

Freedom

A N A R C H I S T F O R T N I G H T L Y

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Threepence

FIGHT THE POLICE STATE

A NUMBER of events in recent weeks have drawn attention, not only to the folly and danger of the law, but also to the fact that those who make and administer it, however liberal they pretend to be, are in fact still completely caught in the toils of the theory of punishment which lies at its basis.

Firstly, as an indication of the complexity and absurdity of English law, it has been decided by Parliament that a special committee shall be set up, presided over by the Lord Chancellor, to go through the statute book and weed out the anachronistic laws which have no relevance to present-day conditions and yet which can be invoked at any time because they have never been repealed. It is estimated that the task is of such complexity that it will take fifteen years to complete, and it would therefore be fruitless for us even to attempt to reveal all the absurd laws that still hang over us. It will be sufficient to say that it is still illegal to sell newspapers on a Sunday, that under a fourteenth-century Act it is a crime to overhear a conversation, even involuntarily, that potatoes must not be dug in Essex with a metal spade, that Welshmen cannot eat leeks at Easter and Yorkshire pudding must by law be eaten with roast beef in Yorkshire on a Sunday.

The Lord Chief Justice may well admit that "These laws could easily have the most grotesque results if we were all foolish enough to make them operate." The fact remains that at times, when it suits them, the authorities are always ready to invoke some ridiculous antique law to deal with a person they wish to get out of the way or punish. Cases under the Witchcraft laws still take place occasionally, and recently in Scotland an old law of the eighteenth century, making it illegal to conceal a pregnancy, has been invoked by the police for their own purposes. It can reasonably be guessed that, however many absurd laws are weeded out by the new committee, those which can be of any use in effectively restricting the individual's freedom will be retained, however ridiculous they may seem. Indeed, one of the results of stirring the cobwebs may well be to bring back into operation some of the bad old laws which had been forgotten.

Equality a Myth

How difficult it can sometimes be for a man to obtain a rectification of an injustice under English law was shown by the case of Maurice Samuel Leachinsky, who, six years ago, was wrongfully arrested by two Liverpool detectives, without a warrant, on a charge of possessing cloth alleged to be stolen. The charges against Leachinsky were dismissed, but although his arrest had been patently illegal, the authorities in Liverpool refused to give him compensation. For six years Leachinsky fought through the Courts to obtain satisfaction, and in the end,

after taking the matter to the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords, it was finally decided in his favour. After all this mighty labour, the law gave birth to an award of £250! The costs of the case were £10,000, which the citizens of Liverpool will pay in their taxes. Which goes to show that, while the law is always eager and quick to condemn a man who has violated the slightest of its statutes, it moves with greatest reluctance to give a man any of his rights, which are equally laid down under its statutes. Equality before the law is a myth, since the State is always given such preference over the individual that only a really persistent man can stay the course in a struggle against it.

Penalties Increased

The injustices already existing in the present law have been increased by the recent Act, sponsored by a Labour Home Secretary, and opposed only by 17 Labour M.P.'s, by which the penalty for attempted rape is increased from two to seven years. Apart from the obviously reactionary nature of such an act, it raises certain questions which reflect in an interesting manner on the attitude towards "justice" of the present law-makers in Britain.

Firstly, the law is put forward, with a great deal of sob-stuff about the feelings of the relatives of attacked girls, as an alleged deterrent. But no man attempts rape without the hope of achieving it, and the penalty for rape itself is one of fifteen years. If this has not been a deterrent, then one of seven years for an attempt will not be any

more effective, and the law will have no effect at all on reducing the number of cases. In fact, statistics recently published by the Home Office show that there are actually more cases of rape committed by men with previous charges than by first offenders. Which seems to indicate that, for this type of law-breaking, punishment is no deterrent.

Savage Retribution

The advocates of the law were not, however, content to stress its deterrent effect. Chuter Ede categorically stated that the object of punishing criminals was at least partly retribution. To hear this kind of old testament savagery coming from the lips of a self-styled progressive is in itself astonishing enough, but it is most significant as a commentary on the recent tendency by Government supporters to say, *apropos* of the Criminal Justice Bill, that the idea of "retribution" has been dropped and that criminal procedure should now aim at prevention and reform.

This kind of action on the part of the government shows clearly that the Criminal Justice Bill, with its few trifling reforms of prison procedure, does not in fact represent any new attitude towards the criminal, when it is balanced by a law which enabled reactionary judges to give vastly increased sentences. The attitude of judges in general on the question of sexual "crimes" is usually savage in the extreme, but it is certainly revealing that the so-called progressives of the Labour Government should take an attitude which shows such a complete ignorance of the kind of psychological derangement which induces men to commit or attempt persistent rapes.

No Justice by Law

This is an incident which shows the fundamental inability of any legal system to proceed on a human basis. Legal systems, both in their legislative and executive aspects, are concerned with the preservation of privilege and property, of the kind of social organisation that preserves them and the kind of social morality that supports them,

WAGES

THE move to peg wages which we discussed some weeks ago, is now looming large on the industrial horizon. But the Government, which has so far only paid lip-service to the idea of pegging profits too, has received scant support from the organised workers.

Conservative critics of the Socialist Government are very fond of asserting that the country is really run from Transport House; that the T.U.C. dictate and the Cabinet does as it is told. That, however, is middle-class propaganda: in fact, it is the T.U.C. which is the doormat for the Government, with the workers as the doormat for the T.U.C. Because there have been signs of a revolt from the rank and file, however, the T.U.C. is treading very gingerly in the matter of the white-paper on incomes and is pretending to put up a resistance to wage pegging without price- and profit-pegging.

Attlee, taking no chances, has called in Ernest Bevin to help put across the Cabinet point of view, because of Ernie's long association and prestige with the trade unions.

Rank & File Resist

The reaction of the workers was definite and immediate, however, and a day after the Government's appeal for a

standstill of incomes was announced 30,000 Clydeside shipyard workers demanded an immediate wage increase, and protested against any attempt to freeze wages. 4,000,000 other workers already have claims outstanding, too.

We have never found, ourselves, any great truth in this story of "too much money chasing too few goods", and we suspect that for some time now money has been getting shorter and shorter in relation to goods available for most workers. Of course, it depends on the goods one needs. While there are plenty of wireless sets in the shops, it is next to impossible to buy an ordinary cup and saucer.

The Government has stressed once again that if wages keep going up without an increase in the amount of goods available, there will be inflation. But this hardly fits with its export mania. The extra goods we might produce in return for our pay increase would not come into the home market anyway, but would be exported—so probably we are in for inflation whatever happens?

From the Government's point of view, there is a certain amount of sense in its being prepared to condone wage increases in undermanned, basic industries, to act as incentives in recruitment, but, if it can be called a policy, it is still a very vague and unformulated one.

The Anarchist Attitude

We have stated many times our attitude to wages in general and rises in particular. We detest the whole money system, and the more obvious its shortcomings can be made, the better we like it. Capitalism may be in its death-throes, but one thing is certain: that the system which has brought misery, disease, poverty and death to millions throughout the world, will continue to do so until it is destroyed by a social revolution. Only then will the iniquity of government and the fear of insecurity yield to freedom and well-being for all.

The Fortnight in Paris

(By Our Correspondent)

THE past fortnight has created around the ordinary Frenchman an atmosphere of fatality, of an immense and mysterious plot fomented by incomprehensible forces. The man in the streets feels himself becoming a character of Kafka—while, of course, knowing nothing of Kafka.

There was, first of all, the incomprehensible news of the free market in gold and the ban on bank notes. What was criminal (the holding and trading in gold and currencies) became legal; what was legal (retaining and exchanging notes of 5,000 francs) became suddenly a misdemeanour loaded with unknown and retrospective penalties! The stupor was so great that nobody even thought of being angry. A dozen measures of this kind, coming in a torrent, and the ordinary Frenchman—reputed to be such a grumbler and so critical even in his docility—became an ever-obedient slave.

A short tale about the famous blocking of banknotes—I give it for what it is worth. It was less, it appears, a measure of finance than a measure of security. The parties which threaten the present government, that is to say, the Communists and the Gaullists, have accumulated, it is said, during the "liberation" and since then, enormous funds for civil war. These funds are made up partly of gold, securities and blocked cur-

rencies, but a greater portion is made up of bundles of notes on the Bank of France. The governmental operation would be a double one: to annihilate the treasures of war in banknotes, and to reabsorb, by various means, the foreign currencies and gold which have been gradually "mobilised", to make them return to the coffers of the State. It would be difficult to say to what extent such an operation could succeed, the parties undoubtedly disposing of a great number of men of straw to effect in their own names the operations of depositing, declaring, etc. But it is also true that these men of straw are liable to disloyalties, and they may have their own monetary difficulties.

Burnt Offerings

After the gloomy story of the banknotes and gold, the second stroke of fate was the total destruction, by half-a-dozen fires, of the presents brought to Paris by the "train of Friendship".

This time, the ordinary Frenchman felt himself hit directly in the stomach. All the delicacies sent by the American uncle, and which everybody was preparing to taste, in little greedy mouthfuls, either enthusing on the generosity of Mr. Truman or storming against the people "who think to buy consciences by distributing bacon or powdered milk", in brief, all the charity or tempt-

ation intended from beyond the Atlantic for the empty bellies, went up in smoke. There again, the hidden powers certainly had a hand in it. But which?

For most of my neighbours, the secret intervention of the Communists is obvious "They did not wish to allow the Yankees to make publicity and inspire the gratitude of the belly among hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen."

The most astonishing thing (for the Frenchman, whether he is a glutton or starving, is above all preoccupied with eating in the best possible manner) is that this so-widespread supposition has not unloosed any more anger than the affair of the banknotes and gold. "After all, the Communists have their game to play, it's only natural." Few people have found the business disgusting; a very tiny number have found it admirable—"the party of the French renaissance has burnt the poisoned presents of the enemy: *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*". A few less heroic zealots prefer to insinuate that the Americans could very well have themselves burnt their "trash" in order to accuse the Communists of it (!), and then to hide the bad quality of their goods, and then to cover up pilferings!

To which others objected that the Communists are experts at this kind of filching followed by "accidents", and that the operation from their side could have had two aims: a wholesale theft of goods, then destruction of the rest, and thus of all means of checking, at the same time as of all means of "enemy" propaganda.

ASSASSINATION OF GANDHI

Arriving on top of all this, the news of the assassination of Gandhi spread a

(Continued on page 5)

THE PROBLEM OF D.P.s

WORLD OVER PRESS reports that: "after April, if shipping continues to improve, Europe's displaced persons and other refugees may be transported for re-settlement at the rate of about 10,000 a month. Such is the hope of the International Refugee Organization, now drawing up plans for 1948. In 1947 the year's total of displaced persons resettled was only about 7,000, although more than 10,000 were sent back to their own countries. These figures do not include Jews sent to Palestine and elsewhere.

"At the beginning of 1948 there remained in Austria, Italy and Germany some 1,600,000 displaced persons, uprooted by the war and the upheavals that followed, existing aimlessly and miserably, some herded together in camps, the majority scattered among a population generally unwilling to absorb them.

"In Austria the refugee population of 600,000, or nine per cent. of the indigenous population, is a serious embarrassment, the more so as the country is short of food. Many of the refugees are living as best they can on the fringe of the Austrian economy. Although labour is in demand in some industries, most of the refugees from Eastern Europe show a marked reluctance to take regular jobs in factories or on farms. The displaced persons have become a major issue in Austrian internal politics. And

the issue threatens Austria's foreign relations as well, for the Eastern Powers, especially Yugoslavia, charge that these refugees are plotting against them.

"Italy has about 280,000 displaced persons. Inside and outside the camps Yugoslavs predominate. Often they are men who, willingly or not, served the Germans or the puppet governments set in their country under the Nazi occupation. Having fled to Italy on the collapse of Germany, they dare not return home.

"In Germany the problem is bigger, but less immediately alarming than in Austria and Italy. Over 700,000 displaced persons are living in the three Western zones—a crushing burden on an economy which is near disaster. It has been impossible to absorb more than a few into the economic life of the country."

If the I.R.O. succeeds in fulfilling its programme it would take over thirteen years to resettle the D.P.'s now in Austria, Italy and Germany. But will the figure of 10,000 a month be reached in view of last year's meagre figure? It took two years before the I.R.O. formed a preparatory commission representing 17 governments. One must also be on guard against the sending back of refugees to their own countries as in the past undue pressure has often been used to repatriate them.

-Interpretations

Two great questions were posed from the first days of the spring [of 1848]: the social question and that of the independence of all nations, the emancipation at once of people at home and abroad. It was not a few individuals, nor was it a party; it was the admirable instinct of the masses which had raised these two questions above all others and which demanded a prompt solution to them. Everybody had understood that liberty is only a lie where the great majority of the population is reduced to leading a poverty-stricken existence, where, deprived of education, leisure and bread, they find themselves more or less destined to serve as stepping stones for the powerful and the rich. The social revolution then appears as a natural and necessary consequence of the political revolution. In the same way it was felt that while there was in Europe a single nation persecuted, the decisive and complete triumph of democracy would not be possible anywhere. The oppression of a people, even of a simple individual, is the oppression of all, and it is impossible to violate the liberty of one without violating the liberty of all. . . . The social question, a very difficult question, bristling with dangers and big with tempests, cannot be resolved either by a preconceived theory or by any isolated system. To solve it, there must be good will and unanimous agreement, there must be the faith of all in the right of everybody to an equal liberty. It is necessary to overthrow the material and moral conditions of our present existence, break into ruins from below this decaying social world, which has become impotent and sterile and which will be unable to contain or allow such a great mass of liberty. It will be necessary beforehand to purify our atmosphere and transform completely the surroundings in which we live, which corrupt our instincts and our wills, in limiting our hearts and our intelligences. The social question thus appeared from the first as the overthrowing of society.

MICHAEL BAKUNIN in 1848

OBJECTIONS TO ANARCHISM

A reader writes: "I have read with considerable interest your articles on 'Objections to Anarchism'. Now that you have answered J.R.H.'s 6 points, I wonder if I might suggest a few more,* which I am sure many must be asking:

(1) By its nature an Anarchist society would be singularly inadapted to war, and an easy victim for imperialist aggressors (vide Spain, Russia in 1917). How, then, can any one country hope to succeed unless every other country joins in simultaneously, which would mean a world advance at the rate of the slowest country? It is not much use leaping from the frying-pan of this government into the fire of Russian or American invasion!"

IT will be appreciated that the territory covered by this question is extremely extensive. But the problem is such a crucial one that any responsible person who wishes to see social justice established must pose it to himself, and feel some confidence in his answer. Considerations of space compel us to eschew detailed argument and we shall only seek to indicate the main lines along which the problem of counter-revolutionary intervention can be tackled.

An established anarchist society must clearly be "inadapted to war", but that is not to say that revolutionary workers struggling to establish such a society will necessarily fall "easy victims for imperialist aggressors". Nor, indeed, were Spain or the Russia of 1917 easy victims, and it is arguable that the dismantling of a revolutionary struggle from within

by political schemers and defective revolutionary vision was a more potent cause of defeat than the imperialist assaults from without. Furthermore, it is just at revolutionary moments that reactionary forces are at their weakest, and it is a mistake to visualize the revolution as being a weak, though admirable current, inevitably overwhelmed by the strong and brutal counter-revolution. This point will be elaborated later.

If it were a question of the revolution establishing an anarchist society in one country, to be followed in other countries after the lapse of several years, then it would be utopian to wait, as the question suggests, till coincidence brought the revolution simultaneously in all countries at once. But to pose the issue thus is unrealistic. Revolutionary situations are not isolated events peculiar to one country alone, but manifestations of world-wide unrest. This is clearly shown in the European revolutions of 1848 which drove reaction on to the defensive everywhere. But the nations are even less isolated from one another now than they were then. Slumps in one country have their repercussions elsewhere; 1936 was a year not only of revolution in Spain, but of revolutionary stay-in strikes in France and America also. It is not therefore a matter of waiting for the revolution in other countries but of assisting the natural tendency of revolutions to spread (for a variety of reasons, the Russian and Spanish revolutions tried to inhibit rather than encourage this tendency—an important contributory factor in their defeats). The counter-revolution thrived on their isolation and their mistakes.

Revolutionists often speak glumly

of the power of reaction. Too often it is a power which has been handed back to a frightened and shaken ruling class by a too timid revolting class. It cannot be too clearly grasped that, in history, revolutionary moments have been moments of fear and indecision and weakness on the part of reaction. Revolutionists seem to doubt the power of revolutions to spread, but reactionaries don't make the same mistake, hence their immediate sinking of national disputes in order to join hands against the revolution. They know well enough that the revolution makes a tremendous appeal to the masses over whom reaction rules. Put in another way, the revolution can rely on a huge fifth column composed of the workers elsewhere. Its safety in one part of the world can only be secured by revolutionary action on the part of the workers in other parts. It can only survive by spreading. Its chief weapon will therefore be propaganda, both direct and also the propaganda of example. It must not stress the merely geographical distinctions of nationality resting on hazy patriotic dogma, but the fundamental unity of working-class interest which rests on solid economic fact. Intervention is traditionally unpopular—let the revolution play up this instinctive distaste of workers for counter-revolutionary manoeuvres.

Such underlining of the international character of revolutionary aspirations may, if thoroughly understood and translated in action, completely hamstring the reaction. And the revolution has only itself to blame if it retains such handles for reaction to seize as the maintenance of a money economy, and a wage system. Conversely the retention of these institutions (not to mention

others as well) which have their "justification" in the securing of unequal property rights can only help to disperse the revolutionary spirit of the revolting workers. The more capitalistic institutions are retained, the more opportunities are provided for the victory of reaction and the more revolutionary spirit is undermined. Hence the strength of the revolution lies much less in its arms, than in its readiness to go to the limits in liberating the population. So far from weakening it, such 'boldness' is its greatest strength and its most practical policy, for the "cure for freedom is still more freedom".

Nevertheless, despite all this, it may be that the revolution may yet have to fall back on physical defence. If it does so, not only is it "singularly inadapted to war", but adaptation to conditions of armed struggle provide most serious dangers to the revolution, which must die if it becomes militaristic. It does not follow that it must eschew the use of defensive force altogether; but it does mean that it must apply revolutionary methods and not allow itself to be seduced by the "practical" suggestions of "revolutionary" militarists. Thus the "practical" people supported the replacement of the revolutionary—and voluntary—militias, in the Spain of early 1937, by the centralized, hierarchical, disciplined "People's Army" set up and controlled by the Communists. The spirit of the militias was only the revolutionary spirit of poorly armed workers, while the People's Army had conscription to fill its ranks, and different pay for officers and men, to say nothing of centralization of command with all the inefficiency and inhumanity which goes with it. Yet the victories of the revolution were all won by the militias; the People's Army met nothing but defeat.

In parenthesis, it may be added that the practical folk who thought that it was necessary to make concessions to Russia because the Russian government was willing to sell arms on certain conditions, were also proved wrong in the event. If the revolution sells itself to reactionary allies it will inevitably be defeated.

In sum, the allies of the revolution are the workers in other countries; these allies are not to be won by half-way concessions to reaction and such-like appeasement; the revolution needs confidence in itself and its revolutionary ideas. Any sign of weakening, of falling away from its highest ideals and aspirations will be eagerly seized upon by the reaction as handles for defeat and vengeance. While adherence to revolutionary principles and their wide proclamation gives full scope for the tendency of revolutions to spread and engulf the reaction before it has time to recover itself.

P.

VICTOR SERGE AND BOLSHEVISM

THE work of Victor Serge will not be forgotten by those who search for the truth on the subject of the great and disastrous experiment of two generations. The Russian Revolution and Bolshevism had in him an irreplaceable witness. His loss leaves a great gap among the men who stood for a libertarian socialism.

Born of a Russian refugee in Belgium, Victor Kibalchich appeared in Paris in 1913 at the trial of the "Tragic Bandits", as editor of the paper *L'Anarchie*, for having put forward, under the pseudonym of Le Réfif, the theory of "individual reprisals". His defence was scornful, both of his fellow defendants and of the tribunal, which condemned him to a term of imprisonment and decreed his expulsion.

Within Russia

Victor Serge pursued his revolutionary education in Catalonia during the 1914-18 war; he quickly rallied to the Bolsheviks and carried out important functions in the new Russian regime, at Moscow and Petrograd. Sent specially to Berlin, he there directed the editing of *International Correspondence*, the twice-weekly press bulletin of the Comintern. After his return to Russia, he became associated more or less openly, towards 1927, with the Trotskyist tendency, with, as a result, his disgrace and a series of deportations, imprisonments, etc. An international campaign saved him from Stalin's grip and allowed him to live by his pen, first in France, then in Mexico. The work of Victor Serge, novels, autobiographies, essays and review articles, is of very rich interest for the revolutionary movement. But it presents from our point of view a theoretical and moral ambiguity of which Victor

Serge, up to his premature death (which took place two months ago) did not, unfortunately, succeed in disentangling himself. The present article is dedicated to the critical examination of the last article of Victor Serge, on the Russian Revolution, a veritable "testament" published by *Révolution prolétarienne* in November, 1947.

In many ways, this "testament" is disappointing. It constitutes, in relation to the recent evolution of its author, a retreat to his old positions. He presents, in vague terms, the mitigated defence of Bolshevism, by a man who has recognised its defects, but who has been able to see nothing positive, neither on this side nor on that. The facts which Serge mentions only feebly support his thesis, or even openly contradict it. The reasonings are so badly followed that it is necessary to substitute oneself for the author to find a logical framework in the whole of his work. In general, the demonstration of the "fertility of Russian Bolshevism", as a theoretical and practical experiment in revolution, is here compressed into a few sentimental affirmations.

Serge and Bolshevism

Let us discuss them, since they seem to be the principal motivation of the positions in which Victor Serge was fixed by his death.

1. The Bolshevik "cohort" was the product of a natural selection leading to an extraordinarily well-adapted homogeneous human type.

The personal admiration of Serge for the fellow travellers of his past, all dead

"The enlargement of freedom has always been due to heretics who have been unrequited during their day and defamed when dead."

George Jacob

HOLYOAKE.

to-day, is very understandable. He was recognised and still saw himself as the last survivor in the "iron phalanx" which was tempered by so many common trials and memories.

But it remains that this homogenous phalanx of supermen destroyed itself by means of which the most common were provocation, denunciation and calumny; to such an extent that the "natural selection" (under the regime of reasons of State) ended by causing the victory of Stalin and his bloody train; the tree shall be judged by its fruits.

2. Stalin and his regime doubtless resemble Lenin and his, but as the paricide resembles his father.

"Mussolini," Serge tells us, "is also the spiritual son of the Socialists of *L'Avanti!*, but he is so dialectically . . . There is no more in the Lenin-Stalin relationship."

Let us note simply that Mussolini did not make of Angelica Balabanoff the holy patron of Italy, and that Lenin, in his "testament", designates Stalin as the most probable, if not the most desirable of the heritors of his personal power.

3. It was necessary to exterminate the old Bolsheviks even to the last man in order to create the breach which allowed Stalinism to consolidate itself.

Similar bloody purges are familiar to all the totalitarianisms; Hitler (30th June, 1934), Mussolini, Franco and other have practiced them on their fellows. And one's relative sympathy towards the victims should not allow one to forget that they were the instruments of other crimes in the "infernal series".

4. The Blood Baths since 1927 show that there has been a complete change of policy.

Even on the admission of Trotsky and Victor Serge, most of the executions coincided with the adoption by Stalin of the policy advocated by the executed men. "He shot his rivals in order to take their programmes from them," or vice versa. The executions are then only simple substitutions of persons, in a general sense of conduct obedient to common principles.

And Serge, who calls the purge of 1936-8 "the most bloody act of force in all history," here reckons cheaply the massacres of Cronstadt.

5. The Bolshevik regime "enlivened" Russia so far that it has been able to support a wartime drain of twelve or sixteen million men; and it has prepared, in the forced labour camps, a population ripe to become from one month to the next, the active citizens of a workers' democracy.

The "Tsarist regime" was such that Russia could not support a war without changing it into a revolution, and that because the Russian people had been able to defend against authority their internal world and the autonomy of the workers in the workshop or in the fields. Nothing can assure us that a universal prison will provide apprenticeship for liberty.

6. The concentration-camp worlds are vast factories of revolutionaries.

I confess to not being able to understand the reasoning which justifies the establishment of a regime of force by the necessity of suppressing it. Besides, I find exaggerated the evaluation by Serge of the Vlassoff movement as socially revolutionary. Where is the theoretical and practical progress, since Machno?

P.

Aga Khan—New Comrade?

Sir,—Some opinions expressed by the late Mahatma Gandhi on matters of general importance may interest the public, so I venture to report them.

The Nawab of Bhopal and I had interviews with him in the spring of 1946 at Poona to find a formula that might satisfy both Congress and League, and after we had failed I had another interview with him on the question of Indians in South Africa. When it was over I asked him his opinion of Marx's philosophy. Gandhi at once said that his own ideal was the same as Marx's, i.e., "that the State should wither away," but that he did not believe the desired end, the collapse of all Governments, could ever come by Marx's Dialectic. On the contrary, the principles of non-violence and obedience to conscience once practised would inevitably make "the State wither away".

Then he said that a society's civilization should not be judged by its powers

over the forces of nature, nor by the power of its literature and art, but by the gentleness and kindness of its members towards all living beings. He reminded me of Kropotkin's theories that primitive man hated bloodshed and cruelty and that if this were proved exact then there had been a growth of the power of evil. He also remarked that the ancient South American custom of human sacrifice, with the proud consent of the victim, was less degrading than mass murder by conscript armies maddened by a scientific propaganda of hate and lies.

There was never any suggestion of "other-worldliness" as the motive force to bring about a truly civilized society built on love and forbearance but that man's proud place in the universe was justified only if he obeyed the highest commands of conscience.

France. AGA KHAN.

Letter to *The Times*, 5/2/48.

A Wave of Little Strikes

ONE of the most interesting strikes for some time began and ended recently near Sheffield. The National Coal Board, which must be well on the way to making itself thoroughly unpopular with miners, announced its intention of closing down Waleswood Colliery, Sheffield, as uneconomical. The miners working at the pit, however, thought otherwise, and did the sensible thing—started a stay-in strike.

We have always maintained that the "stay-in" was a much more effective method of striking than the "walk-out", and in circumstances such as these, it was most appropriate. Threat of closure has been hanging over Waleswood for seven months and came to a head on Monday, Feb. 9th, when the morning shift found timber and machinery withdrawn from certain places. They promptly sat down and stayed-in, all 292 of them, and the afternoon shift was not allowed to go down.

The men are not merely being cussed. They really do think that the pit is not yet nearly used up, and have in fact consistently smashed their production targets to prove that the coal is there to be had. Couple this with the facts that the pit is known locally as the "happy pit" because of the team spirit existing there, and that if it were closed down it would mean the miners going to other pits further from their homes, and it will be seen why the men objected so strongly.

Mutual Aid from Above

A strike committee was formed on the surface and, backed up by the womenfolk, they made a good job of looking after the strikers. Hot lunches and fish-and-chip suppers were sent down to them, and they announced their intention of staying down a month if need be.

It was not, however, necessary. After three days, the men came up again, but at the moment of writing reports are somewhat uncertain as to the conditions for coming up. The strikers are reported to have claimed a victory, but N.C.B. officials maintained that no decision not to close the pit has been made. It remains to be seen whether the men have been tricked or not.

Workers' Inventive Capacity

In connection with this strike incidentally, a very good example of the inventive capacity of workers on the job has come to light. The *Daily Mail* (11/2/48) reported that:—

"Waleswood miners have a practical plan for saving their pit. Six men, including an under-manager, an overman, and miners' officials have devised a new loading unit.

"Mr. A. V. Williams, spokesman for the stay-down strikers, said last night that with this machine 12 men could do the work of 32 and increase output there from 5,000 to 8,000 tons a week.

"And this could go on for 50 years, he said. A blueprint of the £2,000 'Waleswood Power Unit' goes to the N.C.B. to-day."

STRIKE AT MODERN MINE

HOWEVER modern a mine may be there can still be abnormal and dangerous conditions of work. 26 miners at Penallta Colliery, Ystrad Mynach, Glamorgan, found that such conditions made it possible for them to earn only the minimum wage of £5 15s., and thought, therefore, that they should get special allowances.

Officialdom could not agree, and the union moved at its usual leisurely pace, so the men decided to wake things up a bit, and declared a stay-in strike. As at Waleswood, other

miners were not allowed to join them, and this meant 1,800 idle on top and a loss of nearly 2,000 tons of coal a day.

They were 60 hours underground before coming up on the understanding that negotiations would begin within 24 hours. Penallta is the most modern mine in the Welsh coalfield.

SOUTH WALES DISCONTENT

THERE is a wave of strikes running through S. Wales at the moment,

one of the chief reasons for which is dissatisfaction caused by abnormalities created since the last wages agreement.

At Gwaun-cen-Gurwen, Glamorgan, grievances followed the transfer of men from Maerdy pit, closed by N.C.B. reorganisation, to the Steer pit. Over 1,200 men were on strike at one time. At Pantyffynnon, 13 men staged a stay-in strike asking for better bus services to and from work.

It would seem that miners are not so concerned at beating their various production targets when they are working under grievances, after all.

MERSEY SHIP-WORKERS' STRIKE

THE sequel to the announcement that piece-work was to be discontinued among Liverpool ship repairers was a strike which looked like reaching major proportions.

The employers decided that piece rates (now known as incentive bonus) should cease on March 29th. They were approached by the union, but refused to open negotiations on their decision. The strike—unofficial, however—started on Tuesday, Feb. 10th, and rapidly spread to include 7,000 workers.

At the time of writing, 300 shop stewards have decided to support a complete stoppage of work, which would involve 18,000 men, but support is not yet unanimous.

The discontinuing of piece-work, as reported in our last issue, will effect earnings by 6d. to 1s. per hour—a substantial drop over the week, and

is a pretty broad hint of the attacks to come on the standards of the workers. Our sympathies are entirely with the workers of Merseyside in resisting this cut in their income.

We are not, however, to be led into a support of piece-work as such. In this particular case, though the existence of piece-rates has probably staved off increases in the basic wage rate, and its discontinuance can result in real hardship.

From the worker's point of view, the thing to do now is to stabilise the basic rate at something like the average wage including output bonus, but this is purely a temporary and transitory solution, as all arrangements with the wage system are. The only permanent solution, of course, is the taking over of the industry by the workers and the establishment of workers' control.

Land Notes

A GALLUP ON THE LAND

RECENTLY *The Daily Express*, on the look-out for anti-Government material and knowing presumably that farmers suffer perhaps more than most from the present centralized bureaucracy, had the good idea of asking the men on the land various questions about its potential food-producing capacity and also their opinion of the governmental administration which now controls their life and work. While granting the purely propaganda motive of the *Daily Express's* enquiry, nevertheless, the results obtained are sufficiently interesting, I think, to be re-printed here for benefit of those who have not read them.

Not Wanted

If you had to sum up in one sentence the main point stressed by the thousands of farmworkers who have written to the *Daily Express* you might well bawlerise the song in "Annie Get Your Gun" and say: "We can do farming—better than they can do."

By "they" is meant the Government. We are skilled men of the soil. Give us the labour. Give us the implements, give us the feeding stuffs. And then give us the unfettered chance to prove our skill. There you have the voice of the men who farm Britain's acres!

In their letters, there seems general agreement on these points:—

IF EXTRA FOOD has to be produced, British soil has the capacity to produce it.

ANY MEAT, such as beef, mutton, lamb, bacon and poultry, which the Government thinks it can produce by State regulation we can produce faster on our own.

LEAVE FARMING to the people who live by it; they can be relied on to get the best out of the land without ruining it. They need help, of course. They ask for it. But it is help not in the form of the committees and regulations which they

have now, but in the form of buildings, tractors, feeding stuffs and so on. Things which they now ask for and do not get.

Wanted

Farmers and workers were invited to answer a series of questions. Here is an analysis of the replies:—

FEEDING STUFFS: 57.9 per cent. say not enough is being done to get imported foods for their stock, but 82.7 per cent. oppose the idea of buying it "however high the price" from the Argentine or other countries.

GUARANTEED MARKETS: 63 per cent. prefer guaranteed markets (with freedom to bargain for prices) to State-guaranteed prices. They say: "Let us get the best prices we can according to the quality of our produce."

IMPLEMENTS: 59.2 per cent. say tractors are their greatest need; 56.6 per cent. of farmers are short of spare parts.

WORKERS: Harvest volunteers are wanted by 85.6 per cent. The others say they can manage with their present labour.

DIRECTION: 62.3 per cent. think direction of labour is unnecessary to make up the shortage of 100,000 workers.

COMMITTEES: 70.2 per cent. of the farmers think the county agricultural committees have too much control over their work; 58.5 per cent. think the committees should be abolished.

P.O.W. LABOUR: German prisoner-of-war labour should be stopped, say 69.9 per cent. of the farmers who wrote; 60.9 per cent. voted against the use of displaced persons on the farms.

STATE MARKETS: Selling of farm produce by Government agencies in competition with private enterprise, as proposed by the Lucas Report, is unpopular: 63.7 per cent. oppose it; 75 per cent. say publicity finance commissions should not be allowed to control produce.

Facts of Interest

Certain facts of general interest

STOP THESE PROSECUTIONS!

A MONTH ago, we reported in *Freedom* that the National Coal Board had been granted summonses against 191 miners of Seaham Harbour. The Board were claiming damages for alleged breach of contract by striking on December 16th and 29th last.

On February 3rd, the National Coal Board was granted summonses against 1,282 Durham miners by magistrates at Jarrow, Co. Durham, who were told that there was a two-day stoppage at a Durham Colliery in December, and that the Board claimed damages of £1 per man per day of the stoppage. At the moment of writing, neither of these actions have been heard, but a previous action against 40 miners of Grimethorpe on December 19th, resulted in their being fined a total of £304 between them. Thus the third aggressive legal action by the State against miners has been set in motion.

These prosecutions must stop! We do not pretend that they are unexpected. After all, the State is now the employer; the State runs the courts; the State pays the police who serve the summonses; the State can stop the fines out of the miners' pay packets—in fact, all the cards are in the hands of the State. And we have never expected anything else but that it would take advantage of its power and with cold legality carve its pound of flesh.

Can these prosecutions be stopped by legal action? Obviously not! Can the constitution be used to prevent them? The suggestion is laughable! What then, can the miners do? They can take direct action! They can ignore the law; they can break the law on such a scale that the Coal Board would be afraid to use it again. They can make it clear that in the mining industry it is the miners who are important, and not the parasitic Coal Board officials and lawyers.

These legal actions are the opening skirmishes of the State's intention to intimidate the workers. They are totalitarian actions, only one step removed from forcing miners to work with the whip, the baton or the bayonet. A step nearer the Slave State.

These are no exaggerations; the Fascist mentality did not die with Hitler. But if we take no action now, if we do not raise our voices now against these first attacks, we shall deserve the Fascism to follow.

Workers! Do not be lulled into security by labels! Do not say: "It can't happen here!" It is happening here. The State, especially in times of economic stress, cannot help but develop into a totalitarian tyranny. Prevent it from assuming unbridled power, which it can only do with the acquiescence of the people, by taking direct action when it begins "trying it on!"

Stop these prosecutions NOW!

emerge. Firstly, and by far the most important, is that farmers, who far from being revolutionary in their outlook tend from the nature of their job to be rather conservative folk, know that the land of the country is not producing to anything like its full capacity. Since the majority of these men have been born and brought up on the job, their considered opinion is probably of more value than those of the politicians and the economic apologists for industrial capitalism who, like Mr. Paget, referred to in the last lot of Notes, persist in asserting that we must of necessity continue to import much, if not most, of our food.

Secondly, these farmers have the impudence to suggest that they know better, given a free hand, how to get the most out of their land without exploiting it than the members of the vast army of advisors, experts and other respectable spivs who make up most of the personnel of the Ministry of Agriculture. Not that the complacency of the Ministry is likely to be disturbed by this revelation, the motto of bureaucracy always being in effect "what we have, we hold".

Thirdly, that the majority of farmers, as employers, do not want directed labour if they can help it. That is as I should have expected. What does rather surprise me is that apparently two-thirds of them think that P.O.W. labour should be stopped and that, despite the great gap that that would leave in the overall ranks of land-workers, more than half of the farmers are against the use of displaced persons on the farms of this country. It would be interesting to know the reasons given for this opinion.

Lastly, that the Lucas Report is detested as the last word in centralization of an industry that, more than any other requires decentralization, is of course, well-known.

The Potentialities of Starvation

COMPARED with the hypocritical verbiage dished out by our own politicians, the utterances of some American statesmen are, in their naive cynicism, rather attractive. Listen to the American Secretary for Agriculture, Mr. Clinton Anderson, as reported in the *Daily Herald* (14/1/48)

"Backing the Marshall Plan, the Secretary for Agriculture, Mr. Clinton Anderson, to-day told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that no meat would be exported to Europe for two years.

But, he said, America's agriculture had been revolutionised and farmers, who were producing a third more food and fibres than pre-war, would need European markets.

The prospect of a collapsing European economy would not be pleasant to contemplate."

As I remembered a while back, one of the most useful attributes of human beings, from a capitalist point of view, is that they must buy food in order to live. If they did not, what would we do with the stuff?

Danger—Keep Out

From *Time* (U.S.A.): "Near Winchester, Indiana, a bull gored the auto of Jack Townsend, the county's artificial inseminator."

My sympathies are entirely with the bull.

G.V.

France

STATE OF FLUX

DURING the years following the Liberation, the successive governments have based their financial policy on two elements: the exploitation of the working class, following the classical pattern of prolonging the working week and reducing the standard of living to a new low level, and the expropriation of the idle possessing class, by a continued inflation.

We have to-day reached the end of this policy. The working class now know conditions of life 50% worse than those of 1938, thanks in large part to the famous Communist slogans concerning the battle of production, the reconstruction of the national economy, and the need for a working week of 48 to 60 hours. The *rentiers*, the small property-owners, and the little stock-holders, find themselves ruined by the fall in the value of the franc.

A second phase is commencing: the liquidation of the middle classes, who up to the present have benefited from all the ministerial favours. Applying the formula "It is necessary to take money where it is to be found", the coalition Socialist-Christian Democrat government has decided to impose relatively heavy taxes on those who, without directly participating in production, benefit by it, in intermediate posts or in the distribution of products.

The peasants too are being more taxed.

There has been immediate opposition, but it should be noted that nowhere have the protestations assumed a character dangerous for the State. Hundreds of meetings and manifestos have been organised. Thousands of protests have been registered. At the same time the leaders of commercial federations, professional organisations, and agricultural unions have advised their members to pay the tax, only promising to defend recalcitrants if they are genuinely unable to pay.

Victory for Financiers

Which social stratum, which master class, hopes to profit from these financial measures? That is the question of to-day, more especially for the conscious revolutionaries who have long since ceased to fall for official pretences, or into the booby-traps of the "national interest".

Without doubt it is the finance-capitalist, the only really active element of present-day France, who alone shows resource and initiative, who is going to reap the benefit. Those enterprises which find themselves in financial difficulty, accept the propositions of the owners of capital (capital which knows no frontiers) and are absorbed by groups of bankers. All the other governmental measures, concerned with free currency exchange and "free gold", equally favour the financier's business.

... And the Managers

But there is also another certain beneficiary: the State—incoherent, confused, swollen up with useless functions, containing strongly divergent interests, swallowing hundreds of thousands of millions of francs, with nothing to show for it.

The "managers" who have multiplied rapidly since the end of the war, and who may be found at the head of all the nationalised, municipalised or commandeered industries and enterprises, do not seem inclined to yield their territory to the old bourgeoisie. On the contrary, they are skilfully sharing power with their financial masters, and are slowly but surely, taking over their control of internal policy while remaining subordinate in international affairs.

The ebb and flow of political power has altered none of the essentials of the situation. The elimination of Communist administrators in the hierarchy of the nationalised undertakings has not brought about a return of private control, but merely their replacement by Christian-democrats, radicals or socialists, or by technicians with no obvious political alignment.

Social Decay

The old industrial ruling class has given up seeking to re-establish its supremacy and is content merely to seek guarantees of its profits, no longer showing any audacious or adventurous spirit. The peasantry, stuck in the beaten track of a family mode of production, slowly declines. It sees its children leaving the land while wage-labour is unobtainable. This internal decomposition of the regime, this evolution which controls the body of the nation and its mode of production is a fact and there is no point in criticising it or lamenting it.

The traditional parties, like the radicals, look back regretfully to the past, the Communists seek to exploit the discontent of the dispossessed classes, but these are purely political or sentimental manifestations which bring nothing new to the situation.

Lessons of Nationalisation

What is more serious is that so few working-class voices are demanding that use should be made of this political state of flux to attain genuinely socialist objectives. While the whole basis of the old social edifice is crumbling, few working-class organisations are putting forward revolutionary solutions. The official journals of the parties of the left shed a tear over the poor middle-class, or else recommend a more powerful Statism. The experiences of the State-control industries—the printing works, the Berliet or Renault factories, are utilised and commented on by no one, except in libertarian and revolutionary-syndicalist circles.

Yet what could be more logical than the demand that the control of the printing works, which legally no longer belongs to anyone, should be taken over by the personnel concerned—compositors, typesetters, machinists, journalists? What could be more natural than to work as co-operatives, the factories which at present are being ruined by the State administration, without benefit to the public or advantage to the workers employed in them?

Socialist Betrayal

At the time when capitalism is tottering, the parties which claim to be socialist are preparing to be its successors, shut their eyes to the most important events of the century, to concern themselves with the problems of electioneering tactics, or the complicated questions of parliamentary equilibrium.

DIMITROV—THEN AND NOW

FIFTEEN years ago, on the 27th February 1933, the Reichstag was set on fire. The Nazis accused the Communists of starting the fire, which was to be the signal for a general uprising, and a trial was held a few months later, at Leipzig, in which the Dutchman Van der Lubbe, the German deputy Torgler and three Bulgarian Communists living in Berlin, Dimitrov, Taneff and Popoff, were the accused.

Van der Lubbe was sentenced to death and executed, but the man who stole the show was Dimitrov, whose indictment of National-Socialism and rebuffs from the dock to Goering have become famous.

We have every day new proofs of the retrograde character of the so-called "socialists". The signatory of the Franco-Italian agreement on the subject of Italian immigrants to France, Croizat, now Minister of Labour, has made a speech in which he demanded the stopping of all entry of foreign labour into France, and the abrogation of the treaty which he had negotiated. This is at the moment when hymns to greater production deafen all ears, at the moment when the 40-hour week law, won by the great strikes of 1936 is being sabotaged everywhere.

Do not look for a progressive working-class lead from the left politicians. They are busy organising the anti-American campaign, chasing the spectre of idle factories, or developing the crudest forms of nationalism.

The Communist International is seeking its party slogans from the dust-bin of moribund capitalism.

S. PARANE.

Dimitrov and his comrades were acquitted, thanks partly to the worldwide campaign in his defence, and Dimitrov was able to go to Moscow where he became secretary of the Comintern. He remained there till the end of the war, when he returned to Bulgaria in the protective shadow of the Red Army, which occupied the country (though Bulgaria was never at war with Russia). He became Prime Minister and since he has been in power he has been busy in crushing all opposition and has staged a series of trials which make the Reichstag fire trial look like child's play.

His recent outburst against the remnants of opposition was so violent and cynical that it seemed to have caused almost more indignation than the previous hangings. It was provoked by an apparently small incident. Deputy Kosta Lulchev, spokesman of the nine-man Parliamentary Opposition in the National Assembly at Sofia had criticised the budget as "insincere and unreal". Dimitrov turned on him with all the fury of the ex-President of the Reichstag. He reminded the opposition of the fate of Petkov, who was hanged for "espionage" in September of last year, and he added, with a touch of macabre irony:

"As you have not been wise in the past, and do not try to gain wisdom, you will receive a lesson from the nation that you will remember until you meet St. Peter."

Reflecting sadly on these words, Prof. Laski remembered the time when Dimitrov had been in the position of Petkov and when it was still possible to awaken public opinion to prevent judicial murders.

"What does Dimitrov expect us to think of him now," says Laski, "we who have laboured with passion to save his life?"

"In Great Britain, I remember well how men and women of all parties combined in a passionate campaign on his behalf. We interviewed the German Ambassador. Mr. D. N. Pritt presided over a counter-trial. We published books and pamphlets. We sought action from the Foreign Office. We insisted in Germany itself that it would be an unforgivable outrage if this innocent man were convicted by a prejudiced court, deliberately picked for a political purpose."

"I think it is well within the boundaries of accuracy to say that the massive public pressure brought to bear on the Court of Berlin saved Dimitrov from a death which would inevitably have been his lot if the voice of world opinion had not warned the Nazis of injustice."

And he adds hopefully: "If Dimitrov has been incorrectly reported, there ought to be no delay on his part in correcting the error."

Laski's article appeared on the 24th January, and so far there has been no denial. Yet Mr. Dimitrov is quick in correcting himself when he is taken up by *Pravda* (and not Mr. Laski). *Pravda* saw nothing wrong in Dimitrov's threats to the opposition, but it objected very strongly to the Prime Minister's statement that it was necessary to create a federation and Customs union between the Balkan States which would also eventually include Poland, Czechoslovakia and Greece. This project did not meet with the Kremlin approval and *Pravda*, which had previously published Dimitrov's statement with favourable comments, rebuked him a few days later with some alacrity.

It is clear that Mr. Dimitrov can bully, imprison or hang his opponents with Moscow's blessings, but when he hints at the formation of Balkan Federation it is another matter. Disunity in South-Eastern Europe is as essential to Russia as it has been to the other Great Powers in the past, and Mr. Dimitrov is well-advised to remember that puppets are not supposed to take initiatives.

Foreign Commentary

Towards the World Anarchist Congress

IN 1946, at the suggestion of the Bulgarian Anarchist-Communist Federation, a working Committee was nominated with the task of preparing for an International Anarchist Congress. The first circular consisting of five points was distributed throughout the world. It was a questionnaire, the answers to which would form the basis for the organization of an Anarchist Congress on an International scale.

No Congress has yet been held, but much useful work of co-ordination has been done by the Commission set up in Paris, consisting of a French, an Italian and a Spanish comrade. *Le Libertaire* (the organ of the French Anarchist Federation) devotes a whole page in each of its last two issues (February 5th and 12th)* to the "Anarchist International" reproducing the material supplied by the *Provisional Secretariat for International Relations* (which we shall in future refer to as S.P.R.I.), which includes the opinions and proposals of movements and groups in Europe and the S. American continent on this important question of an International organization.

It is too soon to attempt a complete analysis of the answers received—the countries represented are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Gt. Britain, Holland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and Sweden in Europe, and Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru and Mexico in the Americas—though it is clear that the answers fall into two broad categories: those interested in a more or less "exclusive" international organisation on the one hand, and those who look to the creation of a co-ordinating body to maintain

the essential contact between anarchists throughout the world, whilst allowing complete autonomy to each national organization. This difference of opinion we have already dealt with in these columns (*Freedom*, 13/12/47) and do not propose therefore to put forward our views again. Instead, we will give a selection from the arguments put forward by our comrades in other countries on the subject.

For Organization

The Bulgarian comrades put a forceful case in favour of an International organization which will exclude all individuals. They write "we believe the time has come to have done with the individualist attitude to organizational problems. The initiative for the convocation of a world Congress has as its objective the creation of an International Anarchist Federation (I.A.F.) which cannot expect to include all anarchists nor pretend that those who do not support it are not anarchists. Those who wish to and will support the I.A.F. must adopt the organization's and not a personal attitude to the problems and tasks assigned to it. It follows that individuals will express their opinions in their organization; and the organization in the Federation and through the Federation."

One section of the Dutch movement, calling themselves the *League of Dutch Libertarian Socialists* (N.B.V.S.) put forward their suggestions as to the constitution of the Federation. They agree in principle that non-organized anarchists should be admitted to the Congress but that those "opposed to all organization" should be excluded. And they follow this up with proposals as to the extent to which non-organized comrades will be allowed to participate in the discussions and decisions, and suggest further, that "organizations will have one vote for every 100 members and minority organizations or representatives of the non-organized, will have one vote."

The French comrades at this congress expressed themselves in favour of an International Federation but, in the event of this not being at present possible, will

support the creation of an International Bureau to maintain contact throughout the movement.

For An International Bureau

On the other side, the groups inside Spain take the view that an International Bureau would be more effective than the I.A.F. and "would permit each country or tendency to maintain its complete autonomy, and would avoid the danger of a centralization and single viewpoint which would have disastrous results in the anarchist movement." This position is expressed with even more emphasis by the *Libertarian Socialists* of Basle, who consider that "it would be a mistake and contrary to anarchist principles that the Anarchist congress should attempt to do more than be the instrument for comrades to make contact and exchange views. It would be absolutely wrong—write the Basle comrades—to draft a constitution with rules and to issue directives to all those in the Federation; a programme which one could not reject without being subject to expulsion or proscription. Such a procedure would be simply to imitate the mass parties whose failure has been so shattering."

The position adopted by the Italian Anarchist Federation was expressed in their *Internal Bulletin* (1/8/47) in which they answered proposals put forward by one body that the Congress should admit only two accredited delegates from each National Federation who should speak only in the name of their organization and not express their personal viewpoints: all others should be excluded, etc. To this they reminded comrades of the position taken up at their congress at Bologna with regard to relations with comrades in other countries and express the opinion that the proposals before them "with all its exclusivisms can only confirm the correctness of our position."

The comrades in Peru, who publish a paper *Protesta* which will open its columns to the S.P.R.I., support the participation of organizations and individuals at the Congress. In their opinion a Congress will show that all anarchists, in spite of differences in interpretation, are united in affirming that the road to man's salvation is that of liberty and that the harmony in the movement can be demonstrated only by general participation at the Congress. "Let us begin by discussing our own problems freely and openly, for ourselves and for others."

An Interesting Proposal

The position of the *International Conference of Spanish Anarchist Groups in Exile* is one of support for the Congress and the following resolution (with only the Spanish group resident in Gt. Britain dissenting) was also adopted. Unfortunately, space considerations allow us to give only a *precis* of this very interesting resolution.

It calls for a detailed consultation on a world scale of all the tendencies in the anarchist movement (from organizations and groups to individuals) with a view to creating an organism to study the general situation of the movement and to present proposals for its solution. The Spanish groups are mainly concerned with the weakness of the movement in many countries and the need for assisting materially such small groups or isolated individuals to build up a movement in their countries. This can be done, they believe, by publishing leaflets, newspapers, books, magazines and pamphlets in the countries concerned, which will be the beginning of a vast campaign of social education which will lead to the eventual creation of study circles, libertarian centres and syndical organizations. They believe that the principal objective of the Congress should be to explore the most effective way to contribute to the rebirth and development of anarchist ideas in those countries where the fascist and "communist" offensives have morally and materially destroyed the very foundations of liberty.

This proposal by the Spanish groups is, in our opinion, of great importance, and as we have already pointed out (*Freedom*, 13/12/47), this particular form of mutual aid has been very largely responsible for the amazing recovery of the Italian movements after nearly 25 years of Fascism. Similar results we feel would be achieved if the same volume of assistance were to be extended to our German comrades now. They need food, money and literature until such time as conditions will permit them to work freely and openly. And that this is understood by anarchists is shown by the practical examples of solidarity to our German comrades which are increasing every day. The latest example, is the offer made by the Basle group of 2,000 copies of Kropotkin's *Conquest of Bread*, in German, for distribution among German-speaking groups in occupied countries.

LIBERTARIAN.

*These two issues may be obtained from Freedom Bookshop, price 6d. (post free).

THE MUDDY WAR

WHETHER or not it is a cold war, it is certainly a muddy one. Washington State Department has not been able to resist the temptation of having a good smack at Russia, and has published a number of German State documents concerning the relations between the Soviet Union and Germany in the period 1939-1941. These documents were seized by the American forces when they marched into Germany and have been kept on ice for nearly three years before being made public. Nor are all the documents being published now; we are given a selection, a *hors d'oeuvre* so to speak, and the rest are probably kept in reserve for even more propitious times.

We would like to avoid noticing this dirty business; we would rather deal with beautiful and inspiring examples of international solidarity but the task of a paper is to look at facts, however unpleasant and however much one despises the way in which they are presented. And indeed it is difficult to imagine anything more revolting than the use governments make of secret documents.

When a private individual holds a document which might compromise a person and he tries to use it for his own advantage, it is called blackmail and it is punished by law. But when a Government uses documents obtained by their informers, spies, and diplomats or by war and plunder and uses them to blackmail or blacken another government, it is called international politics.

We are not opposed to the publication of these documents, which are of great historical value, but we strongly condemn the use which it made of them. We also condemn all secret treaties, protocols and negotiations. It is ridiculous to talk of a democratic government when that same government, which is supposed to represent the wishes of the people, is able to take momentous steps in its foreign policy with the knowledge of only a selected few. The chief lesson to be learned by the publication of these documents is that nations are committed to alliances defensive or offensive of which they are completely ignorant.

But this is not the conclusion governments want people to reach by the publication of these secret documents. They are used either to blackmail the governments, in whose interest it is that they should remain secret, or to blacken these same governments and create a feeling of hostility among nations.

It is doubtful whether this is in fact a very effective method because, for each document in the hands of the Americans and detrimental to Russia, Moscow will probably bring out one which will smear either Washington or London. Mr. Bevin's wisdom in not allowing himself to be rushed into the publication of documents is probably dictated more by self-interest than by any feeling of discretion or magnanimity.

Already Moscow has hit back by stating that Britain and France did not wish to come to an arrangement with the Soviet Union in the negotiations which began in March 1939 and that their aim was to "get Germany and the Soviet Union to come to grips as soon as possible". Moscow also threatens to publish documents seized in Germany by the Red Army concerning the relations between Hitler Germany and the Government of Britain, France and the U.S.

If we consider the documents published in Washington, as we shall consider those which Moscow intends to publish, it is not to wax indignant at the behaviour of any particular government. None of them has a record to be proud of. If Stalin made a pact with Hitler, Britain helped Nazism to get into power, and neither

Russia nor America, neither France nor Britain, was in the least concerned with crushing Nazism but merely played the game they thought more suitable for their imperialist interests.

We said all this long before these documents were published, not because we were better informed, but because we had no reasons for concealing facts. Mr. Churchill, who is now so anxious that the documents should receive wide publicity, knew of them when he lavished his praises on Stalin. To describe the records as "an appalling story of cynical diplomatic duplicity such as few people in this country would have deemed possible," as Cummings does in the *News Chronicle*, is a gross exaggeration.

In fact these documents prove little that has not already been made public through other sources. They prove that the Soviet-German pact was an active alliance, i.e., that, while it lasted, these two countries helped one another by exchanging goods and by encouraging their respective territorial aggrandisements. This had already been revealed, in particular by Kravchenko, in his book *I Chose Freedom* (see *Freedom*, 15/11/47).

They show that Soviet and German leaders and diplomats exchanged congratulations, compliments and toasts. But didn't we have photographs of them shaking hands and smiling at one another? One could readily imagine that the usual compliments had been exchanged.

They show further that Litvinov was sacked and replaced by Molotov because the former was in favour of an anti-fascist alliance and a Jew, not a very suitable envoy to send to Germany. This also had been pointed out long ago.

The Soviet Government tried its best to make the pact palatable to the Russian people because, in the words of the German Ambassador in Moscow, in his report of Sept. 6th,

"The sudden alteration in the policy of the Soviet Government, after years of propaganda directed expressly against German aggressors, is still not very well understood by the population. Especially the statements of official agitators to the effect that Germany is no longer an aggressor run up against considerable doubt. The Soviet Government is doing everything to change the attitude of the population here towards Germany. The press is as though it had been trans-

formed... In a judgment of conditions here the Soviet Government has always previously been able in a masterly fashion to influence the attitude of the population in the direction which it has desired, and it is not being sparing this time either of the necessary propaganda."

This also is no "revelation". The Russian Press and the testimony of several Russian exiles are there to prove that there was an immediate and thorough change of line.

The documents also give some information which is not of the kind to hit the headlines but which is perhaps more important than the more publicised one. In December, 1939, for example, when Hitler gave the order to expel thousands of Jews from German-occupied Poland into the Soviet sphere, the Russians sent the Jews back to German-held territory. This will seem an incredible story to those who see in Stalin the defender of the persecuted Jewish people but some of these Jews have survived and they could have told their tragic experience if anybody had been ready to listen to them. But nowadays human suffering does not count unless it is related in secret documents. The victims of Russia's senseless act whose sufferings make such good propaganda material for the U.S. are now in D.P. camps in Germany. They can die of starvation and despair; the world does not care, but they have achieved immortality in the published records and, supreme irony, they are used as fodder in the propaganda for another war.

M.L.B.

The Fortnight in Paris

(Continued from page 1)

gloomy consternation. It was like a decisive symbol of the powerlessness of all good will, of all idealism, to stand between war and mankind, or between man and his own stupidity, or between man and his sins. In the assassination of the Mahatma was seen one of the magical signs which precede the vast annihilation of lives and hopes. There was in Gandhi something of the "fakir" and something of the charlatan: that was one more reason why the crowd, fond of medicine men, of good or bad wizards, should have believed in his white magic and hope for the victory of that magic over the black magic of those who let loose hatred. And then the man fell, killed like a nobody. And the sole visible chance of pacification between India and Pakistan fell with him. How could one doubt, after that, of the approaching war between America and the U.S.S.R. and of the "civil war" of the French between themselves in the cause of the two imperialisms? And then, who killed Gandhi? A secret agent of Stalin, or an anti-Communist? "They are everywhere!"

One chance remained for those spirits who only despair with difficulty. Martyrs make miracles, but usually after their death. And what if the corpse of Gandhi could do what Gandhi alive had not succeeded in doing?

For these stubborn hoppers, and for everybody, the story of the funeral ceremony was disheartening. All these absurd rites performed around the pyre by the Nehrus and Patels infected by their caste amounted to nothing. Then, the blindly adoring crowd threw themselves on the still burning pyre. Perhaps all was not yet lost for the miracle? Alas, it was a fray of the disciples among themselves, complicated by police, infantry and cavalry charges, with Nehru himself striking the heads of the "profaners". The ashes of the apostle of non-violence were trodden under the feet of the thousands of his fanatical partisans, falling on other thousands of his enthusiastic zealots. The people freed by the sage slaughtered each other, the friends of the dead man took each other by the throat. The affair of Golgotha

was beginning again!

This is an approximate description of the climate of that last week of January in France; but I have neglected more than one fact which has contributed to create that kind of somnambulistic state where one can be astonished by nothing.

I have not spoken of the strange farce of the trial of Juanovici, in which nothing goes on, in which one loses all feeling of the existence of any law, morality or truth whatever; in which one of the five or six men who know the truth about the Comintern, the Gestapo, the G.P.U., the Sureté Generale and all the bands of killers with exchangeable labels who juggle with passports and millions, is he who jests with buttoned foils with the magistrates, as if it was a question of a simple misdemeanour, of the lack of a bicycle number plate or of a carpet shaken in the street after ten o'clock in the morning.

France and Bevin

Nor have I said anything of the curious impression created by the fact that the words of Bevin, his propositions, the power of England put wholly into the balance in order to decide our country to join a Western European bloc, have had no more effect than the wind on the decisions of M. René Mayer, and of his government, and of the chamber, any more than have the feelings, the interests or the wishes of France herself. Clearly, among us, events obey decisions from afar, from another continent.

In all, one had the impression of being in an aeroplane whose pilot holds the levers for fun, while the controls only obey a distant directing post, and we thought: Have we got to that!

Well, yes, we have got to that. It can't be helped—the planes built in France since 1945 can't fly, or when they manage to take-off, the wheels won't come down when they land, or else they burn three engines out of four after one hour of flight. Nobody wants to pilot them, so the newspapers tell us.

We have then to rely on piloting by remote control—it's an American invention—they say it works!

A. PRUNIER.

The Navy in Spain

Our young comrade, George Melly, who has recently been discharged from the Navy, has sent us this account of a visit to Spain which does not seem to have produced the impression expected by the Spanish Government. Even seen through an 'Alcoholic mist' Spain remains a land of oppression and squalid poverty. May this serve as an introduction to the thousands of tourists Spain is hoping to attract in the near future.

WHILE the Home Fleet was at Gibraltar in the Spring of last year, a six-guinea trip to Seville was made available for officers and men, presumably at the invitation of the Spanish Government who were trying hard at the time to be reinstated in the international game of chess. Six guineas is at least a fortnight's pay to the average sailor, and in this way democracy was honoured, yet the possibility of too many of the lower deck disgracing our country in the

eyes of the refined and sensitive Phalangists was removed. However, even if the price had been a sixth of what it was, not many would have accepted. Drink was available on the Rock, and most sailors are intimidated in the presence of officers which is, of course, a great help to the preservation of discipline.

Nevertheless, I and my friend, Tom Dash, who were eager to see what was going on, wrote home for or borrowed the money and put our names down on the list in the padre's cabin, the centre of all cultural activity (even gramophone recitals were held in the chapel). Another difficulty was that civilian clothing had to be worn, and on the battleship *Duke of York*, to which I was temporarily on loan, no arrangements were made. On my real ship, the *Dido*, a cruiser also at Gibraltar, the officers lent their suits. The smaller the ship the more human and reasonable it is, and the same is true of every unit in life. Tom and I improvised by wearing a form of naval working rig consisting of a light blue shirt and dark blue canvas trousers. Realizing that this would appear grotesque among the regiment of Harris Tweed, I added a yellow tie and red beret to make it appear deliberately so.

Entering Spain

It was a very fine morning. We waited on the jetty until all the ship's boats arrived. We climbed into two buses with automatic doors, the pride of the guide and driver, and started for the frontier. Crossing No Man's Land with its teeth of flags, we entered Spain. There were a great many soldiers in uniforms the colour of dung; the privates slovenly and surly, the officers arrogant and officious. An old peasant with a donkey, its panniers full of rags and papers, was stopped by one of these fellows who emptied them onto the ground, scattered them with his jackboot, and walked on. The man, with a depressing but understandable impassivity, began to collect them patiently.

We drove round the bay. At our first halt, the guide José told us to stretch our legs. There were more soldiers, the droppings of diseased birds. The police wear coal-scuttle helmets which give the air of musical comedy until one remembers the many arrests and executions. I cannot believe Fascism to be natural to Spain; the official photographs and portraits of Franco are in shocking taste and in complete contrast to everything else.

As we drove on through Andalusia, G. and I discussed the well-meaning but ineffectual efforts of the English intelligentsia during the civil war. British intellectuals are tolerated if they behave, and may even finish up with jobs in the civil service! Beaverbrook and Co. safely inoculate the people of our country from any contamination by reinforcing the

resentment against "highbrows", and meanwhile the agents of armament industries move undisturbed behind a daily curtain of sports results and sexual murders. The poems and articles on Spain were the equivalents of the plaintive squeaks of Lear's Dong with the Luminous Nose. I can remember no powerful National indignation. "What's Spain to us?" was the usual line taken.

We stopped at an inn to relieve ourselves, and an amusing English scene took place. In the empty yard were two lavatories, one marked 'Caballeros' and the other 'Señoras'. A queue of about thirty people solemnly formed outside the former, many hopping from one foot to the other with strain.

We stopped again at a small town for a glass of wine. The drink was cheap, but a steak sandwich was a prohibitive price. We were mobbed by children begging for money and cigarettes. They were dressed in rags and very thin, their hair shaved close to skulls covered with scabs and bald patches.

Sherry and Crocodiles

At Jerez we were shown over a sherry factory belonging to the Marquis de Merito. At the entrance to the estate were two wire cages, one of crocodiles, the other of budgerigars (the Fascists and the aristocracy). The crocodiles were fed on asses' meat. The white buildings were deserted, as it was siesta. We walked between great vats, armies of bottles and through the yards where the barrels were made. Real American oak is used for this, we were proudly assured, very expensive real American oak!

On a table in a cleared space at the end of one of the buildings were many dishes of stuffed olives, fragments of cheese, anchovies and savoury biscuits. There were some pretty women in Andalusian costume who served us with sherry, dry, pale and sweet, and when we had drunk, pressed us to more. It was evident that the government wished us to see the country through an alcoholic mist. On the backs of some huge casts which lined the walls were photographs of previous De Meritos. The enlargement had given them a curious leprosy texture. In one of them the present Marquis as a small boy in a sailor suit, played with a small barrel. He appeared in person a little later, sleek and urbane in an American suit, and stood to one side of the party, smiling blandly. As we left each of us was presented with three sample bottles of sherry, a bottle of brandy, a bottle-opener and an ash tray.

We lunched at Jerez at the "Two Swans", a modern hotel in universal and negative good taste. The food on top of the wine had a disastrous effect on many people and the ship's doctor's meal was constantly being interrupted. After

(Continued on page 7)

Greater Effort Needed

We know that with the increased cost of living, the greater scarcity of spare cash, and the continual appeals for support from struggling causes of every kind, it is not always easy to find a little extra cash for another cause.

Yet the need for food in Germany is still so intense that it should be a first priority on everybody's spare cash. Many of our comrades, with years of concentration camp or imprisonment behind them, are still starving, still in need of clothes, and in need, as much as anything else, of the feeling of solidarity that comes with the arrival of even a small parcel from comrades outside Germany. Some of them have large families to support—a Bavarian comrade on our lists has ten children to keep, as well as himself and his wife, and a six-pound parcel of food does not go very far among so many mouths!

In the past four weeks, since the last appeal, we have received just over £12 in cash, but £10 of that came from a single

generous gift, and the number of contributions has decreased.

Also, there has been a marked fall in the amount of food received. Unless comrades can send us more rationed goods, even in small quantities at a time, it will be difficult for us to expand in any way, since the amount which the members of the Freedom Press Group can spare from their own rations cannot be stretched indefinitely.

Please send us cash, food and old clothes as often as you can. It does not matter if the quantities are small; the regularity of the gifts and the number of people who make them are what matter.

So far we have sent 46 food parcels and 18 clothes parcels; help us to make this a weekly figure, and then to increase it beyond that!

Contributions received: A.E.H. 5/-; H.C.M. £1; A.D.W. 2/6; per Freedom Press 1/3; R.A.B. 3/9; R.A.B. 10/-; H.A.A. 10/-; A.R.L. £10. Previously acknowledged £16/1/0. Total £28/13/6.

Book Reviews

ART AND RESPONSIBILITY, by Alex Comfort. (Falcon Press, 7/6.)

THIS little book (90 pages) consists of four separate essays, but the title *Art and Social Responsibility*, is well chosen for it is definitely the basic theme of the collection.

The subject itself, the position of the artist in society is, of course, an old one that almost every generation re-examines in the light of the social environment in which it finds itself. The matter used to be thrashed out under the title of 'Art and Morality', that is the relation of aesthetics to ethics, and it is true that the dissertations of, say, the latter half of the nineteenth century appear now to have had at times a largely academic interest. That is not so now.

Under liberal capitalism it was possible to take the view that the artist merely portrayed what he saw and felt as an end in itself, for the sheer fun of doing so. The concept of the artist as observer however, presupposed a considerable economic and social detachment from what he observed and above all that society, and more particularly the State, permitted him to remain detached.

The modern, totalitarian State does not allow, and of its nature cannot allow, neutral observers. Rather must it take the stand that he who is not with it is against it.

Nowadays, the artist, as well as the scientist and also that entire class of

RESPONSIBILITY OF DISOBEDIENCE

The Ideology of Romanticism

much abused persons known as intellectuals, are forced to take a very definite attitude to society and its goings on. The last war made that abundantly clear. As recently as the first world war it was still possible for writers like James Joyce, W. B. Yeats, Thomas Mann, J. M. Murry and D. H. Lawrence to retire to quiet corners and carry on with the work of their choice relatively unmolested by a society too busily engaged in the process of self-annihilation to take much notice of them. In the last war no writers or artists were allowed that privilege.

Taking a Decision

Faced with the horrible necessity of taking a decision, most artists and intellectuals decided to sell their birthright to the Government in return for being permitted to keep out of the armed forces. Others, to the accompaniment of almost hysterical self-justifications, at least had the guts to go and do some of the dirty work that the war against fascism unfortunately entailed. A very few, among them Alex Comfort, refused to have anything to do with the whole rotten business.

These essays show why Comfort took that position and they should be of considerable interest to many people who make no pretence to being artists, for in the last resort the relation of the artist to society is the same, in its problems and conflicts, as that of every responsible individual. The artist is by the nature of his work compelled to be an independent, integrated individual, and his position is the same in that respect as every person who thinks and acts on his own considered judgment. And here one might suggest that the reader of *Art and Social Responsibility* could also read *Poetry and Anarchism* by Herbert Read, by whom Alex Comfort has obviously been considerably influenced.

In effect these four essays are a plea for, and a justification of, the ideology of romanticism which, as Comfort points out, is not so much a style of writing as an attitude to life and society. It should, however, perhaps be mentioned that what Comfort means by romanticism, when he uses the term as the antithesis of classicism, is not what the majority of people mean by romanticism.

That is not to imply that he is giving the word a new and ultra-subtle interpretation—after all the word anarchism is still in most people's minds virtually synonymous with terrorism; rather does he cleanse the word of its modern perversion and bring out its original meaning which, as Comfort rightly maintains, has always been essentially that of protest.

"No creative activity is free from the sense of protest. It is the sole way open to man of protesting against his destiny." And later he adds the important rider that "the essential feature is that for the moment and for the creator the problem is insoluble—if it is not, then the outlet is rather in solving it by action than in creative expression." (Henry Miller has on several occasions also expressed the same idea.)

The Individual and the Group

In folk-art, in songs and ballads, the element of protests is directed primarily against the social environment (the Blues for instance), while for the individual artist the impermanence of life and the limitations and frustrations of human existence usually form the main theme of protest. But the dynamic of all romantic art comes in the first instance from the

sense of insufficiency; it is essentially a protest.

For the ordinary reader of this book, however, its value lies mainly in helping to clarify the position of the individual towards an increasingly irresponsible and barbarian society. What is our attitude to be and what can we do? And Comfort replies that we can at least refuse to do what we know to be wrong. The last essay, "The End of a War", is a plea for individual responsibility and the courage of disobedience.

"In future, our responsibilities are to our fellow-men, not to society... Barbarism is a flight from responsibility, an attempt to exercise it towards a non-existent scare-crow rather than to real people. The furious obedience of the Good Citizens is basically irresponsible."

It follows from this that the concept of the class war, while in part valid, is under present conditions insufficient and by itself something of an anachronism. "The war is not between classes. The war is at root between individuals and barbarian society." That seems to me important. It is a shifting of the responsibility for the workers to blame everything on to the wicked capitalists as long as they themselves continue to behave in a blind, obedient and basically irresponsible manner. Wilhelm Reich, incidentally, expressed the same idea when he wrote, "It is not a matter of 'class struggles' between proletariat and bourgeoisie, as a mechanistic theoretical sociology would make us believe... The social struggles of to-day, to reduce it to its simplest formula, are between the interests safeguarding and affirming life on the one hand, and the interests destroying and suppressing life on the other."

"The only final safeguard of freedom," says Comfort, "is the ultimate willingness of the individual to disobey."

Comfort deals with what is in any case a very controversial subject, and his burning indignation sometimes causes him to write with a certain student-like dogmatism that those who are not in complete agreement with him may find rather irritating. Nevertheless, this is an extremely able contribution to an ever-present problem and one that is especially urgent just now.

GERALD VAUGHAN.

A CLASSIC OF REBELLION

THE PROMETHEUS BOUND OF
ÆSCHYLUS, translated by Rex
Warner. (Bodley Head, 6/-.)

PROMETHEUS, the Titan, who defied Zeus, king of the Gods, and gave men fire and the arts of life, being afterwards condemned to eternal torture for his disobedience, is the classic symbol of rebellion in antique mythology. Æschylus, the most unorthodox of the Greek dramatists, chose it for the subject of one of his greatest plays, *Prometheus Bound*, in which, while keeping nominally to the canons of the Greek religion, he contrived to build up the rebellious Prometheus as the dominant figure, in the same way as Milton elevated Satan's rebellion above the tyranny of God.

Rex Warner, the author of *The Aerodrome*, has written a new translation of this play, in which modern phraseology, pointing the implications of such a play to our own problems of dictatorship and freedom, is combined with a good classical scholarship. It is worth reading, not only for its merits, but also because the play of Æschylus was the basis on which Shelley wrote what is perhaps the greatest of all libertarian poems, *Prometheus Unbound*, in which he directly linked the classical myth of the rebellion of Prometheus with the human struggle for liberty which it symbolised in his mind.

A Domain Still Unexplored

THE DOMAIN OF IDEOLOGIES by Harold Walsby.
(MacLellan, 10/6.)

THE study of ideologies, those constructions of mingled rational and emotional concepts, of social theory and demagogic appeal, by which political groups seek to persuade the ordinary man into accepting their doctrines, is in an extremely embryonic state, and so far there has been no adequate and systematic study of this subject. Mr. Walsby's little book does little more than raise a number of the issues involved, and does not proceed very far towards their solution. Indeed, as often as not, he merely adds to the already existing confusion.

The first part of *The Domain of Ideologies* consists of an analysis of political and social tendencies, which is already drawn into the realms of unreality by a more or less arbitrary distinction between "mass groups and intellectual groups". The author contends that there is a hierarchy of consciousness and intellect among the people, rising in a pyramidal structure from the conservative mass to the upper crust of individualist and progressive intellectuals. Conservatism, fascism, nazism, even, to an extent, liberalism, are in his eyes doctrines which arise out of the inherent backwardness of the masses; socialism, communism and anarchism are doctrines of the intellectual minority. He makes a diagram, unsupported by objective evidence, which shows the base of the pyramid occupied by the people supporting "Political Collectivism and Economic Individualism" (or authoritarianism and capitalism) and the narrow apex occupied by the intellectual minority supporting "Political Individualism and Economic Collectivism" (or libertarianism and common ownership of the means of production).

Even a cursory examination of the facts shows this to be a gross oversimplification. Fascism and Nazism, which he included in the first group, both contain strong tendencies towards one form of Economic Collectivism (state capitalism as against individual capitalism); Communism, which he places in the

second category, is in practice as violently authoritarian as any regime of the right. While in Spain, far from anarchism being an intellectual grouping, it was and may still be the largest movement in the country.

Mr. Walsby bases much of his criticism of the extreme left on their alleged assumptions (a) that the masses can ultimately be won to complete rationality, and (b) that all human motives are subject to economic determination. He includes the anarchists in this category. But the anarchists have, in fact, except for Godwin in his early stage, never held that man is wholly to be governed by rational considerations; they have always pointed to the strong emotional and instinctual element in the urge towards freedom, and, from Proudhon and Bakunin onwards, have contended that it was by a mingling of reasoning and these instinctive urges that a mass movement towards liberation was always impelled.

Furthermore, the anarchists have also contended, against the liberal and Marxist philosophers alike, that man is not wholly dominated by economic demands. For instance, it is possible to conceive a despotism that provides for all man's material needs, but it is certain that men would still struggle for freedom from the domination of authority.

Mr. Walsby bases his hieratic theories on the belief that evolution is not towards homogeneity, but towards increased differentiation. That is a theory with which one cannot reasonably disagree, but the fact that men are becoming more heterogeneous in their natures does not mean that they can be assessed according to levels of consciousness. They will have different kinds of consciousness, but that does not mean that the intellectual is necessarily any more sound in his social ideas than a worker. The worker who judges his immediate surroundings and sets about to rectify them by direct action is as realistic, as progressive, as libertarian, as the leftist intellectual. Mr. Walsby's assumptions on this point are clearly divorced from any factual knowledge of militant movements of rebellion among the rank-and-file workers. An admission of the increasing differentiation of evolving man is surely an argument for a libertarian society that will be sufficiently elastic to allow for such variations, rather than for a hieratic and therefore authoritarian idea of social development.

The second part of the book, "Ideological Structure and Development" does little more than sketch an attitude. Mr. Walsby sets out, by a liberal use of Pavlov's theories of conditioning, to determine the anatomy of ideological formation, but he does little more than suggest the pattern of resistances and indenti-

fications by which the individual develops his own ideological attitude, and makes no detailed examination of the functioning of mass ideologies, which one would have thought the most interesting and fruitful aspect of his subject. Much of his reasoning is suspect, being largely marred by mere sophistry and philosophical juggling. Here is a typical example of the kind of illogicality into which he leads himself by this means:

"Every act of 'taking' or separation is also, at the same time, act of 'giving' or association. For example, the act of giving consent is at once the same thing as taking or accepting a request; my taking possession of an article is precisely the act of my giving it an owner; if I give something away then I take leave of it; taking a person indoors is the same as giving him entrance."

Which, in reality, means nothing more than that the English language sometimes uses words in an odd way.

There is a similarly unfruitful discussion around the question of determinism. Mr. Walsby rightly points out that resistances to limitations produce a natural urge towards freedom from limitation. He then takes this to be a proof of self-determinism. But, so far as I can see, it really takes us no further in the old controversy of free-will and determinism, since the limitation might be held to be the cause of the resistance, and at best, Mr. Walsby's arguments bring us to the old logical chestnut of "which came first, the chicken or the egg?"

Nevertheless, it is this instinct towards resistance and freedom, which Pavlov found even among his dogs, that provides the motive force for genuine revolutionary movements. If Mr. Walsby had dealt longer on this subject he might have developed some ideas of real ideological value; he would probably also have had to abandon his hieratic ideas of social consciousness, since all men, underneath their layers of conditioning, have this urge towards freedom, which at times of crisis often comes to the surface and expresses itself in a genuinely libertarian mass movement. The problem for the revolutionary is how to give this urge the rational basis that will prevent the movement it initiates from falling back into reactionary forms after the first impulse has passed. It is a problem which has been solved only partially and temporarily, even in Spain.

But of this problem Mr. Walsby's book gives us no solution, and *The Domain of Ideologies* remains a series of valid and invalid suggestions on a subject that still waits for adequate research.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

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Letters to the Editors

Political Discrimination

DEAR FRIENDS,

It seems to me that in your comment upon the resignation of Ian Hutcheon and Dudley Spalding from the Government guided missile research station at Westcott, you touch briefly, and I am afraid, one-sidedly, upon a question which is of great importance and well worthy of consideration in your columns. Namely, to what extent is political discrimination justified? Judging by the remarks in the article referred to you would say categorically, "Not at all."

Let us consider this point in the light of the effect of a man's beliefs upon his actions. To take the extreme case, I am sure you will agree that a truly religious man will never act in opposition to his principles. Communism as preached in the world to-day—an unfortunately fanatical affair—has all the qualities of a religion.

Permit me now to quote from A. A. Zhdanov, speaking I imagine, with the utmost authority at the meeting of the Nine Communist Parties in Poland in September, 1947. He says:

"The reactionary, imperialist elements throughout the world, especially in Britain, the United States and France placed special hopes on Germany and Japan . . . in the first place as a force most capable of dealing a blow to the Soviet Union . . . secondly, as a force capable of smashing the revolutionary working class and democratic movement . . ." etc., etc. Thus it is apparent that we are in the forefront of the imperialist, reactionary powers . . .

Again: "... the Communist Parties must head the resistance to the plans of the imperialist expansion and aggression pursuing all paths—State, economic and ideological; they must rally and unite their efforts on the basis of a common anti-imperialist and democratic platform and gather around themselves all the democratic and patriotic forces of the people."

Thus it seems self-evident to me that the duty of a Communist, as demonstrated above and in fact apparent from any of the teachings of the Leaders, is to fight with every means at his command the works of an 'imperialist, reactionary' country. Surely, it would be illogical if

a concern, especially one as reactionary as to be pursuing research into the subject of 'guided missiles', were to tolerate within its compass a man whose intention, publicly expressed insofar as he is a communist, is to use all means at his disposal to cause the downfall of the said concern?

Personally, I am sympathetic to the anarchist beliefs, and consequently I am violently opposed to any such work as 'guided missile' research on the grounds of it being anti-social, etc., but since the work is being done I see every reason why a communist should not be employed.

I find it hard to believe that if the world contained a large community living according to anarchist principles, and the rest of the world lived much as it does now, nothing more than a statement of good faith would be required before a man was allowed to join the anarchist community; it seems little more than a matter of logic and self-preservation.

It will interest you to know that Ian Hutcheon holds the view that there is every reason for his non-retention at Westcott, simply because he was a communist; his ground for protest, as I tried to point out before, was that the Ministry did not inform him, presumably with the reason that if an official admittance of political discrimination were given a outcry would result. I hardly think that anyone will, in fact deny that a great deal of political discrimination is going on to-day, and I would question whether it is completely unjustified.

I feel that the whole question of discrimination—further examples were given in the same article—is not quite as simple as might appear at first sight; it is so very easy to take the obvious, and of course, strictly ethical, side of the injured party. How many questions in this strange and complex world of ours permit of solution by the 'process of simple' recourse to ethical and moral considerations?

Yours sincerely,

JEFFREY W. BOUGHER.

Wadham College, Oxford.

[See Comment on same subject on p. 8. —Eds.]

Readers' Groups

DEAR COMRADES,

I read with some perturbation your comments on the lack of interest displayed by readers in the distribution of *Freedom*. One of the causes of this can be found in the feeling of isolation and futility engendered by the absence of contact between individual readers. I therefore suggest the formation of local readers' committees by interested comrades to maintain relations between readers and to organise the distribution of *Freedom* in their locality. These committees would not only assist in relieving the strain endured by comrades who single-handedly attempt to distribute and popularise the paper, but would serve the purpose of forming selling squads to cover local political or social meetings and also to collect news-items of libertarian value. An example of such activity is provided by our local Trotskyists and I.L.P. who regularly cover meetings of importance and thus obtain for their respective papers a larger circulation than would otherwise be had by ordinary sales.

The committee I have advocated could be formed in districts where there are only three or four active comrades and would in no way interfere with the personal contact maintained by regular readers with *Freedom* Press. Directing their attention towards the regular-reader-to-be contained in the larger body of occasional readers, they would thus facilitate a bigger circulation of *Freedom* and help in the building of a stronger anarchist movement.

Yours fraternally,

Birmingham, 14.

S.E.P.

An Example

COMRADES,

Excuse me for the delay in renewing my subscription. Enclosed is P.O. for 6/-, of which the extra 1/6 is for the Press Fund.

Sorry I can't send more at the moment, but you will be pleased to hear that I have managed to enrol a new sympathiser and his subscription will be forthcoming later in the week.

We hope to be able to send a small subscription each month in future for the Press Fund and possibly a little to help the comrades in Germany. As we are only "workers", we cannot send as much as we would like, but we can at least go without an extra pint of beer at week-ends in order to help a little.

Mansfield, Notts.

J.L.

The Navy in Spain

(Continued from page 5)

a cigar, I walked through the town followed, like a piper, by a great many children among whom I had been foolish enough to distribute some small coins. Later in the day, a lieutenant approached, and asked me to "pass it on to the lads" not to get too drunk as we were probably all thought to be naval officers and mustn't let the side down! He told me that apparently some Spanish army officers had seen one of the party walking through the streets surrounded by slum children and commented unfavourably to the guide.

Anarchist Colours

We reached Seville in the late afternoon and were accommodated at the Hotel Madrid. Apart from the inevitable photograph of the Generalissimo over the reception desk, nothing appeared to have changed in the last fifty years. Elderly maids in white mob caps and aprons were sweeping the corridors and very large, bad genre paintings covered the dark walls. We shared in pairs a bedroom, bathroom and reception room. Before dinner we went into the bar. In there was a Fascist major who could speak English. He stared angrily at Tom and I and said something to the barman and then to the British officers with whom he was drinking. One of them said, "The major says you are wearing anarchist uniforms, and wanted you thrown out. I explained it was just a coincidence." The major clicked his heels and treated us to a little bow. "It is disturbing to see the uniform of our enemies," he said, "please accept my apologies." We were very pleased with this incident. To walk about Seville in anarchist uniforms seemed a fine prospect.

After an enormous dinner (I had not seen a well-fed child all day) we went into the streets. Posters advertised a film on the life of Christ. His face, drawn with a flavour of cubism, recurred every few hundred yards. What a repulsive sight Franco on his knees must be. We went to a brothel from curiosity, for we had been unable to change any money that night. Madam was dressed in black and wore between her large breasts a silver crucifix. The girls were pretty and asked for cigarettes. On the walls were the heads of long-dead bulls. We went to bed rather drunk.

Next morning, floating in the wash-

basin, I found a withered carnation and a cigar-stub. After a light breakfast, we were taken sight-seeing. The buses had broken down so we walked through the rain to the Cathedral, an impressive building, for the most part of great simplicity. A huge block of altars take up the centre of the floor, their images varying to suit all tastes, beautiful Gothic madonnas standing next to Victorian wax dolls, all with their candles burning, burning. In a very fine chapel the guide told us "that all the high-up peoples is married. General Franco's daughter she is married here." I hate Murillo, the Disney of his age, and the only well-known painter whose works were shown. From time to time a bell rang and the women scrubbing the pavements crossed themselves devoutly until a second bell allowed them to continue scrubbing. Here and there are enormous pop-eyed figures used in the festivals. On these occasions choirboys wearing scarlet surplices by special dispensation, dance before the altars, and yet the incongruity does not affect the sense of power. Clever Franco to embrace Mama Church. The alliance of priest and politician for the oppression of a people is disgusting. As G. said, the church may have won the war.

Spanish Carnations

After some shopping, G. and I sat down for a drink and two men offered to shine our shoes. Realizing we were foreigners, they removed the heels, added new ones and charged us eight shillings each. Luckily, the guide rescued us. He told us a story. "These men cheat anyone, even the Spanish people. A man say to a friend of mine, 'I am gardener to the Bishop of Seville. Here are some seeds of the most beautiful carnations in the world.' He buy them, he plant them. Up come not one carnation, just a lot of dirty grass!" There are others who cheat even the Spanish people and not one carnation comes up either.

After lunch, we were driven slowly past some grandiose public buildings, admittedly in better taste than the German or Russian equivalents. The usual cries of 'Franco seems to be doing a lot for Spain' went up on all sides. Then we passed through Andalusia, where they destroyed hope, and on to Gibraltar and the ships at anchor.

GEORGE MELLY.

POOR VIEW

The Presidential Race is warming up, but a Michigan postman takes a poor view of the whole thing. He admits destroying a hundred political circulars because "there's too much of that stuff in the mails."

Daily Express, 6/2/48.

DOES PRISON REFORM?

John William Slater (23), a seaman, of Francis Street, South Shields, was sentenced to death by Mr. Justice Byrne, at Durham Assizes yesterday, for the murder of Norman Easton, a fellow prisoner in Durham Gaol, on December 3rd. In a dying deposition, Easton was said to have stated that he refused a request by Slater to conceal tobacco and Slater attacked him.

When called upon to plead, Slater answered, "I say nothing," and the Judge directed that a plea of not guilty should be entered.

Dr. Penry Williams, Durham Prison medical officer, said that when Slater was giving him his account of what happened "he gave one reason for his present position that he lost his temper", and added, "A wicked voice told me to do it." He found no sign that Slater was suffering from a disease of the mind.

Manchester Guardian, 5/2/48.

FROM BAD TO WORSE

Having heard the Third Programme transmit some of the riper lines of Chaucer, listeners will be surprised to learn the B.B.C. have insisted that the song, "Hold it Joe"—sung by Pat Kirkwood in the revue "Starlight Roof"—be revised before it is broadcast.

The song deals with the adventures of an English girl who went to South America for romance. Here is a typical revision:

Original.—Hold it Joe, hold it Joe, I'm not that kind of girl you know.
Revised.—Hold it Joe, hold it Joe, Take it easy and don't let go.

Evening Standard, 31/1/48.

It sounds rather worse to us in the revised version and we intend to send an indignant protest to the B.B.C.

STAY-IN STRIKE—NEW VERSION

In Pittsburgh, A.F.L. restaurant workers tried a new strike technique. One noontime, they padlocked a Brass Rail luncheon, held 28 customers imprisoned for 35 minutes.

Time 2/2/48.

WHAT'S THE COUNTRY COMING TO?

Mr. Marlowe (Cons., Brighton), asking the Chancellor about judges' salaries, said in the Commons this afternoon:

"Is he aware a judge trying a prisoner at the Old Bailey, whom he released on bail, found himself sitting on the bus with the prisoner going home?"

Evening News, 10/2/48.

GRATEFUL EMPIRE

Prejudice against British products in British Guiana is so great that our exporters are being asked to mark their goods "Made in Argentina", says the Mayor of Morecambe, Councillor N. L. Nevison.

The Mayor, who is managing director of Souplex Ltd., told a meeting on Saturday: "We refused to do so but eventually agreed to leave out the customary mark of 'Made in England'."

Daily Herald, 9/2/48.

NEW PURGE

Nikolai Rychkov, Minister of Justice, was sacked to-day by decree of the Supreme Soviet because "he is unable to cope with the work".

The president of the Committee on Art, Mikhail Khrapchenko, is also dismissed "for failing to ensure correct guidance over the committee". This follows Press criticism of tendencies to follow "foreign and bourgeois" influences.

Daily Express, 6/2/48.

DEPT. OF STUPIDITY

Turned away from his town's £10,000 swimming pool, a Montgomery (West Virginia) Negro has invoked Federal law and won a fight to compel the town council to admit coloured bathers.

The Negro, Paul Lawrence, was granted an injunction restraining the council from denying the use of the pool to him and other members of his race.

Segregation will, however, be maintained when the pool opens in summer; Negroes will use it two or three days a week and whites the rest of the week.

News Chronicle, 14/2/48.

ALEXANDER WERTH REPORTS

Here is a pretty arithmetical problem: "I left London for Glasgow. For six hours I looked out of the window. Cars, motor-cycles, and bicycles kept passing our train. Even a good runner could have run faster." Such is one of the experiences of Britain described in the current number of *Krokodil* by a Mr. Mospanov, who says he went to England on a Government mission.

The article is entitled "Forms and Kippers". The forms in question are the five forms which, at different stages of the journey, the irate Soviet passenger was asked to fill in by the British. As for kippers, he did not know at first what it (or they) was (or were). "In London for breakfast I was offered either porridge or kippers. These sounded alluring dishes, something exotic, perhaps a cross between a banana and a coconut. But not a bit of it! Porridge is simply oatmeal boiled in milk, and the helping is four spoonfuls."

News Chronicle, 5/2/48.

THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN" COMMENTS

His views about the speed of the train between London and Glasgow belong to the category defined by Mark Twain as "interesting but tough". He looked out of the window for six hours and saw cars and cycles continually passing the train; even a good runner could have moved faster. What he did with the rest of his time on a journey which, at that speed, must have lasted several days we are not told; perhaps he dozed off into a torpor of malnutrition.

Manchester Guardian, 14/2/48.

SONG OF PARTING

Composer Hans Eisler, an Austrian facing deportation for entering America illegally, is writing for a New York concert, in his honour on February 28th, a work entitled "The Aliens' Cantata".

Daily Express, 10/2/48.

Through the Press

BRITAIN'S S.S.

Mr. Shinwell, asked about the alleged "beating-up" at Walsrode, Hanover, of a 20-year-old student, Werner Kleindienst, admitted evidence of "undesirable methods", and said that disciplinary action had been taken against officers and N.C.O.'s.

When it was suggested that these men should be sent home as unfit to be in charge of Germans, Mr. Shinwell said: "If they are unfit to be in charge of Germans they are unfit to be in charge of anybody."

Daily Express, 11/2/48.

DIRECT ACTION?

After Dr. Charles Hill (five children) had pleaded for bigger families, "if we are not to become before long a nation of old people," Robert Boothby, M.P., jumped up at a literary luncheon yesterday (where two in every three diners were over 50). He cried: "I am so appalled at what the radio doctor has told us I am going straight out to find a wife and found a family." He went off to the House of Commons.

Daily Express, 30/1/48.

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

"The House of Lords must be the only institution in the world which is kept efficient by the persistent absenteeism of the great majority of its members."—Viscount Samuel.

News Review, 5/2/48.

We couldn't agree more and only wish absenteeism would spread to the House of Commons, Cabinet, Government Departments, etc.

GANDHI'S DEATH—RUSSIAN VERSION

Last week I quoted *Humanité* and the *Daily Worker* to show that the Communists are blaming the British Government for Gandhi's death.

Since then Moscow radio has broadcast a more explicit statement attributing the assassination to "British imperialists who sought to foment civil strife and prove India's inability to govern herself" and endorsing the "assumption" in the Communist Press that "the British Intelligence Service directed the murderer's hand."

Cummings in News Chronicle, 13/2/48.

GENTLE PACIFISTS

Moonlight rambling has become quite a part of Central London Group activities. I think it is that rambling has enabled us to go on talking in fellowship, for we have always found that there is not enough time in one evening a week to really know each other. Not that talking and walking is the whole of our rambles, for we have all felt the deep silence of the night, the desire to hear the wind in the bare trees, the joy of walking through moon-mellowed meadows. I wish that this report could just ramble on as we have done; that I could tell you how beautiful "The Musicians" sounded recited whilst walking; of coming upon Temple Gate erected in the moon-beams, such a lovely surprise; of the spluttering of frost-covered wood tossed on to our fire at breakfast one morning.

P.P.U. Journal, Feb., 1948.

EDUCATION

In its current recruiting ads, the U.S. Air Force boasts that each new cadet will get training worth \$35,000. This is \$10,000 more than it cost to train a flyer for World War II.

Time, 2/2/48.

LORD DERBY—PUBLIC DUTY (I)

Lord Derby was a great figure for whom Englishmen of every class had an instinctive affection, tinged by a lingering respect for the caste the best traditions of which were exemplified in his own character.

Inheriting immense wealth, a number of palaces and a noble name, he preserved through life that sense of public duty which has given us cause to remember with good will so many men of the same breed.

News Chronicle, 5/2/48.

PRIVATE MONEY (III)

Foresight by the late Lord Derby makes the task of paying his enormous death duties much easier for his successor. Twenty years ago, when he sold his Bootle, Lancashire, estate for £1,750,000, Lord Derby said:

"I cannot help realising that on my death it would be necessary for my son (the new Earl's father who died in 1938) to sell much of my estate in order to pay the very heavy death duties. Therefore, it was advisable, in his interests as well as my own, that the sale should take place in my lifetime, rather than that there should be a forced sale after my death."

Evening Standard, 502/48.

POLICE CAN TEACH YOU SOMETHING

In Franklin, Pa., proud Police Chief F. M. Sheffer innocently made out his year-end report: "Automobiles stolen, 23; recovered, 25. Bicycles stolen, 11; recovered, 12 . . ."

Time, 2/2/48.

Anarchist Commentary

DECLINE OF THE SMALL PARTIES

THE decline of the small left-wing political parties goes on apace. It has just been announced that a strongly supported resolution is to be brought before the annual delegate meeting of Commonwealth, by which this organisation becomes "a movement rather than a party" and abandons the contesting of elections.

An even more significant proposal is that which the National Council of the I.L.P. is bringing before the Easter Congress of the party, proposing the abandonment of the contesting of elections, and the co-operation of individual I.L.P. members in Labour Party work. The I.L.P. leaders apparently think that the Labour Party is the only effective field for Socialist propaganda.

This is a natural enough development, since the I.L.P. have nothing really constructive to offer in place of the Labour Party programme. They have criticisms of policy, but their fundamental aims, based on governmentalism and State socialism, are no different, and it is difficult to see how the I.L.P., in the event of ever gaining power, could pursue any policy other than that of coercion at present pursued by the Labour Government. The recent tiny votes polled by the I.L.P. candidates at by-elections, even in constituencies which were formerly I.L.P. strongholds, show that in the eyes of the workers there is no difference.

The I.L.P. as an organisation will evidently decline into just another "pep" group within the Labour Party, and its genuine working-class militants are likely to be faced with a radical problem of how they are to reconcile this with their revolutionary ideas of social reconstruction. Yet it is the destination of the state socialism for which, in the last resort, the party stands. The only alternatives really open to its members are supporting State Socialism as envisaged by the Labour Party, or abandoning their governmental ideas and advancing to some genuine libertarian attitude.

Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.
At 8, Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1.

FEB. 22nd Charles Duff
introduces his "Handbook on Hanging."

FEB. 29th Tony Gibson
"Anarchism and the Left"

MARCH 7th Bert Smith
"The Last Oven."

A Survey of the Baking Trade.

MARCH 14th Jack Gibson
"The Labour Party and the War"

HAMPSTEAD

PUBLIC DISCUSSION MEETING
WED., MARCH 3rd, at 7.30. Tony Gibson
"Russia and Ourselves"
at the VIENNA RESTAURANT,
289, Finchley Road, N.W.3
(Opposite Froggall)
Discussion and Questions Invited.
Admission Free.

All enquiries to:—
R. MILTON,
79 Platt's Lane, N.W.3

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

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

CHORLEY

PUBLIC LECTURE
SUN., FEB. 22nd
A recent observer from Palestine, on
"The Palestine Situation and Successful
Communal Living"
in the Oddfellows Rooms,
9, Cunliffe St., Chorley, Lancs.
Commence at 7.15 p.m.

Comrades are asked to note the
NEW ADDRESS for

U.A.G. (Lancashire):—
17, Chester Avenue, Duxbury,
Chorley, Lancs.

C.O. PROSECUTED

THE persecution of Conscientious Objectors continues after the war, and, indeed, is no doubt likely to be intensified by the present drive to get all workers into "useful" work.

A recent case is that of a young actor, Philip John Guard, who was prosecuted by the Ministry of Labour because he would not comply with his condition of taking up "forestry, land work or hospital work". Guard contended that he regarded his work as an actor as his "best way of serving the community", and refused to accept the ultimatum of the authorities that he should do his service their way.

The magistrate gave him a month to "think things over", but Guard seems determined to maintain his stand, and it looks as though his imprisonment is merely delayed.

This kind of persecution is likely to grow once again to wartime proportions under the new labour orders, and the only way of combatting it is by a really large-scale resistance of all who are determined not to be coerced into fitting in with the State machine.

MI.5 & THE SCIENTISTS

FOLLOWING logically on the political discrimination mentioned in our last issue against scientific research workers with Communist records, it has apparently been decided that MI.5 will "vet" the records of all scientists employed by the Government, and recommend the Civil Service Commission to see that all "undesirables" are relegated to civil posts.

On the face of it, this is an unwarrantable interference with individual freedom. Yet, for those who retain governmental ideas and support war, from whatever point of view, it is only logical. War, and the preparation for war, are totalitarian, and demand totalitarian methods. The Communists who protest at such activities are fundamentally insincere, since they would clearly approve them if they were directed, by the N.K.V.D., to eliminating "undesirable" elements from the military research organisations of Soviet Russia.

Clearly the only effective answer to such activities is that of the scientist who refuses to take any part in the military machine. Compromise of any kind merely acquiesces in the system which leads inevitably to such bodies as MI.5 and its unpleasant activities.

SOCIALISTS IN EXILE

SOCIALISTS—or the lucky ones among them—are now being forced into exile from the so-called Socialist countries of Eastern Europe. Refugee Socialists from Hungary, Poland, Rumania and Jugoslavia have met in Paris to form a committee which they hope will be the nucleus of a larger organisation.

They state that, while in Hungary and Yugoslavia the independent Socialist Parties no longer exist, in Rumania and Bulgaria, they are about to be dissolved. "Every day," they say, "Socialists and trade unionists in our countries who refuse to bow before the dictatorship are jailed and sentenced to prison or death."

While we can have nothing but solidarity for those socialists who are still fighting against totalitarianism in the Russian-dominated countries, we cannot but point out that the socialist parties in these countries were at first quite ready to support the Communist regimes; like the Russian Social Revolutionaries in 1917, they miscalculated, but while they were on the band wagon they had little to say in the way of protest against the persecution of other minorities. The Bulgarian Anarchist movement, for instance, the largest in Eastern Europe, has been persecuted throughout, by all governments, but it still continues to fight for freedom. And, while they find their sufferings hard to bear, the Bulgarian Anarchists have at least the satisfaction that, unlike their socialist fellows in misfortune, they never helped to set in power the government that is trying to crush them out of existence.

STRUGGLE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

THE W.F.T.U., the International organisation of trade unions, and itself the grand trade union of bosses and paid executives (the workers have almost no say at this high altitude of industrial politics), is imitating U.N.O. by becoming a battle-ground for rival imperialist cliques.

The Communists, in the Moscow press and the Stalinist-controlled C.G.T. of France, are accusing the British T.U.C. and the American A.F. of L. of trying to break up the W.F.T.U. by introducing

discussions of the Marshall plan. Why it should be forbidden to discuss the Marshall plan, or anything else a delegate wants to discuss, it is difficult to see. But it is also quite evident that a real struggle of interests is taking place below the surface, and that the Communist organisations are doing their best to get hold of the W.F.T.U.

For the workers it seems immaterial who controls the organisation; they are unlikely to benefit either way, and the only way for them to gain their concrete aims is to form an international that will genuinely represent the common interests of workers throughout the world, and not the divergencies and petty jealousies of the bureaucrats who have made good out of their poverty.

GIBRALTAR REFUGEES

IN July, 1940, thousands of inhabitants of Gibraltar were given twenty-four hours' notice to leave their homes, and were shipped off to England, where for years they lived in completely unsatisfactory conditions. To-day, nearly eight years afterwards, the troubles and wanderings of many of them are still unfinished.

Many of these people were sent to Northern Ireland, where they lived in unsatisfactory camps, and where very few of them have been able to get employment, so that they have merely existed on the poverty line.

Last December, the Colonial Office announced a scheme for bringing these people from Northern Ireland to England, where they could be given work. But at the last moment the Minister of Health (ex-Leftist Aneurin Bevan) and the Minister of Works refused to allow the former workhouse at Fulham to be used for housing them.

The Gibraltense decided to take matters into their own hands. The Northern Ireland officials refused to give them any assistance in travelling, the Food Office officials kept back their ration books, but in spite of this 650 of them have left Ireland and invaded the Fulham institution. While the Ministries of Health and Works are still trying to stop their settling in London, the Colonial Office has apparently given in and is proposing to convert the institution for their use until they can be sent back to Gibraltar.

It is small wonder that, after eight years of privations, these people should have taken matters into their own hands. They were transported against their wishes, and yet a so-called workers' government which has been in power for two years has as yet made no attempt to reinstate them in their former situations or to compensate them for their troubles.

INCREASES!

Our thanks to the comrades and friends in this country and America whose initials appear below. To survive this difficult period of soaring production costs, we need more readers and more contributions to the Press Fund. Since the price of "Freedom" was increased printing charges have increased, typesetting costs have increased and the price of newsprint has increased. So now the number of readers of "Freedom" must increase and the contributions to the Press Fund must increase!

Press Fund

JANUARY 30th—FEBRUARY 13th:
Chicago: (per R.C.) A.B. 15/-; C.B. 10/-;
R.C. £1/5/0; York: H.A.A. 10/-; Edinburgh:
G.B. 1/6; Dartford: E.G.L. 2/-; Wigan:
E.H. 5/-; Miami: F. (per V.R.) £3/0/0; Los
Gatos: L.M. 10/-; J. d'I. 12/6; S. Francisco:
J.T. £1/15/0; F.S. 5/-; Ashanti: C.D.M.O.
1/6; Hatfield: G.M.H. 1/6; Leeds: J.G. 1/6;
Wood Green: J.R.A. 1/6; London: F.W.C.
8/6; Anon 2/6; Whiteway: L.G.W. 5/-;
Mansfield: J.L. 1/6; Cambridge: C.L.D.
10/-; Chingford: W.G.P. 3/-; Delaware: C.F.
13/6; Cardiff: M.G. 9/3; Glasgow:
A.M.C.D. 2/6; Abercarn: G.B. 5/-; Glasgow:
S.M. 1/-; London: G.F.G. 2/6; Glasgow:
J.S. 7/6; W. Wickham: H.A.D. 2/-;
Leyton: L.W.W. 14/-; Horley: B.G. 3/6;
Walsall: B.C.L. 10/-; S. Francisco: Chinese
comrades (per C.S.) £5/5/0; Manchester:
J.E.B. 2/6; Bradford: A.B.H. 5/-; London:
I.A. 2/6.

Previously acknowledged ... £21 3 3
1948 TOTAL TO DATE ... £28 10 4

*C.S. \$10, G.K. \$2, T.C. \$2, S.J. \$1,
L.J. \$1, M.J. 50c, Y.M. \$1, Y.Y. \$1,
D.C. \$1, P.B. \$1, J.Y. \$1, Y.F. \$1,
J.H. \$1, D.J. \$2, C.M. \$1, M.T. \$1,
W.S. 50c, Q.Y. \$1, K.C. \$3, K.W. \$2—
Total \$33. We have deducted \$12 for 6
subs to "Freedom" and the balance of \$21
is shown in the Press Fund.



THE WISHFUL THINKER?

"We must all subordinate our own interests to those of the nation—otherwise someone will be called upon to force us to comply as the only alternative to disaster."—Sir Stafford Cripps (Edinburgh, 7/2/48).

FRANCE OPENS SPANISH FRONTIER

THE re-opening of the Franco-Spanish frontier reveals to the full the futility of the kind of action taken by the Western democracies against the Fascist government in Spain, the policy of applying economic sanctions while fearing to unleash the revolutionary impulse by the only real method that can overthrow Franco—the direct assistance of the movement of resistance, which is certainly more extensive, co-ordinated and persistent in Spain than it ever was in any other Fascist country.

The closing of the Spanish frontier was found in practice to cause more economic disability to France than it did to Spain, and politicians being what they are, it was inevitable that at some time they should end a condition inimical to capitalist

interests. Meanwhile, the effect of the raising of the ban will be to increase Franco's prestige among the middle-classes in Spain and thus help to prolong his regime.

In any case, it should always be remembered that economic sanctions in themselves have never endangered Franco's or any similar regime. They react only on the workers, for the upper classes still continue to retain their privileges, and any shortages are merely passed on to the workers in the form of lower rations and increased black market prices. Their misery is increased without their gaining any help to overthrow the regime that causes it, and in this way governmental sanctions against Spain merely help to perpetuate Franco's tyranny.

RUSSIAN COMPOSERS CENSURED

THE Russian culture purge broke out again two days ago, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a statement in which it condemned many of the leading composers in the country for writing music which suffered from "anti-popular and anti-democratic tendencies". Shostakovich and Prokofiev were among the condemned, being accused of producing works "strongly smelling of modernistic bourgeois music".

Composers like these, who seem to any outside eye to have done everything they possibly can to adapt themselves to composing according to the canons of dialectical materialism, must be suffering from a considerable bewilderment as to what they should do next to please the party bosses. Short of recommending them to concentrate on hymns to Stalin, we can suggest nothing.

IMPORTANT

Some readers have received two, and some even three, subscription renewal reminder cards and have not responded. If there are any readers among them who cannot afford the paper, all we ask of them is that they should let us know. Otherwise we shall be obliged to remove their names from our lists, and this will be the last issue of Freedom they, and all other subscribers whose subscriptions are long overdue will be receiving, until we do hear from them.

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