

## WORLD GROWING HUNGRIER

FOR the peasants who form the bulk of the 2,400 millions of the world's population, progress is an empty word, for the most primary factor for their survival, food, is getting scarcer rather than improving. Recent United Nations' economic reports have made this quite clear.

They have been summarised in the following words by the *Observer*: "The outstanding single impression given by them all is that, seven years after the end of the war, the economic and social gulf between the industrialised countries and the under-developed countries is wider and more difficult to bridge than ever."

"The rich nations, apparently, are getting richer, and the poorer ones, in many ways—and in spite of everything that has been done by the United Nations, by Governments and by private enterprise and charity—are getting poorer."

"Food is the best index of this. Each of the three reports, tackling it from a different angle, relentlessly points the point home: there is less food for every mouth in the world than there was 15 years ago. Not more of it goes to Americans, Australians, and New Zealanders, and less than ever goes to Asians."

FREEDOM has always sought to assess the economic situation of the peasant population of the world. The daily newspapers are filled with news of political happenings, often with the most prominent headlines. Yet, in a few weeks, such happenings have been forgotten and replaced in importance by other equally superficial events. Underneath all this so-called news, the basic struggle of the world's peasants for bread remorselessly goes on comparatively unaffected even by the wars and military convulsions which dominate the lives of citizens of the western, the industrialized, world.

A social viewpoint which has any validity must constantly take into account the fundamental struggle for food and place it in proper proportion in contemporary events.

### Peasant Diets

The United Nations' Report on the world social situation shows the effect of pressure of hunger on the kind of crops grown. In South-East Asia, for example, where recent years have shown a reduction in the amount of food per head of population, the farmers have concentrated more and more on starchy foods like sweet potatoes and cassava, which are poor in protein minerals and vitamins, and so do not make a health-giving diet. They are, however, both filling to the stomach and provide energy for continued work. From a dietetic point of view such foods are uneconomic, like the bread and margarine and jam diets of the urban workers during the inter-war period; but they do provide the immediate means to go on working, and they are cheap. They show how poverty and hunger are potent factors in determining agricultural policy and while such potent

### MUTUAL AID

A TEAM of 20 gardeners have volunteered to help to cultivate the gardens of disabled tenants living on the Thorntree Estate, Middlesbrough. The Borough Treasurer and Housing Officer, in commending the action of these "Good Samaritans," report that if such a spirit can be shown on this estate it will spread to others. The Housing Committee has agreed to buy a lawn mower, wheelbarrow and other implements for the use of the volunteers. *Popular Gardening*, 17/5/52.

against some standard of value. This standard is always the arbitrary scale of supply and demand—providing one remembers that demand does not mean need, but ability to pay. The fantastic division of the world into primary producing peasant agricultural countries, on the one hand, chronically poor and undernourished yet increasingly overpopulated; and, on the other, the industrial nations, with an ignorant uprooted urban proletariat increasingly given over to war production, and dependent on imported food; this division is purely arbitrary and dependent on a method of economy which a majority of thinking men intellectually reject.

The stranglehold of the economic factor is well shown by a contrast. The Social Report points out that the wiping out of mass diseases such as yaws and malaria by a combination of medical research and public health policy has exerted an astonishing effect on the productivity of certain areas. In one district of East Pakistan, for example, rice harvests rose by 15 per cent. when malaria control was introduced, without any change in the method of cultivation or the variety of rice planted.

Where science can be applied, results follow. But the grip of the market system of economy makes the application of science the exception rather than the rule. Where its effects are most marked—in reducing death rates and increasing infant survival rates—moreover, it exacerbates the general problem by contributing to the enormous increases in population, in the numbers of mouths to fill.

pressure is exerted long-term ideas about what ought to be grown, are likely to be pushed aside.

This U.N. report declares that to effect even a moderate improvement in the diets of the Far East, the Near East, Africa and Latin America (that is the great primary producing areas), cereal crops would have to be doubled; pulses (beans, peas, lentils—vegetables with a comparatively high protein content) would have to be trebled; while livestock should be increased by between two and four times depending on the particular animals concerned.

### Expansion of Industry

In the face of this appalling picture of the situation of the world's peasants—the dumb, unknown mass on whose shoulders the rest of the world sits—the expansion of industrial output seems like a huge irrelevancy. The expansion is shown, for example, by the case of Japan, whose industrial output at the end of 1951 had almost regained the 1937 peak level. German industry has shown a similar recovery.

Symptomatic of our age is the fact that the expansion has been especially notable in the metallurgical and engineering industry—the industries of war.

### Primacy of Trade Factor

The economic situation of the world can only be understood in relation to the pattern imposed by trade, by the exchange of goods

## The Wage Freeze Again

WE do not intend to be diverted from the path we know to be right," said Anthony Eden at Aberdeen last Saturday. "We intend to hold the national interest high above mere party advantage."

It is always amusing to note how those who have power, or advantage, refer to it as something that they don't really want. They accept it as a duty towards the nation. They have greatness thrust upon them—much against their will.

But when one remembers the bitter party strife in which the Tories indulged between the elections of 1950 and 1951, although we are quite sure they were convinced that it was for the good of the nation, it would look as though party advantage was a matter of some importance to them then.

For Eden now to talk of "mere" party advantage might be a little galling for all those Tory back-benchers who harried the Labour Government night after night in interminable squabble, and for all those party agents who worked so hard at the election to put the party in.

But, of course, they know the party game. When you have power you must always pretend that it is not what you really wanted. You did not want power over people, you only wanted power to serve them. It was not power or party advantage that the Tories wanted—it was the opportunity to serve the people of Britain.

As an earnest of how service-minded they were, the Cabinet cut its own salary on taking office. Churchill knocked a couple of thousand off his salary of £10,000, and the other minor (a mere £5,000 a year) Ministers decided that they could rub along on only £4,000 a year—plus their income from all the other sources, of course. We pointed out at the time, that because of the super-tax these gentry pay, the actual cuts they volunteered represented only a few pounds a year actual income, and we also headed an article "Watch out for Wage Cuts", in which we maintained that the Cabinet's voluntary "sacrifices" were a prelude to compulsory cuts in the incomes of less favoured sections of the community.

Our attention has recently been drawn

\*Organ of the Merseyside Portworkers' Committee. Available from FREEDOM PRESS at 2d. (1½d. postage).

(by the *Portworkers' Clarion*\*) to a passage from the writings of Lord Keynes: "Whilst workers will usually resist a reduction in money wages, it is not their practice to withdraw their labour whenever there is a rise in wage goods. In fact a movement by employers to review many wage bargains downwards will be much more strongly resisted than a gradual and automatic lowering of real wages as a result of rising prices." And the Tories, wiser in 1952 than in 1926, have been putting that Keynesian trick into operation.

Now, they can no longer do that. The bottom is dropping out of the markets, and there is no longer the ability to raise prices. In fact, prices are coming down in most commodities which do not use the same materials as armaments. While metal and electronic goods still rise in price, textiles (including nylon), furniture, pottery and such home-consumption goods are falling in price. Not, however, because of any goodwill on the part of the manufacturers, but because the public are just not buying.

Our real wages have fallen as a result of rising prices—and the post-Budget rise in food prices is now preventing us from benefiting from the fall in other commodities.

So the Government is now being driven into the position of having to make a direct attack on our wages. They do not dare—yet—to attempt wage cuts, but Mr. Butler has now appealed to the Trade Union leaders to accept once again a wage freeze.

"Once again." The last time was under the Labour Government, in 1948. Then, of course, the working class party explained it all to the working class as being absolutely necessary "in the national interests" and so on. Now that the Tories are doing it, the Labour newspapers are resenting it as an attack on the workers' standards.

But the Labour politicians and T.U. leaders themselves are not making such a fuss. Even they are not quite so brass-necked as to pretend that they are doing more than make a token protest. It is shadow-boxing on the good old Parliamentary pattern, and in point of fact that staunch class-collaborator, Arthur Deakin, has already come out in support of increased profits for the bosses, but wage restraint for the workers, saying, "If industries are making large profits it ought not to be the incentive for us to go out and make extravagant claims."

The workers' favourite (?) T.U. leader is therefore now quite frankly in favour of extravagant profits but austerity wages.

So, once again, all the Anarchist points are rammed home with uncomfortable force for the workers. The same policies exactly being put into operation by different parties; the Trade Union leaders, supporting measures obviously against the interests of their members, the workers either being unemployed or overworked and underpaid.

The money and wages systems so clearly work against the producers all the time—whether there is inflation or deflation—that the whole struggle for wages, is a tragic farce.

It must, of course, be fought—under present circumstances. But to imagine—as Trade Unionists clearly do—that it is a permanent and inevitable feature of human life, is to condemn the majority of mankind to never-ending and wearisome struggle and wage slavery.

Now that the Trade Unions are admittedly not going to fight, is it not time that the workers began to turn to other directions? Is it not time that they began to rely on their own strength again, to fight for better conditions now—and then to abolish the lunatic capitalist system altogether? P.S.

the alternative) nevertheless, fear men and women who aspire to real freedom.

Indeed, freedom on the lips of politicians, has become the most abused and distorted word in our language. Freedom and government are anti-theses, and only when this is widely understood throughout the world, will the free society begin to grow to its full stature.

What an extraordinary world we live in, where science can split the atom, and observe stars millions of light years away besides giving us a picture of life on this planet millions of years ago, and yet we are so short-sighted that the simplest concepts, on which human happiness depends, eludes us! The human species, it would seem, has developed an enormous head to contain its knowledge at the expense of its heart.

LIBERTARIAN.

## FOREIGN COMMENTARY

### ITALIAN ELECTIONS & FREEDOM OF OPINION

THIS week, following a long campaign of posters and vituperation on all sides, administrative elections are being held in central and southern Italy and the islands of Sardinia and Sicily. On the whole, the election campaign has passed quietly, with only a few arrests and broken heads. The chief of the police at Reggio, Calabria, has been sacked for "failure to guarantee freedom of speech at political meetings" and the Italian Ministry of the Interior has taken "drastic steps" to protect this freedom by ordering all authorities in the 33 provinces and more than 2,400 municipalities where elections are taking place to "intervene with maximum force to protect democratic liberties" and warning them that any laxity in enforcement should be severely punished. Furthermore, that they should suspend public political meetings "partly or entirely in communities where groups attempt to stifle 'liberty of speech' and those responsible cannot be determined."

At the same time as the Catholic Ministry of the Interior was ordering local authorities to defend freedom of speech with "maximum force" (what a curious way of defending freedom!) the Catholic hierarchy was doing its best to stifle that very freedom of opinion (for what other reason does one advocate freedom of speech if not to freely form one's own opinion?) by threatening all Catholics with the fires of hell if they did not vote for the right candidate! In Sardinia, the island's bishops and archbishops in a collective episcopal letter warned Catholics that anyone who fails to vote "commits mortal sin and is a deserter" for "the vote is the most direct and effective means of defending rights not only of the human being, the family and fatherland, but especially of religion and the Church, most gravely menaced by the foes of Christianity." Having told them they must vote... or else, the hierarchy then tells them for whom they must vote, for the Catholic is "held under pain of grave guilt to give his vote exclusively to names and lists that give assurance not only of com-

petence, but also of respect and defense of Catholic morals and the sacred rights of the Church and of souls.

"The vote cannot be given to candidates or lists based on the atheistic-materialistic Communist programme." Not only in Sardinia are the people threatened with the fires of hell. In S. Italy the bishops warned Catholics that it is a mortal sin to vote for Communists or their allies in the elections.\*

EVERY country on both sides of the Curtain threatens or cajols the people to accept restrictions on freedom of speech and movement in the interest of "greater freedom or greater prosperity" in some unspecified future. In Italy, the Communists promise prosperity if they are given power, whilst the Catholics who are in power do not promise prosperity if they are returned but warn that there will be no freedom if the Communists and the Left in general win power. In creating fear of Communism all kinds of abuses of freedom are justified, just as in Communist-dominated countries capitalist hell fires are the alternative to what is euphemistically called the "people's democracies." On both sides of the curtain, the net result of such policies of fear is the eventual elimination of all civil liberties everywhere. Already it is clear that the only criticism permitted East of the curtain is of small officials, of managers of factories and collectives, of local leaders, and so on, but never of the hierarchy of the Party or of their policies. What the leaders do is always right because they know best and they are incorruptible. Any apparently harsh measures are ultimately for the good of the people. A similar mentality is sweeping across the so-called free world. The Seretse Khama case has recently had its equivalent in Algeria, where M. Messali Hadj, leader of the Algerian Nationalist Party, was arrested at Orleanville in Algeria last week and brought to France. "He will be allotted a residence in Western France without the right to visit other departments."

In America, the right of movement—the right of the American citizen to leave the country at will—has been denied to a number of persons by the refusal of a passport. The latest victim is Dr. Linus Pauling "one of America's leading chemists" (according to the A.P. report) who has been refused a passport to visit Britain on the grounds that "it would not be in the best interests of the United States".

Dr. Pauling is head of the department of chemistry and chemical engineering at the California Institute of Technology, is a former president of the American Chemical Society.

He said he planned to visit England to participate in a conference of the Royal Institute of Great Britain.

In Japan, the Government has drafted a Subversive Activities Prevention Bill—which it pushed through the House of Representatives—in spite of nation-wide protest strikes. The *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in Tokyo, refers to this Bill as giving the Japanese Government increased powers over not only the Communists but all anti-Government parties in the country.

This is, in fact, the danger in the West to-day. You cannot strike at a particular political faction without involving everybody else. And one cannot too often repeat that the only answer to those who threaten freedom is more freedom. People who believe in freedom, who are educated to the love of freedom above all things, are immune to the onslaughts of totalitarian thought. Is it not significant that the countries where Stalinism has gained most ground are those countries where the people are both materially impoverished and without rights or the elementary freedoms? Of course, Governments though they recognise this fact (for instance, one recalls that penetrating remark by the Labour Home Secretary, Mr. Chuter Ede, when he said that the answer to evil ideas was not suppression but offering good ideas as





