

followed the move of the organisation's permanent headquarters to Canberra in the mid-thirties. Under its first Director, the appearance of regular delegations of manufacturers before the Prime Minister or members of his Cabinet was supplanted by the Director's permanent embassy in the Federal capital, and the gradual introduction of informal contacts with politicians in the major parties. The last three years, however, have seen a considerable broadening of the front of operations."

With the ceaseless growth of government departments threatening more and more of their territory, commerce and business feel the necessity to organise in their defence, and, since "the best form of defence is attack," the next stage is organisation for attack. The strength of government departments being unassailable, the correct tactics have been found in, first, a form of sniping by which business picks off good quality, top-grade depart-

ment staff. The ACMA has recently acquired half a dozen of their leading brains from Federal Government departments. The next move is to use these men for carrying the war back into their own old territory. They know all the right contacts, they know the rules and the ropes. They are the ones to exert the required pressures at the right points.

This further extract from the *Nation* article shows how the technique has developed, quite naturally, out of the situation which governments themselves provide:

"To understand ACMA's adaptation, one must take into account two secular trends. First, there is a distinct preference on the part of administrators in modern democracies to integrate the interest groups into their own style of working. 'If an organised group does not exist,' says Professor Allen Potter, in a recent study of British

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## AFTER THE PIKADON

By Julia Bastian

"AS A RESULT of air attacks, one hundred and twenty Japanese towns are in ashes. Hiroshima cannot expect favourable treatment merely because disaster there was caused by an atomic bomb." Thus ran the official communiqué from Tokyo in reply to a desperate call for help.

And so, with almost no financial aid from outside, and in the face of insurmountable difficulties, the city was to make its triumphant recovery.

The story of the reconstruction period dating from that fateful day August 6, 1945 is told in Robert Jungk's searing report *Children of the Ashes*, (Pelican, 5s.). Jungk is a remarkable journalist-historian, though unfortunately not much of an economist. By making use of letters, diaries, official statements, together with confessions, eye-witness accounts and newspaper reports, he weaves into a nightmare tapestry the threads of life in Hiroshima after the Pikadon.\* His anthology leaves the reader in no doubt that the survivors of the disaster had an ugly time, but what is totally unexpected is the *speed* of the city's recovery. Within some fourteen years what was little more than a vast atomic desert had become a flourishing modern city with a population considerably larger than it had ever been.

The after-effects of the devastation — floods, famine, radiation sickness—hit even those miles away from the actual explosion. Nearly all were homeless; yet as if held by a huge magnet, the wretched citizens clung to rubble-strewn soil where once their homes had stood. Only a small number had been able to escape from the city and those who had fled, returned.

Never had private enterprise worked so fast against

that first bitter winter that threatened to come early that year. In a brave attempt to get things moving someone had given the order to fell the little municipal forest and provide free building materials to those capable of putting up houses. Planks were distributed and some of the homeless were able to erect rough huts. (Later, in pompous official jargon, a politician was to complain that the wood was distributed without "properly constituted authority" and was therefore illegal!)

Mercifully, by the spring of 1946 the huge filthy atomic epicentre had turned green. Seen from the air Hiroshima resembled a gigantic market garden. Opposite the rusty ruins of the Town Hall corn sprang up, and all around there were crops of potatoes, tomatoes and cabbages.

Along with these first vigorous signs of recovery a wave of crime broke across the city. Of this Jungk gives convincing proof that moral decline is the direct result of insecurity, hunger, poverty, misery and pain. All these factors, immeasurably intensified by the Pikadon, were totally to blame for the steep rise in robbery, violence and murder. Most members of the police had been killed or — unable to face the cleaning up operation—were in hiding as civilians. Yet a force twenty times the normal size could not have held in check the disorder and confusion. One can draw a parallel here with the state of affairs in our own society which, in minor key, echoes its particular insecurity and misery with its own comparatively modest waves of crime.

Clearly, the basic essentials of life were at a premium. Possessions of any kind were so scarce that nothing was safe any more. Those crafty enough earned money by tapping the few water pipes that had not been smashed and selling public water at high prices to people driven crazy by thirst. One of the more honest ways of earning money

\*Pikadon—from the Japanese 'pika' meaning lightning, 'don' meaning thunder.

was to sell warmth. For two-yen a passer-by might sit near one of the fires kept burning all night in the streets by gangs of orphan children.

Thousands of respectable citizens had become beggars, dope-pedlars, pick-pockets or street-walkers — a pathetic collection of riff-raff that fought and cheated and lied because self-destruction of humanity followed automatically the physical destruction of their world.

Among the first to become established in this broken-down society were the bars, brothels, night-clubs and gambling joints. Within a few years a prodigious number of cinemas sprang up "like bambo shoots after the rain." Dance halls, pin tables and gaming dens were raking in money. It seemed as if the most urgent need of all was to find an escape from the frightfulness of reality.

A few sterling characters emerged from this drama. One of them, Shinzo Hamai, became Mayor, and set about organising a Reconstruction Committee. Hamai harboured high hopes of turning what had been a mass of narrow twisting alleys, overcrowded dwellings and traffic problems into a city with wide streets, skyscrapers and open parks. Hiroshima might become a symbol of Peace and Culture. There were plans to build an important administration centre with government offices and training establishments, or transform the city into a glamorous resort to attract tourists. Someone went so far as to suggest Picasso be invited to preside there over an international artists' colony. His committee, no doubt suffering from planning fever, could not agree, but in any event there was the sensible question about where the money for all this was to be found.

One leading industrialist suggested buying as much land (and the ruins that covered them) as possible, while property values were still low. Once reconstruction had begun, he pointed out, the value of land was bound to go up and the profits might then be used to finance projects for the community. Sadly, no one mentioned L.V.T., and the biggest opportunity of all slipped away. In any event, there was not the smallest amount of money available, and at that time no question of borrowing from banks or industry. Financial circles in Tokyo were reluctant to grant credit when rumour had it that the soil of Hiroshima would remain "poisoned" for several generations.

So much for the original grandiose plan. A single boulevard one hundred yards wide is all that remains, and today 100 metre Street straddles the City of Peace and Culture, suspiciously like a great aircraft runway for jet fighters.

Meanwhile, "uncontrolled" building was going ahead. The homeless built themselves shack after shack and soon the city came to resemble a mining town during the Gold Rush. Schools were set up and it is to their credit that lessons did not wait for buildings. The Blue Sky Schools provided classes for hundreds of children in the open air.

An astonishing number of new people were drawn to the area, most of them penniless and exhausted by route marching and life in reception camps. Why, one wonders, did this most damaged of all Japanese cities hold a special attraction for these dregs of humanity? An answer comes

from one refugee who pointed out: "Before the war, four hundred thousand people found living space there. Only a hundred and fifty thousand of them still exist—so there's bound to be room for us."

This perhaps gives the clue to Hiroshima's rebirth—the city, as never before, offered opportunity. The ambitious ones reckoned that in a place so totally destroyed a clever fellow with drive and initiative might become well off pretty soon. The opportunities for every kind of development were unlimited, and in the early days land was cheap and wages were attractive. The new people, unhampered by radiation sickness and with a little capital, quickly acquired positions for themselves, and in a few years outnumbered the "survivors" by five to one.

Today the city acknowledges a kind of prosperity. Shipyards, transport works, steel factories, have rebuilt their plants. There are some 13,700 more houses than there were before the Pikadon. Since 1956 the average income of citizens has exceeded the average for the whole of Japan.

The price of land, which has continued to rise at a steady rate from almost nothing immediately after the disaster, is now so high that two-storey post-war buildings are being torn down in the business district to be replaced by multi-storey blocks. There are numerous industries pushing ahead. But throughout Japan the shortage of food, rising prices, and inflation has led to the unending struggle for increased wages. Demonstrations and strikes are common. Delegations of workers march in protest against galloping devaluation of money.

Hiroshima, which might indeed have become a symbol of Peace and Culture, is to-day no different from any other city. We have not yet learnt to work *with* the forces of nature, and not *against* them. One day we will understand this.

Meanwhile, *Children of the Ashes* is a book to read and to lend. If possible it should be lent to those who make bombs in ammunition factories, to the top brass in the armed forces and to top politicians of every nation.

## WAR — WHY?

by Frank Welch

IN this thought-provoking pamphlet the author refutes some of the arguments used to support the inevitability of war, and makes several practical suggestions as to how the risk of war can be reduced. Some of these are — free trade, the end of spying, the extension of the teaching of foreign languages, interchange of visits with foreign countries and the appointment of a Minister of Peace. What we must do, he says, is to act and think as Albert Schweitzer, with his motto of "Reverence for Life" has done, in order that his example may have a world-wide effect. — R.C.G.

Copies 6d. post free from Frank Welch, Daymer, Catlins Lane, Pinner, Middlesex.