

Now garter and grow round us like quicksands
Here in these islands. O awake! awake!
And let us like the trapped intrepid man
Who on prairie hears the holocaust roar
And sees his horizons running to meet him
In mutinous flames, while the still grasses fill
With rills of refugees, let us calmly
Stand now to windward, and here at our feet
Stooping, light fires of foresight that will clean
And clear the careless ground before us
Of all the dry and tindery increment
Of privilege. So will that other Fate
Arriving find no hold within our state,
And we on our ringed ground its roar will wait
Freely. Awake! before it is too late.

TERENCE HEYWOOD

CUL-DE-SAC

Nothing grows in Callus Crescent.
The pollard limes' smutcht forks
are their own crutches; clipt privets
choke in the clogged air, their stomata
unable to get the smoke out of their nostrils.

O this adhesive hate, stifling
all life, smearing the furled green
and the clean world searing! O these
effusive efforts fuddled, made ineffective
by the indiscriminate use of spiritual contraceptives.

This is a cul-de-sac. The houses,
behind whose blinds are lopped lives,
stare back without seeing.
These being the wrong premises,
how can we ever reach the right conclusion?

TOM HARRISSON

THE POPULAR PRESS?

'What could possibly take the place of newspapers? There surely cannot be any sane man or woman in Britain who would argue that the Ministry of Information or its near-relation, the B.B.C., have so far offered a serious alternative to the newspapers in conveying information.'—FRANK OWEN in *Picture Post*, 24.8.40.

I.—HOW THE PRESS BEHAVES

FRANK OWEN is intelligent, efficient, radical, sincere, a first-class journalist and editor of the *Evening Standard*. And he is being orthodox Fleet Street when he asks himself a question and neatly answers by suggesting that there *cannot* be anyone in his right mind who would give an answer unfavourable to his opinion of the press. In that case, I must come to the reluctant conclusion that for every one person who is sane in this country, three are certifiable. Recent investigations by reputable Market Research organizations have shown generally around three to one who have more confidence, for instance, in B.B.C. news than in newspaper news. Several 'serious alternatives' to the newspapers are developing. At this stage it is only necessary to underline the dismissive, even abusive, attitude of the editor towards anyone who suggests the press is not tops. This journalistic disregard for commonplace feeling about the press is having considerable influence on the course of the war, and the future channels of information.

The technique of dubbing anybody who disagrees a half-wit, bastard or outcaste, is familiar enough. Persil's latest effort, now decorating the hoardings, plays up to the theme excellently—a theme that must be near the worst neurosis of so many of the sort of people who want to be different, and struggle unceasingly to compensate for feeling inferior in childhood. Persil provides three boys walking. Two have lovely white shirts. But the shirt of the third is grey. The two grin, the one glum. The two are passing a remark about him, to his misery: **SOMEBODY'S MOTHER ISN'T USING PERSIL YET:** This is the tragic theme which survives through peace and war.