

"Victorian Socialism"

IN a very interesting essay entitled "Victorian Socialism" which Dean Inge contributed to NATURE of January 13 as if it were a review of my "New World Order", he makes certain statements for which I think it is reasonable to demand documentation. He says that the Nationalists (that is, the Franco rebels) took arms "against those devils in human shape, the Spanish Reds", etc. But is it not a matter of fact and common knowledge that Franco led his Moors against a Liberal Republican Government which had recently suppressed a very dangerous anarchist-socialist rising? (see Sender's "Seven Red Sundays", translated by Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, F.R.S.). Further, he gives an explicit account of abominable atrocities committed at Ronda. But surely in NATURE we want something more than an unnamed "American eye-witness" for statements of that sort. Who was he? How can we check his testimony? Is he available for cross-examination? Then about that three hundred thousand men and women "butchered under orders from Moscow". Is there a single respectable scrap of evidence for any part of that statement. Which we may find quoted presently as a statement made in NATURE.

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I HAVE made a careful study of the Spanish horrors, and have accepted none but well-documented evidence. The Ronda story is from a book by Arthur Bryant. I could have found several equally dreadful examples by Spanish eye-witnesses, but some of them I did not care to keep on my shelves. The estimate of 300,000 victims is official; some have put the number much higher. Krivitsky's "I Was Stalin's Agent" is most illuminating; for example, p. 120: "The OGPU had done a brilliant piece of work. In Dec. 1936 the terror was sweeping Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia. The OGPU . . . carried out assassinations and kidnappings. . . . The Soviet Union had a grip on Loyalist Spain, as if it were

already a Soviet possession." This book may be enough for my friend Mr. Wells, who is a very honest man.

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Scientific Workers and the Armed Forces

THE announcement published in NATURE of January 13, p. 61, "that the operation of the Schedule of Reserved Occupations is being relaxed to enable men at or above the age of reservation in scientific occupations to volunteer in approved cases for service in the Forces" calls for certain comments.

The increase in unemployment among scientists, particularly chemists and biologists, which may be the cause of this relaxation of the schedule and is the cause of much concern in this Association, is largely due to the reduction of 'civilian' research and the impossibility of absorbing all these scientists into direct war research. Through the somewhat uneven incidence of the economy campaign, many lines of research are already in jeopardy; it is only necessary to mention the example of food research. In the leading article of the same issue of NATURE, suggestions are made for new lines of research directly related to the needs of the population in war-time. In addition to such lines of work, there can also be suggested scientific work which is of less direct importance to a country at war but should be inaugurated at once so that its results may be available when required. The most obvious example of this kind of work is research on problems of substitute materials, in which Germany is at present probably ahead of Great Britain.

The fact that chemists and other scientists are now allowed to enlist in the Forces in other than their professional capacity suggests that there is a shortsightedness in the scientific direction of the country.

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Points from Foregoing Letters

THE ordinary form of quartz with trigonal symmetry changes at 575° to a form with hexagonal symmetry, the change being preceded by a progressive change of physical properties. Sir C. V. Raman and T. M. K. Nedungadi find an explanation for these effects as a result of an examination of the scattering of monochromatic light in quartz at various temperatures up to the transition point.

The First Benedicks effect (passage of an electron current in a metal subjected to a temperature gradient) in gas-free mercury has been re-examined by C. Benedicks and P. Sederholm. They find that the effect increases rapidly with increase of the mean temperature of the metal, the law of increase being similar to that for the emission of electrons into a vacuum (Richardson's law).

The principal diamagnetic susceptibilities of the diphenyldiacetylene molecule have been measured

by K. Lonsdale. A concentration of electron density normal to the carbon chain axis is indicated by a comparison of the results with those previously found for toluene.

Independent X-ray crystallographic examinations of phosphorus pentachloride by H. M. Powell and D. Clark in Oxford and by A. F. Wells in Cambridge have established the constitution of this compound in the solid state. The structure contains tetrahedral [PCl₄] and octahedral [PCl₆] groups.

H. O. Jenkins finds that linear relations exist between the complexity of degeneracy, defined in terms of the number of possible resonating structures, and the dissociation constants of series of related acids and bases.

C. L. Duddington describes four species of predaceous Phycomycetes, belonging to the Zoopagaceæ, found in leaf-mould from the Cotswolds.