

Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

Vol. 9 No. 15

July 24th, 1948

Threepence

THE WAR SCARE

THE arrival of sixty American super-fortress bombers at English airfields during recent days, can be regarded as an apt symbol of the war-scare which is being consciously worked up by the governments of the various nations at present concerned with the future of Europe.

We do not for a moment say that the talk of war is all bluff; indeed, war enters thoroughly into the calculations of politicians—otherwise they would not be devoting their energies so assiduously to the making of bigger and better munitions and armaments. War is always the final card in the hand against imperialist rivals, the trump to play when the workers become restive and the established order needs the wastage of war to get rid of its economic surplus and the slavery of war to dragoon its subjects into obedience.

Yet war exists in politics, not merely as a fact, but also as a threat. The menace of war can be used to induce in the peoples an attitude of fatalism which makes them abdicate their own responsibility and fall blindly into the attitude of accepting whatever happens, as if they had no control over it. That is what is happening to-day. Millions of people in all countries, faced by belligerent moves of one kind or another on the part of their governments, are talking of the coming war as an accomplished fact, as if, firstly, the governments had actually decided on it, and, secondly, the war could not be stopped even if it were decided on.

On the first point, we would hazard the opinion that, although there is always the possibility that governments may over-reach themselves in belligerence and topple almost unwillingly into war, at present no government has any immediate desire to embark on a war.

A war in the future might be of two kinds—ideological or imperialist. But it cannot be ideological, since there is nothing fundamental over which the two groups of powers, with their similar imperialist and totalitarian outlooks, would care to quarrel. Both sides base their rule on the predominance of a privileged ruling class over a depressed class of workers; the Anglo-American bloc is no more genuinely democratic than the Russian state is genuinely revolutionary, and from an ideological point of view they can be friends as easily as Hitler and Chamberlain were in 1936, as Hitler and Stalin were in 1939, and as Stalin and Churchill were in 1942.

If, therefore, war breaks out it will be an imperialist struggle, like the last war, over markets. And this again seems unlikely, for the immediate future at least. Russia at present is still in such a condition of chronic under-production that the question of economic domination over foreign markets hardly enters into the calculations of her rulers, who are concerned more to get as much as they can of the manufactured products of the technically more advanced countries of Eastern Europe, and whose failure to satisfy the potential market in Yugoslavia was a leading cause of the split with Tito.

AMERICA'S MARKETS

The potential market for American capital in Western Europe and Asia is very wide, but its actual value at present is slight precisely because of the destruction of the recent war, and it is for this reason as much as any political action against the Communists that Marshall Aid is being sent to Europe and China—to build these countries up to the level when they will once again become good customers of American capitalism. In these conditions it is unlikely that the American Government will willingly destroy the results

of this preparatory work by embarking immediately on a destructive war.

Russia, on the other hand, is still economically to a great extent in the position of a colonial country, in spite of her strategic domination over so much of Eastern Europe. There has been much evidence in recent years that Russian industry is well behind American, and the veiled eagerness of the Russian government to conclude treaties that will give them machinery and manufactured goods shows that their own industrial system is still not in a position to embark on an unaided war. It should not be forgotten how much of the Russian armament in the last war was actually manufactured in England and America.

It should also be remembered that war on an atomic scale is so much greater a danger to vested property interests than any previous type of warfare that the ruling classes may well be very cautious about using it except in an extremity.

That extremity may come. The very building up of armaments itself creates a danger of war, and at some future date the saturation of world markets and the growing discontent of the workers may force the capitalists once again into war as a desperate way out of their difficulties. But in our opinion that danger is not so imminent as the war scare leads many people to suppose.

But, to-day, the talk of war remains a potent weapon to bludgeon the people into submission and apathy. It is a common subject of Stock Exchange chatter that "the country is going to the dogs" and will only revive when slave labour is reintroduced, as it was during the last war, and a similar point of view seems to be held widely among American financiers and capitalists. So, in the hope of bluffing the people into submission, the Berlin situation and the arrival of American bombers are built up for all they are worth, while the Russians, on their side, play at being tough in order to recover their loss of prestige owing to failures in France and Italy and the defection of Tito.

FATALISM IS NO WAY OUT

At present, so far as England is concerned, they seem to be succeeding pretty well. Everywhere one hears fatalistic talk about the coming war, ending in the weak lament, "There's nothing we can do about it." In so far as war is ever inevitable, it is this feeble lack of resistance and responsibility on the part of the individual that makes it so.

For capitalists, bureaucrats and generals cannot themselves make wars. Wars are made in reality by the masses of soldiers and factory workers who allow themselves to be gulled or dragged into fighting or toiling, into losing life, or freedom, or both, in serving the interests of their masters. It is these individual men and women who can decide once and for all that war will not happen, if only each one of them assumes his individual social responsibility to resist in every way he can, to withdraw his active and ideological support from the state and, in collaboration with his fellow workers of all kinds, to refuse any participation in war. Much less than a general strike stopped war in 1921 when the British and other imperialists were bent on an imperialist conflict. All power is

ultimately economic and rests with the workers; it is for them to realise their responsibility and frustrate the policies that may lead, by folly or design, to a new and more destructive war.

THIS IS PEACE

Cholera Wipes Out 10,000 Indians

Ten thousand people have already been wiped out by a cholera plague in India's United Provinces, according to the *Statesman*.

8 to 12 Million Still Missing as Result of War II

The preparatory commission for the International Refugee Organisation estimated recently that between eight and twelve million persons—excluding several millions in Russia—are still missing in European countries as aftermath of World War II.

Death in China

Chinese Government forces, claiming their biggest victory, say that the Communist forces lost more than 80,000 dead and wounded, of 200,000 men who took part in Province of Honan battles.

Death in Greece

The Greek General Staff announce that 1,852 guerrilla casualties were inflicted in the Grammos area from the beginning of the offensive on June 21 until July 10. They listed total Army casualties as 1,211. Total guerrilla losses include 1,288 killed, 398 captured, and 166 surrendered.

National losses comprised 186 killed, including eight officers, and 1,025 wounded, including seventy officers.

David & Goliath

The Case of Peter Green

THE case of Peter Green, the 18-year-old Plaistow schoolboy, might have been a routine case of a C.O. who refuses to attend a medical examination for military service. Instead, the Essex Quarter Assizes got it into their heads to pass a sentence of "not exceeding three years in a Borstal Institution."

The result was much publicity and a flood of protests. Questions were put down in the House, indignant protests were voiced in many quarters, but because Peter Green was persuaded to appeal—first reports stated that he would refuse to appeal—against the sentence but not against conviction, it was not possible to witness the Government's reactions or the real extent of the agitation on his behalf.

He duly appeared at the Court of Criminal Appeal where his Borstal sentence was altered to twelve months' imprisonment. Mr. Justice Singleton pointing out that "it is not a case for Borstal detention because Green is not a person of criminal habits or tendencies". He added that he had however "committed a serious offence against the State". And that great humanitarian Lord Justice Goddard added this profound contribution to the Court's findings: "If he wants to be a martyr, he must suffer martyrdom." So we now know that prison has yet another purpose besides those already enumerated by this great judge in his recent pronouncements and in his memorable maiden speech in the House of Lords.

A Heavy Sentence

In a report of the appeal published in *Peace News* (16/7/48) it is stated that:

"As the National Service Acts provide for a sentence of two years following conviction on indictment because of refusal to submit to a medical examination the Central Board for Conscientious Objectors regards the substitution of one year's imprisonment for the Borstal sentence as being reasonably satisfactory, in all the circumstances."

We are somewhat surprised at the C.B.C.O.'s attitude since they have the statistics and must know that very few sentences, if any, of 12 months have been passed on C.O.'s for failing to attend their Medical during the past three years. Furthermore, since Peter Green has not registered as a conscientious objector, he will presumably not be allowed to appear before a C.O. appellate tribunal after serving about 2 months as generally is the case. This was surely not unknown to the Court of Appeal and therefore "in all the circumstances" the sentence is very unsatisfactory, though hardly surprising in view of the enormity

"If beans and millet were as plentiful as fire and water there would be no such thing as a bad man among the people."

MENCIUS.

"That government is best which governs least."

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

of Peter Green's crime and the publicity and support this "criminal" has received!

Defiance of Authority

"If boys of eighteen set themselves up against the will of Parliament, that would be a fine state of affairs," quoth Lord Goddard, and that in effect is what Peter Green has done. In the first place he refused to register as a C.O. thus refusing to avail himself of the State machinery for measuring consciences. So the State could not even save its face by offering him alternative service on the land or in a hospital.

When later he appeared at the Essex Quarter Sessions he refused to change his mind and allow himself to be medically examined. "In the circumstances—declared the Court of Appeal—it would not be right to pass a nominal or short sentence." This seems a very poor justification for a heavy sentence unless there is a way of half refusing to submit. What in fact does the Court mean? The issue is quite straightforward, and the only aggravation of Peter Green's "crime" is that he received a considerable amount of publicity. The only way to counteract the favourable publicity for the defendant was to impose a heavy sentence as a deterrent to others who might be tempted to follow Peter Green's example. For it has been admitted by the Court that Peter Green was not a person of "criminal habits or tendencies"; it is also obvious that the Court does not expect to make him change his mind since Lord Goddard thought he wanted to be "a martyr", in which case the longer the sentence the more he should like it. The only reason for the long sentence then must be fear of the "bad example" such people as Peter Green have on their fellow beings.

His school-mates look up to him, and who knows how many of them will be influenced when their turn comes to be conscripted. And the State cannot compete with the Peter Greens in argument. Their only weapon of "persuasion" is force: the threat of up to two years' imprisonment. And it is a bad day for the State when people like Peter Green call its bluff.

More Than a Pacifist

Peter Green has been described in *Peace News* as a "staunch member of the West Ham PPU Group, and has been the local *Peace News* distributor for nearly two years. A local delegate to the No Conscription Council, he obtained close on 1,000 signatures to the NCC Petition in the Canning Town district (one of the most difficult) last year. He also joined in work for the POW's in his neighbourhood, and has been an enthusiastic member of the IVSP."

He is described as one of the most brilliant students Plaistow Grammar School has had for ten years or more, and could automatically have obtained deferment from military service as a student, or, probably, unconditional ex-

(Continued on page 8)

The Togliatti Incident

THE attempt on the life of Togliatti by a young Italian student has been the excuse for an outburst of illogical hysteria on the part of the Italian Communists, and for an exploitation of the situation in party interests which has done a great deal of harm to the Italian working-class movement.

As to the attempt itself, while we think it was a mistaken action, we are not willing to condemn the young man who made it, nor do we feel any particular sympathy for Togliatti. Politicians base their activities on violence: they are always ready to use force as a last resort to gain their ends, and look on with equanimity when millions of ordinary individuals are slaughtered or maimed in civil wars. The Communists have always been eager to demand the death of their opponents, and therefore they cannot expect any respect for

their own lives. Togliatti is merely the victim of a creed of violence which he and his fellow politicians have been assiduous in fomenting during their whole careers; in his case the boomerang got out of control.

The Communists, realising the steady decline of their influence in Italy since the elections, took the opportunity to whip up a completely artificial campaign of indignation over the attempt, and even went so far as making a silly attempt to lay the blame on de Gasperi, who replied with an adroitness that probably won

him several thousand votes. The General Strike was not a great success, and its net result has been to strengthen the hand of the government, which is now proposing to forbid the "political" strike, while the rising influence of the Catholic Trade Unions has been given an additional fillip by the incident.

Not only have the Communists given a further blow to their own influence by their cynical exploitation of the incident; they have also done a great deal of harm to the genuine working-class movement by discrediting economic direct action through using it for partisan ends, and by giving the government an unnecessary excuse for penal legislation against genuinely militant activity among the workers.

I RECENTLY visited several new schools, built for the Hertford County Council by their Architect's Department under the Government's New Schools Programme. Their construction is a departure from pre-war practice, and indicates a close liaison between the Education Officer's Dept. and the architects which is symptomatic of the new approach to educational planning. The very highest standards are now being applied to new schools and educational development generally. Buildings are here regarded as becoming obsolete after perhaps 25 years and the structure has been made correspondingly light and is easily dismantled. Light steel sections of a standard pattern with prefabricated wall and roof sections; large glass areas with a good view from the classrooms; plenty of space per child; all provide a sound framework in which to create a friendly interior. Bright colours to walls, ceilings and chairs, well designed desks and equipment complete a picture very different from that of the old type of school. It was the very rapid advance in educational theories taking place between the wars which created the necessary basis on which to build such a structure. The state system has been greatly affected by the work of pioneers like A. S. Neill, who pursued their experiments despite abuse and ridicule; so that now even

EDUCATION and the STATE

the emergency training colleges are attempting to produce a type of teacher more advanced than those with orthodox training. Given any appreciable number of new schools there is every chance of a mass of children being affected, and all this might lead us to conclude that the process of enlightenment in this field continuing, the whole population will have become so well-educated in the real sense that reason and humanity will prevail. In other words, the question is posed—does not this prove that a gradual improvement is taking place which will render any revolutionary reorganisation of society unnecessary?

★

THERE is in fact no reason to suppose that improved educational technique will produce a rational population, or that universal literacy will produce an intelligent democracy, or that atomic fission will open a glorious chapter for mankind. That such improvements automatically benefit mankind is no longer believed, and science is now regarded with suspicion by most people. Why should the science of education be an exception? A distinction must be drawn between the instruments of education, and the content of that education. Progress has not been entirely in the instruments, but the content has not advanced so rapidly. The instruments

of education consist of firstly the teachers, and secondly the environment in school. The teachers are human and subject to unpredictable variations, but it is apparent that the system of their selection and education guarantees a vastly increased control and a more dependable tool in the hands of the authorities than ever existed before. The school environment is, as we have shown, far superior to anything in the past; children no longer regard teachers as enemies, school as a prison or desks and books as objects on which to vent their spite; school, in fact, often surpasses home. The instruments are becoming more nearly perfect and there is no reason to deplore that fact in itself (although the specialisation of function in teaching is open to objection). It is this side of the picture which leads a glib public to applaud and leads them to suppose that all is well.

★

THE context of the education however is quite another matter, it is the use to which the perfected instruments are put which is vital. It is clear that this will vary as the educational authorities vary, but that all authorities will be interested in that perfection. Since the State is the major educational authority everywhere, it follows that the more efficient and powerful the State the more efficient its educational instruments will be, and the more deadly will be their effect upon the people, since States, by their natures, are hostile to the individual. In this connection the example of the U.S.A. might be studied as it shows a democratic capitalism using modern educational

techniques and producing a standard type American almost as mentally regimented as his Russian counterpart. Of course, it will be objected that the true modern educational theories, if put into practice, would produce a free and uninhibited human being able to judge matters on their own merits; this naturally excludes the State as the educational authority, since authoritarian society demands repression. Therefore, on this argument, private "progressive" schools are the only possible alternative, but does experience show this to be valid?

A. S. Neill, quoted in a recent *Freedom*, described his satisfaction when his children preferred jazz to the classics, as though that were a free choice on their part and therefore good. Was it a free choice and are any of us unfettered by the mechanised society in which we are born and live? Being brought up for some parts of some early years at Summerhill may be beneficial and is certainly pleasant for a child, but does that education remove him from the reach of society? From birth a subtle and continuous propaganda is directed upon our children and no schooling known is able to divert it. The choice as between jazz and the classics is unreal—there is music which is neither one nor the other; but also the whole weight of our Americanised industrialism is on the side of jazz—the de-nationalised masses everywhere are fertile soil for jazz. Thus from birth the scales are weighted, not only musically but in every way, against the individual who, however "free" he believes his choice to be, cannot escape from the half-conscious bias which has warped his whole nature.

WHAT is the conclusion of all this?—surely that we cannot abandon our belief in the necessity of revolutionary change in the productive forces of society, in the fond hope that improving education will lead to the establishment of justice. Modern education offers unlimited scope to the power maniacs of modern industrialism whether capitalist or communist. It can be as deadly in their hands as the other scientific advances have proved; we shall do right to suspect the State, whether democratic or totalitarian when it attracts our children into school.

PHIL HARRISON.

A FILM ON PECKHAM CENTRE

"The Centre", a 25-minute film on the Peckham Health Centre, was recently given its first performance in this country at the Peckham Odeon Theatre.

Freedom has unceasingly stressed the importance of the Peckham experiment and it is therefore with regret that we have to criticise this film as superficial and giving no clear idea as to the real purpose of the Centre. From the film it would appear that the Centre is a kind of club where people come to swim and dance or to participate in one or other of the numerous pastimes provided in most social clubs. Yet in his writings, Dr. Scott Williamson has always strenuously denied that this was the purpose for which he raised the money to build the Centre. The other impression created by the film is that it's a sort of glorified maternity home, and this theme is dealt with in a rather sentimental and sloppy way.

★

The story of how and why the film came to be made may perhaps be the explanation why *The Centre* is a bad film. The Central Office of Information had the idea and rather naively thought the Ministry of Health would be interested in it and supply the necessary financial backing. For obvious reasons the Ministry was not interested in giving publicity to the Health Centre, but the Foreign Office, seeing the possibilities of publicity abroad for this isolated example of progressive health ideas, commissioned its production. But the film only tells one part of the Peckham story; the innocuous part, which won't upset anyone. In fact, the Cabinet ministers and the notabilities who attended the London performance seemed quite delighted, and afterwards at the Centre they went over the building displaying considerable interest in all that was shown them. But did they read the introduction to the Souvenir Programme in order to understand what the Pioneer Health Centre was really doing and discovering?

Did Sir Stafford Cripps read that paragraph: "In the midst of social disintegration there is beginning to appear at Peckham a nucleus of society, the structure of which is neither 'planned' nor 'reconstructed' but living. That is to say, growing, developing and differentiating. That this has happened, that anyone can see it happening, and that no one can deny it, is a fact of enormous significance."

And did the Prime Minister read that sentence: "In the social environment of Peckham there are no guiding planners, no cliques, no closed doors, no intimidating hierarchies."

And we wonder whether the Minister of Education who seemed to be enjoying himself, read that part of the introduction which says: "Here equipment—musical instruments, billiard tables, theatre 'props' and the thousand and one other things—are not planted by a benevolent directorate. They are provided on demand and reflect the present needs of this growing society. Visitors notice, no so much that these people have freedom, as that they know how to use freedom. Out of freedom a poised, orderly and adventurous society is clearly evolving itself."

The Peckham experiment is the very negation of all that Government stands for. Peckham is opposed to all compulsion; Government is compulsion. Peckham is interested in the development of the individual by his own conscious effort; government seeks to regiment the individual.

★

Peckham needs money to carry on its work. If the performance at the Odeon, with fanfare by trumpeters lined up on the stage as the notabilities entered the theatre, was intended as a money-raising stunt, it was in very bad taste and what's more, we wouldn't mind wagering that Peckham will not receive Official support. If it does, however, it will probably mean the end of the Pioneer Health Centre as we, who realise and appreciate its importance, know it.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM & THE MILITANTS

SINCE what was originally intended to be a few comments on Anarcho-Syndicalism has developed into a series, some discussion has been provoked on the articles which have already appeared, and in particular I note the remarks of our German comrades in *Freie Sozialistische Blätter*; they describe as 'council anarchism' the theory expounded, and relate this to the "council anarchist" theories expounded elsewhere, by Volin and others. Up to a point it can be equated with council communism, but a difference must be noted, and that is the relation of the militants to the workers, which must inevitably mark a divergence between revolutionary anarchists and all others, and is a clue to the weaknesses of the council communist movement and those syndicalist tendencies which arise from

reformist trade union anarchism.

The musty air of the antique shop that pervades the council communist publications, which in their dry-as-dust sectarianism remind one irrepressibly of the big volumes in second-hand bookshops, is of course, primarily due to the fact that their approach is purely industrial, and left-wing Marxist. The left-wing Marxist critiques inevitably develop into polemics which are not directed against the mass movements, but against the narrow party circles in which the council-communist moves. In addressing himself to "the militants" only he comes to address the "politically conscious" and succeeds in cutting himself off from any but the rare few to whom the party politics of unknown fractions appeal.

While a purely industrial approach is wholly opposed to any understanding of the worker; such a belief which is found even among some who think they have libertarian views, is based on the bourgeois belief that the only thing that matters is money, accordingly all they think important is the wage struggle. This does not appeal to the worker for the simple reason that a very large number could if they devoted their whole energies to the pursuit of gain by any means, do quite well for themselves—it is by no means the most intelligent people who make money, it is simply those to whom money-making appeals. While the worker is obliged by economic circumstances to fight the wage struggle and may naturally be expected to want to know how best this can be made effective, he is not primarily interested in the wage struggle as such (witness the empty seats at trade union meetings) but indeed endeavours always to relate it to something higher, namely control of the means of life. The bourgeois press inevitably sneers when strikes are caused over something to them "trivial"—the use of disciplinary action, the endeavour of the workers to assert their right as human beings, or to defend their freedom. They cannot agree with strikes but when these cease to be economic, they cannot even understand them, and begin looking for the "hidden influence".

At the moment they give the blame to the Communists, but if a strike were clearly "anti-communist", such as a dock strike affecting Russian shipments, they would blame somebody else. To organise the militants whether into shop committees or syndicalist organisations, and so stick their neck out to take the blame from the police, which in revolutionary situations and dictatorial conditions would be a very serious step, is a suicidal policy; the reason party leaders do it is in order to claim credit for the struggle themselves while knowing that their followers are not really responsible, but wishing to show them as such the further away from the scene they get.

The reformist tendency in the old anarchist movement of supplying ex-militants for official trade union posts,

or if penetration of the trade union movement were clearly impossible, merely forming a syndicalist body on exactly the same lines, is not basically compatible with the conditions we are faced with to-day. While for purely illusory effect it is possible to supply a body claiming to be a revolutionary vanguard, and pretend that by so doing one is "fighting the day-to-day struggle", the paper resolutions it can pass which do not even reach the workers are not worth the paper on which they are printed. What is needed is not organisation of the militant workers for them to take control, still less the industrial organisation of those with similar views, but the organisation by the workers themselves, not of themselves so much as of what they produce.

The fact is that there are many who are militants in that they clearly recognise the nature of the class struggle and want to do something about it. But to elevate them into a party and portray such workers as the vanguard of the revolution is something that will never be libertarian; whether they are a minority party or union or federation of shop committees they have nothing that they can offer the mass of the workers which they do not possess already. The workers are quite able to run their industries for themselves; they are quite capable of direct action, which is seen not in paper resolutions but in what goes on at the place of production, and also of workers' control, which as a matter of fact is again operative, for the workers do in fact control every industry in which they work in all but the actual distribution of profits; from what one sees of the sales and managerial side one realises how little a contribution is made by anyone else, and even that merely in relation to the present economic system.

That a man who has a clearer picture of the whole than his fellow workers has a duty is clear but the duty is one to himself, and I personally see no incongruity in relating even the policy of Stirner to that of anarchist-communism and anarcho-syndicalism, an admittedly individualistic policy in relation to the communal whole, as opposed to the idea of duty to any conceptions such as the State or employer or even "society" as visualised by the proponents of delegated authority. For what is the result of delegated authority, whether irresponsible or controlled? A delegate responsible to nobody becomes a dictator; a delegate responsible to the whims and fancies of those who sit back and tell him to go ahead and do the job for them is only a slave, and why should one choose to be a slave to a majority any more than to a minority? The anarchist solution is to strike at the root of all dictatorships, majority or minority, and the basic principle behind our ideas of industrial organisation must be that of direct participation and not representation. Let us not seek to represent the workers' interests, to be "in the van" or leaders or even

claim to be the little body of organised militants that everyone ought to emulate. For what happens to such bodies in times of stress? The workers kick them out and say they know better themselves, as they do.

Only if such a body turns to politics can it gain power. We must exert vigilance that such bodies do not gain power.

Anarchism will be the product of two influences, economic and social. The whole object of "council-anarchism", anarcho-syndicalism, is to see that the workers control their industry, without outside intervention. On the other hand, libertarian-communism, in its true sense, is the building of communes locally which implies the decentralisation of social life, and the devolution of social affairs to the community.

In particular, the work of health and education and such social matters as belong to the people should not be left in the hands of the State; nor submitted to the busy little bodies of do-gooders who run the municipalities. Such a revolution begins in the shell of the decaying society.

To sum up:—In my opinion all who believe in workers' control have no differences to sink insofar as they genuinely believe that the workers themselves should control. The workers are capable of doing this themselves; they have shown their ability both to wage the industrial struggle and to control industry without political leadership; and insofar as workers' control is a political rallying-cri, it may be popular with many groupings, but it must ultimately prove inconsistent with party organisation. Because to accept this genuinely is to reject political leadership and obviate the need for a party or anything above or apart from the workers. As we see it the need is for groups of a libertarian tendency which will not seek to exploit the struggle for political or sectarian advantage, but will merely stand as critics of any political leadership whatsoever. This does not mean standing aside from the struggle; as workers we are in it, but not as militants or Anarchists—as such we are merely critics of whatever leadership might arise, whatever its professional beliefs. Our own groups should not submerge into a purely industrial struggle; but keep alive the spirit of revolt, and the urge for the spread of anti-authoritarian ideas: against parliamentarism, against dictation from above, against arbitration; and for a positive decentralist programme of a social life of the local commune and economic control by the workers in each industry. We should not put forward individual militants or individual leaders who inevitably can be corrupted by power or bought over, being only human, or forcibly suppressed in time of strife. Our programme must be wholly bound up with the idea of the spontaneous action of the masses. This is not to accept them as "infallible"; they are frequently

(Continued on page 3)

FLASHBACK—9

THE growing agitation against the infamies of Montjuich in the repressive measures now being taken in Barcelona reminds us once more of the terrible tribute of blood demanded by the ruling classes when a rising of the people is crushed. What could be more praiseworthy on the part of a people than to endeavour to stop such a war as that now being carried on by Spain in Morocco? Or, again, what nobler work could anyone undertake than the spreading of knowledge amongst the ignorant and the poor? To resist being compelled to murder innocent peoples—that is the crime of the rebels in Montjuich. To devote oneself to the building up of the dignity and self-respect of a nation—that is the crime of Ferrer, for whose blood the clerical jackals are now screaming. The financiers and the priests, two of the blackest types that bar the progress of humanity, have their heels on the brave fighters in Barcelona. The people must be saved. Their aim was noble: their cause was great. Their enemies are beneath the contempt even of civilized Europe. Like the Black Death, they are a pest that should only be remembered as a thing of the past. Let us all lose no opportunity of helping to rouse the indignation of all honest people against the orgy of blood and torture that is being called for by the Spanish reaction.

—"Freedom", October, 1909.

The Demand for Workers Control

DURING the recent dock strike, several daily and weekly papers commented, with varying degrees of alarm, upon the growth of the idea of workers' control. In one or two of the journals syndicalism was mentioned, with varying degrees of disapproval, and it was stated that these "continental" theories were finding response among the workers of Britain—especially in the nationalised industries.

Now we, of course, would be only too delighted to see a resurgence of syndicalist ideas in this country; it is what we are working for. But, optimistic as we are, we find it difficult to see any real evidence that the syndicalist idea is at all widely known among the working class, let alone finding expression in action.

True, the fact that every strike today is unofficial tends to encourage the workers' initiative just where we want to see it—at the point of production, and the continuous and bitter opposition by union leaders to these unofficial strikes is bringing a general distrust of such leadership, but syndicalism goes far beyond that. It is the industrial expression of an all-embracing social attitude.

There is, however, a great deal of evidence that the words "workers' control" are going to be used more and more in a very different way, and for very different ends. And it may be that, since the daily press likes to confuse union officials with the workers they are supposed to represent, it is confusing (or pretending to confuse) syndicalism with the demands for "workers' share in control" which some of the unions are now putting forward.

At the recent conference of the National Union of Railwaymen, for instance, a resolution was passed unanimously declaring that "workers' participation in the control of the industry at all levels is a pre-requisite for the success of the undertaking". Of course, it could be said that it is "a step in the right direction" for workers to participate in the control of their industry and those workers who are elevated to the controlling committees will undoubtedly get experience in handling men and affairs which will be very valuable for them. But will it necessarily be of any value to the men they leave behind them? Or to the public at large?

Let us look at the case of Mr. John Benstead, a former general-secretary of the N.U.R. Mr. Benstead climbed through his trade union into one of the top positions and then took the logical next step and became a member of the Transport Commission on the nationalisation of the railways. Now he comes back to the N.U.R. conferences and utters the familiar "warnings" to the workers not to expect too much for themselves from nationalisation. Mr. Benstead pointed

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM AND THE MILITANTS

(Continued from page 2)

wrong, bemused by propaganda, education and economic influence. But so far as their own lives are concerned they could run them without the intervention of State, capitalism, or any other leadership. While by removing the economic fabric of capitalism we can also destroy the State authoritarian fabric which would inevitably become useless when power left its hands, because it solely relies on somebody carrying out the orders.

In spite of the lack of revolutionary parties or bodies, it cannot be denied that the revolutionary movement already exists; it has been seen in action; lacking vision or permanence sometimes, but demonstrating very forcibly that from the bottom upwards there is a real possibility of a free society.

Since the advent of the Labour Government and the steady incorporation between trade unionism, employers' organisations and the State that has been growing since the War and also since the proving of identity between capitalism and nationalisation, the cry of Workers' Control has been raised, sometimes by mere propagandists cashing in on a popular issue, but most of all by the industrial workers themselves. We stand four-square upon this demand, which inevitably implies no political leadership whatsoever.

A.M.

out that vital industries are not converted to public ownership simply to provide better conditions for the workers. Oh dear, no—the purpose was to ensure that they function with maximum efficiency and fullest service and amenities at a reasonable price.

Now we have no quarrel with efficiency so long as it does not become a fetish in deference to which human relationships are submerged. On the whole, efficiency makes for ease of working and an organisation working efficiently goes smoothly and with less cause for friction and dispute. And as members of the public we are desirous of obtaining the fullest service and amenities at a reasonable price. But we don't want any of these things at the expense of our fellow workers on the railways. Railwaymen are among the lowest-paid classes of industrial workers, and have been kept in that position, and equipment and stock has been allowed to deteriorate, because of the necessity of supplying dividends to shareholders. This, theoretically, has now ended. The only snag is that the State is now the big, one and only shareholder, and people like Mr. Benstead have a vested interest in the railways running efficiently—and at a profit. "It is imperative," says Benstead, "that we should make a success of publicly-owned transport." Of course it is—he has a nice job in it!

So what will it profit either the railway workers or the general public if, instead of one Mr. Benstead on the Transport Commission, there are four—as demanded by Jim Figgis, present general-secretary of the N.U.R.? We have in the present Government enough examples of men rising from the workers into controlling

OUR COMRADES IN THE UPPER HOUSE

JUST to remind us that our betters in the House of Lords have the interests of the workers well and truly at heart, an incident occurred during the debate on the Gas Bill recently.

It was Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, a Tory peer, who brought up an amendment that each area board in the nationalised gas industry should contain two members who were workers in the undertaking—a suggestion which earned the vigorous disapproval of the Labour peers. For the noble lord suggested—of all things!—that the two worker representatives should be elected by their fellow workers.

Viscount Swinton pointed out the danger there, however. It was that elected representatives might pay more attention to the safety of their seats than to the good of the industry as a whole. In other words he fears that elected workers on the area board might try to get things done on behalf of the workers. If the workers' representatives were chosen for them by the managers on the board, "safe" men could be chosen who could be relied upon for their "sense of proportion", "loyalty", "sense of discipline", etc., etc.

The Upper House modified Viscount Cecil's amendment, accepting the principle of the area boards having two workers' representatives, but that they should not be elected. But they need not have worried, for nobody seems to have realised that any person whether co-opted or elected to a position of power is more likely to "pay more attention to the safety of his seat" than to the well-being of society—something which applies to the entire Parliamentary electoral system.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE UNIONS?

IN nearly every country where there are trade unions there is evident a vicious struggle going on among sections striving for control. In France we have the great split in the C.G.T. which is left in the hands of the Communists, and the new movement led by the Social-Democratic political clique. There is also the growing movement of enlightened workers organising in the Anarcho-syndicalist unions. In Italy too, political divergences have led to opposing types of organisation in industry.

Everywhere it is apparent that the struggle for power among the national states is having its effects shown in manœuvres and intrigues within the trade unions by rival political groups. The political parties believe it to be a matter of cardinal importance that they should be in a position to control the workers through the unions and thus discipline the working-class in the interests of political policies neces-

sary in the game of power-politics.

positions—with the sorry results we can all see.

It must be made clear that this present trend from the official union leaders to demand a share of control for the workers (meaning themselves!) means nothing more than a move towards closer collaboration with the managing class, and far from weakening that class will strengthen it. The path of collaboration has always been a fatal one if the aim is complete emancipation.

We must make clear that syndicalism has nothing in common with this half-hearted phrase-mongering. We stand for complete, free workers' control—control from the bottom up, and no collaboration with employers or managers!

P.S.

That the economic interests of the workers are being sacrificed to long-term political power programmes, is a fact quite well emphasised in the controversy over the Marshall Plan. This plan is now the major cause of wide political splits between the two dominating sections exercising influence in the trade unions. So far, disruption has affected countries like France and Italy most severely, because in these countries economic conditions are so chaotic as to cause social stress of almost intolerable dimensions.

But here in Britain we have the beginnings of a cleavage in the trade unions by reason of the conflict of political ideologies. The secretary of the Labour Party recently issued a strongly-worded circular urging the unions to look upon the Communist members as saboteurs and disruptors of unity. This was followed by a general denunciation of Communist trade unionists, and among the savage outbursts inspired only by political prejudices, was the following from Mr. A. Deakin, Bevin's successor as general secretary of the T.G.W.U., reported in *Reynolds* (14/12/47):—

"We cannot afford in this country to allow the attempted infiltration and domination of the trade unions on the part of the Communists to succeed."

In consequence we are to witness a struggle in the trade unions for political control and the workers will be called upon to be the mute stooges of the different parties.

Wages and Cost of Living

The trade unions have been quite incapable, indeed, they have not had the will, to improve wages to meet the ever-rising cost-of-living. What meagre increases have been achieved have been heavily out-weighted by the monstrous rises in prices, and increases in taxation. It has been computed, for instance, that in 1947 alone, indirect taxation rose by £240 millions, whilst in the same year food prices went up by £60 millions, a total increase in the cost-of-living by £300 millions, and yet wages went up in the same period by only £78 millions. It is precisely because of these discrepancies, which are being increasingly felt by the workers and their families, that the orthodox trade union officials realise their

weakness in retaining control of the activities of the unions.

The so-called leaders of the unions are inextricably bound-up with the political fortunes of the government, and those fortunes are not so good. On the other hand, the Communists will pretend to champion the claims of the workers for better wages, all in the attempt to gain more influence in the unions as a step to the political struggle for state power.

It is for the workers to see in all this that they are of secondary importance to politicians, and it will be of no great importance to the workers which political group runs the union or which political clique holds the power of the state. The all-important question to the worker is: Where does the product of my labour go? If the worker will commence to think along the rational lines of asking himself who produces all the lavish wealth in society, and why he gets so little returned in the form of wages, he will then appreciate the fact that the state institutions are among the greatest robbers of his labour produce. Nor does it matter one

(Continued on page 8)

MONEY A MICKLE...

THE total income of the Transport and General Workers' Union—the world's largest union—in 1947 was £2,207,528, most of it representing contributions by the 1,317,842 members.

During the year, states the annual report, the union disbursed £335,467 in cash benefits.

Allocations to political subsidiary funds included £4,351 for Labour Party affiliation fees and £25,000 for grants to Labour Party propaganda.

News Chronicle, 7/7/48.

Land Notes

What Hopes for Change?

THESE Land Notes are, or at any rate, originally were, supposed to consist of a commentary on current events in the farming world of social and political interest that might be supposed, often no doubt erroneously, to appeal to a wider audience than those actively engaged in what is now called, somewhat ponderously, "the agricultural industry". Of late, however, I am afraid that this object has not been very conscientiously carried out and distinct escapist tendencies have appeared. Several reasons have contributed to this regrettable lapse. Firstly, surprisingly little is said or done, or more often merely proposed, on the subject of the land that can be said to have any real value, or originality of outlook at all, sufficient, in my opinion, to warrant inclusion in these Notes. This has meant, secondly, that, if the truth must be told, recently I have not been keeping myself as adequately informed about the political scene as I ought to have been doing if these Notes are to fulfil their avowed intention. To this I must indeed plead guilty and can only say by way of apology that I defy anyone, who has any sanity or honesty left, to continue to study farming politics, or any other politics for that matter, intensively over a long period without periodically succumbing to spells of boredom and frustration with the whole business. After all one cannot help having one's moods, like everyone else, even though one does one's best not to inflict them on one's readers. Still they will out sometimes.

Instead, therefore, of reading and giving careful study to what Mr. So-and-So said at such a place, or what is happening at "The Royal", I have tended to turn over the newspaper page hurriedly and guiltily and read the Test Match commentary. This is a terrible confession to have to make but one for which I hope at least some readers may feel a little sympathy. As a matter of fact, I did have a go at reading the new Agricultural Charter issued by the Conservative Party, but, try as I would, I could not reach the end of it. All I can say is that it appeared to differ hardly at all from what is known, for want of a better word, as "the policy" of the present Government except in one or two minor and inessential details. On the whole I felt that seldom had so much that meant so little been said in so many words. Quite an achievement in its way.

to analyse and comment on it except in a largely negative manner. After a while this is bound to pall on both writer and reader, though I do not see how it can be avoided to any great extent.

When thinking, or writing, about political matters it is, in my submission, of the greatest importance to differentiate most clearly between what one would like to see happen and what one's knowledge of the situation, such as it may be, leads one to think will happen. To pretend that any really desirable changes in the social and economic framework of farming in this country are at all likely, or even conceivable, in the foreseeable future would be simply wishful-thinking of the crudest order. In particular, to delude oneself that anything useful or constructive can be hoped for from the rural workers would be just dishonest.

Any talk about the workers taking over the control of the industry is, under present social conditions and with the present state of mind of the mass of rural workers, little better than an irrelevant frivolity. That, of course, is neither a pleasant nor a popular statement to have to make, but anyone acquainted with contemporary rural England will know it to be true.

The Ideology of the Rural Worker

Two things combine to reinforce the contemporary rural workers' aversion to any fundamental social change. Firstly, the farming tradition of this country has for many generations now been of a strongly individualistic character. The ideology of the worker is in no way different from that of his employer. He merely envies his employer his position and his one hope, unless by middle-age he has ceased to hold it, is to have a place of his own some day, to be his own boss and to be able to employ one or two people to work for him as he has worked for others. He does not by any means disapprove of the employer-employee relationship. Rather does he believe in the principle of "the farming ladder" by which, in theory at least though decreasingly so in practice, it is possible for a hard-working and business-minded chap ultimately to have his own holding, however small.

But the tendency for farming to be conducted in ever larger units makes this hope nowadays less likely of realization than it was in the past. And if it is realized, it becomes ever more difficult for the small farm to compete economically with the large, mechanized farm or group of farms. Until the advent of the use of

machinery on a large scale for an ever-increasing variety of farm operations, this disparity did not exist. One man's hands could successfully compete against another's but not now against a machine doing the work of several pairs of hands, even if not inevitably doing the job quite so well. As, however, in our world it is costs of production rather than the quality of the product which is the deciding factor, this advantage is largely off-set—at least in all arable farming though to a lesser extent where livestock are concerned.

Even so the satisfaction, and sense of pride and independence, to be derived from running one's own place more than compensates for many men for the slightly lower financial reward in terms of man-hours that a small farm may entail. As someone once said to me: "It don't really matter the same how long you work when you are working for yourself." Which is very largely true.

Strength of the "Status Quo"

The second reason which tends to make farm-workers set against any change in existing economic and property relationships is that farming is now, by comparison with its previous condition, relatively prosperous and is likely to remain so for some time to come. The industry is in some ways going through an expansionist period which means that reformist policies, such as demands for wage increases, can in fact bring some reward. A certain percentage, if only a small one, of the increased financial returns, can nowadays be wrangled from the employers if the workers, and their organizations, are insistent enough. During the great Depression between the two wars, farmers for the most part quite genuinely could not afford to pay more than they did without going out of business. Now they can and the worker also benefits, and while he continues to do so he is unlikely to desire any radical social change. "Well-fed men," as Lord Bruce truly remarked in a recent debate in the Lords, "make poor revolutionaries."

In brief, then, the present social and economic order, as far as farming is concerned, would appear to be more secure and more resistant to radical change than it has been for quite a long time. Change will come, and can only come, when a sufficient number of the workers desire it and insist on it, and at the moment they do not desire it. Anyone who tries to maintain otherwise is merely projecting his own vision on to other people who do not in actual fact share it.

G.V.

THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

Twelve Years have Passed

In times like the present the struggle for social justice seems an unending road beset with overwhelming difficulties and overcast by heavy clouds of despair. It is but three years since the "ending" of the second imperialist war. The so-called peace-loving nations who joined hands under the banner of anti-Fascism allegedly for the eradication of the threat and actuality of war, are now at daggers drawn, menacing each other with shadow mobilization and shows of force. And the spirit of despair has so firmly taken hold of the peoples of the world that the shadow of yet another war evokes less alarm than resignation.

How different indeed was the spirit of 1936 in Spain! For the first time since the Fascist reaction had consolidated itself in Italy and Germany, the Spanish workers had shown the way by revolutionary insurrection to defeat the threat of its extension to Spain. But they had not merely confined themselves to the defence of pre-Fascist social conditions; they had raised the banner of the social revolution itself. In sweeping away incipient Fascism, they had also swept away the whole of class rule itself, and had taken into their own hands the task of ordering their own lives.

It was this sense of experiment, of starting a new life, that gave the feeling of promise to the morrow of the social revolution in Spain. The tasks the Spanish workers undertook were formidable enough, the enemies of the social revolution immensely strong; but nevertheless the spirit with which those early months were touched was pre-eminently one of hope and courage. The revolution had lit a spark which political reformism can never kindle.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE REVOLUTION

In the twelve years that have gone by since 1936 immense efforts have gone into the war and its aftermath—with very little in the way of positive achievement, and still less in the way of hope. Though the Spanish revolution was crushed, its achievements were such that they have many lessons for to-day.

The revolution adopted methods of social struggle quite unlike those of a centralized state power. Significantly enough, the resuscitation of state power

HAD the Spanish Revolution and the struggle against Fascism in Spain triumphed, the events of 1936 would be well-known to everyone to-day. But the importance of Spain is only hidden by the fact of failure, not diminished. For those who participated in the momentous events, or who watched them with anxious sympathy, the months after July 19th, 1936, contained the most important movements of recent history. The long drawn-out agony and the final defeat were inexpressibly painful, the onset of the new world war six months afterwards unutterably disheartening; but they can never obliterate the hopes engendered in that first July, never quench the exhilaration of the revolutionary spirit which went out from the Spanish workers and peasants at that time.

which characterised the triumph of the counter revolution was built on the destruction of those very revolutionary methods.

The workers and peasants of Spain placed no reliance on democratic methods of anti-Fascist struggle. Had they not seen the Popular Front government which came to power in February 1936 do absolutely nothing to foil General Franco's coup d'état, although they were forewarned of it. Hence when Franco made his attempt their answer was to occupy the factories and take over the land. Decisions for the future lay in their hands, and they proceeded to give effect to them through local committees and communes, while production was managed by the revolutionary industrial unions of the National Confederation of Labour, the anarchist syndicalist workers' organisation.

The economic achievements of the revolutionary economy were enormous. They improved productive methods, output and working conditions, and

managed the technical relations of one industry with another, entirely through the workers' direct organizations. And they did this at a moment when the whole country had been thrown into chaos and confusion.

In its economic achievements, the Spanish revolution went far beyond the revolutions of the past, and the study of them is of the first importance. The Freedom Press pamphlet "Social Reconstruction In Spain" describes some of the socialised industries during the revolution, and those interested in the matter are advised to read it. What is important to point out is that the revolutionary economy was entirely in the hands of the workers and peasants themselves, without the intervention of trade union leaders or "managers". They provided a living demonstration that workers' control is not merely possible but is a more satisfactory method of organisation than any other.

Similarly revolutionary in approach was the organisation of the workers' militias, the spontaneously organised

groups of armed workers who bore the brunt of the shock of the military uprising of the generals. It was these purely workers organisations which won the first struggles of the revolution without any assistance whatsoever from the military forces at the disposal of the Popular Front government.

The militias were free organisations. They dispensed with coercive discipline, with a hierarchy of officers, with all the apparatus of militarism as we all too painfully know it. In place of these things they possessed a revolutionary spirit and a consciousness that their future lay in their own hands. They succeeded in driving back the Fascist wave over more than half Spain.

THE INFLUENCE OF ANARCHISM

The lines on which the Spanish revolution proceeded were mainly due to the long tradition of anarchism in that country. The setting up of revolutionary committees has been a feature of all recent revolutions; but in Spain

it was a conscious mode of organisation adopted after long years of struggle and study as the best means to achieve definite objects. For the Spanish revolution aimed right from the start to set up a society without government and without exploitation, an aim which had been for long inculcated into the workers and peasants by the powerful currents of Spanish anarchism.

Significantly enough, the counter-revolution—signalled by the Communist-dominated government of Negrin—immediately sought to dismantle the revolutionary methods of organisation both in economy and in the armed forces.

It succeeded in breaking up workers' control of industry and agriculture and in re-introducing the ideas of discipline and hierarchy into the army. In so doing they dispersed the revolutionary spirit and dug the grave not only of the revolution but of the anti-Fascist struggle itself.

THE TRAGEDY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SPAIN

The tragedy of Spain lies in the greatness of its achievements and the still greater promise it held out for the future of the world. The very magnitude of its vision and the tremendous achievements it made in the teeth of overwhelming odds make its final destruction the more painful. But those who felt the spirit it breathed, who understood and were exhilarated by the hopes and visions of the Spanish workers, had grasped the possibilities of a different kind of life. They had had a taste of the social revolution, and neither failure nor the submergence of the peoples in wars can take away that experience.

THE TRIAL OF GODSE

lead India to a secondary place in the comity of nations or to dependence."

This is an unshakable fact; if India goes to war with Pakistan, and it may come about over Kashmir, over Hyderabad, and many other troublous problems, the war can no more be isolated and hermetically sealed off than war in Palestine or Greece or anywhere else. And even as regards violence on a small scale—what is happening at present—cold war and local bloodshed—the whole matter is bound up with relationship between the two sets of Imperialist Powers. Nehru and his Government have chosen the American side; and the more they declare themselves in favour of that side, the more speculative become the observers about what Pakistan will do. Whether it will not accept Russian aid against India; or whether Russian backing of India will wean India to the other side. The reference of problems to U.N.O., which is only another aspect of "violence" (namely, the cold war) do not tend to peace but to war. The nations assembled do not judge problems according to abstract standards of right and wrong, but solely in terms of power politics and how the nations concerned are going to react. Shall the American bloc favour Pakistan and wean it from Russia?—or would that alienate India?—and so on. Reference of problems to U.N.O., local war in which the Great Powers are inevitably going to be interested, all such actions which in the Gandhian doctrine are termed broadly "violence" and are the logical outcome of Power Politics, inevitably presuppose that India must play second fiddle to one or other of the blocs of Great Powers.

The removal of Gandhi—for Acharya Vinoba Bhave has none of his personal magic—has made it possible for Indian statesmen to go ahead with the formation of the Nation State without his interference at the consequences of illogical political pacifism. As *Independent India*, Bombay, (23/5/48) puts it:

"We must thank Acharya Bhave for opening up before thinking Indians the dreadful perspective of India getting involved in a world war, not as a major combatant, but as the base of operation of a foreign Power, as a camp-follower."

And what this means was seen in World War II.

In these circumstances, Acharya Bhave has demonstrated the logical tie between the death of Gandhi and the prospect of Indian participation in World War III, for not only is the major obstacle to Indian militarism gone, but his nominal disciples now in power, the conquerors who paying lip-service to non-violence, have become the heads of State, and the leaders of the armed forces, can now disregard the obscurer exponents of the Gandhian creed. So far as Gandhi is concerned they "can now commemorate Gandhiji by raising compulsorily voluntary contributions, by carrying out the Nehru plan, by spending 59% of the meagre revenue on Defence—merely to build up India as an American base. This does not mean, if Gandhiji lived, he could have prevented his powerful followers from straying into so-called real politik; but he could certainly have controlled them, or at least made them work within bounds and with a feeling of bad conscience whenever they transgressed." (*Mysindia*, Bangalore, 13/6/48.)

It remains the fact that whatever sentence is passed by the courts on whoever is found to be the assassin of Gandhi, it is clear that his way of thinking has triumphed. The panic-stricken arrests of members of the Hindu Mahasabha have now subsided, and they and even the right-wing fascistically inclined R.S.S., who were at first held collectively responsible for the crime, are now quietly released. When all is said and done their ideas of militant communalism (in the Indian sense, where "communalism" has rather a different meaning from that in English usage) namely, the acerbation of Hindu caste rule, is not primarily different from many of those now in power who are shaking the sword against the Muslims, irrespective of the fact that at the finish all India's "races" will live together, and that this whole principle of antagonism will not in the finish be—as Acharya Bhave has raised truly before India—between Hindu and Muslim but just another facet of the struggle between America and Russia.

What has already happened in India is the proof of the Anarchist contention that nationalism and the State invariably corrupt; for the contrast between the moral Gandhists such as Acharya Bhave, who hold fast to the ideals of the movement, and the political Gandhists such as Jawaharlal Nehru, who are in power, is clear to all. And it is a fundamental criticism of Gandhism that this division was equally implicit in Gandhi himself; the principle of the national State which he accepted contradicted his ideals, as is now seen in practice between the Gandhists in power and the Gandhists out of power.

The act of assassination of Gandhi, whether by Godse or an unknown, has been of great asset to the Gandhists in that they can now revere Gandhi and disregard his teachings, just as it is a great advantage to the Christian nations that their Messiah is dead and unable to intervene. What is important is not really whether Godse is or is not guilty, whether his sentence is harsh or light, or whether the Mahasabha and the R.S.S. are to a greater or less extent implicated. Gandhi did not teach personal judicial revenge and he

(Continued on page 5)

U.S. Goodwill Visit to Argentina

Buenos Aires. STATEMENTS by the Argentine Minister of War, on his recent visit to the United States, have confirmed rumours long circulating in certain political circles in Argentina. Officially, General Humberto Sosa Molina went to the United States on a "visit of good-will to obtain a better understanding between Argentina and the States", but actually to negotiate a large shipment of arms and military supplies—partly left over from the last war—which were offered to Argentina through U.S. General Willis Crittenger, when he visited Buenos Aires last December.

Public opinion had been surprised by this unaccustomed visit of a North American soldier, whose mission in our country was not very clear. What is the chief of the Caribbean defence coming here for? asked one newspaper. Is it not strange that in a time of international tension "a group of authorised Yankee chiefs comes with the sole object of visiting our military institutions and arms factories, where probably they have very little to learn?" Papers buzzed with conjecture.

Actually, General Crittenger's

visit high-lighted certain disquieting measures of the government, such as the projected plan for pre-conscription and post-conscription training, the creation of a National Council of Physical Education controlled by the War Ministry, the prohibition in schools of the well-known anti-war book, *The Crime of War* by Juan Bautista Alberdi, and the progressive growth of the military budget. Large sections of public opinion have become alarmed. "Does this have something to do with 'continental defence'?" asked some people, "or with the 'standardisation of armaments'?"

"Naturally," said the War Minister, General Sosa Molina, when asked in the U.S. about his shopping, "the Argentine army needs to modernise its matériel. We are interested in buying more equipment and we would prefer to buy it in the United States." General Crittenger's trip to Argentina, says the political Opposition, has been highly profitable.

—(W.P.)

ON OBTAINING "EVIDENCE"

Police brutality is much too far from "unusual". Hector Verbuch, a man 67 years of age—recently was awarded \$20,000 by a Federal Court in a suit brought against Chicago policemen who, with sadistic disregard for his age, beat and tortured him during questioning concerning the Degman murder case. Every American community should have its Civil Liberties Committee to check on police conduct in making arrests and while "holding" prisoners.

Open Forum (Los Angeles), 29/5/48

The prisoner in the dock snored so loudly that a murder trial had to be postponed to-day at Leunenburg. The accused was a former German policeman charged with the murder of his sweetheart.

He was asleep when the court convened. When it became impossible to hear above his snores the court adjourned. Officials said he apparently had been doped.

N.Y. Herald Tribune, 11/6/48.

THE RISE OF TITO

DURING the war, when Hitler's armies had conquered the whole of Eastern Europe, guerrilla warfare in Yugoslavia surprised the world, and the entire propaganda machine of the Allies boosted the 'hero of the resistance' General Mihailovitch, leader of the Chetnik fighters. Mihailovitch was duly accredited by the Yugoslav Government in exile, as Minister of War, and acted in liaison with the Allied Forces. No praise was too great for the Chetniks, until a sudden reversal in policy came, following Russian entry into the war and official Russian backing was switched to Marshal Tito, leader of the Partisans.

Tito was himself a Communist—about whom a great many myths had been spun, including the story of his fighting in Spain, and organised his guerrilla army on lines conforming to the Communist policy at that time—i.e., dominated and controlled by Communists with a strong emphasis on nationalism and Pan-Slavism.

The pro-Stalinist wing of the Conservative Party of that time—which was hysterically in praise of Communism at least east of Germany, soon dropped Mihailovitch like a hot brick when they saw Stalin's backing of Tito, and Churchill by switching his liaison officers to the Partisan army, made it impossible for Mihailovitch to continue without some compromises and degree of collaboration with the Germans he was originally fighting, in order to carry on the internecine warfare with Tito. The British staff officers who went to Tito's Red army included at least one man now a Conservative M.P. This army, which fought the Germans and the rival Yugoslavs was the army which was allowed to take conquest of Yugoslavia. The Chetniks were discredited, broken up, and their leaders, including Mihailovitch, shot as traitors. The Government in exile was disowned. Marshal Tito was

The Trial of Godse

(Continued from page 4)

would have let his assailant pass unmolested. But what is really important is who has murdered the great ideals that once encompassed India, of which Gandhi was once a great spokesman? To this Gandhi himself helped to contribute but the disciples who took power are those who became corrupted. The vision that once was Congress has sorely faded when Congress entered power and became the refuge for every big businessman and black marketer who was so implicated with British administration that he needed to vindicate his nationalism by vigorous politics. As Acharya Kripalani, another moral Gandhist of the out-of-power section, has justly observed:

"Even after the withdrawal of the foreign power from India, the people of this country cannot identify their own Government with anything but a machinery for collecting taxes and maintaining a type of law and order—the two functions the alien government also had discharged without fail."

If India had wanted "strong measures" and a "firm hand" it could have clung to rule by the Viceroy. India struggled for more than that and more than petty nationalism. There was a great vision in India which embraced more than Hindus and Muslims and which brought great encouragement to the darkness of thousands outside India as well as the millions within. The Indian masses need to look for something above the political struggles attendant on the building of the State, and the judicial processes involved in such instances as the Godse trial, which the British Raj could hardly have held differently, and this next and libertarian stage is one that many thinking Indians have already reached.

INTERNATIONALIST.

acclaimed by the Allies as the ruler of Yugoslavia.

Tito in Power

He immediately became canonised in the approved Communist Party style. The Western Powers later realised this was yet another of Churchill's bad bargains, since Tito naturally allied himself with the Russian bloc when the Allies fell out amongst themselves, a factor which the advocates of total surrender do not appear to have foreseen.

But Tito was not content to play stooge to Stalin, and after all why should he? The various Communist Parties are obliged to take their orders from Moscow since the man who pays the piper calls the tune. But with Tito in absolute power in a nation not militarily subject to the Red Army as in the nations nearer to Russia, the same situation arose as could have arisen had France or Italy been taken over by the Stalinists. Namely, that the leaders of the Communist Party were in power in their own right and had no need to truckle to the Kremlin.

This is the key to the break by Russia with the Yugoslav Communist Party: in expelling it the Cominform hoped to

get the "healthy Communists" to overthrow Tito, but as his appeal was made as much to nationalistic elements (which the Stalinists everywhere are arousing) such an appeal coming from outside could only strengthen his position.

The position of the Powers will have to be revised according to Tito's next move. The Anglo-American sudden regard for Italian claims to Trieste made in time for the elections, may be eclipsed if Yugoslavia also comes into the Marshall Fold. While the 'Fascist cannibals' who led Mihailovitch may yet be hailed by the Kremlin as the true upholders of Yugoslav independence.

But what concern is there for the ordinary people who have faced so much suffering in the long years of occupation, resistance and civil war? It is very plain that the whole of such struggles are clearly manoeuvres for power, and that what is wanted is a genuine revolution that will sweep away all these militarist and nationalist dictators. All that the Communist Party is to-day is an instrument of Russian Imperialist policy that dates back to the Tsars, by means of which some men hope to get dictatorial power in their own right.

J.B.

STALIN'S BLACK SHEEP

The History of Yugoslav C.P. Dissent

(From a Yugoslav Correspondent)

THE news of the excommunication of Yugoslavia by the Cominform was such a blow to the Soviet Union that few Anglo-American newspapers were able to disguise their joy. One commentator after another ascribed Marshal Tito's attitude to his conception of Yugoslav interests, to the intrinsic strength of the Yugoslav Communist Party (YCP) and even to Tito's popularity among the peasants. Yet all these "experts" on Yugoslav affairs overlooked the fact that the Comintern had always shown a chronic inability to control its Yugoslav section which Dimitrov once described as the worst Communist party in Europe.

The first important clash between the Soviet All-Union Communist Party and the leadership of the YCP happened at a time when a foreign Communist at Moscow could still argue with Joseph Stalin. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in 1925 the first secretary-general of the YCP, Professor Markovic, put forward the view that the constitutional problem in Yugoslavia could be solved by constitutional means. This theory was immediately attacked by Stalin himself and soon afterwards a number of changes in the party hierarchy took place. Markovic, however, retained a large number of followers who refused to give way and tried to oppose Stalin's views. The following extract from Marshal Tito's report to the Fifth Conference of the YCP held in 1940 and published in the *Communist*, October 1946, gives a truthful account of the conditions in the party in those days: "The existence of factions and interfaction struggle made it possible for the class enemy to infiltrate spies and agents provocateurs into the party. These agents provocateurs and spies took a very active part in the fractional struggle which was raging with such bitterness within the leadership of the party. They were helping both one faction and the other but most often the leftist faction."

This state of affairs forced the Comintern in 1928 to address an "Open Letter" to all members of the YCP "who had not been infected by fractionalism" and called upon them to liquidate "the inter-faction and intergroup struggle. Notwithstanding the fact that the Soviet Communist Party supported this appeal "in Serbia the right wing elements openly resisted the Open Letter and threatened to split the party and the trade unions". The publication of this notorious "Open Letter" led to the appointment of yet another leadership in which, to quote Marshal Tito, "certain new and younger men, who had not hitherto been known as fractionalists, but who later proved to

be such, assumed leading positions."

At the Fourth Party Congress held at Dresden several months later, the consolidation of the party proved to be one of its most important tasks but could not be accomplished owing to the onslaught launched against the Communists by the police. The large number of arrests which followed and the murder of the secretary-general of the YCP by police agents placed a Czech, Ciznizicki, alias Gorkic, in charge of the party machine. The work of this Communist leader has been vividly described by his successor, Marshal Tito: "These factions and groups within the leadership, which were fighting one another for the leadership and using all sorts of means in this fight, were, as we have seen, nevertheless, united in one respect: they were systematically lying to the Communist International, sending false reports, being insincere and giving a false account of conditions. When the need arose to conceal something before the Communist International, they hastily reached a rotten compromise. Here is an example: Gorkic himself stated that the plenary session in April 1936 was held without the knowledge of the Communist International, solely for the purpose of reaching a compromise without the Communist International knowing that there had been a struggle." In consequence "the Communist International again intervened and annulled the decisions of this plenary session and declared the session itself not valid, and subsequently again relieved the

THE INTERNATIONAL

AS decided by the International Anarchist Conference at Paris last Easter, the "International Anarchist Co-ordination Commission" (I.A.C.C.) was formed to continue the work of the Anarchist International since the Amsterdam Conference of 1907, and to prepare for an Anarchist World Congress as soon as possible. The I.A.C.C., working in Paris, is energetically connecting our movement in various countries, constituting international records, and above all preparing for such a World Congress. It is also issuing a bulletin in various languages (including English), and as it starts without any money or technical help whatsoever, is asking assistance of Anarchists everywhere.

The Union of Anarchist Groups is affiliated to the I.A.C.C. and is in full accord with the tasks it has undertaken.

The international stamp "Pro-Congreso" is on sale in aid of the funds of the I.A.C.C. (3d.) and may be obtained, as may the bulletin for June 1948 (6d.) in French, German, Spanish and English, also for its funds from the U.A.G., Freedom Press, or direct from:

ROBERT JOULIN,
145 QUAI DE VALMY, PARIS (10e),
FRANCE.

Legacy of Imperialism

THE case of the emigrants from Jamaica draws attention again to the plight of the West Indians. Unemployment is widespread in the islands. The export of bananas came to a standstill during the war and the fruit rotted on the docks for lack of ships. Now the crop has failed due to disease. The spices and sugar, which made the West Indies the most prosperous British possession in the seventeenth century, are now of little value. High quality cane sugar has been replaced in Europe by the home-grown sugar beet. Chocolate manufacturers have gradually altered the blend of their products until the African cocoa flavour replaced that of the West Indies, because they found it cheaper to do so. The result is that capitalism having profited by these islands now throws them aside like a sucked orange.

In the past, these islands were fought for, lost and recaptured in turn by the rival empires of France and Britain. The native inhabitants, Caribs, could not survive work on the plantations, so the negroes were introduced as slaves by the fat merchants of Liverpool and Bristol. Their ships were stinking hells. The slaves were treated worse than cattle. Sometimes the voyage was not a financial success, because too many of the cargo died. Only one hundred years ago were

they freed and slavery was responsible for almost every one of their descendants' problems. The majority of children born are illegitimate and orphans and waifs are common, because in the past the slaves were encouraged to breed to increase their master's property. The West Indians are the prey of mob-leaders, such as Bustamante, whose followers brawl and riot in true fascist style. American "crank" religions flourish amidst the poverty. Many of the simple folk tolerate their wretched conditions, consoled by the thought of Paradise hereafter.

The islanders must combine to produce for their own needs and thus solve their economic problem. Fruit is plentiful and in the hands of the people the land could provide food enough to satisfy the requirements of all with a minimum of labour. It rests with the West Indians to set up co-operatives and throw off the shackles of exploitation. It rests with us to support them in their struggle and to welcome as comrades those of them, forced to emigrate by unemployment.

St. Annes, Lancs.

F. TONKS.

In Brief

"Pure Blood only."

A race hygiene bureau to trace family trees and ensure that all South Africans getting married are of pure white blood, advocated by biologist Dr. G. Eloff, of Johannesburg.

Town Without Politics

The town of Barbaranno Romano with a population of 1,222 in Viterbo Province (Italy), has called off city elections set for August 1st. No party entered candidates.

Dutch Deny Their Units Mutinied in Indonesia

Reports of a mutiny in the Netherlands East Indies forces have been denied in an official Dutch Army communique. It stated, however, that 113 auxiliaries in the NEI Army have deserted.

Soviet Atom Scientists Win \$9,000

Two brothers, both atomic scientists, headed a list of Stalin Prize winners for scientific research, issued recently. They were awarded 200,000 roubles (about £9,000) for their work on cosmic rays.

Japan Now Sells Scrap to U.S.!

The *New York Herald Tribune* reports that American steelmakers were offered what is said by the trade to be the first opportunity on record for them to purchase scrap iron and steel from Japanese sources. The offer, made by the Japanese Board of Trade, Tokyo, was channelled through the New York foreign trade office of the Supreme Command Allied Powers. (SCAP).

If metal made available by the Japanese group is acquired by domestic interests and shipped to the United States, it would mark a reversal of the movement which aroused to much criticism and controversy in the years immediately preceding Pearl Harbour.

In that period the Japanese obtained millions of tons of iron and steel scrap from the United States and used the material to build their war machine.

Russians to Free Nazis Jailed in Eastern Zone.

Release of all former Nazi internees in Soviet-controlled Germany was announced by the Russian-licensed radio.

According to the announcement all former Nazis arrested "in the interests of public safety and democratization" will be released.

To Drive a Wedge

(From a Correspondent)

AN interesting example of real damned foolishness comes to us from Australia. The Queensland Chamber of Manufacturers sent a circular letter round to its members dated 7th April, 1948 (reproduced by *Common Cause*, Miners' Federation paper, 1/5/48), suggesting that private addresses of employees be sent so that anti-communist pamphlets could be sent direct to them; also they offered special pay envelopes, to be endorsed: "It is Happening Here. Destroy Communism in your Trade Union. Communism threatens the very life of free Trade Unionism in Australia", etc., etc.

Can it seriously be imagined that such a message from such a source, offered gratuitously with an inadequate salary from which tax has also been deducted, would have any effect as a rallying-cry to the workers? Is the concern of the employers' organizations over "Free Trade Unionism" to be taken at its face value? Needless to say, such propaganda could

only have the effect of making the workers imagine that the Communists and capitalists were irreconcilable enemies, and it would in effect be Communist propaganda.

But the Australian capitalists aren't so dumb. They know these facts quite as well as I do. What is their motive then for such a fillip to Communism? It is to drive a wedge in the workers' movement, by strengthening the Communists and bringing deeper the irreconcilable splits in the Australian labour movement, which exists between Communist, Labour Party and Catholic led trade unionists. Such a division suits them, and it is basically to their advantage that the Communist Party disrupts and distorts the struggle as it has done elsewhere, while at the same time the capitalist parties pursue other methods, such as direct support, to ensure the dominance of the other parties in order that the Communists do not turn into a Frankenstein and gain power.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST.

THE WRITER AND POLITICS

by George Woodcock (Porcupine Press, 10/6).

THIS book contains fourteen essays and the title chosen for the collection is that of the first essay. It is an apt title, for what Woodcock is mainly concerned with is the influence of a social awareness on several well-known writers, about half of them being contemporary ones. In other words, since it is nowadays virtually impossible for a "serious" writer to be uninfluenced by the disintegration of the society in which he lives, what influence has this awareness had on his thought and writing? Having said that I must hasten to add, in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding, that unlike some critics of the previous decade, warped as many of them were by a predominantly Marxist interpretation of life and literature, Woodcock does not approach his subject encumbered with political prejudices, nor does he attempt to evaluate literary achievement solely in terms of some preconceived political or philosophical theory. And for that alone we can be grateful these days.

Nevertheless, as he himself says in his short Introduction: "Whether the individual essays are sociological or literary in character, they tend towards that conception of society, which is unreal in that it exists only in mind and desire, but which is also real in the sense that it provides an aim towards which our efforts as individuals and as members of society can be directed."

"This book, therefore, embraces a social approach to literature and

THE WRITER AND POLITICS

thought, an approach which takes into account the society where the writers work and live."

Critical Studies

It is, of course, obvious that to give a fair and adequate critical assessment of a book of this nature, it is necessary to be fully acquainted with all the writers, and most of their work, with which the individual essays comprising the book are concerned. Unfortunately, I cannot claim to such a wide and comprehensive reading as is displayed by Woodcock in this book, so that, whereas I have read at least something by all the writers he deals with, my knowledge of several is not sufficient to enable me to pass judgment on the book as a whole. Where, however, I do happen to have sufficient knowledge of the particular writer under discussion to feel competent to express an opinion, I can find nothing but praise for Woodcock's critical acumen. It is indeed rare to find a critic who combines

a predominantly sociological approach with such a sensitive awareness of the more purely literary qualities of his subject, and this, one feels, makes him able to approach each writer in a clear and sympathetic manner and without any attempt, only too common among politico-literary critics, to see in a writer largely what one wants to see and use him to justify and substantiate one's own particular viewpoint.

There is little to choose between the different essays, but those on George Orwell, Graham Greene, Ignazio Silone and Arthur Koestler are perhaps the most satisfactory. It is noticeable that Woodcock is at his best when dealing with a particular person, when he has a central object around which to concentrate his analysis. In the more general essays, such as the one from which the book takes its title and the one on "The Functions of the Political Myth", there is a slight tendency to meander through certain aspects of the subject

for longer than the total length of the essay really warrants. Excellent as those two particular essays are, they do lack the coherence and conciseness of those concerned specifically with a particular person.

It is as a critic with an unusually clear and impartial insight, that Woodcock most excels. Where he allows himself the relaxation of more purely descriptive writing, as in the first part of his study of Henry Bates' *A Naturalist on the River Amazon*, the results are not quite so happy.

The Function of Criticism

Perhaps the most original contribution is the study of the social background and development of "The English Hymn". The contents of this essay will certainly be new to most readers and are a good example of the versatility of Woodcock's critical approach.

Criticism is essentially an accessory to more purely "creative" work—not of course that the critic cannot be a creative worker in his own way. Still, the only valid reason for reading a critical study of a writer, or any other artist or thinker, is that by doing so one is enabled to appreciate and enjoy their work more fully. And certainly when I next have either the time or the occasion to read, or to re-read, the writers dealt with in this book, I know I shall enjoy them all the more and have a clearer understanding of their work for having read Woodcock's critical studies of them. Which I consider is the highest praise one can give to a critic.

GERALD VAUGHAN.

THE NOVEL AND SOCIETY

THE NOVEL AND OUR TIME
by Alex Comfort (Phoenix House, 5/-).

ALEX COMFORT'S new book is written for readers and writers rather than for literary critics, and with a mixture of statement, opinion and polemic it covers a good deal of ground at a rather hurried pace. It examines the kind of society we have in relation to the novel as an art-form, discussing the technical problems of the writer and analysing a number of novels in the light of the writer's anarchist beliefs. The value of the book lies in its concentration on an aspect of the subject that is usually ignored except by Marxists, and in the many suggestive observations thrown out in passing by the author. It offers a personal statement rather than a critical system, and as such it is very refreshing, largely because of the sanity of the writer's outlook (he does not think that art is necessarily a crutch to help the crippled neurotic back to life) and partly because of the sarcasm with which that outlook is sometimes contrasted with other viewpoints. Readers wanting a closer definition of Comfort's premises than he gives here might find it useful to read *Art and Social Responsibility* in conjunction with the present volume.

Comfort's basic position is a romantic one, which in his opinion implies a belief that there is a continual struggle between men and the external universe, between men and death, and between men and those advocates of power who range themselves on the side of death. He points out that present-day society is atomised, lacking an explicit system of loyalties or beliefs, and having in fact only the biological allegiances of men to hold it together at all. Art forms depending on a communal feeling, such as the drama, epic poetry, and the ballad, are not appropriate to this society. The novel, whose development has accompanied its rise, and which is dependent on its technology, is its typical vehicle for artistic endeavour. Comfort thinks that the novel owes its character to a great degree to the type of society in which it is written. At the present day it is addressed to one reader at a time and because it can make no assumptions about his activities comparable to those made at an earlier period, it has to build up a water tight fictional world to which the reader may be introduced at various points as the writer wishes. In this situation, Comfort suggests, a coherent view of history is essential for the writing of major novels—the first-rate novel combines scope, responsibility, and impact. By "responsibility" he means "the refusal to abandon the basic conception of humanness for any extraneous object whatsoever". The writer can take one of four courses: the creation of pure form (*Finnegan's Wake*), lunacy (fantastic revivals), acquiescence to barbarism, or the interpretation of what he sees in a responsible manner. Realism ("the treatment of events as they appear"), or a form of fantasy based on realism, is in his view the method which appeals most directly to reader and writer to-day.

This condensation of the purport of the book is necessarily simplified, and gives a false impression of its rather loose and episodic structure, a structure which embraces a series of comments on the novel and the film, on the novel and narrative, on the novel and monopoly publishing, in fact on the novel in



KAPUTT, by Curzio Malaparte.
(Alvin Redman, 12/6).

WARS are the happy hunting ground of memoirists; politicians, generals, administrators, moved by obscure motives of guilt, pour forth their several-volumed chronicles of confession and revelation, in which

nearly every one of its aspects. As I have presented it, the argument is obviously susceptible of some damaging criticism; the thin ends of many formidable wedges may be driven between each link. To hint at one or two of these: in what respect are the 'advocates of power' less romantic than the advocates of the struggle against the external universe? Usually power is thought to be desirable as a weapon in the struggle; the romantic often seeks power as a compensation for what seems to be his weakness in face of the external universe, and his preoccupation with death is sometimes no more healthy than that of the power-holder. Classicism in literature, it might be argued, is associated with societies in which power is thought to have its source outside the society, and in which power is delegated to men on sufferance and is canalised through a carefully preserved system of social dykes, so that it may not easily be misused or have an issue in death. In short, it could be said that the terms 'romantic' and 'classical' are so misleading as not to aid the discussion. Again, is seems debatable whether the major novel of to-day presents a world any more self-contained and self-explanatory than did the major novel of yesterday; the connection between the character of society and that of the novel may be more tenuous than Comfort suggests. In what sense is the novel of pure form irresponsible? It may extend the awareness of the reader and so contribute to his humanity; it may derive its purity from basic human tendencies needing satisfaction. The romantic objection to realism does not need stating.

However, it is very easy to tilt at Aunt Sallies of one's own construction, and maybe I have unwittingly put my own construction on Comfort's book—a book which is not intended to present a systematic argument. The objections just suggested are not of a kind to be insisted upon in a review; their purpose is to show that in his eighty pages Comfort manages to raise problems of considerable scope, and that he raises them in a way likely to provoke thought and discussion. A sufficient reason for buying the volume.

LOUIS ADEANE.

A Volume of War Memoirs

they generally attempt, with more or less plausibility, to fix the blame on others. Another type of war memoirs with which we have become familiar in recent years is that of the war correspondent, whose newspaper assignments have led him into situations which are generally more lurid and directly exciting than those seen by the top-rank political leader, and who makes use of his experiences in an attempt to hoist himself from the ephemeral world of journalism into the more enduring category of literature.

Looking back over the last few wars, it is surprising how little of this kind of writing has any permanent interest. The mere recording of the horrors of war, the chaffering over-praise or blame between interested parties, make dull reading for posterity; it is only where an element of imaginative feeling has illuminated the story that it acquires a lasting value for anyone other than a student of history. In *War and Peace*, Tolstoy said more about war in general, its nature and effects on human life and character, than all the memoirs of the Napoleonic era put together, and even a comparatively minor work of fiction like Ford Madox Ford's *Tietgens* tetralogy gives a far more real idea of how the war affected ordinary people than we can gain from the most intensive perusal of the war chronicles of say, Lloyd George.

Kaputt is a volume of war memoirs into which the author has tried to infuse a certain imaginative element. The publishers compare it with *War and Peace*; it is nothing like Tolstoy's masterpiece, either in style or quality. In fact, it is a singularly ill-constructed book, in which a great deal of flowery language and "poetic" imagery clog the fairly acute perception which Malaparte brings to his subject, the description of his experience as an Italian correspondent among Axis military circles and on the various

sectors of the Eastern front, from Finland down to Rumania.

The emphasis lies too much on the antics of rulers and diplomatists, the "private life" aspect treated very much in a kind of literary Hollywood style; there is a long account of a dinner with Frank and the high-ranking Nazi bosses of Poland in which the inanities of these political freaks are recorded *ad nauseam*, and dull conversations with Franco's diplomatic representative in Finland fill whole large tracts of writing. This is all the more annoying as Malaparte can, on occasion, give really vivid descriptions of war scenes which he himself witnessed. There is a very telling account of the Rumanian pogrom against the Jews in Jassy. On the other hand, even such accounts are often marred by an ornate sentimentality, and what might have been a very interesting picture of the Warsaw ghetto under the Nazis is spoilt by this over-decoration.

But *Kaputt* has, nevertheless, one outstanding merit; it does reflect the almost unreal grotesqueness of the military ruling class which sprang up just before and during the war. And he does this most successfully when he is unconscious of it, for Malaparte clearly belongs to the world he describes; for him, although he sees its doomed corruption, this life of the cynical diplomats and crazy rulers has its own poetic quality, where you and I would only be conscious of its dull malignance. Indeed, it is perhaps most interesting as the portrait of the mind of a member of a dying ruling class, conscious of the sickness of his own environment. But do not be led away by the blurb into thinking it a great work of art, or imagining that it is a significant contribution to the real history of the last war. It is neither, and the sensation it produced in America seems to have been due to its sensationalism rather than its documentary value.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

Freedom Bookshop

● Alex Comfort's
THE NOVEL IN OUR
TIME 5/-

● Montgomery Hyde's
TRIALS OF OSCAR
WILDE 15/-

● George Woodcock's
THE WRITER AND
POLITICS 10/6

★
All Men are Enemies Richard Aldington 10/6
Lady Chatterley's Lover D. H. Lawrence 7/6
The Cult of Power Rex Warner 7/6
I Chose Freedom V. Kravchenko 15/-
Leaves of Grass Walt Whitman 4/6
35 Poems Herbert Read 2/6
The Culture of Cities Lewis Mumford 16/-
The Republic of Plato trans. L. A. Richards 8/6
The Crack-Up F. Scott Fitzgerald 17/6
Contemporary Issues No. 1 2/-

★
Pearse and Crocker: The Peckham Experiment 5/-
J. Comerford: Health, The Unknown. Story of the Peckham Experiment 7/6
Pearse and Scott-Williamson: The Case for Action 2/-
Scott-Williamson: Physician Heal Thyself 5/-
Kenneth Barlow: A Home of their Own 4/6
The State of Public Knowledge 8/6
Postage is not included in above prices, and should be added.

Please send all orders to
FREEDOM BOOKSHOP
27, RED LION STREET
LONDON - W.C.1.

Freedom Press

Alexander Berkman:
A.B.C. OF ANARCHISM 1/-
George Woodcock:
ANARCHY OR CHAOS 2/6, Cloth 4/6
NEW LIFE TO THE LAND 6d.
RAILWAYS AND SOCIETY 3d.
HOMES OR HOVELS? ...6d.
ANARCHISM AND MORALITY 2d.
WHAT IS ANARCHISM? 1d.
THE BASIS OF COMMUNAL LIVING 1/-
Rudolf Rocker:
NATIONALISM & CULTURE 21/-
Herbert Read:
POETRY AND ANARCHISM Cloth 5/-
THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANARCHISM Boards 2/6, Paper 1/-
THE EDUCATION OF FREE MEN 1/-
John Hewetson:
ITALY AFTER MUSSOLINI 6d.
ILL-HEALTH, POVERTY AND THE STATE Cloth 2/6, Paper 1/-
MUTUAL AID & SOCIAL EVOLUTION 1/-
Peter Kropotkin:
THE STATE: ITS HISTORIC ROLE 1/-
THE WAGE SYSTEM 3d.
REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT 3d.
SELECTIONS FROM HIS WRITINGS (Chosen by Herbert Read) Cloth 8/6
Errico Malatesta:
ANARCHY 3d.
VOTE WHAT FOR? 1d.
M. L. Berneri:
WORKERS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA 1/-
F. A. Ridley:
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE MODERN AGE 2d.
Gaston Level:
COLLECTIVES IN SPAIN 1d.
Charles Duff:
A HANDBOOK ON HANGING 2/-
John Olday:
THE MARCH TO DEATH 1/6
THE LIFE WE LIVE, THE DEATH WE DIE 2/6
A. Ciliga:
THE KRONSTAT REVOLT 2d.
Icarus:
THE WILHELMSHAVEN REVOLT 6d.
"Equity":
THE STRUGGLE IN THE FACTORY 3d.
McCartney:
THE FRENCH COOKS SYNDICATE 3d.
William Godwin:
SELECTIONS FROM POLITICAL JUSTICE 3d.
ON LAW 1d.
C. Berneri:
KROPOTKIN—HIS FEDERALIST IDEAS 2d.
P. J. Proudhon:
GENERAL IDEA OF THE REVOLUTION IN THE 19th CENTURY Cloth 5/-

27 Red Lion Street
Holborn, W.C.1

Victimising the Disabled

WE have heard a lot lately about the Criminal Justice Bill. In it there is no mention of a grievous anomaly of which the greater public is in ignorance. I refer to the power of the Minister of Pensions to confiscate a pension following the imprisonment of a pensioner convicted of an offence.

This arbitrary right violates an important principle at two points. One is that an offender shall not be punished twice for the same offence. The other is that compensation for injury shall not be governed by wholly extraneous circumstance.

The fundamentally false position into which the Minister of Pensions has been pitchforked by the legislation of long-past Parliaments is that of assuming a judicial function alien to his administrative duty. To confuse the two functions, judicial and administrative, does not enhance the prestige which the judicial ideal generally enjoys, nor does it promote the success of administration.

We are all familiar with the Royal Warrant's quaint view that widows', children's and other dependants' pensions and allowances shall not be claimed as a right, but shall be given as a reward of service. And the Ministry of Pensions' insistence that the award of its cash compensation for disablement suffered in the rendering of a certain service to society may, irrespective of the degree of disability remaining the same, be revoked for the rendering of certain disservice to society, is exactly in line.

With the discretionary power to deprive the disabled man of his pension in whole or in part, permanently or temporarily, the Minister may, in effect, over-rule his medical advisers' careful assessment of the disability by a stroke of the pen.

Apologists for this situation argue that we can surely depend on it that only the grossest of misconduct having led to a pensioner's imprisonment would induce any Minister of Pensions to impose so drastic a penalty.

It might, therefore, be useful to examine factors not unlikely to influence a Ministerial definition of gross misconduct.

The writer of the article printed below, representing the Bolton and District Branch at the 16th annual conference of the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association moved a resolution: "That Clause 14 of the Instructions to Pensioners in Pension Order Books should be deleted", and it was passed by an overwhelming majority.

Clause 14 reads as follows:

"IMPRISONMENT.—If a pensioner 'is imprisoned following conviction of an offence, his pension is liable to forfeiture but, on his release, it 'may be restored in whole or in part at the discretion of the Minister of Pensions. This book 'should be returned to Pension Issue Office as soon as an imprisonment commences, with a 'note giving the reason for its 'return.' [Editors.]

Notoriously, the Ministry of Pensions relies, as far as is possible, upon the arbitrary measurement of the degree of disability by the length of any limb stump remaining. Inches literally distinguish definitely between what is regarded as, for instance, a total incapacity requiring that constant attendance upon a pensioner for which the Ministry is prepared to accept financial responsibility, and that little less which decides the Ministry that its purse strings shall be tightened.

It is not inconceivable, therefore, that the same government department may be inclined to measure misconduct simply by the length of any term of imprisonment to which a pensioner has been sentenced.

Certainly no more convenient measure to suit the bureaucratic ideal could be imagined than one reflecting in due course every anomaly and anachronism of the judiciary.

However (fantastically or otherwise) the heinousness of any offence shall be adjudged in the determination of the Ministry's standard of sanctions is beside

the point—which is that the employment of such sanctions is an indefensible impertinence violating an important principle of public policy. It is sometimes contended that a democracy cannot legislate for minorities; but this is an example of minority affecting legislation with a vengeance, and one which forms an unhealthy precedent as compensation generally passes from the jurisdiction of the courts to administration by government departments.

READERS OPINIONS

What evidence exists that this discrimination against recipients of pensions from public funds serves any useful purpose? Only public ignorance of the potency of this obnoxious provision excuses its survival.

SAM WALSH.

Religion: Opium for the Escapist

I READ F. A. Ridley's contribution with great interest, and while I agree personally with much of what he says, especially with that portion of the article that makes the Church the moral scapegoat of the State, I feel I must protest against his too sweeping condemnation of religion. For to very many church members (of all denominations) their faith is their only consolation. A large proportion of these are aged and elderly, and must we deprive them of their only comfort in this life? And as for the younger members, I think one should be tolerant of their religious beliefs insofar as they do not transgress the freedom of others.

While it is true of the churches to-day that they worship the God of the State or Nation, may it not be possible that this may be superseded some day by the God of Humanity (as Mazzini has elaborated it in the *Duties of Man*)? I

AS a rejoinder to T. Hart's views on my recent letter, and at the risk of becoming tedious, I will content myself mainly with commenting in the alleged worship of images by Christians. The worship of images is, of course, a form of idolatry, and is condemned by the Christian religion. To confuse the veneration of objects of piety with their worship is common enough with non-Christians, but such a misconception of the relation between man and created things has no place in the life of the Christian who understands the significance of idolatry, to practice which would imperil his salvation. Moreover, his belief in a sacramental religion transforms his entire relation to the material universe about him, and is a sufficient guarantee against the idolatry which your correspondent complains about. The Christian is aware that, however insistent the pressure of emotional needs can be, idolatry is not necessarily confined to external things but may manifest itself in the secret places of his innermost being. Max Stirner, anarchist and destroyer of idols, a century ago, ruthlessly and with terrible logic, revealed that the very atheism of his revolutionary contemporaries was a snare and a delusion, as the abstract concept of Man (with a capital M) had taken the place of the God of Mediaeval Christianity and was being idolatrously worshipped. "Our atheists are pious people," was his devastating comment. I do not, of course, overlook the fact that Stirner's philosophy found no place for the Christian God, but it is with the nihilism of popular unbelief masquerading as enlightened opinion that I am at the moment concerned. As regards T. Hart's distinction between religion and ethics this seems to me, in the context of the points which he raises, to an artificial one, and one, moreover, that

can see nothing in this theology which is incompatible with the practice of Anarchism.

Finally, I think a right education must come first, and then the downfall of organised Religion must necessarily follow sooner or later.

Lincoln.

W. ARTHUR LEMIN.

it not maintained in either Eric Thacker's article or the book by Herbert Read he mentions.

While disagreeing with F. A. Ridley's assertion of the primacy of the purely scientific view of the universe in his recent thought-provoking survey of the origin of religion and the subsequent evolution of the idea of God there is, I think, some truth in his estimation of the rôle of Christianity (or, as I would prefer it, bourgeois Christianity in its specifically authoritarian aspects in the political and social sphere) as a moral agency acting on behalf of totalitarian State power, whose corrupt servant it increasingly tends to become. Such a departure from New Testament truth is, according to Berdyayev, evidence of the increasing domination over the minds of Christians of the precepts of legalistic ethics, an inevitable consequence of which is to regard religion primarily as a system of government rather than a manifestation in the world of the ethics of love and freedom. Many Christians will be found to agree with F. A. Ridley that the new religion of the State (or the modern religion of humanitarianism if you will) with its millions of devotees debauched by propaganda and the enervating influence of mass, stereotyped entertainment, requires for its complete ascendancy the operations of "a new Inquisition far more terrible than the old. They will, however repeat the atheism which is at the root and centre of his thought. May there not be some connection between the appearance of the absolute State in its twentieth-century, totalitarian garb, and the inherent optimism of the purely scientific view of the universe based upon the assumption that in the course of history the creation of what Reinhold Niebuhr has called "ever wider and more inclusive communities" must occur almost as a matter of course, as it were, being a consequence of evolutionary necessity? If so, further reflection on the awful possibilities latent in the discovery of atomic power alone may cause your contributor to think out his position afresh. In any case, a more sober estimate of the limitations and possibilities for good or evil of human nature seems to be called for.

Leeds.

P. M. M. HUGGON.

MORE ACCOMMODATION FOR H.M. GUESTS

Britain is to have six more prisons to ease the present over-crowded state of the gaols.

Mr. Chuter Ede, the Home Secretary, said in the Commons yesterday that an additional prison would be opened in August [at Portsmouth] and that negotiations were in progress to acquire premises for five others.

Evening Standard, 9/7/48.

239 AND STILL GOING STRONG

Said to have replied: "Yes, my darling," when a police officer charged her with being drunk, 62-year-old Emily Crawley was fined 1s. at Luton yesterday. It was her 239th conviction.

Sunday Express, 11/7/48.

THE GESTAPO MENTALITY

A fifteen-year-old boy who said he had been "beaten up" by his employers after they had accused him of theft was awarded £300 damages with costs at Manchester yesterday.

The boy is James Cornelius Sampson, who lives with his great-uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Bradley, at Thomas Street, Blackpool.

Mr. Bradley was given judgment for £100, with costs, because the employers unlawfully entered and searched his house.

News Chronicle, 8/7/48.

PATIENT DIED, BUT LAW UPHELD

Dr. Arthur Lionel Punch, of Harley Street, who pleaded guilty at Highgate 10-day to speeding at 45-47 m.p.h. in High Road, North Finchley, said he was on his way to an urgent case.

The police-constable kept him for ten minutes, and his patient died two minutes before he arrived.

Fining him £1 without endorsement of his licence, the chairman said the constable was doing his duty.

"I am afraid that I should do the same again under similar circumstances," said the doctor.

Evening Standard, 5/7/48.

TIP FOR LORD JUSTICE GODDARD AND FRIENDS

A "jail on wheels", complete with an electric chair, is part of a mobile crime-prevention unit now touring Ohio to show children how police track criminals, and what happens to offenders when they are caught.

N.Y. Herald Tribune, 14/7/48.

Through the Press

AMERICAN OVERSTATEMENT

Life magazine prints a story about Gene Autry, Hollywood's singing cowboy. "In 1939," says Life, "when Autry made his first and only trip abroad, touring Ireland and Great Britain, he staggered local showmen by drawing an audience of 750,000 shrieking fans in Dublin."

1936 census figures show the population of the whole county borough of Dublin as 468,000. In 1943 the census was 495,074.

Evening Standard, 2/7/48.

FLAG OF OPPRESSION?

As the Union Jack which has been hauled down in Fort William, Calcutta, last year, when India was created a Dominion, was being hoisted in the Burgh of Fort William (Inverness-shire) yesterday, Miss Wendy Wood, the Scottish Nationalist, rushed from among the spectators and tried to snatch the flag.

Miss Wendy Wood later said: "The people of India had the 'smeddun' (courage) to force that flag to surrender when they won freedom from English rule. It's an insult to offer that flag to Fort William, Scotland, as if the people of the Highlands have less courage than the coolies of India. It is the flag of the Butcher of Culloden."

Sunday Dispatch, 4/7/48.

AN OLD CHINESE CUSTOM

A Chinese wife who was granted a decree nisi by Judge Earengay in the Divorce Court to-day, took the oath in the Chinese fashion by kneeling in the witness-box and breaking a saucer on the ledge.

The usher, administering the oath, then said: "You shall tell the truth and the whole truth. As the saucer is cracked, if you do not tell the truth your soul will be cracked like the saucer."

Evening Standard, 5/7/48.

RED CAPS NOT POPULAR!

Police were called to disperse a crowd of more than 1,000 in Coventry Street, Piccadilly, last night.

The crowd gathered when a man, being questioned by a military policeman, pushed him aside and ran away.

Later a woman was arrested for being drunk and disorderly and a man for obstructing the police.

Evening Standard, 2/7/48.

REVOLUTIONARY PROPOSAL

You report that British Railways have been prosecuted and fined £5 at Westbury (Wilts) for having a faulty weighbridge.

Is not this nonsense? The State owns British Railways. The State prosecutes. Who suffers except you and me, who must pay the legal expenses and for the wastage of man-power?

I suggest that as more and more British ventures become the property of the State it might be sensible to devise some other method of compelling the officials to keep to the law. Should not some official be made personally responsible?

Letter in News Chronicle, 9/7/48.

What about abolishing fares as well and save more man-power hours issuing, punching, inspecting, collecting and sorting tickets?

THAT'S WHAT WE SAY

Field-Marshal Lord Wavell urged new graduates at Aberdeen University to-day not to become "a mere number on an identity paper and hole punched in an index card".

Lord Wavell, who was presiding as Chancellor, said that British individuality was to-day threatened by the massed phalanxes of bureaucrats, the seas of ink, the great icebergs of paper, the hailstorms of commandments and prohibitions that flowed from their never-ceasing pens, type-writers, telephones and printing presses.

How was a man to maintain his individuality against such an avalanche? And yet the amazing thing was that the British still manage to do so.

Evening Standard, 7/7/48.

Why not abolish identity cards for a start?

GUNS STOPPED FOR FLOCK TO HEAR PARSON ON "LOVE AND PEACE"

Villages on the Imber perimeter in Wiltshire will hear no firing during their Sunday morning church services. Lord Long, who has protested about the firing on behalf of the villages, has now been told by Lord Pakenham that generally there would be no firing on Sundays between 10.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m.

Lord Pakenham said that no guarantee could be given that firing would never take place during these hours, but as far as possible it would be avoided.

Manchester Guardian, 8/7/48.

TWO ATTITUDES

A silent police campaign on the beaches of Rome for decorum and chastity in women's bathing suits brought vigorous protests from all quarters.

Loudest were merchants of nylon two-piece "Eve's slip" women's bathing suits, which rival anything seen in Deauville or Biarritz. Their sales dropped 70 per cent. the last three days as women rushed back into their twenty-five-year-old swimming models.

Sophisticated Roman beauties in abbreviated "slips", hauled off the Ostia beach by police, also complained bitterly.

N.Y. Herald Tribune, 13/7/48.

I am a Scandinavian married to a British airman and I read, with some interest, the article on Miss Eleanor Wilkinson. She mentions, probably with the blood mantling her bronzed cheeks, that the swimmers, male or female, who were in the fiord with her had donned no swim suits.

It is rare to find any attention paid to what is a widely practised habit in Norway and Sweden. One sunbathes in a suit of sorts, but one swims, as one should swim, without garment of any sort whilst a girl is lissom and pretty.

In the land of the midnight sun the water is cold and invigorating to a degree and, resting in a clammy, near icy garment, is not too good for one's health.

I remember my mother telling me a graceful act by a British princess who was staying with our Queen and bathed from the royal pavilion. When she found that the girls were not wearing swim suits, she slipped off her own and made no bones at all about getting in her swim as we all did.—GRETA GRIFFITHS, The Chalet, Farnborough, Hants.

Letter to Leader, 10/7/48.

Is it difficult to decide which of the two attitudes is the healthier?

A MOTHER SHAMES THE LAW

The plea that it was "unnatural to expect a mother to denounce her deserter son, as such an act, although strictly a public duty, would conflict with that elemental and primitive force, a mother's love for her child," was made in a case at Bridgend, Glamorgan.

It figured in the defence of 68-year-old Mrs. Sarah Ellen McTiffin, a widow, of West Winds Estate, Porthcawl. She was fined £5 on the charge of assisting to conceal her son, Pte. Cyril Vincent McTiffin, knowing him to be a deserter from the R.A.S.C.

News of the World, 4/7/48.

VANDALS IN OXFORD

The authorities at Oxford University are considering banning all parties and drinks in college for one or two terms to stop an outbreak of vandalism.

A few days ago a priceless lectern in one college chapel was overturned and damaged. An attempt had been made to repair it with chewing gum, and the chapel floor was strewn with cigarette ends.

Last term oak panelling in the dining hall at Oriel College was damaged—apparently by someone trying to reach the Black Prince's sword, which hangs over the high table.

News Chronicle, 1/6/48.

FLOWER LOVERS IN LONDON

A garden now begins to bloom on a bombed site at the corner of Chester Square and Elizabeth Street, Belgravia.

The garden does not belong to Miss Streatfeild. She cannot even see it from the windows of her flat further down Elizabeth Street. But Miss Streatfeild argues that a bombed scar is a depressing sight and that any citizen who enjoys gardening should seize the chance of beautifying it.

So she applied to Westminster City Council for permission to create a garden in what used to be cellars of a public house. Permission was given.

Miss Streatfeild was warned that at any time the garden might have to be sacrificed to the builders. But she was undaunted.

She has had her reward. To-day I saw petunias, sweet peas and nasturtiums coming into bloom. Presently there will be snapdragons, stocks and chrysanthemums.

The gate to the garden is never locked. "But nobody throws rubbish there any more," says Miss Streatfeild. "And nobody tries to steal the plants."

—Londoner's Diary,

Evening Standard, 24/5/48.

What a lesson for the Oxford gentlemen is contained in the last paragraph!

DEMOCRACY AT ETON

The decision to make "toppers" voluntary at Eton recalls Lord Rosebery's dictum about the extent to which the state of his hat could be trusted to indicate a boy's character. Here is his description of his first sight of Lord Randolph Churchill as an Eton boy. "I first saw Randolph Churchill at Eton—a small boy in an extremely disreputable hat, and the hat bore at Eton in those days almost as notable a sign of condition as amongst the Spanish nobility. Moreover, his appearance was reckless—his companions seemed much the same; he was in a word, but a pregnant word at Eton, a scug."

Manchester Guardian, 6/7/48.

HANGING IS TO STAY

LORDS REJECT GOVT. COMPROMISE

WHEN in April last, the House of Commons by 245 votes to 222 voted in favour of suspending the death penalty for murder for a period of five years, we expressed our opinion in these columns (*Freedom* 1/5/48) that the Government, for political reasons, would resist the combined attack of the Press and the House of Lords to reverse the Commons' decision. We must now admit that we overestimated the Government's courage and political insight, for the amendment to Clause I of the Criminal Justice Bill which was debated ten days ago and which was carried by a 307-208 majority was a confused attempt to steer a middle course and satisfy everyone by offering each side a sop for their consciences.

What then has the Government achieved by this compromise? If one reads *Hansard* on the debate, one realises that they have satisfied no-one and have left themselves open to further political broadsides from their opponents.

THE April amendment proposing that the death penalty be suspended for 5 years, was itself a compromise by the abolitionists in order to secure the necessary majority in the House. But at least there was something radical about it, though the arguments put forward by most of its supporters were opportunistic. Sidney Silverman who moved the amendment did so not on the grounds that judicial murder was immoral but because he maintained that hanging was not a deterrent. If he believed it were then he would be opposed to its abolition. We do not know whether he genuinely holds this view or whether he felt it expedient to do so in the debate. Whichever is the reason, it explains how it was possible for Mr. Silverman to give the Government amendment his support last week on the grounds that if he were only left with the "choice of voting for more hangings or less hangings" he would vote for less hangings. And presumably, for the reformist this does represent one step towards his goal!

THE Attorney-General in opening the debate for the Government, revealed his own embarrassment in having to speak for the amendment. His speech contained a number of important admissions, one of which was that:

"I do not myself recall a single capital case in which I was concerned in which I would have been prepared to say that the moral guilt of the condemned man was manifestly greater than that which had existed in many other cases in which the capital penalty was not available at all. Nor do I recall a single case in which I would have felt that the whole process—the sensational trial, the solemnity of the sentence, the black cap, the three weeks or more of waiting, with morbid excitement on the one hand and bitter anguish and anxiety on the other, and then the final thing, the hanging of some person who, after all, was some mother's son—had really made any contribution to the fundamental dignity of man. And is that not, after all, what we ought to try to set out to achieve in this matter?"

CHURCHILL, who followed, used the occasion to make a political speech, as was to be expected. "Fortunately, in this country we still have a Second Chamber . . ." "The Second Chamber did their duty . . ." and he was able to point out that after all the Lords only accepted the Home Secretary's considered opinion that now was the wrong moment, etc. He went on to point out that the Lords were expressing "the views and the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the nation." Churchill then fell into the trap by stating that there was little to choose between the death penalty and life imprisonment so far as suffering was concerned, whilst it may be quite true, nevertheless weakens his argument and that of the majority of the Judges, in favour of retaining hanging as a deterrent.

But in this connection the hypocrisy of the Tories was clearly revealed when Churchill refused on four occasions to give a straight answer to Silverman's question as to whether he (Churchill) would wish to retain hanging if he were satisfied that the death penalty could be abolished without increasing the number of murders. Yet when it came to voting on Mr. Greenwood's amendment which proposed that the death penalty should be suspended for a period of five years at some future date to be left to the Home Secretary to decide, Mr. Churchill and his fellow Tories voted in favour for no other reason than that the Government were opposed to this amendment!

ANOTHER Tory manoeuvre was to attempt to dissuade the abolitionists with moral arguments from voting for the Government. Quintin Hogg attacked the Attorney General, who admitted that he was in fact an abolitionist, for

"If he were a respectable abolitionist, I would not mind it; I would know where I stood; but what cannot be justified in any circumstances whatever, in my submission, is an attempt to compromise on any principle whatever between those who think that capital punishment ought to be abolished altogether and those who want to apply it rationally as a deterrent, because the only result of that is to get capital punishment imposed upon people in such circumstances that it cannot conceivably be a rational deterrent. It thereupon becomes retribution and nothing else."

Mr. Hogg's arguments are good, but as a politician himself is he in a position to preach morality to his political opponents?

AND so hanging remains. The abolitionists console themselves that it exists for fewer crimes, and Mr. Churchill and his friends feel satisfied with their day's work, for they have not only obtained a victory, but they have also made political capital out of the whole business. What is more, the matter is not closed, for the Lords will now have to discuss the amended clause, and the Bishops and the Judges are bound to be in their places when the sanctity of the hangman's rope is again in question. Their Christian outlook is certain to tip the scales in favour of "more hangings rather than less hangings". V.R.



What's Happening in the Unions?

(Continued from page 3)

iota what name the political set-up called government has, it is mostly the same; it appreciates a major portion of the wealth produced by the workers, calls it national revenue, and spends it in a way best calculated to serve the interests of a small class. So that when we see trade union officials retire to become members of industrial boards with salaries of upwards of £8,500 a year, or become a governor of some small semi-colonial state, living in a palace just like a crowned monarch, we cannot be blamed for having ideas as to why they get such jobs.

In these circumstances of trade union disunity and political world chaos, there are very many workers who appreciate the need for a conception of things which can give a reliable hope of improvement. But such a changed conception can only come if they are prepared to make the necessary effort to attain it. And when progressively-minded workers see the way clear to progress, surely it becomes a socially determined responsibility to convince their fellow-workers of the need for conditions of peace and improved methods in the long fight for conditions of peace and plenty. For we cannot forget that the ordinary man and woman have been so long conditioned by the social system to expect salvation from "leaders" and "great men", and must be helped to grasp the fact that "only the working-class can save the working-class".

Is the I.W.W. the Way to Real Unionism?

A small British section of the Industrial Workers of the World is trying to find a way to genuine industrial unionism in accordance with the principles first formulated in 1905 and later for purposes of improved explicitness slightly amended in 1912. These principles are gathered together in a Preamble, which would appear to be comprehensive, courageous, concise, and such a straight-forward description of the way the workers should go to realise their natural aspirations of freedom from wage-slavery and from state domination, that they warrant the immediate active support of all those workers who already acknowledge the reactionary character of trade unionism.

The Preamble says: The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars." How many times have we seen the truth of this reflected in workers' efforts to improve wages in the post-war period? Why should workers

continue to see all their legitimate union efforts completely frustrated by obsolete structure and a wrong belief that leaders are persons who have unjustified power and whose primary philosophy is political power.

Therefore, the I.W.W. proposes a form of organisation as an alternative to the out-moded trade-unions, but in its relations with other unions is animated at all times by the basic idea of solidarity among workers in industrial struggles. If the workers as members of a trade union are trying to use unionism for its fundamental purposes of bettering wages and conditions of labour, then the I.W.W. would do its utmost to support. But as the Preamble states:—"The army of production must be organised, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown," therefore the I.W.W. is not an appendage of the trade unions but a revolutionary alternative with the concept of workers organising industrially to get the best working conditions out of industry at present, and ultimately to use that industrial organisation so that workers stop producing for capitalists of any kind and start producing for themselves under the system of workers' control of industry.

The political wrangling and intriguing which passes for unionism to-day would have no place in a union such as the I.W.W., for anything which tends to sacrifice workers' solidarity for extraneous ends has nothing to do with real unionism, and would offend against the basic principles.

Future for the I.W.W.

If the I.W.W. would develop in Britain as the situation demands, it can do so by boldly urging the workers to examine its structure and principles and to recognise its alternative superiority over the trade unions. Soon the trade unions will forfeit their greatest allurements to many workers—the sick and accident benefits—under the Social Insurance Scheme; this event should serve to concentrate more attention on the questions that unions should concern themselves with. Here is an opportunity for the I.W.W. in Britain to explain its policy to the workers, and convince the greatest number that the best practical way to avoid the shambles of a third world war, to get more of the things they produce, to prepare the ground for a better order of society, is to learn to organise and co-operate with their fellow-workers; to show solidarity with workers everywhere; and become equipped to manage without capitalists and politicians, by control of the industries they work and the wealth they produce.

C. W. ROOKE.

[While we are in agreement with most of what our contributor says, his concluding remarks on the I.W.W. are not quite ours. We incline to agree with the remarks made by our contributor on "Anarcho-Syndicalism and Direct Action" in the last issue, on the inadvisability of "paper unions" and our disagreement with the I.W.W. in America on the issue of claiming to be an industrial union without the actual backing for it. This, of course, applies

even more so to the I.W.W. in Britain, which is a propagandist group, although its name and foundation would tend to give the average worker the idea that it was of itself an industrial union rather than a group of people supporting the idea but belonging to various trades.

On the question as to whether such an organisation could be formed, we concur with the articles referred to, which stated in the last issue that the revolutionary union ought to be a majority industrial organisation or admittedly merely a propaganda movement, since the aim is not control by the most militant section of the workers but control by all the workers; i.e., not control by an industrial union but by workers' council on the job, which we consider the anarcho-syndicalist version of industrial unionism and which the final article of the series on Anarcho-Syndicalism deals with more fully.]

(Continued from page 1)

emption as a C.O., had he not chosen to adopt an absolutist stand against conscription."

But he is much more than simply a pacifist. The *Socialist Leader* described him as an anarchist, and there is every indication to show that his action was as much a protest against the right of the State to conscript him as it was an expression of his anti-militarist views. His father is quoted in *Reynolds News* 13/6/48 as saying, "The boy refused to accept the recognised methods for securing exemption. He would rather let authority take its course. He doesn't mind doing things voluntarily, but will not be ordered about."

What an example this 18-year-old schoolboy has set to the millions of men and women who tremble before the authority of the State. Peter Green has shown that the strength of the State is proportional to the weakness of the people or, in more exalted language, "I know he would not be a wolf,

But that he sees the Romans are but sheep;

He were no lion, were not Romans hinds."

R.

[For the benefit of those readers who would like to express their solidarity with Peter Green, his address is: Wormwood Scrubs Prison, London, W.12.—Eds.]

FREEDOM
Anarchist Fortnightly
Price 3d.

Postal Subscription Rates

6 months 4/6 (U.S.A. \$1).

12 months 8/6 (U.S.A. \$2).

Special Subscription Rates for 2 copies

6 months 7/6 (\$1.50).

12 months 15/- (\$3).

Cheques, P.O.'s and Money Orders should be made out to FREEDOM PRESS, crossed a/c Payee, and addressed to the publishers.

FREEDOM PRESS
27 Red Lion Street
London, W.C.1 England
Tel.: Chancery 8364.

Meetings and Announcements

BIRMINGHAM

Public Meeting in the
BULL RING

Sunday, August 1st at 7 p.m.

Speaker: Mat Kavanagh

All enquiries to S. E. Parker, 72, Coldbath
Road, Billesley, Birmingham 14.

BRISTOL

A Public Meeting will be held at the
Kingsley Hall, Old Market Street, on
AUGUST 3rd Tom Carlile
"Workers' Councils"

NORTH EAST LONDON

JULY 27th Alan Smith
"The Prospect Before Us"
Comrades interested should ring WAN 2396

KINGSTON, PUTNEY, HAMMERSMITH

Discussion group in above area meets
alternate Thursdays, 7.30 p.m. at Doric
House, Kingston Vale. (85 and 72 buses
to Robin Hood Gate stop 100 yards up
Kingston Vale on right side.) Next meeting,
Thursday, August 5th. Variety of subjects
Bring your friends.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

Public Meetings at

MAXWELL STREET

are held every Sunday evening.

Speakers:

John Gaffney, Frank Leech, Eddie Shaw.

1948 SUMMER SCHOOL

Arrangements made for this year's
Summer School consist of a week-
end, August 21st & 22nd, in Glasgow,
with public meetings, etc., followed by
one week's stay on the Isle of Arran
(Firth of Clyde).

Comrades can take part in either or
both of these features. Boarding rates
are reasonable, but accommodation is
limited, and application should be
made immediately to the following:—

GLASGOW: JOHN GAFFNEY,
18 Finnieston St., Glasgow.

ARRAN: RITA MILTON,
79 Platt's Lane, London, N.W.3

(Comrades who have already booked
up need not apply again)

Press Fund

July 2nd to 17th:

Great Yarmouth: L.F.B. 2/-; London:
G.G. 2/6; Sidmouth: J.S. 2/6; New York:
S.H.P. 19/3; Elmhurst, L.I.: N.S. 5/-; Anon
2/6; London: A.M. 6/-; Smethwick: A.W.
2/-; London: D.S. 1/-; St. Annes on Sea:
W.B. 1/6; Liverpool: L.G. 1/6.

Previously acknowledged £2 5 9

1948 TOTAL TO DATE £211 10 9

1948 TOTAL TO DATE £213 16 6