

can be bought here at 47s. 6d., evidently cannot be produced here at that price, otherwise we should not be importing them. If we stop imports, and produce them here, say for 57s. 6d., every buyer will lose 10s. which he might have spent on other commodities, and the production of the commodities which would have been exported to pay for the Ingersolls will also be stopped. The cost of waking-up the workers will be greater with home-made than with imported alarm clocks, and this principle carried through all productive items will inevitably lead to higher production costs, and a decrease of exports. Mr. Dalton states that he is going to stimulate home industrialists to produce efficiently here goods which, he says, have been in the past "quite needlessly imported from foreign countries." But by discouraging imports he will be increasing production costs of industrialists for everything they could have imported more cheaply. We consider Mr. Aldrich's logic more convincing, and that maximum production depends upon unrestricted access to world markets for the importation of raw materials and the cheapest and most efficient tools and machinery of all kinds. To speak of "needlessly imported goods" is once more to beg the question. Goods are imported only because they satisfy the needs of consumers at the least cost. To proceed on any other principle is to facilitate that totalitarianism of which Mr. Aldrich warns us, and it does so without the supposed excuse that we shall be economically better off. There is far less risk in allowing the mechanism of the free market and the price system to stimulate production of commodities at home, and by exchange, from abroad, if at the same time as securing free access to world resources, we also secure free access to the resources of our own land. This is the way to end that scarcity which Mr. Dalton sees as lasting a long time and which his policy will do nothing to remove.

The *Daily Telegraph*, August 23, reports that discussions are proceeding between United States and British Ministers and leaders of industry to plan bigger trade and reduce tariffs. There is close interest, it is stated, among the visitors as to the effect on America's export trade, conducted on a free enterprise basis, of the British Government's policy of control of imports and exports. Mr. Colmer, chairman of the U.S. delegation, stated that an international trade conference has already been recommended, with the purpose of establishing a general policy amongst the countries of reducing trade barriers. The immediate establishment of such a policy, he said, would be of enormous assistance in providing increased trade and employment.

2d. **HOW THE ENGLISH PEOPLE BECAME LANDLESS.** And How to Regain the Land.

2d. **THE NEW POLITICAL ECONOMY.** By John B. Sharpe.

THE TROUBLE IN SYRIA

(From an article by BRIAN STUART in the "Spectator," July 6)

MOST OF the villages in Syria are either owned outright by wealthy merchants in the big towns, or else village lands and crops are mortgaged *en bloc* to powerful and often shady moneylenders. It is now no secret that a number of these merchants and financiers were pro-Axis quislings. They set out to effect the economic discredit of the Allies by organising a bread famine. They intended to amass unheard-of fortunes by collecting great stocks of grain, and selling it secretly to certain countries outside Syria. Within a very short time the situation had become one of the utmost gravity. The Syrian Government, under pressure from the French and British authorities, brought into being the *Office des Céréales Panifiables*. Simultaneously they passed a law forbidding the sale of even the smallest quantity of grain to any but an O.C.P. official. This meant that all grain in the country, whether growing or already harvested, was virtually requisitioned. This decree was rigidly enforced, and those who broke it were dealt with severely. Syria was facing famine, and nobody realised it better than the Beduins and nomads. These people are not self-supporting as regards grain. They trade their sheep for it. Very real trouble was brewing.

The French Administration had fallen down on its job. The British took over joint control of the O.C.P. with the French. Specially selected officers of the British and French forces were appointed to act as agents all over the country. Their task was to ensure that all grain grown in the country found its way into the O.C.P. storage depots, and thus break the Black Market. The price of cereals was fixed by law at a very generous rate. In consequence, the Black Market price promptly went up to astronomical figures. Within a few weeks, Aleppo, Deir-er-Zor, Homs and Raqqa became reminiscent of Chicago at the height of the Booze Racket. The French *Services Spéciaux*, and their squadrons of Gestapo-like native *Gardes Mobiles* could not, would not or did not have any noticeable effect on the attacks on grain caravans going into the O.C.P. depots. One suspected, but could rarely prove, that the prices reigning in the Black Market had something to do with it. Certain it is that a number of officials and French N.C.O.s were able to live in a style and luxury utterly inconsistent with the miserable pittance they received as pay. French and Syrian authorities in Beirut and Damascus gave the O.C.P. every support and help in stamping out corruption. The quislings and bribe-takers were dealt with ruthlessly if they were caught. British prestige, methods and insistence prevailed, and it was soon evident that actual famine would be averted, although strict and severe rationing would have to be introduced.

When the crisis was over I discussed

these matters with a very powerful Beduin shiekh, while sipping coffee in his tent.

"Thank God," he said, "the British jumped in when the French failed. If the French had not been here, no question of famine would ever have arisen."

I protested that it was not fair to blame the French. The culprits—the quislings and racketeers—were Syrians, not Frenchmen. The old man laughed.

"We could deal with them better than the French could," he said, grimly. "How would places like Aleppo or Raqqa appreciate forty thousand of my tribesmen encircling them, and watching every road, track and pass? Not one camel-load of wheat would have gone over the borders! Why can't we rule our own country in our own way?"

PERFECT PLANNING

A PAMPHLET entitled "Full Employment and Freedom in America," by Dr. Virgil Jordan, President of the U.S. National Industrial Conference Board, is reviewed in the *Sunday Times* of August 26. Dr. Jordan tells his American readers that the totalitarian doctrine has triumphed in Europe and is in a fair way to do so in America. He includes Britain in his account of the destruction of economic and social liberty. "It is not merely," he says, "that the Soviet legions have overrun the Balkans and the Baltic countries and already turned out the lights of an entire continent from Kiel to Korea, but that in most of the rest of Europe, in Italy, France and England, no Red armies were needed to destroy economic freedom and social liberty. It had been done long before by the politicians, business men and labour unions of these countries." The pamphlet develops the argument that shift economic terms such as "full employment," "social security," "expanding economy" and "international planning" have only served to disguise the real issue, and after a searching analysis of the full employment policy, Dr. Jordan concludes with this passage, quoted by the *Sunday Times*: "The Government will give you full employment and guarantee your income provided you will let it use your money as it pleases; if you will buy for your own use what it tells you, at the price it fixes, or let it do the buying for you; if you will save as much money as it says and let it invest it as it pleases; if you will work at whatever it says, when and where it says, and as much as it says for what it says you can be paid; and if you will hear, read and think what it tells you and keep your mouth shut."

This is spoken in a liberal language that almost requires an interpreter in this country, so silent has been the voice of Liberalism on these great issues of the fate of the individual under systems of State control and economic planning.

6d. **BACK TO THE LAND.** The Essay by Dr. Thomas Nulty, Bishop of Meath. New Edition.

6d. **LAND VALUE TAXATION IN PRACTICE.** Review of what has been done in a number of countries. By A. W. Madsen.