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SIXPENCE WEEKLY

Slavery via Food Control

After many centuries, we have reached the apotheosis of the Power of the Larder, with all its attendant evils.

The use of this evil power first started with one man trying it out on his brother. In Genesis 26, vs. 29-34, we read that Jacob bided his time until his brother Esau came back from a hunting expedition, exhausted and hungry. He then proposed the kind of deal so common to the tribe: "Food? — yes, on condition you give me your birthright." In order to give the Power of the Larder a real try-out, Jacob next approached his dying father with food supposedly supplied by Esau, and so stole Esau's blessing. The Power of the Larder, plus the "double-cross," proved invincible. The end justified the means. If that could happen in a family circle, need we wonder at the effects of the same policy when applied to strangers?

The next test occurred when Joseph was in Egypt. Having prophesied that there would be seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine, he proceeded to organise the famine by storing all the corn surpluses in the plentiful years, and by cutting down the seed-corn issue. (Gen., 47, vs. 13-26). Within two years the Food Dictator Joseph, by the Power of the Larder, had reduced a nation to slavery. He then handed out seed-corn and the slaves thanked him for having saved their lives! Incredible? — not at all. The "slaves" of today accept the same preposterous conditions without a murmur. When the tribe was scattered abroad, their peculiar method of rule was foisted "upon any nation among which they chose to live. The selected rulers secured the allegiance of the necessary "Larder Guards" — statesmen and soldiers — by awarding them a goodly share of the Larder. (Our own "statesmen" are paid £1,000 a year in lieu, but the principle is the same.) Always underneath, was the vital power of the Larder — the power to grant or withhold Food -- the power of Life and Death in the physical sense.

In Joseph's time, although a simple form of money was in being the slave driver's whip and the hangman's noose were undoubtedly the chief "persuaders." Over the centuries the persuasive power was transferred from the visible to the invisible, from the slave driver to the Debt Monetary system. Debt is, of course, the financier's reprieve from Death to Penal Servitude for Life.

Each nation in turn, under the Power of the Larder, rose to great heights of superficial prosperity, only to sink to destitution when the descendants of that first ingenious, but infamous power-grabber passed on to fresh conquests. Needless to say, England, under this pernicious system of rule, has had her day. Always the method is the same — Corner the Larder

and all else follows, as Joseph so clearly showed in Egypt.

"Cornering" is now operating on a world scale in preparation for the reign of the "Prince of this World." The latest attempts at Grand Monopoly are not running too smoothly. Although the Dollar is nearly "Almighty," the Sterling opponents seem to have managed, temporarily, to corner wool, rubber, and tin. The rubber position is, however, untenable, as rubber cannot be processed without sulphur, and the Dollar has cornered sulphur! In answer to the tin corner, all the relatively scarce metals for hardening steel have been cornered by the opposition.

The Dollar's answer to the wool corner was to corner cotton. In 1950 U.S.A. reduced the cotton acreage by 60 percent. Part of the resulting short crop was rationed between England, Germany and Italy. England received the smallest ration. This sort of "help" does not assist our old friend "Full Employment" in Lancashire. (The Lancastrians thought to get out of the difficulty by using English rayon, only to find that it was earmarked for export at 18d. per lb. They had to import rayon from Norway at 23d. per lb!)

At the moment, the Wool Corner is not too happy. Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and ourselves had built up a Corporation to make sure there would not be a "disastrous fall in the price of wool." Armed with large buying powers their agents bought all the fleeces in sight from the farmers — at a price satisfactory to the farmers — then. Owing to an excess of zeal on the part of the buyers — U.S.A. and Russia chiefly — and the rules of Debt Finance — the price of wool rocketed to 5 times what had been paid to the farmers! This was good business for the Corporation but a bone of contention for the farmers. The new proposed Wool Corporation is in danger of sinking as it is launched, as, quite naturally, the farmers — especially

Australian — hate the scheme like poison. The Corporation hopes to by-pass the farmers of New Zealand and South Africa by legislation, but they cannot do this with the Australians who are to have a ballot on the scheme. May the Australians dig in their heels. They could, by determined opposition and publicity, even at this late hour, start a move in the right direction, which would postpone indefinitely the reign of his Satanic Majesty. The Power of the Larder and Wardrobe must be broken. For this job social credit is the only remedy. — H.E.B.

—In *The Social Creditor* (England), March 17.

OUR POLICY

1. The preservation of Australia's sovereignty as a part of the British Empire, and the exposure of all internal and external groups which attack that sovereignty.
2. The preservation and extension of genuine local government.
3. The preservation and strengthening of all Constitutional safeguards for the purpose of protecting fundamental individual rights.
4. The encouragement of all activities designed to bring Governments tunder more effective control by the electors.
5. The preservation and extension of genuine free, competitive enterprise and private ownership, and opposition to all Monopoly, whether it be "private" or State.
6. The support of a financial policy which will (a) permit free enterprise to make available to all individuals an increasing standard of living and greater leisure for cultural pursuits; (b) result in no further increase in the community's indebtedness and the sound business practice of gradually reducing existing debt.
7. Recognising that the basis of any sound economy is agriculture, the encouragement of agricultural policies which will ensure the preservation and building up of soil fertility by organic farming and gardening; and the prevention of soil erosion and the protection of forests and watersheds.

Now, when our land to ruin's brink is verging,
In God's name, let us speak while there is time!
Now, when the padlocks for our lips are forging,
Silence is crime. WHITTIER

Because of its great importance and the fact that little reference has been made to it in the Australian press, we are republishing from British "Hansard" the full debate in the British House of Commons on the appointment of an American to control the British Navy:

North Atlantic Defence (Supreme Naval Commander)

House of Commons: February 22, 1951.

Mr. Churchill (by Private Notice) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any statement to make about the appointment of a Supreme Sea Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir. The North Atlantic Treaty Defence Committee has agreed that there should be a Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic and that he should be an American. An American officer has already been nominated for this appointment, and it is expected that an announcement will be made on this matter very shortly.

Mr. Churchill: Were there no British admirals capable of discharging these functions; does not Great Britain lie at the very key of all communications across the Atlantic with Europe; are not the sea approaches to our island in the event of submarine attack vital to our life; and how is it, with our experience, which is longer and wider than that of any other country, and when we have all agreed with so much pleasure that General Eisenhower should command the Armed Forces on land, that we should have resigned any claim that we may be thought to have to the command of the sea on the Atlantic?

The Prime Minister: In an organisation of a number of Powers, as in the North Atlantic Treaty organisation, an appointment is made by those Powers. No Power has an absolute right to dictate its views as to any appointment. I understand that the proposition that an American admiral should be appointed was generally acceptable.

Mr. Churchill: Does this not argue a great decline in our influence and in the esteem in which we are held by other countries with whom we are in the most friendly relations? Did the right hon. Gentleman make any effort to put our claims forward in a sober and earnest fashion, or did he simply accept the fact that we are to be brushed out of the way in this matter which, of all others, apart altogether from history and tradition, is vital to our existence.

Hon. Members: Answer.

The Prime Minister: Hon. Members must give me a moment to get up; I am perfectly prepared to answer. This matter was, naturally, very fully discussed, but I say again that this is a matter for agreement. The general conclusion was that this was the best appointment. I cannot at the moment say whether there was an elaborate discussion or not, but in any international organisation of this kind, of a number of—

Mr. John Hay: Where is British leadership?

Mr. James Hudson: Not over there, on the other side of the House.

The Prime Minister: In an organisation of a number of countries, it is not possible for one country to insist on its right to some particular office. It is a matter for discussion.

Mr. Churchill: It was possible, anyhow, not very long ago, for one country to sink 525 German U-boats compared with 174 by the United States. No one is going to argue that I am hostile to the United States, but I do not think that our country ought to have fallen so far into walks of humility.

Mr. John Hynd: Without endorsing what the Leader of the Opposition has said about the question of substantiating our particular claim, or the credit of any country, or any prior rights of any country in any field, does the Prime Minister not consider that there is a very important psychological question to be considered here, a question which ought to be appreciated by the Americans as much as by ourselves? The world at large is beginning to think that there is something wrong when the Americans have leadership of the Atlantic Forces on land, leadership of the Korean Forces and now, presumably, are to have leadership of yet another Force. I am not arguing the merits or demerits of any claim that any individual American may have, but this is a matter of collective force and world psychology. Will the Prime Minister look into it?

Mr. Somerset de Chair: If it is too late to make any further suggestions about the appointment of a supreme Allied naval commander, will the Prime Minister see that the claims of the British Commonwealth to hold the appointment of Allied air commander are considered, when this matter comes up?

Mr. J. Hudson: Will the Prime Minister take into account that as we have committed ourselves to the full principle of collective arrangements we cannot now risk the development of ill feeling with America when these arrangements are carried out?

Mr. Churchill: May I ask the Prime Minister whether this matter is finally settled or whether he will, in view, I think, of the widespread feeling in the House, make a further appeal to the United States to consider this matter in all friendship and loyal feeling of comradeship? As the Hon. Member for Attercliffe (Mr. J. Hynd) has said, on the land we welcomed General Eisenhower, the Americans alone have the atomic bomb, which covers a great part of the air, but here, in this question which is absolutely vital to this island, will he not ask them to give it further consideration? I am only asking that the Prime Minister should believe that they are very ready to treat loyal Allies with all fairness and generosity.

The Prime Minister: I will certainly look

into the matter. I cannot say more than that. As I understand it, they have selected the admiral who seems most suitable for this matter. (Hon. Members: "Name.") The name I cannot say. (Hon. Members: "Who are 'they'?" "They" are the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The name has not yet been announced. I will take into full consideration everything that the right hon. Gentleman has said, and will look into the matter.

Sir H. Williams: Who represented us?

Mr. Churchill: It is late in the day for the Prime Minister of this country to look into the matter. Might I ask him whether he was not consulted beforehand?

Hon. Members: Answer.

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir, the matter has been very very fully considered. I am saying that I will reconsider it and look into it.

Mr. Churchill: I am much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for saying that he will look into it again and see what can be done.

(To be concluded.)

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The Anti-British Conspiracy IV

By James Guthrie

Continued from last Issue

The systematic attempt to destroy the prestige and power of the British Empire, which we have been witnessing very clearly since World War II, represents, perhaps, the final stage of the organised attack on Western civilisation. The modern phase of that attack can be said to start with the French Revolution, when France was handed over to the Rothschilds, and eventually destroyed as a political, cultural and military power. Germany, which was used to complete the final humiliation of France, was "nationalised" with the help of the socialists and had its "national" spirit suitably inflamed and exaggerated under the direction of such men as Rathenau, Ballin and Bleichroeder, ready for the suicidal fights which were, in turn, to eliminate her as an effective cultural unit. Austria-Hungary was caught in the holocaust of war to emerge later as the synthetic State of Czechoslovakia, manufactured and prepared in New York for presentation to Moscow.

The attack on Western Civilisation by all the forces of the Left is of course, an attack on European Civilisation, and that which differentiates European Civilisation from others is that it is, or was, a Christian Civilisation. The attack on Great Britain and Europe is an attempt to destroy the roots from which Christian communities obtain their strength and inspiration; until we realise this we shall be unable to understand the significance of the forces, which are constantly driving us into war.

Europe is still the centre of civilisation, but one by one the countries of Europe have been broken, and de-Christianised. The last war was designed to obliterate all remnants of civilisation in Great Britain. That it failed to do so was due to one of these things we call miracles, which, like Mons and Dunkirk, took place in spite of the British Government.

C. H. Douglas, in his book *Programme for the Third World War*, showed clearly that the real nature of the attack was beginning to be understood when he said, "We have only to compare the remark of General Ludendorff that 'The majority of the English do not realise that, having done their duty by the inner Jewish circle, they have now got to disappear as a world power' (*The Coming War*, 1931), with that of Mr. Winston Churchill, which has been so coldly received in America: 'I did not become His Majesty's First Minister to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire,' to see that the meek acceptance of decrees of fate is somewhat marred by the realisation that fate is a lady of easy virtue, always to be found and acquired where the pickings are good."

B. A. Fletcher, writing in the *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1949, gives us a glimpse of the nature of the attack on Christian civilisation when he says: "With foolish ideas in our heads of the inevitability of human progress, we have seen with horror and surprise, the eruption into civilised life, of cruelty, lawlessness and depersonalisation on a vast scale.

"Realising that these demoniac outbreaks

must have historic roots we have been forced to look again at the development of thought during the past three centuries, and *we have seen how the basic idea of Western civilisation, the uniqueness of the individual, has been steadily weakened.* There has therefore been a fresh attempt to discover the true nature of man and to consider his destiny."

Lord Tweedsmuir (John Buchan) described this attack when he said that we are witnessing a "World-wide pseudo-intellectual attack in every department of art and letters, on the fundamental principles of ethics and religion, as well as on the most elementary codes of good faith and decency in ordinary human life; and this attack has preceded and prepared the way for the new savagery in the political world. *There is a real and vital connection between these phenomena.* The European tradition has been confronted with an Asiatic revolt, with its historic accomplishment of janissaries and assassins. There is in all, too, an ugly pathological savour, as if a mature society were being assailed by diseased and vicious children."

The fact that the British Empire remains the chief effective bulwark of Christian civilisation has been prevented from reaching the consciousness of the British public by an almost complete blackout, by international news agencies, of all the relevant data, which would help the British people to assess the position and take the necessary steps for self-preservation. Emerging from this significant fact, one of the chief agencies that has been used to screen the vital position of Great Britain, is the role assumed by America as the guardian of Western civilisation. This role has been made acceptable to many by the following collection of facts and fallacies:

1. America is an English-speaking country with democratic institutions similar to our own.
2. Americans are looked upon as "our cousins across the Atlantic."
3. That they fought in the last two wars as our allies.
4. That they helped us with "Marshall Aid" after the last war.
5. That they are fighting the Communists in Korea.

These items add up to an imposing total, provided they are all true and we do not scrutinise the balance sheet.

The balance sheets issued after the last two wars reveal that America emerged more powerful and prosperous than before, whereas Great Britain, besides losing most of her overseas assets, was loaded with debts that not even her enemies were asked to pay, thus revealing the real target of World Wars I and II.

The fact that the Americans speak English has deceived British people into believing that the Americans have the same outlook and the same way of life as ourselves; nothing could be further from the truth.

The number of people of British origin in America represent a small minority, and although there are many people in America who abhor the crudities of American life,

so far they have not been able to make any great impression.

The incredible mediocrity of Hollywood, the long history of corruption of American politics, the immorality of Big Business (accompanied by janissaries and assassins), the prevalence of violent crime, the all pervading exploitation of sex, the childlike and pagan worship of materialism, all these things, and many others do not substantiate America's claim as a guardian of Christian civilisation. On the contrary, there is much evidence to show that the Asiatic revolt, which confronts the European tradition, is largely an "American" creation.

—From *Aust. Social Creditor*, Jan. 27, 1951.

(To be continued)

FAIR COMMENT

By John Weller

No more brutal British imperialism; this is the Socialist ideal of Peace and Progress!

Taipeh, March 11: Chinese Nationalist newspaper publishers in Taipeh said yesterday that the Soviet Union planned to cut China's population through purges by 200,000,000 people.

"The publishers quoted a statement by the Chinese Nationalists Defence Ministry that the Chinese Communists had already put 1,000,000 persons to death out of 25,000,000 marked for execution. The publishers said that these deaths were merely preliminaries to the larger Russian goal.

"The publishers listed instances of up to 2,500 people being slain in individual towns on the Chinese mainland."

—*The West Australian*, March 12, 1951.

This is the regime the pink clergymen say we should be "tolerant" about. This is what Professors McMahon Ball, Copland and Stone, Dr. Peter Russo, Douglas Wilkie and Sir Keith Murdoch say we should recognise. As Sir Keith states: "the regime is thoroughly established and has the main goodwill of China."

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In recent issues we have outlined to supporters the present precarious financial position of *The New Times*, pointing out how this position could be strengthened by a large number of readers becoming direct subscribers. A number have acted upon this suggestion, but many more direct subscribers must be obtained immediately.

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THE ROAD TO SERFDOM

Until the menace of rising prices has been squarely met and solved without curtailing the initiative and independence of the individual, no Government can do other than support policies leading to the erection of the complete totalitarian State. Prior to the 1949 Federal Elections, Mr. Menzies did at least indicate that he understood the policy necessary to defeat inflation. But this policy, never even attempted, has been completely repudiated, and electors are now told that nothing but increased production can solve the problem. Increased production is a very laudable objective, which will be enthusiastically supported by every individual who finds that this increased production is directly benefiting him personally. But increased production to further large-scale Socialist projects, with its consequent reduction in the immediate standard of living, is another thing altogether. If the Liberal and Country Parties were genuine advocates of a free enterprise economy, they would implement a financial policy designed to ensure that the programme of production was directly controlled by consumers spending their own money as they thought best. Instead of continually expanding credit by inflationary methods, a policy of price-subsidies, for a start on all basic items of the economy, should be financed, thus reducing the cost of living: i.e., increase the effective purchasing power of the individual.

If Mr. Menzies is returned at the Federal Elections on April 28, and if he persists with the policies he has so far supported, we desire to go on the record as having predicted that the inevitable result will be growing compulsion in an endeavour to try and force the individual to do what he is not prepared to do voluntarily. Mr. Menzies can either pursue the road of freedom, or he must move further along the road towards complete totalitarianism. All the talk in the world about Communism will not remove the Communists' greatest ally, growing inflation, until the causes of inflation are removed. Genuine peace in industry is impossible while prices continue to rise and centralism in all spheres continues. The Communists are well aware of this fact and know that any Government will find it most difficult to drive them from positions of influence in the Trade Unions while inflation grows hourly.

No stable society is possible while the independence of the individual is progressively undermined by policies imposed by Governments. All Western communities today are disintegrating because of the menace of Governments. Unless Mr. Menzies' associates can force him to face this vital issue, it is certain that one disaster will follow another until there is an effective revolt by the individual.

America Speaks

By W. R. TITTERTON

"I guess we'll never understand you British. What the hell does it matter if an American admiral with a perfectly good middle European name hoists his flag in your waters? It's plumb plain business. You've an old English proverb in Shakespeare, I guess, or *Robinson Crusoe* that those who pay the piper call the tune. Well, you've had your Marshall aid, haven't you? *And* spent it regardless. You'd think us darned poor businessmen, or you had ought to, if we didn't ask you to foot the bill.

"Money talks, brother, and we hold the dollars. In plain English, the dough. If we felt that way, we've got you where it hurts, but we're kind-hearted. All we ask is a token, a mere token, of our supremacy.

"All this talk of tradition and the Battle of Trafalgar don't cut no ice. What about Paul Jones? And let me tell you, mister, we've sailed the Seven Seas as much as you have, and quite as often on our lawful occasions. Pan Brit- whats-name be . . . excuse me marm, but I get hot under the collar. You were ocean traders, and you wanted your charter parties to hold good. Oh, yes, I'll admit that as Empires go (and yours is going) you've done less harm than some. But that's neither here nor there in this year 1951.

"When a man forecloses on a mortgage . . . But, say, that sounds brutal. And we mean well by you. This is how we look at it. As a going concern you're gone. When the free and independent electorate come to depend on a Welfare State you can stake your last dinner that they haven't the nous to rise up and get going. And you're all like that.

"But you're decorative. Oh, yes, I grant you that. Old-world and what not. Some of our Southern families and even two-three folk in Boston boast of their escutcheons. That you are—an escutcheon, and that's about all. Sort of Cheshire Cheese and Ann Hathaway's Cottage on a large scale. And a few ancestral mansions, largely inhabited by Americans.

"We aim to keep you as you are—as a museum. Even such giant pastimes as cricket at Lords and the Haringay Arena will be strictly preserved. Buckingham Palace will function as usual. To be honest, our dames are tickled to death to be presented. Like Mark Twain at the Court of King Arthur.

"No, Sir. We do not aim to make you the Forty-ninth State of the United States of America. You'd interfere with the Gallup polls, being unaccountable creatures; and your ideas of politics don't match with ours.

"Stay as you are, and where you are, nice and pretty. *We'll* look after you, and save you from the nasty Bolsheviks. So long."

—English *Truth*, March 9.

Eric Butler to Contest Election

Supporters of *The New Times* will be interested to know that Mr. Eric D. Butler, Campaign Director of the Victorian League of Rights, has announced that he is standing as an Independent Candidate at the coming Federal Elections. Mr. Butler will contest the Victorian Electorate of Deakin, in which he resides. Apart from his educational activities, Mr. Butler runs a farm of 140 acres. He is a leading exponent of organic farming and gardening methods.

In a press statement issued last week, Mr. Butler said that electioneering at present conflicted with his personal affairs, but so many people in the community had urged that he stand in protest against the policy of Monopoly being pursued by all Federal Governments, that he felt that an experiment might profitably be conducted to ascertain just how many electors would support certain fundamental principles. Mr. Butler said that his contact with Members of all Parties had convinced him that while many of these men, irrespective of party labels, were genuinely concerned with the appalling results of growing centralism in all spheres, the dictatorship of the party machines made them afraid to speak and act as they were personally inclined. This intolerable state of affairs could be bettered by the electors of at least-one electorate

A FRAUDULENT ELECTION

Menzies cannot sustain the claim that the election, no matter if he won every seat, would give him the power necessary to deal with the Communists. The Labor Senate majority, however much it may have obstructed him in other things, passed the Red Bill.

It is the High Court of Australia that stands between Menzies and the Communists, and just how an election is going to change that is something that not even Menzies' silver tongue could explain.

If he claims that his return will mean that a Referendum to change the Constitution would receive an affirmative vote, then he is holding a Referendum and an election where a Referendum would suffice, an unwarranted use of taxpayers' money.

Menzies cannot possibly believe that this election will have any effect on the Government's plans to deal with Communists.

A Senate majority will not change the Constitution.

Menzies main reason for this election seems to be an attempt to get in early, and buy extra time in power, before the rise in the cost of living makes the electors so angry that his defeat would be inevitable. This is a diversionary election. An election to take the minds of the electors off the Government's monumental failure to honour its election promises, and a fifteen month record of futility and ineptitude.

As such, it will succeed. Menzies, in my opinion, must go back. But he must go back with a reduced majority in the House of Representatives, and no better than even numbers in the Senate.

He will buy himself another eighteen months of power, at the expense of some of his less fortunate followers, which squares pretty well with his known record of loyalty to those who support him.

—Frank Browne in *Things I Hear*, March 20.

supporting a competent member prepared to fight for the rights and independence of the individual as opposed to the growing demands of Governments and those manipulating Governments.

Mr. Butler stressed the fact that he and all those working for him would under no circumstances indulge in the usual money-wasting hysterical propaganda associated with electioneering, but would concentrate all their efforts on educational work. It is proposed to ascertain just what electoral support can be obtained for the proposition that the Federal Government should disgorge all the powers it has filched from the States and the individual over recent years; that new constitutional safeguards are urgently necessary to limit the powers of Governments over the individual, particularly concerning taxation; and that all professing Christians, particularly church leaders, should take a leading part in re-asserting the Christian principle that there must be a strict limit to the power of Governments.

Mr. Butler claimed that growing inflation was the greatest ally the Communist conspirators had, and that the Menzies-Fadden Government must be publicly criticised for their failure to honour their 1949 pre-election promises to reduce the cost of living by reducing the burden of Government and by the restoration of price-subsidies abolished by the Chifley Government. He would warn the electors against the dangerous Labor-Socialist policy of centralised price-control to defeat rising prices.

New Times supporters, both inside and outside the Deakin electorate, who desire to help Mr. Butler's campaign either personally or financially may write to him direct at "Runnymede", Alma Road, Panton Hill. All types of assistance are urgently required in order to make this special educational campaign successful.

Special Series of

Anti-Communist Booklets

The Victorian League of Rights has launched a special educational campaign to bring to the attention of all responsible members of the community all aspects of the Communist conspiracy. The first of a How-To-Defeat-Communism Series of booklets has been published. This booklet, by the League's Campaign Director, Mr. Eric D. Butler, is entitled *The Truth About Communist China*, and is an excellent introduction to the frightening subject of Communist influence in high places in Western countries.

The League appeals to all *New Times* supporters to co-operate fully in ensuring that this important booklet is widely read. The price is 7d. per copy, post free. Orders of one dozen or more at 4/6 dozen, post free. Order now from The Victorian League of Rights, Box 1052J, G.P.O., Melbourne.

Mr. Menzies and Senate

According to the Melbourne *Age* of March 20, the Minister for Social Services in the Menzies Government, Senator Spooner, said that it was "mathematically impossible" for the Government Parties to win the Senate. What, then, can this election solve even if the Government is returned in the House of Representatives? It appears to us that Mr. Menzies has deliberately exaggerated the obstructive role of the Labor-dominated Senate in order to try and camouflage his failure to deal with his major election promises of 1949.

Might we point out to Mr. Menzies and his associates that they need have no fear about the Senate if they introduce Price Subsidies and start reducing the "burden of Government" Mr. Menzies mentioned in 1949.

"I Believe in the Value of the Small Nations"

"I believe in the value of the small nations. I believe in the value of the minority. The world will be saved by the few."

According to *The Observer* (England), these words were Andre Gide's, spoken to a group of writers in his flat in Paris a week before he died.

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A Plan to "Transform Nature" The Folly of the Groundnuts Scheme

By Jorian Jenks

As was perhaps inevitable, the failure of the Great Groundnut Scheme has hitherto been debated mainly in terms of party politics—administrative incompetence, ministerial mulishness, over-eagerness to "show what State enterprise can do." Admittedly, a venture, which has lost over £30 mil. of public money in four years, and has so far developed a meagre 753 tons of groundnuts towards the 600,000 tons a year promised by 1950-51, is open to some censure on these counts. But the really disquieting feature, throughout the whole four years, has been the complacent acceptance in almost all quarters of the premises on which the original Plan was based. And because there exists, even now, a vaguely nostalgic impression that "the Plan itself was all right," it seems essential that those premises should be examined. It is even possible that the instruction so obtained may come cheap at £30,000,000.

Before doing so, however, it is but fair to the chief architect of the Plan (and subsequently chief official scapegoat) to point out certain factors which profoundly influenced the recommendations made by his Mission of investigation, because they seemed to be of such urgency as to justify what was in effect a huge gamble. Those factors, of course, still exist, and will have to be dealt with by other means.

The first is one which has hardly been mentioned in this country, but which would weigh heavily with a former Director of Agriculture in Tanganyika and on which, in fact, some stress was laid in *A Plan for the Mechanized Production of Groundnuts in East and Central Africa* (February, 1947. Cmd. 7030). It is the need to relieve as speedily as possible the present pressure of population on land already in cultivation (especially in native reserves), pressure that is resulting in cumulative soil erosion and human malnutrition. In the opinion of the Mission, the only adequate area of new land available, because it consisted of uninhabited, semi-arid scrub, without water supplies or means of access, could not be brought into use by native methods. But a highly mechanized war had just been concluded. Why should not some of the heavy machinery and technical skill it had called into being be harnessed to the tasks of land-clearance and subsequent cultivation?

Such a project, the Mission was convinced, was technically feasible. But clearly it could not be financed, much less equipped from local resources. It would have to be undertaken as an investment by the industrial country, which was responsible for the well being of the colony, namely Britain. Here a second factor, as urgent as the first

and seemingly complementary to it, came into play. The whole world, but especially the industrialized parts of it, was experiencing a grave shortage of edible vegetable oils, commodities of which Africa has long been the main source. If Britain could be induced to provide equipment and technicians, she would receive in exchange a substantial and assured supply of a product (groundnuts) from which such oil can be obtained.

"From this point onwards, the Plan seems to have expanded with an exuberance remarkable even in post-war planning. By multiplying prospective acreages, rates of clearance and estimates of annual production, so as to justify the rapid construction of new rail and port facilities, pipelines and so on, the whole scheme was at once raised to the status of a major military operation, with a corresponding claim on the resources of the State. The time-honoured virtues of prudence and patience, which should characterize all agricultural projects, and especially those pregnant with known and unknown difficulties, appear to have been discarded as unworthy of the situation.

Naturally enough, such proposals at once appealed to a harassed but not unambitious Minister for Food (the Colonial Secretary appears to have withdrawn discreetly at this stage). Even before the Overseas Food Corporation could be formed, the Scheme was set in motion and a much-enduring British public invited to enjoy the prospect of a substantial increase in its "fats" ration thanks to the coming victory of modern science and engineering over the African wilderness. Indeed the only point which seemed to worry the Minister (quite needlessly as it proved) was the possibility of a fall in the world price of fats. Nor was the picture coloured exclusively by self-interest. Large numbers of Africans, it was pointed out, would receive the blessings

of modern (industrial) civilization—technical training, social services, trade unionism and the rest — and, above all, an "ocular demonstration" of the immense superiority of "scientific agriculture" over peasant cultivation. As a *Times* leader remarked, when certain miscalculations began to arouse comment, the Scheme had "a logical symmetry." All that remained for it to do was to produce groundnuts.

It never seems to have occurred, either to the members of the Mission which framed that exceedingly naive Plan, or to the Minister and his advisers who accepted it at its face value, that logical symmetry in planning, even when reinforced by technological ingenuity, did not necessarily make biological sense in the African bush. Or if it did occur, they must have assumed that they could over-run nature, like some military opponent by sheer weight of armour. The fact that a body of responsible and experienced administrators failed to recognize (or determined to ignore) the risks inherent in such a course, suggests strongly that the divorce of modern man from direct contact with nature, and the submergence of instinctive peasant knowledge by "higher education," has left a dangerous void in his mental equipment.

The extent of this void may be measured by the application of such a phrase as Mechanized Production to agriculture. To the industrialist, of course, there is nothing anomalous in the expression, since the kind of "plant" he uses does actually consist of machines, which perform secondary production by processing pre-existent materials into useful articles.

But in *primary* production — that is, agriculture, horticulture and forestry — the essential operations are performed by an immense diversity of living creatures, ranging from soil microorganisms to thousand-gallon cows. Even the farmer, gardener or forester, no matter how much "dominion" he exercises, is not, strictly speaking, the producer. While, therefore, machines can often be employed to advantage in certain

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ancillary tasks, such as the preparation of the land and the harvesting of crops, any notion that the basic natural processes themselves can be "mechanized" is as misleading as it is unscientific.

The limiting factor in food supply, then, is the fertility of the land and its vegetable and animal population, plus, of course, the skill of the human cultivator in fostering that fertility and directing it into channels useful to humanity. But here, again, confusion has arisen, partly through the misapplication of the term "fertilizer" to many substances, which are in effect chemical stimulants. Fertility means fecundity — capacity to sustain and *renew* life; and what we are accustomed to call agricultural production is in fact material created by, but surplus to, the re-productive processes of plants and animals — seeds, vegetative growths, milk, male animals not needed for breeding, and so on.

But plants and animals are no more self-supporting than are humans. As the study of ecology reveals, every fertile terrain, whether forest, farm or garden plot, is in effect an extremely complex society of interdependent species, the key position being occupied by the green plants, which alone have the power to use solar energy for the conversion of the "raw materials" of soil, air and water into organic tissue. Where the natural cycle is fulfilled, the wastes and residues of this society go back to the soil to form the humus, which not only gives it coherence and texture, but sustains its biological activities.

In the virgin landscape, this ecological pattern is balanced and adjusted to climatic and other environmental factors by nature herself. In the cultivated landscape, man evolves another kind of pattern in order to provide a place for his own species; but it is one, which, nevertheless, must conform to the same ecological principles if it is to remain stable and productive. Thus the process of bringing virgin land into cultivation requires a lengthy period of adjustment and, in cases, where previous experience is lacking, not a little trial-and-error. Where the level of virgin fertility is high, and the climate reasonably equable, this period can be bridged by drawing on reserves. This, roughly, is what has happened in the case of most of the new lands occupied in countries such as Canada, Australia and Argentina during the great period of territorial expansion (1860-1930). Even so, much useful land has been lost by erosion through the depletion of fertility before the necessary adjustments were made.

In the case of the lands used for the Groundnut Scheme, however, the margin of safety is extremely narrow. Climatic conditions — a long, hot, dry season, followed by a period of tropical downpours—are such as to bring about the rapid dissipation of such humus as the soil possesses as soon as the surface is bared and disturbed. The dense, tough, strongly-rooted scrub which has played such havoc with the land-clearance programme is in fact nature's provision against such dissipation; and it may well be that the tsetse-fly is in turn a protection for the scrub against the inroads of big game.

Under such conditions, the only safe method of development would appear to be

a gradual and piecemeal removal of the scrub, and its immediate replacement by some effective soil-cover, at any rate until stabilization has taken place. But such a method represents the very antithesis of the Plan, which was to clear vast tracts as rapidly as possible with heavy machinery, and to use them at once for growing a short-season crop (the groundnut), which provides little cover and few residues. In short, a transitional process, which, even in favourable circumstances, takes years to complete, was here to be forcibly compressed into a matter of months.

It is true that the Plan referred to soil conservation as "undoubtedly the over-riding factor," made some provision for windbreaks and contour working, and recommended a rotation including a grass ley. But, in the opinion of experienced East African settlers, these safeguards were not in themselves adequate. In any case, they were soon lost to sight in a welter of unforeseen engineering problems and the political need to produce as many groundnuts as rapidly as possible. By all accounts, the bared soil was soon reduced to a state in which it was either dust or concrete—a sure sign of humus-deficiency and an insuperable obstacle to the smooth working of an ambitious cropping programme.

So there may be something to be said after all for the primitive peasant methods of surface-scratching and mixed cropping; at any rate they are continuing to produce groundnuts within a few miles of the intended demonstration of scientific agricultural techniques.

Associated, as elsewhere, with this uncritical faith in mechanization has been an equally implicit belief in size. This association is largely inevitable; mechanization is cumulative and thus needs an ever-increasing scale of operations to support it. But it stems also from a mentality taught to rely almost exclusively on quantitative assessments—which may be why "nationalization" has so far proved to be Big Business writ bigger still. In practice, such advantages as may be derived from unified management, standardization, bulk handling and so forth tend to be offset (and often more than offset) by the rapid growth of unproductive superstructure, excessive departmentalization, bureaucratic methods and an ever-lengthening chain of command.

In industry, such handicaps can be a serious burden; in agriculture, where the personal factor is paramount, they usually prove fatal; in the Groundnut Scheme, conducted from a London headquarters thousands of miles from the scene of operations, they seem speedily to have stifled the enthusiasm, which the project originally engendered. From almost every account, one has had an impression of growing uneasiness among the dusty, harassed "groundnutters" in Tanganyika; and doubtless a similar sense of frustration was also felt higher up.

An urbanized community, living in daily contact with such triumphs of technology as the radio, the aeroplane and the huge distributive network which brings it food, water, fuel, light, news, never finds it easy to recognize the limitations of that technology. It cannot be expected readily to abandon the "facile mechanistic concept that economic evolution is determined mainly by

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the application of technical power" to which Professor Herbert Frankel referred in his penetrating articles on "The Kongwa Experiment" in *The Times* of October 4th and 5th last. A large section of it, at least cherishes a belief that the strong arm of the State can do what the long arms of trade and finance are decreasingly able to
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do— to extract a regular tribute of food and raw materials from the soil of other lands. And yet, unless the effort to come to grips with realities is made, this post-mortem may well be followed by others, even by one on urban civilization itself.

It may well be that that effort is to some extent already being made. The recent White Paper on "The Future of the Overseas Food Corporation" (Cmd. 8125), for example, is something more than a confession of failure; it shows a growing appre-

ciation of the value of decentralization and of small experimental units. No less welcome is the evidence afforded by the Livestock Rearing Bill that the food-producing potentialities of our own "backward areas" are at last being appreciated. Hill-country improvement at home and localized land-development overseas may seem small beer by comparison with the grandiose Groundnut Gamble, but they are likely to prove a more sustaining drink. We may even yet see an odd million or two spent on developing the English sunflower crop, which can yield several times as much vegetable oil per acre as do African groundnuts. In the meantime, we can watch with interest (and perhaps instruction) the outcome of the Stalin Plan to "transform nature," which sounds like Kongwa multiplied and intensified to the nth degree.

One ought not to be too sanguine about such things. Human thought patterns are no easier to re-shape than are plant-and-animal ecological patterns. But it does not seem altogether unreasonable to write of the Groundnut Scheme, as Kipling wrote of an earlier and even more costly African venture, "We have had no end of a lesson; it will do us no end of good."

—*The Tablet* (England), Jan. 27.

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