

# Freedom

ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

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Threepence

## THE DOCKERS RESIST

IN the face of growing opposition from both the sources and the dupes of authority, London's dockers are continuing the struggle against petty dictatorship in the docks, and are giving workers throughout the country a lesson in solidarity, determination and militancy.

The actual cause of the strike goes back a month, when eleven dockers objected to unloading a "dirty cargo" of zinc oxide at the rate agreed upon by the union. These men did not strike. They made their protest, which was to be considered, and returned to the job, unloading the zinc oxide at a rate which they contended, having regard to its dirty and even dangerous nature, to be far too low.

The tribunal which eventually considered the dispute, however, decided to teach these men a lesson, decided that they must be taught not to question the decisions of the alliance of boss and union leader, through which discipline is maintained and—incidentally, of course—profit secured.

This tribunal "sentenced" the eleven dockers to seven days' suspension, 13 weeks' penalty period without guaranteed attendance money,\* and no extra money for handling the zinc oxide.

This was too much for the dockers to swallow. Within three days 10,000 men had walked off the ships and quaysides in protest; within a week 19,000 workers, including cold storage men and even some Port of London Authority permanent staff had joined in. It goes without saying that such a strike could only be unofficial. The union officials have shown themselves, as always, with only one thought in mind—to get the men back at work as

\*"Attendance money" amounts to £4 8s. per week and is a guaranteed wage which dockers receive whether there is work for them or not. It is part of the decasualisation scheme established during the war.

soon as possible—on the bosses' terms.

### A Special Tribunal

Scared at the speed with which the strike spread, however, the union—The Transport and General Workers'—did arrange for a new tribunal to be set up to reconsider the case of the eleven men. The only difference that made was that the punishment was modified from thirteen to two weeks' loss of attendance money—the other penalties standing.

In no way was the principle behind the clause in the decasualisation scheme which enables tribunals so to punish workers attacked or effected. And it is as much the existence of this clause which the dockers are striking against as the actual incident which brought the matter to a head. For while that power lies in the hands of tribunals no dock worker is free to raise his voice against conditions which oppress him, except through the tortuous union channels. In the words of one of the strike committee—"we might just as well be in Dartmoor!"

The decision of the Special Tribunal was rejected by the strikers at mass meetings in Victoria Park and throughout dockland, and the men reaffirmed their determination not to return to work with anything less than the complete withdrawal of the punishments meted out to the eleven workers.

### The Press Goes to Work

The national press have been unanimous in their condemnation of this strike. On the very first day the scream went up about all the perishable food in the ships that was going to be wasted. Before a complete stoppage had been effected, the journalists of the yellow press were telling us that our rations would be in danger, and making every effort to blacken and minimise the dockers' case. But the men were not to be deterred by these arguments. They knew the justice of their case and they knew the situation regarding food, and instead of collapsing the strike spread.

One of the most interesting comments from the press, however, from our point of view appeared in the London Evening Standard, of Monday, 21st June—just a week after the strike started. The Standard had tried the "perishable food" line with the rest of the papers, but finding it did not work, switched over to an attack on the idea of workers' control.

The Evening Standard has done us a great service. It has taken the name "syndicalism"—identified with workers' control—to a public hundreds of times larger than that reached by Freedom. And it has encouraged us considerably in our belief in the possibilities of a syndicalist movement appearing in this country again.

This is what the Evening Standard had to say:

"In effect the strikers are claiming: 'We don't want any discipline unless we run the tribunals and award the penalties ourselves.' This is a demand for dockers' control of the docks which must be put beside some of the miners' claims to run the pits. Since nationalisation has proved such a bitter disappointment the clamour for complete 'workers' control' grows in volume both inside and outside the nationalised industries.

"Now the truth about 'workers' control', or syndicalism, to use its proper name, is three-fold: (1) The workers are not fitted, as Sir Stafford Cripps has said more than once, to exercise control of their own factories

and pits, let alone their own industries; (2) If the workers tried to exercise control, the whole fabric of this country would crash in ruins; (3) Most of the trouble-makers who cry most vociferously for 'workers' control' know these facts very well, and have no intention of pursuing this aim, should they ever seize power."

### What Syndicalism Stands For

Now we have to allow the Standard its own opinion on the first point. We need only say that we don't share it. We believe, as Anarcho-syndicalists, that not only are the workers perfectly capable of managing their own industries but that the only just and free form of society must be based on workers' control.

It is amusing to notice that this Conservative paper, usually most critical of all the Socialists, is pleased to join with Cripps on this point! It shows the identity of attitude of politicians, whether of the Right or so-called Left.

As far as the second point goes, the only reason for the workers seeking to establish control themselves would be precisely to destroy the economic fabric of this and every other capitalist country. The economic fabric of this country has oppressed and exploited the people for centuries. Its end would be a matter of rejoicing for all but the privileged.

On the third point raised by the Standard, we couldn't agree more! While being proud to identify ourselves with the "trouble-makers", we know perfectly well what happens when power is seized. That is why we are Anarchists and have no intention of seizing power, or of allowing anybody else to, if we can help it.

There are political parties who raise the cry for workers' control—we refer to them in an article (fourth of a series on Anarcho-Syndicalism) on page three. We differ from them in advocating pure syndicalism, based upon free non-political workers' organisation at the

## The Jamaican Emigrants

THE whole policy of immigration and emigration to-day is crazy. Those who imagine the world's economic ills are solved merely by shifting populations about are pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp that has been shown as such in many previous turnabouts. The present policy in England is to encourage English settlers to go to the Dominions and colonies (but really only skilled men are required); on the other hand, to tour the Continent for precisely the same trades and occupations to come to England. As internationalists, we do not in the least mind human beings labelled Poles, Czechs, Jews, etc., coming from one place and settling in another part of the world, which we regard as one. But it is absurd to suppose that this form of musical chairs solves any economic ills. Moreover, what it is intended to do is to people the countries like Australia and New Zealand with British settlers so as to exclude Asiatics to whom Australasia would be a natural space

for expansion, while seeing to it that "foreign" settlers here were Anglicised and absorbed; thus ensuring racial domination of a petty nature.

The case of the Jamaicans on board the *Empire Windrush* is a remarkable case in point, because while well-to-do Englishmen are racing out to the West Indies to buy up mansions and chateaux at fantastic prices, and to live in the lap of luxury in that hideout, West Indians are in such dire needs and miserable conditions ("sacrificed to Britain's economic recovery" as they say) that they are seeking to come across the Atlantic here. Five hundred Jamaicans, without jobs or homes to go to, are coming here; alas, it is true that they will have to face here not only the ills of poverty and homelessness attendant on unemployment (which the fairy-stories of manpower shortage cause to be unbelievably abroad) but also with stupid and ignorant colour prejudice. The English gentlemen, on the other hand, travelling over to Jamaica to face the other sort of unemployment, that goes with castles and cocktail parties, will maintain and intensify that colour prejudice even more so over there where it is inextricably bound up with the more deeprooted and real class prejudice that is at the basis of it.

We welcome any breaking of nationalist ties and influences; but while this can be achieved by moving about the world freely, it is not done with these plans of emigration and immigration where prejudices are packed in the suitcases and re-assembled at the other end.

We do, however, offer greetings to the Jamaican workers coming here, who will learn that emancipation is not achieved through a change of frontiers but by a change of systems.

point of production. This organisation we believe can be the basis for the co-operative commonwealth.

The dockers of London have returned to their traditional militancy. Their organisation of this strike has been exemplary. Watched by the Special Branch, with Arthur Deakin nagging about political mis-leading (as if he hasn't done plenty himself!) the strike committee of 48 shop stewards have handled the issues clearly and democratically.

The solidarity and 100% response from the river-side workers augurs well for the future. In this matter the Anarchists stand where they have always stood—for the workers against the whole machinery of government and discipline from above.

The mines to the miners, the land and the factories to the workers—and the docks to the dockers!

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## German Currency "Revolution"

REFORMISTS are fond of attacking revolutionary methods on the grounds that change must be gradual and that any sudden change can only produce misery and hardship. This attitude, however, does not prevent reformists from going in for the most thoroughgoing social jobs when it suits them. The new currency reform in Western Germany is an example of far-reaching interference with the social and economic structure—carried out from above.

It dislocates the pattern of life as completely as any revolutionary manoeuvre and has, indeed, been referred to as a revolution by decree.

Such measures, one might remark, are commonplace enough in self-styled "revolutionary" regimes such as those of Stalin and Hitler, Tito and Central Europe. That the Western democracies resort to the same kind of method serves to show that the pattern of government is fundamentally the same wherever it manifests itself.

### The German Problem

Of course, the social and economic situation of Germany urgently requires some kind of reorganisation. For months, years even, the struggle for the simplest kind of life requirements—food, shelter, clothes—has been the prime pre-occupation of the bulk of the people. Rations have been unable to secure food enough for all, and every German has had to deal on the black market which flourishes everywhere at fantastically inflated prices. It has been said that it is more profitable for a man to keep three chickens and sell the eggs than to go to work in industry. The devalued currency makes it not worth while for farmers to sell their produce on the ordinary market, so they hoard it for the black market.

Meanwhile, the dismantling of any industry which can be termed a war plant (i.e., which is a potential competitor with Western heavy industry) has completely disorganised the structure of industry itself. Since the ending of the war, Germany has presented the picture of millions of people starving, with no productive work to do, unable to create a reasonable standard of living for themselves by the obvious method of apply-

ing their labour to natural resources in order to create new wealth.

### What the Currency Reform Does

This is the situation which the new currency reform is designed to meet. On Sunday, June 20th, the old Reichmarks became invalid and were replaced by the new Deutschmarks. Just how drastic the changeover was is explained by the *Observer*:

"Sunday, June 20th, 1948, does in one day what the German inflation of 1923 did in one year: it wipes out all savings and all money fortunes in Western Germany. Moreover—a truly unprecedented measure—it puts, for one week, all Germans, rich and poor, on exactly the same cash level. Every man, woman and child will have exactly 40 new marks, or about £3, to spend for the next week. Only thereafter will wage and salary differences re-assert themselves; partial conversion of former cash holdings, at a 'drastically reduced' level, will again come later.

"The conversion rate has been deliberately left open till all such holdings—at present unknown and variously estimated at 60 to 80 billion old marks—have been surrendered or registered, together with exact information as to their derivation. This is officially explained with administrative reasons, but it also serves the purpose of discouraging war profiteers, tax dodgers, and black marketeers from declaring all their holdings. Undeclared holdings will become entirely and finally worthless."

The occupying authorities in the British, French and American zones hope that this measure will destroy the barter economy and force production and trade out of black market channels into the "normal" channels. They plan at the

(Continued on page 4)

## COLLECTING THE DIVIDENDS OF VICTORY?

LAST week a member of the Polish Parliament charged that the United States failed to disclose arms manufacture data seized from the Germans valued at £250,000,000.

The Peasant Deputy, Mr. Wladyslaw Kiernik, told Parliament "a considerable number of German patents fell into the hands of the Western countries occupying centres of Germany's industrial potential which they have not disclosed. 'Valuable technical documentation connected with these patents, representing a value of many thousands of millions of dollars, was carried away by the United States and not rated either as reparation deliveries or as imports.'"

Obviously this is a charge which must be answered. By ignoring the matter the Americans will only confirm the statement, which with the wholesale looting at a high level that has taken place in Germany, rings true. Individual soldiers caught looting have received prison sentences of up to life imprisonment. Yet Governments can get away with it. It would seem that the bigger the loot the less chance there is of being caught!



# Religion and the

THE question of religion is, beyond doubt, one of the most important questions, both theoretical and practical, in the domain of human culture. For the origins of human society will be viewed very differently by the believer in supernatural creation and by the believer in the natural origin of mankind from the slime of primeval chaos, and the same difference applies to its nature.

In general, one can say that religion, and a religious estimate of life and of society arose as the natural outcome of a prescientific view of the universe and of life in general. To the primitive man, knowing little even of the phenomena of the Universe and totally ignorant of the logic of cause and effect, visible being appeared merely as the manifestation of conflicting wills, of living spirits behind the superficial phenomena. From animism, the belief in "spirits", all religious phenomena directly stem, including the idea of "God", the, as it were, "amalgamation" of all previous spirits into a single omnipotent and everlasting unity. For monetheism, the belief in one God, is, at the bottom, and beneath all high-sounding disguises, merely the final, and most refined form taken by animism. The line of descent from the spirits, innumerable in quantity and indifferent in quality, to the one omnipotent and omiscient God of Theology represents a direct and recognizable case of theological heredity: spirits begot gods, and gods begot God!

To-day, it is obvious that the primitive ideas from which religion originated no longer correspond to the observed facts of social and intellectual existence. The idea of causation of determinism, the essential causality of science, has made its entry into the field of human experience. In a world amid which the same causes invariably produce the identical effects; in which the two+two invariably make four, and never anything else but four; the capricious spirits of a pre-scientific age have no room for activity. When, for example, one want light, one switches on the electric light; one does not, as did our pious ancestors, invoke God (or the Gods) to command, "Let there be light". The mental difference involved is the intellectual gulf between the religious world of capriciousness and "free-will", on the one hand, and the world of science and causal logic, on the other, and is overwhelming.

One must, accordingly, necessarily reach the resulting conclusion that religion has, to-day, no "natural" reason for existence in a now predominantly scientific world. And, accordingly, many social revolutionaries, whose sincerity and devotion to revolutionary ideals is beyond any question, deprecate any explicit attack on religion and advocate leaving religion and the Churches which, to-day, are its effective embodiments, severely alone. Education, it is argued, and the natural evolution of contemporary society based upon science, will be quite sufficient to ensure the ultimate "withering away" of religion and of its theological ideas and explanations of natural and social phenomena. They, therefore, urge us to leave religion alone and to concentrate on the direct issue of the social struggle for human emancipation.

SUCH a social viewpoint as is implied in the above reasoning is however, mechanical and, ultimately, misleading. For religion does not continue to exist to-day solely or, even, primarily, because of the forces of its own ideas. Quite the contrary! Religion, to-day, lives more and more, an highly artificial existence. More and more, it ceases to depend for its effective existence on natural causes; and becomes, instead, dependent on social and political causes; that is, on artificial causes which have often got no direct connection with religion as such.

Put more concretely, religion owes its powerful and privileged position in contemporary society, and this applies more or less, all over the civilised world, to the interested support of reactionary vested interests which fear social progress and social change (and, above all, of course, social revolution!) like the proverbial plague, and which, unable to combat new ideas solely by force, require the aid of conservative ideas and institutions, and religion, by its very nature, has always been, even more than law or politics, the great conservative ideological force in ensuring human stability and aversion to rapid change.

The main social function of present-day religion is, consequently, that of an, as it were, social and moral policeman against revolutionary changes in ideas and institutions. It is as such, that present-day conservatively inclined forces, whether in the capitalist West, the Feudal East, or in Russian State-Socialism, consciously support it and, we can relevantly add, it is this function, one well-nigh universal

in present-day religion, which in practice, is pre-eminently, a political one, that brings religion and its churches into the orbit of the Social Revolution as one of its most ubiquitous and dangerous enemies. I hope that this undoubted fact justifies the publication by a Social-Revolutionary journal like *Freedom*, of the present article!

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WHEN we turn from theory to practice and direct a glance at recent activities of, at any rate, the more important religions, we can easily test the truth of

## Social Revolution

the above assertion. Whether we take the rôle as a Tsarist State policeman of the Russian "orthodox" (Eastern) Church of the Romanovs and Rasputin, or the very similar rôle now discharged by the self-same body towards the current Stalinist totalitarian regime; or whether we choose to regard the world-wide "crusade" directed by the Roman Catholic Church on behalf of Franco during the Spanish Social War (1936-39); or its present activities as the successor of Fascism in European and American conservative circles, or else, looking nearer home, assess the recent action of the anglican bishops towards long overdue reforms of the criminal law; the inference to be drawn is obvious. Everywhere to-day, the Christian Churches, or, at least, the

larger and more important ones, are the "moral policemen" of the class state, and its effective allies against the world-wide advance of the Social Revolution.

And what applies to the Christian World of the West applies equally to the non-Christian world. Whether we take the age-long opposition of Hinduism, with its priestly (Brahmin) exploiters at one end of the social scale, and its "untouchable" outcasts at the other, to all social innovations; or the totalitarian tendencies manifested for centuries throughout the East by a decadent Mohammedan culture; or the prominent

part played by Judaism, with its chauvinist "Holy Book" and its racist legislation, in stirring up a new Zionist Imperialism: the general conclusion to be drawn is identical. Everywhere, organised religion, with its accumulated vested interests and its conservative ideology, is the ally of the ruling classes and the declared enemy of social change and, very particularly, of social revolution.

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I CONCLUDE, accordingly, that the struggle against religion is an integral part of the struggle for the Social revolution. It is forced upon the revolution-

ary movement by the activities of the Churches themselves and though this anti-religious struggle is a social, rather than an ideological struggle, yet so closely are the political activities of the Church bound up with their religious ideology that it is virtually impossible to separate them. "By your fruits ye shall know them": this axiom attributed to the nominal founder of the Christian Religion himself, can be applied to the present counter-revolutionary activities of the Churches themselves!

A further point may usefully be added before bringing this article to a close. Anarchists, of all people, need not be reminded of the close and, to-day, inseparable connection between "God and the State"—and, to-day, in an era of fast-growing totalitarianism, the connection is closer and more obvious than

ever. The new religion—as one may aptly term it—of the State threatens to become the most powerful and intolerant of all: the hetacombs of victims who have perished in the concentration camps of the absolute State far surpass the victims of the older religions: the human sacrifices offered to Hitler and Stalin dwarf the victims of Moloch and of Torquemada. The new Inquisition is far more terrible than the old!

To-day, the struggle against religions old and new becomes merged into the social struggle for human emancipation. The gods unite against the Revolution. For the Revolution digs a common grave for all the Gods!

F. A. RIDLEY.

### FLASHBACK—7

"I BELIEVE that, in spite of the restrictions imposed on adults by the requirements of culture, a high degree of what we might term physical freedom is possible, provided that the possibility hasn't already been destroyed or too seriously lessened by tampering with the mind in its infant condition. In nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of ten thousand, the tampering has taken place. (The estimate is a conservative one.) Voltaire's philosopher can see the result any day he cares to board a tramcar.

Of course, we shift the responsibility for this on to government, capitalism, militarism, private property, religion, or any other excuse that's handy. But we're not very honest in doing so, because, though these are responsible to a great extent, still a good deal of the blame must remain attached to our individual selves. Granted, we are all of us victims in our turn of "conditions"; but you must grant as well that we also have some modicum at least of independent reasoning powers. Unless we exert this power to mitigate conditions we must write ourselves down as slaves. Freedom doesn't consist merely in recognising chains."

—"Freedom Bulletin", Dec., 1932,

## THE HOUSING PROBLEM & PLANNING

[continued from our last issue\*]

THE housing problem cannot be solved from above. It is a problem of the people, and it will not be solved, nor even boldly faced, except by the concrete will and action of the people themselves, so it will be useful to examine the validity and the limits of the types of direct action for houses that have so far been seen—building co-operatives, illegal occupation of empty houses, and housing strikes.

### Co-operative Action

The building co-operative is certainly an effective means of producing houses at low cost and a valuable experience for the tenants in the forms of collective action. These co-operatives, of which many have arisen since the war, are generally constituted with the object of giving work to a certain number of building operatives and of putting apartments on the market at a competitive rent compared with the municipal undertakings—made possible because of their more efficient internal organisation and by a fairer allocation of the proceeds. But although they are an interesting example of collective action, and certainly solve part of the unemployment problem, they can do little to remedy the basic housing problem, since the primary aim is to provide work, not houses, and since the work is undertaken according to the fluctuations of the competitive market.

The tenants' co-operatives, which are less frequently met with, aim at providing housing for a certain number of the homeless; the purchase of buildings at current prices and their organisation as housing. If we exclude joint ownership (which is not co-operation, but merely a form of divided proprietorship, limited to the wealthier, and devoid of any social significance), this type of co-operative can only exist with the help of strong external financial aid. And the solution is certainly not, as has been suggested in some quarters, the direct co-operative building of houses by the tenants who will eventually occupy them. This may be an educative example of direct action, but it is hardly a practical method and yields very few concrete results. The house of to-day is costly because of the expense of traditional building methods, which have not been brought up to date by modern productive techniques. Direct production on the part of the tenants, generally untrained in building crafts and not given adequate tools and materials, usually results in poor workmanship and relatively high costs.

The solution lies in setting up building collectives, and tenants' collectives combined in a communal programme of action with, (while acting in the present social structure), a joint financial mechanism. We cannot count on the State's financial assistance, promised in the futile

decree of May 1947, nor on the type of initiative that comes from political action and which sooner or later reveals its pitfalls, tying the co-operatives to the interests of the financiers. For this reason the financing must also be autonomous, arising from local circumstances, based as far as possible on the mutual aid of the members of the collective, contributing in money, in hours of work, in produce, and demanding assistance from those who at present have in their hands the wealth that properly belongs to the community, and forcing the municipalities to provide freely or at low cost the necessary sites and basic constructional materials.

### The Squatters

Another form of direct action is the illegal occupation of uninhabited dwellings. The most important examples occurred in England, soon after the 1914-18 war, and again after the last war with the "Squatters" movement which has given its name to action of this sort in many lands. "Squatting" in reality, consists not only in the invasion of empty houses or buildings which could be used for housing, but also in the systematic and organised refusal to accept eviction orders issued by the owners, which is another form of "illegal" occupation. In Italy, soon after the war there were widespread outbreaks of "squatting". At Messina, for example, two years ago, homeless people seized the archbishop's palace where 3,000 rooms were uninhabited despite the desperate needs of the people. Frequent cases have arisen of individual or collective eviction orders being resisted by means of pickets of tenants around the homes.

The housing strike is a method of direct action, complementary in one sense to the last-mentioned. It has not been widely used and, for lack of precedent remains untried, unless one considers the strike for higher wages as a strike for housing—since a large part of the weekly wage goes in rent. In the form of collective refusal to pay rent, the housing strike becomes a great aid to large-scale squatting, in the form of financial coercion of the state, the municipality or the private usurpers of social wealth, it can become a great help to co-operative initiative.

The methods of direct action we have examined, while they are effective as tactics, cannot themselves bring about a definite solution. We need to get right to the root of the problem to find its basic causes and to face them with action on an adequate scale.

### More Than Four Walls

The home does not merely consist of four walls, it is also space, light, sunlight, and external environment. It is not only this, it entails also the school, medical services, green space, room for the children to play, facilities for rest, pastimes, culture—in other words, amenities; facilities for work, production, exchange—in other words, the means of economic life. The home, in fact, extends

into the community. When the home is healthy it is an efficient instrument for man's social purposes, and fits harmoniously into the texture of a healthy community.

The contemporary town is not merely an unhealthy community—it is not a community at all—it is a physical agglomeration of isolated buildings and people. Even if a widespread squatters' movement and an enormous increase in house construction were to house all the population to the standard now enjoyed by the rich, the result would be the same, because the city in capitalist civilisation is inefficient and within its framework the home cannot be healthy.

The sickness of the home coincides with that of the city.

The origin of this malady, since the disintegration of the medieval community, is the abdication of the principle of man in favour of the principle of authority, the subordination of concrete facts to abstractions and the elevation of abstraction to the world of realities—Man's loss of the ability to give adequate social expression to his corporate life.

The result to-day is a devitalized and decayed social body. It is inefficient from the human point of view because it reduces man to a state of life without relations with his fellows, with nature, with collective productive processes—a life hermetically sealed with asphalt and stone. It is inefficient from the functional point of view because instead of being the active centre of the surrounding region, it has become a parasitical body absorbing nourishment from the region for its costly bureaucratic and unproductive structure.

### Our Attitude to Town Planning

Urban planning conceived as a technical means of saving the present social structure, of damping up the pressing realities of life, is a dangerous delusion.

But conceived in a different way, as the manifestation of communal collaboration, it becomes the endeavour to liberate the true existence of man, the attempt to establish a harmonious connection between nature, industry and all human activities, and it is far more than a question of traffic, means of transport or the aesthetics of building.

For this reason the attitude we adopt to the new fact of urban planning is decisive.

It is possible to adopt a hostile attitude: "The plan must necessarily emanate from authority, therefore it can only be detrimental. The changes in social life cannot follow the plan—the plan will be consequent on the new way of life." Or an attitude of participation could be adopted: "The plan is the opportunity of 'liquidating' our present social order by changing its direction, and this changed aim is the necessary preliminary for a revolutionary social structure."

The first attitude is based on two main arguments. Firstly, that authority cannot be a liberating agent—perfectly true;

secondly, that man can do nothing until he is free—a mistaken view. Man cannot be liberated, he must liberate himself, and any progress towards that liberation can only be the conscious expression of his own will. The investigation of the full extent of the problems of region, city and home, is such an activity. To find out the nature of the problems and to prepare their solution is a concrete example of direct action, taking away the powers of authority and giving them back to men. The attitude of hostility that really means "waiting for the revolution to do it", does not take into account the fact that the social revolution will be accomplished by clear heads, not by sick and stunted people unable to think of the future because of the problems of the present. It forgets that the revolution begins in the elimination of these evils so as to create the necessary conditions of a free society.

### A Revolutionary Weapon

Urban planning can become a revolutionary weapon if we succeed in rescuing it from the blind monopoly of authority and making it a communal organ of research and investigation into the real problems of social life. These problems are numerous and urgently need a solution.

In the region, private property has arbitrarily divided arable land, and not only destroyed the emotional and functional relationships between men and the soil, but has put obstacles in the way of all the vital interests of the community. The problems of production, exchange, transport, communications, and of services—creation of industries, diffusion of culture, construction of roads and bridges—all these are in the hands of privileged minorities or of the state, which have neither the interest or the skill to solve them.

In the town, the congestion and stratification of the inhabitants has destroyed or spoilt all aspects of individual and social life. Schools are unhealthy and overcrowded, medical services insufficient, traffic chaotic and dangerous, and the green belt absorbed by land speculators.

In the house, man is degraded to an animal level. Deprived of light, air, sun and grass, of contact with nature and with his fellows, he loses his independence and his capacity for social life. He becomes docile, obedient, amenable to discipline—and to war.

The situation can be reversed. If we develop a profound knowledge and understanding of local problems, and work out the technical means of solving them, and then vigilantly and actively see that these plans are put into effect—then town and country planning can be made a most effective instrument of collective direct action.

GIANCARLO DE CARLO.

[Translated by C.W. from the Italian original published in the anarchist monthly review "Volontà"]

\* Copies of the June 12th issue are available price 4d. post free.



# ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM & INDUSTRIAL EXPERIENCE

**T**HE fact that an organisation specifically standing for the principle of workers' direct action and workers' direct control, and having any influence among the British workers, has not existed, leads some comrades to think that either the principles and experiences of anarcho-syndicalism are foreign to the British workers, or that it is necessary to point as a pattern to similar organisations built in other countries under considerably different circumstances.

We dealt in our last issue in this series with a specific disagreement with the I.W.W. of America on this subject. The facts of increasing State control, reformist union monopoly, the alignment of capitalism with so-called workers' representatives and above all, the march to the police state (none of which was a formidable menace in the same way in 1905 when the old I.W.W. was formed, as it is today), leads me to differ from some of those older militants who have good sentimental loyalty to the great attempt at building a revolutionary syndicalist movement amongst the English-speaking workers. But as stressed at the opening of this series, I believe it possible for those who believe in workers' direct control to unite on the issue of workers' councils.

## What Is Workers' Unity?

Some weeks ago, somebody took me to task in the columns of the Socialist Leader for not supporting a suggestion for unity between Anarchist and the I.L.P. and other "libertarian socialist" bodies. It is curious how the idea of a United Front has persisted in the I.L.P. from the Keir Hardie days, throughout its many changes of policy; originally it was unity with the trade unions, then the Labour Party, then the Communist Party, then the opposition Communists, at last by ultimate progression to the Anarchists; and this in spite of the fact that the I.L.P. has had the worst of it every time. But frankly this idea is based on a complete misconception of the class

struggle, which is not determined by unity between different parties or groups, but by industrial unity on the job. It is all very well in the interests of "unity" for two rival Parliamentary parties to have an electoral pact and not oppose each other; that may help them even though it leaves a certain bewilderment as to what the difference really is. Or again groups with different aims but agreeing in the right to differ, can with advantage unite to defend their freedom of speech. But workers' unity, as Anarchists interpret it is that industrial unity on the job, that solidarity which is expressed when men ask for their cards rather than demolish somebody else's illegally-built house, which has never anything to do with mutual pacts between minority groups, and the idea that minority groups influence such action, although one popular with the capitalist Press, which likes to blame the Communists—unless Russia is an Ally, when it blames the Trotskyists or the Anarchists—is usually a myth.

The task of the revolutionary is not primarily to build workers' councils, which can only be built from below upwards, nor to organise the workers. That is a totalitarian conception, a hang-over from the trade union idea which has been taken up and developed by Fascism and Bolshevism. The organisation of the workers into docile bands of trade unionists is, as has been seen in the present experiences of the British workers under nationalisation schemes, one that is very suitable for the State planners and for the capitalists alike. They consult and depend on what are called the "workers' representatives" who are those who have organised them into the unions. The pattern of trade union representation has developed so greatly that there is hardly a State board or judiciary body without a workers' "representative" on it, but every struggle against capitalism or the State is against the trade unions also.

## The State and Industrial Casualties

**I**T would be easy, for the sake of propaganda, to describe Britain's bureaucrats as cruel and vicious. Whether it would be strictly true is another matter, for the number of people who are actually cruel is probably very small, but the number who are thoughtless is colossal.

The effects, however, can be very similar. The cold eye and the dead hand of the State cannot help but deal with human problems in ways which take all the humanity out of them and reduce them to statistics and policies. And because these measures are administered by men, these men are automatically compelled to be thoughtless if they are not cruel.

Sir Stafford Cripps is the type of man one would not easily call thoughtless. And there is no real evidence to show him to be vicious. True, he is a politician running true to form, and his personal habits tend to make him ignorant of many of the desires and needs of the majority. But it is quite enlightening to see that his high office has made him completely thoughtless (if he was not before) as to the human implications of the many problems that face him.

For instance, in a speech at Horsham on 12th June, Sir Stafford bewailed the fact that Britain loses 40 million working weeks a year from sickness absenteeism. He went on to say:

"It is quite frightening when we see to-day the very large amount of sickness absenteeism which arises not from what, in the past, we regarded as illness or disease, but from those once despised causes which passed under names such as neurasthenia and described to-day as stress diseases.

"Nothing is more wasteful than the casual absence through sickness, which often disrupts the flow of work.

"Researches had shown that a good deal of stress disease was being created by management through lack of understanding or failure to take the necessary preventive measures.

"That emphasises the need for management and medical science to get together in the attack upon this industrial handicap."

Now that, on the surface, may seem all very sympathetic, but where in those four paragraphs can one see one word which indicates that Cripps is looking at the problem of stress diseases from the point of view of those suffering from them?

No, the only thing which worries the Economic Dictator is the fact that his production drive is suffering. The fact that human beings are cracking up under the strain of the dehumanisation and mechanisation following on the pressure for more production does not register as important. What is important is the export-import gap, and if that can only be closed over the broken minds and worked-out bodies of machine-minders—well, that's just another sacrifice for the greatness of our country.

## A Classic Example

A similar but much more blatant instance of this sort of mental attitude, however, has just come to light.

Two years ago quite a lot of publicity was devoted to a Government scheme for building new factories in South Wales which were to serve two purposes. The first was to bring light industries to areas where there were predominantly heavy industries to prevent a recurrence of the mass unemployment South Wales knew before the war. The second purpose—the one we are concerned with here—was to provide light work for ex-miners who had been invalided out of the mines with one or other of the dread "dust" diseases, or as the result of accidents.

Ten factories were to be built for this purpose. We may remember the promises that before many years had passed South Wales would be challenging Switzerland as a producer of watches and clocks, that small electrical equipment would be produced by these factories, bringing self-respect and satisfaction to men otherwise condemned to hopeless

## Creation Of a New Union?

In the present circumstances it is not really very likely that an anarcho-syndicalist organisation can be created similar to those created in the Latin countries in the '90s. Actually many of these were created as trade union movements. They were built in response to a demand for workers' organisation, in countries which were not industrialised, and also where Anarchist teachings greatly influenced the workers. For this reason they cannot be considered as patterns for the movement we have to build. The demand in Britain to-day is not basically for workers' organisation; if anything it is a struggle against too much organisation as expressed by workers tearing up their union cards in disgust; what they want now is "unofficial action", and that is basically a revolutionary demand in present conditions just as the desire for organisation was in the past. The fact of industrialisation has outmoded the trade union form of organisation with its division of the workers into crafts, and postulated the need for industrial unionism—and we must learn, too, from the sad endings of many revolutionary syndicalist movements born in hope (as the French C.G.T., whose

## SERVE-YOURSELF FOOD SHOPS

**W**E have several times drawn attention to the artificial nature of the retail business. We have said that in a free, moneyless society goods could be available for consumers to help themselves without the necessity for shop assistants.

A partial version of this idea has been put into operation in a Hounslow West (Middlesex) Co-operative store, where goods are on show and customers simply walk in, collect the goods they want in a special carrier and pay as they go out. It's the last part wherein it differs most radically from a distributing centre in a free society!

Even to-day, however, the idea has advantages. Queuing is practically eliminated, customers see immediately what they want and don't have to wait to be served to get it, and there is less work for the assistants.

This could be done at all shops, but the next step—the abolition of money—is a task for all of us!

idleness.

The pitiful truth is another story. In the Rhondda valley one of these factories managed to get into production—this one making steel mattresses. Between thirty and forty victims of the dust were working there, and while it was not a very sensational start—it was a start.

It was a start and a finish. None of the other nine factories have so far materialised, and now this one has closed down! Not because there were no workers; not because there was no work, but because the allocation of steel for that factory and that purpose has been withdrawn!

By whatever stroke of bureaucratic genius this effort has been thought up it is difficult to imagine. We are getting very used to governments giving with one hand and taking with the other. Everything any government has ever "given" the people has been done that way. But for sheer cold-blooded inhumanity this takes some beating!

It is not that only 30-40 sick miners have been thrown back on the scrap-heap, for there are 15,000 to 17,000 miners who have been actually certified as suffering from pneumoconiosis, and who are still capable of doing light work away from coal dust. These men had their hopes raised two years ago by a government which has since voted huge sums of money for atomic research and military defence, and has gladly granted £50,000 yearly to a couple of royal parasites. While we think they were mistaken to have placed any hope in a government, nevertheless this remains a shocking betrayal.

We do not think that anybody should have to work to live when they have been incapacitated by the very work they have been doing for years. Nor do we think that the mere reform of specially providing work for such men is anything like an adequate solution. It is the right of all to have full, free and equal access to all we need irrespective of our individual capacity to produce.

When we are in charge of our own industries, no doubt we shall have mistakes. But we must see that they are human errors, erring on the generous side rather than the mean, while the cold inhuman blunders of bureaucracy have no longer sway over the very lives of men.

P.S.

founding Charter prepared at Amiens was a classic exposition of syndicalism) which later fell into the hands of political leaders who led their movements to become carbon copies of the avowedly non-syndicalist English trade unions, to copy which is the aim of every Continental labour leader. What is the use of struggling to build a movement that can become the bastion of the enemy—a happy hunting ground of the reformist politician or the fifth column of the totalitarians?

There is a very bitter lesson to be learned from the experiences of the revolutionary movement. Namely that the reformist politicians or totalitarian leaders of to-day were the militants of yesterday. And their militancy helped towards it. It is no solution for a man to preach even our own ideas of workers' action and workers control, if the workers are going to listen with awe to his exposition of self-responsibility, and then appoint him to do the job for them! Once in power, libertarian ideas or not, corruption will follow, and as our old comrade Mat Kavanagh has pointed out in these columns before, some of the union leaders of to-day once claimed to be active Anarchists.

We cannot devote our efforts to the building of a big industrial union which although a minority among the workers, is strong enough to have temporary economic gains, and see it later a perversion of its ideas, like the C.G.T. in France and some other revolutionary

bodies elsewhere. Or for that matter, see it retain its ideals and watch the militants desert it for some other body, as happened in so many cases too numerous to mention, when honest revolutionaries deserted the revolutionary bodies after the last war, owing to the "glamour value" attaching to the Communists as a result of the Russian Revolution, before news of the reaction seeped out and when criticism of Bolshevism seemed an act of betrayal in view of the fact that world capitalism was also attacking it for very different motives. And yet again the march to the police state proves that we may build an economic movement only to find it crushed by repressive laws under the present secret police of M.I.5, or at any rate later on when additional laws of a fascist-inclined government will give this body the full powers accorded to the Gestapo or OGPU. That is why our present interpretation of

(Continued on page 7)

## REWARD

**U**NDER the heading of "Craftsman", the following letter appeared in the *Daily Mirror* of 11th June. It needs no comment from us:

"Whatever party is in power, the producer is always the main sufferer. The wealth of a nation is in the skill of its workers, yet, after twenty-five years at my trade, I am handed £4 13s. 11d. for a full week's work.

"Must the sole reward of the craftsman always be the praise of future generations?—Sawdust, Newcastle."

## Land Notes

## DOWN ON THE FARM

**T**O write on the subject of the land for each issue of *Freedom* and, furthermore, to write for readers the great majority of whom are not practically concerned with farming in their daily lives and who have, therefore, little knowledge of it is, I may say, often no easy task.

One has to be constantly on one's guard against the tendency to assume that the reader is well acquainted with the subject and even to beware of using words that are commonplace to oneself but of which many of one's readers probably do not know the meaning at all. One has to try and remember that one is not writing for a farming paper or addressing farmers and farm-workers. I imagine that a doctor writing regularly on the social and political aspects of medicine must experience much the same difficulty and sometimes the same sense of frustration. At all costs one has avoid giving any impression that one is writing down to the layman in a patronizing manner, while on the other hand it is fatal to take for granted that the reader knows what a hogg or a stirk is if he obviously does not and is probably not much interested anyway.

One's scope and one's subject-matter are therefore very limited, and all the time one has to ask oneself: is this particular piece of information, and one's own opinions about it, really of any great interest to someone not "in the business"?

## To Be a Farmer's Boy

Furthermore, most persons who write about the land for the benefit or entertainment of the general public usually have one great, and very useful, source of appeal that is denied to me as a contributor to a paper like *Freedom*; that is the appeal to the undoubtedly sentimental attitude to the land inherent in the majority of townspeople as is displayed in many popular songs like "Galway Bay", "Lazy Countryside" and others of the kind.

Many papers carry small, regular features of a whimsy nature about the land, and I have often thought how much easier my task would be if I could transform these Land Notes into a sort of "Countryman's Diary". There is great scope here and it is much easier to do. You know the sort of thing I mean. One has several regular characters, whom one always trots out, one of whom at least must be an elderly farm-labourer and must embody all that the town reader imagines a farm-labourer to be. He should be called Old Something or Other and he must speak in a strong dialect.

What dialect is really immaterial, though one based on, or made to sound like either Somerset or Essex, or both at once, is, I think, to be preferred. He will state ponderous platitudes with a knowing smile, but as these are said in dialect the reader will believe them to be the wisdom of the soil. By way of dramatic contrast one can, if desired, have the lad who drives the tractor, though one must be careful here to keep the tractor well in the background most of the time as any form of power other than that of horses is really out of place in this sort of feature. Then there is the boss, or gaffer, who must always wear breeches, chew a straw and lean reflectively over gates. It goes without saying that he is a very nice chap to work for.

## Our Dumb Friends

The English are notorious for their love of animals for whose welfare they display more concern than they do for the great majority of their fellow-countrymen. While casual cruelty to human beings, unless of a sensational nature, is passed over, cruelty to animals raises great indignation and brings out the most noble elements in the English national character. I knew a man who had been a commando throughout most of the war who was overcome with horror and disgust at the prospect of drowning a kitten.

It is, therefore, amongst farm animals that one's irresistible appeal lies. The expressions of cows (except when "bulling"), with their big, sad, dreamy eyes, lend themselves excellently to this whimsical touch. (Why it is considered a term of abuse to call a woman a cow, I have never been fully able to understand.) Then, of course, there are the little pigs, in the orchard—not in the crew-yard, by the way—but they must be little for pigs, like most human beings, seem to become less likeable as they grow older. The picture cannot be complete without at least one horse, getting on in years, or, rather, a mare since there is something not quite nice about geldings. Moreover, unlike a gelding, this mare can have a foal and the description of mother and child can be made to touch the heart. Note that farm horses never walk but always plod. This seems to make them much more endearing. (See adverts for the Women's Land Army and especially those for Harvest Holiday Camps.)

A word of warning, however. On no account must any mention be made of the mating habits of farm animals. These can be very embarrassing and are, to say the least, unfortunate.

## A New Feature?

If this sort of picture bears little or no resemblance to actual farm life, neither for that matter do most of the utterances of politicians or the writings of agricultural policy-makers. And both the latter have the added disadvantage of being almost invariably dull to read and having no emotional content. Those readers, therefore, who may sometimes get as bored with these Notes, as I often do with following the general trend of farming politics, will be glad to hear that I am considering giving them the go-by and starting a new whimsy feature on the lines indicated.

G.V.



## AUSTRIAN WORKERS STRIKE

### In Russian Operated Factory

THE *New York Herald Tribune* (18/6/48) publishes a report from its Vienna correspondent of a two-day strike of workers in a Russian operated factory there. The strike started after the Russian administrators dismissed the head of the plant works council, who is a Socialist, and ignored the Austrian arbitration court's ruling to reinstate him. The factory does construction work for bridges.

The strike, however, threatened to spread to all enterprises operated by U.S.I.A., Soviet administration of former German assets in Austria. It brought the direct intervention of the Russian commander, Colonel General L. V. Kourasov, to end the strike.

While 250 Socialist workers went on strike, the strong possibility of the vast majority of U.S.I.A.'s 35,000 employees joining in protest restored the dismissed works council leader to his job as soon as the matter was brought to General Kourasov's attention.

The strike also had political implications which apparently were foreseen by Johann Kopenig, one of the Communist party leaders, who went to General Kourasov to ask for the reinstatement. The Socialists control Austria's workers councils and the strike definitely did the Communists more harm than good.

The cause for the strikes, Karl Lucan, was accused by the Soviet administrators of the plant of having agitated against the Russian enterprise. Mr. Lucan was charged with having urged a woman employee to leave her job because she was tied up with too much activity in cultural work for Soviet-Austrian relations.

The Communists in the plant also insisted on Mr. Lucan's dismissal and proposed one of their party members to replace him as head of the works council. Mr. Lucan insisted upon trial by a labour dispute court, to which he is entitled under Austrian law. The Soviet administrators ignored the court's demand for their appearance.

The court then ruled that Mr. Lucan's dismissal was void and ordered him reinstated immediately. This judgment, too, was disregarded. The Socialist party inveighed against the "failure to recognise trade union rights" and the plant's employees walked out on Monday afternoon.

## CHANGING HANDS

It is possible that a move will be made to secure Congressional approval of a plan to build a huge American naval base, with a twenty-year permit from the Japanese Government, on the island of Yokosuka, off the Bay of Tokyo. The island was formerly the main base of the Japanese fleet, and contained an airport, arsenals and shipbuilding facilities.

*Socialist Leader*, 5/6/48.

## PARLIAMENTARY MANNERS

In Ottawa, Parliamentary Law Clerk Paul M. Ollivier proposed that M.P.'s be required to stand on one foot while speaking.

*Time*, 31/5/48.

# ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE ARABS

IT is a fact very discouraging for the Arabs (who are well aware of the fact) that they have practically no real friends in England, where anti-imperialism is abandoned by the Left. Least of all are the people who call themselves pro-Arab. There is the minority who have come from the colonial service and have the Lawrence of Arabia attitude; they are certainly "pro-Arab" insofar as the Arabs can be dominated and ruled; as long as they recognise their place—as fellahs—they will be pleased to dine and wine with kings and rulers on terms of equality and talk Islamic culture. Most Army officers for that reason have been opposed to the Zionists because they were in an unusual position of being European elements in what was intended as a colony and simply did not fit in with the type of treatment they liked to dish out. They were "ready made" as it were, whereas in India and Egypt it took time before the population realised they could assert themselves against the red-tailed Caesars and even then, there was such extreme poverty that the colonial mentality type could always find somebody poor enough to be prepared to be kicked around as a "wog". Although at the present time so far as the Palestine conflict goes most of these are pro-Arab it is certain that the Arabs themselves have nothing in common with them. And they are conscious enough to recognise it; the Zionists have fostered the myth that

the Arabs are entirely dominated by the British and that Bevin could "call the war off at any time". Actually, Bevin's plan is to endeavour to keep in with whichever side wins; the officers with the Transjordan forces are hanging on in case the Arabs win. They have not as much influence as is ascribed to them.

The other type of pretended pro-Arab is the one who writes "Up the Arabs" on the walls, when all he means is simply "Down with the Jews", solely out of an ignorant anti-Semitism which has nothing really to do with Palestine at all. Some of them are writing to the papers to tell them how fine the Arabs are, when they really have no sympathy with the Arabs except that they happen to be fighting the Jews. But they need not have any mistaken ideas about the Arab attitude, because whatever faults may be ascribed to them, they have not fallen for that propaganda. We quote the *Arab News Bulletin* (4/6/48), the official Arab Office publication, which is naturally bitterly anti-Zionist, but never anti-Jewish: "Every now and then the courageous, wise and honest voice of an American Jew makes itself heard against the savage propaganda clamour of the Zionists in words which sooner or later will prove their truth to the world. Amongst such utterances was the speech made on May 6th at a meeting of the American Council for Judaism by Rabbi

Morris Lazaron." (It then gives Rabbi Lazaron's speech in full.) We do not agree with the views in this bulletin which is just as nationalist in its own way as the Zionists in theirs—it is true, too, the Arabs also have a fascist grouping amongst their ranks just as the Zionists have in the Irgun Zvai Leumi. (It is odd, by the way, that the fascists always quote the Irgun's deeds in order to discredit the Jews—but should it not be to discredit Fascism?) But compare this tone with anti-Semitic stuff elsewhere. But what we want to point out is that the anti-Semites who wish to make use of the civil war in Palestine to further their ineane arguments cannot claim the Arabs as allies.

## CZECH FREEDOM PROGRESS

Mr. Alec Lawrenson *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, was expelled by the Czech Government to-day. Officials told him he interfered with the police when he helped a previous *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, Alec Collet to obtain the release of his fiancée—who was arrested without a warrant.

He is the fifth correspondent to be expelled since the Communist coup. *News Chronicle*, 15/6/48.

## Foreign Commentary

SOME time ago (18/1/47) we drew attention in this column to the case of an Italian cartoonist who was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment for "offences against the Religion of the State", his offences being two cartoons which appeared in an anti-clerical paper published in Rome.

Now comes news that an Italian anarchist, Paolo Patrian, who has been in prison since last year was sentenced to 2 years and 8 months imprisonment by the Court at Rovigo for the "crime" of having distributed a number of anti-militarist leaflets. The sentence has since been confirmed by the Court of Appeal of Venice. The Milan weekly *Il Libertario* (9/6/48) points out that in similar cases in Trieste, Modena and Milan, the arrested persons were held for a maximum period of one month, whilst in other districts for a matter of days.

Comrade Patrian, it should be noted, had spent many years in prison and in political confinement during the Mussolini regime. Is there no one in Italy outside the anarchist movement (which we know will not cease agitating on our comrade's behalf) who will raise his voice against such injustice? Where are the Silones and the Levis?

## TOLERANCE BY LEGISLATION?

FROM a press report it appears that the Home Secretary has received a deputation from the Communist-controlled National Council of Civil Liberties who appealed to him for additional legislation to check the growth of anti-Semitic propaganda. There may be people who genuinely think that legislation can curb anti-Semitism and we have no quarrel with them, though we think theirs is wishful thinking. But the moving spirits in this anti-Fascist, anti-anti-Semitism legislation campaign are the Communists who are no more concerned with religious freedom than they are with political freedom. It's all a political stunt which they hope will bring them votes and support. And the Communists only defend minorities when they happen to be in a minority themselves. In Albania, for instance, where the Communists are the top dogs with Russia behind them, and the Catholics represent only 10% of the population, they do nothing to prevent the persecution of the Catholic minority by the Mohammedan and Greek-Orthodox majority. According to *Worldwide Press* correspondent Hans Fehlinger (16/6/48), persecution has reached a high pitch of violence in Albania. Among those executed already this year, after summary trials held in secret, have been the Regent of the Apostolic Delegation, Mgr. Gjini, Father Matteo Prennushi, Father Cipriano Nikai, Mgr. Nicola Deda and 29 others of the religious. The Archbishop of Durazzo, Mgr. Prennushi, and the Vicar General of Scutari, Mgr. Michele Kaligi,

are now serving long prison sentences.

Only one diocese is reported functioning in the whole of Albania, Catholic schools have been closed, the Catholic Action Society dissolved, and Catholic printing presses seized.

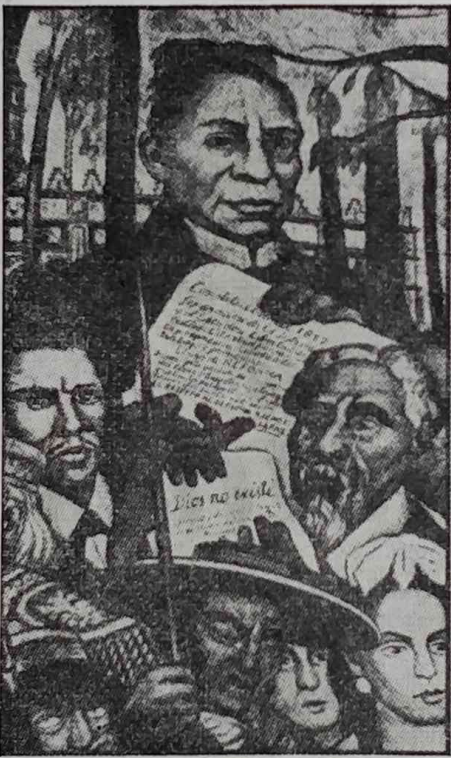
In Hans Fehlinger's opinion, not only the Communists but also the ancient religious cleavage in Albania are responsible for this campaign.

## "GOD DOES NOT EXIST"!

IN Mexico, where the Catholics are in a majority, it's a brave man who stands up to the Church and for a business man to do so would appear to be the height of folly. This was shown recently when Diego de Rivera, the famous Mexican painter, completed a mural in Mexico City's Prado Hotel. According to *Time* (14/6/48): "Someone had informed the Archbishop that the mural contained a portrait of Don Ignacio Ramirez (an anti-clerical follower of Juárez) holding a placard with the words *Dios no existe* ('God does not exist'). Sadly, the Archbishop cancelled a date to bless the just-completed hotel and went off to bless some *jai alai* courts instead.

"When a reporter got to Rivera's house, the garrulous, 61-year-old revolutionary was ready and waiting, with both guns loaded. 'I respectfully propose,' he offered grandly, 'that the Archbishop bless the hotel in order that, with divine help, it may realise the greatest profits possible, and that he damn my [mural] so that I may go tranquilly to hell. Then everyone will be happy.'

"Having made this proposition, Rivera bumbled happily on: 'I am an atheist, that's true, and I think any individual suffering from religion is sick. But... I'm not an enemy of Catholics any more than I am an enemy of those suffering



A section of the vast Diego Rivera mural, showing Don Ignacio Ramirez holding a placard with the words "Dios no existe" (God does not exist).

from tuberculosis, myopia, paralysis."

But the matter did not end there. Roman Catholic committees demanded that the Del Prado mural be changed, or got rid of, as Rivera's Reforma Hotel and Rockefeller Centre murals had been. Their demands could not be met, however. Under the law, the hotel could not touch the mural. It was government property, in charge of the President's committee on mural painting. But there was no law, the hotel decided, against veiling the mural with a vast white cloth.

It would, however, seem that this only made matters worse, for one night more than a hundred students raided the hotel dining room, and with table knives scratched out those terrible words, *Dios no existe* and presumably returned home satisfied that by obliterating those words the idea of God had been reinstated.

Rivera, it is reported was having dinner when the incident occurred. Quiet, unperturbed by the news, he finished his meal, returned to the hotel, mounted a chair and painted the terrible words right back in again!

## MORE ON THE "AMERICAN WAY"

WHAT strikes one most about the "American Way" is its coarseness and smugness. At least that's how it strikes this writer from this side of the Atlantic. In the past few days we have put aside three cuttings to illustrate one or both of these impressions.

### 1.

The Californian weekly *Manas* (2/6/48) in an article of general interest, reveals that: "Along with other items of democratization in post-war Japan, a couple of years ago the Americans sponsored a beauty-contest in Nagasaki the winner of which was styled, not Miss Cherry Blossoms or Miss Lotus Eyes, but 'Miss Atom Bomb, 1946'."

In case memories are short, Nagasaki was one of the cities atom-bombed by the Americans.

### 2.

The American Press recently reported that:

"Plans to rescue the world's first atomic bomber from the dusty oblivion of an Arizona airport and preserve it for posterity have been disclosed by officials of the Smithsonian Institution.

"They said that historic Boeing B29 Superfortress, Enola Gay, which hastened the end of the Pacific war by its blasting of Hiroshima, will be moved after July 1st to Orchard Place Airport, near Chicago. There it will be stored in part of the war-time Douglas DC4 plant recently made available to the Smithsonian by the War Assets Administration until the institution's projected National Air Museum can be built to house it and other famous airplanes.

"At present, they added, the Enola Gay is gathering dust in the 'outside storage' on Davis-Monthan Field, near Tucson, where it has been sitting forgotten by the world, for two years."

### 3.

A report from Germany published in the *N. York Herald Tribune*, informs readers that:

"There's a place in this little resort

town in hungry Germany with plenty of lobster, steak, chicken, caviar and fine wines, but no German can buy a meal there. The name of this oasis is the Ritters Park Hotel. It represents the first venture of the British-American Joint Export-Import Agency (JEIA) into the hotel business.

"The experiment has been accompanied by loud ringing of the cash register. The Ritters Park has grossed about \$100,000 in its first three months under the JEIA wing.

"This is the showpiece of a string of dollar-only hotels scattered through the American zone.

"On this island of luxury you can get breakfast for 3/-, lunch for 7/6 and dinner for less than 10/-. But sea food and other luxury items can easily boost a couple's dinner check to £7/10/0.

"No German enters here save as the guest of someone who has the requisite dollars, still forbidden to the Germans, Mr. Eisenmenger estimates you cannot dine in his establishment for less than £2 daily.

"Whatever dollar profits there are go to JEIA, to be poured into the rebuilding of the crippled economy of Bizonia."

Note the hypocritical justification for such coarseness in the last paragraph!

## KROPOTKIN MUSEUM IS NO MORE

IN 1923, a Kropotkin museum was created in the house where the anarchist thinker was born, and which was situated in a small street of Moscow bearing his name. The museum housed Kropotkin's papers, photographs, files as well as his library and archives which were transferred from this country to Russia in 1925. As a writer in *Umanità Nova* put it, "for 15 years the museum was an oasis of anarchism in the dictatorial desert of the Soviets." Up to the time of his death in 1936, Lebedieff, one-time secretary to Kropotkin, author of a biography of Elisée Reclus and a history of the International, was in charge of the museum. After that news of the museum was scanty and no news at all was received, of course, during the war years. But recently a reply to enquiries was received from the professor in charge of the State Literary Museum in which he stated that, "the house at 26, Kropotkin Street has been put at our disposal. The Kropotkin Museum ceased to exist as an autonomous institution since 1939. All the documents, etc., have been transferred to the Museum of the Revolution (59, Gorky Street) and to the State Historical Museum (2, Krasnaya Ploshchad)." He added that Kropotkin's widow, Sophie, had died in 1938.

So this anarchist oasis is no more. Yet Kropotkin's ideas are gaining ground throughout the world. In China our comrades are at work translating his complete works (*Freedom*, 12/6/48) and we have just received from India copies of Kropotkin's *An Appeal to the Young* and *Spirit of Revolt* in Hindi translations, as well as three 8-page Quarto leaflets giving short biographical sketches of Louise Michel, Emma Goldman and Michel Bakunin.

LIBERTARIAN.

## German Currency "Revolution"

(Continued from page 1)

same time a tax reform for "equalising burdens" to be brought into operation before the end of the year. To quote the *Observer* once more: "German capital and landed interests are not again, as in 1923, to be allowed to profit at the expense of savers and money owners. Moreover, it is intended to spread the internal cost of the war and defeat more evenly between those who have lost everything and those who have kept all or most of their belongings. 'Equalization of burdens' is to be sought by way of forced mortgages on landed property and a capital levy on other property."

## Effects of the Reform

The *Observer* takes throughout an optimistic view of the currency reform: but it does not disguise the effects. "At the same time, the whole poverty of the German economy, hitherto partly disguised, will be brought into the open. Prices will have to find their new level, inessential trades will collapse, manufacturers will no longer be able to keep redundant employees on their pay-roll, and instead of hidden under-employment inside the factories, widespread open unemployment is expected for a time, which can only be absorbed through the effects of E.R.P., combined with a careful credit policy. In the meantime, Western Germany will inevitably pass through a period of great social and economic strains."

It is inevitable, also that those who will suffer most material hardship (though

perhaps not most material loss) will be the poorest.

## Aim of the Reform

It is hoped that the currency reform will put Germany back on to a stable monetary basis and enable Western German production to come into line with Western economy as a whole. Objections have been raised on a number of features: the separation of Western and Eastern Germany by a currency barrier as well as by a political barrier, only makes more definite an already accomplished fact. Russia has absorbed the Eastern Zone into Russian economy; the Western powers are now doing the same with Western Germany. A much more cogent objection is to the pettiness of the aim in itself. The economic pattern of capitalism is disclosed all over the world: to try and solve the tremendous economic and social problems of Germany by seeking to rebuild German economy within this unhealthy framework is to take drastic measures for an altogether too petty end. Revolutions may be drastic in their methods (quite often, in history, they have been peaceful and constructive), but at least they have the justification of a high aim—the establishment of equality and social justice and the elimination of those forces which make for social injustice and misery. To use such drastic measures for such a threadbare aim as the re-establishment of the German capitalist pattern of society, is altogether ridiculous, and the suffering incurred will be just so much waste.



# THE RUSSIAN CHURCH IN THE SERVICE OF THE STALINIST STATE

(From a Correspondent)

THE terrible reality of the "Iron Curtain" hinders the serious and deep study of the conditions of life of the Russian people. In spite of that, let us hope that the spirit of search for truth which should characterise the anarchist movement will not hesitate even before this monstrous obstacle. With more tenacity than ever it is necessary to collect all serious evidence, all authentic information that emerges from the countries of universal slavery.

It is thus desirable, among other questions, to estimate the exact attitude of the Russian government with regard to the Orthodox Church. Already a quantity of reliable information has shown that since about 1941 the Russian despots have abandoned the encouragement which they gave to a narrow, governmental and state-controlled atheism, passing firstly to tolerance, then to protection, and finally to alliance with the old Greco-Orthodox Church, or, to be more exact, with the leaders. But it is interesting to study how far this collaboration goes and above all to understand its reasons.

An important contribution to that study can be drawn from the August, 1947, issue of the *Review of the Moscow Patriarchate*, published in that town. The very fact of the existence of this magazine, bearing proudly above its title in enormous Slavonic characters the traditional eight-pointed cross of the Russian national religion, is characteristic; the presence of that cross contrasts with the entire absence of that atheist press which was once so abundant and of whose existence not the least sign is now to be found in Russian publications. But there is a fatal greed in all forms of despotism; not only is militant atheism reduced to silence, but the manifestations of all religious belief other than those of the Official Church are condemned to silence; a careful observation of the Russian press does not reveal any trace of the existence of Catholic, Mohametan, Jewish or Buddhist publications; faithful to the tradition of the Tsars, the Stalinist despots have given complete hegemony to the Greco-Orthodox religions.

## The New Hierarchy

That Church has been authorised to organise a numerous and complicated hierarchy which parades its titles proudly over the pages of the *Review of the Moscow Patriarchate*. Sometimes it invokes the "Most Holy Patriarch Alexis", then it enumerates complacently the present princes of the Church—"Philipp, archbishop of Astrakan; Safroni, bishop of Ulianovsk; Cyril, bishop of Penza; Nicholas, archbishop of Alma-Ata; Theodosius, bishop of Czernowitz; Warlam, bishop of Kovno;" or else "Necta, the most blessed and recently consecrated bishop of Petrozadovsk and Olonetsk". "Nicholas, the metropolitan of Krontitsk and Kolomna", "Bartholomew, archbishop of Novosibirsk and Barnaul; Serge, bishop of Odessa and Chersonese; the igouman Anatole (a monastic title): the bearer of the tiara, Mouretov, of Odessa", and many others.

From now onwards courses are planned and instituted for the formation and extension of this clergy; the pupil-priests, instead of being called seminarists, are designated *koursanty*, a title applied for a long time to the pupil-officers of Russian military academies. They are taught: "... canon law, dogmatic theology, the history of the Church, the study of foreign doctrines of faith and

of schisms against orthodoxy, etc."

## The Party Overseers

But the explanation of the authorisation and encouragement given to that clerical hierarchy is furnished by the presence of special functionaries of the Russian state, who are picked communists and who enhance by their presence the important ceremonies. Thus, relating the reopening of the famous convent of Troitsko-Sergeievsk Lavra not far away from Moscow, on the occasion of the return of the relics of Saint Sergei of Radoneje, the review already quoted wrote: "Among the noted guests present in the church were: S. K. Bielychev, vice-president of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and A. A. Trouchin, *upolnomotchenny* of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Moscow region." In the same way, in the account of the reception of Juvenal, new bishop of Cheliabinsk, the review mentions among the personalities present: "V. S. Kladov, *upolnomotchenny* of the Affairs of the

Russian Orthodox Church for the Cheliabinsk region." It is thus that the existence of the institution is confirmed by the Communist state: the council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church corresponds to the Office of the Procurator of the Holy Synod in the age of the Tsars. This power of the State over the Church is administered through a network of Stalinist functionaries organised by regions and called *upolnomotchenny* (meaning charged with powers), a title given also to the important hierarchs of the N.K.V.D., the former O.G.P.U. The spiritual and religious life is thus confided to sure hands.

It is thus that, in associating with the despotic power, the Orthodox Church has abandoned the road of martyrdom and persecutions in order to wallow in luxury and material splendours. The review quoted underlines this with regard to the reopening of the convent of Troitsko-Sergeievsk: "On the 17th and 18th of July of that year the Lavra of Sergei celebrated the return of the relics of its Celestial Protector with all the magnificence of the Church. In these un-

forgettable days it reflected brilliantly the importance of the life of the Orthodox Church of Russia by putting forward all the abundance and majesty of its rites."

But as always in human history and even more particularly in that of Churches, the renunciation of sacrifice involves spiritual servitude. And so, confirming the old fears of sincerely religious Russians who dreaded the rise of Anti-Christ to the extent of submitting the Church itself, the nationalised Russian priests sing the glory of Stalin. The review from which we quote describes the review from which we quote describes the celebration of mass on the First of May at Kichinev and summarised the sermon of Venedict, bishop of that town, as follows: "With a steady attention the numerous congregation listened to the words of His Reverence on the right of the Church to participate with a frank spirit in the celebrations of our native country and of all the democratic peoples, on the justice of the Socialist regime, on the power of the U.S.S.R., on the majesty and authority of our Church in the whole world. The proposition of His

Reverence to send telegrams of greeting to the Most Holy Patriarch Alexis and to the Great Leader Stalin were received with enthusiasm by the congregation to cries of "We ask for them, we ask for them!"

## Church and State

To the numerous examples of servile invocations to Stalin we must add finally the following quotation which is printed in the same review. It involves the exaltation of the doctrine of Saint Seraphin of Sarov (canonised with great pomp under the Tsar in 1903) expressed in these terms "Russia will always be glorious, terrible to her enemies, and invincible, such was the conviction of Saint Seraphin."

"It is interesting for us to state that the venerable Saint Seraphin declared in a convinced manner that the unconditional service of Christ and the care of man for the salvation of his spirit, not only are compatible with the service of the fatherland of existing society, but the latter constitutes the duty of all Christians."

"Render then to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. The venerable man always quoted these words when he spoke of the need for the citizens to execute conscientiously the legitimate demands of the State." Thus the leaders of the Russian national Church have abandoned the ancient maxims of "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt have no other gods but me"; they have substituted the acceptance of war, submission to the State and the adoration of Stalin.

Thus religious imposture has combined with materialist hypocrisy in the united deception under the protection of Russian despotism.

## RUSSIAN STRENGTH?

The International Committee for the Study of European Questions said Russia now controls armies totalling 3,800,000 men and probably will exert heavy pressure on other powers in the next few months.

The committee said Russia alone has a peace-time Army of 190 divisions, totalling approximately 3,000,000 men, half of them stationed in Eastern Europe—Russia itself, Germany and the Danubian plains.

"The combined armies of Russia and her satellites in Eastern Europe include to-day approximately 2,000,000 men," the committee said.

N.Y. Herald Tribune, 13/6/48.

It looks as if the *Daily Worker*, which has been constantly advocating a reduction of British armed forces, should keep some of its advice for Moscow.

# CONSCRIPTION IN U.S.A.

CONSCRIPTION, which before 1914 was unthinkable in war-time, and before 1939 was unthinkable in peace-time, is now an established fact in both Britain and the United States. Despite considerable opposition which succeeded in modifying some of its terms, the conscription Bill has now been passed by the American government. It is a measure of the extent to which the "democratic" pattern has absorbed the totalitarian gospels which it claimed to be fighting in the recent war. The struggle "to preserve our way of life" has now resulted in the adoption of "their" way of life.

The seemingly inevitable progression towards totalitarian patterns, illustrates also the truth that such particular manifestations as conscription, national registration, etc., cannot effectively be fought as separate and isolated phenomena. They are the outward signs, the symptoms, of a trend inherent in the system of government itself. Those who fight merely against conscription alone—or any other undesired feature of our society alone, for that matter—are condemned to futility. In accepting the State and the idea of government, they are part of the wave which brings in the very thing they seek to fight. Their battle is lost at the outset.

It is time to recognise that the outstanding evils of our time are the inevitable products of the universal governmental pattern. Their eradication demands the development of a society without government, where mutual co-operation takes the place

of coercion.

## Jim Crow Again

There are many who, deploring racial discrimination in America, think that it is merely a product of ignorance and prejudice in the South alone. Cultured Americans, and the government, they imagine have no truck with it. Such a rose-coloured viewpoint is completely discredited by two incidents recounted by Senator William E. Langer, of North Dakota, in the course of a long speech in the Senate against colour discrimination in the Army. There can be no question that the U.S. government knows fully the extent of colour bar, and is not merely supine in the face of it, but actively maintains it.

Said Senator Langer (he is quoted by the *New York Herald Tribune*, 12/6/48): "Within a few weeks after the United Nations Charter, a young man walked into my office. He was

in uniform. He lost an arm in the war and was perhaps 50 per cent. coloured. Here in the nation's capital he had gone into a restaurant and tried to buy a cup of coffee. He laid 10 cents on the counter. Although he was in uniform, he was informed by the young lady behind the counter that they did not serve coloured men in that restaurant."

## Colour Bar in Senate Restaurant

"Senator Langer also said that at the very moment when the United Nations Charter was being considered in the Senate, he had tried to take some coloured people into the Senate restaurant for coffee. 'I was informed that I could not get them in without a fight,' he said, and added that Justice Burton, of the Supreme Court, saved the situation by taking the party to the Supreme Court's cafeteria."

# AN EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT

Will you put down your knife and fork for a minute and listen to me?

I've just spent eight months as a hanger-on of the American Occupation Army in Germany. It was a peculiar existence composed on the one hand of luxury plus, and on the other, of a simple battle for mere existence. For the first seven months I was on the inside looking out, and then, by a peculiar and personal change of status which wouldn't interest you, I became an "illegal" resident, and went into hiding with a German family who faced the risk of eviction and penalization for harbouring me.

Up to this point, although I had not subscribed to the view expressed by the average American on arrival in Germany ("Goddamn Krauts!—they look starving don't they, with their fat bellies and bouncing buttocks!") I had tended to presuppose a certain exaggeration in descriptions of the German economy, rationing, housing conditions and black market necessities. Up to this point, apart from a few self-conscious distributions of "largesse" from my groaning larder and P.X. rations, the problem had remained a largely impersonal one for me, as I suppose it is for you. But from then on I became, for all practical problems another German, a personally very interested one.

After three days of revolt from my stomach I became hungry enough to welcome whatever food was put before me—every scrap a sacrifice from the meagre rations of the three people harbouring me. Breakfast: black bread, ersatz coffee. Lunch: semolina soup and black bread. Supper: boiled potatoes or rolled oats, or the interminable soup. Soup that rarely saw a bone or a vegetable, that consisted mostly of an ersatz bouillon paste called "Maggi" and boiling water and

bread. I discovered the effects of this liquid diet coupled with starch, this bloated distention producing the unhealthy fat so evocative of the scorn of the occupying forces.

I discovered people who were actors, writers, musicians, medical students, etc., working for the Americans as jeep drivers, office boys, filing clerks, housemaids—a career was not to be weighed against the unanswerable value of one free meal a day in an American mess, with beans, soup and coffee. The papers printed reports of orchestras collapsing midway through a symphony, of plays being abandoned by actors who lacked the stamina to cope with rehearsals and performances, of deputations by University professors pleading for increased rations to enable them to combat the exhaustion of teaching.

I learned all this—and remembered the American families I had encountered in Munich. Families with Commissary privileges and a card entitling them to purchase American food ad nauseum. This costs good dollars, but, if you have a German maid, can become profitable. One pound of coffee brings 350 marks, a pound of black market meat, 40 marks, 10 marks buys an egg, 200 marks a pound of butter. Who can resist such simple arithmetic? Some can and do, but the example of the rest is digested as badly as the semolina soup by the intelligent German, whose average wage per month as a worker is 120 marks—one fifteenth of the value of a week's basic P.X. rations to the American who decides to black market them.

As for the Germans who wanted to read, to fill the mental void left by years of dictatorship and war, they were so deprived of literary material that they descended to the faithful perusal of the American comic strips to be found in the office

waste paper baskets, along with chewed cigar stubs and cigarette butts, the one wrapped up in the other and taken home to be enjoyed equally.

A lot is said and written about the smooth-running efficiency with which the Americans run their Zone. I saw little of it. What I saw was the humiliating spectacle of arrogant conquerors living on loot, while fawning Nazis were given high offices in the German administration.

I have been home four days and have canvassed friends and acquaintances for help in mitigating just a little of the stark and drab existence of those particular Germans I now value as friends. Already I have been offered cast-off clothing, food and books. When I asked why they never discovered these things when solicited by some "Aid-to-Europe" canvasser, they lacked replies. Perhaps they didn't have enough imagination to think in terms of individual suffering people. Perhaps the necessary impetus was provided by knowing that Wolfgang got the Rilke book, and Maria the pair of shoes, to augment the one pair she has, made of wood and paper, and Johann the old shirts and odd soft collars, and Mütter Frühauf the 2 ozs. of tea which I have no doubt she will use as she used her coffee—three brewings to one lot of grounds, the first for her son, the second for daughter, and the third for herself.

To make up and dispatch a parcel is rendered as irksome a business as Food Office regulations and Post Office rates can make it—a certain dilatoriness is excusable—or is it?

Anyway, if you don't send a parcel yourself, can't you send some food, or clothes, or some money, stamps, a postal order or a cheque to the Freedom Press so that they can make up and send a parcel. The need is desperate. I know.

JO BEAL.

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# The Declining Interest in Literature

READING Philip Sansom's article in the last-but-one issue of *Freedom*, I could not help being impressed by the difference between the present popular interest in painting, ballet, opera, music and the theatre, and the declining interest in literature, shown in the present steadily increasing slump in the sale of books.

Three or four years ago, there was a brisk demand for books of all kinds. Any book with pretensions to literary merit sold out quickly, new literary magazines sold in thousands, classics were almost impossible to obtain, and even a volume of verse by an unknown poet could be sure of selling seven or eight hundred copies. To-day, all that is ended. There is a surplus of books on the market, the sales of fiction have slumped to a low level (the other day I heard of a publisher selling 300 copies of a novel which would have sold a good 3,000 copies two years ago) and the sales of poetry have fallen almost to nothing, so that books by comparatively well-known poets are selling 200 copies and those by unknowns cannot be expected to sell more than 70 or 80. The case of literary magazines is as bad, and the only consolation I have had in suspending *NOW* until times improve has been the doubtful one that the malady is general. Most of the magazines founded during or just after the war are no longer to be seen, and the few that survive have to be subsidised in order to meet growing losses. The decline that towards the end of the war began to affect political writing has now spread over the whole field of literature. The advantage is that almost every book that is published is now readily available, without having to search for it under the counter of a friendly bookseller. But the disadvantages are many, and the worst of them include the sudden cuts which are appearing in the incomes of the less prosperous writers, already a badly paid class, the reluctance of publishers to take on new writers, the absence of little magazines to provide a first platform for the young, and the economic difficulties which are facing many enterprising and liberal-minded smaller publishers who have not the resources with which the big publishing combines are able to weather slumps.

The result of this, as of all similar slumps in the book trade, will be that the publishers will become increasingly cautious and conservative in their policy, publishing "safe" books and the kind of opiate trash which the circulating libraries seem to buy in large quantities, whatever the economic state of the country. Anything experimental, anything outspoken, anything just honest and workmanlike, will be suspect, and the writers who produce books of this kind will find it increasingly difficult to get publishers and editors to take their work.

We can only lament the result, which will be a weakening of the already not particularly high standard of literature in

this country. But it is interesting to speculate why the movement which Sansom shows in the other arts has not spread to or continued in books. Why do people prefer ballet or concerts to cigarettes, but cigarettes to books? I think it must be partly because, as Sansom suggests in one place, the interest in the other arts is largely due to the need for consolation and compensation; as the present period of political apathy shows, people are still too numbed from the war and the aftermath to wish to be brought

## Literary Notes

up against the worse reality that lies behind their daily lives. Ballet and painting give them something colourful and vital; books—new books in particular—make them think and bring them too much up against the dark side of life, which they are still anxious not to recognise too clearly. The revolt which Philip Sansom sees as a possible implication of the return to the other arts has certainly not yet taken on intellectual form.

There is not a great deal that can be done about it at present. But something might be achieved if the publishers would only try to cut down costs and profits and produce books more in accordance with the reduced surplus which most people are able to spend on cultural amenities. Half a guinea for a new novel, six shillings for a thin booklet of verse, twelve and six for any kind of serious volume are more than most people can afford to pay nowadays, when wartime gratuities are all run out and the cost of living continues to rise. Cheaper forms of binding and various other technical changes would decrease cost of production, writers would be willing to take slightly less for each copy if they thought sales might be doubled, and pressure could be put on wholesalers and retailers to take a smaller "cut" in order to help increased sales. Hamish Hamilton's Novel Library, a very nicely produced edition of the classics, running in some cases up to more than five hundred pages, sell at six shillings, and are a good example to modern publishers. They are attractive, durable, well-printed, and reasonably priced, while I doubt if their publishers budget for a phenomenally high sale. A general attempt to bring the costs of a book of small format down to six or seven shillings and of larger format books to eight and six could succeed if the publishers and distributors were really determined, and this might have a salutary effect in jerking the public out of its largely justified opinion that buying books at present is an expensive luxury, which in its turn might make them begin to read

the books that would start them thinking again in a rebellious way. But perhaps it is too much to expect this of the majority of publishers and distributors, who are as obstinate as most capitalists, and it may be that some kind of co-operative venture on the part of writers themselves will eventually be the only way of solving the problem.

★

A NUMBER of reprints have appeared which deserve the attention of libertarian readers.

The first of these is the Novel Library edition of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* (6/-). This novel of Tolstoy's is interesting because, unlike his other famous novels, it was written in the period when he had become converted to the attitude towards life commonly known as Tolstoyanism, and had long been engaged in his struggle against political, social and ecclesiastical institutions. In *Resurrection* his anarchist philosophy runs like a strong current through a novel which, if not such a superb work of art as *War and Peace*, remains nevertheless among the finest work of Russian literature. It is interesting to note, in the introduction by Alan Hodge, a mention of the fact that when *Resurrection* appeared in England in 1900 it was at first banned by the circulating libraries because of the unconventionality of the ideas expressed, and that Tolstoy used his royalties to help the Doukoko-bours, the Russian sect of libertarian Christians, to escape from Tsarist persecution and set up their non-authoritarian communities in Canada, where they still

flourish to-day.

*Coming Up For Air* (8/6), one of George Orwell's pre-war novels, has just been re-issued by Secker and Warburg as the beginning of a uniform Orwell series. It is the story of a commercial traveller's attempt to rediscover the lost happiness of his youth by a return to his home town, which he finds flooded under all the sordid spread of industrial urbanism. It is by no means the best of Orwell's novels; the commercial traveller is too much of a split personality, mingling the commercial-suburban crudity of the caricature bagman with a roving Orwellian intellect and an acute observation of the life which surrounds him and of which he is part. *Burmese Days* and *Down and Out in Paris and London* are both much superior, but *Coming Up For Air* does succeed in giving a clear and rather amusing picture of the kind of sensational drabness in which we live so much of our jerry-built modern lives, while it catches very well the spirit of those last few years of desperate ostrichism which preceded the war.

Those interested in Wilde will be pleased to see him appearing in the Penguin series, with a collection of three plays, under the title of *Salome and other Plays* (1/6). One of the plays included is *An Ideal Husband*, and those who went away disgusted from the really appalling film of that name will be able to realise just how far the film magnates managed to turn a play, which is really a rather subtle satire on political life and its inevitable corruption, into a piece of Empire and Glory propaganda.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

## A Welcome Reprint

THE VILLAGE LABOURER  
by J. L. & Barbara Hammond  
(Guild Books, 2 vols., 3/-).

THE VILLAGE LABOURER, by J. L. and Barbara Hammond, has long been out of print and the fact that it has at last now been reprinted, and reprinted in a cheap edition, is very welcome indeed. This book, dealing with the position between the years 1760-1832 of that new social class of persons created by the Enclosures—the landless labourers, still remains the classic book on its subject. And unlike many such books it is not only an excellent and reliable historical account, but it is also very readable as well.

The Enclosure movement, which reached the peak of its development during the years covered by this book, had a profound effect upon the whole social structure of the country, and not on rural England alone, for it was the dispossessed peasantry that provided the necessary manpower for the growing industrial towns as well as supplying the new large-scale capitalist farms with a plentiful supply of cheap and desperate labour.

Because it brought about greatly increased food production and made British farming of the mid-nineteenth century the most efficient in the world, the movement of enclosure has been regarded as an exclusively progressive one. That this technical advance was achieved at an appalling cost in human misery, and that the newly-created farm labourer of the period descended into a squalor and destitution that it would appear few medieval serfs ever knew, is either not realized or tacitly ignored. Underneath the imperial aggrandisement of that age and the growing wealth and power of the capitalist economy, in the shadow of the great country houses that grew up over "England's green and pleasant land", there lay a mass of suffering humanity, exploited and persecuted by the most ruthless governing class in the world of that time.

Those who may think that statement a dramatic exaggeration should read this book, as also should anyone who wishes to understand the origin, and the economic and farming lay-out, of the present English

countryside, for that time with which *The Village Labourer* is concerned, literally changed the face of England, and also the people who lived on it, from a once relatively prosperous and independent peasantry to a landless proletariat.

G.V.

## The Writer's Dilemma

THE Summer Number of *Politics and Letters* contains a contribution to the series "Critic and Leviathan" entitled "Writers and Leviathan" by George Orwell. It is of some interest because it is not only fairly representative of Orwell at both his best and his worst, but because the dilemma therein portrayed is also representative of a great number, perhaps the majority, of writers and what are known as intellectuals generally.

Orwell is at his best as a descriptive writer with a strong, if somewhat vague sense of social justice. As a critic he combines an often unusual insight with a lack of clarity of thought that can be most bewildering. Just as one feels that he has "really put his finger on the matter", he comes out with some quite contradictory and illogical comment which makes one doubt whether he has really understood the implications of what he has said. And very often he obviously has not. This comes out clearly in this essay.

"The acceptance of any political discipline," states Orwell, "seems to be incompatible with literary integrity. This applies equally to movements like Pacifism and Personalism, which claim to be outside the ordinary political struggle. Indeed, the mere sound of words ending in -ism seems to bring with it the smell of propaganda. Group loyalties are necessary, and yet they are poisonous to literature, so long as literature is the product of individuals. As soon as they are allowed to have any

influence, even a negative one, on creative-writing, the result is not only falsification, but often the actual drying-up of the inventive faculties."

### Jekyll and Hyde

All of which is so obviously true as to need no further emphasis. What, then, is to be the writer's attitude to politics and to the social problem as a whole? In view of the fact that an ivory-tower detachment is no longer possible even if it were desirable, the only solution that Orwell can see is that: "When a writer engages in politics he should do so as a citizen, as a human being, but not as a writer."

Superficially that may seem to be reasonable and at least a possible, if not altogether satisfactory, solution. But Orwell himself, following up his own line of argument more consistently than he often does, shows only too clearly into what an impossible position such an attitude lands the writer who adopts it. Such a man, says Orwell, "should be able to act co-operatively while, if he chooses, completely rejecting the official ideology . . . It is reasonable, for example, to be willing to fight in a war because one thinks the war ought to be won, and at the same time refuse to write war propaganda . . . Sometimes, if a writer is honest, his writings and his political activities may actually contradict one another . . . War may be necessary, but it is certainly not right or sane."

This attempt to adopt what one presumes Orwell considers to be a "realistic" approach to the problem would be bound to have a disintegrating effect on almost anybody, but on a creative writer the results, especially if he is consciously aware of what he is doing, can be very much worse.

No writer can effectively thus divide himself neatly into Jekyll and Hyde compartments and the effort to do so, even when attempted with the utmost sincerity, can be disastrous to his integrity both as a man and as a creative writer, for the two are inter-connected. As a man is,

so he writes. One result of making the attempt is that lack of self-respect, that almost masochistic self-depreciation, so admirably portrayed by Cyril Connolly in many of his writings and especially in *The Unquiet Grave*. It also contributes very largely to the guilt-complex which Arthur Koestler found so universal among the intelligentsia, that he said that it had to be regarded as an occupational disease like tuberculosis amongst miners.

### The Dilemma of Liberalism

All this is not to say that the problem is not a very real and painful one, or that it is easy to solve. Certainly it is not. Nor is it meant to imply that Orwell, and all those others for whom he can be taken as the spokesman, are insincere. Again, obviously the majority of them are not insincere. There is probably no fully satisfactory answer to the question posed, and yet, while realising the complications of the issues involved and avoiding the temptation to any over-simplification, it is difficult to see how any writer, who faces this problem clearly and honestly, can come to any other than an at least more or less anarchist conclusion; the position, with variations according to the individual, that Herbert Read reached ten years ago when he wrote *Poetry and Anarchism*.

Be that as it may, it remains true that to attempt an act of deliberate withdrawal, to try, albeit almost certainly without much success, to adopt a purely isolationist and individualist attitude is probably less harmful in the long run on the creative faculties than Orwell's attempt to develop this schizophrenic personality.

"Obviously," Orwell notes, "there are strong tendencies towards totalitarianism at work within the English literary intelligentsia already. If we find ourselves in ten years time cringing before somebody like Zhdanov, it will probably be because that is what we have deserved."

It is the tragedy of Orwell's genuine, if muddle-headed, liberalism that that indeed is its probable, in fact almost inevitable outcome.

GERALD VAUGHAN.

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# ANARCHISM AND RELIGION

I HAVE often come across first-century Christians like your correspondent Mr. P. M. M. Huggon (*Freedom*, Letters, 12/6/48) who scorn us "nineteenth century Agnostics". While he seriously examines the facetious remarks you made about the Bishop of London's attack on that unfortunate film which pathetically attempted to be half as tough as the Hanging and Flogging Bishops in the Lords, he tosses aside as foolish the comments on the tragedy in Jerusalem referring to "Christian worship of images".

In doing so, he grants the case put forward, which is that if Christians do not worship the images and edifices strewn about the "Holy Land", there is no case for intervention; if they are knocked down they can always be put up again and what significance attaches to the enormous churches built above the sites attributed to Jesus? And yet the Bishops—also others such as the Christian Union in Palestine—continue to worry about such man-made buildings as if they were worth the most insignificant life. Since the establishment of the Anglican Church was accompanied by deliberate smashing of images of Mary and the breaking up of monasteries and convents, not in the course of war but intentionally, doubtless

your Middle East commentator had this in mind when saying it was hypocrisy for Protestants at any rate to join in the complaints of such bodies as the Palestine Christian Union. But if Mr. Huggon believes these latter do not worship images, I can only assume he has not been to Palestine in normal times where, as stated in your columns, a vast commercial ramp existed in the Christian Arab town of Bethlehem and in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where you could run out of piastres buying cure-alls from the relics of this and that. For that matter, in France, Italy and Spain.

## The Mirror and Baptism

What a curtain has been lifted by that extraordinary series of letters appearing in the *Daily Mirror* recently. You will recall the correspondence started with a couple complaining that a clergyman had told them their unbaptised child could not be buried in consecrated ground and would have to "crawl on the floor of Hell" for evermore (apparently never even getting to the toddling stage). And a shoal of letters appeared in reply from other people who had lost their children before baptism, and were distressingly taken in by this fundamentalist rubbish, including

Nonconformists who had decided that unbaptised children could escape Hell (but by such arguments as the child's non-responsibility for its lack of baptism, that makes it apparent they too believe that all non-Christian adults, at any rate, are doomed to a good old fire-and-brimstone Hell — Socrates,

These two articles are  
**Readers' Opinions**  
a monthly feature contributed  
by readers.

Gandhi, Confucious, Einstein, me and the editors of *Freedom*). While to thinking people the Churchman makes a rational approach, reconciling the scientific teachings of modern times with Genesis by explaining the more unlikely stories as allegories, obviously the poor deluded people who follow the Church's teachings are still troubled by hobgoblins such as these, unless as in the at least frank Catholic Church you openly pay money to the priest to save the babe from eternal flames!

That is why I think that some of your contributors ought to be a bit more careful when they talk about the "religious truth in Anarchism" and so on. I understand them correctly, I believe, in that they do not mean religion in the sense it is normally used, but take it for granted we have progressed far beyond the stage where to the average person the term "religion" did not mean the good old-fashioned literal Heaven and Hell our grandfathers believed in. Frankly, this is not the case: the *Daily Mirror* correspondence brings that out very well. Eric Thacker in his article, I take it, meant "ethical", as did Herbert Read when writing on this in the *Philosophy of Anarchism*. Among a very limited circle the use of the term "religious" when you mean "ethical" sounds advanced and a big improvement on "nineteenth-century Agnosticism". But they had better face the fact that there is a terrific amount of rubbish from eighteen centuries previously to be cleared up before this can be safe from misinterpretation.

T. HART.

# Industrial Psychology

IDEAS are largely determined by the social influences generated by the mode of economic production. Changing forms of economic organisation bring about changes in the ideology of the community. We have previously stressed the fact that the emphasis, which politicians have felt compelled to place on the urgent need for production, should assist the industrial worker to get a better appreciation of his worth to society. Political discussions of to-day are often primarily devoted to the economic questions rather than the airy problems so detached from the lives of the overwhelming mass of people. Circumstances prevailing, so largely contributed to by the war-mad "unconditional surrender" politicians have compelled a recognition of the vital part played in society by the economic wage-slave; but this recognition is yet only partial, and its motive force is the need to increase the productive output of the worker, rather than his individual capacities.

## Human Relationships

The National Institute of Industrial Psychology at a recent conference gave special attention to suggestions of improving human relationships in industry with the view to stimulating production and avoiding manpower wastage. It would be wrong to assert that the views expressed at this conference by the psychologists, industrial executives, etc., were of little value. There were expressions of opinion which revealed a sign of the times, and must tend to promote a more progressive approach to problems of the worker and industry. But such a conference is considerably hampered by the fact that it starts from a bad premise in assuming that the worker must be part of a wage-system. The cost of government, of wars, bureaucratic executives, managerial technocrats, supervisory staffs, lackeys, etc., are largely taken for granted; the alternative to these costly impediments to production—workers' control of industry—will hardly be found on the agenda of a body like the National Institute which is almost a progeny of the industrial magnates and political influence.

## Employees' Records

An executive of the Philips group of electrical companies, pointed out that whilst some firms would strive with meticulous care to keep records of nuts and bolts, and prepared elaborate instructions about the care and maintenance of a particular machine, they knew practically nothing about qualities of their workers and cared less about the individual welfare of a skilled and valuable worker. Such an attitude to the human being is of course a direct result of the system of production for profit, and whilst efforts to obtain a greater proportion of surplus-value from the labour of the worker can be made with ample labour available, there can be little hope of the minor improvements possible. It is very interesting that society has to

await the influences of war and the aftermath of war when manpower, for a time at least, is of more than usual importance, before any special efforts are made to give consideration to the all important psychological traits of men and women. During the war methods were devised to test the capacities of individuals in the services for what was termed "leadership". Obviously though, these methods though graced with the term "psychological tests", could not be effective in promoting the natural characteristics of the individual. For war is unnatural and abnormal, and the rôle of a leader can only be to instigate hatred, aggressiveness, etc., if he is to be a leader from the point of view of the higher commands. We can be sure that extremely little good can accrue from such tests and training, that has any value for peaceful society or for a normal individual life.

## Must be a Genuine Purpose

Some employers have recognised that value attaches to giving consideration to the welfare of their employees. Brightening up the surroundings of the factories, etc., recreation facilities, profit-sharing before the war. No doubt these innovations were designed as suitable to meet some of the primary psychological wants of the workers. Better environmental conditions could undoubtedly affect beneficially those working in them; recreation facilities provide for many opportunities for social intercourse so very often lacking. Profit-sharing schemes most probably have a more subtle intention. It has long been contended that by giving the worker some small share in the proceeds of industry, he will work harder to try to improve the total product in order to get a slightly larger share. Such schemes may also serve to delude some workers that they really belong to the other class, and thus get a false sense of security, and at the same time escape the consequences of being a member of the proletariat.

The urge for a greater productive capacity is seen to be the main reason for attempts to apply psychology to industry, and where any useful improvements for the workers have resulted they have also meant a profit increase for the bosses. After a time, the competitive profit system has led to more intensity of labour, so that relatively the worker is worse off.

Only when we have a system of industry based on the principle of production for use can we expect the conditions which would permit an approach to psychological questions in a manner to develop the individual and thus society as a whole. When the workers realise how their psychological as well as economic interests are being grossly sabotaged by the existing social-system, and by revolutionary industrial organisation take over their industries, they will be able immediately to make use of vast resources to achieve a sense of security, of comforts, and a feeling of real social co-operation, as a prelude to great opportunities for individual development.

ENGINEER.

## ANARCHO - SYNDICALISM

(Continued from page 3)  
an anarcho-syndicalist movement in present circumstances must be one based on the spontaneous action of the workers, does exist. For they cannot crush such innate struggles of the masses, as was seen in the struggles in the fascist countries, or for the matter of that, the unofficial strike movements and acts of solidarity in this country.

### Movement In Being.

Throughout the last twenty years we have seen a revolutionary movement actually in being. The General Strike of 1926 was basically a movement of the workers who showed their capacity for revolutionary organisation, and the leaders' contribution was to take hold of it and betray it. Countless actions since then—whether on the social side in the form of rent strikes, solidarity against bailiffs over the tithe question, the post-war squatters' movement or strikes with an avowedly social objective, and on the economic side the steady growth of unofficial strike action and the formation of unofficial committees on the job to determine such action by the mass meeting of the workers and not by the London office

of the union—go to add up the fact that the movement for social revolution is actually in existence, and from below upwards. Created not by a party or group of parties for political ends, but by the workers in their need and desire for direct action, the logical conclusion of which must be shown to be workers' direct control, in opposition to both conflicting authoritarian theories of private enterprise (capitalism) or State control, that form the phoney issues of politics.

The job of the Anarchist, as I see it, is to urge the federation of all these unofficial and mostly temporary bodies into a permanent force for workers' control. And this can be done by example and propaganda on the social and economic fields, in order to point the way to an anarcho-syndicalist society, which based on the idea of direct participation and not representation, in the control and management of things, and on the rejection of domination from above which is at the basis of all governments and totalitarian creeds, including capitalism, will be the first stage on the road to the Anarchist society. A.M.

## THE CONSCIENTIOUS WORKMAN

Thomas Fellows, 47-year-old nut shaper, of Darlaston (Staffs), was a conscientious and reliable workman.

Because of this, according to an official of the firm, a time study engineer watched him at work, timing him for a bonus scheme.

But it worried him. He told his wife he felt he was not pulling his weight. And he cried in bed and imagined the bonus man was in the wardrobe timing him.

So he drowned himself in a canal. The story was told at the inquest yesterday, when a verdict was returned that he took his life while the balance of his mind was disturbed.

*News Chronicle*, 4/6/48.

## CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL

Twentieth-century man . . . by the Rev. Henry Whiteman, Rector of Everdon, near Daventry, in his magazine . . .

"He can circle the earth, kill others miles away, weigh and find the distance of the stars, pump oil from the bowels of the earth, print a million newspapers an hour, coax a hen to lay 365 eggs annually, make dogs smoke pipes, and sea lions play ball, and so on.

"But show him five loaves and two small fishes, and have five hungry adults and two small children without money to buy them, and he calls a conference, appoints a committee and a few sub-committees, holds elections, and cries out that a crisis is upon him.

"He makes scores of regulations then retires, leaving five adults and two small children starving, and five loaves and two small fishes unapproachable."

*Daily Express*, 7/6/48.

And what is the Church doing but supporting such an absurd system of society?

# Through the Press

## NOT CRICKET

Britain is facing a new menace—blanco. It stopped the Trooping of the Colour Parade for the King's birthday yesterday.

The ceremony on the Horse Guards' Parade in London was cancelled at the last moment "owing to the threat of rain".

The War Office stated that the effect of heavy rain on the uniforms would be "disastrous", as the blanco on the webbing equipment and rifle slings would run on to the tunics.

There was groan of disappointment from the crowd, many of whom had been waiting since 7 a.m., when the cancellation was announced.

It was to have been one of the colourful ceremonies of the year with the Guards in scarlet for the first time since the war.

The King was to have ridden from Buckingham Palace with the Duke of Gloucester and a retinue of mounted officers.

A Guards officer stated: "The men are terribly disappointed. They were all on parade eager to see it through when the cancellation came."

"They have been working very hard at it for about two months and were absolutely on top of their form, and determined to make it a perfect Guards' show."

*Daily Worker*, 11/6/48.

Let the C.P. run the show next time.

## EXPERT VIEW ON PRISONS

Britain's gaols, overcrowded and understaffed, face a menacing future, according to speakers at the annual conference of the Prison Officers' Association in London yesterday.

The situation, declared Mr. W. R. Weston, of Birmingham, "is not just dangerous, it is dynamite." The move to provide cells with three-tier bunks brought "more black eyes and broken noses."

He suggested that people in authority had not seen for themselves the "terrible conditions" under which prison officers had to work.

Revealing figures were given by Mr. E. Thomas, from Stafford Prison. In 1946 they had 55 officers and 579 prisoners; in 1947, 50 officers and 555 prisoners; in January this year, 35 officers and 607 prisoners; and in March, 32 officers and 712 prisoners.

Unless there was a sufficient number of new officers, said Mr. L. Grievson, of Lincoln, the prison service would collapse.

"The time is approaching," he said, "when proper supervision cannot be obtained." They were seeing the development of gangs in prisons, razor slashings, and even murder. Prisons were "hotbeds of evil".

*News Chronicle*, 10/6/48.

We didn't say it!

## THE OATH

The words of the oath, which are usually treated with careful deference, seemed comic to Arthur, for he first of all read them silently and delightedly to himself enjoying their wit, and then he recited them aloud, punctuating the recital with appreciative laughter. "I swear," he cried, "that the evidence I give to the court—ha, ha, ha—shall be the truth—ha, ha, ha—the whole truth—ha, ha, ha—and nothing BUT the truth—ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur looked as if he would gladly say

it all over again, because he shook his head over the card as though lost in admiration of the jester who had invented the joke of the oath; but the clerk of the court in a powerful legal tone, said to him, "Tell the learned magistrate what you wish to say on your own behalf."

"My own what?"

"Behalf."

Arthur laughed again, apparently thinking that nobody but an incorrigible wag would ever use a word like "behalf", but the clerk poised his pen at the ready.

*The Evening News*, 16/6/48.

## KINDRED SOULS

Small, twinkle-eyed George Antonio Laberge of Rhode Island is the only American Roman Catholic priest in Moscow.

Recently on the *Red Arrow*, night train from Leningrad to Moscow, Father Laberge, was assigned to a bed in a four-berth compartment with three women. Such scrambled bookings are not unusual on Russian trains, but these women were no ordinary travellers. They were party members on their way to a party powwow, and the opportunity to cross-examine a priest delighted them. Asked one: "Now tell us the truth. Do you really believe the Pope is infallible?" Said the priest: "Yes, in matters of faith and morals, the Pope is infallible." But he continued: "I'm going to ask you a question, and I warn you to be careful of what you say. Do you believe that Stalin is infallible?"

The laughter died to a strained silence. Father Laberge removed his shoes, climbed into his upper berth, and began reading his breviary. Nobody asked him any more questions for the rest of the trip.

*Time*, 7/6/48.

## THE TEST

Mr. Zilliacus spoke on his own position when the Prime Minister had finished.

He proclaimed: "Democracy would die unless at the heart of it there was the right to be an anarchist and a rebel, and to stand on your conscience in issues of life and death and right or wrong."

*News Chronicle*, 20/5/48.

Mr. Zilliacus will clearly agree with us that Russia is not a democracy—anarchists have no right to exist there except underground, in prisons or concentration camps.

## NEWS!

President Truman, addressing an audience at the station here during his train tour, said: "I like old Joe Stalin. He's a good fellow, but he is a prisoner of the Politburo. He would make certain agreements, but they won't let him keep them."

Mr. Truman added that at the Potsdam Conference he "got very well acquainted with Joe Stalin", and added, "Joe is a decent fellow."

*Evening Standard*, 12/6/48.

## FRANCO'S LIBERALITY

General Francisco Franco expects all good Spaniards to multiply, despite the high cost of living. To encourage large families, his allowances begin only with the fourth child. But recently he made a concession.

Mothers of triplets were promised a special grant of 5,000 pesetas (about £200) whether they had other children or not. Mothers who had triplets twice were promised a further 5,000 pesetas, on top of the family allowance.

*News Review*, 10/6/48.



# Hanging in the Balance

FORESEEING that the Lords would reject the Clause of the Criminal Justice Bill suspending the death penalty for murder for a period of five years, we suggested in an article ("Politics and Hanging", *Freedom*, 1/5/48) that the Tories would use the whole business for political ends, but it was our view that for a number of reasons the Government would resist any attempts by the Lords to reverse the Commons decisions. Apparently, we overestimated the Government's strength and foresight, for as we go to Press it seems that a compromise proposal, whereby the death penalty would be retained for certain types of murder, will be put forward by the Government, and will be acceptable to the majority of the Labour M.P.'s who voted for suspension of the death penalty.

Apparently many M.P.'s have been seriously shaken by the numbers of constituents who have sent the post-cards supporting the retention of hanging, and it is thought that should the matter be again debated in the Commons the abolitionists would lose. One must conclude from that that voters are more important than individual consciences.

## Public Opinion

So much has been written and spoken about the fate of policemen and warders if hanging is abolished that the letter published in the *Times* (4/6/48) from Mr. C. R. Hewitt, late Chief Inspector of the City of London Police from which he retired in 1946 after 25 years' service, is of considerable interest.

Mr. Hewitt, who it will be noted possesses a good sense of humour as well as some sound arguments, writes that in his 25 years in the Police:

"I (like the overwhelming majority of my colleagues) arrested no murderers, no armed burglars, no desperadoes who might have been induced by a regard for their own lives to refrain from taking mine. But I lived and worked with policemen and I know what many of them think;

## DOCK STRIKE Troops Go In

Following minority meetings by union leaders, ignored by majority of dockers, the Government have sent in the Guards to move perishable food.

"We are not strike breaking" said an officer.

The distinction, however, is too subtle for us!

## Meetings and Announcements

### BRISTOL

An Anarchist group has recently been formed in Bristol. Any enquiries to Peter Wilcox, 73, Whitehall Road, Bristol, 5. First public meeting will be held at the Kingsley Hall, Old Market St., at 7 p.m. on JULY 6th "Objections to Anarchism"

### NORTH EAST LONDON

JUNE 29th Edgar Priddy "Anarchism and the Utopian Ideal"  
JULY 13th R. Maddison "Is Progress an Illusion"

### KINGSTON, PUTNEY, HAMMERSMITH

Discussion group in above area meets alternate Thursdays, 7.30 p.m. at Dorick House, Kingston Vale. (85 and 72 buses stop at Robin Hood Gate stop 100 yards up Kingston Vale on right side.) Next meeting, Thursday, July 8th. Variety of subjects. Bring your friends.

### GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

Public Meetings at MAXWELL STREET are held every Sunday evening. Speakers: John Gaffney, Frank Leach, Eddie Shaw.

### OXFORD

Anyone interested in the formation of an Oxford Anarchist Group should get in touch with John Larkman, Ruskin College, Oxford.

and, as we have now been given to understand—I think for the first time—that the current state of public opinion as represented in the Gallup polls and the letters to the newspapers must determine the conduct of Parliament, I hope no one will arise to declare that what policemen think is of no account.

Some of my late colleagues think it odd that if 34 other countries can cope with their homicide problem by means of imprisonment and reformatory influence, it should still be necessary for English criminals to be killed. There are even some (their names occur to me as I write) who believe that State killing, by devaluing the currency of human life, itself tends by example to encourage murder as a solution to intolerable private dilemmas; and that the resort to mass slaughter in war as a deliberate national policy, the "continuance of diplomacy by other means," is the logical and inescapable outcome of this pagan assumption of the right to destroy that which we cannot understand. As men whose job it is to take the first shock of battle in the "crime war," policemen have a unique experience of the cruelty, futility, and smugness of many articles in the criminal law (especially, perhaps, in relation to sexual aberration); and some of them feel that the Criminal Justice Bill, which promises a free attack on the crime problem by delving into the springs of human conduct rather than by "passing the buck" to the police, the prison staffs, the discharged prisoners' aid societies, and the hangman, will be stillborn if its final resort is to be the execution and burial of its failures.

If I may return for a moment to the vox populi argument now so oddly in favour among politicians, why is this rejected in the case of income-tax, petrol rationing, licensing hours, gaming and betting, lotteries, and Sunday theatres? Is it that public opinion is so much better informed on the death penalty question than on these others, that in all matters except the treatment of murderers Parliament alone can know what is best for us? Gallup poll legislation would be a Gadarene experiment.

Many policemen, I am convinced, view the solicitude of the death penalty enthusiasts with less gratitude than it perhaps deserves, and could wish to see some of it diverted to the conditions under which they live rather than devoted to those in which they should not be allowed to die. But all policemen would probably allow me to say, in their name, that the most monstrous and disingenuous of the arguments now being used are (a) that men will resign from the force unless the death penalty is retained for what they are already calling "bobbicide", and (b) that recruits will not come forward for fear of being shot.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,  
C. R. HEWITT.

"My father was a Murderer"  
Under this heading *Picture Post* (19/6/48) print a very human document in their Letters column. It is an aspect of the case to which we have seen no previous reference, yet is of great importance in considering the barbarity of judicial hanging:

"My mother died nearly forty years ago, when I was eight years old. My father murdered my stepmother-to-be, nearly two years later. My brother and I were abruptly taken to relatives in the country. We were told that my father was very ill in hospital, but with the shrewdness of children, we sensed that something more was wrong. It wasn't till much later we knew the facts. A very great sense of guilt fell on us, which caused us both to be hypersensitive and suspicious. We knew that our relations and friends all knew. Wherever we go and wherever we meet, our mind quickly says, 'Do they know?' We are never settled or at ease; we are scared of the memoirs of retired police officers, and murder cases in papers; books, films, and radio bring back too vividly the past, and so are voluntarily barred. All discussion that must mention crime is an ordeal. Insurance and other forms, and even casual enquiries as to one's parents, are all heart-burning episodes. The hardest thing is to tell one's future wife. The fear is always there that the tendency to do evil is in the blood. We are both very active in local social work, to help compensate the community for our father's error.

We are both abolitionists, of course. It might have given us back our father, and he was grand and loving, and we have always missed him. We feel very strongly that with a really capable reform department in our prisons, where murderers could be under constant medical and mental care, even the worst type of murderer could be treated and reformed and be an asset to the community.

R.B.  
Ruislip. (name and address supplied).



# The Essential Revolution and the Failure of Marxism

COMMUNISM, now that Hitlerism has been "liquidated", is once more the enemy of democracy, liberty, Western civilisation and the rest. The proud boast of our present-day Marxists is that the "spectre" of 1848 is still capable of terrifying the upper classes. However, even they will not dispute that Marshall Aid has had a great influence on the British government's attitude to Communism. Where it might have tolerated "Leftist" views, it now, at America's order, is quick to act against them, for more than Communism as such, the capitalist's powers hate and dread what has become synonymous with Communism—the Russian Bear. To keep Russia from Constantinople has been traditional policy, but now it is a question of keeping Russia from the Thames.

The ideological differences between the two groups of world powers are, as usual, of secondary importance, but since the peoples of the world are still conditioned to believe in politics as important, it is very useful for the warmongers of each side to adopt the attitude of modern crusaders preparing for a new Holy War. All this, of course, is a commonplace among thoughtful people, but what is not yet so clear is the reason for the success of Communist theory and for its failure in practice. Why are people forced to choose Marxism as the seemingly logical way out of the dilemma of Capitalism, and why, when they have done so, are they so displeased with the results that they need a secret police, concentration camps and all the familiar apparatus to prevent them from ever voicing their objections? Until we can answer these questions, we cannot offer an alternative with confidence.

It is a Marxist doctrine that private ownership of the means of production is an insuperable obstacle to a free society, and that, conversely, public ownership will lead to a free society. The economy of nineteenth-century England led Marx to the first conclusion, the ideas of "pro-

gress" then current, to the second. Private enterprise was responsible for the destruction of primitive productive forms (such as cottage industries) and for the creation of a slum proletariat. Marx foresaw the tendency of this form towards monopoly and imperialism on a world scale, through trusts, cartels and centralisation. Therefore, since "progress" must be true, this must all be leading to something higher and better, and Marx knew what it was! For justice and freedom to prevail, the propertyless masses must become the ruling class, and at the same time all other classes must begin to disappear, until only one people, without classes, remained. Such was the opening in the skies, through which the prophet Marx, saw the coming of the new heaven upon earth. To assure him-

## Controversy

self that his dream was capable of realisation he sifted and dug through the debris of the past until he found what he wanted:—Revolution, the midwife of all new societies. Now justice would be satisfied, progress vindicated, and history would provide the precedent. This is the typically naive optimism of the 19th century which has never been abandoned by Marxists. Lenin and Trotsky, their only outstanding theorists, left the doctrine essentially unaltered, and Stalin merely elevated it to the status of a national religion.

It has become only too clear to us today that Marx's analysis of Capitalism was not only original but also accurate. All attempts to refute Marx on this point by the vulgar economists of Capitalism have failed, although they are still trying to contradict him while the evidence, in the shape of the atom bomb, the rocket and mass starvation, is all around them. This side of Marxism has done its work, and now that his analysis has been proved correct, it is becoming less obvious how valuable it was in its time. Marx's political conclusions, however, have not stood the test of time so well; the transference of power to the masses by the appropriation by the Communist hierarchy of productive forces has not in fact produced a free society, nor does it seem to offer much hope in the future of transforming mankind. The divergence between the idea and the reality is too great to allow of much faith in that future, except to the adherents of Communist Parties, themselves. Somewhere the machine of "progress" has broken down; something has got out of joint. We who stand apart from the struggle between Russia and America can see that there is a flaw in the reasoning; the Stalinists dare not admit a doubt even to themselves.

Briefly, we believe that Marx did no more than explain the nature of the problem facing the workers, but failed to elaborate on it. For some reason he let it be assumed that the actual change of ownership of the means of production would of itself lead to a new society. Whether in fact he believed this, or whether he would have modified it had he had time we cannot say. We believe however that Marx had no historical precedent for this statement, that it was an over-simplification, conscious or unconscious, of the problem. But from that day to this, official Marxism has refused to modify or develop this general theory. In fact, the experience which has brought the new class into power has at the same

time, brought with it new instruments of production, while the older, more primitive forms have been destroyed. The problem before the revolutionary then appears; not to seek the ownership of the old productive forms, but to bring with him new productive forms, and at the same time to declare war on the old methods. A transference of power, such as we are told we are witnessing in Britain will no more convert this State into a new civilisation than the earlier transfer did in Russia.

Only the revolutionary destruction of the basis of Capitalist production, the factory system, and the substitution of some new form of production can alter the lives of our people. It is interesting to note that when Lenin was discussing in *State and Revolution* the tasks of the revolutionary workers, he wrote: "Democracy... crushes the proletariat the opportunity to give, to smash to bits, to wipe off the face of the earth, the bourgeois state machinery." He does not follow up with the really logical corollary that it also provides a chance for the proletariat of smashing up the bourgeois factory system. Instead he says that electricity will be the means to socialism and Stalin piles up "Five Year Plans" on top of one another.

The question now becomes: "What productive form is the revolution to substitute for the factory system?" Unless an answer is given by those of us who hate Capitalism and Communism (which merely carries on the old business under new management) our criticism is not constructive. Freedom must have an economic basis, and we would suggest, before concluding, what we think that basis might be. The new forms must be collective, and we think that a co-operative unit of production might consist of a partially self-sufficient small scale colony, based on agriculture, with industries serving that basic trade. A re-colonisation of Britain and a new distribution of population into numerous small units of this sort would solve many insoluble problems. The factory as we know it would have no place in such an economy, but power sources of the most efficient sort would be utilised. We do not intend here to go any further with the argument, for our object is to stimulate discussion on these points, in the hope that some new ideas may arise. We are convinced that a change in the nature of the economy of industrialism is the first essential for a successful revolution where the people and not the politicians would benefit. We must show the workers that there is something more hopeful than machine slavery under the Stars and Stripes or the Hammer and Sickle.

PHIL HARRISON.

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