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Twopence

"Consider the origin of all fortunes, whether arising out of commerce, finance, manufactures, or the land. Everywhere you will find that the wealth of the wealthy springs from the poverty of the poor."
KROPOTKIN.

CAPITALISM—NOT ANARCHISM—MEANS CHAOS!

The crisis of the past week, with its cutting down of industrial production and domestic heating, its throwing into temporary unemployment of more than two million men, its reintroduction of the black-out and its accentuation of the scarcity in many essential goods, its cutting down of wireless programmes and suspension of periodicals (*Freedom* appears a week late this issue because of this), is clearly only the somewhat terrifying symptom of a really deep-seated state of social disorder. When one considers that even during the worst days of the war, when man and materials were diverted to military needs, there was no fuel crisis of this magnitude, the situation appears all the more serious and indicative of some deep-seated faults in the present functioning of society.

As we said in our last issue, it is useless to blame the weather, the miners or the consumers. It is equally useless to blame previous governments, or a capitalist plot. The Labour government have surely been in power long enough to take responsibility for a crisis that happens during the second year of their regime, while the capitalist plot idea rather falls to the ground when one considers that the industry in which the crisis first became evident is no longer in the hands of the capitalists, but is controlled by the representatives of the Labour Government.

The three most important contributory factors to the crisis were, firstly, the failure of state control of industry to provide an efficient system of production and distribution, secondly, that bogey favoured of Labour leaders as an excuse for their shortcomings, the "manpower problem", and lastly, sheer incompetence and muddle in government departments.

Government Incompetence

The incompetence factor would seem to be at the basis of the action of the government in ordering the drastic restrictions in the consumption of electricity. The total saving in coal consumption from the beginning of the restrictions to the 25th February, was 420,000 tons. To the end of the restrictions it will probably be less than double this—or no more and probably less than 800,000 tons. But during one week in February alone the miners produced more than four million tons of coal. So, because stocks had got so low that it was necessary to save a fifth of a week's production, two million people were put out of work and the whole economy of the country has been disorganised!

The failure of state control of industry to provide any better results than laissez faire capitalism is quite evident in this crisis. It must be remembered that, not merely have the mines been nationalised for the past two months, but they have also been subject to a fairly strict control during the war, including rigid control of labour. The result, however, has not been to increase efficiency; on the contrary, the production of the mines has fallen steadily, and the measures taken by the state, whether as owner or merely controller of the mines, have not been such as to increase the confidence of the miners themselves. In fact, nationalisation is having a negative effect, because the men are beginning to realise that for them it means no difference, since the same bosses stay and the same conditions prevail.

The manpower problem can be considered in two aspects, as it affects mining in particular, and as it affects industry as a whole. In the mining industry, it takes the form partly of a reluctance of men to become miners, and partly of a rate of absenteeism which still remains very high. Mining is an unpleasant and dangerous form of work, and, in addition to this, the miners have always been a neglected and badly treated section of labour, who have had to fight hard for all they could get. Even now, after several wartime increases, the wages rate for miners remains substantially below the national average wage.

Give The Miners Better Wages

In order to win the miners the government is proposing to make a number of unimportant concessions, such as improving housing—a proposal which in any case cannot take effect until the fairly distant future—and providing nylon stockings for miners' wives—who will not be able to afford them in any case on the present miners' wages. All these proposals are substitutes for the only real remedy, which is to increase the miners' wages, and give them better working conditions. However, although the government have been in full control of the mines for more than two months, they have made no visible effort to make these fundamental recti-

fications. Instead, they have muddled on into a crisis and done more harm than good by closing down industry and thus creating a whole series of new economic problems.

The general lack of labour in industry is due to a number of causes. Particular industries fail to attract men back because of bad wages and poor conditions. But the fact remains that there is a large labour shortage, which is caused very largely by the fact that since the war nearly a quarter of the working population has stayed in almost wholly non-productive employments, including the forces, munitions, and the swollen government services. Another contributory factor is the failure, which persisted even during the high-pressure periods of the war, to give any full scientific attention to the possibilities of saving labour in industry by the wider application of machinery.

A number of solutions are offered for this problem, and the most important of them at present is that we should

import foreign labour from countries where, paradoxically, there is a large unemployment at the same time as a lack of workers in Britain. This proposal is being pushed by Tories and Tory newspapers, who obviously feel that they can be used as a large pool of low-paid labour which will tend to depress the general level of industrial wages.

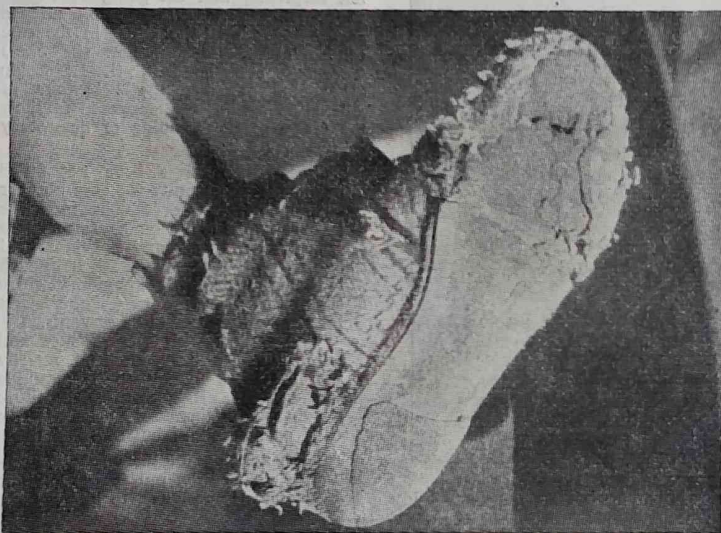
Foreign Labour

Because they realise this possibility, the British trade unionists are opposed to importing foreign workers. Clearly, they distrust even the Labour government, which they fear will allow the dilution to be used against the very workers who elected it to power. The importation of foreign workers is only practicable if it is done with a guarantee that they will receive the same wages as British workers, and it is unlikely if the industrialists will agree to this. An even better alternative would be to give them work in their own countries, manufacturing the goods they would otherwise import from England. But that would mean so direct an attack on capitalist interests that it is not possible under the present system.

The real solution to the manpower problem remains the recalling of troops and their demobilisation to return into industry. Still a million and a half men remain under arms to further the Anglo-American imperialist policy, and undoubtedly it is these commitments abroad which sap our standards here. In Japan, in Germany, in Greece, there are hundreds of thousands of British troops, who are certainly not wanted by the people of those countries, and whose only reason for being there is to protect imperialist interests. If these men came back, and if the munitions industry were abolished, there would be enough men set free to end the present industrial crisis.

Crises such as the present teach us once again that capitalism, whether it goes under a Tory or a Labour banner, can only mean social chaos and privations for the workers. The kind of reforms proposed by the government will be totally ineffective; indeed, we are taught once again that reforms of any kind are useless and merely lead into a similar crisis when the effect of the last batch of reforms has vanished. The Labour Government remains bound hand and foot to American capitalism, and must do what the American financiers dictate. The sooner the workers realise this, the sooner they will begin to cast aside their old discredited organisations and make a real labour movement that will struggle for the destruction of capitalism in order to end the tragic cycle of crises by which the rulers profit continually at the expense of the workers.

ELEMENTARY HUMAN SOLIDARITY



Victor Gollancz in his book "In Darkest Germany" writes: "Bits of dirty rag: a thin strap over a stocking full of holes: soles—numerable soles—completely broken away from the uppers—these were common form. Then there were the children hobbling painfully in shoes borrowed from a younger brother: and children slopping about in their mother's or father's shoes: and, in one class, three children completely barefooted."

The London Anarchist Group has already sent many parcels of food and clothes to Germany and relies on the solidarity of comrades and readers of "Freedom" to continue this work. Parcels of clothing, money for the purchase of food, and points should be sent to the London Anarchist Group, c/o Freedom Press, 27, Red Lion St., London, W.C.1.

Failure of Deserter Round-up

The relative failure of the attempt to induce the 20,000 deserters to give themselves up in exchange for vague promises from the Government has been shown by the fact that up to the 19th February, according to a statement made in the House of Commons by A. V. Alexander on that day, only 392 deserters, or somewhat less than 2% of those on the run, had actually given themselves up, this in spite of the fact that later government announcements had tried to make the offer to deserters appear in much more rosy colours. The main reason why more men have not given themselves up is clearly the uncertainty in their minds as to what sentences they can expect to be given, and the treatment of the 126 men already sentenced does not seem likely to give them any greater confidence, as the sentences appear to have been awarded on the most capricious basis, in that they have varied from one day to two years. Naturally, each deserter fears that he will get two years, which is little more than he would expect to get if he were arrested in the normal course of routine procedure.

Meanwhile, the Minister for

Defence stated in his speech on the 19th February that deserters who had given themselves up before his statement on the 22nd February would be eligible for the same concessions as those who surrendered subsequently. But he did not say anything definite about reducing sentences where these had been outrageous, or compensating for bad treatment.

One case that springs to mind is that of Harry Harrison, who gave himself up voluntarily on the 18th November last, after having been for five and a half years regarded as a deserter. Harrison is a member of the I.L.P., and registered as conscientious objector. He appeared before the Appellate Tribunal and was registered for Non-combatant services. In May, 1941, he was called up for the Pioneer Corps, but refused to report, and instead went on the run.

The authorities failed to find him during the whole of this period, but in October, 1946, he decided to give himself up. On October 10th, he wrote to Bellenger, and on November 7th was advised by Bellenger's secretary to give himself up. This he did on Nov. 18th.

He was first held at Scotland Yard Barracks, where he was strongly questioned by Special Branch Detectives on his political connections. "He" was kept for nearly two months in custody, before his court martial, and after this period of imprisonment without trial (which

according to English common law is strictly illegal), he was court-martialled at Stourport-on-Severn and sentenced to two years' military detention. The sentence of detention to a C.O. is against the declared War Office policy, which has previously stated that a C.O. shall be given three months or more imprisonment in order to make him eligible for an appeal tribunal, and this is the first time in two and a half years that any departure has been made from this policy. It is significant that the President of the Court, Major Harper-Shove, questioned Harrison extensively on his political views before passing sentence. Actually he was completely outside his province in doing this, as the Appellate Tribunal had already admitted that Harrison had an objection by granting him Non-combatant service.

But the irregularities in this case did not end here. Harrison was taken to Fort Darland Detention Camp, where he refused to put on military uniform. He was then taken to the "cooler", or "silent cell", which is given this name because it is provided with an electric fan for making the air cold and has also double walls to prevent sound reaching the rest of the prison, and forcibly dressed. In answering a question in the House of Commons, the Minister of War tacitly admitted the forcible dressing, although this is in fact contrary to the King's Regulations, and therefore is inadmissible even according to military law.

So far, no definite decisions have been reached by the War Office in Harrison's

French Strikes

DURING the last few weeks France has seen a series of strikes which have deprived her of newspapers and magazines, fish, petrol, telephones, firemen and even policemen.

On the 14th February a protest strike of civil servants paralysed the French capital for several hours. Three hundred thousand members of the Federation of Personnel of the Public Health service had called a one-day demonstration to protest against inadequate salaries.

The main cause of the unrest is due to the extremely low wages paid to vast sections of the workers, and the Government's refusal to allow any wage increases. The Government has had to compromise, however. After having refused to grant the General Labour Confederation's demand for a minimum monthly wage of 7,000 francs, the Ramadier government has decided to grant temporary bonuses to workers under the 7,000 francs (£14/10/0) a month minimum, while more price cuts are foreseen.

The newspaper workers' strike, which began on the 14th February, is also for an increase in wages, in spite of the fact that printing workers are comparatively well-paid. The unrest among them is due to the fact that the machinists were able, up to recently, to do two shifts a day; as they are paid 500 francs a shift they were earning up to 25,000 francs a month. Recently, as there was less work they have only been able to do one shift a day and their wages have been reduced by half. A month ago they staged a three days' strike and since then newspaper workers have been applying go-slow tactics.

Newspapers are forbidden by the Government to reach an agreement with the strikers, so that the present strike will only end if the Government climbs down or when the strike funds come to an end.

The only newspapers coming out in Paris at the present time are the continental editions of British and American newspapers, and, curiously enough, *L'Officiel* (corresponding to the *London Gazette*). This paper is run by a co-operative of the workers who, to preserve their privilege, have undertaken not to strike.

During the first few days of the strike Belgian and Swiss papers were sold in the Paris streets, but measures have now been taken to prevent these from reaching France.

(Continued on page 8)

case. But, whatever is decided, it stands as an example of the kind of treatment which the authorities are ready to mete out to a man who has actually given himself up. It is not the kind of thing which is likely to induce others to follow his example.

As we have repeated often enough, the only solution to the deserter problem that is both just and practicable is to grant a general amnesty, to wipe off old scores, and to let the men return to their normal life as useful citizens. This the Government persistently refuse to do—on the 19th February, Alexander made yet another refusal when a Labour M.P. asked for a reconsideration of a general amnesty. The reason, of course, is obvious. Terror is a necessary part of army discipline, and, on balance, the government would actually prefer to have the deserters and the crime wave which their plight involves, rather than take the risk of applying a reasonable solution which would weaken military discipline. As always with governments, justice bows before expediency.

GERMANY: Misery & Corruption



People live in cellars and under rubble. The average living space in Dusseldorf is just over 3 square yards per person.

Since the review of Gollancz's recent book *In Darkest Germany* appeared in the last issue of *Freedom* much has been said in Parliament and in the Press which has only confirmed the statements in his book.

Mr. Hynd's optimistic declarations on the situation in the British zone have been challenged in the House and have been disproved by newspaper correspondents. The Anglo-American bi-zonal food programmes, introduced in January to achieve a common ration scale in the northern and southern provinces has not improved the conditions of the 23 million inhabitants in the British zone. Promises of a bigger meat ration have not been implemented and it is officially admitted that the 1,550 calories ration scale exists only on paper.

With the news of the grave food situation in Germany, of deaths from cold and 200 suicides in Berlin, of 7,233 people being arrested by the railway police in Hamburg for coal thefts during January have also come the news of vast black market dealings by Allied troops in Germany.

The "merry game" of speculation in marks by British troops in Germany will cost the British taxpayer £20,000,000. Mr. Bellenger, War Secretary, explained to the House that this sum was required to meet a loss in surplus marks and schillings in Germany and Austria. B.A.O.R. men bought cigarettes and other goods in Army canteens and sold them to civilians at enormously inflated prices. They used this money to buy other goods

IN DARKEST GERMANY — The Record of a Visit by Victor Gollancz, with 144 photographs, obtainable from Freedom Press, 8/6 (postage 3d.).

at the canteens, or to buy Savings Certificates and make deposits with the Post Office Savings Bank.

To have an idea of the profits made by some of the Allied troops one must remember that the ration to British troops and Control Commission staffs was, up to a few days ago, of 200 per week. Black market prices stood for months at four marks or two shillings a cigarette and even more. If he sold the whole of his ration the British soldier or official could make over two pounds a day. But it is often found more profitable to ex-



Homes are not repaired but materials and labour are freely used on Allied Clubs.

change cigarettes against cameras, electric fires, books, records, watches, jewels, and other goods.

Fortunes have been made in speculation and black market sales and in many cases big properties have been purchased by British personnel to invest these large profits.

It is probably quite true that, as Mr. Bellenger has pointed out in self-defence, Britain was the first country to try to put a brake on black market transactions. But it gives one little hope as to the effects of occupation in Germany to know that American investigators estimate that illegal deals have cost the American treasury not less than £250,000,000.

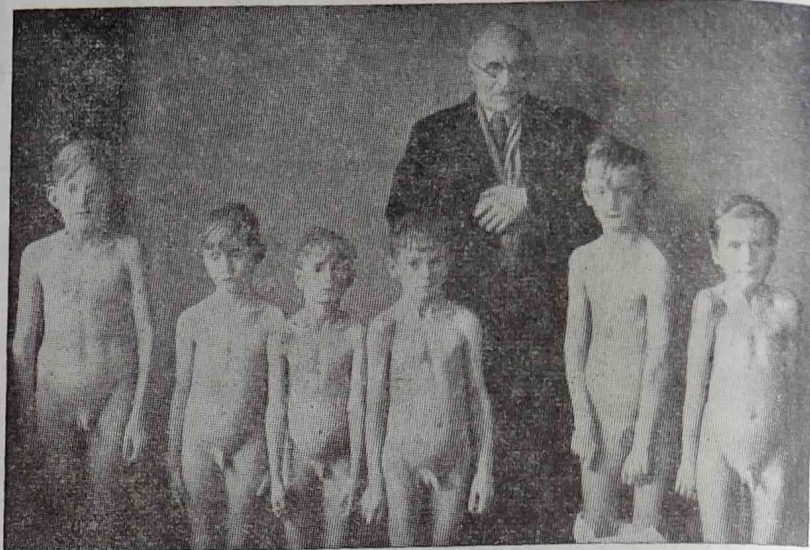
One gets a pretty good idea of the efficiency with which the American black market is organised from the advertisements which cover the continental editions of American newspapers.

To take one example, the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune* contains over a dozen big advertisements by American firms offering A.P.O. personnel everything from duty free cigarettes to nylons, coffee, vegetable fat, chocolate, lipsticks, lengths of tweed (blue, gray, brown).

The *American Star Trading Co.* offers 2,000 cigarettes for \$9.50 or £2 7s. 6d. If each cigarette is sold at 4 marks it will bring in 8,000 marks or, at the official rate, £200.

The *American Overseas Shippers, Inc.*, N.Y., offers to ship by air mail 6 pairs of nylons for 13 dollars or 10lb. of the finest coffee and 7½lbs. of pure vegetable fat for 16 dollars.

Fraser, Morris & Co., Inc., claims to be "the originator of duty-free cigarettes! The idea that has saved servicemen millions of dollars" and to have shipped 3,500,000 parcels in the past few years.



Gollancz found schoolchildren hungry, underweight, suffering from skin diseases.

Now it is quite obvious that A.P.O. personnel receiving 200 cigarettes a week, well fed and looked after, receiving a decent pay would hardly need thousands of cigarettes, coffee and cooking fats for their personal use. It can be argued that he wants these things as presents for friends and this may well happen in some cases but one can imagine what vast black market transactions are taking place when goods are supplied to the black marketeers by airmail, insured and at a low cost—without forgetting the legality of the whole transaction.

The presence of Allied wives and families in Germany has only worsened the morale of the occupation and it is not surprising that the going of women to Germany has been recently discouraged and even stopped altogether, in the case of Hamburg. This is how the *News Chronicle* correspondent, S. L. Solon (31/1/47), describes the behaviour of Allied wives who were supposed to show the Germans the meaning of democracy in everyday life:

The Allied wives have not failed to see the opportunity for easy plunder and the advantages of German coolie labour. Established on a caste system reflecting the ranks and positions held by their husbands, the women have each built up their little kingdoms where they command from one (on the lowest level) to a dozen or more servants.

The women with more leisure and fewer scruples have bounded merrily into the black market. The scramble for antiques, jewels, furs, furniture bought with 'cigarette marks' is the chief occupation of hundreds of them.

All the solutions of the German problem which have been put forward fail to give enough importance to these facts.

The Allies are the conquerors and it is useless to ask them not to behave as such. They behave as such in a small way by exchanging their cigarettes against cameras; that's the bottom of the ladder. At the top they steal raw material, factories, manufactured goods under the cover of reparations. But the principle is the same—the weak have to accept the rule of the strong.

It is for this reason that the suggestions put forward by well-meaning people like Gollancz appear unrealistic. He accepts military occupation but he would like this occupation to be humane (feed the Germans), democratic ("stop behaving like inefficient totalitarians"), liberal and Christian.

This would only be possible if the countries occupying Germany to-day were not capitalist, totalitarian, imperialist powers. It is not an accident that the machinery of control is inefficient, cruel and corrupted. It merely reflects the spirit of the governments they represent—governments which prefer to destroy food rather than feed it to the German people—governments which ruthlessly destroy factories when workers cry out for work—governments which prefer to deal with docile Nazis rather than let honest anti-fascists free to speak and write.

As long as the fate of Germany will be in the hands of the British, American and Russian governments, she will know misery and reaction. She can only expect solidarity from workers in other countries. Is the spirit of *Kameradschaft* completely dead? If hands can be stretched across frontiers when the lives of a few men are in danger why aren't they when millions of people are sinking in hopeless misery?

THE MEANING OF BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

ANARCHISM — Interpretations

"Anarchism, then, really stands for the liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion: the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property: liberation from the shackles and restraint of government. Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth; an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations.

"This is not a wild fancy or an aberration of the mind. It is the conclusion arrived at by hosts of intellectual men and women the world over; a conclusion resulting from the close and studious observation of the tendencies of modern society: individual liberty and economic equality, the twin forces for the birth of what is fine and true in man."

(EMMA GOLDMAN:
Anarchism and Other Essays.)

"We have something far more deadly than the atomic bomb to-day—not tomorrow—and, furthermore, it's in usable shape." —Representative Albert Thomas of Texas, 1946.

When this respected gentleman quoted above addressed the U.S. House of Representatives after hearing testimony from high naval officers in secrecy for weeks, his words, sounding like a challenge thrown in the face of the world, seemed to the already atom shocked public unreal and without personal implication and not sufficient notice was taken of the fact that the atom bomb is already obsolete.

Two weapons exceed, if that is possible, the destructive power of the vaulted atom bomb.

The invisible atomic ray is one of which Frédéric Joliot, one of France's foremost physicists, said in a magazine article,

"In the future, a country feeling secure through having in its possession a hundred atomic bombs may receive a warning from its statisticians. 'For five years now,' they may say, 'the number of abortions in the central districts has grown to such proportions that there is not one normal birth in six; in the coastal ports fires are destroying the ships; inland, strange maladies are devastating the harvest; the drought in the north has deprived the country of a quarter of its electrical energy.'

Official headquarters and parliamentarians will pore over these figures and will find one explanation only—for several years war has been waged against their country with immense destruction and a considerable number of victims.

Yet no one had known that hostilities had broken out."

Add to this perhaps under-stated picture of future war the recent research work in biological warfare, and the imagination fails to grasp the full extent of the destructive power in the hands of the militarist.

As early as 1941 the U.S. Government gave the National Academy of Science the job of studying the utilization of deadly bacteria in warfare. Since then a huge plant has been built in Indiana for the mass culture of bacteria and in Berkeley, Calif., a disguised research laboratory was set up.

Under the direction of a Captain A. P. Kreuger this laboratory reached conclusions which give another horrible preview of the next development in the struggle for power.

"It is almost a certainty that the first indication of such enemy action will come as the result of sabotage before hostilities begin. Groups of key personnel in important centres will first be attacked. Shortly afterwards, the industrial areas will receive the agents of infection, and the people—as well as the authorities—will suddenly realize that the country is under enemy attack.

"The primary purpose of such enemy action would be to slow down production and to demoralize the civilian population. Airborne agents would be used to contaminate the air in a given section, while other bacteria would be used to contaminate sources of water supply, food and the like. Cattle and grain would succumb to the onslaught of airborne agents of death."

The U.N.O. and other bodies are solving the public conscience by pur-

porting to set up controlling bodies to restrict the production of atom bombs.

Meanwhile the development of these other methods of quick extermination are being developed. The word "hypocrite" comes to mind!

The exponents of bacteriological warfare see nothing immoral or inhuman in it, saying "infectious disease is a natural thing." And, they claim, is no more barbaric than the bayonet!

Let us beware—the militarists throughout the world are preparing these and other weapons—each protesting as does Robert Clark, member of the Society of American Military Engineers, in "Our Navy"—"this country must, war or no war, continue research along lines of biological warfare, for our own self-protection."

Waiting, hoping for peace, trusting to God and politicians, will not prevent the crazy onrush toward annihilation of mankind. Each and every individual must recognise his responsibility to sabotage this trend with every means at his disposal.

In conclusion, allow me to quote Robert Clark once more:

"If germs are ever used in warfare, one of the obvious diseases to expect is botulism, a form of food poisoning 1,000 times more deadly than ordinary poison gases.

Other germs such as typhoid, may also be scattered through an artificial mist. Soon, disease germs are in everything you touch, the food you eat, the air you breathe.

Germs could even be smeared on bullets or scattered with shell or bomb fragments."

D.G.

A Lapp Tribe Starving to Death

There remain in the world to-day, on the fringes of the great areas of capitalist or state-capitalist economy, many small societies which still enjoy an economy dating from some more primitive but not necessarily less happy stage of social development. Many of these small peoples and tribes have found their economies destroyed and their social lives entirely disrupted through contact with the hostilities in the last war. This has applied more especially to the natives of the South Sea Islands, and such countries as New Guinea and Borneo.

Recently, however, news has been brought of a tribe of Lapps in the northern part of Finland, who are threatened with extinction because of the destruction of their economic basis in the most recent war. This tribe, the Skolt-Lapps of the Petsamo peninsula, have lived on herds of reindeer, but during the war the various armies who penetrated into their area slaughtered the reindeer for food, and thus took away the basis by which this tribe can only hope to live. They are now faced with starvation and complete extinction unless their herds are adequately replaced. Already 200 people out of a tribe of 400 have died, and the rest cannot survive unless the reindeer are found.

This may seem a small tragedy on the scale of world calamities that we have seen during the past few years. But it remains a great crime against a peaceful people, and the situation is urgent. There are reindeer available in Sweden, but so far no effort has been made to send them to the relief of these people, and, since no governments are likely to worry about them, we appeal to the Swedish workers to do their utmost to get the necessary reindeer sent before it is too late to save this tribe of Lapps.

Letter from France

Alsations & Lorrainians in Russia

At regular intervals the various governments which have succeeded to power in France have been and are the object of questions on the subject of the Alsations and Lorrainians living in Soviet Russia.

After the defeat of 1940, the Nazi authorities mobilised the valid age groups of the regions considered as making part of Greater Germany, i.e., Luxembourg, the German-speaking regions of Belgium, Alsace and Lorraine.

These recruits were quickly sent to the various fronts, and part of them were directed to the East. Some deserted, others were made prisoners by the Russians and the two categories were placed in camps.

After the defeat of Germany, French commissions were sent to Russia to find all the French citizens and facilitate their repatriation. After several months, and when the Soviet authorities insisted that there was no longer any body of French people on Soviet territory, the associations of deportees and prisoners, the families and parliamentary representatives of the Alsatian and Lorrainian regions perceived that several tens of thousands of young people had failed to answer the call.

The questions put before the National Assembly and the replies of the Minister responsible for prisoners and deportees soon took a political and polemical turn. The affair of the Alsace-Lorrainians threatens to provide a serious enquiry which will end in lifting a corner of the veil prudently thrown by the Soviet government and its French Communist branches over Soviet reality, the proceedings employed during the war and the fate reserved to the prison population.

The moment seems favourable to relate when, how, and in what circumstances the first contingent of Alsations and Lorrainians in Russian were given back into the hands of the French military authorities at Teheran, in July, 1944. The facts of yesterday will allow us to understand better the tragedy of to-day.

Delivery At Teheran

In the summer of 1944, a French military mission, comprising 40 officers and N.C.O.s of the Levant and North Africa, went to Iran. It was commanded by Commandant Morin (known as *Desiré* in the Resistance). The mission was to receive and convey to North Africa fifteen hundred ex-prisoners of the *Wehrmacht*, whose Alsatian or Lorrainian origin was proved.

In the Northern suburbs of the Iranian capital, an old prisoners' camp had been arranged by the British military authorities to accommodate the contingent. Tents were put up, sanitary services installed, feeding organised. Commandant Morin went to Safaran, near to the Irano-Soviet frontier, to make contact with the Russian representatives charged with the transport of the prisoners.

On the 17th July, the convoy was at last announced. It arrived by the Tabriz road. Nearly ninety lorries came to a stop before the camp. The Alsace-Lorrainians, in spinach-green Russian uniforms, descended and ranked themselves in sections. Russian and French officers saluted each other and exchanged certain information through a French interpreter. British officers present at the arrival remained aloof.

Immediately placed in tents—the sun made the thermometer rise to 58° centigrade—the arrivals were asked to pass a medical examination. A third of them were weakened by dysentery, another third suffered from skin diseases, a sixth had to be taken to the hospital. With the exception of two dozen fellows, fat and in good health, all were of a frightful thinness, of the type which was to be designated some months later under the name of "Buchenwald". It was soon learned that the most solid had fulfilled the function of cooks in the Russian camp, which explained their good condition.

A first meal, consisting of biscuits, preserved meat and jam, was given to the prisoners, who threw themselves on it. They believed that the officers were pulling their legs when these explained to them that this was just an improvised snack. One of them showed a sample of the bread which was given them in Russia. It was a hardened putty consisting mainly of rye. All possessed knives made from spoons, and forks of wood, true prisoners' articles. Many of them kept part of the meal and put it away as a reserve; they were acting from experience.

The Camp Of Rada—Province Of Tambov

The attitude of the Alsace-Lorrainians was full of mistrust, and the lively curiosity of the officers concerning the situation in Russia often remained unsatisfied. Little by little however, nourishment and care helping, the ice was broken and tongues were freed. With a few exceptions the statements confirmed each other. We shall see later the origin of the exceptions.

Enrolled in the German army, the young Frenchmen of the East found themselves in various situations. In principle they should have been submerged in groups and sections composed of pure

Germans to facilitate assimilation. Because of some technical difficulties, that rule was not applied in an absolute manner. In this way relatively important ethnic groups remained intact. This circumstance explains the greater or lesser difficulty of deserting. The period of remaining in the line on the Russian front varied equally and for the same reasons. Some had half an hour in the front, others six months. The majority gave themselves up voluntarily to the Russians.

Those who went to Teheran came from the camp of Rada in the province of Tambov. The camp, situated in the forest, also included sections reserved for Italians and Rumanians. The last dominated the camp, thanks to their easier power of adaptation and to the fact that a number of them understood Russian.

The work—cutting trees—was painful, because of the cold and the lack of warm clothes and boots. The German equipment, personal possessions, photographs, identity papers had been taken away since their capture. The medical service was non-existent for lack of medicines.

Nourishment was based on bortsch, soup of beetroots, and black bread. According to the prisoners the condition of those who guarded them was no better than that of the detainees and all hoped to go to the front where the combatants benefited by a much privileged treatment.

The deaths were numerous, notably because of the state of feebleness of the prisoners, cold and dysentery. A woman doctor came each day to check the number of deaths.

No correspondence was allowed. After numerous attempts to make contact with the French authorities, the prisoners decided to ask for enrolment in the Red Army. It was finally thanks to a telegram of congratulation sent simultaneously to Marshal Stalin and to the French Military Mission in Moscow that the existence of

the camp was revealed to other French people. Long discussions took place before a favourable decision could be received from the Russians.

The camp of Rada was chosen to group the repatriable elements. A careful sifting was put into operation. Questioning, cross-questioning, written statements, information gathered amongst the prisoners themselves, a system of spying, all means were set to work so that the choice should present no danger. The groups of "wrong-heads", that is to say the prisoners who had expressed their views openly, were displaced to unknown destinations. Among the repatriates, there were non-Alsations, that is to say elements whose tendencies would appear doubtful at first sight to the Russian authorities. They were old members of the Legion of National Volunteers and of anti-Bolshevik groups. There is no doubt they were liberated after having given the promise to join the NKVD. This came to the light after the distance between themselves and the Soviets became large enough.

The School of Krasnograd

The Russians attempted to select certain elements for their own propaganda. About forty prisoners, chosen according to their political opinions, their party or trade union membership and their social origins, were sent to Krasnograd, where functioned "the anti-fascist courses". Various sections were organised—French, Italian, Rumanian, Polish, etc. The professors of the French section had all worked in France.

The subjects communicated comprised courses in the history of the working class movement, very tendentious and superficial, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the elementary principles of Marxism, Leninism and Stalinism. On several occasions the pupils were visited by Maurice Thorez, who declared to them

that the Communism which would triumph in France would have a wholly different character from that of the U.S.S.R. They were also visited by Wilhelm Pieck. Under the care of a professor, the pupils visited the principal movements of Moscow, without, however, entering into contact with the Muscovite population.

Better treated and fed than in the camp, the pupils gave proof of a remarkable facility of political adaptation. But it is among them that the fiercest adversaries of the Russian regime were found as soon as they felt themselves out of harm's way.

What was the role which the NKVD destined for its agents recruited among the Alsace-Lorrainians and placed in the first contingent of the repatriates? Each had precise instructions. Some were to get into hospitals in one or other town of the Middle East or North Africa, and reply to liaison agents who would eventually come to their homes.

Where Are The Absentees?

Are we to believe that the first repatriations and the counter propaganda which has been their consequence in the Eastern regions of France will push the Russian authorities to show still greater severity in their control? The explanation will be valid only for a period of short duration.

Of the 50,000 Alsace-Lorrainians still missing, a part have no doubt been liquidated, either in military operations, or in repressive measures. It is probable, on the other hand, that an important fraction have paid, in deportation, for their refusal to accept orders. The last hypothesis, which covers a minority, is that they are forgotten in the over-populated camps in Central Europe and the Balkans, where the mixture of races will lead to a detention of uncertain length.

S. PARANE.

Foreign Commentary

WHERE'S MUSSOLINI'S LOOT?

Sensationalism is all part of the political game and political parties do not hesitate to use it for party ends. Italy is no exception, and the sensation of the moment is Mussolini's loot which he took with him when he made his get-away from Milan on April 25th, 1945. The sensation is not that Mussolini had the loot—everybody expected that he and his lieutenants would take as much as they could to ensure their being able to carry on the Fascist movement—but the fact that Mussolini did not get away with the treasure and nothing more has been said as to what happened to it. Now the whole question has been raised again by the clerical party, the monarchists and all the other residues of Fascism, who openly accuse the Communists of having appropriated the treasure, and the Communists strengthen the accusations by opposing the proposal that an enquiry should be held on the fate of the "Dongo Treasure".

The Communists admit that Mussolini had the treasure; as to the amount involved opinions vary. According to the Communist daily *Unita* it amounted to a few tens of millions of lire, whilst *Risorgimento Liberale* (monarchist) states that an enquiry conducted by the Como police put the value of the Italian and foreign currency, and cases of gold and jewels at 10 thousand million lire and that it was handed over to the Communist Party. According to the correspondent of the *New York Times*, four copies of the inventory of the "Dongo Treasure" were made and certified by 5 signatories, of whom the names are given, and apparently two of the signatories as well as other partisans who "talked too much" just disappeared; that the treasure was distributed in part to the C.P. of Milan (300 million lire, 25,000 Swiss francs and two cases of documents) in part to the C.P. of Como (200 million lire, and four suitcases containing jewels, gold and foreign currency in the name of Dante Gorreno; 30 million lire and more than 35 kilos of gold in the name of Remo Mentasti). The Communists accuse the clerical and monarchist of speculating on the "Dongo Treasure" in order to discredit the partisan movement. But as our contemporary *L'Adunata di Refrattari* points out, even if the scandal of the "Dongo Treasure" did not exist, the enemies of the partisans could invent a scandal to those ends and that two roads are open to the C.P.: "either prove that the scandal is an invention by the clerico-fascists or else to state where Mussolini's confiscated money and valuables have gone... as well as the partisans who have disappeared because 'they talked too much'."

An Interview With Koestler In France

During a recent visit to France, Arthur Koestler, the author and journalist, member of the Communist Party from 1931—1938, granted an interview to the French

literary review *Le Littéraire*. Extracts have been published in the Italian paper *Gioventù Anarchica* and the American *New Leader*. So far as the writer knows no reports of this interview have been published in this country, and yet the political questions dealt with in the interview are of considerable interest and most revealing since they come from the lips of a former party member. For the sake of any Communist reader who might attack Koestler on the grounds that he is a Trotskyist, he pointed out in answer to a question that he had never been a Trotskyist. Instead he claims to be a Socialist and hates tyranny. "I consider the U.S.S.R. as economically progressive, but in all other domains as the most reactionary power of our time. The word 'progressive' has here a purely technical meaning, i.e., the sense in which electricity represents progress over the oil lamp."

Q.: And how do you use the word "reactionary"?

A.: In this sense: politically and culturally, the U.S.S.R. has regressed to a state prior to the capture of the Bastille.

Q.: One cannot say that this opinion is very widespread among the 'left'?

A.: No. The enthusiasm of the "leftists" for the U.S.S.R. is generally inversely proportionate to their knowledge of the facts...

Q.: In the absence of what you call a truly socialist international, what policy do you advocate for the independent socialists?

A.: I shall reply indirectly with a parallel. In 1925 the Sacco and Vanzetti case provoked such a wave of indignation in Europe that barricades were put up in Paris and elsewhere. In 1946, the Soviets have deported about 1,500,000 men, women, and children from the Crimean and Chechen Republics, and almost nobody has opened his mouth in protest. From 1933 to 1939, the "left" fought against Nazism because Hitler established concentration camps and did away with liberties, whereas the "right" tried to get along with him. In 1946, the "left" is silent about the unparalleled persecution of some 20,000,000 persons at forced labour in Russia, while the western opposition to Stalinism has lined up on the level of power politics... Power politics does not interest us; what we are passionately concerned with is the insurrection of the mind against totalitarian neo-Machiavellianism.

Q.: But who is this "we", on whose behalf you speak?

A.: In the days of Sacco and Vanzetti and of the great rebellion of consciences against Nazism, "we" was the "left". Today the "left" is silent about the crimes of Stalinist totalitarianism, silent by dint of its moral lassitude, because of its false allegiance; the "left", by the sin of omission, becomes an accomplice of this Eastern neo-Nazism. The "left" is the prisoner of its own past. The result: the Hearsts and Tsaldaris pose as spokesmen of human freedoms while the

Socialist Parties commit suicide and lose their roots in the masses because they do not have the courage to raise their voice against the cynical usurpation of the name of "socialism" by the G.P.U. Either the "left" will rediscover the moral and spiritual climate of the days of Socialist idealism, or else by losing itself it will lose Socialism, our only hope."

Koestler does not tell us anything which the revolutionary critics of Russia have not been saying for years, but we quote at length because he does raise certain issues: those of human conscience which are important and which if true must be of concern to all those who look to the Free Society as their goal. Is apathy and lack of social conscience against what is wrong as widespread as Koestler maintains? Or is the conspiracy of silence in the Press largely responsible for people's ignorance of what is happening in their own countries, quite apart from what is happening on the continent—and the cause of this apparent apathy?

MORE POMP AND PAGEANTRY

Nuit et Jour (French illustrated weekly) published a reportage on the preparations being made for the Carnival in Nice, in one of its recent issues and the figures quoted reveal the scale on which the Carnival is conceived. The cost this year will be 10 million francs. Nearly 15 tons of paper will be used for the coloured streamers and 20,000 electric bulbs will be used to illuminate the Carnival.

There is a shortage of coal and of paper in France, but the Carnival must go on! This kind of thing happens in all countries. In Naples, for instance, the visitor is struck by the elaborate preparations that are made for the Feast of Piedigrotta in September—one of many celebrated in Naples. Thousands of electric bulbs illuminate the route while people have to put up with electricity cuts every day and many more living in the slums have only reached the oil lamp stage. Food is displayed in large quantities during these feasts, and bright decorations hide the miserable houses while thousands of people go hungry and women sell themselves for a tin of spam. But the Carnival must go on at all costs!

Why?

We draw the attention of our readers to the Anarchist Monthly *Why?* published by our comrades in New York. It has increased its pages from 8 to 16 and the material contained shows improvement in each issue that reaches us. The January issue which has reached us may be obtained from Freedom Press, price 3d. *Why?* gives space both to the discussion of American affairs and Anarchist theory and deserves to be better known by our comrades in this country.

LIBERTARIAN.

Economic Unrest in Australia

(from a Comrade in New South Wales.)

IF press reports meant anything Australia would appear to be in a state of revolution. From the Anarchist point of view, however, there are no real progressive signs for the good of the working class. The workers are bulldozed by traitors of both the political and industrial wings during the war to accept pegged wages, high taxation, overtime, military and civil conscription. At the last Federal Election there was much talk about the 40-hour week and a rise in the basic wage. Foremost of all parties were the Communist Party of Australia, who despite vigorous and costly campaigns mostly lost their deposits, and indeed polled less votes than in 1943.

Now the CP men who control many big and important unions are trying to save face by driving for a £1 a week by capitalising the general discontent of the workers and bringing off many strikes. The discontent is based on high taxation and the high cost of living.

The unions controlled by the CP are the coal miners, seamen, waterside, and iron workers. These are key unions, and to a large extent all waterside and dock labour and seamen are still being paid as semi-State employees.

In Victoria a big dispute goes on by workers in the iron trade, a general rail and tram strike was partly successful, but the general rule is—let the Arbitration Court decide.

In Western Australia, the Railway workers achieved a success, the issue being the dismissal of engine crews who refused to man some Garrett Rail engines, a wartime product said to be dangerous. The men have been reinstated and the engines are to be tested. This strike completely stopped all work in that state for 16 days.

In South Australia too a dispute of iron moulders is paralyzing all industry on the issue of a rise in wages. In New South Wales, I.C.I. has a dispute of a domestic nature, and to-morrow 8,000 shipyard workers are to be paid off by the employers, again on a wage issue. But it must be understood that no revolutionary action exists, the tragedy being that mutual struggle between the Communist Party, the Labour Party and Catholic Action sections divides the workers when solidarity is needed.

To come to more general matters: a severe drought has caused a loss in New South Wales and Queensland of over 30,000,000 sheep, and 50,000,000 bushels of wheat, 20,000 tons of sugar, and tens of thousands of tons of butter and meat. All this means a loss to the hungry world of much wool and food. Transport here in New South Wales is in a state of chaos. Due to coal shortages and serious delays in handling shipping, for instance, 250,000 tons of sugar lies in ports up about Queensland. Potatoes rot in some states, and fruit, too; in Sydney they are as precious as diamonds.

Employment remains at a high level; most world visitors as a rule say Australia is a paradise compared with the rest of the world.

American Anti-Militarists Demonstrate Against Conscription

American anti-militarists are using a new form of demonstration against conscription. They are holding meetings at which people are requested to destroy their draft cards or other military papers. As such destruction is an act of illegality, and as it involves the destroyer in the possibility of imprisonment for "draft-dodging", it constitutes quite a serious step in defiance of the state.

At the first meeting, held in New York, the authorities took such a serious view of the campaign that thirty police agents were present among three hundred people. At this meeting, which was addressed by, among others, Dwight Macdonald the editor of *Politics*, more than sixty men came forward and destroyed their draft cards. Another demonstration was held outside the White House in Washington, and there have also been public burnings of credentials in Philadelphia, Chicago and Los Angeles. So far about four hundred men have taken part.

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TERROR TRIALS IN YUGOSLAVIA

The Communist terror in Yugoslavia continues to follow the orthodox Russian pattern, with concentration camps, secret police, and political trials which are conducted on a basis of fantasy that, if it were not combined with a barbarous ferocity, would verge on comedy. Any individuals or groups who oppose the regime, or who attempt in any way to criticise the regime or to get out of the country information about atrocities committed by the authorities, are treated with the most ruthless brutality, and either disappear into the concentration camps or are made the victims of theatrically staged trials which slavishly imitate the Moscow purge trials in all their manifest injustice.

The most recent of these trials has been that of a number of Jehovah's Witnesses, who were accused of attempting to instigate a war against Yugoslavia, and with co-operating with reactionary groups to this end. This accusation seems quite incredible when one remembers the magnificent record of the Jehovah's Witnesses in their opposition to the recent war. We do not support the theocratic ideas of the members of this sect, but their heroic and consistent resistance to the Nazi terror in Germany cannot be denied, nor can the persecutions which they have endured in almost every country of the world during recent years for their opposition to war. Everywhere they have suffered really savage sentences of imprisonment rather than accept the dictates of the state to fight in wars which they did not support. Even in disagreement with their general views, one has to admit this consistency and disinterested courage.

It therefore seems self-evidently ridiculous to accuse such people of fomenting war on behalf of reactionary groups abroad, by which is presumably meant the British and American ruling classes who gave them savage sentences of imprisonment for their opposition to war!

Moscow Trials Imitated

We have received the information bulletin issued by the Yugoslav Embassy on this case; it reads like the most hysterical Nazi or Communist apologetics for terrorist action under the guise of legality.

The document starts with a general

WHITE MAN'S JUSTICE

All civilised men and women who read of the news, were shocked when the case of two young negro boys, aged 14 and 16, condemned to death for the murder of a white man in one of the Southern States of the U.S.A., flashed across the world. They were arrested, charged and found guilty by an all-white jury, all in one day. Protests against the barbarous sentence came from all over the world. An appeal was lodged, and the Appeal Court changed the sentence into one of imprisonment for life. They are the youngest prisoners to be lodged in the gaol to which they have been sent.

This savagery is only equalled by the turning down of the appeal of Willie Francis, 17 year old negro, found guilty of murder. Last year, Francis went to the electric chair, but when the switch was pulled, a fault in the system caused the chair to fail. The negro returned to his cell, and from there he lodged an appeal. Now, he has to face this terrible ordeal again. Such revenge upon a helpless individual could only be expected from a government which murdered 100,000 people in Hiroshima in cold blood. One or many, it is all the same to the soulless state machine and its operators.

accusation that the J.W.'s were—

"under the cloak of religious activities, connected with centres working to instigate a new war. They also enabled foreign reactionary groups to carry on activities liable to threaten our people and security and to undermine the democratic achievements (sic) of the national liberation struggle. The accused were instigating the severance of diplomatic relations and the abrogation of international treaties with the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia as well as interference in her internal affairs."

The specific activities of the J.W.'s appeared in a following paragraph which says that—

"under the guise of religious work (they) spread propaganda against People's Authorities of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. They persuaded their followers to shirk conscription, sent untrue reports on the political and economic situation of the country to international centres of their organisation in Berne and Brooklyn and in this way placed themselves directly at the service of international reactionaries."

In other words, the Jehovah's Witnesses held their own opinions instead of supporting Tito, they refused military service, and sent out of the country information which they con-

sidered should be known abroad. We know the old methods of Communist thought by which such activities are made to seem something very different from what they are in reality.

Death For Disagreement

But, even if the accusations—which accusations are supported by literally no evidence—are true, it is a singularly strange form of "democratic achievement" to sentence men to death because they happen to disagree with the government of a country and endeavour to overthrow it. This is what happened to three of the accused in this trial. Eleven others were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The case was immediately taken up by various English organisations as soon as the news came through, including the War Resisters' International, the Peace Pledge Union and the Freedom Defence Committee, and protests were sent to Yugoslavia via the Embassy. News has since come through that the sentences of death have been replaced by sentences of twenty years' imprisonment.

But it is not enough to get a death by shooting merely changed to a long death in a Tito prison. Agitation must continue until the fact of such trials are sufficiently widely known for protests on a really wide international scale to force the Yugoslav dictatorship to give up its victims.

Middle East Notes

(From our Cairo Correspondent.)

Unlike mass terrorisation, which is only and can only be the prerogative of Governments (and all Governments alike use it, either by war or dictatorship or "colonisation"), what is usually known as political terrorism is not a monopoly of anyone in particular. But by however many highly varying different groups it may be used, the irresponsible lapdogs of the Press millionaires will always associate it with particular groups at particular times. At the moment one might be excused for imagining that individual terrorism was something peculiarly Jewish, from the headlines in the papers. Yet at the beginning of the century, when the Press was vilifying the heroic struggle of the Nihilists against tyranny in Russia, "Russian" and "terrorist" were almost interchangeable terms. At different times it has been used as peculiar to Frenchmen, Italians, Poles, and at one time nothing of the sort could happen without the Irish Republicans being blamed for it. And, of course, the Anarchists, who have had to struggle against every kind of political blackguardism of the Press from boycott to mass libel, have had their full share of blame. The Anarchists were certainly obliged to use the weapon of individual terrorism in certain phases of their struggle against tyrannical (personal dictatorship and the 19th-century dictatorships of crowned heads) and have been so much vilified for it that one could hardly blame a half-witted observer from imagining that Anarchism and political terrorism were identical and Brutus, William Tell, Charlotte Corday, Oliver Cromwell, the Irish Republicans, the French Revolutionaries, Croat and Serbian and Macedonian Nationalists, South American palace politicians and anyone else you can think of (to whom we must now add the followers of the late Abraham Stern!) must have been Anarchists!

Palestine Terrorism

But as every political trend and movement has on occasion had to use this particular weapon—the British Empire in the war, in its support of Partisans and Maquis no less than the Indian anti-Imperialists—it is time to drop the pre-

"TERRORISTS"

tence of being shocked at the fact that any group resorts to its use. One cannot fail to be amused by such organisations as the "Thou Shalt Not Kill League" in Palestine, whose leading members are proud of what they did recruiting for and enlisting in the War. They have excellent reasons for opposing the terrorism in Palestine, no doubt, which tends more than ever in a fascist direction, but they seem to pick on the most illogical one. Chief Secretary Sir Henry Gurney deplored recently the £600,000 spent by the Palestine Government on reparation as a result of terrorism, and asked how many school and hospitals could have been built with this sum. If Sir Henry had forgotten the cost of the bloodiest war in history, he could at least have reflected what usually happens to public money in the hands of the Palestine Government!

The authorities wonder why such plaintive appeals don't persuade the Jewish community in Palestine to co-operate against terrorism. After all the I.Z.L. (if not the Sternists who are more openly fascist) are not much different from the mass Zionist movements such as the Haganah, except as to the need for force to be used now, and there is nothing much to persuade them to start using the force against the I.Z.L. which they have decided not to use against the British authorities. The soldiers who are sent there by force, are part of the sacrifices made in the sacred name of 'commitments' that no-one asked for and no-one wants; the sacrifices we make for tolerating imperialism and the right of Governments to order our lives for us.

Our opposition to the terrorist movement in Palestine is because of its nationalism. All nationalist movements have idealists and political swindlers in their ranks, and the former always and the latter when it is useful, become tyrants. Any nationalist movement should be opposed and even more these militant nationalist movements which aim at imposing colonisation. But who is to oppose

Famine in Rumania

According to recent reports, the great Ukrainian famine has been followed by an equally disastrous one in Rumania as a result of the same drought, which affected the Moldavian plain almost as badly as it struck South Russia. This is the second drought which the Moldavian peasants have suffered in two years, and they are now near the end of their resources—many of them have actually reached the end.

The situation, bad in itself, has been aggravated by many avoidable circumstances. The devastation of the recent war has played its part in disrupting the carrying on of supply services in the country, but much more crippling circumstances have been the continued presence of a large Russian army, which, as elsewhere, lives parasitically on the land and has taken first priority on all crops, and the lack of any co-ordination in distribution—the black market in Bucharest is one of the most widespread and highly organised in Europe, but there has been little effort made by the Communist-controlled government to organise efficient supply services for the country areas. The result is that, while the rich in the capital are living as

well as they live in any other European capital, the conditions of the poor in the famine areas are so bad that, according to a *Manchester Guardian* report,

"... the peasants are moving away in gangs in search of food, meanwhile eating grass and acorns and even chewing clay-bearing soil to assuage their hunger. They have slaughtered their cattle or bartered it for grain, and have even, it is said, consumed seed corn although the authorities soaked it in oil before distributing it."

To meet this situation, the measures taken by the Rumanian government are, even in the words of one of the well-censored Bucharest newspapers, "of symbolic rather than of effective value." Some children have been transferred to areas not affected by the famine, but very little in the way of supplies has been sent. Nor has there been any great display of international solidarity. Some of the neighbouring countries have sent small supplies of grain, but the authorities still estimate that there is a need for 50,000 wagons of grain in March alone. So far none of the great democratic powers has come forward to give any substantial help for the starving Rumanians.

Nor is the future likely to show any great and immediate improvement. Owing to disruption by war and political strife, it is officially estimated that the quantity of winter sowings this year is little more than half of last year. Further improvement will of course be hindered by the effects of the slaughter of cattle and destruction of seed grain during the present famine.

One cannot blame the Rumanian or the Russian government for the drought. But one can blame them for the way in which they have allowed the peasants to be pillaged for their armies and for black market purposes, and have failed completely to provide any system that would prevent such a crisis. A social system based on efficient and voluntary mutual aid would undoubtedly have proved much more elastic in crises of this kind than the inefficient governmental system of coercion and class interest.

it? The British Government as an imperialist government is tarred with the same bush. Its policy of repression can only accentuate nationalism, as it has already done. Fascism can only be fought successfully from within; the I.Z.L. and the Sternists—as well as the other 'moderate' Zionist nationalists—will only disappear with the growth of libertarian and revolutionary feeling among the Jewish people. At present many of them turn to nationalism because as a people whose best modern representatives rejected nationalism, they feel insecure in a nationalist world. Hence this problem is bound up with the advance of revolutionary feeling elsewhere in the world. Emancipation has to be international, it cannot come to one people alone, as the Spanish Revolution showed.

The Bomb Bores

One point however, as regards Palestine terrorism is interesting to note. The alarm taken by the British Government in imposing martial law, evacuating British families, etc., as well as the general state of tension and the total inability to prevent the terrorists doing pretty well as they wish, answer those pessimists (even in our own ranks) who took the Atomic Bomb so much to heart. How extraordinary that a right-wing organisation without mass support, consisting of a few schoolboys of sixteen, a few ex-Servicemen trained in military matters, and a few others, could terrify the mighty British Empire so much that the Press has screamed its head off over the prospect of them landing in London; troops have been sent specially to reinforce Palestine; and the holy of holies, U.N.O., has been shaken by it. Yet when the Atomic Bomb first exploded into the news we were told by some of our friends that now there was no hope of any upsurge of workers overpowering the capitalist class!

A. M.

It Can't Happen Here!

In Cairo in time to see King Farouk drive through the streets the day prior to his birthday on February 11th for which the benevolent Government has fairy-lighted and decorated the sordid squalor and misery of the Cairo streets. I have every sympathy with the King of Egypt now. He doesn't give the cheering people in the streets a set grin, he doesn't wave his hand or bow or salute. He doesn't even lean out of car window and make a rude gesture like a famous British politician. He just ignores the fools. Do you blame him?

Socialism Made Easy

Socialism has become fashionable in Egypt, after the triumph of British socialism has convinced the Pashas that it doesn't mean abating one whit of privilege, but is the best form of slavery since the Pyramids were built as an eternal monument to sheer waste of manpower for the glory of the state.

Nahas Pasha of the WAFD and the present Premier Nokrashy Pasha all declare now that they are Socialists. Latest recruit to the Socialist ranks is His Excellency Wahid Yousri Pasha, son of the Princess Chivekiar who has learned the lesson of British politics that socialism doesn't mean the loss of one grain of privilege.

His Excellency has declared to the Egyptian magazine, *Al Hhnein*:

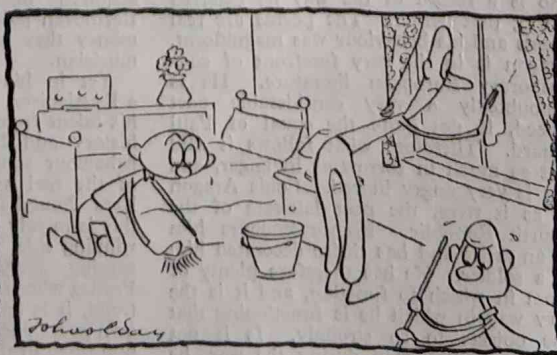
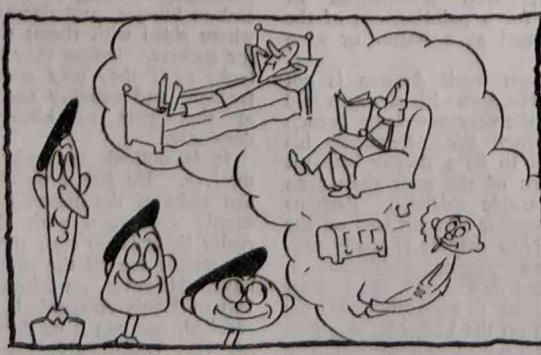
"I am a socialist and nothing will prevent me from remaining one. I appeal to all my countrymen to adopt socialist principles. I don't agree with those who believe that socialism is the first step towards communism."

I appeal to our leaders to adopt socialist principles as they are expressed in our religion. Nobody can deny that Islam is above all a socialist religion."

THE THREE MUSKETEERS—3

THE NEW ARMY (dreams and reality)

By JOHN OLDAY



"Someone's got to do the dirty work!"

OSCAR WILDE AS A LIBERTARIAN WRITER

The position of Oscar Wilde in the world's literature and thought has always been somewhat ambiguous. This fact was accentuated by the sensationalism which has been given to his imprisonment and the homosexuality that led to it, but, even without that, Wilde remains a writer whom it is always hard to place. In his earlier work, at least, and even to a degree in much of his later work, there is a struggling after effect which at times verges on showy vulgarity. And yet, in his best books, and even here and there in his less satisfactory writings, there are passages which show a profundity of social awareness that is really striking. In his life the same schizoid tendency is

evident. He was by nature a kind and generous man, loyal to his friends, capable of any effort to assist them, and endowed with a gift of witty conversation which was all the more unusual because it was entirely devoid of malice. Yet at the same time he was attracted like a child to the false glitter of social ostentation, liked to appear as a dandy, and strove to impress people for whom he had the deepest contempt.

Yet, out of this curious mixture of qualities, this almost pathetically split mind which undoubtedly played a great part in involving Wilde in the tragic farce of his imprisonment, there emerges one quality that seems to be wholly constant—a profound respect

for the human individual, and a perpetual concern for that individual's freedom.

Hatred Of Oppression

Wilde was an individualist. But, unlike many of the individualists of his time, he did not seek personal freedom for himself alone. He realised that his own freedom was dependent on the freedom of others, that what he desired for himself should be given to everyone else. And for this reason there is evident throughout his works a consciousness of the oppression and exploitation, the political corruption and personal slavery, of the world in which he lived.

Even in his younger days, as an undergraduate, his mild liberalism was tending to develop into libertarianism, and the idea of freedom is a perpetual one in the poems he wrote at this time. But it was in his first play, *Vera*, or the *Nihilists*, that he began to show a more clear sympathy with revolutionary ideas. On this play he said:

"I have tried in it to express within the limits of art that Titan cry of the peoples for liberty, which in Europe to-day is threatening thrones and making governments unstable from Spain to Russia, and from north to

southern seas."

Vera was to have been played in London at the Adelphi Theatre, but was withdrawn by the producers because of the panic caused by the assassination of Alexander II by the Russian terrorists. It was a bad play, but at least it showed a good intention.

In Wilde's later writings the theme of exploitation is a recurrent one. One of his best stories, *The Young King*, makes a monarch see in a series of vivid dreams the terrible sufferings which his people undergo to provide his wealth. One of his plays, *An Ideal Husband*, is based on an exposure of the corruption by which men succeed in politics, and here and there throughout his works are scattered sentences and paragraphs in which Wilde showed his concern for exploited and oppressed people.

The Soul Of Man Under Socialism

But it was in his pamphlet, *The Soul of Man under Socialism*, which Wilde seems to have written as a kind of manifesto of his social beliefs, that he reaches his full stature as a libertarian. Various ideas of socialism were in the air and it was natural that Wilde should have been affected by them. But he differed from the majority of the intellectuals of his time, of whom Shaw is a fair example, in that he did not allow himself to be impressed by the fashionable kinds of Fabian and Marxist authoritarianism which were beginning to dominate English socialist thought. He had been too much influenced by Ruskin and Morris to accept with equanimity the state as a director of his life, and, although he never declared himself an anarchist, he was

obviously impressed and influenced by anarchist thought, as is shown by several pieces of evidence in his life and writings.

In *De Profundis*, for instance, he praised Kropotkin as one of the few men whose lives he really admired. When the Chicago anarchists were waiting to be executed, an attempt was made to organise an appeal among well-known English writers for their reprieve. Out of all the literary "rebels" Wilde was the only one who gave his support and stood beside the anarchists in the storm of hatred which surrounded them at the time. When an anarchist poet, John Barlas, demonstrated his disgust with the social structure by firing a revolver at the House of Commons, and was arrested for this, Wilde, who hardly knew Barlas, came forward voluntarily to bail him out, and to stand surety to prevent his being sent to prison. Such gestures as these suggest the anarchist sympathies which become even more evident from a perusal of *The Soul of Man under Socialism*.

Opposition To Authority

Wilde sets out with the thesis that Socialism should be used for the sole purpose of creating more individual liberty. He begins by attacking philanthropic ideas, which attempt to palliate the evils of private property, and points out that only under a system where property is socialised will the evils of poverty be abolished. But he is careful to dissociate himself from any authoritarian idea of socialism.

"Socialism, Communism, or whatever one chooses to call it, by converting private property into public wealth, and substituting co-operation for com-

(Continued on page 7)

The Socialist Tradition

THE SOCIALIST TRADITION: MOSES TO LENIN, by ALEXANDER GRAY. (Longmans).

We have long needed a comprehensive and relatively impartial study of the history and tendencies of socialist thought, that would set forward the salient points of each socialist thinker (and in this general definition is included anarchists and communists) so that the reader might have the opportunity to reach his own evaluation. The histories of socialism that have been written, in England at least, are either hopelessly out-of-date, like Kirkup's, or definitely one-sided, like Beer's, and it was therefore all the more necessary that we should have a work which could act as a reference book, and a beginning for those who wish to embark on a wider and more general study of socialist thought, or to devote themselves to a more intensive study of certain schools of thought.

Such a book should be written by a disinterested scholar. It is not the kind of book that should condemn socialism, or that should select any particular kind of socialism for its approval. It should strive to be wholly objective, and to give an absolutely unbiased summary of the theories of each important socialist writer. It should leave it to the reader to draw his own conclusions and make his own favourable or unfavourable judgment.

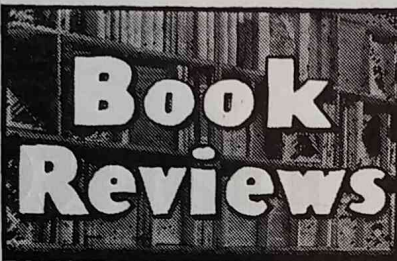
Perhaps to expect all this is to cry for the moon. We all have our predilections, and the wholly objective scholar is a phenomenon which I, personally, have never encountered. Nevertheless, the great need of such a book makes one always hope that it will appear, and when I read Alexander Gray's survey, it was with a renewed hope that this might be the real thing.

The result was disappointing. It is true that the author has made a really exhaustive study of socialist writings. His book not only covers the great figures of anarchist and socialist thought, such as Kropotkin, Proudhon, Marx and Lenin, but also draws out from their undeserved obscurity such really interesting writers as Thomas Hodgskin and John Gray, the disciples of Godwin, and such generally neglected predecessors of the French Revolution as Mably and Morelly. A long selection is devoted to Godwin, and there is an interesting section in which the author analyses the totalitarian ideas in Saint-Simon and Thomas Moore's *Utopia*. Some significant figures in early socialist thought are omitted—Gerrard Winstanley's is a name that immediately springs to mind—but in general the author deserves our gratitude for reminding us of many worthy books and authors who have been so long and so unjustly forgotten. It will repay the reader who is interested in the roots of libertarian thought to follow his example and read the works of such men as Hodgskin. He will find them a good deal less dry and forbidding than Marx.

But the great disadvantage about Mr. Gray's book is that it is not unbiased. He is evidently not a socialist, and his book is marred throughout by a facetiousness and a superiority that diminish the value of his conclusions. He is a man who governs his political thought by that unfortunate quality, adored of the timid, "common sense", and anything that might be interpreted as vision or idealism, or that shows an attitude towards human nature different from the current bourgeois one that men must always be restrained or else they will become ravening beasts, is received by the author with a shallow condemnation that hides a schoolboy snigger. Indeed, his book shows little power of deep analysis or polemical reasoning, and too often a theory is just dismissed with a bare statement that it is nonsensical.

Naturally, enough, the anarchists have come in as much as any of the other socialist thinkers for this barrage of sly wit, and Mr. Gray is at pains to inform us that anarchists suffer from a strange mixture of intelligence and simple-mindedness. The superficial nature of his understanding of anarchist thought can be seen from the following paragraph,

"So long as we live in a society which has advanced in any degree beyond a state of primitive disintegration towards a condition of mutual interdependence, it is essential that we should be able to rely on each other. Expressed more sordidly and prosaically, this means that everyone must



fulfil his contract, and in a sense make himself the slave of a time-table. We must know that the train will leave King's Cross at 10 a.m.; we must be able to rely on the engine-driver being there; we must have an assurance that he will see the job through. He may not, sixty miles from London, hand over the train to one of the passengers, merely because, with Delius, he has just heard the first cuckoo of spring, because the meadows are bespangled with orchids, the ditches a gleam of golden king-cups, and all nature summons him to partner the dining car attendant in a round of golf on an adjacent course."

This, of course, is a complete travesty of what anarchists have contended. What we have said is that responsibility is necessary, that men should be reliable, and that they are in fact more reliable in a free society than under compulsion. Those who laugh at this idea are ignoring, as Mr. Gray ignores, the fact that it has been proved in real life—not in the common sense bourgeois world, but in the communal villages of Spain and the Palestine communities, which have run for years, prosperously and efficiently, on a wholly voluntary basis of work.

This is only one example of the superficiality of the judgments of this book. It shows great research, but it is a rash thing to embark on such a work merely as the result of years of reading, when that reading has not led to understanding.

We still await our comprehensive and satisfactory reference book to socialist theory.

G. W.

ARAGON

ARAGON: POET OF RESURGENT FRANCE. Edited by HANNAH JOSEPHINE and MALCOLM COWLEY (Pilot Press, 7/6).

Here, in English translation, are the poems that Louis Aragon wrote while France was occupied by the Nazis; here also is a record of the way he behaved during that period. The poems are real poems and his behaviour was magnificent. Aragon is in the very forefront of contemporary European literature. He is undoubtedly a very considerable poet indeed, if not quite the equal of Paul Eluard. Therefore what follows is said just as much in sorrow as in anger, and one is very angry indeed. Louis Aragon is, as it were, the poet laureate of the Fourth Republic. France honours him as an artist and has thrice decorated him as a soldier. He has therefore plenty of room in which to function, and it is the very way in which he is functioning that one objects to so strongly. Is it not significant that even during the war, he never referred to the Nazis, but always to the Bosche and to the Germans? Aragon's behaviour is truly a part of the period.

Like the Communists, and too like the Poles, he was magnificent in defeat and pathetic in victory. What he is doing now is advocating a kind of left Fascism. He tries to stop, or does stop, any writer from being published in France who is not politically correct. He wants all French works of art in Germany to be returned, however and whenever she acquired them; even if Goethe or Beethoven paid for a painting out of the money they earned as a writer or as a musician.

Yet in his own work Aragon is not a Russianiser. He draws his strength and his talent from the very bowels of French history and French life. Somehow his behaviour seems to be a deeper betrayal of the real work of the poet than even Ezra Pound's tragic mistake. Perhaps this is merely because Aragon was on the winning side. Now that he is busily preventing everyone getting published in France who is not in line with the present trend, it is amusing to remember that his own great poem on the U.S.S.R. was first published in the English-speaking countries by Ezra Pound in his *Active Anthology*.

While disagreeing with "the save your own soul" brand of passivism, obviously

The Anatomy of Peace

THE ANATOMY OF PEACE. EMERY REVES. (Penguin Books.)

Before considering the nature of the remedy which Mr. Reves proposes in this book for the problem of war, it is necessary that we should consider some of the bees in his bonnet, bees which buzz most insistently throughout the book, and determine all the author's findings.

First, he holds the interesting belief that the state is the source of all human liberty. He writes:

"... Freedom in human society is exclusively the product of the state. It is indeed unthinkable without the state."

"The day the first legal imposition of a compulsion was forced upon a community was the greatest day in history. That day freedom was born."

And so on, *ad nauseam*.

Throughout the book, this adulation of state as a compulsive factor forcing man to be social, is endlessly repeated. Mr. Reves clearly does not believe that man, or any other animal, has any natural sociable instincts by which freely working social groupings can be formed. Indeed, he holds a most novel biological theory:

"Freedom does not exist among animals, except the freedom of the beast of prey... Human freedom is created by law and can exist only within a legal order, never without or beyond it."

Yet Mr. Reves is not a plain Totalitarian State-worshipper. He insists that the state should be "democratic" and freely admits all the manifold evils

that the modern state inflicts upon the citizen. These evils he ascribes entirely to the fact that all states have to be in a position of war-preparedness, and hence the people must suffer in many ways. In a condition of true peace, he infers, perfect justice and prosperity could be imposed on the people by the state. The simple remedy for war (and indeed all social evils) which he proposes, is that there should be a single, all-embracing World State to force peace on all mankind.

I scrutinized the book most carefully to find any analysis of the causes of war. There is none. The only statement on this issue which the author permits himself is:

"War takes place whenever and wherever non-integrated social units of equal sovereignty come into contact."

This statement is repeated a great number of times in similar words; but nowhere does he explain what he means by "coming into contact." This is typical of the vagueness of most of his assertions.

Badly analysed, the book seems too superficial to attract much attention. Yet it would be a grave mistake to under-rate its possible influence. Though superficial in content, and relying on endless repetition of sheerly dogmatic statements rather than on reasoning, it is written in a powerful style reminiscent of masterly oratory. Many readers may well be carried away by the torrent of words.

All through the book we await the unfolding of a masterly plan to bring about the World State. Mr. Reves keeps us waiting. He demonstrates quite ably why the existing sovereign states resist the idea of a World State, and then in the last chapter he shews his hand:

"If we cannot attain universalism and create union by common consent and democratic methods as a result of rational thinking—then, rather than retard the process, let us precipitate union by conquest. It serves no reasonable purpose to prolong the death throes of our decrepit institutions and to postpone inevitable events only to make the changes more painful and more costly in blood and suffering. It would be better to have done with this operation as quickly as possible, etc., etc."

This book was published in a small edition in the U.S.A. in June, 1945. After America let loose the atomic bomb, however, it was printed by the 100,000 and sedulously pushed by responsible authorities in the States. The significance of it is clear; America has, or fancies she has, the physical means to compel this "universalism", and Mr. Reves' book is an interesting straw in the wind. I commend it to the attention of everyone interested in modern trends in state-worship and power politics.

G.

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Oscar Wilde as a Libertarian Writer

(Continued from page 6)

petition, will restore society to its proper condition of a thoroughly healthy organism, and ensure the material well-being of each member of the community. It will, in fact, give Life its proper basis and its proper environment. But, for the full development of Life to its highest mode of perfection, something more is needed. What is needed is Individualism. If the Socialism is Authoritarian; if there are Governments armed with economic power as they are now with political power; if, in a word, we are to have Industrial Tyrannies, then, the last state of man will be worse than the first." He continually re-iterates his warnings against compulsion.

"Every man must be left quite free to choose his own work. No form of compulsion must be exercised over him. If there is, his work will not be good for him, will not be good in itself, and will not be good for others. And by work I simply mean activity of any kind. . . . All association must be quite voluntary. It is only in voluntary associations that man is free." And he is equally definite in his condemnation of government.

"All modes of government are failures. Despotism is unjust to everybody, including the despot, who was probably made for better things. Oligarchies are unjust to the many, and oligarchies are unjust to the few. High hopes were once formed of democracy; but democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people. It has been found out. I must say that it was high time, for all authority is quite degrading. It degrades those who exercise it, and degrades those over whom it is exercised."

Wilde uses the word "Individualism" to describe his own form of Socialism. But in fact he was somewhat nearer to what we should call anarchist communism, in that he said that the State should be replaced by "a voluntary association that will organise labour, and be the manufacturer and distributor of necessary commodities." His idea was that property, in the sense of the means of production, should be socialised, and that the possibilities of machinery must be exploited to the utmost to enable the community to provide all the necessities. The community as a whole would organise the production of "useful things", and thus leave the individual to produce whatever he desired for his own personal satisfaction.

Attitude To Crime

Elsewhere, Wilde condemns punishment, and shows that crime is usually caused by want, and that with the abolition of property crime will practically vanish.

"When each member of the com-

munity has sufficient for his wants, and is not interfered with by his neighbour, it will not be an object of any interest to him to interfere with anyone else. Jealousy, which is an extraordinary source of crime in modern life, is an emotion closely bound up with our conceptions of property, and under Socialism and Individualism will die out. It is remarkable that in communistic tribes jealousy is entirely unknown."

There is much more in this interesting pamphlet that could be quoted with profit, if I had the space, but for the present I shall have to be content with a few words from Wilde's praises of disobedience, which echo Thoreau and all the great Anarchist writers.

"Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man's original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion."

When Wilde himself went to prison, and was brought up against authority at its worst, his feelings of anger were renewed, and it is significant that the last work he wrote, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, is little else than a fine and indignant protest against oppression and the laws that make it. Wilde tells vividly how men suffer in prison, how sordid and miserable their lives become, and says:

"But this I know, that every Law That men have made for Man, Since first Man took his brothers' life, And the sad world began, But straws the wheat and saves the chaff With a most evil fan."

In this article I have been unable to do more than give a sketch of the social ideas and comments of Wilde, but I think this is sufficient to indicate a side of his thought too frequently neglected. Wilde had his faults, both as a man and a writer, but he had a consistent preoccupation with freedom, a constant desire that men should be able to live more fully in a world without tyranny. His belief has been expressed perhaps most concisely in these words from *The Soul of Man*, which to my mind supply as good a definition of the anarchist view of life as any I have read elsewhere:

"For what man has sought for is, indeed, neither pain nor pleasure, but simply life. Man has sought to live intensely, fully, perfectly. When he can do so without exercising restraint on others, or suffering it ever, and his activities are all pleasurable to him, he will be saner, healthier, more civilised, more himself. Pleasure is Nature's test, her sign of approval. When man is happy, he is in harmony with himself and his environment."

(Wilde's *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* is reprinted in the Everyman Library selection of his works.)

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

Letters to the Editors

Importance of Social Biology

SIRS,

In your critic's excellent commentary on Allan Dale's *An Introduction to Social Biology* he rightly stresses the importance of bad social conditions as providing "the basic soil for ill-health and premature death." Before the war in certain districts of England, realistically known as the "distressed areas", disease of almost every kind was prevalent among the people, and he who ran might read the cause. Families were sleeping eight or ten in one room, sometimes with a lodger or two added. Sanitation was so conspicuous by its absence that when some of the Tyneside houses were demolished it was reported that three years exposure to sun and air would be necessary to purify the site sufficiently to make it safe for rebuilding on. Medical officers further declared that two-thirds of the children were suffering from malnutrition.

What is the use of spending colossal sums on medical research, involving the most hideous torture of helpless animals, to find a cure for these diseases, whilst the right and true way of prevention lies wide open before us?

Feed and clothe and house our people properly and teach them to lead clean lives, and the problem of disease will vanish.

M. OLDFIELD HOWEY.

(Granted that with sound economic organization, poverty would disappear, and with it the bulk of disease, and hence the need for medical research also. Meanwhile, however, disease is rampant, and has to be treated here and now, for one cannot leave individual problems "till after the revolution". We find ourselves regrettably unable to take up the same anti-individualist attitude as our correspondent.—Eds.)

Individualist and Communist Anarchism

DEAR COMRADES,

I cannot reconcile Anarchism with Socialism and/or Communism. To me there is no such thing as Voluntary Socialism or Voluntary Communism. Anarchism is pure Individual Egoism, and a voluntary association of Anarchists or League of Egoists (as voiced by Max Stirner) has no relation whatever to Socialism or Communism, which latter are systems depending on Authority.

Authority has a basis of revenge backed by force against free individuals who dare to assert their freedom against the orders of Authority. This revenge is cloaked in moral and legal mummery, called "Punishment", backed by force. The crushing of Individual Freedom by Authority is called "Discipline", and Authority cannot exist without "discipline".

I mention all this because some Anarchists often speak of a Free Society as being "Voluntary Socialism", or

"Voluntary Communism", whereas both Socialism and Communism cannot do without Authority, Punishment, and Discipline,—that is, the State.

The word Anarchism is alone sufficient to describe a Free Society, because Anarchism repudiates Authority, and Authority is a denial of a Free Society. Socialism and Communism are a denial of a Free Society, as any Anarchist can easily understand by experiencing Bolshevism, Marxism, and SPGB'ism, in word, print, and deed.

E. M.

(N.B.—Due to the practice of large-scale labour parties, and of the Russian Social Democrats (Bolsheviks) who adopted the term Communism after they achieved power, the terms Socialism and Communism have come to have rather changed meanings to-day. But when William Morris used the term "socialism" or Kropotkin the term "communism", they certainly did not accept the idea of Authority. Similar confusion exists with regard to Anarchism; etymologically, no doubt, it means "without ruler", but it has also been perverted to mean "disorder". These terms must be understood in their context, and with regard to the general views of the user.—Eds.)

Freedom's Circulation Drive

DEAR COMRADES,

I want to congratulate you on the new format of *Freedom*. I wish you success in your drive for new readers. You have stressed the economic side of the question and I would like in future issues for you to emphasize the aims and ultimate goal—the more readers and converts to

SONG FOR THE DAY

Yesterday's 6 o'clock P.B.S. News in English, which led off with a definition of Jerusalem's security zones, was preceded by a gramophone recording of "Don't Fence Me In".

The Palestine Post.

PORTRAIT OF AN ENGLISHMAN

Harold Nicholson, reviewing Major Lewis Hasting's book *Dragons Are Extra: Major Hastings has no love for intellectuals or politicians, but he adores animals; his stories of how he killed these animals are among the most vivid in the book.*

Evening Standard, 24/2/47.

WHAT IS IT?

Mr. Attlee concluded his speech by emphasising the dignity of the working man. There he showed real insight. The true value to society of the man who uses his hands is at last being recognised. But in return the manual labourer has a responsibility. It is the job of the unions to tell him what it is.

News Chronicle, 17/2/47.

Through the Press

FOOD SITUATION IMPROVING

Strawberries, at £2 a pound, from the West Indies, may be on sale in London in a few days.

Daily Mirror, 27/2/47.

DECONTAMINATION DEPT.

Soviet Navy concert parties are admonished in the official newspaper for singing "trivial bourgeois songs".

Says Colonel Melnik in *Red Fleet*: "Tipperary" and "Tavern in the Town", which the Pacific Fleet sings, have migrated from the bourgeois music hall and cannot interest a Soviet audience.

I cannot understand why the Black Sea Fleet has turned attention to the very stupid music-hall ditty "K-k-k-katie". It is only capable of ruining the musical taste of a Soviet audience.

Daily Express, 17/2/47.

POSITION DEFINED

Men of the Fifth Battalion of the Burma Rifle Brigade, who have been on "sit-down strike" for three days at Peru, were today declared "rebels".

Sunday Express, 23/2/47.

LESSER BREEDS

Mr. R. T. Paget, Old Etonian Socialist M.P. for Northampton: "There will never be enough people to fill the bottom jobs . . . that situation can only be overcome by a constant inflow from those nations where the standard of living is lower and where our bottom jobs appear to be jobs of luxury."

Sunday Express, 23/2/47.

ESSENTIAL NEWS SERVICE

Paris without newspapers is a city of rumours. The only news published for Parisians is a Government bulletin which gives Ministry announcements and accounts of funerals.

Evening News, 22/2/47.

SANCTUARY

Challenge to a duel at dawn to-day was sent yesterday by Colonel Randolph Pacciardi, Left-Wing leader of the Italian Republican Party, to Signor Tulli Benedetti, editor of the Right-Wing newspaper *Giornale della Sera*.

As duelling is illegal, it may take place in the Parliament Buildings, where the police have no access.

Daily Herald, 24/2/47.

CHEERFUL NEWS DEPT.

On show in freezing London yesterday were flowers which last week were blooming in Palestine sunshine.

They were flown to England in ice-cooled containers for exhibition at Palestine House—"a foretaste of what Londoners will be able to enjoy."

The plan is to sell flowers within three days of being cut. Roses will probably cost 1s. each.

Daily Express, 18/2/47.

DEMOB FRIENDS DEPT.

Awaiting milder weather like the rest of us are two hippopotamuses (or hippopotami—both plurals being correct according to my dictionary). They are to come to the Zoo from Hamburg.

Mr. Leslie Flewin, Zoo overseer, has not been finding it easy to arrange their release. He first went over in September, with the idea of relieving the Hamburg Zoo of animals they could not feed. The suggestion came from the Control Commission.

Now, after negotiations described to me as tedious, a permit to send them to London has been granted.

Because of low temperatures the hippos will not travel in their natural element—water—but in crates lined with straw.

The journey has to be planned to avoid

delay, for this mode of packing is liable to give them dry and cracked skins, which would be as dangerous to them as chilly weather.

The Star, 17/2/47.

Lovable though hippopotamuses undoubtedly are, we think it is going a bit too far to consider their comfort and amenities before those of the hungry and homeless human inhabitants of Hamburg.

BENEVOLENT DESPOT.

Sir Bede Clifford came back to Britain yesterday after five years as Governor of Trinidad.

The oil island's natives had lost "a stern parent". Sir Bede put it that way.

In his cabin in the Queen Elizabeth after she berthed at Southampton he told a *Daily Mirror* reporter: "In relation to the people, one has to be something like a stern parent in a position like the Governor's."

"The people are like children from whom one has to take away things that might hurt them."

"If they had sabotaged the oil wells in the recent trouble they would have deprived thousands of their fellows of work and at the same time have made Britain spend dollars to buy oil she could not get in Trinidad."

Daily Mirror, 26/2/47.

LEARNING AT HOME

My husband teases our little son aged three. His favourite game is to rush the carpet sweeper at him fiercely. My husband—just demobbed—thinks a boy should have this sort of hardening.

The child is terrified and repeatedly asks me when the man (he won't call him Daddy) is going away again. My husband is training to be a teacher.

Letter in *Daily Mail*, 26/2/47.

DISCOURAGING

A girl who tried to explain to the police, who had arrested her and three boy companions for posting bills on the walls of Jerusalem that their notices were against terrorism was told by the police that it made no difference. Putting up the poster was illegal, said the policeman, no matter what was on it.

The four were allegedly caught posting up "Hahoma" anti-terrorist literature, in the Beit Israel quarter.

The Palestine Post.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND—

Ten thousand pineapples have arrived from the Azores, where they sell at 1s. and 2s. Some are already in London shops at 21s. and 25s. There is no price control and heavy costs of transport, as well as insurance and customs duty, make them dear.

A Covent Garden fruiterer tells me that the price factors are supply and demand—"If people are prepared to pay high prices, then pineapples will remain high."

They have varied in price. In a North London shopping area they have been 12s. 6d., which is about their minimum. Usual price is about 15s.

The Star, 17/2/47.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND—

For stealing 90lb. of coke, worth 3s. 3d., from the boiler-house of Kilburn Palace Theatre, Belsize-road, N.W., Joseph Thomas Mann, 32-year-old former Hampstead A.R.P. demolition worker and professional boxer, of Exeter-road, Brondesbury, N.W., was sent to a month's gaol yesterday by Mr. Ronald Powell, the Marylebone magistrate.

For being concerned with Mann, Frederick Skingle (30), toolmaker, of Darren-road, Battersea, was fined £10 or

anarchism, the nearer and more successful the social revolution will become.

I would like to put one or two suggestions for your consideration in your drive. Why don't you offer Anarchist Books (say for instance Woodcock's *Godwin*) for the reader who introduces 40 or 50 new subscribers to *Freedom*? The *Industrial Worker* does it and lately offered Hewetson's *Ill-health, Poverty and the State*.

As an Anarchist I would like to see the paper gaining circulation and being able to come out as a weekly, and then its influence would be felt more. I have all the earlier issues of *War Commentary* right back to the typewritten first number. But lately I have been passing my copy on to workmates whom I thought I could interest in Anarchism and that has been to the detriment of my bound volumes. I know you have been gaining strength by looking through back issues and taking note of the new contributors. In future send me two copies of *Freedom*, and I would also like you to send me *Why* every month.

Wishing you every success in your circulation drive. I hope in the near future to see *Freedom* appearing as a *Daily*!

Yours for Anarchy,

D. T.

Anti-Clericalism and Agriculture

DEAR COMRADES,

With regard to E.W.L. and J.S.'s letters in the Feb. 15th issue of *Freedom*, I don't see how any "real" fiction (excuse my unlucky choice of words) could be serialised effectively in your paper. And while I agree with your attacks on the Vatican, I think any more space available for attacks on the churches should be devoted to the C. of E. whose influence if less insidious is more widespread hereabouts (Yorks). Personally I should like to see more space devoted to the question of agriculture.

R. E.

a month's imprisonment.

The theatre is being renovated and the accused were found in the boiler-house with the coke in two sacks. Mann said he was short of fuel at home and his wife in ill-health, and that Skingle had come along to help him carry the coke.

1s. Coal costs £1 2s.—Because his wife and six-months-old baby were without a fire, Edmund Bolsover, aged 32, of Hermitage-road, Woking, filled a sandbag with coal at the Brookwood Hospital, where he is employed as a male nurse. The Woking magistrates yesterday dismissed under the Probation Act a charge of stealing coal valued 1s., but ordered Bolsover to pay £1 2s. costs.

Sunday Dispatch, 23/2/47.

A STEP FORWARD—TO 1697

Russian citizens throughout the Soviet Union are to be given Habeas Corpus rights.

A new civil and criminal code to be prepared by the newly created Legislative Commission will afford defence rights to accused persons, the commission's president, Mr. Georgi Perov, told the Supreme Soviet.

[Habeas Corpus is the greatest constitutional safeguard in Britain against unlawful imprisonment. The Act dates from 1697. It means that anybody unlawfully imprisoned can either be released at once or brought to speedy trial. It is a writ issued by a judge or court of justice commanding the person to whom it is directed to bring the body of a person in his custody before the court.]

News Chronicle, 27/2/47.

NO BRITISH OBJECTION

The current issue of the *New Republic* carries a highly sensational story of Peron's plans for developing atomic power in Argentina. It declared that the German Nobel Prize winner, Werner Heisenberg, one of the world's leading atomic physicists, who is now studying at Gottingen, has accepted the invitation of another German scientist named Beck to join him at the University of Buenos Aires.

When I first heard of this story I made inquiries from British authorities who scouted the notion that Heisenberg would even imagine for a moment that he would be allowed to move from the British Zone. To my surprise, I read in the *New York Herald Tribune* of last Sunday that the *New Republic's* story is confirmed by an official British spokesman in Berlin and that Heisenberg is reported to have said that no British objection would be taken to his departure.

Critic in *News Chronicle*, 27/2/47.

COMMUNIST SNOOPING

I am stung to protest by the behaviour of people in this district re the fuel cuts. They seem to think they can help the opposition by wasting as much electricity as possible.

Our power is not cut off at the main now, and it is left to people's public spirit to economise. My boss's wife has waterheaters, frig. (in this weather!) etc., all on, and when I tried to protest she said she had no intention of economising.

We ought to be compulsorily cut off to stop this sort of thing. Can nothing be done?

ANGRY.

Yes. Report such cases to the police; who can now take action.

Daily Worker, 19/2/47.

Anarchist Commentary

Political Discrimination in Army

The recent discussion on appointments to the Army Education Corps shows very effectively the hollowness of the pretence of democracy in the services which has been fostered by the Labour government and the military authorities in recent months, in the hope of gaining recruits for the peacetime forces.

A certain Private S. applied to be made an instructor in the Army Education Corps, and the Chief Education Officer of his command expressed his satisfaction with the man as an instructor. But on investigation the War Office found that he was a Communist, and immediately the usual political discrimination got to work, and he was turned down.

The question was raised in the House of Commons, and Bellenger put forward the singularly lame excuse that one of the functions of A.E.C. instructors was to teach the doctrines of democracy as laid down in that incredible series of pamphlets, "The British Way and Purpose", and that therefore a Communist, as an avowed enemy of democracy, could not sincerely fulfil his functions in the A.E.C.

All this, of course, is the most patent folly. The teaching of democracy in the army is regarded by all soldiers as a piece of manifest hypocrisy, particularly when they have perhaps just been the victims of some instance of the rigid totalitarianism of army life. Any true democracy in the army is impossible, and to teach it in army education lectures is just about on a par with the mouthing of the word 'democracy' by Molotov and Tito. Communists and militarists—there is not much to choose between them when it comes to using the word 'democracy' to mean its opposite.

The real reason for the refusal to appoint Private S. would seem to be much

less high-handed than the War Office contend. Military life is based, not on principles, but on expediency, and, while Communists and fellow-travellers were tolerated in the army during the war, because their line agreed with that of the army leaders, now they are naturally suspect because Russia is the potential enemy. One cannot expect a leopard to change its spots or an army to allow freedom of discussion; the leopard would have to evolve into something other than a leopard, and the army would cease to exist, since the whole of militarism is based on the negation of freedom. But, since every soldier and ex-soldier knows the real nature of the military system, it is adding insult to injury to use democracy as an excuse for acts of army discrimination.

A genuinely democratic spirit—even if we only interpret it according to the ideas of nineteenth-century liberals like Mill—would allow freedom of discussion by all opinions. But Mr. Bellenger's army democracy is strictly tied to the full-stops and commas of "The British Way and Purpose". So a Communist is kept out when his party is out of favour, and an anarchist, we can guess, would always be kept out, since there is no possibility of believing that army democracy would allow any discussion of the faults of militarism.

Women In Prison

The recent protests against the treatment of women in prison, raised in the House of Commons by Mrs. Ayrton Gould and other women M.P.'s, bring forward once again the whole question of the atrocious conditions under which prisoners have to live, for what was said in the House on the treatment of women prisoners applies equally to that of male prisoners, and even to that of the boys who are kept in Wormwood Scrubbs prison. The facts speak for themselves, but it should be protested that the bad conditions act just as badly on men, in their particular way, as they do on women, and that it is a misplaced feminism which merely selects a women's prison and does not apply the criticism to the manifest inhumanity of the whole prison system.

Our regular readers will know already the main facts which made the basis of Mrs. Gould's protest. They were that, from four in the afternoon until six the next morning the prisoners in Holloway receive no food, and that the majority of the prisoners are then locked-up from 4.30 until six. Thus they go for fourteen hours without food, and for 13½ hours are kept in what is virtually solitary con-

finement. The inadequacy of the last meal, consisting of "about three slices of bread, a very small pat of margarine, sometimes a small piece of cheese or a tiny piece of Spam, and a pot of cocoa," was revealed, and a further criticism was that the prisoners are never issued with their sweet rations.

To all these contentions, the Under-Secretary for the Home Office made the usual lame answers. The whole situation, according to him, was caused by the lack of staff—"for all prisoners to join in evening association," according to him "would require an enormous staff". In the end, the most he would say was that "an effort was being made to see that the prisoners got tea at tea-time and a cup of cocoa at 6.30". To those who know anything about prison cocoa, the miserable nature of such a 'concession' will be evident.

These are the kind of things which the Labour Government is willing to do for prisoners, and such an attitude gives us a foretaste of what we can expect of the Criminal Justice Bill. It is an ironical fact that Labour Home Secretaries have never made any real effort to improve prison conditions, and that the only real advances should have been made by Tory Ministers. But none have thought of the only solution of the problem of prisons, which is to destroy them completely. For while men are as subject to others as they are in prison, it cannot be expected that cruelty and tyranny can be avoided.

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International Anarchist Conference

ON the 12th, 13th and 14th Feb. a Conference of European anarchists was held in Paris. Its aim was to prepare an International Anarchist Congress which would decide if it is possible to form an Anarchist International.

The Conference had been called by the Committee of Initiative for the preparation of the Congress, which has been working in Paris during the past year to establish closer contacts between the anarchist groups and federations of various countries.

Delegates were present from Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Britain and Belgium. Messages were sent by Dutch, German and Swedish comrades. All those present agreed on the need to establish strong links between the various European anarchist groups, and groups and organisations in other parts of the world. To this end it was necessary to organise

a Congress with the shortest possible delay.

We shall give in the next issue a fuller report of the Conference, which showed a truly international spirit and allowed the delegates to get better acquainted with the work of their comrades in other countries. Both the Union of Anarchist Groups and Freedom Press had sent delegates.

DOCKERS AND THE "QUEEN ELIZABETH"

A pathetic picture appeared in the *News Chronicle* (26/2/47) of Raffaele Duchess of Leinster searching for her baggage on the quayside at Southampton.

It seems that 300 dockers had refused to unload luggage from the *Queen Elizabeth*, after being ordered to leave other jobs, in their opinion more important. Some had been unloading timber, some had been loading export goods and, in the opinions of these workers, it was much more important to carry on with these jobs than to carry bags for the 2,000 wealthy passengers from New York.

Other stevedores in the docks, with the spirit of solidarity associated with dockers, joined in, and soon there were no less than 1,000 workers on strike. The baggage was carried down the gangways by the stewards while, as usual, the local T. & G.W.U. official thought only of getting the men back to work.

By their actions, the dockers of Southampton showed their sense of responsibility to the community as a whole, relegating luxury travel for the rich to the non-priority position it deserves.

STRIKE FOR DANGER MONEY

Another successful lightning strike was staged by Southampton dockers when they stopped unloading smouldering bags of sunflower seeds. Firemen were fighting a fire in the Danish East Asiatic Company's cargo-passenger liner *India*, and salvage work was held up for over an hour while a union official negotiated with the company for a danger rate of £3 per day.

The men went back on accepting £2 10s. for the day shift, £3 5s. for the night shift, plus a bonus payment.

"Government Blood Money"

Normally we would not make special comment if £50 were contributed to the Press Fund by an individual because it might not involve the donor in as much sacrifice as a worker contributing a half-crown. But on this occasion we must refer to the Anonymous contribution of £54 odd included in the Press Fund list below, because it comes from a soldier who is being demobilised and who tells us that he has a "conscientious objection" to accepting his gratuity for his personal use, and so he passes on this "Government blood money" to help "Freedom" to carry on its struggle against Nationalism, Capitalism and War. His gesture is one that deserves our special thanks because he, no less than "Freedom Press" needs money to carry on, and yet he is able to resist the very real temptation of retaining the gratuity to tide him over the period of rehabilitation between Army and civilian life.

Our young comrade's gesture is a ray of light in an otherwise very dark picture. Our appeal "Hard Facts" in the last issue of the paper has so far met with only slight res-

ponse. We therefore ask all comrades who approve our work to do something concrete in extending our sphere of activities. Or are anarchists also suffering from the post-war apathy and indifference which is affecting the Left?

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MAT KAVANAGH

will speak at

COOPERS HALL,

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on

SUNDAY, 16th March at 7.30 p.m.

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Sun, March 9th Mat Kavanagh

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