

the people. We must strive for this objective, of the unity of the labour movement and of all progressive opinion, as an indispensable part of preparedness and effective action, at the same time as we direct all our practical efforts to the fulfilment of the immediate tasks of the offensive. We are on the eve of tremendous events. The measure of democratic response in

this country will have no small responsibility to ensure that the united march of the peoples shall lead to the complete destruction of the fascist armies and fascist domination and the victory of the aims which are inscribed on the banners of the United Nations.

R. P. D.

May 21, 1944.

Teheran and the Atlantic Charter

by IVOR MONTAGU

IN the late summer of 1941 Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt, meeting in the middle of the ocean, drew up the Atlantic Charter.

Its provisions, which have been made widely available,* may be summarised as follows:—

1. The signatories sought no aggrandisement; 2. They desired to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely-expressed wishes of the people concerned; 3. They respected the right of all peoples to choose their own form of Government and desired to see sovereignty and self-government restored to those forcibly deprived of them; 4. With due respect for existing obligations, they would try to get equal access to raw materials for all, including victor and vanquished; 5. Economic collaboration between nations; 6. After final destruction of Nazi tyranny, a peace enabling nations to dwell, free of fear and want, within their own boundaries; 7. Free passage of the seas; 8. General security system against aggression.

In what lay the epoch-making significance of the Charter?

The principles here enunciated afforded a glaring contrast with the theory and practice of the Axis powers. Their proclamation by Britain inspired hope in all the peoples who had

been robbed of statehood by the Axis, or who feared that succeeding world-developments would deprive them of independence. Their endorsement by President Roosevelt associated the immense power of U.S.A. with the realisation of these principles, even before America's involvement in the war.

No wonder the Charter thus stood out as a beacon for the peoples.

The remaining United Nations, including U.S.S.R., later subscribed to the principles of the Charter.

The fact that it thereafter became a touchstone of democratic conduct—the treatment of India, the Darlan episode, the British official attitude to the Greek king, in each case the sharpest criticism of Allied conduct is the complaint of its inconsistency with the Atlantic Charter—shows its strength as a weapon in the fight for liberty.

Its strength is likewise shown—in reverse—by its employment as a disruptive catchword by the enemies of liberty.

The Devil can quote Scripture for his purpose. It is therefore perfectly natural that the demons who wish to return to their fiendish old world, and prevent the growth of the new, should be very glib with Charter quotations.

An apt parallel is the fight for post-war monopoly dictatorship today being waged under the banner of free-

* Text in LABOUR MONTHLY of January, 1944.

dom: that is, freedom of monopolies from control; a type of freedom that automatically involves the annihilation of freedom for all others.

The Atlantic Charter demons use their quotations in the attempt to discredit precisely those measures which may be necessary for realisation of the Charter's principles.

When Mr. Churchill, referring to possible security modifications of Germany's eastern frontier, denied that the Charter constituted a contractual obligation to the enemy, he drew a hornet's nest of Chamberlainites about his ears.

But on this point Mr. Cordell Hull (speech of April 9) is incontrovertible:

The Charter is an expression of fundamental objectives, towards which we and our allies are directing our policies. It points the direction in which solutions are to be sought. It does not give solutions. It charts the course upon which we are embarked and shall continue. That course includes the prevention of aggression and the establishment of world security. The Charter certainly does not prevent any step, including those relating to enemy States, necessary to achieve these objectives.

Plain common sense.

The true inwardness of the scripture-quoting campaign was revealed by the instructive episode of the seventy M.Ps.

The appeaser Rhys Davies, together with the I.L.P.er Maxton, the Vaticanite Stokes set down a resolution in the Commons which, "bearing in mind the specific promises contained in the Atlantic Charter," jumped violently on Churchill for "conveying the impression that its provisions do not, as a matter of right, apply to Germany," and thus bringing the Charter into disrepute; depressing the Allied population, encouraging enemy resistance, prolonging the war, making permanent peace impossible, etc., etc.

No less than seventy names of M.Ps., principally those of Labour

men carried away by the flavour of internationalist demagoguery and not looking beneath the surface, became appended to this resolution.

Its complete collapse without being brought to debate seems to have been due less to Churchill's declaration that it would be treated as a Vote of No Confidence—which the sponsors didn't mind, anyway—than to the ingenious amendment put down by Geoffrey Mander which, deleting all the matter after the first phrase (quoted above), continued "is of opinion that these should be applied universally so far as is consistent with the supreme object of making German aggression impossible in future, including in that connection such proposals as the transfer of East Prussia to Poland on security grounds."

This amendment would certainly have sorted the sheep from the goats with a vengeance.

The subtle object of the Charter Crusaders is to undermine the agreements of Moscow and Teheran by suggesting that these are in some peculiar way a "going back" on the Atlantic Charter. The Charter can enlist the lip-service of all flesh. The most hidebound reactionary can pin it to the masthead as an "aspiration," without committing himself, just as he can pray every Sunday for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth while opposing to the death every practical reform that would be effective in providing even an instalment of it. He does not like Moscow and Teheran precisely because they are that—practical instalments of measures to secure the "supreme object" that will bring the Charter principles nearer of realisation.

Moscow reasserted the unconditional surrender principle; pledged continuation of Four-Power collaboration as the basis of a post-war security organisation; prescribed procedure for the extermination of fascism in

the pressing, and sample, case of Italy; agreed the revival of Austria; and laid down the punishment of war criminals and its method. Teheran* proclaimed the war measures necessary before the Charter can come to life at all, consolidated the Three Power Concord without which the peace cannot be lasting, and emphasised that post-war collaboration and active participation, while available to all nations, large and small, required from these a certain political orientation "dedicated to the elimination of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance."

"We will welcome them," it added, "as they may choose to come into a world family of democratic nations." No place, that is, for Franco and Salazar or Peron.

Moscow and Teheran, it may thus be said, began to put teeth into the Charter. Those who had been prepared to endorse it as a dream-child liked it not at all as a lusty infant.

Professor Boris Stein puts the matter very exactly in *War and the Working Class* of May 1. He points out that those who now come out in defence of the "purity" of the Charter, and scream about alleged dismemberment of Germany, include precisely those Munichite writers who had no scruples about dismembering Czechoslovakia in favour of Hitler, and today encourage both aggressive claims of Polish reactionaries to Ukrainian and Byelorussian territories and the claims of the Baltic fascists kicked out by their own peoples.

They have by no means laid down arms, and "there is no doubt that, as the pretext of a necessity for a discussion on the Atlantic Charter, another attempt will be made to put over political principles harmful for the struggle against the Hitlerite bloc."

It does not, of course, follow from this that every discussion of the Atlantic Charter must be condemned and that this document must be declared above criticism. The Atlantic Charter is a declaration correctly formulating some of the common principles of post-war world reconstruction, supported by all members of the anti-Hitlerite bloc.

These principles were proclaimed on August 14, 1941. Are they adequate to solve the extremely complicated problems facing the entire anti-Hitlerite coalition of 1944? Could the Atlantic Charter have taken into account the changes in the general international situation during the three intervening years? Suffice it to recall that in August, 1941, the U.S.A. was not yet belligerent, Hitler Germany was at the height of its military power, Great Britain was menaced by a German invasion, and, lastly, the U.S.S.R., suddenly attacked six weeks before the signing of the Charter, was bearing the full brunt of the blow of the German hordes, which were then driving for Moscow and Leningrad.

During the past three years not only have changes occurred in the military relationship of forces, but a series of new problems has arisen which in 1941 either could not have been taken into account or could have been reckoned only in the most general outlines.

The basic principles of the Atlantic Charter are undoubtedly vital and just. Nevertheless, the proclamation of such principles does not yet mean the solution of all the problems facing the United Nations on the eve of the defeat of the Hitlerite bloc and after this defeat.

The Atlantic Charter does not mention the problem of the organisation of international security after the defeat of the Hitlerite bloc, for example.

No mention was made in it of fascism and the struggle against it

* In addition to a declaration including pledges to Iran.

during the war and after the defeat of Hitler Germany. These two examples are sufficient to show that, even at the time of its signature, the Atlantic Charter did not supply exhaustive answers to a number of important current problems. This becomes especially clear if the Atlantic Charter be compared to the declarations of the Moscow and Teheran Conferences, which go much further, taking into account the appearance of new problems. But even the principles formulated—the declaration at the Moscow Conference—do not embrace all the problems connected with the rapidly changing international situation. It is necessary only to cite the fact that the decisions of the Moscow Conference on Italy proved inadequate and demanded a number of other steps taken lately.

... there can be no objection to discussion aimed at improving, centralising and developing the common principles underlying the Atlantic Charter. But the aim of this discussion requires to be the determination of measures capable of strengthening the efforts in the struggle against the common enemy.

As a contribution to that discussion the document entitled *The International Post-War Settlement* and issued as a report by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to the Annual Conference that was fixed for Whitsun is of definite value.

Here, though the document rightly emphasises that only Socialism can

finally assure the destruction of fascism, the realisation of human rights and peace and plenty for all, equally rightly the greatest attention is devoted to the immediate settlement, the laying of the "foundation" on which future generations must build the "superstructure."

The question of German responsibility, precautions for the future, Three Power collaboration, future world organisation, punishment of war criminals, reparations, frontiers, international economic organisation, are all ably examined. In addition to the present possibilities of the situation, future developments arising from present action are borne in mind.

The Palestine proposals at the end of the document arouse disagreement, and the colonial recommendations, although they contain positive features, are unsatisfactory. There are also certain weaknesses which call for criticism, notably the lack of adequate recognition of the role of the democratic anti-fascist forces in Europe. Nevertheless in its main features and outlook, this is a salutary document.

It is a misfortune that the postponement of the Whitsun Congress has lost it the opportunity, for the moment, of being the subject of full consideration and adoption by the Labour Party. Meanwhile, it will repay careful study and serve as a corrective to further manoeuvres of disruption camouflaged as a Charter crusade.

AN UNOFFICIAL EXPORT BAN ?

Last August the export ban on LABOUR MONTHLY was raised, but someone is exercising an unofficial export ban. A civilian subscriber in Egypt informs us that he has not received *one single copy* since he took out his subscription in October last. We are endeavouring to find out at what stage of its journey his copy is stopped ; and would appreciate hearing if any readers have heard of similar cases among their friends abroad, either in the Forces or otherwise.

The Stewards' Place in the Unions

by J. R. CAMPBELL

TRADER Union Executives are at the moment deeply immersed in the problems of Trade Union reorganisation.

As is well known, the last Trades Union Congress passed a resolution asking that an enquiry into Trade Union structure should be undertaken. That enquiry has been going forward. An influential sub-committee has been examining the problem at Transport House and there have been consultations with various Trade Union executives.

It is no secret to say that one of the questions which is bound to receive a great deal of attention is the relation of the shop stewards and of shop stewards' committee to the official Trade Union organisation.

There can be no question but that the role of the shop stewards has grown immensely in this war. It would diminish if we were to go into a period of mass unemployment, but that would be scant comfort, even to those Trade Union officials who dislike the shop stewards, for the influence of the Unions would decline also. But if a serious large-scale attempt is made after the war to maintain a high level of employment there is no reason to doubt that the influence of the stewards will grow.

The shop steward has grown in influence and authority, not because of the propaganda of any political party, nor because of any desire to challenge the authority of the Trade Union leaders, but because he is fulfilling important functions whose significance has grown.

He is, for example, a negotiator of first instance. With the growth of payment by results he is daily called into negotiations on piece-work and bonus questions. The basic rate of wages and the minimum rate for piece-workers

may be settled by national negotiations, but the actual piece-rate or bonus rate which the worker gets in the workshop is settled by the strength of the workshop organisation and the negotiating ability of the shop stewards. The development of mass-production methods is likely to be accompanied by a growth of piece-work and the role of the shop steward as a negotiator of the first instance is likely to grow.

Welfare, embracing everything from the character of the washing and lavatory accommodation, to factory sports and entertainments and the efficiency of the factory canteen, is a factor of growing importance in the modern factory. The broad principles of welfare might be negotiated nationally, their actual details are a matter for negotiation at the workshop level.

The question of discipline will be of prime importance. The great mass of the workers will object to the right of arbitrary dismissal being restored to managements. The Trade Union Congress has indicated that it favours some form of appeal against dismissal and it is certain that the workers, whatsoever the legislative position, will be prepared to use their organised strength, in order to reduce it to a minimum.

It is a moot point whether the interest in production which the workers have displayed in the war industries can be sustained in peace-time. A great deal will depend on the Government and its policy. Yet, despite employers' profits, there is a sense in which it is as essential to have an efficient building industry in peace-time as it is to have an efficient ship-building industry in war-time. It is also true that pieceworkers' earnings may be affected by the general efficiency of the enterprise in which they work.