

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Under no form of government is it so dangerous to erect a political idol as in a democratic republic, for once erected, it is a political sin against the holy ghost to lay hands upon it."
—VON HOLST.

Threepence.

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DE GAULLE MISFIRES ?

Pflimlin Government's Algerian Policy Unchanged

CUPS D'ETAT, though in some cases they may seek to exploit popular feeling, never are risings of people, for never are they, nor they by their very nature be, spontaneous, unpremeditated, uncalculated actions. Like wars, their success needs a justification, an appeal which will rally maximum popular support to the "cause". But success depends on the element of surprise, on catching the adversary unprepared or politically embarrassed; it depends on the first move being decisive. Hesitation is hence the need for perfect co-ordination of all the strategic elements so that when the blow is delivered it will be at maximum strength.

"Democratic" governments claim they govern with the powers conferred on them by the electorate through the voice of parliament. In this power they make the laws, and it is their control of the armed military and civilian forces which in ensures that the laws will be respected and their Executive power respected. Believers in government deny this, yet it seems self-evident to us. Which coup d'état within living memory has not been led by the military or by former military men as figure-heads for a politico-military conspiracy?

★

LAST week's events in Algiers and Paris were not the spontaneous manifestation of the people which the successful generals and politicians in Algeria are making them out to be. They have all the imprints of the carefully prepared *coup d'état*, the first step in the realisation of which, was the overthrow of the Gaillard government by the Rightists withholding their votes and accusing him of getting ready to sell-out Algeria. Then there was

the execution by the F.L.N. of three French parachutists who were found guilty of committing atrocities. And finally there was the meeting of the Assembly at which M. Pflimlin was seeking a vote to enable him to form a government. But we insist these are not the causes of the "rebellion" but in the eyes of the rebels were seen as propitious issues for playing their hand.

It may also be, however, that the rebels felt obliged as a result of new political developments to come into the open before they had completed their plans, or fully explored the chances of success in France itself. The fact of the matter is that whilst the *coup* in Algiers was bound to succeed—after all the military leaders were already doing as they liked and could count on support from the millions of white *colons* in anything they did to flout the wishes of the administration acting under orders from Paris—at no time have the chances of a corresponding success in Paris seemed even remotely possible, except perhaps in the eyes of journalists with too vivid imaginations. General de Gaulle's brief announcement of last Thursday week—in which he reiterated his belief that the "régime of the parties" could not deal with France's major problems, and reminded the country that once before, when it was at "its lowest ebb", it had given him its confidence to lead it and felt that "it [the country] should know that I hold myself in readiness to assume the powers of the Republic."—de Gaulle's statement was a clear admission of General Massu's failure to establish a bridgehead of revolt among what are left of the armed forces, and in the security forces, in metropolitan France.

It was also perhaps an attempt to sound the potential forces of a

right-wing revolt, in which case, the ambiguity in the General's statement was intentional. However, it not only failed to rouse much enthusiasm, let alone spark off a *coup d'état*, but actually succeeded in awakening some sections of the hitherto apathetic left-wing movements, to the realisation that the General's statement smelled strongly of dictatorship!

Last Monday afternoon he made another statement and answered questions at a crowded Press conference. He confirmed his willingness to take over the leadership of the government "if the people want it", and explained that when he had said in his first statement that he was prepared "to assume the powers of the Republic" he meant that

the powers of the Republic can only be those which the Republic delegates. I shall make no attempt to violate the Republic, but to obtain by legal means the changes in the political system that seem necessary."

On the other hand de Gaulle expressed his support for the Algerian generals whom he refused to call rebellious since, he said, amidst laughter, not even the government had described them as such.* Is he suggesting that there has been no change in the set-up in Algeria in the past fortnight or is he saying that what changes have taken place were not a "violation of the Republic"? By not condemning Massu

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*In fact M. Pflimlin in his speech in the Assembly last Tuesday week referred to those military leaders "who have taken up a position which—I say it with regret—is a position of insurrection against the republican law."

Patriotic Socialism

THE 'respectability' of the Labour Party, if any further proof was needed, has been confirmed by the increase in the middle-class vote—the kind of people who cannot stomach the idea of a free equalitarian society, but who want nevertheless to benefit from a system which offers no threat to their privileged positions. The 'welfare' state gives their offspring the same welfare as working class kids, and since the Labour Party is generally thought of as being more committed to securing the social services than the Tories, nowadays it is the obvious choice for the middle class.

No more embarrassing outbursts from the one-time rebellious leader who, right in the forefront of fashion has proved what a dandy he is by clothing himself in the H-bomb. That 'statesman-like' action of Bevan's at Brighton clinched the middle-class vote.

Loyalties, however, are easily switched, and after the Labour Party assumes power once more we will await, with patience born out of our cynicism, the recriminations and accusations indicating that the marriage has been soured by closer association.

Another respectable pair of Labour Party members, Messrs. Gaitskell and Driberg, visited the German Social Democrats last week in a bid to help them secure the German middle-class vote.

The Anglo-Catholic Socialist Driberg will no doubt have an appeal for the morbid, and Gaitskell is hardly distinguishable from any other middle-class business man. It has been whispered that at one meeting he wore a *red tie* but when greeting the members of the audience he gave a casual "American-

style big-hand". The reply from the crowd was some old-fashioned clenched fists, which could mean anything—a comradely greeting or a threat?

The 'socialists' who abandoned their concept of internationalism for the patriotic period of the war now return to Germany to meet German socialists who did the same thing. Relations between them have never been better, simpered Gaitskell. Is it to be wondered at that the 'idealistic' anarchists vomit when the 'realistic' politicians publicly proclaim their hypocrisy and think that everyone believes their claptrap!

Cliché followed cliché, and every second one concealed a lie. Dear German brother, our "policies are very close", mouthed Gaitskell: "we both recognise that in the conditions of the world to-day the Western Democracies must take the appropriate means of defence of the West to deter the Soviets from attacking us".

How close are the 'defence' policies of British and German socialists? The Social Democrats are opposed to having nuclear weapons or bases in Germany. No doubt they have their political reasons, and many Germans, in remembering the results of the last war may not want to risk another holocaust and will support a party opposed to nuclear arms. But the British Labour Party carrying on the policies of the Conservatives will insist that Germany, as well as Britain, be turned into targets, and attackers.

And what of fellow socialists in the Soviet Union? Well, dear Russian brother, you may not like your Government or what it is doing, but we have to do as we are told, don't we? Long live patriotic socialism!
M.

Reflections on the Bus Strike

The Uncoordinated Struggle

PEOPLE who interpret events in terms of historical processes, taking the broad view and professing to be scientifically objective about the fate of human beings—such people comfort themselves, and attempt to comfort others, by the 'progress' they read into the events they interpret.

If you see things big enough, and think in the mechanical terms which explain historical processes, progress can certainly be discerned over the centuries and justification is thus provided for the human misery involved. The world was a cleaner place in 1946, after the disappearance of Hitler, than it was in 1939, and all that mixed bag of idealists and opportunists, socialists and capitalists who supported the war thought that the millions of lives were well spent and the appalling destruction worth while.

The fact that the war did nothing to change the world so that wars could not happen again, that nothing emerged from the holocaust which prevents the continuance of tyranny (indeed one of the immediate results of the war was the establishment of Stalin's tyranny over a greater area than Hitler ever ruled), that all the ingredients for the emergence of fascism still remain—as France's present crisis shows—and the Franco régime in Spain was untouched by the Nazi defeat; all this is overlooked in the satisfaction for the main result of the war.

Sputnik the Justification
Similarly do the Communists justify the terrible sufferings of the

Russian peoples as a result of Stalin's policies. The massive deportations, the physical deprivations, every result of Russia's industrial revolution, which crammed into thirty years as much misery as was spread over 150 years during the slower industrial revolution in Britain, and finally the culmination of the old tyrant's lunatic policies in the war—these have all been justified by the Sputnik, the symbol of the Soviet technological triumph.

Material progress is all. If human beings are ground under in the historical process, that is unavoidable. A pity, but unavoidable.

One finds the same sort of attitude in those who see the class struggle in every strike, the onward march of the workers in every wage increase. These people see what they want to see in an event and are thus diverted from the reality in favour of their theory.

We wrote last week that, in order for the London busmen to win their strike, they must have the support of the railwaymen. Particularly the Underground workers, but those on the suburban lines as well. We claim no special genius for analysis in having made this point. It seems crystal clear and must actually have been plain to everybody.

A Government Lead

It was obviously plain to the Government and to Sir Brian Robertson, boss of British Railways, for the Minister of Labour intervened (which he has to date refused to do in the bus strike) in the dispute between the railwaymen and Sir Brian

and the latter yielded from his previously determined refusal to offer any hope for the railmen before the Autumn, and has settled with the workers—who have accepted a pitiful increase of three per cent.—as from the end of June!

This follows the unions' professed determination to have a decent rise right away—or else. At delegates' meetings up and down the country the rank and file expressed its determination to strike by May 18 if no satisfactory settlement was forthcoming. Whether that rank and file considers the settlement that has in fact been made as worth while, nobody knows and presumably nobody cares. The leaders of the three railway unions have accepted the conditions and we hear nothing of any revolt from the rank and file.

Their militancy has petered out—bought off by a three per cent. raise! And the most important result is that the London busmen now stand very little chance of winning their strike. They have been left roasting by the railwaymen.

Other strikes are going on—but none which effect the busmen. At Smithfield meat market the porters have joined the drivers who have been on strike for three weeks, and in turn they have been supported by cold storage workers in the docks.

All Unconnected

What we see going on at the moment, in fact, is the typical pattern of industrial struggle in this country—reformist and sectional. The workers involved in the strikes

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Radiation Victims

THE UNLUCKY FISHERMAN

THE *Observer* is currently serialising "The Voyage of the *Lucky Dragon*" which is being published this month by Frederick Muller, and which describes the fate of twenty-three Japanese fishermen who were the victims of radiation from the first operational hydrogen bomb exploded on Bikini Atoll by the United States on March 1st, 1954.

Only one of the fishermen died in hospital. After over a year the others were released "lucky" to be only bald and sterile to face the future uncertain of what sicknesses they may still develop as a result of their unfortunate chance encounter with a peace-time H-bomb explosion dropped by the people who had devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the same experimental purposes—after the Japanese had asked for a cessation of hostilities.

The *Lucky Dragon* was over a hundred miles east of Bikini and outside the prescribed dangerous area when the bomb exploded. But the "unexpected" happened and the result is described by the author, Ralph E. Lapp, formerly Scientific Adviser to the United States War Department:

The high-altitude winds pulled and tugged the bomb cloud in the "wrong direction," that is to say, opposite to that expected by the test experts. The northern edge of the cloud veered downwind,

passed over the island of Enyu in the Bikini group, and drifted eastwards. It took time for the cloud to travel downwind to where the *Lucky Dragon* lay low in the water, and it took additional time for the tiny particles to swirl down from the high altitude.

Why fuss about so few when so many are being killed every day somewhere in the world, the realists will argue. And the patriots will say what do a handful of Japanese fishermen matter if by experimenting with H-bombs we are saving the world from Communism?

What can one reply to such statements except to protest that it is because we do not care about the fate of ordinary individuals everywhere that brutality is accepted (with barely a thought for the victims) as a necessary part of human society? If we cannot do more than merely shrug away the Japanese victims, whose tragedy seems closer because they have been given names; men with faces, personalities and families and whose simple, day-to-day job of fishing was to end so drastically, with a resigned "too bad", we have little hope of feeling for the un-named mass of people who die in their millions, or of encouraging an attitude of mind which might lead people to refuse to slaughter each other in the interests of—what? Patriotism, politics and economic gain.

REPORT ON THE CO-OPS - 2

(Continued from previous issue)

IF, as I suggested last week, anarchists have shown little interest in the Co-op. Movement, the same cannot be said of socialists. It is true of course that most socialists are convinced that the Co-ops. are very much a junior partner in the broad Labour alliance. The Co-ops. may be a 'wing' of the working class movement but it is definitely the *third* wing. The Labour Movement, like most feathered vertebrates, could manage quite successfully with only two wings but it is useful to carry a spare as well. For most of the 19th century, it should be remembered, the position in Britain was very different. Then, the Co-operative Movement was the social movement—the only movement which had as its object the supersession of the capitalist order. The Labour Party did not exist and the trade unions were mainly organisations of skilled workers which sought to improve their position within the capitalist framework. In the last decade of the century, however, things began to change. The ubiquitous Webbs initiated a policy of Fabian permeation of the Co-ops., which at that time were largely controlled by men who were Liberal in political allegiance. This Fabian policy was a great success, although it took a generation to carry through. The young Co-operators were converted to State Socialism and when, as middle-aged men, they reached positions of authority in the movement, they led the Co-ops. into the socialist camp. A Co-op. Party was formed which, almost from the beginning, has been in effect an adjunct of the Labour Party—notwithstanding the differences between the two organisations which have manifested themselves from time to time. Ideologically, the effect of the socialist 'take-over' of the Co-ops. meant that Co-operation from being a movement to achieve by voluntary means the Co-operative Commonwealth became merely one form of social ownership, alongside municipal ownership and nationalisation. Co-operation was incorporated in

the vision of the Socialist Commonwealth.

This incorporation inevitably raised the question of the area to be assigned to the Co-ops. in the future socialist society. Disagreement on precise boundary lines was inevitable and still exists but, broadly, the area to be assigned was obvious—the retail sector and those industries producing basic individual consumer goods. Unfortunately for those who drew up the blue-print of the pink future this plan presupposed the ability of the Co-ops. to capture for themselves the area of the economy assigned to them. Social ownership in the forms of nationalisation and municipalisation could be extended when the socialists succeeded in gaining control of the organs of government but not so the co-operative form of social ownership. Even socialist majorities on the management committees of Co-ops. could not legislate co-operation into existence.

When the socialist blue-print was first drawn up at the beginning of the century, the prospects for the Co-op. Movement looked quite good. Since 1844, when the movement 'was born again and born different', membership had increased steadily. By 1900 there were 1½ million Co-operators organised in some 1,400 local societies which between them did about 7% of the total retail trade of the country. This latter figure was small compared with the objective of 100% but several factors appeared to favour the view that future expansion would be at a more rapid rate. For one thing the Co-ops. had an advantage over their private competitors. They catered for a known market—their members—and could rely to a large extent on member 'loyalty'. This meant that the Co-ops. could afford to effect various economies. For example, they could place their stores in the back streets,

secure in the knowledge that their customers, stimulated by the prospect of a fairly substantial dividend on purchases—then an average of 2s. 6d. in the £—would take the trouble to seek them out. The same factor allowed the Co-ops. to make do with fewer shops: members were willing to travel longer distances just to shop at the Co-op. Another important factor was that the Co-ops. were the most efficient type of retailer. They had been first in the field to develop relatively large-scale retailing—the larger societies having scores of shops compared with the normal 'one man, one shop' in the private trade. Moreover, the Co-ops. were not merely retailers. They had shown what could be done by way of achieving economies of vertical integration. They had cut out many of the parasitic middle-men by establishing their own productive units. In some instances, complete integration had been achieved when the Co-ops. gained control of sources of raw materials e.g. by buying tea plantations in Ceylon. And, finally, the edifice had been completed by the C.W.S. setting up its own banking department and insurance society, thus freeing the movement from capitalist financial control. Little wonder, then, that in 1900 Co-operators liked to talk of their movement as 'a State within a State'. All that remained for the following generations of Co-operators was to continue the good work until they had completely socialised the retail sector of the economy.

Alas, the plans of Co-operators, like those of mice and men, 'gang aft agly'. The private shopkeepers obstinately refused to be competed out of existence by their co-operative rivals. Instead, the more intelligent private traders began to take a leaf out of the co-op. copy book and even to improve on the lessons they learned. They saw that the era of

the small shopkeeper was over and that the future belonged to the large-scale retailer. Private multiple concerns began to develop rapidly in the first decades of the 20th century and the largest of them set their sights at covering the whole country. They were not prevented, like the local Co-ops. from opening branches wherever they thought it profitable. They were not contained within any local boundary; one national organisation would suffice and, by centralised control, they could switch goods from one branch to another with comparative ease. Moreover, these new private multiples applied more systematically than the Co-ops. one of the first lessons of large-scale organisation—specialisation. The Co-ops. set themselves up as general dealers or 'universal providers', aiming to cater in one organisation for all the consumer needs of their members, from Co-op. cradle to Co-op. coffin. Not so, the multiples. The most successful private multiples restricted themselves to a limited range of commodities and thereby achieved the advantages of specialisation—more competent management and larger turnovers. This organisation gave them a greater flexibility than the Co-ops. possessed and enabled them to adapt more easily to the changes in retailing that occurred between the wars—the new emphasis on advertising and branded goods, the sale of mass-produced goods at highly competitive prices and the changes in shopping habits consequent on developments in transport. The Co-ops. had demonstrated the advantage of combining retailing and wholesaling in one organisation. Some of the private multiples went one stage further: they cut out wholesaling altogether and bought direct from manufacturers whose factories they didn't bother to own but whose policies they could effectively control simply by guaranteeing them large orders.

The result has been very different from the optimistic visions cherish-

ed by Co-operators in 1900. True, the membership of the Co-operative Movement has continued to expand so that it now embraces one adult in every three. There are now over 12 million members of Co-ops. organised in some 950 societies. This vast increase in membership has not brought with it a comparable increase in trade. In the years of the 20th century the Co-ops. have only increased their share of total retail trade from 7% to 11%. Contrast this with the increase achieved by multiple organisations with more than 10 shops apiece. Collectively, such multiples did mere 3–4% of the total retail trade in 1900—half that of the Co-ops. to-day, they do 20–25%—

Continued on

BOOK REVIEW

SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE by Jeanette M. Muller, 25s.

WITH admirable detachment and lightly by sympathetic understanding of her subject, Dr. Foster has piled a volume of great value to anyone interested in, or involved in the study of, female variance.

Though her subject matter is obviously mainly concerned with fictional syncretism there is a good deal of psychological insight in the text, and her approach to each work, good, bad or indifferent, it may be, spotlights the salient and useful to the student.

Wherever the variant note is so faint as to have little bearing on the remainder of the novel, Dr. Foster has left it intact into her text.

From Sappho and Ruth to the present day naturally covers a vast field and a good deal of relevant material is accessible, in German, etc. Nevertheless the author appears to have dealt with almost everything of importance written on her subject.

The book is, I consider, a great asset to the library of any student of psychology, comprising as it does such excellent bibliographical material.

FRANCESCA GORDON

VIEWPOINT

The H-Bomb Dilemma

AS a matter of fact, atom and hydrogen bombs exist in considerable quantities, and are constantly added to; tests proceed unabated to make them more deadly, to deliver them more rapidly and farther, and more accurately to achieve specific aims; nations which do not possess them are working for the day when they also will have them, when also the ignition points and chances of a general conflagration will be increased.

As a matter of ethics, the use of bombs is wicked because killing is so. Their manufacture is also wicked because they can hardly be used for purposes other than killing. To pay taxes which the State may use for the manufacture of bombs, or to co-operate in any way with a State who manufactures and will eventually use them, is also, strictly speaking, unethical. But a strict ethical life can only be demanded from a free man, and, what is not often realized, the great majority of people in this or any other country are not born free. To achieve perfect ethical life is to achieve perfect freedom. But to do this one must be prepared to suffer great discomforts and privations, even to lose one's life in the attempt. The weakness of the principle of ethical perfection, as of him who is born a slave, is that no sufficient reasons can be found making it imperative to sacrifice one's life to what is right.

As a matter of power, there is practically nothing that anybody can do to stop bombs from being made, tested and stored to-day, and from being dropped to-morrow. Too many power organizations are involved, and to make them desist from their pursuits a power is needed as strong as theirs. Ideas and tacit assumptions are also difficult to find, by which to rally a sufficient number of people who will strike the evil of nuclear bombs at all its roots. Among these are the existence of separate States and the irresistible momentum acquired by technological development.

War is incurred, on one side at least, through refusal to submit to a foreign power. The dilemma, as put to-day to

the British people, is between the horrors of nuclear warfare and life under the Communist yoke. Those who opt for the first show that they put reasons to live before life itself. According to the principle of freedom, they are as entitled to fight in order to avoid a servitude which they do not want as those who do not mind exchanging one kind of servitude for another are not to be dragged to fight. Those who want to fight may cause the death of those who do not want to, but so may those who do not want to fight bring a hated kind of servitude upon those who do. Such are the painful situations arising from bringing the principle of freedom into a context of servitude.

He who, lacking fighting spirit, or for any other reason does not want to fight, is inclined to see all the worst aspects of a threatening war. He who is ready for it, on the other hand, may take enormous risks, but will also do his best under every circumstance to prevent the worst from happening to him. The non-fighter takes the victims' or the spectators' point of view, and thus sees history as a series of recurrences and laws, of inevitabilities, futilities and disasters. The fighter, who sees it from the point of view of a participant, knows it to be a material susceptible of receiving many imprints, including his own.

Because each man is capable of freedom, and there are millions of men whom desperation or exaltation may cause to take the greatest risks, the future scorns all prophecies and baffles all wisdom. As the saying goes, it may never happen. This element of unpredictability is humanity's greatest hope in the present juncture. The bombs may never be dropped disastrously to affect our country, they may never be dropped at all.

Only he who lives in a fool's paradise may expect people to surrender without a fight the things they cherish most. Only he who believes in a paradise after death, or in an order of things eternal, may say that they ought so to surrender them. To bring this point home, let us imagine that an anarchist society has

been established in Great Britain, and that there is no external balance of powers to allow us to sit on the fence unconcerned. Would we be well-advised to scrap the H-bomb when a foreign State is in a position to tell us: "Give up your anarchist ways or we drop it on you"? If an anarchist society is worth building, and if H-bombs or other murderous weapons are the only effective means of fending off attack, should they not be kept handy, and used if need be?

It is, of course, impossible to foresee when, and under what circumstances, an anarchist society will be built in Great Britain or anywhere else, but the question of defending it by means commensurate to those that may be used against it is very important for anyone who wishes it to be built, because how it will be built and what it will be like depends in no small measure on how this question is solved.

In the present situation, where anarchist influence is infinitesimal, it is impossible realistically to see how the H-bomb could be scrapped, unless the whole world were politically unified. The tendency towards world unification has been underlined by Dijlas as now the most actively and irresistibly at work. Unfortunately, world unification is more likely to come about through a third world war than without. Armaments, at any rate, would not be constantly increased and perfected if a pacific solution were envisaged by those from whom the unleashing of a nuclear war is to be feared.

The possibility of the leaders of the most important modern states seeing where their best interest lies is not to be excluded altogether. Present leaders, however, are too far committed to positions of mutual hostility and mistrust to achieve unity of oppression and exploitation. The present co-existence of different blocks of exploiters and oppressors is very precarious. Yet the hope of solving their differences without resorting to war is fondly nursed by them both. Each relies on a change of personnel in the policy-making body of the other. The Communists count on fellow-travellers

taking over in the West, and the Western leaders on more liberal-minded teams gaining the upper hand in the East. Both being aware of this state of affairs, liberal tendencies are stifled and persecuted in Krushchev's and Mao's empires, while communists and pro-communists are kept off every position of responsibility wherever American power holds sway.

What way is there out of the H-bomb dilemma? There is none, once we have allowed ourselves to be gored and lifted upon its horns. Once we have accepted the alternative "H-bomb or world-communism", our cause is lost. Full freedom consists in choosing the things we shall choose from, not in making a choice which someone else imposes. To elect choices is the true mark of freedom, as to impose them is the true mark of power. Our chance of conquering freedom and power depends then on our ability to work for what we want, not in using up all our energies in opposing something we do not want, only to find out that we have strengthened something else which we want even less.

The H-bomb dangers are very real, and so are those of Communism. The more we stare at them, however, the more we are paralyzed in our faith, in our will, in our hopes. We must rely on the unpredictability of history. After all, Communism and the H-bomb are not the only forces at work in our midst, and competing for our future. Other forces there are, to which we may lend our support, capable of diverting into other channels energies and interests which are now dammed by preoccupation with communism and the bomb or working for their development.

Our aim should be to clarify, strengthen and propagate the anarchist ideology, to mark the contours of anarchist man, of the anarchist way of life, to understand, and to give form and substance to, anarchist power. We must make anarchism a presence, and to the extent we succeed in these tasks, we shall make our society, even our enemies, take notice of us. Instead of having anarchism now being modified and distorted because of Communism and the H-bomb holders, we might then have Communists and H-bomb holders to modify their creed and their intentions because of us.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI

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