

Freedom

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THE COLD WAR

A ruthless war between Imperialist Powers goes on while Foreign Ministers meet

ON the eve of the Foreign Ministers' Conference which is opening in London this week, we fail to see any optimism anywhere as to the results of this meeting.

The truth is that there is a "cold war" being waged between the two imperialist groups and that no amount of discussions round green tables can conceal that fact.

Since the 25th October the deputies of the Big Four Foreign Ministers have been trying to pave the way for the entrance of their leaders, but have disagreed on almost every point—even on the form and substance of the report they would present to the Ministers to explain that they disagreed!

It is futile to hope that this conference, which Bevin has described as "perhaps the most vital conference in world history", may result in an agreement between the four powers and avoid another world conflict. It can only reach a number of compromises on minor issues, but the bases of the conflict will remain—the only way to abolish them would be for the big powers to renounce their imperialist aims, and to do this would be against their very nature.

To put the blame for this stalemate on Molotov's obstinacy is pure nonsense. The blunt attitude adopted by Russia makes compromise more difficult to reach, but it is not the cause of disagreement. That disagreement will exist as long as Governments discuss peace with the next war in mind.

THE GERMAN SCAPEGOAT

The main issue before the conference is whether Germany is to achieve economic and political unity under Four-Power control (i.e., American, Russian, English and French), or whether the division between the Eastern and Western zones is to continue. This problem would easily be solved if Russia did not see in the British and American attempt to unify Germany the desire to provide a "bulwark against Communism".

The fear of a revival of German nationalism and aggressiveness is merely an excuse. Neither Russia or Britain is afraid of the might of a reborn Germany, but either of them would be prepared to use the German people against the other. In fact, they attribute to Germany the wishes and intentions which they themselves foster. Not content with starving and oppressing the German people, the big Powers must also make them their main scapegoat.

There is something nauseating about the hypocritically patronising attitude adopted towards Germany. It is no less nauseating to think that while Foreign Ministers and their acolytes meet to argue in an air of forced amiability, people are being imprisoned, shot, hanged and tortured for belonging to one or other camp.

This war is not merely a struggle between politicians, between Groza and Maniu, between Mikolajczyk and Gomulka; it is a conflict in which thousands of workers are falling and which brings to millions of them starvation and suffering.

THE PLIGHT OF GREECE

British intervention, followed by the application of the "Truman doctrine" in Greece, has been accompanied by mass arrests, executions and atrocities. It has caused starvation and inflation. It has obliged an already financially unstable government to use 40% of the revenue for military expenditure. The much advertised American Aid is small in proportion to the destruction brought about by civil war. If one compares the programme report of the American Mission to Aid Greece with a report of the Greek Third Army Corps on guerilla destruction during October in North-Western Greece, one sees that des-

truction is far greater than reconstruction.

"The AMAG report showed that five airfields were being 'winterized', work had started on repairs to three stretches of highway, repairs had begun on port installations in Piraeus and Salonika, and work would soon begin on clearing the Corinth Canal (blocked by German demolitions since 1944).

"The III Corps reported that in its area 83 guerilla attacks were carried out on towns and villages, 218 houses, shops, schools and public utilities buildings were burned to the ground, 26 railway bridges destroyed, 193 villages looted, 6,000 animals stolen and several hundred tons of food stores plundered."

To this destruction one must add the plight of 300,000 refugees from guerilla areas, living in crowded mud huts, starving and unable to work. The fields remain untilled and next year the food situation will be even worse.

THE ORGANISATION OF DISORDER

Though the situation is less tragic in France and Italy, there too we see workers being used in the imperialist game. Their genuine grievances are exploited by the Communist Party. The succession of strikes, demonstrations, armed assaults on barracks, clashes with the police, which have taken place during the last few weeks are not conducted with any revolutionary aim in mind. They are intended as a show of strength of the Communist Party, to intimidate their political opponents. Workers will not reap any benefits from this, but many of them have fallen in this struggle; several have been shot and many more wounded by the police

in Marseilles, Corato, Naples, Bari, Milan, victims of a new policy decided in the Kremlin. The Communist Party, who the day after the liberation proclaimed themselves the defenders of law and order and put a break on the revolutionary aspirations of the workers, are now the most methodical organisers of disorder.

The cause of such agitation is not that the Communist Party intend to seize power either in France or in Italy. What was possible in Eastern Europe under the shadow of the Red Army cannot be repeated in countries where Russia cannot interfere directly and which are in the Western sphere of influence.

This agitation can only activate American infiltration into the economic and political affairs of those countries. A member of the Senate Appropriations Committee who visited Europe to gather information on her needs in order to have some factual background against which to frame the Marshall Plan, Senator Bridges, declared that if any such plan was adopted in full or in part the economy of Western Europe would be sufficiently restored to provide "one of the best bulwarks against Communism that we could build." He would expect it to arrest the spread of Communism at least in the territory where the plan was applied.

Communist agitation avowedly directed against the Marshall plan will in effect hasten American help, i.e., economic infiltration of countries like France and Italy. It has further the disastrous effect of exhausting and demoralising workers, who will lose faith in the strike weapon when they realise that it has been used as a political lever and not for the defence of their own interests. The apathy and disgust which generally follows such agitation will make them an easy prey for the strong man politicians; we have already seen this trend manifesting itself in the recent French municipal elections.

Though the methods used by Russia and America differ, their aims is the same, that of extending and consolidating their spheres of influence with a view to the next world conflict. We must stop being used as pawns in the preparation of war. Internationalism is the answer to Foreign Ministers' conferences and Marshall Plans.

DEMOB NOW!

SO much has been written about the Government's plan for speeding up-demobilization that I am beginning to think it considerably lucky for the forces that they did not announce they were going to slow it down. The crawling pace at which release is proceeding being considered a "speed up".

There was only one fair method of demobilization that would have satisfied everybody but the militarists, and that was "all out altogether". The war was finished and there was no need for considerable forces to be wasted everywhere on enforcing the "peace" and on sordid military adventures in countries like Greece and Palestine, which in the latter case has led to nothing but ignominy and unadmitted defeat. British troops were left or sent out all over the world when the war finished, in pursuance of the decisions of the Foreign Office, and yet at the same time our politicians were claiming we were in the throes of a crisis caused by lack of manpower. A stock excuse for lags in demob was "lack of shipping" and yet shipping has never been lacking to take out fresh reinforcements!—reinforcements which have never

ceased to pour into countries, such as Egypt, which we were claiming to evacuate.

Instead of this we have had the slow trickle of demob allowed for by the Age and Service plan, which ostensibly fair, was used as a means of prolonging men in service far beyond the time necessary. Thus, men who had signed on for the duration of the war, or in the later years, the duration of emergency, were kept in the army long after the war and emergency had finished.

Whitehall has now to all intents and purposes abandoned the Age and Service plan for a differential release programme which places certain sections of the Army on a favoured basis and slows the release of the "corps" generally. This needless to say is resented by the corps as against the regiments, and it is symptomatic that this is recognised by the War Office, which apologises to the corps and makes its excuses for the favouritism, a fact which in itself proves that we live under dictatorship, and that all government is in effect dictatorship whatever democratic veneer it may have, since it admits that the people forced to be in the army do not want to be in the army, and it is Whitehall and Whitehall only which decides they should be in the army.

GERMAN BOYS FOR MINES

Not content with keeping thousands of German prisoners of war in England as cheap labour for landwork, the Government have now a new scheme by which they are exploiting the misery of other war victims, by bringing over some 10,000 homeless and orphan boys from camps in Germany to work in the British mines.

No indication is given as to whether this is forced labour in the real sense, or merely the result of relentless economic pressure in Germany which forces the boys to accept a bad alternative. The fact remains that the government is taking advantage of conditions in Germany to exploit these children, who, in any case, would be better employed in the reconstruction work in Germany which one would have thought more urgent than anything here.

Whitehall continues to make its plans for the new army that will be used in the next imperialist bloodbath. The people themselves will not be consulted on any plans the Government makes, such as compulsion for the Territorial Forces, and it will be imposed on them from above. Soon those who think that the slow-down in demobilisation does not affect them, by being now (at last) outside the reaches of the Army, may find that the latest plan to come from Downing Street forces them back into uniform part-time or even full-time.

In view of the plans for World War III, in spite of the complete dismemberment and prostration of Germany which we were told was the source of all evil, there is very little chance of a relief from the extension of militarism from above.

What chances there are of a relief from militarism from below depends largely on how docile we are under oppression.

A.M.

Above the Struggle?

SINCE once again the Throne's domestic affairs have pushed all matters of importance out of the British Press, it is perhaps topical to examine its position in the society of to-day. While it is true that this relic of the Middle Ages survives largely as a matter of traditional humbug with no practical importance other than providing a circus for Londoners every so often, rather like the Lord Mayors' Show and similar events, the fact that it can so completely focus attention on itself proves that it cannot be completely without power. Idolised American film stars are considered to be of political importance owing to their adulatory followings—witness the use of them by both parties in the elections, such campaigns as Sinatra's against racial prejudice, and the admittedly rather comic story unfolded to the un-American Activities Committee, that is proving its concern for "American Democratic Liberties" by the typic-

ally democratic American style of trying to muzzle everybody who thinks otherwise. How much more so are their rivals for public appearances and bowing and smiling at the somewhat familiar spectacle of cheering crowds—the British Royal Family.

The typically pro-Royalist opinion in this country is given by John Masfield whose wedding gift to the Royal couple was a poem of sorts eulogising the monarchy, and part of which reads as follows:—

"What is a Crown but something set above
The jangle and the jargon
and the hate
Of strivers after power in the State
A symbol like a banner for men's love.

Now, it is interesting to note that the average apologist for royalty always explains that it is "above" party politics and "striving for power in the State", while at the same time he never considers abstaining from striving for power in the State, and while Mr. Churchill and Mr. Attlee would doubtless combine in their

expressions of mutual regard for the sovereign, whose benign neutrality is above the sordid game of party politics, neither of them would dream of lifting themselves above the striving for power.

It is perfectly true that the sovereign can rise above the sordid quarrels of Labour and Conservative striving for power knowing well that both sides are going to apportion the same amount of power to the sovereign; but if any side turned up which was striving for power and didn't want the sovereign in, we should soon see, as in foreign countries, the encouragement of pro-Royalist opinion to form itself into a militant party as in Greece, Spain, and Italy, etc.

So far as Anarchists are concerned, they consider themselves apart and separate from striving for power in the State. They believe in the abolition of the State. From the point of view of people who believe in the establishment of a free society, with no possibilities of ambitious politicians using any political apparatus to climb into power, the Throne must inevitably be a matter not "above the struggle" but impeding it by being a glorification of militarism and nationalism and a relic of a feudal past. All such institutions must disappear in a

society which aims at freedom. Its role as the link between the Dominions would be unnecessary when a free society threw aside all nationalist frontiers and announced itself as an integral part of as many 'nations' as cared to sweep away the rubbish of its past and build a free society.

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Sixty Years Ago—Bloody Sunday and THE FREEDOM OF THE SQUARE

HOW many people to-day realise that the right to hold meetings in Trafalgar Square was won only 60 years ago at the cost of human life? And, more important in these days when ever-tightening restrictions are being made, without effective protest, on our individual freedom; how many people care?

The depression of the eighteen-seventies and eighties and the consequent fall in wages and widespread unemployment gave birth to the "New Unionism" and to the militant socialist organisations. In January, 1886, the reformist protagonists of Trade Protection arranged to hold a meeting in Trafalgar Square on the 8th of the following month and the then revolutionary Social Democratic Federation decided to organise a counter-demonstration of the unemployed. When the procession reached the Square the police ordered its leaders, John Burns (not then the Rt. Honourable!), Jack Williams, H. M. Hyndman, the pioneer Marxist and Henry Champion, to move on to Hyde Park, which they agreed to do. When they reached the Reform and Carlton Clubs in Pall Mall, the club-men gathered at the windows and doors and jeered and derided the demonstrators, scandalized that the representatives of the "great unwashed" should venture into the sacrosanct West End. A contemporary account describes the scene which followed:—

"Suddenly the situation was changed by a dramatic and entirely unexpected incident. A poorly-clad hungry-looking man, tore from his ragged breast an Egyptian war medal which he had been wearing. He forced himself in a frenzy of anger into a prominent position, and, addressing the members of the Carlton

who were looking at him with surprised expectancy, he shouted: 'We were not the scum of the country when we were fighting for bondholders in Egypt, you dogs!'

"With the last word, he flung the medal with all his might at the window, shattering the glass. It was the first

missile thrown in the West End riots, and it gave the cue to all that afterwards took place.

"Loud cheers greeted his speech and action, and immediately all the available stones and gravel in the street were picked up and hurled in the windows."

"A Revolution In The Streets"

When the demonstrators reached the Park, Burns addressed them from the Achilles statue, giving a warning to the government to take heed of the condition of the people if they wanted to avoid "a revolution in the streets of London." Champion told the demonstrators that they could not stand against the police and the soldiers, "But this you can do. Many have friends in the army—probably in the guards—who will be the first brought down to this park. Go and inform them how things are, so that when the day comes for taking sides in this great class struggle they will be on the side of the people."

Hyndman, Williams, Champion and Burns were arrested and tried at the Old Bailey. Burns delivered a fighting speech in court and Hyndman, a diplomatic one and all four were acquitted of the charges of "seditious conspiracy".

The wealthy were so shaken by the revolutionary portent of the demonstration that in a few days the fund which the Lord Mayor of London opened for the unemployed totalled £75,000, and duchesses opened soup-kitchens or, with a shudder, went "slumming".

In the following year the police became more and more hostile and violent towards demonstrations in Trafalgar Square and on October 18th, 1887, they broke one up and made twenty arrests. George Lansbury describes the police brutality:

"The vast crowd started to move down Whitehall towards the House of Commons which was then sitting. All at once, from all points of the compass, mounted and foot police appeared, and before we knew what was happening, a

crowd found themselves wedged in Old Scotland Yard with horses and policemen kicking and punching all and sundry. They had us in a confined space and could be as savage as they chose."

Fight for Free Speech

After the change of government the Conservative Home Secretary placed a ban on all meetings in Trafalgar Square. A committee was formed to fight for the "freedom of the square" with William Morris at its head. It was decided to hold a demonstration on the Irish Question on Sunday, Nov. 13th, 1887 and as a preliminary a deputation was sent to the Home Secretary, led by R. B. Cunningham Graham, "Don Roberto", who having returned to this country from South America had become a member of Parliament and for six years fought a lonely and futile battle in the chamber against capitalism and imperialism. The Home Secretary refused to meet their request and they announced their intention to hold the meeting despite the ban. The Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Charles Warren, filled the square with police and soldiers. The contingents marching from the south of London were met with troops on Westminster Bridge and several were wounded in their attempt to get through. The North London demonstrators, led by William Morris, Cunningham Graham, Annie Besant and John Burns tried to force their way into the square. Many were injured in the fighting with the police, cavalry and infantry. John Burns and Cunningham Graham (who was injured) were arrested and imprisoned for six weeks. As Kropotkin points out, the authorities dared not give them longer sentences for fear of the revolutionary consequences.

On the 28th of February in the following year another demonstration was held in the Square and the demonstrators were faced with enormous numbers of police and the Guards fully armed. Alfred Linnell, a workman, was killed by the police. A great funeral was arranged at which William Morris spoke and for which he wrote his famous "Death Song" ending with the lines:

"Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,
"But one and all, if they would dusk the day."

By this time the police ruthlessness and brutality had awakened the public conscience and considerable genuine sympathy was felt for the unemployed and underpaid workers, which manifested itself in the great Dock Strike of the following year.

The right to demonstrate in Trafalgar Square had been won and those who to-day, lightly propose to restrict the rights of public assembly should reflect on the long and bitter struggle which was fought to attain it.

COLIN WARD.

THE PROBLEM OF WORK

By Camillo Berneri

We are printing below the last of a series of articles which comprise an abridged translation of a pamphlet by Camillo Berneri *Il Lavoro Attraente* (Attractive Work). The first three articles stressed the importance of discussing the problem of work from an anarchist viewpoint and showed that work has always been slavery since the beginning of civilization, that Christian ethics considered it a punishment imposed by God. Modern systems of rationalisation have transformed workers into robots with dangerous results for their physical and mental health.

The author further analysed the factors which would render work pleasant and concluded that the duration of work must be proportional to the effort involved and that everyone must be free to follow that productive capacity to which they feel most attracted.

Many so-called "lazy" people would work could they find an occupation suited to their psychic and physical personality, but anarchists must beware of being over-optimistic and realise that a "discipline of work" freely agreed upon and accepted is necessary.

The Discipline of Work

NEARLY all anarchists tend to agree with Mario Rapisardi's warning: "Leave a man to work as long as he is able and to rest as often as he wishes. If discipline is used indiscriminately, man becomes a machine and society a monastery and a prison."

As a general formula this appears more than acceptable to me; but I do not believe that the workshop, however ideal, can be likened, as Kropotkin does, to a library which one enters and leaves as one pleases. The absence of a universally respected working time leads to a waste of motive power, heat and light, in those cases where individual work is not possible as for example, in a metal foundry. It is true that in certain industries (textile, printing, etc.) there is a certain autonomy to avoid a general hold-up in the event of breakdowns and to save the dispersal of power transmission and thus only use as much power as is required for the job in hand. The electric motor has greatly developed mechanical autonomy by placing complicated machines—such as the linotype—at the artisan's disposal, and many public services have been supplanted by perfected systems like the automatic telephone, which greatly reduces the importance of the telephone exchanges.

Considering industrial work as a whole, however, the limits of autonomy are very narrow and are likely to remain so for a long time to come. It should be borne in mind that the burden of a fixed working-time can be greatly lessened by a reduction of the working hours and by travelling facilities to and from work. The choice of work must be subordinated to production requirements but a developed and accurate statistical method will allow many workers to do that for which they are most prepared or for which they have a particular disposition. At the present time a great many workers are doing work for which they have neither taste nor aptitude.

Free Co-operation

Free co-operation in industry is not easily accomplished. In the factory of to-day, the manager is the organiser of the executive (departmental managers, foremen, etc.) and of the division of labour. The operatives work together to the same end, which, however, is not decided by them: "This co-operation is nothing more than the direct effect of the capital which employs them simultaneously. The link between their individual functions and their unity as a productive body is outside of themselves, in the capital which needs and unites them. The linking together of their work seems to them, in theory, to be the plan of the capitalists, and the unity of their collective body appears as its authority, as the power of an alien will which subjects their acts to its aim. Insofar as they co-operate, they are merely a particular mode of existence of capital. The productive force which wage-earners manifest in the form of collective work is consequently the productive force of capital." (Marx).

The problem of the technical hierarchy, too, is a complex one. Managerial capacities are not consistently associated with qualities of a nature that will ensure the nomination of the most capable to directive positions, or that will permit the most capable to carry out these functions most effectively. Whereas the workshop technician of to-day is an "official", in the workshop of to-morrow he should be a "teacher"; but this change in direction will not be easily brought about.

Pseudo-Rationalisation

One aspect of the "discipline" of work is that of "rationalisation". The Taylor system has undergone a rapid deterioration under the capitalist regime. Copley, Taylor's biographer, has observed that "everything must

be submitted to the workers' good-will, and without this their technical preparation is of no avail... All attempts to turn the new system against the workers would end in disaster".

Many anarchist writers have criticised the pseudo-rationalisation of work, but very few have set the problem in exact terms. We must examine the question of automatism and specialisation if we wish to reconcile the technical necessities of specialisation with the possibility of avoiding the psychic atrophy due to work organised solely from the economic standpoint. Automatism is negative only when it is an end in itself. The operative who for ten years repeats a restricted number of movements, in the end will become an automaton, not because these gestures are automatic, but because the psychic process which determines them is mechanical.

It is the semi-automatic nature of uninteresting work, which makes it toilsome and degrading. If I have to translate from the French one hundred pages of a book which does not interest me in the least, suffer a double penance; that of the weariness of a boring job, and that of being unable to apply my mind to the many things which occur to me because the job in hand requires conscious attention. But if I have to remove a few hundred postage stamps from a stamp album I may be bored by this silly pastime, but I am also able to occupy my mind with pleasant and interesting thoughts. It seems clear to me that the really stupefying occupations (when the hours are not excessive) are not the entirely mechanical ones, but rather those that narrow the attention to a monotonous and restricted field, and at the same time require critical attention. Eight hours passed in writing on an absorbing subject are brief; eight hours passed doing a boring job which permits one to indulge in day-dreaming or light conversation are long; but eight hours spent on a piece of work which is boring and at the same time requires active attention are interminable. Office workers suffer more, both physically and mentally, than those workers who do entirely mechanical work. The operative who does a completely mechanical job is rather like a woman with her needlework. He can think about something else, chat with his neighbour or hum a tune. This is because his movements are automatic—they are controlled by his subconscious. For instance, a shoe-maker who was subject to epileptic fits continued to go through the motions of cutting his leather while unconscious.

When an action becomes mechanical it results in a decrease of mental activity if the mechanisation is circumscribed and to a stimulation if it is renewed and amplified.

Walking is easy, yet it has cost us many efforts to get used to it. Riding a bicycle and walking on a tight-rope require a considerable effort. Though walking becomes in time automatic in action, once we have started moving, keeping one's balance on a bicycle or tight-rope always requires a certain amount of concentration. I doubt to whether anyone could read Kant, and understand him, while cycling or tight-rope walking.

Automatism, then, only obtains for simple movements. The pianist whose fingers run rapidly over the keyboard does not have to think where to press them, but the musical expression springs from the linking of "pathos" and the mnemonic attention with automatic movements of arms and hands. While the poet may, in the haste of expressing through the written word the image of his inspiration, alter his writing to a kind of shorthand, the pianist must be master of the mechanical process, and the more exact he is in his movements, the more complete will be the musical expression and interpretation. The same applies to the draughtsman, the sculptor, and others.

There is, therefore, no automatic and non-automatic work, but rather, flatly mechanical work on the one hand and intelligently automatic work on the other. The first is soul destroying if it becomes an end in itself and is done to excess; but within the limits of a time-table proportionate to the individual's physical capacity it is neither damaging nor painful.

The Importance of Rest

The problem does not lie in avoiding automatism which is more and more required by the development of mechanical industrialism, but rather in alternating work with rest. The master-class, too, has understood this. The paper *Opinion* of September 12th, 1924, published the following: "Careful observation carried out in a number of English factories has shown that, even in jobs where the required muscular energy is of the smallest, the employers obtain an increase in production by allowing rest-periods to their employees. For example, in the case of a group of women engaged in labelling packages, the introduction of ten-minute rests at regular intervals led to a thirteen per cent. increase in output in spite of

the two per cent. reduction in the working day. The same results have been observed in a group of women engaged in mounting bicycle-chains. It should be noted that these rest-periods do not bring the desired results unless they have taken place at specific times of the same regularity as those of the work itself. Production does not increase in the same proportion if work is suspended according to individual fancy". The discipline of rest is therefore as necessary as the discipline of work.

"Discipline of work" means rational distribution of jobs; rational alternating of effort and rest; rational employment of the particular worker's instincts, feelings and mental aptitude; association of the productive process as a whole with the autonomy of the individual; and so on.

Conclusion

For centuries, everywhere, work has been, and still is, a penance. It is significant that in all Aryan languages those words which indicate a productive effort mean suffering. Man has always worked from necessity, but at the same time there is inherent in man the instinct to work—which is perhaps nothing more than a manifestation of the erotic instinct. The laziness of certain primitive peoples is not so much stupid indolence as a refusal to adapt themselves to new labours requiring continued attention and generating boredom. Hunting, fishing and stock-breeding are activities somewhere between work and play, and it was mainly economic need, and coercion on the part of conquering warriors, which forced people who lived by hunting and fishing to change into agricultural and then industrial communities. Where the natural conditions required very great effort, while at the same time offering possibilities of land or sea commerce, the people were pre-eminently traders and travellers (Phoenicians, Hebrews, etc.).

Man is "*homo faber*" inasmuch as he is a political animal, and Ribot rightly says that the love of work "is a secondary sentiment which progresses in step with civilisation".

Love for work, an important conditioning factor of economic and psychic well-being is determined by progress which cannot only be gauged by the "amount" produced, but rather by the idea that work ceases to be drudgery and comes nearer to being a sport.

Already under capitalism industrial work is being made more attractive. In a report approved by the Manufacturing Association Congress of Illinois in July, 1931, the stimulating effect of music was praised. Many factories have "rational" lighting, and more attention is being paid to the psycho-physiological influence of colours, sounds, smells, etc. But all these modernistic notions are vitiated by the intent to exploit. Means and methods are studied whereby the worker shall not be "uselessly" exhausted, in order to make more thorough use of him, and certain enthusiasms for workshop and factory "music while you work" recall, not so much Fourier's sensual, affective and volitional stimuli, as the empirical and utilitarian physiologism of certain waggon-drivers who in order to stimulate their exhausted horses up a steep slope will walk a young mare in front of them.

However, the technique for the emancipation of work within the sphere of production is being perfected, and is paving the way for the time when even in industrial work, man's occupation will be pleasurable. And the day will come when with the machine as the friend of man, everyone will be occupied according to his or her particular preferences, and doing pleasant work. Then their pleasure will spring from their work "like the coloured petals of a life-giving flower". This image of Ruskin's is a bright reflection of the whole of his philosophy as a socialist-humanist writer; but those who search in the writings and speeches of writers and artists of the XIXth century would find not a few equally eloquent endorsements of Fourier's idea of "attractive work".

D'Annunzio took as his own the motto of the times of the Communes: "Effort without fatigue" an admirably concise and clear saying, for effort is a law of work, however attractive it may be. The Italian poet has only vaguely guessed the social truth of this motto and only superficially felt its intrinsic moral beauty.

"Effort without fatigue" means free work, work in which the personality is uplifted and perfected. How it may move from wishful thought to historical fact is the problem to be discussed—and we are the most suitable for such an examination; for in the producer we see, first and foremost, a human being; for the cold formulas of the production statisticians are not enough for us—they fail to see what immense treasures are hidden in the deviated and dissipated energies of those who carry out the daily drudgery without intellectual light or pleasant feeling, atrophying the wings of their personality and changing them, in the course of a few years, into ever less human machines.

ANARCHISM —Interpretations

Society is an ideal existence, and not on its own account entitled to the smallest regard. The wealth, prosperity and glory of the whole are unintelligible chimeras. Set no value on anything but in proportion as you are convinced of its tendency to make individual men happy and virtuous. Benefit by every practicable mode man wherever he exists, but be got deceived by the spacious idea of affording services to a body of men for which no individual man is better. Society was instituted, not for the sake of glory, not to furnish splendid materials for the page of history, but for the benefit of its members. The love of our country, if we would speak accurately, is another of those specious illusions which have been invented by imposters in order to render the multitude the blind instruments of their crooked designs.

A wise man will not fail to be the votary of liberty and equality. He will be ready to exert himself in their defence wherever they exist. It cannot be a matter of indifference to him when his own liberty and that of other men with whose excellence and capabilities he has the best opportunity of being acquainted are involved in the event of the struggle to be made. But his attachment will be to the cause and not to the country. Wherever there are men who understand the value of political justice and are prepared to assert it, that is his country. Nor does he desire for any country any other benefit than justice.

WILLIAM GODWIN.

THE SEAMEN'S STRIKE

Causes Behind the Discontent

FEW strikes have caused as much panic in official circles as the recent seamen's strike which affected practically every port in the British Isles.

On the Clyde side squads of police and cars rushed blacklegs in closed vans through the seamen's picket lines. Instances of seamen being prevented from leaving ship; pay being withheld and dictatorship from ships' captains as a means of thwarting the legitimate demands of the men, were met with silence by the authorities and fabrication by the press.

Cut Price Service

In a message which called for solidarity in their struggle the seamen's rank and file committee sloganised their fight in these terms:

"Seaman, rise up and disperse the black clouds of suppression; oust the tyrants and officials; pay off the debt; clear the mortgage on our labour and sweat!"

On the surface this call sounds like a political cliché, but after visiting the ports in London, Glasgow and Liverpool, I have come away full of disgust at the greed of the shipowner, loathing for the betraying union officials, anger at the dictatorship of the captains and amazement at the toleration of the men who do an extremely unattractive job in unnecessarily bad conditions.

THE CONCLUSION THAT THE MERCANTILE SERVICE OF THIS COUNTRY IS RUN ON A CUT PRICE LABOUR SYSTEM IS INESCAPABLE. ALREADY IT IS ADMITTED THROUGHOUT THE SHIPPING WORLD THAT BRITAIN IS THE ONLY COUNTRY THAT CAN PUT SUCH SHIPS AS THE QUEEN MARY AND ELIZABETH INTO SERVICE BECAUSE OF THE VERY LOW LABOUR COSTS. INDEED, PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THAT EFFECT.

The British merchant service is today competing in a market for invisible exports and attempting to operate a coolie system for the seamen and offer freightage rates 50% below those of America, Scandinavia and the Dutch.

This is done solely at the expense of the men. The shipowners, far from sacrificing a penny profit, are drawing handsome dividends as ever before and are using the slimy residue of war-time regulations to intimidate, victimise and tyrannise the seamen.

Glorified Detention Barracks

Evidence of the foul conditions under which the seamen work and live is abundant; I have seen for myself within the past few days such things as paneling torn from the men's living quarters, normal hygienic necessities of toilet ruthlessly stripped away to give extra carrying space, and even the Liberty Ships (Kaiser Coffins) stripped of showerbaths and amenities so that they offend the eye and offer the appearance of glorified detention quarters.

Although food varies from ship to ship and company to company, it is a very painful subject among seamen. The galleys' delight seems to be a horrid mixture of sticky mess which is neither stew nor mush and thoroughly nauseating, followed by 'duff' which is renowned rather for its weight and indigestibility than for its palatability; the men have an unprintable name for it which includes the captain and the shipowners.

The extent of the cheeseparing at the seamen's expense is evidenced in the fact that even the salt and pepper pots have been removed from "these heroes of yesterday who in the face of the most terrible perils and at the cost of 40,000 men kept the lifelines of this country open".

Promise and Betrayal

Beneath this top layer of sordid conditions lies the very serious challenge on wages and control.

For all the glib promises made during the war, first, on the pool system, then by the government at the General Election, conditions are worse now than at any time since the last seamen's strike in 1911. Thirty months after the declaration by the Labour Party that "The gallant men of the Merchant Navy deserve and must be assured a happier future than faced so many of them after the last war. Labour regards their future as a sacred trust," (Let Us Face The Future, p. 1), the same people, with the help of the Union officials and employers, are now running this vital service on the cheap, and the seamen with many disadvantages are forced to fight back against the men who for 36 years they have been paying to watch over their interests while they are away.

The government has destroyed any advantages that may have been in the pool system by the trainee system. The pools are short-circuited and the trainees are flooded on to the ships, and although there is an abundant labour force of skilled seamen available, ships are leaving port with as many as 50% learners on board.

The advantages for the shipowners and government lie in the fact that trainees' wages are nearly a third lower than the lowest paid seaman.

The seamen are forced to compete now with an apprentice level which is not far removed from the standard operated by some millionaire British shipowners who employed Chinese coolies and Lascars.

Almighty Skippers

The seamen have no means of redress on board ship where the ship's captain is Lord God Almighty—or apparently thinks so. Seamen are fined, pay is stopped and punishment ladled out in the most generous manner on the most trivial excuse. Complaints are treated as mutinous behaviour and appeals against punishment as insubordination.

The employers, through the ship's officers, have the power to imprison a seaman or to rubber stamp his book on leaving ship or to victimise at will. Seamen's books are rubber stamped 'Testimonial Not Required' (dishonourable discharge) without reasons being given or opportunity of appeal.

Seamen's Five Points

The only recourse open to the seamen was an 'unofficial' strike which they conducted with courage and vigour.

The stated aims of the Rank and File Committee were:

1. A pool system for all seamen.
2. System of rotary hiring.
3. Maximum basic rate for all seamen according to rating.
4. Suspension of present training system.
5. 80% wages while waiting for a ship.

At present, although the seamen are tied up completely by the employers' contract, the wages paid while waiting for ships is only 24/- a week, out of which the seamen has to pay 30/- per week for board at the Mission.

Solidarity

The committee believe that could they get the opportunity of putting their case before the public, the public would be with them in their present fight. The seamen invite those interested to gain their information first-hand from them at the docks and committee rooms rather than from the yellow press and careering politicians.

Support has been forthcoming where ever they had the chance of putting the facts forward, and they have been heartened by the solidarity from America and Canada, where the merchant seamen are vitally concerned at raising the standard of their British comrades to a common level. These comrades see this attack here as affecting seamen everywhere, and an attack on one section of the workers as an attack on all workers.

We join with others in wishing them success in the formation of their own free trade union, built from the bottom, for seamen, by seamen, in the common interest.

PRESTON CLEMENTS.

Land Notes

Potatoes and Priorities

THE rationing of potatoes will make little or no difference to the great majority of country people, many of whom grow their own and those that don't can always reckon on being able to buy a bag or two on the quiet from friends or relations. This new rationing is, therefore, of little practical interest to them. To townspeople, on the other hand, and in particular to the lower income groups to which, of course, most people belong, it will make a great difference. It is, therefore, all the more irresponsible for the Government to have allowed the present situation to come about, to have, as usual, let the matter slide until what must have been known to be inevitable finally became unavoidable and, because of the refusal to recognize the position and prepare for it, worse than it need have been.

In the words of *The Farmer's Weekly* (14/11/47), "It has been quite obvious to everyone for at least three months that potato rationing would be necessary. The acreage was known to be down by the end of June and it hardly needed a ministerial enquiry to establish a drought. If the Ministry and its Potato and Carrot division could not add up these two facts to make a smaller total supply than last year they are grossly incompetent. No one can blame the Ministry for the fact of a shortage. We do blame them bitterly for delaying so long either in recognising the fact, or in doing anything about it."

This, incidentally, despite the fact that the Ministry has apparently 121 potato supervisors and 555 merchant agents to advise it on this particular matter alone.

Furthermore, Dr. Edith Summerskill, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food, admitted in a written reply that from January 1st to November 14th, 50,000 tons of potatoes were exported from this country and that from Oct. 1st to November 14th—that is, considerably after the time when it became obvious that rationing would be inevitable—we still continued to export to the amount of 5,765 tons in those six weeks. When you carry home your weekly ration of 3 lbs. just bear that fact in mind.

Finally, before leaving this subject, it is perhaps worth noting that when Mr. Strachey (having just returned from the Lord Mayor's banquet, by the way) arrived at the House for the debate on the rationing of potatoes, only 30 M.P.s were present. Apparently, potato rationing is not of much personal, as opposed to political, interest to Honourable Members—and indeed, with a minimum of £1,000 a year, why should it be?

Is Farming Priority No. 1?

Many weeks ago the Government announced its big, new plan for agriculture.

The Lord President of the Council, Mr. Morrison, even went so far as to say in a broadcast that from now on agriculture was to be Priority No. 1.

When reminded of this fact in the Commons by Captain Crookshank who asked what was happening about the priority allocations of steel for the manufacture of agricultural implements, the Paymaster-General, Mr. Marquand, admitted that agriculture was not yet on the priority list at all and explained that "The Prime Minister's list of priority users is at present restricted to the manufacture, installation and repair of certain classes of equipment necessary for the extension of fuel and power resources and (significantly enough) for atomic energy."

Mr. Marquand added, however, that "the existing priority system is at present under review." Members were not impressed by this assurance and he was again reminded of the Government's plans and in particular of Mr. Morrison's statement just referred to, to which Mr. Marquand made the astonishing reply that he "had no record of the statement". When pressed for an explanation of his ignorance he displayed a truly remarkable capacity for ignoring the real issue while yet managing to reply to persistent questions. Such ingenuity at evasion did he show that, if he can keep it up, his political future seems assured.

Asked about the over-allocation of steel he delivered this masterly reply:

"Over-allocation of steel," he explained, "arose partly because in the period of reconversion departments had to operate on a basis of insufficient knowledge of the real needs of the consumers, and partly because in certain periods supplies of steel fell below expectation."

This impressive statement, as was no doubt intended, seemed to intimidate the opposition for the matter appears to have been put aside for the time being at that point.

Mr. Brown, on the other hand, had sounded a more cheerful note. "Agricultural machinery requirements," said Mr. Brown, "are receiving very favourable consideration (well, well). As regards steel, for example, the allocation of agricultural machinery for the fourth quarter of 1947 is nearly twice as much as for the third quarter."

Since, however, no one seems to know how much steel was in fact allocated for the third quarter, we are not very much further forth.

It would appear that when I wrote some two months back that the Government was embarking on its big food production drive "reluctantly, belatedly

and with obvious irritation", that was not by any means an over-statement. Our rulers must be aware, if sometimes only vaguely in their deep, Jungian unconsciousness, that a full production policy for British agriculture is fraught with grave dangers for our present economic set-up, that it is incompatible with a policy based on imports and exports for reasons that have been frequently referred to in these Notes and which need not be gone into again now. Hence the continued reluctance to set about the matter at all seriously.

In particular the dilemma is presented in an acute form in the manufacture of agricultural machinery. Shall we sell the stuff abroad or use it here where it is so badly needed? In the last resort you cannot keep your cake and export it.

The Bureaucratic Mind Dept.

Two cuttings from *The Farmer's Weekly* (14/11/47):

(i) In view of the desperate housing shortage in rural areas which would appear to be, taking the country as a whole, even more severe than that existing in the towns, the following may be of interest.

"The local housing committee came to see a certain farmer to ask him where he would like to have the two new cottages he had been allocated. 'I don't want any houses, he told them, I've got all the men I need and they're all taken care of.'"

The officials were dumbfounded, and they took a good deal of convincing. Eventually this farmer persuaded them that he knew what he was saying, and meant it. 'Oh, well,' they said, 'you'll have to have the houses anyway. They've been allocated to you, and that can't be altered now.'"

Planning for the Future

(ii) Extract from a report of a Glamorgan F.U. Meeting:

"Another member argued that Cardiff City Council were particularly bad landlords. They had recently applied for and, he understood, been granted permission to acquire sixty acres of good arable land for the purposes of cemetery extension, while admitting that they already had sufficient land for this purpose to last them thirty-five years."

Perhaps the Council considers that the present acreage may, after all, be insufficient to accommodate the local victims of the next, atomic, war.

G.V.

Confusion at the Savoy

Direction Solves the Blackleg Problem

FOR the third time in just over a year the catering workers of the Savoy group of hotels (which includes the Berkeley, Claridges and Simpson's Restaurant in the Strand) are on strike. Unlike the previous two, however, this time it is an official strike, and bears all the localising and stultifying characteristics one associates with a union-led strike.

It seems too, that the union (Catering Section of the General and Municipal) has almost been forced into action now by the truculent attitude of the Savoy management, who have never fully implemented the agreement made, following the October '46 strike, by the Hotel Employers' Association to recognise the N.U.G.M.W. and the right of their workers to join the union of their choice.

This strike is distinguished by the obscurity which shrouds its causes. Even some of the pickets from other unions seem hazy as to the reason and are supporting it automatically because they are union men, but it seems that its main causes are the managements' aggressive dismissal of the shop steward waiter Frank Piazza, and mere lip service paid to the workers' right to organise.

Piazza's case goes back over a year and has been mentioned in *Freedom* several times before. Briefly, after the October '46 strike, the management promised "no victimisation" but proceeded to dismiss a waiter. Piazza took up his case, and was himself suspended for alleged indiscipline. The hotel workers struck (March 12th) and went back after promises that the case should be referred to a National Arbitration Committee, Piazza meanwhile being suspended for only 14 days. The management, however, refused to have him back after that time and continued to pay his wages while keeping him suspended until in July the National Arbitration Tribunal considered the case,

found Piazza in the right and recommended his reinstatement. The management's answer was to dismiss Piazza completely on August 9th. Between that time and this the union has made attempts to get him back, but on November 6th the workers went on strike and on Nov. 7th the union declared it an official strike with full union support, strike pay and the rest.

Strike Localised

The effect of the union taking control of the strike has been to localise it to the Savoy group only. In previous (unofficial) strikes other hotels' workers have backed up the Savoy and made it much more effective, but although individuals from other unions are picketing and supporting the Savoy strikers now, they seem to be in a very weak position.

The initiative still seems to lie with the employers, who are making claims to the effect that 80 per cent. of their staff are working, and are reported to be sending dismissal notices to the strikers. The union, however, counter-claim that all their members are out and only imported blacklegs working inside, with flower girls and office workers waiting at the tables.

Blacklegs Directed to Savoy

One very clear example of the way the State's laws will help the employers is given in the report that numerous employment exchanges, some as far away as Scotland, have been sending staff to the Savoy Group under the new direction order. Pickets also assert that Polish labour has been imported to replace some strikers.

One of the pickets is reputed as saying: "We cannot understand how this fits in with the new Control of Engagements Order." What innocence these union men betray! Because an order has been made by a Labour Government with the backing of the T.U.C. they believe it can only work in the interest of the workers. The very opposite is true. Placing power of direction in the hands of the State gives it the ability to back up the employers more efficiently than before—all in the name of democracy, of course.

To the Savoy strikers, we would advise them to pack up this useless, long drawn-out strike and embark on a series of unofficial lightning strikes, making sure at the same time that no one else can use, say, the ovens in the absence of the regular cooks. Let them realise that they are fighting a class war, not a gentlemanly mock-combat.

Let them, also, read *The French Cooks' Syndicate*, by W. McCartney (Freedom Press, 3d.).

P.S.

LIBERALS OPPOSE DIRECTION

POLITICAL parties out of power are renowned for the way they can champion the rights of the underdog. The Tories, of course, are playing the game for all it's worth just now, but even better is the position of the Liberal Party. They are not merely out of power, but have very little hope of ever being in again. So, they are in a fine position to declaim against the government without ever having to implement their own promises.

The latest instance is a broadcast by Clement Davies, leader of the Liberals, in which he opposes industrial direction. So do we, of course, and could not agree more than when he describes it as "slavery", but we feel he rather lets the cat out of the bag when he says: "We need not fear unemployment for at least a generation if we use our material and financial resources wisely..." What happens at the end of the generation, Mr. Davies? And do you really think that the free capitalism which you advocate is going to continue free from war for a generation?

No, the party out of power can always be the most principled and make the most noise, but in power the role of government is the same whatever the party label, and the defence of capitalism in decline would call on any party group to do as the Labour Party has done.

In any case, who wants full employment? What we want is full enjoyment!

General Mobilisation

DURING a recent press conference, General de Gaulle made fun of the parties forming the parliamentary majority. Very much at his ease, and filled with an overweening confidence in his future, he recalled the words of Kipling on the people of the "bandarlog", the monkey-people who go about repeating "We are the kings of the jungle because we say so." And he made abundant fun of the new Socialist-Christian-Democrat parliamentary combination which pretends to represent the Republic.

Perhaps the general should have remembered that Kipling was alluding to the French when he spoke of the bandarlog, and that the chief of the Union of the French People is really nothing more than the kind of the bandarlog!

At the same time, impressed by the assurance of de Gaulle, plenty of political men, and among them a certain number of Socialist and Christian-Democrat parliamentarians, fly to help in the victory, and revive the famous "Marshal, you are there" of Vichyist memory in hastening to cry "General, you are here".

And the democratic governments which Ramadier and Vincent Auriol are trying to maintain, transform and patch up, no longer appear much more than transitional ministries, at the end of which de Gaulle will be called in.

THE OLD GUARD REAPPEARS

All the former democratic and parliamentary machinery, all the old groups, try to respond to the problems of economy and foreign policy by turning towards the western bloc, that is to say in giving every guarantee to the American brokers.

In practice this means a mobilisation against the Communist Party, a continued effort for the appeasement of social conflicts, a desperate attempt to solve the balancing of the budget, and the offer of guarantees to the governing classes.

In the campaign directed against the Russians and their internal supporters, an appeal is made to everybody, in the hope of rendering de Gaulle unnecessary in the eyes of the incensed crowds who have allowed his sudden rise. Thus we see not only the feverish activity of the governmental party machines, but also the reawakening of the reformist minorities in the trade unions, who, having been held prisoner by the old nationalist programme of the Stalinists, are freeing themselves and noisily making themselves heard under cover of an anti-Communism which has become fashionable, and an expedient love of working-class democracy. The old war-horses like Jouhaux present themselves, and are presented by the reactionary press, as the authentic expression of the French working class towards "the foreign party", while the would-be Ministers of Labour of the Petainist era, like Cappa, play at being extremists, and assume the role of "leftists" in the trade union opposition.

But this mass of apparently disunited forces corresponds effectively to the great American offensive which is linked with the return of the French ruling classes, and a certain number of common desires can be distinguished—order, the disciplining of the working-class movement, the elimination of the Communists and alliance with the United States.

THE COMMUNISTS REACT

Against this developing national unanimity, the communists are reacting

vigorously and are also mobilising all the forces at their disposal. Perhaps in a disordered manner, thus precipitating the concentration of their adversaries, but applying with discipline the new orders of the Cominform. Strike after strike breaks out, for the most diverse motives, but always with a basis of economic demand sufficient to rally a great number of malcontents among the workers.

There are also strikes in small and medium-class business, which are largely favoured by the Stalinists, and which thwart the awkward attempts of the government to regulate commercial transactions and to limit the black market. There are appeals to industrial interests menaced by American assistance, and support for all movements, no matter whence they come, provided they are against the government.

The infiltration of administrations and of repressive forces, carried on during the preceding years, is proving effective. At Marseilles, since the incidents which followed the election of the Gaullist mayor in place of the old Communist mayor, the sections of the security police let the demonstrators take action. Two companies were dissolved and a third replaced. It was not a question of conscript troops fraternising with the strikers, but of Communist cells applying each in its own sphere the common policy.

THE INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLE

In the real industrial field, the factions are opening their struggle. "Workers' Strength", a confused collection of non-Stalinist elements in the CGT, is entering the field resolutely in the name of independent unionism, but leaves the door open for collabor-

PERON FIGHTS THE PRESS

By a Worldover Press Correspondent

BUENOS AIRES—(Uncensored).

THE Perón regime has been stepping up its nationwide campaign against a free press. Government-inspired papers and the National Broadcasting System have made frontal attacks on several outstanding dailies, especially the world-famous *La Prensa*, *Argentina Libre* and *La Vanguardia*, but the attack on the rear is even deadlier: the fining and padlocking of printing presses on which the opposition must rely. This has been the fate, for example, of *Argentina Libre* and *La Vanguardia*.

Here's the way it works. Lest anyone should think the government was persecuting free newspapers, it rather shuts

ation with a "comprehensive" government.

Among the rank-and-file, the narrow interpenetration of political motives with motives concerned strictly with the demands and class struggle of the workers, makes the activity of the revolutionary militants very difficult.

The working-class is not at the end of its misfortunes. If, as all seems to indicate, the isolation of the Communists becomes more complete, the incapacity of the democratic parties prolongs the chaos, and authoritarian tendencies show themselves, we are going straight towards a "strong" regime, with or without de Gaulle, but with the rallying of a certain number of reformist leaders to conceptions of State unionism and corporativist formulae, and that of Socialist leaders to a "national labour" programme.

Once again the Communist party will have been the great organiser of defeat.

It remains to be known if the other force which is becoming aware of its possibilities, will overcome the events and, staying closely linked to the working-class struggles while retaining its clear-sightedness, will increase its influence and become a determining element in the situation.

The same problem exists in France, in Italy, in Germany, and will present itself in Spain to-morrow, as it already exists among the refugees.

S PARANE

down their printing presses on some "legal" excuse: the plant is not fit for use, its location is poor, its wages are too low, its health conditions are bad.

Official inspectors have visited every printing press in the city of Buenos Aires to see which of them were willing to publish any of the "undesirable" papers. The campaign has carried beyond the capital. One of the latest papers suppressed was *El Norte*, an independent liberal paper published in San Nicolás, Province of Buenos Aires. Its director, the distinguished Dr. Vicente Solano Lima, was thrown into a filthy prison and the building was occupied by police forces. Although this is a new structure, well fitted for its purpose, the newspaper was shut down because, among other reasons, the building was "unhygienic". Two other papers, which support the government's policy, *El Tribuno* and *El Progreso*, published in the same city, suffered no interference. Neither of their buildings has light enough or proper hygienic conditions. One of them used to be a stable.

Violently suppressed also has been *Unidas Provincias* (United Provinces), one of the influential papers of the Radical Party, the strongest political party before the revolution of 1943. The weekly magazine *Que?* illustrates the sort of thing that can rouse the vengeance of the Perón regime. The well-reputed *Que?* used to publish local and international news, without comment or departure from simple fact. Recently an issue had on its front page the picture of the actress Libertad Lamarque, who had fallen into disgrace with Mme. Eva Duarte de Perón, the President's wife. The issue was not allowed to circulate and no issue has appeared since. No press dares to print it.

Papers controlled by members of Congress have shared the same fate. *Argentina Libre*, once suppressed, appeared again in an abridged form under the directorship of three deputies opposed to Perón. Only a small press in La Plata, capital of the Province of Buenos Aires, would print it. After the first number, this press was closed up. Its editors, the deputies, protested to the national authorities and the second number appeared in early October. Then the printing press was ordered to put itself "under the rules and regulations" within 60 days—rules and regulations which do not apply to papers upholding the Perón regime.

Worldover Press, 24/10/47.

Foreign Commentary

Spanish Anarchist Congress

MORE than eight years have passed since the last Spanish republican fighters made their way into exile as Franco and his German and Italian allies completed the military conquest of Spain. During these eight years many of the Spanish refugees in France have spent years in French, and later in German, concentration camps, undernourished and deprived of the companionship of their families left behind in Spain. Of the hundreds of thousands in France, a large proportion were members of the C.N.T. (National Confederation of Labour) the revolutionary syndicalist organisation which played such an important role during the three long years of struggle against International Fascism in Spain.

At the end of last month, the second Congress of the M.L.E.—C.N.T.* in France was held at Toulouse, and delegates from groups in every corner of the country packed the auditorium of a local cinema, and for two weeks—yes, two weeks!—the Spanish comrades discussed, at day and night sessions, the problems of their movement. *Solidaridad Obrera* (the weekly paper of the M.L.E. in France) in its issues of November 1st and 8th gives full accounts of what happened. There were twenty-two items on the agenda, of which, according to a *Le Libertaire* eyewitness account five provoked the greatest interest: The Structure of the Movement, Declaration of Principles, Relations with other Movements; The Struggle inside Spain; the Press and Cultural matters. The declaration of principles which has now been published is an interesting and significant document in view of the tragic dissensions within the Spanish movement during the past eleven years on the question of collaboration with political parties and, during the revolution, of participation in "Popular" Governments. Important, too, is the declaration that "The C.N.T. is convinced that only the revolutionary violence of the Spanish people them-

selves can eliminate Franco and Fascism", in view of the equivocal position adopted by many during World War II: that the defeat of Hitler and Mussolini would automatically result in the downfall of Franco.

It is to be hoped that the Declaration of Principles will be published in full in *Freedom* at an early date. Meanwhile, here are three fundamental points from this document:

"All authoritarian principle is antagonistic to expression of Freedom."
"Revolutionary direct action is the only effective tactic for the overthrow of Capitalism and the State."

"Our Movement aims at the establishment of Libertarian Communism—without transitional periods—and with tactics that conform to our principles."

PRICE OF A SLOGAN

The *Adunata dei Refrattari*, the Italian Anarchist weekly published in New Jersey, in its issue of November 15th refers to General Marshall's article in the latest edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in which he gives figures for military losses during World War II. These are U.S.A. 295,904, British Empire 452,570, Soviet Union 7,500,000, Germany 2,850,000, Italy 300,000, China 2,200,000, Japan 1,506,000. Total 15,305,474 dead or missing. But as the *Adunata* points out, the figure is doubled if we add the military and civilian losses of all the other countries, not to mention those massacred in prisons and concentration camps, those killed in the underground movements, etc. 30 million dead or missing. What a price to pay for a few hollow slogans. And what a great tragedy it is when one realizes that it will need only the same slogans with a few alterations to throw the people of the world at one another's throats once more!

AMERICA'S UNTOUCHABLES

That racial discrimination exists in America is not "news" to our readers, but it is important to note when a government body admits its existence. The report of the Truman-appointed Committee of Civil Rights has, according to *News Review*, 20/11/47, "shaken America on its treatment of the Negro about as forcibly . . . as the Myra Curtis Committee Report on the Care of Children shook Britain."

These are some of the facts which the report lists:

"Negroes barred from membership in

labour unions; Negroes given one-tenth the schooling their white neighbours get, but charged just as much in taxes; Negroes barred from voting in eight States through the device of the poll tax;

Americans of Japanese ancestry given the rawest deal on the Pacific Coast. Americans of Italian, Irish Catholic, Jewish and Negro descent barred by polite devices, such as a quota, from the better American medical schools and some universities. Discrimination in the Armed Services, particularly in the Navy, where there is one white officer to every seven enlisted white men, but only two Negro officers in the whole Navy to 22,000 Negro enlisted men;

Low wages and no advancement for Mexican-Americans in Texas. Discrimination in Government offices in the employment of Negroes and Jews, particularly in the State Department, whose personnel officers are so "Aryan" they could have qualified for the *Wilhelmstrasse*. 'Restrictive covenants' preventing the selling of land or houses to Negroes or other 'undesirables'.

The Report charges 20 of the 48 States with laws that compel segregation in one way or another. To the embarrassment of the business men and 'better people' of that city, the Committee singled out the national capital, Washington, where by custom a Negro may not patronise downtown hotels, restaurants, theatres, most of the hospitals (including some run by religious organisations), nor work in the department stores or on the trams.

He can live only in shambling segregated districts."

The Committee makes many recommendations, but obviously little can be achieved so long as the prejudice among the people is so deep-rooted. After all, the Negroes in America have rights by law, but of what avail are they when large sections of the white population are determined that the Negro "must be kept down"?

FRENCH SITUATION

Events are moving fast in France and we recommend the Anarchist weekly *Le Libertaire* (obtainable from Freedom Bookshop, price 3d.) to readers interested in the French political situation and who can read French. Contributors to *Le Libertaire* include our French correspondent, S. Parane, whose articles in *Freedom* have often been reprinted in other journals and have been the subject of favourable comments by many readers.

LIBERTARIAN.

REGIMENTATION OF ARTS IN GERMANY

In order to capture the masses this policy of 'bread and circuses' is dished out: for those indifferent to sports are offered music, theatre, cinema, literature. The House of Soviet Culture in Berlin provides something of everything in 'cultural' line—exhibitions, concerts, cultural and political lectures. Towns like Dresden, according to the German League of Culture, have become new centres of German art. The League guides art away from the dangerous spheres of bourgeois decadence into the fields of the new culture. The function of these institutions is to bring the Russian and German peoples closer together, to demonstrate the greatness of proletarian creative powers and so on. The Germans have once already experienced the introduction of a superior German Art—then their answer was unmistakable, for the reported number of visitors to the 'decadent', 'bourgeois and Jewish-Bolshevik art' was far greater than that to Hitler's 'German art'.

Recently Schadanov has made speeches on literature and art which sound like a new edition of Goebbels's speeches on similar subjects—Soviet culture is the greatest in the world; Russian literature need not copy the West. It is the task of the German Communist Party intellectuals to spread the blessings of Russian culture to the Germans. Nevertheless the German theatres are dominated chiefly by Western authors of artistic brilliance and German classics. The works of Toller, Werfel, Feuchtwanger, who represent German emigré literature, are little known. The situation of theatre managers and producers is exactly the same as it was under Hitler. There is a big cry for topical drama but no sane producer would dare take the risk of bringing it before the public. German emigré production contains too many rebellious tendencies.

Literature is dominated by translations from the Russian—the book of the moment is *Stalingrad*. The intellectual élite is led by Joh. R. Becher, who in

days gone by was introduced by the anarchist magazine *Die Erde*, Willi Breidel, Anna Seghers, Ernst Wickert, Friedrich Wolf and others who have faithfully served Moscow. Mühsam, Katz, Toller, are relegated to the ranks of the forgotten by being ignored.

On the question of art we find amazing journalistic somersaults such as "Fascism destroyed, by drastic means, the illusion of artistic freedom and clearly demonstrated the most slavish dependence of the artist on the ruling class", and "The progressive artist must either suffer passively the crisis of society or in an active way attempt to form society". Progressive artists in the Eastern Zone not willing to prostitute their art to the demands of their Russian masters or who attempt in an active way to form society, end in a forced labour gang or in prison. We presume that this is what must be meant by artists suffering passively!

Newspapers published under British and American licence are suppressed in the Eastern Zone. In order to capture the reluctant middle-class there are a great number of magazines and papers, made up in typical bourgeois style, all bearing slogans of democracy, and written by Christian and democratic stooges. Many of our readers will remember from pre-Hitler times the courageous *Die Weltbühne*, a magazine of politics, art and science, edited by Karl von Ossietzky, the internationally known pacifist, democrat and Nobel prizewinner who later became a victim of Hitler. *Die Weltbühne* appears now in exactly its former shape, edited by the widow of Ossietzky. Here, as a taste of its value, is just one sentence from it:

"We remind you of the contributions by men such as Tucholsky, Toller and Mühsam, of whom the latter two can be considered as outspoken Communists."

Tucholsky and Toller committed suicide. Mühsam was killed by the Nazis—they cannot protest against this outrage!

J.O

*M.L.E.=Spanish Libertarian Movement.

A Letter from Germany

TO the Germans it is incomprehensible that, according to the Marshall Plan, Germany is to be rehabilitated and that in the reconstruction of factories and workshops hundreds of millions of dollars are to be spent and several hundred thousand tons of steel brought to Germany from the U.S.A., particularly since, according to an agreement between the Allies, 682 factories in Germany are to be dismantled and the machinery sent to the Allied countries.

What is the meaning of this nonsense of dismantling and then reconstruction at great cost? Is this another employment programme, such as we witnessed under Hitler, where the most idiotic jobs were invented for the sole purpose of finding work? Or is the dismantling simply a "safety" measure to prevent valuable plants from falling into the hands of a "possible enemy" in case he should invade the country, and the Marshall plan merely a proposal in case the "possible enemy" should not occupy the whole of Germany?

We can only find out through the American newspapers, which say that in case (unfortunately we Germans know enough about these "in cases") it should come to conflict between East and West, the American army command would not make the same mistakes as Napoleon and Hitler, i.e., to march into Russia and beat the Russians there, but that at the beginning of the war Russia would occupy a large part of Western Europe, from which its armies would be routed by aerial bombardment. A fine outlook for those people living in countries which would be occupied by the Russians! Or perhaps the American command has already manufactured atom bombs which will only kill Russian soldiers and not the civilian population? Every day the people believe more strongly that another war will break out in the near future, and they are strengthened in this belief by happenings which are very similar to those in Hitler's Germany just before the outbreak of the last war.

Pollitt and Germany

Now I come to Pollitt's statement in *Looking Ahead*, that "There have been no strikes, no mass protests and demonstrations in the Soviet zone. Isn't that fact something to think about?" Here is a little news item—a fact for Pollitt to use in his next book, *Looking Backward*. In the last three months approximately 50,000 workers crossed illegally from the Russian zone into the British and American zones because conditions there are so frightful that they could not endure them any longer. The British and American military governments have forbidden these workers to stay in their respective zones, and give them neither food nor housing allocation. Despite this, the workers prefer to stay. Isn't that fact something to think about, Harry?

At the moment, the greatest problem here is that of food during the coming winter and next year; there will probably be a famine, as the harvest was worse than average. With the whip of hunger the military governments will be able to suppress any protests on the part of the workers, and threaten them with a food cut if they refuse to do as they are told. This is exactly what happened just recently when the Trade Unions refused to carry out the dismantling programme in the factories. The workers fear that when these jobs of dismantling are finished they will once more be unemployed and will have to starve. And even our Trade Unions, which are anything but revolutionary, are being betrayed in their modest demands and used as a means to an end by our politicians.

A German Politician

And what kind of politicians are they in the so-called Labour Party, the SPD? There is, for instance, still Karl Severing, the former Minister of the Interior, who is one of the leading lights in the SPD.

What sort of a record has this parasite? When he was still a minister under the Weimar Republic he let himself be thrown out of office by a Nazi and a soldier, although he was the commandant of a Republican police force of 100,000 men. Does one not have to ask whether the whole business was not prearranged? This suspicion becomes even stronger when one considers that Severing was not taken from office by Hitler as an opponent, but that he was pensioned off with the salary of a Minister and lived during Hitler's regime in a beautiful villa in the vicinity of Berlin. While the workers of the Social-Democrat Party were in concentration camps he lived in his villa near Berlin. When Hitler's time was up, and the workers came back from the concentration camps, Severing was once more a great man in his party, whose command they had to obey. And now he has become their parliamentary delegate and enjoys once more the opportunity to betray and sell the workers. This Severing is a typical politician; in 1920 he betrayed the workers to the German capitalists in the Ruhr rising; now he has the opportunity to betray them to International capital.

WILLY F.

Zionist Nationalism

A Controversy

A READER'S VIEWPOINT

DEAR COMRADES,

I very much appreciate your article on the "Palestine Collectives" in your last issue, and I whole-heartedly agree with it. In your "Through the Press", however, you condemn Zionism as very near to Nazism, implying that the people in the Palestine collectives, who all, and without exception, are Zionists, must also therefore be crypto-Nazis. I very much would like to challenge the statement that Zionism is similar to Nazism, and I would even venture to say that many Zionist principles are compatible with anarchy.

You argue that Jewish Nationalism, as all nationalisms, is valueless, and Jews should assimilate. History of the last 20 centuries has shown that this is impossible, and if you argue that this is the fault of the social system, I quite agree with you. Nevertheless, you do not and cannot believe it possible to change society within a decade, and do you believe that the Jews in the meantime should be exterminated by anti-Semites, as 6,000,000 of them were in the last decade?

The Jews therefore want to go to Palestine to build up a new life there, a new society where there will be no oppressed minorities. They do not wish

any harm to the Arabs, as statistics show. Since 1900, 600,000 Jews have immigrated to Palestine. They have improved the living standard to such an extent that the Arab population has increased from 300,000 to 1,200,000. This shows that more Arabs have immigrated to Palestine, than Jews.

Further, the Jews have helped the Arabs in many ways. Free hospital treatments and public services. They have also shown them by example a much higher standard of living. This is why the Jews are so hated by the Effendi class of Palestine, who become rich by Jewish land purchases, and now also want the Jewish profits.

What other alternative have you for the Jewish D.P.'s in Germany?

It might be interesting for you to note that the present form of commune was largely influenced by the German Anarchist philosopher, Landauer.

Besides the Libertarian principles employed in agriculture, the Jewish community has many industries run on syndicalist lines. The Eged bus company is an example. The theatres are run on these lines. The biggest building firm in Palestine, "Solel Aboneh", is run on a co-operative basis.

Besides, all the Jewish institutes in Palestine are run by voluntary subscription, and voluntary taxation, which is far from being encouraged by the Mandatory Power. Perhaps the Jewish community in Palestine gives the best example of development and progress without a Government. It is a good example of happy life without a State, and the average Jew does not care about a State as long as there is free emigration, settlement and self-defence.

To my mind the Jewish experiment is the one which is nearest to anarchy which has ever worked for a considerable time, and I think it somewhat shameful to label Zionists as Fascists as you have done on so many occasions. I would very much like to hear your opinion on this matter.

Yours fraternally,

Bangor.

H.K.

Reply

There seems to us no real inconsistency between the article in *Freedom* on collectives in Palestine and the remark on the

AUSTRIA

AS the "iron curtain" enfolds Hungary, Russian imperialism looks towards Austria. Frontier incidents are reported from the Yugoslav border. At the time of the Hungarian elections, the Soviet forces requisitioned a further 217,000 acres of agricultural land in their zone of Austria. Now new Russian forces are joining the occupation detachments in the Eastern zone of the country, and with them the political war of nerves begins. The Russian zone contains the bulk of Austria's industry and, as *Combat* reports, "they have in their hands the destiny of the country. They can at any moment exercise economic pressure which will paralyse Vienna and plunge the whole of the West of the country into misery". The coming winter will see that pressure exercised.

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SACCO AND VANZETTI'S MEMORY DOES NOT BELONG TO THEM!

One thing that neither time nor politics has changed is Massachusetts' official stand on the 1927 execution of famed Radicals Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. Ten years ago Democratic Governor Charles F. Hurley curtly rejected the offer of a bronze bas-relief, designed by the late mountain-sculpturing Gutzon Borglum, as a memorial to "the good shoemaker and the poor fish peddler". Last week Republican Governor Robert F. Bradford just as firmly turned it down again. This time the committee that offered it to the state was headed by Harvard Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger. Other sponsors: Eleanor Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, ex-Governor Herbert Lehman, Phil Murray.

The Committee had suggested that the plaque be installed on Boston Common. Governor Bradford replied that he had no more power to do that "than the President of Mexico." But he also made it perfectly clear that he would not order it if he could. Said he: "I can see no useful purpose in stirring up the bitter passions and prejudices of 20 years ago, particularly at a time when the whole world is striving for unity, not discord."

Time (U.S.A.), 13/10/47.

Quite right, Governor Bradford! A memorial for the two anarchist martyrs would be a monstrous piece of hypocrisy in a country where political persecution, police brutality and racial discrimination are rampant.

HERESY HUNT

THE great hunt for Communists, in which vague term are included radicals and revolutionaries of every shape and kind, has now spread to the American Trade Unions.

The initiative was given by the Government, with the new Taft-Hartley labour law, which issues an ultimatum on internal organisation to the unions by decreeing that only unions which have no Communist officials can enjoy the protection of the National Labour Relations Act, which governs the question of arbitration between Unions and employers.

The leaders of the C.I.O. and A.F. of L. have not been slow to take full advantage of the opening which this legislation offers them. Reuther of the United Automobile Workers has just successfully ousted the Communists from key positions in his union, and the majority of the other unions, no matter to what camp they belong, are following suit by turning out their Communists and radicals so as to keep on the right side of the Government.

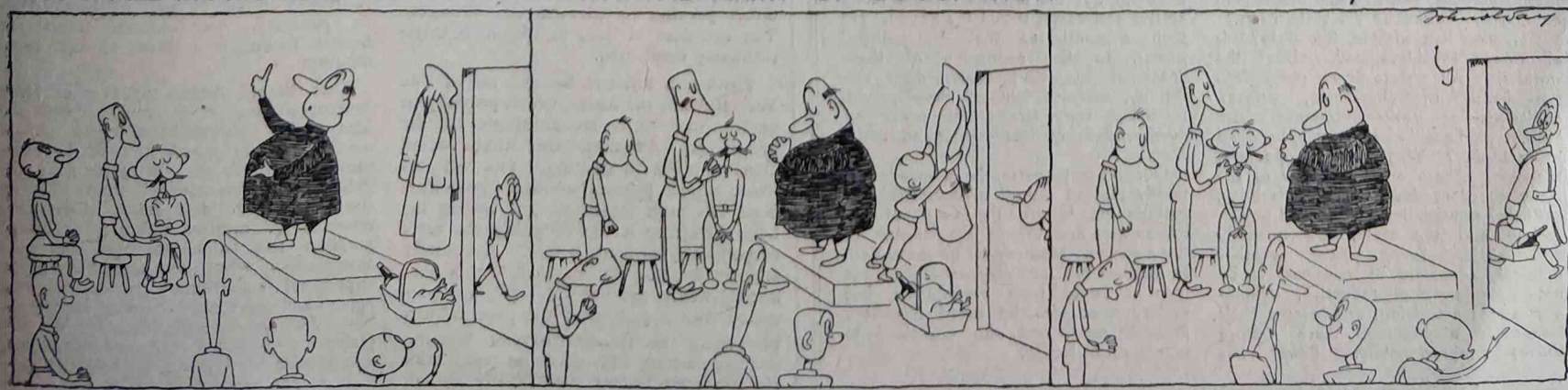
We have no sympathy for the Communists who have made their own attempt to control the American Unions; there is not a pin to choose between them and the present right-wing leaders, for both wish to produce a state of affairs where the rank and file are kept down.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the attack will not end with the Communists. As in other walks of life in America these days, anybody who attempts genuine rank-and-file activity will be treated as a Communist and hunted accordingly. The whole Communist heresy hunt may have started

THE THREE MUSKETEERS—17

WITH THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION

By JOHN OLDAY



CALABOOSH CALORIES!

THE present calory level of this country was recently stated to be 2,870 per day on the average. Cripps, who made this statement, said it might be necessary to reduce it to 2,700. Bearing in mind that this figure is only an average one, and that a great number of people subsist on a smaller number of calories, it is therefore with amazement that we read of the details regarding the daily diet of men and women in British prisons. The Home Secretary, Chuter Ede, stated the following figures:

Gaols. Men 2,923 to 2,955. Women 2,541 to 2,605.

Borstal Institutions. Boys 3,261 to 3,389. Girls 3,095 to 3,223.

Now, to anyone who has experienced prison food, the idea that one is on a better standard of diet than a large bulk of the population, is ludicrous. Take an average daily menu, in a British prison:—

Breakfast: Thin porridge, 6 oz. bread, a tiny pat of margarine and a pint of unsweetened tea.

Dinner: Usually soup, except when they serve out uneatable fish, potatoes (many bad), sometimes a small portion of "duff".

Tea-cum-Supper: 8 oz. bread, pat of margarine, one pint of cocoa.

These are the only meals which one gets, tea being served at 4.30 with nothing till breakfast time at 8 a.m. next morning, and there is no variation in the breakfast and tea details! And yet this is supposed to be better than most ordinary honest civilians get! Either the caloric figures are just false, or they have been arrived at by using the best available food so as to get the highest possible answer. A practical experience of the diet will soon disillusion anyone who is credulous enough to believe that you get a better deal inside the "nick" rather than outside! RUSTICUS.

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A FACTUAL PAMPHLET

BEHIND "THE IRON CURTAIN".
A Survey of Eastern Europe, published by the New York Herald Tribune, obtainable from Freedom Bookshop (7d. post free).

THIS pamphlet written by a team of four American journalists after an extensive tour in Eastern Europe contains valuable information on the methods used by Russia to gain control over countries which have fallen into her zone of influence.

Though events have moved so fast in those countries that some of the information, gathered in June-July of this year, is already out of date, this report helps to understand the series of arrests and trials which have taken place during the last few months.

Nobody is fooled by the sudden interest taken by the American Press in the civil liberties of some European nations but this is factual, intelligent reporting worth reading even if one disagrees with the motives which have prompted it.

Would this team be allowed to show the same gifts for getting facts if it were sent to Greece?

POETRY AND ANARCHISM

We apologise to readers who have ordered this book for the delay in dispatching their copies, but there has unfortunately been a hold-up with the binding which we could not foresee at the time when we announced the book. We are hoping however that copies will be ready for dispatch early in December.

FUNCTIONAL LIVES

HEALTH THE UNKNOWN. The Story of the Peckham Experiment. By John Comerford. Hamish Hamilton, 7/6.

THIS is a book about the Peckham Experiment which seeks to avoid the technicalities of the Peckham scientists' own accounts, and to present the ideas behind the experiment to the "ordinary reader"—whatever that convenient abstraction may be. As such it labours under the usual disadvantages of "popular" accounts, but nevertheless derives its significance from the importance of its subject matter.

Readers of *Freedom* will already know something of the work going on at Peckham; it is not necessary here therefore to try to describe the general scope of this new book. Instead, I will point to certain features of the experiment which it rightly stresses.

The Pioneer Health Centre seeks to provide conditions in which human beings can function fully, in which individual capacities are fully extended instead of being inhibited and dormant. Full function can be regarded as their conception of health, and is a very different thing from mere absence of gross disease. But full function can obviously only be realized if no restrictions are present; or, to put it more positively if also more vaguely, in conditions of freedom.

With this conception in mind it is only too apparent how appallingly inhibited and restricted are the lives of vast numbers of families, with the father frustrated by dull work, the mother exasperated by the triviality of domestic cares, and the children pushed around the irritable adult world, absorbing an atmosphere of tension and suppressed despair, instead of the calmness and emotional security which they need. Such a family—and it is the usual type of family in urban life today—has no common ground to meet on, no outlets for whatever creative capacity its members possess. Its individual members have no chance to function at all.

At the Family Club at Peckham the means for all kinds of activities are there for any member of the family to use when and as he (or she) likes. "But," says Comerford, "the Peckham scientists have more to give their members than fine premises and full equipment. They have what might be termed 'the philosophy of latent human function'. Their hypothesis is that many men, women and children are living in a kind of functional imprisonment; and that release from this is a possibility which would produce surprising results. They have been shown to be right."

Amongst the surprising results is the absence of leaders in the present-day sense of the term. "Accustomed as is this age to artificial leadership—witness the white-gloved leader of Community singing, the cheer-leader at a football match, the leader of rambling parties—it is difficult for it to realize the truth that leaders require no training or appointing, but emerge spontaneously when conditions require them. Studying their members in the free-for-all of the Peckham Centre, the observing scientists saw over and over again how one member instinctively be-

came, and was instinctively but not officially recognized as, leader to meet the need of some particular moment. Such leaders appeared and disappeared as the flux of the Centre required. Because they were not consciously appointed, neither (when they had fulfilled their purpose) were they consciously overthrown. Nor was any particular gratitude shown by members to a leader, either at the time of his services or after for services rendered. They followed his guidance just as long as his guidance was helpful and what they wanted. They melted away from him without regrets when some widening of experience beckoned them on to some fresh adventure, which would in turn throw up its spontaneous leader; or when their self-confidence was such that any form of continued leadership would

have been a restraint to them." This description of conscious egoism might have come out of the pages of Stirner himself!

And John Comerford goes on to say: "A society, therefore, if left to itself in suitable circumstances to express itself spontaneously works out its own salvation and achieves a harmony of action which superimposed leadership cannot emulate." A footnote dryly adds that "such superimposed leadership, of course, is necessary when it is desired to make people do what they themselves do not spontaneously want to do."

Such passages as these serve to indicate the importance to anarchist ideas and the philosophy of freedom of the work being done at Peckham.

J.H.

FILM REVIEWS

MONSIEUR VERDOUX (New Gallery and Tivoli).

IT has long been a cliché to say that adverse criticism is a hall-mark of genius. In the case of **MONSIEUR VERDOUX**, the first Chaplin film to be shown in England for seven years, this seems certainly applicable: this film, which in my opinion is one of the greatest to be made by America, if not condemned outright by most critics, is damned with but faint praise.

The story is of a bank clerk turned "Bluebeard" in order to support his invalid wife and his son. Each woman he marries he kills and then invests her savings, spending what time he can in between his "business trips" with his family. His is a kind of voluntary Jekyll and Hyde existence: he adopts the trade of ladykiller in the same way as others adopt other forms of business and he, for his part, is able to rationalise his position in comparison with the others without losing track of his real nature and thoughts ("Business is a ruthless business." "The history of many a big business is war." "I do not see how anyone can be an example in these times.") Amusement and sympathy are created by such remarks as that to his son not to pull the cat's tail—"You have a cruel streak in you. I don't know where you get it." With the loss of his family he retires from killing and "pursues his destiny" by giving himself up to the police and is eventually led to execution.

For the most part critics have been vociferous in their objections to the absence of 'the old Charlie'. And yet is this objection justified? It is true that he has a new suit, or rather several new suits, of clothes and that he speaks, but this has all happened before. It is none the less true that the basic Chaplin theme of the insularity and loneliness of the individual is continued in this film: it is merely given a new form of expression and, what is important, an effective and successful form.

As for what has been termed "the crudeness of his political dogma" we leave our readers to judge the bias of the National

Press on this question for themselves.

To the priest who asks if he does not repent his sin, he replies: "Who knows what sin is, born as it was from heaven . . . and besides where would you be without it?" And in answer to "May God have mercy on your soul"—"Why not? It belongs to him!"

Extracts at least from his speech from the dock are worth recording . . . "For thirty-five years I worked honestly: after that I was not wanted . . . I am accused of being a mass murderer. Does not the world encourage it? . . . Evil is the shadows cast by the sun . . . One murder makes a villain, millions a hero. Numbers sanctify, that is the trouble."

TOBACCO ROAD (Academy).

The play of this name, although banned in this country, was shown in London recently at a club theatre. The film version, since it had passed the Censorship Board, was obviously not to be expected to adhere very closely to the original story. For all that, however, it is well worth seeing for the convincing force with which John Ford has filmed this half-forgotten, derelict settlement of planters whose lives and land are wrecked and wasted by lack of finance. Charley Grapewin's portrait of the sly old

Controversial

The Novelty of Being Human

THE most challenging aspect of the social and economic crises which follow each other with the tiresome regularity of a roundabout is the effect it is having upon the deepest responses of the human being. The passing of Hitler and Mussolini has brought as little change in man's fundamental attitude to his fellow men as the Spanish Inquisition, the massacre of the Armenians and the tyrannies of imperial expansion. The same subordination of man's human feelings to economic and social factors, disguised in the fanciful terms of democracy, necessity or post-war planning, is still all prevailing. On issues wider than internal affairs the national state has progressed no further than the discrimination of one nation against the other. Man is man no longer. There are the guilty and the innocent. The curse of government and nationalism has guillotined the most elementary questions of human oneness. Man's problems are no longer human problems. He is stigmatized in the name of United Nations' justice. He is enslaved to the universal political barometer. Hate is preached but never love. Suspicion is cast but never unquestioning acceptance.

In an environment of this nature it is not unnatural for man, as an individual, to be steered in his thoughts and actions along paths of a similar narrowness and selfishness. The tendency of adopting a cold indifference in our everyday human relationships, a frustrated response when our emotions are called into action, is a direct parallel to the material situation. The sacrifices of man to matter is being ruthlessly conducted.

There is a scene in Silone's novel, *The Seed Beneath the Snow*, which provides in microcosmic form an antithesis to the present-day situation. For that reason alone it is worth quoting. The scene is where a poor peasant woman, whose husband has been imprisoned, is hoeing his field. Finding it too fatiguing she rests despondently beneath a tree. A stranger appears and, to her surprise, commences hoeing where she left off. We are presented with a picture of the poor woman beseeching the stranger to stop because she has nothing with which to repay him. He continues hoeing methodically and in

silence, and then departs. After his departure the people of the district hold it to be Christ himself.

Only Christ, in their eyes, could show such kindness in a society which has dealt with them so cruelly. It is more likely, however, that in these days such actions would be considered the whims of a crank, unworldly and odd because no profit is demanded. Sympathy and brotherliness are suspected virtues. Like any other repression the frustration of essential human responses, sympathy, brotherliness and mutual aid, brings to the surface the opposites of these emotions. All that man displays outwardly is lack of sympathy, lack of brotherliness, lack of mutual aid. To those desiring to assert that this is not his fundamental self one has to deny what is visible and apparent. And one has, inevitably, to blame the structure of society.

Many socialist writers have, of course, said the same thing; though not because of but despite their Marxism and Darwinism. Nevertheless the human factor has always been so incidental to the economic that it has never become a major issue. To proclaim the bare fact in its vaguest form is usually considered sufficient. We have the example of a socialist democracy like England in which, except for Priestley's unofficial radio talks, which are more appealing than uplifting, not one word is uttered by the government to encourage a change of heart and spirit. Only the hands are coaxed to greater efforts. The political leaders of Socialism have as little faith in a change of heart as their capitalist partners. Any normal display of human feeling is a threat to their paramountcy.

One should define the fact of being human in case it is confused with the idea of an uninhibited aliveness. Aliveness is a positive projection of the spontaneous desire to do. Being human is the delicate yet fundamental sister, showing itself in heart and mind, giving the emotion an intuitive rightness. Genuine laughter and tears, sympathy and consideration, when not derived from the superficial conditioning of conventional behaviour, are looked upon as abnormalities. Pity for the suffering, when the suffering is in conflict with state institutions, is a punishable crime. To help the fugi-

(Continued on page 7)

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Rocker proved that culture and power, society and the state, are basically antagonistic. Every power, whether political, economic or religious, is by nature sterile and unproductive. Wherever states are dying, or wherever their power is diminishing, there culture thrives proportionately. Power has

various patterns and the states of Plato, of the Church, of Hobbes, More, Locke, Paine, Bentham, Franklin, Jefferson, Herder, Hegel, Kant, Rousseau and many others are subjected to analysis. In each case, wherever centralization of power is achieved, humanity is shown to take the further step toward the destruction of its own culture. Every new institution of power has various forms, but the same content. Therefore, no change in the form of the state, but only its extinction, can bring about a full flowering of human life.

Rocker deals at length with the various concepts of the "nation" and their inadequacies, making clear that what we know as "national interests" are never anything but the interests of the ruling classes and castes within the nation. He then demonstrates that all political power, as the expression of these "national interests", strives after uniformity, whereas cultural development, on the contrary, strains after every new manifestation of intellectual and social life.

Our present course, he concludes, is fatally plotted toward a dictatorship of materialism, toward the death of the humanities, and toward the triumph of the machine. Man cannot be saved until he realizes that not only must economic life be saved from exploitation, but society must also be saved from the invasive state, and also organized to secure social justice.

The Novelty of Being Human

(Continued from page 6)

tive, succour the criminal, weep for the enemy, are major offences. Everything in society appears to have taken sides instead of unanimously being human.

All the same what a happy day when all the arsenals of the world are sabotaged. Yet who would shelter the saboteurs?

Walt Whitman could no more embrace a stranger in England with the intimate dignity of being a fellow human than he could in his nineteenth century capitalist democracy. Such informality and intimacy would, most likely, lead to a prosecution under an indecency act. Yet, among the most primitive West African tribes, men walk hand in hand with the unassuming naïveté of children. Whitman's songs would have had a more sympathetic hearing among such people than among our own society.

In illustrating the suppression of human feeling one is faced with a contradiction. To quote from the major social catastrophes is to present a picture too vast for individual comprehension. Mass fears, mass efforts to self preservation, mass intoxication by propaganda are, most often, the motive forces. The individual is without a name. It is only in the tiny yet all important personal sphere, that one can illustrate human responses. The single example, the parable of Christ's Samaritan who helped the injured man after the priest and the Levite had passed by without stopping is more impressive than the relief of Mafeking or the dropping of the atom bomb. The mind is able to relive it and therefore profit by it. One of the few events of the First World War that cut across governmental antagonisms was the instance of a football match between Germans and Allies played in No Man's Land. As a human victory it takes precedence to Verdun and Ypres. To those who believe in an anthropomorphic god, the Charlie Chaplin of the screen should be closer to him than the Pope.

The universal advance against the individual continues while the human word and the human act are outlawed. One of the potential war centres is Palestine where groups of individuals calling themselves Jews are trying to settle. Arguments are produced for and against the migration. Yet the fundamental argument, which is the right of people to settle wherever they desire, is overlooked. Problems reduced to human terms are problems no longer. Problems elevated

to a political or social status defy solution. Man is quite forgotten. It is not surprising that he has forgotten himself, too.

Here one can consider the unbridgeable gulf between the fortunate and unfortunate, rich and poor, those defeated by force of arms and those successful, those imprisoned for their ideals and opinions, those who are sneered at because they shed tears instead of being icily indifferent. Unending are the examples. On a country road the shining limousine speeds smoothly past the tired tramp. Only the woodchopper in his antiquated Ford will think of offering him a lift. And the tramp, seldom knowing kindness, will feel embarrassed and indebted. We are so far from being human that charity is often resented.

As good citizens of England we are ordered to show no sympathy to German prisoners. The single beauty of some of their sad and sordid lives, that of being in love with a woman of the military successful, is a punishable offence. The wives and mothers of English army deserters face a prison sentence for not informing on them to the police. Voices raised in objection are called traitors, sentimentalists, fifth columnists and bad Englishmen. But never bad human beings. If one were to be a good human being, Christ the man, if you like, one would not be allowed two consecutive nights under one's own roof. And certainly one would be refused admission into a church.

Society is being urged forward without the guidance of a single human principle. All that is offered is material sufficiency, security from war, and a full day's work—all of which are quite impossible when the only factor that can achieve their smooth integration is denied, the application of the human force.

Whether society survives is of secondary importance to the question of whether man can survive. The scene to-day promises that we shall evolve into a society of gadget makers, slaves of statesmen, churchmen and scientists. One way in which the individual can combat this cumulative encroachment upon his integrity is by the force of personal example. An uncompromising refusal to ignore the appeals to one's higher sensibility. It demands, too, a recognition of the fact that most of the responses which to-day are considered dangerous, odd and nancyfied are really associated to the highest of moral values.

CHARLES HUMANA.

Letters to the Editors

Eleven and a half years in a U.S. goal

Washington,
Benighted States of America.

COMRADES,

Greetings and solidarity. Liberation has at last descended on this your slave after 11½ years in Washington State Penitentiary for the "crime" of second degree burglary—that is, taking food from the rich to feed the poor. Specifically, some canned food from a rich farmer's cellar to feed some starving WPA women and children who were on relief during the starvation thirties—that is, in the last depression, not this one coming on now!

I recall the days of Comrade Frank Leech's stay in Barlinnie Prison, and little did he know then that a comrade over here in the "Arsenal of Democracy" (sic!) was serving eighteen years for harbouring the same beliefs and, though thousands of miles away, a feeling of solidarity went out from me to him. Oh, yes, I failed to mention that it was not for being a modern Robin Hood, i.e., taking a bit of food from the rich to feed the poor, that I was sentenced to serve such a monstrous sentence—but for being a sympathizer (a fellow-traveller, the judge quipped) of that grandest of all organizations, the Industrial Workers of the World. Mind you, now, not even a member!

So I was sentenced in reality for my beliefs and not for what I did, and thus it was that I acquired the title "Rebel Joe" even in prison, and when you sent me those solidarity tickets through the war, I was firmly told that under no conditions would I be allowed to send in the required contribution to those "damned anarchists".

At last the bridge bit is taken out of my mouth and I can now talk. My, there is so much to tell that I cannot possibly tell all at this writing for my one "good" eye already begins to fail me.

One item should be told before concluding. Through the war for four or forty freedoms we prisoners were "given" an opportunity to "take our part" in the "war effort"! That is, we were taken out to work on private farms, harvesting

crops, under guard, of course. The pay for this work went as high as \$9.00 per day but there is a little catch in it, ha! ha!—you were expected to sign a yellow dog agreement that went something like this: "I, the undersigned, wishing to take my part in the war effort, have been given an opportunity to go out and harvest crops on private farms where shortages of labour exist. I further agree that out of any money received for such work that I shall receive only the amounts as provided under Remington Code laws, State of Washington, under Section etc., etc., blah, blah and so on." Well, it turned out that to "take your part in the war effort" became a catch phrase and he who really took your part was the politician as usual and the "part" turned out to be only a harmless little 55 per cent! Another 20 per cent was held in escrow until release maybe 8 or 9 years later and the 25 per cent you received at the time you first had to spend at the prison commissary to keep from starving as the main line fare was so scanty and putrid.

Well, this slave was conscripted and was sent out on a night crew (we worked all night—about 13 hours) and came in about 8 a.m., dog tired, frozen, sleepy, dirty and hungry, to sit down to the regular old main line slop; mush with skim milk, no sugar, and a slice of state bread. Well, it was too much for this rebel and since I couldn't get any response out of unorganized American sheep and cattle, I decided to make individual resistance. So when they came around with the patriotic "take your part in the war effort" slips, I refused to sign! Asked why, I told them it was contrary to my IWW beliefs to scab whether in prison or out. "So you are one of those damned agitators!" rasped the bull (guard). "Well, over to the hole with him"—so I did some time in the hole for my beliefs. Years later, the gullible ones told me how right I had been and how the politicians "took their part" in the war effort.

Solidarity until the workers of the world break their chains. Congratulations for a courageous paper and let us all finish Capitalism ere it finishes us!

REBEL JOE HUNSINGER.

COSTS OF PRODUCTION

DEAR COMRADES,

I read with interest your detailed information re cost of producing *Freedom*.

For many years I have supported revolutionary journals and still do, but I cannot understand why the Executives have to appeal to the masses to send funds to keep their journals going when they are sent to them at such a ridiculous figure.

Any worker worthy of the name should support a paper like *Freedom* without the need for appeals.

Yours for the Idea,
Australia. A. NOSELLI.

SMILE, PLEASE!

Mr. Mackay of the *News Chronicle* was dead right when he referred recently to the "melancholy anarchists". I have yet to see what might be termed a "sunny" headline in *Freedom*. Your comrade's review of Mr. Webb who happily lived far beyond his time, was about what I expected!

Wadebridge. F.E.R.
[We undertake to print all the "sunny" news readers might be willing to send us.—Eds.]

ESPERANTO

KARAJ S-JROJ,

I notice that the Anarchist movement is favourably inclined towards Esperanto, and I wonder whether your attention has been drawn to the Declaration which is to be presented to U.N.E.S.C.O.

It may be argued that since Anarchists have no confidence in the United Nations Organisation, there is no point in their participating in this Declaration (or Petition). My view is that it does not matter by whom Esperanto is spread, but an increase in the number of Esperantists facilitates contact between people in different parts of the World, thus breaking down ill-informed prejudice; and provides a larger audience for all internationalists, since the language creates a sense of the Community of Man and stimulates a wide outlook.

A copy of the English version of the Declaration is enclosed, in the hope that you may wish to publicise it.

West Wickham. J. A. COX.
[We regret that lack of space prevents us from reproducing the Declaration mentioned above. It can be obtained from the British Esperanto Association, Inc., 140, Holland Park Avenue, London, W.11.—Eds.]

IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

we shall publish extracts from letters received criticising G.V.'s comments on vegetarianism in his "Land Notes" in the last issue of *Freedom*.

THERE IS A FUTURE IN TRADE-UNIONISM

Salaries on a capitalist scale are being paid to trade union leaders who have been given jobs with the Transport Commission.

Receiving £5000 each are Mr. John Benstead, general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, and Mr. W. P. Allen, general secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen. For each of them it is more than a £3000 rise above his trade union salary level.

Whole-time members of the Commission's London Transport executive include Mr. John Cliff, former assistant secretary of the Transport Workers' Union. His new salary is £3500.

Nor are these salaries all. Expenses are to be added. The amount? "Not yet fixed" is the official Ministry statement to Parliament.

Evening Standard, 11/11/47.

GOOD-BYE TO ORANGE JUICE

Lubricated with orange-juice and dry martinis, lighted with brilliant fluorescence, well fed and well warmed, the United Nations has rapidly acquired a taste for life in New York. Now that the suggestion has again been raised that the next Assembly might be held in Europe—in Paris or Geneva—the lights of Manhattan gleam a little more brightly in delegates' eyes, the lure of warm hotel rooms and of well-filled shops pulls a little more strongly.

Where else could every one of these comforts be found? Where else—for one thing—could the Delegates' Bar get not only unlimited quantities of liquor but also its daily ration of eighteen gallons of orange juice, its five gallons of tomato juice?

Observer, 9/11/47.

WHERE IS THAT HOUSING SHORTAGE?

For a sum in the region of £40,000, Sir John Leigh has bought Juniper Hill, the home of the late Lord Bennett, at Mickleham in Surrey.

Sir John Leigh, a cotton millionaire, lives only 18 miles away, at Witley Park, Godalming. He also has a house in Berkeley-square, and a place in Inverness-shire. Two years ago he bought an office block near Oxford-circus for about £250,000 as an investment.

Evening Standard, 18/11/47.

CAPITALIST PUSSIES

In Camden, N.J., two tomcats, Pitty Sing and Budgie, were formally adjudged the beneficiaries of the \$36,000 estate of Sarah Y. Furber, a retired schoolmarm.

Time (U.S.A.), 17/11/47.

VOTE—WHAT FOR?

In Schuylkill Haven, Pa., voters were disconcerted to learn that they had elected to their borough council a John McHarty, Republican, who did not exist.

Time (U.S.A.), 17/11/47.

THAT LABOUR SHORTAGE (I)

In Windsor Great Park is the Royal School which the Prince Consort started 102 years ago to ensure that the Royal Household never ran short of properly educated servants.

Through the Press

BY SOME FREAK OF CHANCE

Henry Ford's empire—a vast business built up on a motor-car chassis—has its strongholds in many lands: hands both black and white handle the parts that make up the thousands of vehicles his works turn out weekly.

By some freak of chance, the Ford factory in Germany, which is one of the firm's biggest in Europe, was almost completely unharmed by the Allied blitz, though it stands close to Cologne, one of the most battered of German cities.

Parade, 8/11/47.

Another tribute to the accuracy of the Allied bombing—as directed by international capitalism.

DOWN MEXICO HARD WAY

While governmental officials issue statements and the various government offices announce plans and programmes for combating the economic crisis, economic conditions worsen steadily throughout Mexico. The number of unemployed has already passed the 300,000 mark and there is no evidence that the Administration is at all prepared to solve the problems confronting the nation.

The political leaders and their hangers-on have succeeded in one thing only—to call a halt to the Revolution which contained such promise not only for Mexico alone, but for much of Latin America.

In Latin America, where there exists hardly any effective socialist movement except in Chile and Argentina, the effects of American imperialism are readily to be seen. The Pan-American Conferences at Rio de Janeiro, Mr. Truman's plan to standardize Latin American military equipment with that of the United States, the efforts of the Import-Export Bank, all these are but symptoms of the efforts of American imperialism to dominate the Latin American countries.

The Socialist Call (U.S.A.), 31/10/47.

PERON v. GLAND

For Argentina's Dictator Juan Domingo Peron it was all very embarrassing. Dr. Bernardo Alberto Houssay, the first South American to win a Nobel Prize in medicine, was an Argentine, but he was no Peronista. In fact, Peron had fired him from the faculty of the University of Buenos Aires in 1946 because he signed a wartime manifesto favouring "democracy and American solidarity".

At first the Government-controlled papers kept quiet; what was left of the opposition press printed glowing stories. Then the Peron party line was passed along. The pro-Peron *La Epoca*, charging that the prize had been "granted with political ends", went to town with a caricature of Dr. Houssay and an attack on the originality and value of his studies of the pituitary gland. "This gland detective", it said, should have been doing something useful like tackling tuberculosis and syphilis.

Time (U.S.A.) 17/11/47.

UNHAPPY MARRIAGE

That is what people are thinking of to-day: food. If I had doubted this before, I would have been convinced by many letters I have received during the last few weeks, which are full of passionate concern about food, which is not greed.

It is not exactly hunger. It is more as if we were unhappily married to our food. One woman wrote me a letter about the wartime pork pie exactly as if it were a husband whom she detested and could not leave.

She told herself that as long as she could buy a pork pie she need not fear hunger, just as some discontented wives tell themselves that at any rate their husbands keep them from being lonely. But she loathed it for its tastelessness, its breadiness, its unconvincing colour, and, above all, its unpopularity. Call yourself a man, she said to it, in effect.

This is something that cannot be laughed out of court.

Rebecca West,

Evening Standard, 17/11/47.

There are sixty pupils in the school to-day; a hard core, at least, for the staffs which are needed for many Royal Households. Buckingham Palace alone has 226 butlers, footmen, valets, cooks, maids.

The Leader, 22/11/47.

(II)

Twenty-five embroideresses worked on Princess Elizabeth's and of her bridesmaids' dresses for two months. The actual working hours were 1,020 hours on the wedding train, 950 on the dress, and 440 on each bridesmaid's dress.

News Chronicle, 20/11/47.

APPEAL TO GALLAGHER

I will be frank with you when I say that my desire to see the British Communist Party assert itself a bit is not because I have suddenly seen the light according to Karl Marx, but because I believe it to be a fact that Great Britain does require some more help from the U.S.A. as soon as possible.

Leaving aside the Marshall Plan, which is still suspended in the uncertainties of 1948; there is no doubt that the amount of immediate assistance which any democratic country receives from the U.S.A. is directly dependent upon the apparent activities in the country of the Communist Party.

It is impossible to over-estimate the value which the Communist Party in France and Italy have been to M. Ramadier and M. de Gasperi in their successful attempts to obtain immediate help from the U.S.A. But what about us? We are not even in the queue! And whose fault is that?

Yours, Mr. Gallagher. You have let down your country; you have failed to alarm either the British, which is understandable, or the Americans, which is deplorable and inexcusable.

King-Hall in the Leader, 8/11/47.

THE PRICE OF HONESTY

So high were the principles of Judge Yoshitada Yamaguchi that he could not patronise the Black Market.

He resolved to support his family on his legal salary and his legal rations. He died of tuberculosis and malnutrition.

The story of the struggle between principle and an empty stomach emerged when his diary was published in the Tokio newspapers.

The Judge subsisted on thin soup, giving the legal rations to his family. He even refused food sent from a farming area by his father-in-law, turning it over to his hungry family.

To his wife's pleas that they sell some personal belongings and buy food on the Black Market, he replied: "How can one who judges others do any black-marketing?"

Last March extreme malnutrition set in. In August, Yamaguchi collapsed. A doctor told him he had tuberculosis. He was taken to the home of his father-in-law. But even then he refused to eat anything from the Black Markets.

In mid-October, still clinging to his principles, Judge Yamaguchi died.

His widow, telling reporters about it, lamented: "It is horrible these days to be married to an honest man."

Sunday Dispatch, 9/11/47.

SPIV OR GENIUS?

A little point that seems to have been overlooked in the Minister of Labour's "spivs and drones" direction Order is that a very important class—our geniuses, who are seldom "gainfully employed"—will almost certainly do very badly when presenting their objections as required to an umpire.

I have been checking over some precedents to illustrate the types who might be expected to be floored.

Tennyson waited ten years after leaving university before publishing "In Memoriam". Ernest Dowson lived ungainfully, but how productively in penury in a cabman's shelter. The Brontës and Jane Austen lived on their parents. Goldsmith sponged in a state of happy genius on his relatives.

Bernard Shaw has explained that while writing his novels "I didn't support my mother in her declining years—I was tied to her apron strings." Coleridge and Southey would have had to explain to the umpire that they were devoting themselves to pantisocracy, a form of communism.

Matthew Arnold would have received the Ministry of Labour's smiles. He was a civil servant. Perhaps they would have made him an umpire.

News Chronicle, 13/11/47.

Anarchist Commentary

FOR THE GOOD OF THE PARTY?

OWING to his indiscretion over the Budget secrets to an over-zealous reporter, Dr. Dalton had to resign his office as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Apart from marking yet one more milestone on the road of Sir Stafford Cripps to personal dictatorship, this might not be worth mentioning save to illustrate yet once more for the benefit of the self-deluded why politicians are in business.

The papers referred to the "personal tragedy" of Dalton's resignation and to the fact that a trivial matter like this—that is to say, a matter in which his disclosures had no personal gain, as had the Budget leakages of a previous Cabinet Minister, or the Press disclosures of the Labour M.P. recently expelled from Parliament—should eclipse so brilliant a career, and that the result would be so disastrous for Dalton personally. This is, of course, a frank confession that politicians are pursuing a career in their personal interests, and nobody with any sense would try to deny it, any more than they would claim that lawyers were pursuing their careers not from personal motives of ambition and advancement, but because they were interested in seeing justice triumph.

Having admitted this, we have to ask ourselves why people devote their energies, powers and brains to politics when they are not self-interested politicians, and have no prospects of a seat in the Cabinet, or even in the local council. The politicians get into office only on the sacrifices made by the humble rank and file of

their party, and the triumph of the Labour in 1945 in particular is solely a tribute to countless sacrifices and hard work made by working men and women, the majority of whom would have encouraged an ambitious working lad in a professional career (for which he would seldom thank his benefactors) but would in normal circumstances seldom think of going out of their way to help the well-to-do son of middle-class and upper-class families to make a career.

The miners' lodges who so often help a promising local lad to a career in medicine, for instance, would not be mugs enough to do the same for the rich man's son—in anything except politics! Why in politics? In politics the man who advocates a party's cause is identified with the policies of the party, and people think that by helping his career they are helping the party. But in every case it is frankly admitted that the man himself is thinking of his career. "The tragedy of Dalton's resignation." The "tragedies" over countless other politicians whose careers have been halted by one personal affair or another obtruding into their public life.

We quite see the "tragedy" of the man who is carving out a comfortable career on the backs of the deluded masses being suddenly cut short in his chosen profession by a Parliamentary enquiry as in the case of the Conservative Robert Boothby or the Labour Garry Allighan. But to Anarchists the real tragedy is the fact that, when the people who did the spade work at putting them in the position they hold read how upset they are at one thing or another being an obstacle to their chosen career, they never think that it is *they* who are the necessary background to that career, as the patients are to the doctor, or the accused are to the lawyer.

Special Branch Abuses

In our last issue we pointed out the extent to which the police, in many ways, are to-day extending and abusing their power. We also showed elsewhere how the Royal Wedding was being used by the most reactionary elements of the police, the Special Branch of Scotland Yard, to interfere with the liberty of foreign radicals and revolutionaries at present living in this country.

The extent to which these so-called "precautions" went is shown by a recent news item in the *Evening Standard*, which states that:

"During the week-end, special branch officers began a house-to-house check of all 'undesirable' foreign men and women in London.

"Most of them were warned to stay in their homes on Thursday.

"Anyone found along the route, they were told, will be liable to immediate arrest as a 'suspected' person."

This, of course, is the most blatant use of arbitrary police power. A titled nonentity is married, a few titled nonentities—or worse—come over from the continent to take part in the mumbo-jumbo, and for this reason thousands of people who have suffered for the democracy which our Government is supposed to support are subjected to insults and restrictions from the police, and are even threatened with arrest under a perfectly arbitrary charge if they so much as go into the streets where the wedding procession passes as an allegedly public spectacle.

Every day, in new ways, the police are spreading their power over our lives. The Special Branch already represents the basis on which an openly reactionary government could easily build up a British Gestapo or OGPU. It is an institution whose activities should be continually exposed and combatted by every means at the disposal of all people, not only anarchists, who have the most elementary concern for their own liberty and that of others.

Challenge To Tradition

Nothing could have done more to expose the snobbery and commercialism that besets the conventional world of art than the recent trial of Hans van Meegeren, the greatest art forger of all time, who successfully "foxed" all the experts and succeeded in passing off as genuine "old masters" the paintings which he had made in his own studio.

Clearly, if the art critics could not tell the difference between a genuine Vermeer and an imitation of Vermeer by van Meegeren, the latter is no less a master of the craft of painting than Vermeer himself. As the *Manchester Guardian* points out:

"... if a 'Vermeer' by van Meegeren is now accounted less valuable than a 'Vermeer' still believed to have been painted by Vermeer, the difference measures the proportion of the genuine



WHEN WILL HE WAKE UP?

A CARTOON similar to the above appeared in "Freedom" of January 4th, 1947, and many comrades wrote to us asking for copies or for the original. Here the cartoon has been redrawn and reproduced larger and more clearly, and copies on good paper with a 2 inch border are available on application at a price of 9d. each. Orders as promptly as possible, please.

Old Master's price that is attributable to scarcity rather than to art."

It is a strange reflection on the values of our present world that a man, who, if not a great original artist, is at least a consummate craftsman, should be forced to deliberate imitation in order to gain recognition. It is, indeed, all of a piece with the situation in which a Van Gogh almost starves while he is alive, yet his pictures fetch fantastic prices after his death.

As elsewhere, the values of a commercial society have completely corrupted standards in the arts, and particularly in those visual arts which are manifested in portable objects, whose uniqueness is one of their main characteristics. It remains yet for some social historian to make a study of the whole cult of "Old Masters" and to trace why many palpably inferior artists still have an enormously inflated reputation because their works have, by means of scarcity, gained a vast market value.

YOU APPROVE!

We will publish in the next issue a selection of letters from readers following the announcement that the price of "Freedom" is to be increased to 3d. a copy as from January 10th. It is clear from the letters so far received that readers understand the reasons which forced us to make this decision, and with literally two exceptions, support it.

The response to our circular letter to subscribers in this country has been fairly encouraging, replies being received from about 10% in the first week. Many supported the idea of a circular letter at regular intervals, and we can assume readers that this is an intention. We are now waiting to hear from the other 90%! Make a special effort and get in touch with us before the next issue appears.

Press Fund

November 8th—20th:

Yedder Crossing, B.C.: H.K.L. 16/9; Fulham: F.C.D. 1/-; Horley: B.G. 2/6; Anon: 5/-; Holbury: L.S. 5/-; Glasgow: A.M. 2/6; Tamworth: V.E.R. 4/8; Swansea: R.R. £2/2/-; Leeds: A.E. 1/-; Thornton Heath: S.H. 2/6; Roehampton: D.S.B. 5/-; Bardney: W.A.L. 1/6; Liverpool: H.H.J. £1/1/-; Cardiff: H.W.D. 5/-; Colwyn Bay: W.D.R. £1; London: A.E.H. 5/6; Birmingham: B.P. 2/3; London: R.R. 10/-; Whiteway: L.G.W. 5/-; Belfast: J.M. 10/-; London: W.E.C. 1/8; Edinburgh: D.G. 2/4; Stockport: R.F. 2/6; Llanelli: E.G.R. 8/4.

£9 3 0
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Freedom of the Press

A FEW days ago the editor of a local weekly newspaper, *The Morcambe and Heysham Visitor*, was acquitted on a charge of seditious libel in connection with an article which he wrote attacking the Jews.

We have nothing but abhorrence for the racist arguments put forward by this writer in the article which was the subject of the charge. On the other hand, we recognise that freedom of speech and writing are indivisible; that our most extreme opponent has a right to state his opinions, and that any infringement on his right can have its eventual effect on our own liberty. The attempt to suppress reactionary propaganda is in itself reactionary and introduces precedents which can be used in due course against revolutionary movements.

Therefore, although we may have different reasons from the members of the jury who tried the case, we have no quarrel with the fact that James Caunt was not punished for his unpleasant expression of unpleasant opinions.

But the attitude of the Judge did arouse in us certain cynical reflections. The case was tried by Justice Birkett, who also conducted the trial of the four anarchists at the Old Bailey nearly three years ago. At the end of the present case, the judge remarked:

"It is in the highest degree essential—and I cannot over-emphasise the importance of it to you—that nothing should be done in this court to destroy or to weaken the liberty of the Press."

We cannot remember that the same judge showed any such strong concern for the freedom of the press when it was a case of trying anarchists. It is the old story, that while, when the anarchists talk of freedom of the press, they mean it literally, even for their most bitter and violent opponents, the ruling class, when they use the same phrase, mean it to have relation only to those who are not likely to endanger materially their own interests. It would have been mighty inconvenient during the war if anarchist propaganda had begun to affect the actions of soldiers in a practical way, so that in this case the freedom of the press was in fact tacitly ignored.

It all boils down to the fact that all the old liberal phrases are untenable in a capitalist state society. Liberty of freedom, writing and action are necessarily limited where state and property interests arise; at some point or other these principles clash with the purposes of the ruling class and are calmly thrust aside. They can only have real and complete existence in a free society where property interests and privileges no longer exist.

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Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS:

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.
At 8, Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1.
NOV. 30th. John Olday
"Survey of the German Situation"
DEC. 7th. Jack Phillips
"Anarchism—A new approach"
DEC. 14th. Bert Smith
"Religion and Anarchism"

N.E. LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

At Flat 3, 43, New Wanstead
(Nr. Green Man, E.11)
DEC. 2nd. Bill Anglis
"Arab Unrest in North Africa."
PUBLIC MEETING
Thursday, December 11th, at 8 p.m.
Co-op Hall Midway Parade, Cranbrook
Road, Ilford
(Bus routes 25a and 129 from Ilford to
Victoria Road).
Anarchist and Socialist Speakers
with Fenner Brockway demand
"End Conscription, The Badge of Slavery".

MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST GROUP

Sunday, 7.15 p.m.
NOV. 30th. J. H. Moorhouse
"Anarchism and Health."
Coopers Hall, Shaw Street, Liverpool.
7.30 p.m.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

Public Meetings at
CENTRAL HALLS, BATH ST.
will be held every Sunday evening.
Speakers:
Preston Clements, John Gaffney, Frank
Leech, Eddie Shaw.
Doors open 6.30 p.m.

Comrades interested in the formation of
a Discussion Group in the Addlestone area
should write to:

Constance Stork,
55, Byron Road, Addlestone, Surrey.

TO READERS IN WEST LONDON:

A preliminary meeting to discuss the
formation of a FREEDOM DISCUSSION
GROUP in West London, will be held on
Monday, December 1st at 7.30 p.m., at
9, Rosetti Gardens, Flood Street, Chelsea,
S.W.3.

ALL ARE WELCOME.

Enquiries to: John Brown,
211F, Guinness Buildings, W.6.

CABARET "LIBIDO"

NEW POETRY : SKETCHES : SONGS
Comrades are invited to the World
Premiere of the Cabaret "Libido", to be
held on Thursday, 4th December, at 7 p.m.,
at the Friends Meeting House, 594, High
Road, Tottenham, N.17.