

Freedom

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Threepence

WEARING DOWN TACTICS AT WESTMINSTER; CONSERVATIVES CALL IT PATRIOTIC

Is This the Democratic Way?

It is, of course, a central tenet of anarchism that government from above is undesirable. Briefly, anarchists hold that such government is an incompetent method of ensuring that the common needs of a community are adequately administered; that it does not make use of the creative capacities of the people as a whole—indeed it rests on contempt for such capacities; and that it brings out the worst elements in those to whom the actual business of administration is delegated. Recently, Alex Comfort has suggested that the nature of the work of politicians attracts mainly those whose inadequacies of character drive them to seek compensation in power over others.

Few open-minded people would assert that the anarchist contentions are groundless. But the majority of people to-day even if they do not hold the creative capacities of the community in contempt, do not believe the community capable of self-administration. They see government as a necessity, perhaps regrettable—but still inevitable. If they are not motivated by personal gain they will echo the words of Tom Paine: "Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively, by uniting our affections; the latter negatively, by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher. Society, in every state, is a blessing; but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one . . ."

Where the believers in government have also been believers in liberalism and freedom they have sought to offset the disadvantages of government by various safeguards. Broadly considered, democratic parliamentary procedure may be regarded as such an attempt. It is true that anarchist critics of the principle of government have not found it difficult to point to the inadequacies of such safeguards even when they are sincere. But if they are to command any respect they must be operated and animated by people who have a sincere regard for freedom and democratic rights. The recent governmental and parliamentary disregard for civil liberties have shown how little of this regard remains. Now the tactics of the Conservatives in Parliament in the last

* Common Sense (1776)

few weeks serve to exhibit another aspect of the inadequacy of democratic government.

Wearing Them Down

These tactics were described by a Conservative M.P., Robert Boothby, in a speech on March 13th: "We shall harry the life out of them. We shall keep them up day and night. The only way to get rid of them fairly quickly is to try to wear them out. We will make them sit up day and night and grind away until they get absolutely hysterical and say, 'We can't stand it any more,' and this is what we are going to do for the next two or three months."

The Tories are, of course, making use of the fact that the Government have only a tiny majority in the House, and this makes it necessary for every Labour member to attend all the time in case there is a division and the government is defeated. Now parliamentary procedure lays it down that when the formal agenda for the day is disposed of, the Opposition may "pray" for the annulment of any Orders in Council of which it may claim to disapprove. In the ordinary way, any frivolous use of this right is prevented by the fact that late at night the members just go home and the House is too empty to make discussion of a serious matter worth while. (In the past we have had occasion to complain how often a matter of great importance—questions of colonial injustice for example—are "debated" by a handful of tired and bored parliamentarians in an almost empty House.) But now, a division is a serious matter for the Government, and its supporters must attend every session. In this way, the Conservatives have only to keep

up a continual flow of "Prayers", and they can regularly keep the parliamentary labour party up till all hours of the morning, while ministers or their deputies have to answer all kinds of criticism. Now, if one believes in the democratic method of parliamentary government one must regard it—as the Home Secretary said on March 19th—as the duty of the House to keep a close watch on the Executive, and that one of the ways of doing that was by the prayer method. But it is obviously one thing to do it out of sincere regard for liberty, and quite another to do it as a means of party warfare.

Churchill's Support

The Conservatives have adopted this method expressly as a means of defeating the administration of government by the Labour Party. Churchill himself in his broadcast of March 17th, defended this policy. In his speech he claimed that the dangers which beset this country on the international field were tremendous; yet his party pursues a policy which, in the words of the *Times*, ensures that "the great issues of policy and administration are all the time in danger of being over-

laid by the nightly scramble in the House."

Churchill and the Conservatives generally claim that they are animated by the highest possible patriotic motives. The country "needs" the Tories, and so an early election is urgent. The international tension demands a "broadly-based" (that is to say, a Conservative) government commanding an adequate majority. And so on. Even the leader writer in the *Times* is derisive of this farrago, pointing out (19/3/51) that "it is the habit of political parties to believe that by serving their own interests they serve the nation's; it is the special habit of the Conservative Party to claim that it is the party of the nation, just as the Labour Party always claims to be the party of the people . . ." And he goes on to say that "if policy is to be hamstrung and Parliament kept in an uproar through month after month of declamatory moment in the country's affairs it will indeed be a mockery of the national duty."

No Political Answer

Yet it is symptomatic of the venality of politics that this same leader-writer in the *Times* can also write: "In fact, it is in strictly political terms that the struggle between Ministerial tenacity and the Opposition's stratagems will go on; and it will be justified, if at all, by its results." (The italics are ours.)

DOWN AMONG THE Z-MEN

Tribunals Disallow Political Objectors

CLASS 'Z' and 'G' reservists who apply for registration as conscientious objectors on political grounds will have their applications dismissed. The *Daily Telegraph* (17/3/51) reports that, "Some reservists say they object to fighting a war against particular countries, or a war they consider to be unjust. Some protest at the possible use of the atomic bomb. All are told the tribunals have no power to recommend exemption on these grounds. The objection must be to military service as such."

The chairman of a London tribunal, Sir Gerald Hargreaves, told applicants: "You cannot object to military service on the grounds that your country is wrong or because you feel a particular war would be unjust."

Of sixteen applications before his tribunal on March 16th, nine were granted. (This tribunal has been dealing with about 18 cases at a sitting and had still nearly 100 to consider.)

At the first tribunal for 'Z' and 'G'

objectors in Manchester, five cases were heard. Two objected for religious reasons, one on moral and humanitarian grounds, one was a Communist, and one objected because he thought it wrong that men should serve again while others were exempt. Only the two religious objectors were successful. The objector on humanitarian grounds, who admitted that he did not hold deep religious views was told by the chairman that he was "an opportunist, anxious to avoid the discipline that military training involves". The Communist, a fitter by trade, who said that "he would never allow himself to fight with our ex-enemies against our ally the Soviet Union", had his application dismissed because, said the chairman, Judge Sir Edwin Burns, "if his conscience would allow him to build vessels of war it would allow him to fight in them." He was also told by a member of the tribunal that "Conscience is a God-given thing".

These cases indicate that the policy in dealing with Class 'Z' reservists is to grant exemption only to religious objectors. It is obvious that the chances of the anarchist objector are slight. There are two possible anarchist attitudes to the provisions for conscientious objectors. The anarchist might very well argue that to apply to a tribunal is illogical from our point of view since to ask for exemption is a recognition of the right of the State to conscript. On the other hand it can be argued that you are surely right in getting what assistance you can from the State in avoiding the State's alternatives—army or prison. Whether it is worth while to submit to the impertinent questioning of the tribunals, those curious and omniscient arbiters of conscience composed of baronets, ex-officers, trade union officials, parsons and local busy-bodies, without the chance of success, unless you can persuade them that you are a Jehovah Witness, a Quaker, or a Primitive Methodist, is a matter for 'Z' men to ponder.

The authorities, of course, are assuming that because the period of recall is so short, men will shelve their unwillingness to serve. As *Public Opinion* says: "If large sections of the 'Z' Reserve had been told that they would be called-up for a long period of training a great number of them would never have allowed them-

"I believe in the value of the minority. The world will be saved by the few."

ANDRE GIDE.

The Labour Party have considered countering Tory tactics by changing the rules of procedure—always an easy resort if the rules don't serve the interests of those in power. It is charitable to believe that they will do this only unwillingly, and at least one occasion, they managed to turn parliamentary procedure to their own advantage so that the House could rise early in the evening.

Another motion advanced by Mr. G. E. C. Wigg, and supported by Mr. Glenvil Hall, chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, uses a somewhat different weapon. It proposed "that on any day on which any motion for the annulment of a statutory instrument is to be moved, no alcoholic liquor of any kind should be sold or consumed in the members' smoking room or elsewhere within the precincts of the House of Commons after 10 p.m."

Whatever else one may say about all this, it is clear that all this chicanery is unworthy of a body committed for good or ill with important affairs by the community. That there is so little dignity about it arises from the same fact which made the Tories' tactic possible in the first place—that there is neither dignity nor sincerity in party warfare. And still less we may add in "national" or coalition parliamentarianism. The only safeguard to make democratic government at least worthy of respect is a scrupulous sincerity and devotion on the part of its protagonists.

Were these essential considerations present, the anarchist criticism of government by delegated authority would still stand. As the moral tone of parliament is at present such criticism remains academic; anarchists, and no doubt, many others will feel only contempt.

selves to be drawn into the defence net at all. But nobody is going to risk a charge for evading a mere 15 days' service." We would, however, be optimistic to assume that the 'Z' men's obligations will end with their 15 days. It was announced in Parliament that they would be issued with new uniforms. New uniforms for a fortnight?

An ex-soldier who has signified his unwillingness to serve writes in an account of his military experiences: "My mistake previously, and the mistake of most men in the Army, had been to give way through a desire to avoid fuss, or with the proviso that it was only 'this time', but through inertia it so easily became every time, and avoidance of fuss merged gently into an unmanly compliance." W.

"BOMB DRILL" IN U.S. SCHOOLS

THE Los Angeles city school system recently instituted frequent "bomb drills", during which each student is required to fall upon the floor with arms locked over his face and head. Almost any candid psychiatrist, we should think, could tell school-board officials a great deal about the lasting effects of such an intrusion into the impressionable consciousness of the young. It is a means, whether designed or not, to make nearly everyone in high school think war, feel war, and believe in war. Apparently, all-out psychological mobilisation has already begun, and gathers momentum with each day and each new proposal for action in response to "the seriousness of our present emergency".

There are interesting signs of resistance, though these are not likely to make any of the papers. Some of the youngsters in Los Angeles, we understand, have refused to capitulate to the ritualistic motions of bomb-drill, and have tried to organise a protest to the requirement. How sixteen-, seventeen-, and eighteen-year-olds manage to do it we cannot say, yet some instinct for preservation of the integrity of independent thought can apparently arise even at these tender years. We have seen two letters of protest against the A-bomb drills, one of which remarks that "the very word 'drop' is a fear slogan, suggesting alarm and creating hysteria. This caused me to wonder if such drills are really doing more harm by building up fear." The other letter strikes a different note: "It appears that students actually begin to look forward to the drills. They naturally increase the desire for a time to put the drills into use . . ." Somebody, at any rate, is thinking about the implications of regular bomb drills.

Mamas (U.S.A.)

French Strike for Higher Wages

12% Cost of Living Increase since August

(From our Correspondent) PARIS, MARCH 24.

At the time of writing, the social crisis in France is at its height. The strike is not general, but extends to public services which are of vital interest. The railways are almost completely paralysed, gas and electricity undertakings are also concerned, particularly in the Paris region, where public transport is equally involved as are also certain factories with the result that the economic life of the country is being seriously affected.

All the more or less objective commentators are in agreement on one point: the origin of these strikes is not political. They really correspond with a serious economic situation for the working people brought about by alarming increases in the cost of living. The Commission for Collective Agreements, summoned by the government through popular pressure, has itself admitted that the cost of living has increased by 12.5% since August 1950, the date when minimum wages were last fixed.

In fact, since putting into effect the policy of rearmament everyone could—and did—foresee such an outcome. The serious sections of the Press was already asking at the time: "How can we strangle inflation and the increased prices of raw materials, which will result from the conversion to a war economy: how are we going to face up to social agitation which will surely occur?"

An increase in prices did take place immediately, affecting consumer goods as well, and more serious in certain industries found their budgets below the

tradition. This deluge of verbal impotence helped to increase public tension, and the "democratic" parliamentary system has once more shown that it is no longer even capable of playing its part as defender of the capitalist order.

The Communists, for their part, did not miss the opportunity of using the social agitation to attack the government. It seems, however, that they are playing a clever game, attacking mainly in State and public sectors, so as not to have certain industrialists against them. For the C.P. is discreetly dangling before the eyes of business men and industrialists the advantages to be gained by commercial negotiations with Russia. This policy is of course made to fit in with the struggle between Russian and American imperialisms, and the preparations for the next war.

But once again, the Communist game, is only grafted to a movement which has deep economic roots, and which is supported by all the large unions. And it is certain that once the crisis has been warded off, and the strike wave reduced at the price of concessions by management and government departments [this time at a cost of some £100 millions in wage increases—Eds.] it will, after a few months flare up again. The root of the evil is in the increases in prices, which will not be stopped so long as the world armaments race continues.

REMÉ MICHEL.

The Star, 15/3/51.

"Political Struggle" & the "Scientific Approach"

II

LET us ask, suppose that to-morrow the Soviet declared full political liberty (full in the western "democratic" sense), what would occur? Surely the powerful institutionalised groups—the party bureaucrats, the generals, the secret police, the economic bureaucrats—would gather to the masses for absolute power for themselves, and the State would be torn by civil struggle. Against the formation of such cliques, against any relations not mediated by it, the State, that is the top of the pyramid personalised in Stalin, directs its ceaseless purges and liquidations (they are falsely taken as signs of momentary malfunctioning of the State). To formulate the rule, in a society where political power is the main vehicle of personal power and prestige, the State can prevent endless civil war only by preventing the most rudimentary sociality.

What sort of judgment are we to make of such a society, and what expectations may we have from it? (Obviously we need much more information.) I do not know that we have any knowledge about sexuality in Russia, and I do not know how to infer it indirectly; but we have considerable information on the points of sociality and work (in the latter, absence of choice, of opportunity for creation and a sense of possession). Perhaps Comfort would deny any sort of primacy to these desires; and since neurosis may turn out to be an ethical rather than a biological pathology, he may be right to define it as he does. He may also be right (the evidence would be very relevant) that the more spectacular neurotic disorders of the west are less common in Russia. But I would argue that what occurs there is a social neurosis by which the individuals are able to deny to themselves that they do not have genuine primary satisfactions—a denial necessary to avoid heresy and possible extermination, as well as to protect one's self-esteem. The editors of *Freedom* are surely right to draw attention to this other neurosis, just as much a human sickness. In fact, if this were not so, Comfort's "psychiatric" approach would be practically meaningless, it would have no point of attack (what could he say to the "delinquent" ruling class?)

Let us not deny that the Russian State binds the nation tightly together; so long as it can offer the rationalisation of future paradisaic communism, and blame the war and external capitalism for all the manifest evils and deprivations, we can perhaps imagine the society holding together (by the time the man sees through the lies, he is probably too exhausted even for rage). But the system seems, by such an analysis, something less than the smooth-functioning machine that Comfort suggests. (It is not amiss to warn against the sufficiently-demonstrated power of the bureaucracy to seduce admiration.) Further, the problem of the succession has been fatal to many dynasties, even when intelligence has been sacrificed to continuity in the hereditary monarchy; though Stalin's death would be unlikely to lead to a libertarian revolution, it would almost certainly set off such an

internal struggle as to endanger the balanced structure, possibly destroy mass-faith in the State, and open possibilities we cannot now reason about.

(2) Comfort is also offering a program, presumably a hopeful program logically implied by his analysis.

First, let me say that anarchists must face the fact that revolution and large-scale social struggles are not the order of the day. For thirty years, except for Spain, there has been no revolutionary situation with potentialities we would call libertarian. In the midst of a revolutionary situation, it was reasonable for Malatesta to believe that a revolution would make more anarchists than a thousand libertarian schools; but if a revolution is not creating anarchists? And such are the facts. These main sorts of action are open to us, they are not sufficient, they are something: to persuade others and to disturb their rationalised-systems; to offer powerful positive examples; to modify social institutions in a libertarian fashion (not for the sake of reform, but to create more opportunities and more freedom). If "traditionalist" anarchists object to this, it is because they suspect that the eventual revolutionary situation will somehow be overlooked; a good warning; but we observe, in general, a brutalising, and in specific, a withdrawal of interest from fellow men and a loss of capacity for indignation, and if these reach a certain point there may never be a revolutionary situation.

Comfort wishes anarchists to supplant the revolutionary approach with the "psychiatric" approach; and it seems clear to me means to supplant as well the whole concept of "struggle". He seems to think there is an inconsistency between the struggle against the oppressors and efforts to convert persons to anarchism. (I want to bypass the relevant but too vast question of pacifist objections to struggle *per se*.) But why not simultaneous struggle and love? This is Malatesta's view: we do not hate the oppressor or his agent, but the evil he is doing; we do not desire to destroy him but to prevent him from doing evil; we do not use violence except to defend ourselves against violence. Again, perhaps, qualities difficult to reconcile; but concrete examples would not be hard to find, and I am mindful of the experience of American conscientious objectors who attempted to engage in such a struggle against their jailers, for a variety of demands, without failing to try to make some sort of human contact with guards and officials, and often with success. I am afraid that by "simplifying" and "purifying" our actions, by rejecting one by one those which contain some elements of dangers, we shall finally remove them all.

Perhaps a psychological point is relevant here. The main psychological energy of anarchism, it is fairly well agreed, comes from rebellion against authority, after the pattern of paternal authority (Herbert Read says this rather nicely in *Poetry and Anarchism*). If the just restraints are not expressed in struggle, where are they to go (for they will not disappear)? If we were to apply the "psychiatric method" Comfort proposes, I

think we would discover the following: instead of frank rebellion aimed at preventing the authority from inflicting more evil, but not at destroying the persons, there would develop an attitude of insidiously destroying the person psychologically (the ambiguous phrase "win over" might apply fit the case); and we might very well find that we ended by turning against our friends, and perhaps at last ourselves, the guile we were trying to use, perhaps from too much conviction of weakness, against our oppressors. (Psychology, and not necessarily just amateur psychology, may well be a harmless outlet for sadistic and power motives; but for this reason it must be watched.) And while the usual anarchist attitude has its rational counterpart in the necessity for destroying the authority in order to be free, it is not clear, from a practical point of view, why it would be necessary to convert the top rulership, utterly powerless as it would be without the support of the middle layers and the passivity of the underlying population.

The concept of "struggle", unmodified, tends eventually toward a new class domination ("dictatorship of the proletariat"). But the modification exists, in the centre of the anarchist tradition, in the idea of love, and without the ascetic tone of pacifism; once again, Malatesta.

(3) Now, my last point: the "scientific approach". Unless we prove to be unable to do anything with it but abuse it, our knowledge of man and society can hardly become too abundant, especially when as now our means are so disproportionate to the ends in view. But—a little caution! If we could have some sort of faith in ourselves, in our spontaneous reactions in personal and group situations, we should have less need for such knowledge; as the mother loaded down with psychological baggage is at best an inadequate substitute for the mother with love, security and common sense, and at worst is a robot controlled by a dead book.

In short, the useful scientific knowledge leads to—more exactly, removes the blocks to—true understanding of ourselves and our desires and our situations (the very need for the detour of science is a symptom of the present evil); but the application of psychological science to society, particularly if after the older aspirations to apply "social science" and "engineering" to society, contains, and I think even stems from, the most serious dangers.

I will merely mention these dangers, since I have mentioned previously some of those peculiar to a psychological approach, and the sociologists provide such

notorious examples. Coldness, lack of feeling, calculation; excusable in the analyst who is striving to be neutral while he helps the patient discover himself; but the analogy will not hold with life-situations. The errors of abstract thinking, not checked by ordinary observations and intuition. The power of the scientific bloc. The demand for exclusive concentration on this sort of activity. The incapacity of such methods to take into account the complexity, unpredictability,

the magic, of human activity. The proper function of the social sciences is to detect superstition, interested observation and the like; that is, to free our minds for positive inventions that no science could devise. So far, we owe the psychological sciences very little more than reconstruction of how some of the harm has been done, and some indications of what cannot be done; potentially we owe them some very valuable insights into human nature and into our own conditions. In general, let us listen to them, but not be awed by them, let us use them to strengthen ourselves and not try to create a science of which we may become the instruments.

DAVID WIECK.

THE DEATH OF KROPOTKIN

Emma said there had been snow
and a keen wind sighing in the withered
branches

And I imagined little details
sheepswool caught in the thorns
red berries
and a prophet's dead face on the pillow.

She said he had died in peace
and the eternal intelligence on his brow
had seemed like a light
in the dark unlit hut

And I imagined
steel-rimmed glasses on a side-table
and eyes forever hidden.

She said there had been a great concourse
of people
walking out from Moscow
or the nearest station
poor humble people—Lenin had let them
come
to sidle lovingly past
his silent form.

Several hundred people, simple people
fur caps down to their ears
their padded trousers crisscrossed with
string
standing there on the obliterated road
waiting for the cortege.

Dmitrov was the name of the place.
They took his body to Moscow
and there formed a procession
perhaps a mile long
old revolutionaries, young students
and children carrying wreaths
of holly and laurel.

[Peter Kropotkin died 30 years ago this month.—EDS.]

They marched five miles
carrying the black and scarlet banners
and I imagined the feathery snow falling
gently on his bier
gently on the bowed heads
and the patient streets.

But when they reached the burial place
the snow had ceased
and the winter sun
sinking red
distinguished the level glittering plain.

A river of glowing light
poured into the open grave
all the light in the world
sank with his coffin
into the Russian earth.

It was seven versts outside Moscow.

On the steps of their museum
the Tolstoyans had gathered
to play mournful music
as the cortege passed.

Dark then it was, and silent.
I remembered, said Emma, the cairn on
the mountain ridge
a heap of stones and broken branches
with tokens attached of horsehair or rag
and the cry: "The waters before us
flow now to the Amúr.
No mountains more to cross".

No mountains more to cross for you
dear comrade and pioneer.
You have crossed the Great Khinghán
travelling eastward into rich lands
where many will follow you.

HERBERT READ

The Catholic and Anarchism

"Because of its adaptability because it is an international organisation, because it represents the one living and independent religious body, because it is sensitive to social tendencies and able to assume protective colouring, because it is quite capable of advocating fascism in one country and some parody of free socialism in another, the Roman Catholic Church is the most dangerous single institution in the world to-day, and the libertarian should always remain conscious of the fact . . . the Roman Catholic Church represents the prototype of human authority . . . its pretensions are incompatible with the hopes of those who seek the fullest and most fruitful freedom of relationship between man and man."

—GEORGE WOODCOCK.

MOST of us who have been associated with the anarchist movement for some years have encountered in the course of our association, quite a few individuals who hold certain weird interpretations of anarchism, ranging from a belief in navel-gazing as the sole way to salvation, to the view that anarchy can be realised by way of its absolute antithesis—world government. The doubtful privilege of being the most unusual and perhaps the most dangerous of this type of person, are those who contend that it is possible for Christianity as represented by the Catholic Church to be reconciled with anarchist views, and that it is feasible for the ad-

herents of this idea to continue to be effective within the framework of this church and presumably to influence this great bulwark of authority in a libertarian direction. The similarity between the advocates of such a view and those who believe it possible to use the state to achieve a stateless society is too apparent to be stressed.

In the last issue of the American anarchist review, *Report*, an article appears from the pen of one Byron R. Bryant, summarising the main tendencies of the Catholic Worker Movement in the U.S.A. (the recipient of papal blessing not so long ago) which apparently is the strongest organisation of "catholic anarchists". Since the article in question was read by Dorothy Day, one of the founders of the movement in America, before publication, and since the comments she appends in no way contradict the main theme of the article, we can assume that the author succeeds in representing the "official" view of these professed anarchists of the Roman Catholic Church. Let us therefore examine some of the more blatant travesties of anarchism this movement advocates. The article incidentally sets out to further closer collaboration between those holding "traditional" anarchist ideas and the CW movement; it merely demonstrates the uselessness of such an action.

Bryant writes: "Agrarianism should form the basis of any desirable society, it is less hurried, gives greater opportunities for individual development and avoids the unnatural and insanitary conditions which urban life inevitably produces for the majority of those who live within it."

A viewpoint worth consideration. But what type of social structure would such a society, in the view of the CW movement, entail? "Such a society would not be wholly without authority. Secular power would be practically or wholly non-existent, but the authority of the Church would be all-powerful. The priest and 'holy man' would replace king, president and parliament". [My italics.—S.E.P.]

Anarchism involves the 'negation of authority; the denial of the domination of man by man; the rejection of the powers of compulsion over one section of the community by another—yet these self-styled advocates of 'christian anarchism' think that a free society can be attained by handing over the power of the state to

the church! Well might Bryant weakly comment that the literature of the movement can hardly be said to have solved what kind of 'churchly coercion' would be used against the nonconformist. Perhaps a glance at history and a consultation with the spirit of an Albigensian or a Ferrer would provide him with an answer.

A similar 'libertarian' attitude is displayed towards freedom in sex-relationships. Divorce and birth-control are denounced. Celibacy is advised for the more 'spiritual' members and church-sanctioned marriage for those who succumb to earthly desires. Bryant states that this aspect of the movement would probably be the least attractive to the revolutionary (as if the domination of the priest in other spheres of life were by some celestial reason more attractive!) He contends, however, that the anarchist does not forfeit his anarchism by accepting such a conventional outlook. But surely the individual who rejects authority in the form of the state, yet accepts it in the form of the family and church supervised sex-relationships, can hardly be said to be a consistent anarchist? The real crux of the matter is whether the 'catholic anarchist' is capable of tolerating not only the advocacy, but the practice, of free love, when, since he accepts rules of god, as represented by the priest, such behaviour would be a violation of God's law—in fact, a sin.

To sum up: The CW movement in the U.S.A. claims to be not only Catholic but also anarchist. It is not. All that its 'anarchy' would involve would be the transfer of power from secular to 'divine' authority (as represented by the Roman Catholic Church). The only aspect of its ideas that bear any resemblance to anarchism is its objection to the modern centralised (secular) state—an objection shared by some Tories. The fundamental principle of anarchism—the rejection of all authority of man over man—is obviously far from the minds of its adherents. To co-operate with such a movement under the mistaken impression that one is encouraging anarchistic tendencies within the church and thereby furthering a social revolution would be futile and inconsistent in the extreme. Our struggle against both god and the state will be better served by keeping completely clear of such 'parodies of free socialism'.

"If God really existed it would be necessary to abolish him."

S. E. PARKER

Decentralising the B.B.C.

THE proposals for decentralisation of broadcasting made recently by the Beveridge Committee on the B.B.C. (discussed in our editorial for 3/2/51), were attacked in a speech on March 12th by Mr. John Coatsman, the B.B.C.'s former North Regional Controller.

He said that if the recommendations were carried out, they would result in a strong tendency for the commissions to arrogate to themselves the authority of

national boards of governors, which would give rise to serious political as well as internal B.B.C. problems, and would certainly affect the people's broadcasting prejudicially. Secondly, there would be a clash between these commissions and the English broadcasting authorities.

"The third and most serious consequence—if the Beveridge Committee's recommendation is left in its present form," he continued, "will be a disastrous breach in the existing social and political harmony of the United Kingdom. Moreover, these undesirable consequences will be powerfully reinforced by the measure of regionalisation of television requested by the Regional Advisory Councils and recommended by the Beveridge Committee. In short, so far from establishing 'federal harmony' in British broadcasting the committee's recommendation points the way straight to immediate partition of the broadcasting sphere, and the ultimate 'Balkanisation' of this most important national service."

Here is the authentic echo of Lord Reith, the former Napoleon of Broadcasting House. Mr. Coatsman says that what he calls 'Balkanisation' would certainly affect the people's broadcasting prejudicially, but he does not say why. What it would upset is the mammoth, infallible and omnipotent sort of organisation beloved of the official mind. The fact that, as our editorial suggested, the B.B.C. is "a reflection of current administrative practice rather than an instrument for moulding such practice for the better", is underlined by Mr. Coatsman's view that devolution would upset the social and political harmony of the United Kingdom. Who says the B.B.C. has no political rôle?

His fears, in fact, can only reinforce our view that decentralisation "would provide the bricks whereby the radio could play a living part in a society which possessed vitality because it reflected and responded to the needs of the individuals comprising it."

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

- The Anarchist Prince George Woodcock 21/-
- Homage to Catalonia George Orwell 10/6
- Down and Out in Paris and London George Orwell 8/6
- East London Robert Sinclair 15/-
- Hadrian the Seventh Byron Corvo 7/6
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Nationalism in the 'Cominform

AT the end of the war, the European Communist Parties inherited a considerable amount of prestige from the activities of their members in patriotic partisan movements. But since that time a number of factors have combined to make them lose influence. The plain fact of Russian totalitarianism extending an almost colonial rule over the satellite countries, the manifest motives of subservience to Russian foreign policy which underlie every action of the Communist Parties outside Russia; the shameless opportunism of Communist political activity—all have exerted their effect, while particular conditions have added their weight in different countries.

With the loss of prestige has gone a loss of membership, estimated recently in America as follows: Austria, 34%; Belgium, 65%; Denmark, 63%; France, 30%; Luxembourg, 84%; Netherlands, 34%; Norway, 65%; Sweden, 55%; United Kingdom, 34%; West Germany, 34%; and Italy, 31%. These figures have been criticized as being exaggerated, and no doubt they are not fully accurate. But there can be no doubt about the general trend regarding Communist influence. When the cold war began to gather way a few years back, *Freedom* ventured to predict such defections, since those who sought to climb on to the Communist bandwagon under the impression that the Russian star was in the ascendant—and the Communist Party has always attracted, and sought, opportunists—would obviously not wish to find their way to Brixton and the Isle of Man if the shooting war started.

Cucchi and Magnani

The recent defections in Italy, however, do not appear to be of this kind. They have an ideological content which makes them of far greater interest than, say, the apparent defection of J. B. S. Haldane from the party ranks. Moreover, the dramatic resignations of Aldo Cucchi and Valdo Magnani from the Italian C.P. reveal a tension and a cleavage in the party which goes deeper than the somersaults we have come to expect in the changes in Communist policies.

Cucchi, who is deputy for Bologna, recalls André Gide's book *Reflections on Returning from the U.S.S.R.* for he had recently been to Russia. On his return he spent three weeks in Florence, completely dropping out of party activities and not making contact with fellow party members. It is reported by Ignazio Silone that visits to Russia have been disillusioning for many other Italian Communists, who, amongst other things, found the Russian educational system "mediocre", and hence have poured a cold douche on the enthusiasm for things Russian.

Magnani is also an important figure in the Italian C.P. He is deputy for Reggio Emilia, a north Italian town where the local Communist Federation is said to number 67,000 members. He fought with the Yugoslav partisans during the war and has always been an admirer of Tito. He is described as an intellectual of resolute mind, who is in the habit of weighing his views and his resignation is therefore no light matter. Some months ago he proposed a resolution at a local party congress urging that Italy should be defended from attack from whatever quarter, and was immediately attacked for implying that the Soviet Union could be an aggressor. At the time he withdrew his resolution, but it is plain that the Russian desire for a militarily weak and disarmed neutral Italy has remained unpalatable to him. With Cucchi, he now demands a strongly armed neutral Italy, and appeals to patriots to defend this "sacred soil" with all the familiar terminology of nationalism. The split in the Italian party revolves round just this issue of Italian patriotism finding subservience to the interests of Moscow—the transferred patriotism of the real Communist—too much to swallow. The related Communist dogma that in the cold war the Soviet Union is shining white while the Anglo-American imperialists are completely black is also perhaps something altogether too remote from the truth to be acceptable to thinking Italians.

Nationalism in Russia's European Colonies

This problem of nationalism in opposition to Russian colonial rule is not confined to Italy. It is confusing to call it Titoism, although Tito's successful defiance of Moscow has obviously made the problem a permanent one in the satellite and other countries. Cucchi and Magnani travel up and down Italy seeking adherents to their new movement. But if

Communism had come to power in Italy as in the Iron Curtain countries, they would no doubt be ministers awaiting trial for treasonable dealings with the West. Their defection from the party on the nationalist issue comes at the same time as a very widespread unrest in the Russian European Empire.

Drastic purges are in progress in Czechoslovakia, and the fear of an uprising is so great in governmental circles that in addition to the universal arrests they have dissolved thousands of voluntary and seemingly innocent associations such as village chess clubs. This may be taken to indicate that they fear any kind of association as potentially subversive and are adopting Herod's blanket method of dealing with it. Meanwhile the bread and flour shortage, and the Russian withholding of bread grains until they have secured further favourable economic agreements, aggravate the difficulties of the government, and also inevitably make Russia even more unpopular. Furthermore, they ensure for "loyal", that is, pro-Soviet, Communists the odium of quittings.

This is the dilemma that faces the whole of Russia's European colonialism. The nationalist interests are so clearly subservient to the Russian interests, that nationalism is bound to be fostered. Treason trials and government purges cannot weed it out, but rather intensify it.

Similar problems confront the Communists in Hungary and Bulgaria, while in Albania it has flared up into a virtual seizure of the Communist government. In China the process is probably much less far advanced, but Communist ministers have admitted widespread guerrilla activity and sabotage of transport. Once again the C.P. used nationalist sentiment to get themselves in power, and once there their subservience to foreign interest (this time, of Russia) can only inflame it further.

The Cucchi-Magnani defections have received dramatic underlining in Italy from the "line" that Palmiro Togliatti, the

Communist leader has brought back from his recent protracted stay in Moscow. So eager is Russia to see the Western European countries militarily weak, that Togliatti publicly offered the De Gasperi government in Milan that "if Italy modifies her foreign policy the Italian Communist Party will give up all opposition in Parliament and in the country". This means that Togliatti is prepared—on instructions from Moscow—to throw over the whole of the working-class struggle in Italy which the C.P. claim to be their prime interest, for the sake of a foreign office bargain. In Italian nationalist eyes the offer means simply a gain for Russia at the expense of a defenceless neutrality in Italy.

Now, of course, it is open to critics to say that Communist promises are worthless, and that Togliatti's offer cannot be taken seriously. Nevertheless, so damaging an offer would hardly be made lightly, and in any case, in politics each side to a bargain makes concessions in order to gain something, the one being dependent on the other. Hence such bargains can never be entirely without substance. But it is no new thing for the Communists to throw over the workers' struggle for the sake of Russian advantage. During the war the C.P. in this country—gave up every militant struggle "for the sake of the war effort", even to the point of strike-breaking with Communists scabs, denounced the class struggle as pro-fascist.

It is not surprising that Togliatti's offer has been bitterly denounced by Cucchi and Magnani. More than their defections it will itself go far to deepen the nationalist split in the party ranks. Furthermore, the disgraceful nature of Togliatti's bargain, together with the waning enthusiasm for Russian institutions, can only throw the Italian C.P. into further disrepute.

But care should be taken not to place much reliance on the groups who split away. The ex-Communists are said to be

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

'La Prensa' & Principles of Press Freedom

IT seems almost certain that Peron, Argentina's dictator, will not heed the world-wide protests at the suppression of the independent daily newspaper *La Prensa*, which ceased publication on January 26th as a result of a boycott by the newsmen's union which demanded a 20% share of all income from the paper's revenue from small advertisements and exclusive distribution rights in Buenos Aires (see *Freedom*, 17/3/51). Indeed, as we go to Press it appears that the editor of *La Prensa* is under arrest. It is a reflection of the contempt shown for human rights by the totalitarian countries and of the apathy, and opportunism of the democracies. What must Peron think of the sincerity of the American protest when at the same time the United States extends its hand of friendship to Franco, who has long ago suppressed all the freedoms in his country, or for that matter Great Portugal where freedom of the Press, of assembly and of speech were suppressed years ago by their old friend dictator Salazar?

The issues at stake in the world to-day—the defence of freedom-loving peoples from the threats of Russian Communism—are too vast for such trifling episodes as the suppression of the Press in one of the United Nations to be of any consequence! After all, we must expect to lose all our liberties in defending our freedom from the Russians!

And so Peron knows that the protests will peter out, and soon meat will take the place of *La Prensa* in the columns of the world press. Already *La Nación*, of the world press, is critical of another newspaper which is critical of the Peron regime has capitulated to the Peronist union's (a Peronist organisation) demands, and the principal vintner newspaper *La Voz del Interior* has also been the subject of a boycott by the distributors. And one need hardly add that the political periodicals, including the anarchist weekly *La Protesta*, have long ago been suppressed, and when they do appear they do so illegally.

How precarious is the liberty of the Press is a subject which has been discussed so often in *Freedom*. And yet it is such an important subject that it cannot be too often repeated. The greatest threat to the Freedom of the Press is the intolerance of people towards unpopular views. In other words, one finds that many people who agree with the freedom for the Press they agree with, whereas, of course, to ensure real freedom of the Press implies equal facilities for all viewpoints to be put forward.

How the *Daily Worker* moaned for years about the wholesalers' boycott of their paper! Yet they were the most vocal supporters—and perhaps the organisers—of the threatened strike by workers in W. H. Smith, the large wholesale and retail newsagents, if Moseley's fascist paper were to be distributed by that firm.

And in America, while protests at the suppression of *La Prensa* come from all levels, one reads that the American C.P. *Daily Worker* admits that it is on the brink of bankruptcy. There are many contributory factors, but one obviously important one is the boycott by the newsdealers. A news item, from New York (16/1/51) announced that the Newsdealers Association of Greater New York, representing 500 of the city's estimated 1,500 newsdealers, has voted, 4 to 1, to ban the Communist newspaper *Daily Worker* from its stands.

Mr. Richter, president of the Association said that while the ban was not binding on members of the association, he expected most members and most other newsdealers to remove the *Worker* from their stands. Most members, he said, had removed the newspaper 'informally' since the ban was first proposed.

Newsdealers also have taken action against the newspaper on another front. In letters to Gov. Thomas E. Dewey and State Attorney General Nathaniel Goldstein, they asked that the publishing company's charter to do business be revoked. The state officials replied that they had the proposal under consideration.

Now, one may dislike the *Daily Worker*; one is not obliged to read it, but neither has one the right to prevent those people who do want to read it from obtaining a copy from a newsagent's shop. If one cannot see that point of view then one has no right in criticising the newsdealers' union in Argentina for boycotting *La Prensa* which is as reprehensible to Peron's way of thinking as the *Daily Worker* is to such patriots as Mr. Richter of the New York Newsdealers Association.

Any of the freedoms—of speech, of assembly or of the Press—is only real when it is enjoyed by all the members of society. When one believes in it only for oneself and for those one agrees with or for those one disagrees with so long as their voice is a small one with no influence, then it is no longer freedom; it is nothing more than hypocrisy and humbug. And that is something Peron realises, and he just carries on in his own way and corks a snook at the bogus freedom-lovers in the democratic countries.

Powers of Deportation

IN *Freedom* (3/3/51) we mentioned the case of Mr. Ignatius Musazi, a native of Uganda, who on his return to his country was arrested and deported. The case was taken up in Parliament by Mr. Fenner Brockway, who asked the Colonial Secretary why Mr. Ignatius Musazi was detained on arrival in Uganda from Britain on January 22nd, and what were the Uganda Government's intentions in respect of him.

Mr. J. GRIFFITHS: The Governor has decided, with my concurrence, not to deport Mr. Musazi, but to keep him under light restraint in the Northern Province of Uganda, where he

Rhodesia: Setting the Scene for the Race War

"You should not spare the natives. You should kill all you can, as it serves as a lesson to them when they talk things over at their fires at night."

—CECIL RHODES.

A CONFERENCE of officials was held in London this month to discuss the possibility of creating a new Dominion of Central Africa consisting of North and South Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The initiator of this move is Southern Rhodesia, which is a self-governing colony with a native population of 1,700,000 and a European population which in 1945 was 80,000, and was said to have risen to 110,000 by 1948. Northern Rhodesia is ruled by a Governor with an Executive

the largest party in the world—and they are the most politically disillusioned and inactive people. Silone may woo Cucchi and Magnani; in Germany the formation of a new "independent labour party" mainly from disappointed Communists may have a considerable weakening effect upon the existing C.P.; but no positive good is to be expected. Cucchi and Magnani call the Italian party "back to Gramsci"—a reference to its founder in the early twenties. Like the admirers of Tito, they criticize the details, but have no fundamental quarrel with the Leninist party structure as such, nor have they altered their attitude towards the rank and file and the working class generally.

The present Communist splinters in any case derive from nationalist disappointment, and carry all the vices of nationalism. The real adversary of Communism is not to be found in nationalism and party political activity, but in internationalism and revolutionary self-activity on the part of the workers and rebels from any and every class. But the present splits are welcome as showing once again the interior tensions which dictatorial tyranny breeds.

will be able to be accompanied by his family and, subject to reasonable conditions to see his friends and associates. The Governor and I hope it will prove possible to help Mr. Musazi to realise that Government policy and intentions are designed solely for the welfare of the people of Uganda. We hope he will thereby become conscious of the desirability of working with, rather than against, the Government in the interests of the country and that it will then be possible to release him from all forms of restraint.

Mr. Brockway said he would take advantage of the ten-minute rule to introduce a bill to "withdraw the Hitlerian and Stalinian power of deportation in the colonial territories."

Mr. ANTHONY EDEN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) asked if Mr. Griffiths accepted that extraordinary description of his powers.

Mr. Griffiths: No, I do not. I am now examining, not only in Uganda but in the whole of the colonial territories, these powers of deportation.

Segregation in Kenya

EARLIER this month, the Kenya Legislative Council rejected by 22 votes to 8 a motion condemning segregation. Needless to say, the eleven elected European members joined Government members in opposing the measure while Indian, African and Arab members supported it.

The motion was put by one of the five Indian elected members, Mr. Patel, who based his proposals on a White Paper issued by the British Government in 1923 which proposed the abolition of residential segregation in townships in Kenya. He said that in the small up-country township of Eldoret three Moslems built houses for themselves four years ago.

They had recently been served notice by the Department of Lands for recovery of the land and forfeiture of the leases as the houses were in the area reserved for European occupation.

Mr. Patel said that representations were made to the Governor, Sir Philip Mitchell, but no legal proceedings were taken. The Indians were offered land only a hundred feet away, where it was suggested that they should build new homes. Mr. Patel said 11,000 acres were available in Nairobi for 15,000 Europeans and only 3,000 for 45,000 Asians. As a result Asians had to pay three times as much as Europeans.

Actually the situation is not as clear-cut as one might assume. For in the case of the African he is menaced not only by the European but by the Indian settler as well. So the African member said that his community must insist on an amendment to the Indian proposal in order to ensure that the position of land preserved for Africans would be maintained. If segregation were removed from the townships or any other area, the Indian community, which was the richest in the country, "would buy all the land reserved for Africans". Indian applicants would have enough money to oust the African trader from his trading centres.

Will it be surprising if the unhappy African people pass through a violently nationalistic period in such circumstances?

LIBERTARIAN.

and Legislative Council. Nyasaland is a British Protectorate. The total population of the three territories which have an area five times that of the United Kingdom is under 8,000,000 of whom only 163,000 are Europeans.

The aim of the rulers of Southern Rhodesia is to create in the proposed Dominion "a more gentlemanly version of South Africa" as one observer describes it. Although, in theory, laws governing Africans in Southern Rhodesia must have the consent of Whitehall, in practice the government there has a free hand in Malanising its territory. An Electoral Amendment Bill has just passed through the Parliament there, which raises the elector's qualifications. The financial requirement is raised from £100 to £240 a year, the property qualification from £150 to £300, and to the education qualification is added a test showing that the applicant has an adequate knowledge of the English language. The effect of this will be to disqualify almost all Africans from the franchise, as one of the sponsors of the Bill said, during "my lifetime and that of my children".

The Africans of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland bitterly oppose the proposed merging of their countries with Southern Rhodesia, since it implies the extension of open racism, as against the theoretically non-discriminative rule of the Colonial Office.

The Southern Rhodesian government has been frantically increasing the European population since the end of the war. To such an extent indeed that it is impossible to say what the population is. The figures quoted above are taken from *Public Opinion* (23/2/51) and, for the proposed new Dominion, from the *Observer* (4/3/51). But Mr. F. Gordon Harper, Secretary of the Federation of Rhodesian Industries, writing in *The Times Review of the British Colonies* (March 1951), declares that Southern Rhodesia contains 142,000 white people, and that the rate of European immigration is more than one per cent. of the whole population a month, and is probably higher than at any previous time of Empire. His article is full of such phrases as "this virile territory", "buoyant and exhilarating", enterprise and enthusiastic virility", and, of course, "good British stock" (he means people, not cattle). What it all boils down to is that here is a country with none of those tiresome restrictions for "industrialists who have thronged to Southern Rhodesia in an almost embarrassing number, attracted by the economic potentialities". Here there are abundant raw materials to be exploited and since, "situated in Central Africa between the two Tropics, where there are believed to be almost 100 million Africans, Southern Rhodesia has the important advantages of an immense source of labour" to be exploited, too.

The effects of this expansionist programme has been seen in the same month as Mr. Harper's glowing article appeared, for the *Manchester Guardian* (20/3/51) reports that:

"Unable to keep pace with growing development because of an increasing population, Southern Rhodesia is facing a period of mild austerity. The word 'mild' is used advisedly in face of the much more stringent austerity in Britain. Nevertheless, in a country which has for half a century been accustomed to a high living standard, the degree of austerity is real enough to be keenly felt. Shortages of cement, meat, petrol, coal, electricity, bricks, houses, trucks, and labour are all in the headlines.

"Like so many other countries, Southern Rhodesia is desperately short of housing. Prices are rising, and the popular two and three bedroom bungalow-type of house costs between £3,500 and £4,000, and prices will probably rise still further."

When conditions are hard for the Europeans, one can imagine what they become for the Africans in a country where their wages are at a starvation level, facilities for their education almost non-existent, and where armoured cars and troops were used last year to intimidate the undernourished strikers at Bulawayo. (Incidentally, the Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Huggins, announced this month that the Rhodesian armed forces are to be expanded as quickly as possible.)

The twentieth-century Empire builders in Rhodesia have ceased to talk in the manner of Cecil Rhodes, who gave his name to the country, but the policies they are following and initiating, like those of Dr. Malan, will lead inevitably to racial warfare on a scale far greater than Rhodes ever envisaged.

C.

2,200 Draft Dodgers a month in U.S.

J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, said in Washington that the F.B.I. is investigating more than 2,200 cases of draft dodging monthly.

One-sided Communist Indignation

THE Communist *Daily Worker* has been making capital out of the release of war criminals in Germany by the American occupation authorities. But the *Daily Worker* did not, however, publish the statement made by Dr. Gruber, the Austrian Foreign Minister (13/2/51) to the effect that the Soviet Government had informed Austria that 119 Austrian prisoners of war sentenced to Russian courts for war crimes would be released shortly.

THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

In a capitalist society, those who have nothing to sell but their labour-power are, to put it mildly, at a disadvantage. By association, however, and by organising to defend their interests, the have-nots find the strength to minimise the disadvantage.

We say "minimise" because the odds against the actual elimination of the disadvantage within a commercial society are tremendous. In fact it is only by climbing out of the "have-not" class that the individual can beat the handicap of the individual. And he can only do so by taking advantage of other have-nots, whose existence is essential to the smooth running of that form of society.

The so-called "self-made" men, the Lord Nuffields and the like, are not self-made at all. They have been "made" by the efforts of hundreds or thousands of workers who happen not to have the particular brand of cunning which passes for prowess in the jungle of commerce and who allow themselves to be exploited.

Unity is Strength

The answer of the under-privileged class, then, as a class, has been to act on the principle of "unity is strength" and to realise that although individually they can be beaten by the superior economic strength of the property-owners, collectively they are stronger, for the owners and controllers depend—for all their alleged power and independence—upon the continued allegiance and "loyalty" of the underlings.

We see, then that the relationships between the classes in society are adjusted according to their strength, and that contracts or agreements between them are based purely upon the degree of strength each can bring to bear upon the other in support of its claims. This is clear and obvious when it is a mere matter of cash-bargaining. When there is a large pool of unemployed, for example, the employers are in a strong position. Workers are already divided into two groups—those who have jobs and don't want to lose them and those who have no jobs and want them. Fear and envy divide them. The employers can play one group off against the other and they both suffer. The employer has the strength, he can call the tune and agreements entered into will reflect the situation by being in favour of the employers.

On the other hand, when there is a shortage of labour, the position is reversed. The workers are in a strong position, and agreements entered into will reflect that fact and will favour the workers.

Have We Any Rights?

Looked at like this, the so-called "rights" of the workers and of the employers cease to be based on any conception of justice or social morality and are seen to be simply the outcome of the balance of strength between the opposing forces. Trades unionists talk about the "right to strike", for example, as though it has been ordained by God, when in fact it is a practice which has developed through the growth of trades unionism and syndicalism as a tactic in the class struggle. And there have been times—when the present is one of them—when the right to strike is not recognised by the powers that be—and those powers have the support of the trades unions themselves!

Meetings and Announcements

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP
CENTRAL LONDON

Regular Sunday evening meetings will be held in future at 7.30 p.m., at

THE PORCUPINE
PUBLIC HOUSE.

corner Charing Cross Rd. and Gt. Newport St., next Leicester Square Underground Stn.
APRIL 1st Jimmy Raaide

ANARCHISM & THE POLITICIANS

APRIL 8th Brian Rees

POVERTY & SOCIAL REFORM

APRIL 15th TO BE ANNOUNCED

NORTH-EAST LONDON GROUP

Discussion Meetings fortnightly, 7.30 p.m.
Enquiries c/o Freedom Press.

APRIL 3rd Rita Milton

"THE FAMILY"

"CONSCIOUS EGOISM—FOR AND AGAINST"

Proposer: Ted Mann
Opposer: Edgar Priddy

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

INDOOR MEETINGS

EVERY SUNDAY AT 7 p.m.
at the

CENTRAL HALLS, 25 Bath Street.

with Frank Leach, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw,
J. Raaide

CENTRAL LONDON P.P.U.

8 Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1
APRIL 13th Colin Ward

MARIE LOUISE BERNIERI'S JOURNEY

The official union leaders have supported Regulations like IAA (Bevin's wartime anti-labour law) and 1305, and are only now speaking against the latter because the workers are acting against it. In other words, the T.U.C. has betrayed the workers by accepting anti-working class legislation when the workers have been in a strong enough position to successfully resist its application.

The workers are in that position to-day. The attempts of the government to intimidate them by prosecutions are proving of no avail. Widespread indignation followed the arrest of the ten gas workers last year, and the prosecution of the seven dockers, committed at the Old Bailey this month has resulted in thousands of their fellow workers downing tools every day they appear in the court.

Last year the gas workers were first sentenced to prison, for inciting a strike, and then, on appeal, the sentences were altered to fines, because the workers showed their strength. The fact that at the moment when the dockers are appearing at the Old Bailey, Aneurin Bevan and the T.U. leaders are conferring on the matter of amending Regulation 1305 under which they are being prosecuted, shows that the determined nature of the dockers' protests has made the Government think again.

It will indeed be an interesting situation if the sentencing of the dockers coincides with the revoking of the Regulation—or even its amendment. How will the dignity of the law look then? And—more important—how will the dockers react if the men are not immediately released?

Strength Is The Key

But let us be under no illusions. There is no such thing as the "right" to strike. There is only the power to strike. If we talk about the right to strike we must also recognise the right of the employer to lock-out, the right of the Government to break strikes by the use of troops or any other means, the right of the boss to victimise militant workers, and so on.

Strength is the key to all this. Governments and employers will try anything the think they can get away with, irres-

pective of rights or social ethics or political theories. It is time the workers realised their own strength, time the "sleeping giant" woke up and realised that it is the one power in society which is indispensable and irresistible. Governments, employers, armed forces, police, parsons—all these we can get along without. We cannot get along without the productive and distributive workers—that is their strength.

Let this be recognised throughout the working class, and it will then be seen that there is no need for workers to remain for one day longer in the disadvantageous position they have always occupied. When it comes to a trial of strength, I know which side will win.

P.S.

THE DOCKERS STILL NEED YOUR HELP!

THE London dockers are carrying on their struggle under the present attack with no lack of militancy. THEY STILL NEED HELP. Funds are still badly needed for the defence of the seven and for the subsistence of their families.

It is in the interests of all workers to support the dockers to-day, for any of us may be glad of support from the dockers to-morrow. Add your contribution, even if it seems negligible, for Unity is Strength!

Funds can be sent to FREEDOM (mark envelopes "Dockers' Fund") and will be passed on to the Port Workers' Committee.

HOME FOOD PRODUCTION

THE first progress report of the Rural Reconstruction Committee concludes that "an average increase of less than 40 per cent. in the yield of Britain's farm land would suffice to meet the needs of the whole population for such foodstuffs as can be produced at home".

This figure assumes an "optimum use" of land as defined by Dr. Dudley Stamp on the basis of the Land Utilisation Survey. The method used to determine the acreage required to feed the whole population at current yields make no allowance for the simultaneous use of land for more than one purpose, and therefore, the committee points out, it tends to result in an over-estimate of the increase required.

SYNDICALIST NOTEBOOK

Those Anarchist Engineers!

Civilised Society

The engineers were not so slavish. They banned overtime and would only work day-work, not piece-work as a protest against an agreement they could not accept. Not very desperate really, but enough to invoke another law: "It says that if a man will not work properly he shall be dismissed. That is one of the pillars of a civilised society." It seems that the law is always on the side of the masters, and that what suits them is the criterion of civilisation.

The Greeks had a civilisation, but it was based on slavery. So is ours—but it need not be. Instead of the slave we could use the machine, and the men who

work the machines could be free men. The engineers who refuse to work at slave rates are using the methods that could lead to freedom—syndicalist methods of direct action.

Perhaps, then, after all, even if like so many others they are unconscious of it, they are to that extent anarchists.

OVERTIME BAN THREATENED IN ARMS FACTORIES

DISPUTES are threatening in the Government's Ordnance factories if the following demands are not met:

1. An increase of 11s. a week.
2. No recruitment of labour until the extra pay is granted.
3. Two weeks' holiday with pay instead of one week.

The workers will institute a ban on overtime and piece-rates if these demands are not met by the end of March, and if carried out would mean a serious cut in arms production. Atom research stations would also be affected.

Arms production, preparation for war, the making of atom bombs, all depend upon the workers remaining—and working hard—at their benches. The implication and the answer to the threat of war seem to us obvious.

CROOK IN OFFICE

LORD Crook (30 years' experience with the Ministry of Labour Staff Association) has been appointed to succeed Lord Ammon as Chairman of the National Dock Labour Board.

The Law's an Ass

At a meeting recently held in London to open a membership campaign by the Sunday Freedom Association, a speaker pointed out that it was illegal for anyone to go out in a boat on a Sunday; it was even illegal for the Queen Elizabeth to be sailing in British waters on that day. Selling ice-cream was also illegal then.

Corruption in America

In the Senate Crime Investigation preliminary report it is stated that at least £6,700 million change hands in the U.S. every year as the result of illegal gambling. Millions of dollars were paid as "ice" or protection money in various forms.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Self-Interest

I WELCOME Eddy Priddy's letter in the last edition of *Freedom* as it is a fair example of the mental confusion and attachment to abstractions which makes the discussion of realities so difficult in this Age of Faith the mid-20th century.

It was particularly fortunate that his letter should be published in the same issue as the extract from André Gide's *Reflections on being 80*—"A young man of intelligence... is unable to struggle against the sophisms which are aimed at him, if he has not first of all and in solitude long reflected on this momentous question—what is for me the most important thing in life?—and if he has not dared to answer resolutely: Myself."

Priddy expresses these sophisms in a nutshell. If he were right in saying that "What's in it for me?" is the common slogan for to-day, then anarchism would make greater headway than it does. But he is wrong: the common tendency of to-day is for everyone to be ashamed of their own self-interest and to sacrifice the comfort, happiness and even the lives of themselves and others in the service of monstrous ideals—including "Truth, Justice and Freedom".

What anarchist propaganda has to offer is an appeal to the sanity of self-interest. We point out to every individual that it is not in his own interest to engage in warfare, that he should organise with his fellow workers in his own interest, that he should be concerned for the civil liberty of the community in his own interest, that whatever his social origins and means of livelihood may be he should adopt a revolutionary approach in his own interest. Anarchism, in fact, refers to rational behaviour, all morality and ethics having to refer to the individual in society. Anyone who does not accept this criterion must postulate a non-self, the interest of which is to be studied in all his actions. The religious man calls this non-self 'God', and is quite logical in trying to serve what he conceives to be the interests of God in preference to his own interests. Where the self-styled rationalist and agnostic is hopelessly confused, is in the substitution of abstractions (Truth, Justice, Freedom, etc.) for God, and in serving them with horrid devotion. For while the average man is discriminating and comparatively tolerant in the pursuit of his own acknowledged self-interest, he

will commit literally any outrage on his fellow humans, in the service of a grand non-self.

I know that these words of mine will have little effect on self-less men and women who are committed to the service of ideals. Argument will never convince the possessed. It is illuminating to all intelligent readers of anarchist literature to study the double-think that makes it possible to praise such-and-such and to condemn so-and-so, because of their effect on our interests—yet at the same time to deny the fact that self-interest is the criterion of our judgment. Anarchist theory has come into being by no immaculate conception, and it still bears traces of religious thinking which assort oddly with its practical concepts. Its future success will depend upon the degree to which it can outgrow the legacy of Christianity.

Fraternally,

G.

We regret that pressure of space has compelled us to hold over correspondence till next issue.

Eds.

Readers in America

Our circular letter to readers abroad has met with a fairly encouraging response. Readers on the Continent of Europe who have not answered will not be receiving this copy of "Freedom", so there is little we can tell them now, but American readers who have not answered will be getting this issue and we must warn them that it will be the last. We are sorry to lose them as readers—but are they readers? How can we know whether the paper reaches them, whether they are still at the same address, unless we periodically hear from them?

★

OUR FUND

It cannot be said from a glance at our Special Appeal list below, that the comrades and sympathisers among our readers in this country are falling over one another to support our appeal for £600 to put the "Freedom" weekly on its feet. Obviously, if they do not feel that a weekly "Freedom" is an objective worthy of their support then we could go on appealing until we were blue in the face without much hope of success. We have no intention of doing this, but we do intend that "Freedom" shall appear as a weekly in a month's time, and we can only hope that there are sufficient readers who share our determination!

★

On the brighter side of this report there is the fact that our circulation is slowly but steadily increasing, thanks largely to that handful of comrades who have come forward to sell the paper outside public meetings. They have certainly shown what could be done if there were more "Freedom" street sellers.

Freedom — Weekly

Special Appeal

March 8th to 22nd:

Manchester: H.F. 8/6; Llanelli: L.W. 2/6; Anon 2/6; Needham, Mass: Gruppo Libertario (\$10). San Francisco: L'Incaricato (\$25). Miami L'Incaricato (\$25). £21.0/0; Detroit: B.S. 7/-; Brandon, Oregon: M.G. £1/15/0; London: Anon 5/-; Llanelli: L.W. 2/-.

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£85 16 10

1951 TOTAL TO DATE ... £109 19 4

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