by these "high-level economic problems" as the long-term effect on the nation as a nation.

Like any other great organisation, a nation that fails to make progress soon begins to slip backwards. In this epoch of change, to stand still is to decline. The danger that faces us, after a decade of complacent Tory Government is not the sudden catastrophe of slump and mass unemployment but piecemeal economic deterioration and gradual political decline. These processes of decay have, indeed, already begun. But there is still time to halt them and to restore that public spirit and collective dynamic which this country needs if it is to remain prosperous and to play its full role in the second half of the twentieth century.

It is difficult to know where to

Labour Apologia for Capitalism

start commenting! It is clear that it is not only de Gaulle who dreams of a strong, influential *patrie*; for the language of the last two sentences we have quoted from the Gaitskell-Crossman document, only have meaning in such a context. Otherwise from a socialist point of view it is just a lot of balderdash (Incidentally when they talk of "restoring" that public spirit, etc., when did it exist before? Was there a time when the capitalists were jolly decent chaps? Or were they thinking of the bad (good?) old days when workers really did work and doffed their caps to the master and didn't keep on thinking about more wages and fewer working hours?).

But it is just as well perhaps to rid oneself of the illusion that the Labour Party "socialists" of the 2nd international are internationalists. If one accepts that they are chauvinists at heart it will be easier to explain their attitude to such questions as unilateralism in our time and to war at all times. And the L.P.'s document is full of revealing passages which illustrate the narrowness of their political and economic horizons. For instance in

references to take-overs in which not only do firms swallow each other up but are "even swallowed up by foreign firms", and to private finance, the term "unpatriotic" is twice used:

"The British people cannot be asked much longer to subscribe to this curious and fundamentally unpatriotic doctrine."

"The fulfilment of the plan, therefore must not be sacrificed to the dictates of private finance, of private profit or speculation, or outmoded financial techniques, or unpatriotic manoeuvres in foreign exchange."

And on numerous occasions one comes across references to "competitors", "industrial rivals", "formidable competition" in connection with foreign markets. Of course the Labour Party "socialists" are very anxious that Britain's share of the export markets should considerably increase... at the expense of their "rivals" and "competitors"—the Germans, French, Italians, etc. But if the prosperity of the British people depends on Britain capturing a larger share of world markets it will be at the expense of other exporting nations and of the living standards of the people of the coun-

Continued on page 3

The Constitutional Fiddle

WHATEVER else the revised constitution for Northern Rhodesia has not done, it has produced a general agreement on its complexity of execution although its intention is clear enough.

The February White Paper which formed the basis of discussion for the constitution, limited as it was, suggested that:—

in theory at any rate, African or pro-African candidates might win all 15 of the "open" seats, and thus give them 30 seats in the legislative council as against 15 European seats.

According to the *Daily Express*, the Prime Minister personally ordered changes in the White Paper which would satisfy, or at any rate mollify, the demands made by Sir Roy Welensky and his white followers. These simply mean that the white minority will continue to exercise effective control.

The main change under the new plan means that:

15 members will be elected on the upper roll (mainly European), 15 on the lower roll (almost wholly non-

European); and 14 will be elected by seven two-member constituencies, of which four are to be "reserved". The reserved constituencies are each to return one African and one European. The remaining two-member constituencies will be elected candidates if they receive a prescribed minimum number of votes from both the upper and lower rolls. The new plan stiffens the minimum conditions for election.

A fifteenth constituency is to be created for the Asian and coloured communities in Northern Rhodesia who will elect a candidate of their own kind.

The Africans will find it hard to win any of the national "seats" as they have to gain 12½ per cent., or 400 voters from the Europeans.

This constitutional fiddle which has been put forward under the pretext of "favouring moderates of all parties" has met with Sir Roy's approval, but the African leaders do not share his view of the changes and it is to them that the ordinary African will ultimately give his support.

It would seem that the struggle in Rhodesia is only beginning.

The End of D.A.C.

(From a Correspondent)

IN the Aldermaston number of FREEDOM it was forecast that the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear War would merge with the Committee of 100 "within a month or two". In fact it has taken three months. Just before the end of June DAC disbanded, pointing out that it and the Committee of 100 are barely two organisations at all, since only two of its members don't also belong to the Committee, and that its continued existence is causing confusion in the unilateralist movement.

This remarkable gesture of solidarity is in line with the behaviour of DAC ever since its formation in 1957 by supporters of Harold Steele's plan for non-violent direct action against the Christmas Island nuclear tests. For three years it was the pioneer in the British unilateralist movement. It organised the first Aldermaston march and the Swaffham and Harrington demonstra-

tions, it first used Gerald Holton's famous ND symbol which is now used throughout the world, it made the idea of non-violent civil disobedience familiar in this country. It deserves a place in British social history beside the Women's Social & Political Union (the Suffragettes) and the National Unemployed Workers' Movement (the Hunger Marchers). But all the time its leaders have refused to push themselves forward and take the credit they deserved; that sort of thing has been left to CND. And now DAC has been absorbed into the Committee of 100. An era has closed.

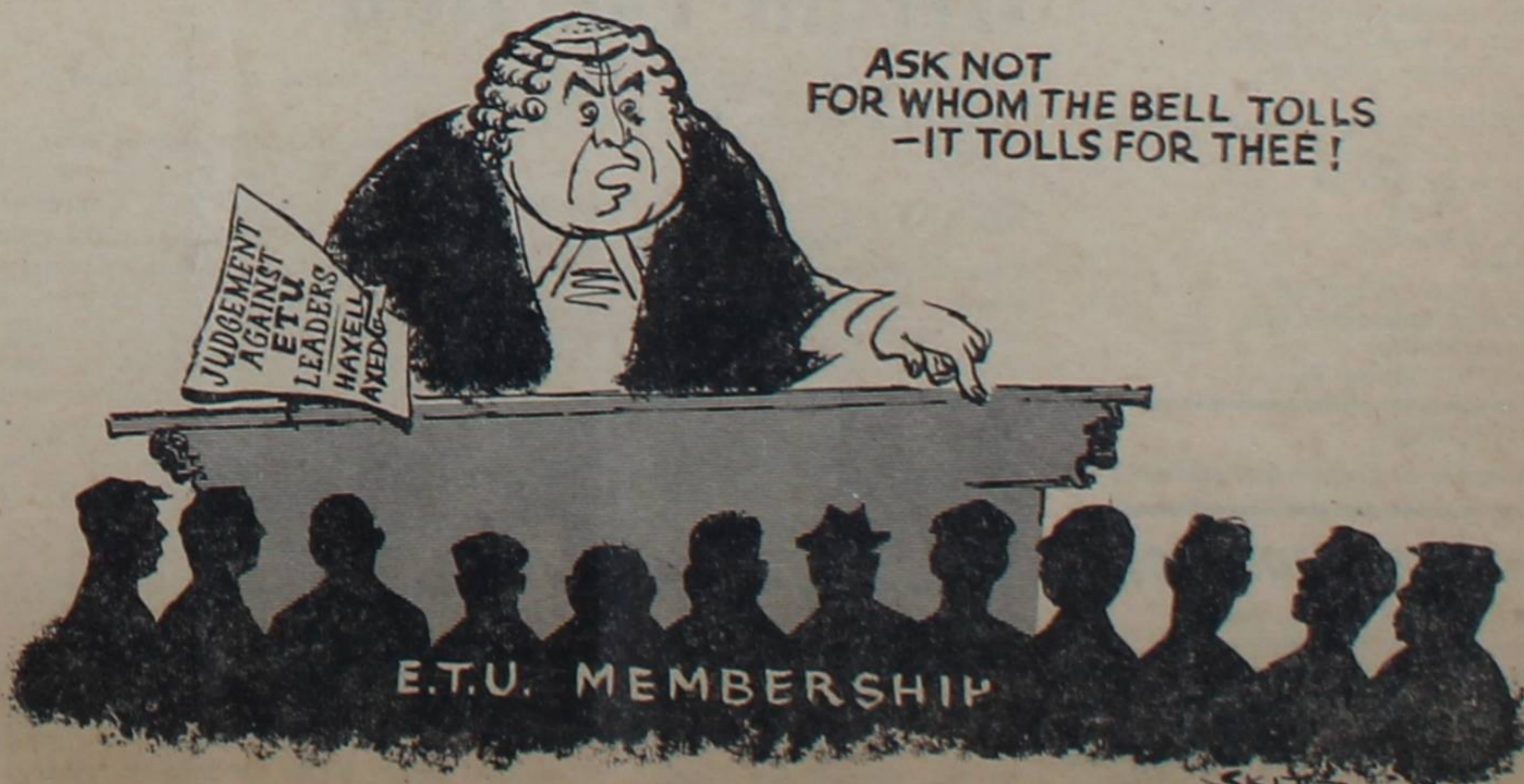
But what about the new era? The Committee of 100 may be expected to move away from massive civil disobedience towards relatively small-scale direct action. Already it is tending to aim at Polaris in particular rather than against nuclear warfare in general, and it is unlikely to get many people to sit down in London at the same time as a Holy Loch demonstration. It is reasonable to guess that the Committee will become increasingly pacifist and will become less interested in the political implications of its activity. This change in emphasis should be seen in the context of the swing away from unilateralism in the official Labour Movement. The methods of CND were splendid, but they have evidently failed, for the time being at least (see the *Peace News* editorial on June 30th). So the methods of DAC acquire a new appeal, and the leaders of DAC naturally have great authority in the Committee of 100. Perhaps the self-effacing gesture of disbandment is not quite so self-effacing after all. Perhaps we should say not *Requiescat in pace, but DAC est mort, vive DAC!*

ANARCHY 5

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The Waste Land

VANCE PACKARD'S two previous books *The Hidden Persuaders* and *The Status Seekers* have been best-sellers but *The Waste Makers** the critics seemed to have turned against Mr. Packard. He has been denounced for his lack of academic sociological standing (he is only an associate member of the American Sociological Society) and consequently his books have not been given serious consideration. That they reach a wider public than a more scholarly Ph.D. thesis on the *Tendencies of a Market Economy to stimulate excessive consumer reactions* seems to be a point in Mr. Packard's favour. It is true that there is a certain amount of wild surmise, generalization, writing down and (in the later part of the book) a tendency to sermonize which seems a necessity in writing for a wider public. A more serious accusation is that like many American muck-rakers, Mr. Packard has been accepted as part of the establishment and his morsel of criticism is taken as

*"The Waste-Makers", Vance Packard, Longmans, 21s.

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evidence that something is Being Done and the Hidden Persuaders, Status Seekers and Waste Makers are Fully Aware of the Dangers of their Persuading, Seeking and Making.

The book commences with a description of Cornucopia City of the future with paper-houses, expendable cars, rocket-launchings of consumer goods, and declarations by repair-men's unions that nothing more than two-years-old would be repaired. Packard then goes on to point out that modern America is fast approaching this stage, through an overabundance of staples, amenities and frills and that even the Government is not free of wastefulness. It might be mentioned that this country's lag behind the U.S. in this respect, is a matter of regret to some, although we are catching up fast.

The aim of American society, states Packard, is the increase of consumption and staving off the menace of the falling off of demand. This is done by the rapid necessity of replacements, the provision of more items per family unit, the improved model. The difficulty arises from the fact that up to a certain point in functional goods, improvements cannot be made. This gap is filled by gadgetry and packaging.

This faith in an expansion of consumption is given in slogans such as "Buy your way to prosperity". The rate of growth of the American economy is taken, claims Packard, as a measurement of success rather than the nature of goods produced. The creation of desires is the function of society. The insistence on buying more has led to the two-car family, the two house family, the television in every room, the wall-to-wall carpet, the deodorant for 'he' and 'she', the 'breakfast' coffee as distinct from the 'after-dinner' coffee.

Packard instances power lawn-mowers as an invasion of gadgetry and the proliferation of tail fins and petrol-consuming devices in cars. The latter has led to the importation of less-ostentatious and more serviceable foreign cars.

The 'throwaway' spirit pervades T.V. commercials which insist on perpetual consumption. To assist this and to hint improvements where none exists, packaging is a thriving industry. Packard estimates that the average American family spends \$500 per year on packaging—all of which is thrown away!

Faced with consumer-resistance in obstinately clinging to old television sets, cars and typewriters commerce has introduced the 'trade-in', where a new brand is purchased and the customer is credited with an 'allowance' on his old goods. These old goods are promptly junked since the 'allowance' is merely a price-cut in order to stimulate sales.

This is one of the more legal and ethical methods of stimulating consumption. Packard tells of a potato-peeler manufacturer who discovered that if he coloured his peelers the same shade as potato-peel his sales increased because of the number of thrown-away peelers. He also gives an account of "heating engineers" who turned out to be boiler salesmen whose technique was to "examine" and wreck boilers and sell the

harassed housewife a new boiler on the grounds that her old one was condemned. English readers will remember the encyclopaedia salesman with the vague affiliations with Education Departments who still infest the suburbs and provinces.

With a quotation from Arthur Miller, Packard introduces his chapter on 'planned obsolescence'.

Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* says:

Once in my life I would like to own something outright before it's broken! I'm always in a race with the junkyard! I just finish paying for the car and it's on its last legs. The refrigerator consumes belts like a goddam maniac. They time those things. They time them so when you've finally paid for them, they're used up.

'Planned obsolescence' is the kernel of Packard's book in the same way that the 'affluent society' sums up Galbraith and 'conspicuous consumption' Veblen. But like Galbraith's phrase, 'Planned obsolescence' is often misinterpreted.

Willy Loman's interpretation is not the one of which designers and salesmen proudly speak. They aim, says Packard, at changing the product constantly so that consumption expands. This can be done by three methods. (a) Obsolescence of function, (b) Obsolescence of quality: goods wear out, (c) Obsolescence of desirability. The latter is achieved by changes in fashion (styling), this is applied chiefly to women's clothing, has spread to cars, but has widened considerably in its scope, one of its by-products is a stream-lined frigidaire.

The justification for this three-pronged attack is that 'it makes work'. Indeed says Packard it makes America 'a repairman's paradise'. So many of the goods sold need repair frequently and so many of the gadgets are too complex for simple home repairs.

Work continues on the sales side. Desperate attempts are made to find the 'soft sell' or break down 'the hard sell'—by means of free gifts, 'trade-ins', bargains, and price-cutting. Present attempts in Britain to break resale price maintenance agreements are indicative of the pressures.

Packard instances instalment selling and the Diners' club as methods of breaking down sales-resistance. Side by side with these helps to easy spending goes the "Go on! Spoil Yourself!" type of advertising with its frank appeal to the belly. The commercialisation of Christmas, the gift-card racket and the spawning of Fathers', Mothers' and (who knows?) eventually Bastard's Day are all offerings on the altar of Consumption. Dichter's department of motivation research connects the theme of this book with Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders*.

The rapid growth of the population is connected with this expanding economy. Every new baby is a new consumer. The teen-age market is specially studied with the aim of 'catching them young'.

Packard analyses the failures of this type of society in terms with which we have become painfully familiar. Packard's marshalling of facts is impressive. His diagnosis is a little curious and his remedies strike one as distinctly odd.

WITHIN THE TRAP

"YOU CAN TOUCH ME", by Christine Billson, Scorpion Press, 15s.

WE are accustomed to "blue-sky" books, which, under the guise of Chinese, Emersonian, Jewish, Catholic, Hindu, Rationalist or even "common sense" philosophy, seek to reassure us about life, telling us that it is, despite appearances at times, really wonderful. There is a place for such works, without doubt. But Christine Billson's series of autobiographical sketches represents what might be called a "grey-sky" or even a "black-sky" book. She has her pleasures, but her world is grim! Sometimes she even writes as if she were parodying a "blue-sky" book.

"I have met happy people, people who seemed to have a smile hidden in their hearts. But I have always been shocked by the materialistic comfort in which they seemed to live".

The world of civilisation is a vast trap.

"Always at the end of term the last thing I did was to play the first few bars of Tchaikovsky's Concerto in B flat minor on the piano in the classroom. I liked the atmosphere of empty desks and no more work. I liked the idea of no more forced religion or long walks in the bleak countryside or games of hockey. I was always quite satisfied to see my ugly school receding into the background, and to feel that once again I could eat chips, look at boys, and be myself without rules.

"But the rules came. At first I enjoyed them because they were different rules. Then I taught myself to think, and to wonder why I always obeyed without question. Since then life has become complicated. The world has become a huge school from which there seems to be no feasible escape, except death which I do not want."

True to form he complains that this type of society makes America look fatuous as a world power. He instances Russian successes in space travel as a rebuke to an America preoccupied with tail-fins and colour T.V. (Might not the Sputnik be a Russian form of planned obsolescence?). Packard warns that an expanding economy allows foreign competitors to enter American markets. He asserts that this reliance on sales promotion leads to commercial oligarchies, but surely the monopoly tendencies in capitalism have been obvious for years, but it is interesting to see the effect of advertising in creating newspaper monopolies.

His other diagnosis is that this outpouring of goods changes the life style—and not for the better. For example, the vast traffic problem caused by motor-car salesmanship, the urbanisation of the countryside, and the effects of detergents upon rivers and canals.

Vance Packard goes on to point out the dwindling resources resulting from this economy of waste. Paper, metal, fossil fuels, food and water he lists as expendable. In passing he mentions the possibilities in atomic power but mentions the side-effects of the problem of disposal of radio-active wastes.

In another field this commercialisation of life subjects us, so Packard says, to increasing advertising pressure through T.V., newspapers and posters. The quality of our aesthetic sensibility is assaulted constantly by advertising. Advertising and salesmanship verge on the fraudulent in such devices as 'switch-sales' and the faked T.V. demonstration.

There is a story of an old coloured woman attending a revivalist meeting and enthusiastically 'Hallelujahing' denunciations of fornication, murder and simony, who was heard to mutter when the preacher attacked her pastime of crap-shooting. 'He done finished preaching and gone on to meddlin'.

Mr. Packard hasn't quite finished preaching for he blames this type of society for the breakdown in family life, the pervasion of monetary standards and the growth of 'materialism'. He blames it for juvenile delinquency and the surrender of American soldiers in Korea.

For the solution of the American problem of waste he looks to organisations such as Consumer Research and the British Standards Institutions and also to a growth of responsibility on the part of manufacturers. He feels that Consumer Research suffers from the fact that only those already aware of a need for consumer standards join it and the average shopper will always be at the mercy of the supermarket TV huckster.

Packard feels that we should cultivate a respect for ecology, which sounds like Malthusianism plus birth-control. He suggests remedies lie in cutting down work-hours (he advocates Galbraith's divorce of income from productivity); elimination of the idea that leisure-time is the time for consumption (restricting advertising by taxation); he hints at the inculcation of anti-machine thinking.

He believes the energies of designers and manufacturers would be better served by introducing real innovations such as ultrasonic devices for cleaning and helicopters to solve traffic problems for example. He feels that there should be a transfer of labour to service industries.

Vance Packard's greatest advocacy is of finding new outlets for production. In this he again cites Galbraith's "public squalor and private affluence" and points out the need for slum-clearance, conver-

This is a sustained scream from within the trap of civilisation. But it is hard to get outside. Outside there is only the cold wind, the damp grass and the mud. The night is black and hostile. Nature seems more alien perhaps to the civilised person, even the tamed and docile nature of Britain, than it does to the primitive, even though to him it constitutes more of a threat.

Human beings have lost the knowledge of how to live, which is still possessed by the animals. The animals are dying out, but is not man on the verge of doing the same? There are at present few hopeful signs. Children are tortured into conformity. They die in spirit in their youth, live on in the flesh like zombies, do the world's work, and suffer squalidly in innumerable futile existences.

Christine Billson writes with vigour and passion. If it is not the whole of reality (if it were I would turn in my C.N.D. badge!), at least it represents an aspect of it.

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

sion of salt to fresh water supplies, need for rain-making research, educational expansion and aid to backward nations. To do all this, says Packard, it is necessary to break down resentment of taxation!

Packard's last chapter returns to preaching for "an enduring style of life". He instances the all-pervading portable radio, the reliance on amusements and the faith in technology as symptoms of our sickness and the do-it-yourself movement as a sign of health.

He urges the need for greater humility and idealism, dedication to others, deeply cherished personal goals, judicious attitude to values of personal possessions, strongly held standards of good and evil, and strongly held standards of success and failure.

He finally philosophises as to whether it is really necessary for a slump (or a war?) to be an American prod to a new way of life.

This sententious philosophising and tinkering and "meddlin'" of his "remedies" vitiate the usefulness of Packard's diagnosis. Short of a more deep-seated revolution in ways of thinking leading to an anarchist form of society it is impossible to see any solution to the problems of Persuasion, Status and Waste so ably posed by Mr. Packard.

J.R.

SUCKED IN

THE PRESS GULLIBILITY OR SELL OUT?

"Let's face it, we got sucked in pretty badly on this one."

With just a touch of bitterness in his voice, a veteran U.S. newsman sat in the coffee shop of Miami's Hotel Du Pont-Plaza and confessed to one of the cardinal sins of his profession: Gullibility. The reporter was trying to explain the bombastic headlines and radio bulletins that helped transform an unsuccessful guerrilla landing in a Cuban swamp into a grievous psychological defeat for the U.S.

The blunt truth was that seldom within recent years have so many otherwise sophisticated journalists been guilty of presenting so much inaccurate information to so many impressionable people around the world. With a virtual blackout of hard news from Cuba itself, the squads of reporters who converged on Miami as well as hundreds more back in New York and Washington, filled the vacuum with rumours (or "bolas" as the Cubans call them). From the moment when Francis L. McCarthy of UPI flashed the news that "Cuban rebels invaded their homeland by air and sea today only 90 miles from Havana" until the final gloomy press conference at which Dr. José Miró Cardona admitted the grave defeat inflicted on the anti-Castro forces, the reporters were grappling with a story they could neither see nor feel nor even imagine. Feeding on the wishful dream of the Cuban exiles (filtered through one official Madison Avenue public-relations outfit and a host of unofficial spokesmen) they not only blew up a guerrilla landing operation into a full-scale "invasion" but subsequently told the world that "the Isle of Pines has fallen" . . . "the Cuban Navy has revolted" . . . and "rebel planes raid Havana". A check would have shown that throughout the "invasion" the Cuban Army radio on the Isle of Pines kept reporting every half hour: "Still nothing new." The headline writers didn't help the situation either. On the morning when the remnants of the landing force were making a dismal retreat into the hills, the New York Daily News trumpeted that REBELS 1ST OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

IN THE MIDDLE: And yet to what degree was the press really to blame for the magnitude of the American propaganda defeat?

The best answer is that the newsmen, like many other people, became pawns in the intensifying conflict between Washington and Havana. "As I see it," explained one knowledgeable reporter, "we were being used by both sides in this mess. Castro, once he realized how really puny this operation was, probably reasoned that the more the American papers made of the story, the bigger would be his inevitable victory. The attacking forces obviously hoped that the news of a major invasion would touch off a full-scale uprising in Cuba, and so did our government in Washington. By the time they realized they had guessed wrong about the revolution, it was too late. The world was convinced that there had been a major invasion and that Castro had won a great victory. "Many of us may have gone off the deep end," said one newsmen, "but I can't help thinking that at some point we were pushed."

Newsweek

SIGNPOST TO NOWHERE

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tries concerned. Is that a satisfactory "socialist" solution?

★

"IN this epoch of change, to stand still is to decline". In the context in which the L.P. refer to "change", that is changing techniques, new gimmicks, sales talk, etc., this is a myth assuming we are talking in terms of people and not of business and finance. They lament the fact that our road system is "antiquated" but proudly point to "achievements" which are the result of State-subsidised research:

Jet aircraft would not have been produced without a massive investment of public money, or television without the joint enterprise of the Post Office and the B.B.C. The National Research Development Corporation, set up by the Labour Government, has sponsored the industrial development of scores of new inventions, among them the Hovercraft and advanced electronic brains and digital computers. . . .

Are those of us who prefer the country lanes to the motorways, who have no inclination to travel by jet or cross the channel in a hovercraft, who haven't found the time to look at TV and who prefer to use their own brains rather than an electronic brain to work out our problems . . . are we standing still, poor backwoodsmen in decline?

But of course these people are not thinking in terms of people but of the system with the health of which the Labour Party "socialists" are in certain respects more concerned than the *laissez faire* Tories. Their programme attempts to give more stability to the capitalist system not to abolish it; they object to the present social discrimination in choos-

The Vocabulary of Insecurity

THE Labour Party concept of "all men are equal but some are more equal than others" emerges in the section dealing with *New Needs in Social Security*. The statement first complains that there are two standards of social security as a result of the various private welfare schemes which have been encouraged by the Tories through generous tax concessions to the firms concerned. They want to see this inequality abolished: "the privileges voluntarily conceded to some employees must now be transformed into the right of every citizen". So one of the first jobs of the "next" (?) Labour Government will be

completely to recast the level of contributions and benefits in the Government's scheme, so as to achieve Labour's aim of ensuring that everyone gets at least half pay on retirement . . . in return for contributing a percentage of his wage or salary towards superannuation

On the question of National Insurance the statement declares that

In the modern expanding economy, flat-rate contributions are out of date. They are a poll tax which lets the prosperous off lightly and imposes an unjust burden on the lower paid worker. We must now move forward, in the case of sickness as well as of old age pensions, to a new graduated system, in which benefits are wage-regulated and contributions are paid as a percentage of earnings. (Our italics).

Again one injustice has been replaced by another. That the lower paid worker should contribute the same amount as the business executive to insurance schemes and draw the same benefits seemed unfair to the Labour Party socialists. To

ing the men at the top but not to the pyramid of power and privilege:

With certain honourable exceptions, our finance and industry need a major shake-up at the top. Too many Directors owe their position to family, school or political connections. If the dead wood were cut out of Britain's board-rooms and replaced by the keen young executives, production engineers and scientists, who are at present denied their legitimate prospects of promotion, our production and export problems would be much easier to solve.

Higher Education, under the Labour Party plan, must be available to all, for the good of the State!

Children are the nation's most valuable asset. What we spend on their schooling earns a bigger return in the quality of our national life than any other expenditure. This is more true than ever in the age of scientific revolution, when the improvement of our living standards and our survival as a free democracy depends upon the quality of our scientific, technological and technical education.

And whilst the shortage of places in establishments for higher education exists

we must be sure none of them are wasted; in particular, we must make sure that poor but able students are not excluded from universities by wealthier parents buying places for less-gifted children.

So under a Labour administration one would replace the privilege due to wealth by a privilege of brains. The injustice to the young people concerned, it seems to us, is as great under both systems, and it is only when one sees higher education as a vital aspect of the power- and/or economic- struggles that one can blithely advocate one injustice to replace another and pride oneself with being democratic!

remedy this they propose a graduated contribution based on a worker's earnings so that the lower paid will contribute less than the highly paid. But when it comes to benefits these are based on their earnings so that wage differentials which existed between them during their working lives are applied in sickness and in old age! Is this socialism?

The Labour Party's plan for saving capitalism is a simple one. In the early stages of their "national plan" capital investment and exports would have to be given priority. "Economic growth" must be achieved without inflation. This demands "self-discipline" by the people, which, though they don't say so in so many words means a curb on wage demands and on profits and tax evasion. So long as the people are "satisfied that both benefits and burdens are being fairly shared" they will show the self-discipline needed to restore the old country to its former glory!

★

WE would be the last to deny that the Labour Party statement does contain interesting factual material on the Land racket, on education, on tax evasion, on the distribution of wealth which is impressive. What we find much less impressive is the Party's claim to put things right if they win the next election. Apart from being tempted to ask why they didn't do something about these problems during the 5 years when they were in office it would be interesting to know how

Continued on page 4

IF *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*—the latest play by Jean-Paul Sartre which has been running in London recently under the title *Altona* and has been published under the title *Loser Wins*—had been submitted to any theatre management or publisher's editor by an unknown writer, it would have gone straight into the waste-paper basket. The only reason I can think of for seeing or reading it is that it was written by Sartre (or so we are told) and is therefore a frightening object lesson in the decay of literary talent and incidentally in the willingness of critics to be taken in by nonsense—what old Bentham would have called "nonsense upon stilts".

Not that the situation of the play is necessarily nonsensical. Von Gerlach is a rich ship-owner who lives outside Hamburg at Altona (Altona is actually part of Hamburg, being its main railway terminus, only two miles from the city centre, but never mind); he is dying of cancer and proposes to leave the family business to his weaker younger son, Werner, on condition that he lives in the family house. Werner's wife, Johanna, objects because she doesn't want to be mixed up with the skeleton in the family cupboard—the stronger elder son, Franz, who has shut himself in a room upstairs since 1946. He won't see his father, he is looked after by his sister Leni, and he is off his nut.

Fair enough. This could be either a realistic study of a post-war German family with a schizophrenic black sheep (something like *Death of a Salesman* or *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*) or an allegory of defeated power and guilt and the human condition in general (something like *Oedipus* or *Endgame*), or more specifically a study of war and responsibility (something like *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* or *The Andersonville Trial*). But in the existentialist tradition it tries to be everything and ends by being nothing. The characters are all puppets except for Franz, and Sartre lacks the creative touch that might have brought him to life. The language is neither poetic nor realistic—it is simply rhetorical, and only a genius can prevent rhetoric in English from collapsing into bathos. Perhaps it sounds quite good in the original French, but Justin O'Brien's translation sounds like a three-hour parody, symbols clash-

TALKING SYMBOLS

ing together in a sort of "1812" Overture of our time.

No doubt the father is a symbol of the German past, but his impending death doesn't move me either as a personal or as an historical disaster; no doubt Werner is a symbol of the German future, left high and dry by the passing of those who came before him and the rivalry of those who bully him, but he is quite colourless. No doubt Johanna and Leni are symbols too—they can hardly be designed as real people—but I haven't the slightest idea what they are meant to symbolise, unless it is Fate or Woman perhaps.

The real interest of course is meant to lie not in the family bickering downstairs but in Franz raving upstairs. He is a symbol of the Germans who fought in the war (and the French who are still fighting in Algeria, I suppose), and also of the common man of our century. But even he fails to convince me, whether as a symbol or as a man. He talks to imaginary crabs who will in his fantasies inherit the earth from *homo sapiens*; he records his self-accusations and defence on a tape-recorder; he supposes (or wishes) that Germany has been destroyed by the Allies; he is ashamed of doing nothing to prevent the Nazi atrocities, but later it turns out that he committed one himself. All this might have been good, but in fact it is thoroughly tedious. Sartre is so incapable of maintaining our interest in Franz that he shows us Johanna replacing Leni in his affections (oh yes, there's a dash of incest to give the play spice), and the two women come in alternately to break the monotony of Franz's delirium. When this fails to keep us awake, there's a great deal of shouting and throwing of wine-glasses and oyster shells (supplied by Cunningham's Oyster Bars Ltd.) to give the impression of passion, or something. In the end Franz comes downstairs and drives off with his father into

the Elbe (*Götterdämmerung* in modern dress), and Leni takes his place in the room.

The messages fly thick and fast. We are all in prisons like Franz. We are all guilty like Franz. We are all going to die like Franz and his father. I expect there are dozens I missed. But there are some good things. The ironical remarks about Germany's recovery since 1945 are good for a laugh (until the inhuman existentialist slogan *Loser wins* chokes it in our throat) and in one of the father's speeches achieves a certain eloquence. And some of Franz's declamations to the crabs of the thirtieth century have real majesty and must sound magnificent in French. But on the whole what awful bosh the whole thing is! It is all so cold and contrived, and the upper-crust English voices make it even worse; only Franz is at all well acted (by Kenneth Haigh, the original Jimmy Porter), and Claire Bloom and Diane Cilento are terrible. In a good play the dialogue emerges from the situation and the emotion emerges from the dialogue; in *Altona* the situation, the dialogue and the emotion are separate and equally artificial. Samuel Beckett wrote *Waiting for Godot* as a treatise on boredom; sitting through *Altona* is an unintentional example of boredom. Hell isn't other people, as Sartre pretends—it is talking gibberish in solitude, like Franz von Gerlach and Jean-Paul Sartre, without love, hate, or even much laughter, in abstractions. N.W.

LAG SUMMER SCHOOL

The LAG Summer School will be held at Alan Albon's (Little Marshfoot Farm, Mill Road, Hailsham, Sussex) from Saturday, August 5th to Monday August 7th under canvas. The cost will be 35/- per person (children pro rata). Deposit with booking 10/- per person.

The theme for this year is "Anarchism and Respectability" and the speakers will be: Alan Albon, Colin Ward and Bob Green.

Enquiries and Bookings (plus deposits) to: Mary Stevenson, 17a Maxwell Road, S.W.6., closing date Friday, July 14th. Further details will be circularised to interested comrades.

ONCE upon a time, there lived high in a mountain valley a great community of bears. They had discovered many different ways of securing their needs, and it appeared to the casual view of the migrating birds which flew over the valley, that they were really the most fortunate bears in the world.

However it was not all that it appeared on the surface of things, and they were not so easily provided for as imagined. Most of them worked long hours each day collecting the berries and gathering the honey, which always brought in the latter case, strong and painful attacks from the bees. Others had discovered ways to trap fish, and there were some who searched the places where the sweet roots of the water lilies were to be found, and collected them in bundles.

Now most of the bears lived from one rising of the moon to the next, for at each new moon-rise the chief bears would give them moderate portions of the berries and fish, and a small one of honey and promise them the same at the following moon-rise if they collected the food as before. They received no water lily roots for "they were not good for the working bears' constitution" said the chief bears and thus kept the roots for themselves. Some of the working bears, who had tasted the roots, grumbled about this, but as the chief bears said that they knew what was best, it was generally accepted.

The chief bears lived in the larger caves, allowed themselves more fish and berries and considerably more honey than the working bears, but they proved this was fair, because of the responsibility involved and also because it had always been that way as long as any bear could remember. "Always there have been chief bears who get more, and always there have been working bears who get less, therefore it must be the way of life." But they added that any bear could become a chief bear if he wished, all that was necessary was to work hard and obey the rules and in due time he would be recognised. This they said was freedom for it proved that nobody had to stay where they were if they didn't like it and further they added that any bear who said this was not so was lazy and should be ignored. This was the kind of thing that was being

The Bears

said by the black bears out on the plains, and everyone knew that they were a bad lot, and would come in time to a bad end.

In some seasons the bears, by hard labour would collect more than could be used and where this collection matched with good natural conditions, then there would be a great surplus and every bear at first would look forward to additional berries and honey, and some would think about the possibility of giving what they still had as surplus to the same bears who lived on the other side of the mountains, and who were known to be often short of food. Often as not however the chief bears would be dismayed at this great supply of food and would point out that these were evil times and that unless things improved and there was a drought or a war or some other catastrophe, then there would be no work for anyone, and if working bears weren't working then they could hardly be given things to eat. As for the others over the mountain, as they did not have anything to exchange for the food then it would hardly be possible to give away good food. "Who," they said "will pay for it?" "But trust us," said the chief bears, "we will struggle with the problem, we will stand by our slogan, that 'all working bears must work'."

So they made laws that provided punishment for those bears who collected too much fish for the time being, and strangely organized more bears to collect the water lily roots, which they explained was to give to another group of bears living over the other side of the river and who had a special kind of syrup, which they gave in exchange and which was very good for the chief bears as it helped them to think even more clearly. Then they came to a final great decision and solemnly emptied much of the surplus into the river. This they said "was for the sake of the economy". As none seemed to know what this wonderful new word meant the plan was accepted as probably just and wise.

By and by some of the bears who

were out of work and living in damp and draughty caves with their wives and cubs began to think about this surplus going to waste and how it might be an idea to collect for themselves so that they would not go hungry in the future. When the chief bears heard about this they were very annoyed and said that this was a selfish and unbearable spirit, that judgments of this nature were their concern and that working bears should stay within their station of life. Further they hinted darkly, most of the berries, honey and fish, belonged by right to them and any bears that went collecting for themselves should be wary that they did not trespass or they could be in serious trouble.

As some bears took no notice of the threats but began trying for themselves, large notices were placed on trees warning everyone that any bear who was found doing this would never be allowed to work for the chief bears again as they were endeavouring, by behaving in this way, to take away the chief bears' legal rights, and thus were really trying to destroy the community of bears. Some were frightened by this and went quietly back, others however continued in their own way and there arose in time great speculation and ferment about this idea of working and creating for themselves.

The chief bears grew to dislike the idea more and more and constantly found ways of proving how absurd it was, how unbearable, etc. They tried banishing some bears and placing others in hollow trees for punishment for listening to the nonsense and threatened all kinds of terrible things to the others who listened to the lies being spread about by undesirable.

All this of course happened a long time ago, but bears will be bears and I hear tell that there is still trouble going on today in the valley. There have been some pretty furious fights and I hear great efforts are still made by the chief bears to hold their position and they still still want trust, justice and their legal rights. But the other bears have begun putting notices up on the trees and one little notice they prepared has come out of the valley, it reads:

"Watch out for the bear who insist that things are 'Unbearlike'. They probably have their paws in the honey."

K.S.

A Difference of Degree?

SHOOTING six elephants may not be as bad as exterminating the whole species, and whether shooting six human beings is as bad as exterminating the human race is difficult to judge. To say that it is, is to be greeted with cries of incredulity at one's fanaticism, but the fact is that, as the Chinese poem says, "the thousand mile journey begins with one footstep", and if one consents to the killing of six, by "hard necessity"

of course, it is a fatally easy step to proceed to the killing of twelve next time "hard necessity" imposes itself. If twelve, why not twenty-four? And so on. I believe that if the recent war had gone on long enough, one side or both would have ended by using nuclear weapons to wipe the other completely out. The Allies would have exterminated the German nation, if things had got to this pitch, including the Jews in the camps, who could not conceivably be rescued.

I do not know what logic Eichmann used to justify himself. But the fact that one has killed one human being, or six million, does not justify continuing to kill. The fact that one has done evil in the past is no reason to go on doing it. One should stop and turn towards doing good.

S.F. assumes that no one but himself (and those who agree with him) have thought the problem out, or are engaged in thinking about it now. But, for his information, those who hold to the principles of the rejection of violence and authoritarianism have usually come to their position after many years of worrying the problem out, and they do not find it an easy position to hold. The principles of complete non-violence and non-authoritarianism are extremely difficult to put into practice. But then, things that are worth doing are not necessarily easy. At all events, it requires as much effort to maintain this position as it does to maintain the "relativist" one that S.F. adheres to.

S.F. writes, "I cannot recall when the English were ever persecuted because they were Englishmen, or for that matter the Germans as Germans or Russians as Russians *ad infinitum*. Minorities have all their fair share of persecution when they are alienated from their geographic home. But at least integration with the indigenous population offered succour

and refuge. This cannot be claimed for the Jews, who either didn't want to or were not allowed this facility."

Though the English, Germans and others were not persecuted for their nationality, large numbers of them have been persecuted for other reasons. Women have for centuries been subjected to cruelty and humiliation simply because of their sex, though I do not suppose any were actually killed for that reason alone. But in the last few centuries people living in different parts of Europe have been exterminated because they were heretics, witches, aristocrats, Moslems, Lombards, gypsies, radicals, petit bourgeois, kulaks, Mensheviks, Whites, anarchists, Bolsheviks, peasant or slave rebels, Irishmen, Highlanders, Crimean Tartars, the list is endless. The most terrible persecutions were carried out by Catholics against Protestants, Protestants against Catholics, and Calvinists against both. In all these cases a large number of the victims either did not want, or were not allowed, to integrate themselves with the general population.

The Jewish people have been high up on the list of victims, but it is not true that their situation was utterly hopeless. I will mention later some cases of genocide that were completely successful. Quite a number of Jews escaped from Hitler's empire, and a great many more would have done so if the peoples of Europe had really cared about it.

It seems to me that we are coming up against the question as to whether what we are concerned with is the wiping out of large numbers of people, or with the wiping out of a people. To my mind, fantasy ridden as it is, the distinction is merely academic. But I can see that to some people it is real enough. To me the destruction of British and German cities by bombing were acts equally abominable as the putting of people into concentration camps. True enough, genocide by bombing is a less efficient method than genocide by rounding up and herding into camps. But it is still genocide, if you mean by that word the slaughter of large masses of people.

However, perhaps to S.F., on the analogy of the elephants, it is more atrocious to wipe out six million people, if that means wiping out an entire culture*, than to kill off the same number of people if it means simply individuals of different cultures, which cultures remain themselves unharmed. Say for example, 2 million Russians, 2 million Poles, 1 million Magyars and 1 million Scots. This would not be so bad as killing 6 million Magyars, and wiping out the race entirely. To me this distinction is valueless. The suffering of the poor devils is just as great whoever they are.

But, semantically speaking, it would probably be more correct to use the term "genocide" only for such crimes as the killing off of the Tasmanian blacks by the English, or the total extermination of the Arawaks in the West Indies by the Spaniards†. (12 million died in a generation, according to Charles Duff in his book, *The Truth About Columbus*).

I do not accept this distinction as having any moral validity. Humanity is always producing new cultures‡. Its vitality is boundless. To me the wrong lies in the destroying of human life, the pain, the fear, the humiliation and the general suffering involved. For that reason, I cannot pick and choose between governments, because they are all liable, when driven to it to practise mass-slaughter. (If it is true that the British and American governments refused to allow some German Jewish refugees into their countries before the last war, as I have heard, then they were as guilty, in regard to those people, as the German government which was directly responsible for killing them).

S.F. says that it is impossible to argue with one "who refuses to acknowledge detail". I treated him rather cavalierly in my previous letter, because I was devoting most of my time to another article. I apologise. However his sneering final paragraph is unjustified. I certainly see equal danger from a bow and arrow as from an atom bomb. If S.F. will read H. G. Wells' *Outline of History*, he will find that the massacres committed by the Mongolian hordes were carried out with bows and arrows, in a manner unrivalled till Hitler. A nuclear bomb poisons future generations but the wars and slaughters of antiquity have poisoned men's minds, with an equally deadly effect.†

Principles are not paddings or forms

of argumentative shorthand. I am sure that S.F. has his principles, which he would not betray, or if he did he would feel a sense of shame, just as much as I. His very "relativism" is a principle to which he is faithful. There can be no quarrel about the validity of adhering to principles, since everybody is bound to do so, unless he is an imbecile incapable of abstract thought, who is simply aware of sights, sounds, smells and hungers.

I believe that the principle of accepting gentler governments, rather than opposing all governments, is a bad one because the gentler governments have a way of changing their character with remarkable rapidity. And then one finds oneself supporting policies that a short time before one would rather have died than consent to.

I believe that, as an alternative to relying on the protection of government, I am thinking in particular of the Second World War period, but the application is universal, we should develop some form of non-violent warfare. (Richard Gregg, in the new edition of *The Power of Non-Violence*, describes non-violent resistance movements in the Scandinavian countries during the war). I think that the most important thing for us to engage ourselves in is the study of means of opposing tyranny, Communism, revived Nazism, Western militarism, by non-violent means. This is of course going off on another subject, and a vast one at that. But I wish to point out that there may be a practical and constructive alternative to supporting "the bad against the worse".

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

*To make the distinction clear. The cultures of the Picts and the Etruscans have vanished from the world, but the descendants of Pictish and Etruscan people still flourish in Scotland and Italy.

†In these cases there was even less chance of escape than for the German Jews. These unfortunate primitives had no people of their own race, in other countries, to speak for them and succour them. Not a single descendant of theirs survives.

‡Whereas an animal species once destroyed is gone for good. And wild animals in general are dying out fast.

§One might also advise perusal of the *Old Testament*, where the massacres are carried out with swords and spears. Our children's minds are still being poisoned by being taught to admire the ancient Hebrews.

Common Ground?

DEAR EDITORS,

Mr. Parker apparently believes that individuals can determine their economic condition as individuals. I regard this as being feasible only with individuals in association.

I am sure that Mr. Parker is not himself advocating any system of labour notes or works credit, reminiscent of that well known revolutionary, the late Mr. Sidney Webb, but even these, if workable, would still require association of effort. As for the authoritarian aspect of what Mr. Parker terms "the exclusivist approach", there are certain things in life, eating, sleeping, breathing, etc., which are also authoritarian, and I for one will be content to aim at the elimination of human authoritarianism, the domination of one individual over another, or of groups over others. That variations may occur—indeed will occur if the necessity arises—is accepted, which after all is in keeping with Mr. Parker's

BETTER!

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common ownership there can be no ideal of liberty of thought, since with coercive power to enforce rigid codes or regulations, and as I see it, actually there is little difference if any between the aims of Mr. Parker and myself. I am, however, convinced that freedom must arise from the development of economic forces rather than individual aspirations and that automation, by the elimination of drudgery and useless effort, will be the determining factor in this revolution.

I do appreciate though that to avoid the benevolent big brother State, our task is to advocate liberty all the time and in doing just that we are doing all we can, all that matters, and in which we are all on common ground.

Yours sincerely,

Surrey, 1/7/61.

F.B.

SPAIN 1936 Public Meeting

Public meeting to commemorate the Spanish workers' social revolutionary struggle against fascism and to express solidarity with the Spanish people.

Sunday July 16th at 6.30 p.m.

Speakers:

Speakers for the (CNT)

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LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP CENTRAL MEETINGS

L.A.G. Central London meetings are suspended for the time being pending the booking of a new meeting-place.

Hyde Park Meetings

Every Sunday at 3.30 (if fine)
On the Grass

OFF-CENTRE DISCUSSION MEETINGS

1st Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. at Jack and Mary Stevenson's, 6 Stainton Road, Enfield, Middx.

Last Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m. at Dorothy Barasi's, 45 Twyford Avenue, Fortis Green, N.2.

1st Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m. at Colin Ward's, 33 Ellerby Street, Fulham, S.W.6.

3rd Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. at Donald Room's, 148a Fellows Road, Swiss Cottage, N.W.3.

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Signpost to Nowhere

Continued from page 3

they would propose to both cooperate with and curb the directors of the few hundred great combines who today, to quote the L.P. statement, "determine between them what Britain should produce".

As their power increases, these men, together with the Directors of the leading insurance companies, are usurping the functions of a Government which is theoretically responsible to the whole people. . . . The free-enterprise system provides no check to this dangerous trend [of take-overs]. Far from restraining it, the record of the Tories is one of retreat from government by Ministers responsible to Parliament into government by boardrooms, responsible to no one.

We have always maintained in these columns that the real rulers of the country are not to be found on the Government benches. The Labour Party record in government and its statement in opposition are far from convincing arguments that in office they would be any more successful. But if they succeeded in establishing themselves as the effective government even more reason for the working people of this country to doubt that any government can serve the people's true interests. For the greater the power of the government the less say have the people in their own affairs.

Full-employment, social security in sickness and old-age, opportunity, these are words which belong to the vocabulary of the insecure society of capitalism. Leisure, freedom, struggle, living, belong to a different language which no government whatever its complexion or the promises it makes, can provide. To move from a society in which production is for profit or is geared to the policies of State, to one in which it is based on needs requires more than a change of government. The Labour Party statement reminds us that

the top 1 per cent. of the population owns nearly half the nation's private wealth and property. . . . In 1959 over £6,000 millions were made in untaxed capital gains.

To dislodge such privilege requires something more radical than a change in government personnel.

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