

Freedom

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Threepence

CHINA

Despair, Reform or Revolution?

FROM time to time events in the Chinese civil war bring China into the newspapers of the West. But in betweenwhiles no one thinks of the largest country in the world, with its population numbering a fifth of the world population, which has been sunk in a seemingly endless war since 1927. It is well to reflect on this interminable struggle while evaluating the present "crisis in China", for it is doubtful if the Chinese peasant any longer thinks in terms of "decisive phases in the struggle", "critical moments in the campaign" and all the other catchwords of Western observers for whom the agrarian millions in China hardly exist.

Nevertheless, it is inevitable that the virtual loss of North China to the Communists should seem an event of importance to those observers outside China who regard the struggle—correctly enough—as lying between the Soviet Union and the United States. For the situation of the Nationalist forces now seems fairly desperate, and American newspapers are already talking about "the loss of China" and discussing desperate measures for the recovery of the Nanking government, or alternatively seeking to diminish the importance of the blow.

The Balance of Power

The attitude of the British Government is difficult to assess, but it may be inferred from certain important articles in the *Times*, whose general trend is to try and maintain that Chinese Communism is somehow different from the genuine Moscow article, and is not seriously to be feared. There is indeed an attempt to whitewash the Communists at the expense of the Nationalists, attention being drawn to their provision of "efficient Government", their agrarian reform and so on, by contrast to the inefficiency, corruption and general contemptible nature of "the carpet-baggers of Nanking."

This point of view is castigated by the more realistic *Economist*, indeed the ease with which it is demolished makes it perfectly clear that the *Times'* line on China represents less the government's beliefs than its probable policy. One is perhaps justified in concluding that the British are seeking once again to play their old rôle of rejoicing third holding the balance of power. Having no direct concern in the struggle in China itself, they no doubt hope that the two other great powers in the world will exhaust and weaken themselves on the battlefields of China, and hence relatively increase the power of Britain.

Chiang Kai-shek's Star Wanes

In America there are two schools of thought; those who think the checking of Russian expansion in China is more important than checking Russian expansion in Europe, and those who think the reverse. It looks as if the latter are in the ascendant at the moment, probably as a result of Marshall's damning of the Nanking regime eighteen months ago. In any case, the incompetence of the Nationalist regime is such that American aid intended to equip the armies more efficiently gets side-tracked into the deep pockets of the functionaries. Those who are most concerned about American interests in China recognise that the first condition of the increase in American aid is a radical reform in the administration and in the agrarian field. The *Economist* even goes so far as to hope that "Upheavals in the Nanking Government may well come, of themselves, as a result of the military defeats of recent months." But one may infer that such a process would not be willingly permitted to go too far, and although Chiang Kai-shek's star has undoubtedly declined, he is still praised in American editorials, his counter-revolutionary prowess in the past being no doubt still remembered.

Unpopular Opinions

The position of anarchists towards the protagonists in China was stated seven or eight years ago, at a time when Chiang Kai-shek was being lauded to the skies and participated in the councils of Roosevelt and Churchill. Nothing can obliterate the bloody record of the Generalissimo in the years after the revolution of 1927 which makes him rank as a butcher of revolutionists and working-class militants second only to Stalin. Nor have anarchists ever been taken in by the "reforms" of the Communists which left the system of landlordism substantially untouched and dismantled the peasant councils set up at the revolution.

Parallels With Spain

The present position in China has many parallels with that of Spain after the counter-revolution had destroyed the

revolutionary resistance to Franco. The workers on both sides are in the grip of rulers whose aims are dictatorial and reactionary, and for them there is little to choose between the protagonists. They must be deadly weary of a war which has gone on for almost a lifetime with the Japanese invasion as a few years incident. Deadly weary of chronic famine conditions which make army rations a sufficient incentive to recruit the fighters on both sides. Twenty hopeless years behind them and a hopeless prospect in front.

A New Social Revolution

Such a situation augurs poorly for the only immediate prospect which offers hope for the future, a new social revolution. Yet, if the incompetence and internal divisions of the Nationalist regime of Chiang were to lead to the seizing of initiative by the workers and peasants, the whole struggle in China would take on a new complexion. Throwing off the fetters of landlordism and debt and the depredations of the armies, the social revolution would offer a far more serious threat to the Communist regime in North China than ever the Nationalists have done. And not by force of arms but by example and the well-known tendency of revolutions to spread and overwhelm the Communist dictatorship from below.

It may be Utopian to hope for such a response from exhausted men and women, but all the world's revolutions have seemed visionary and improbable a few weeks before their outbreaks, and at all events such a prospect would have far more to offer than the indefinite battleground of the great powers, with its famines and slaughters and endless columns of refugees, which is the pattern of life for the Chinese people yesterday and to-day.

ANARCHIST.

Mechanisation

A RECENT strike in the docks in London has raised issues of very considerable importance, and on the whole only one side of the argument has been presented by the Press. It was a strike of 400 men who came out in support of 12 dockers in danger of becoming "redundant" owing to the introduction of a mechanical loader.

Like a luddite whisper from the past, this strike reminds us of issues facing the working-class which have not been settled in a hundred and thirty years—and will not be while capitalism lasts.

In 1811, workers in the textile industries of the North of England became alarmed at the introduction of machinery into their factories, and incensed at the unemployment it caused. A widespread movement of machine-wrecking began in which quite large sorties against mills which had installed the new automatic machines were carried out, with savagery and bloodshed on both sides.

To-day, in our highly mechanised world, it is almost impossible to imagine industry without machinery. In Lancashire mills to-day, one girl operative may be responsible for a dozen high-speed machines each automatically doing the work which Ned Ludd and his contemporaries laboriously carried out by hand many times more slowly. And yet even now a machine can be introduced which makes such an impact on the habits of working of a number of workers that they take action which once again brings into the limelight the questions: "Who benefits by mechanisation?" and "Who suffers?"

Such a machine is the mechanical loader—a power-driven mobile truck with a lift fitted to the front with a movable platform on which can be loaded a considerable weight of goods which can be transported to a loading bay, warehouse or lorry, and stacked by the machine, doing the work of 12 men with only one operator. Fittings to the machine enable it to be used as a crane or mechanical digger

as well as stacker, loader or carrier. It is obviously a grand labour-saving device.

And that's just the trouble. For the dockers do not want labour-saving devices; they remember only too well the times when unemployment saved the labour of many thousands of them—and reduced them to idle penury. And they know perfectly well that the present shortage of labour is not going to last for ever—that as soon as we are "on our feet again" (according to Stafford Cripps by 1951), the old balance of workers over jobs is going to return. And London's dockers do not see why they should accelerate the process.

In the name of the sacred Export Drive the aim of the Government is to reduce costs so that we can compete in the world's markets. This they are doing by freezing wages while at the same time increasing production. Putting it simply: getting more for the same money. By increased mechanisation they will be getting more for less money—much less in this case. And what happens to the "redundant" workers is not the concern of our captains of industry. The argument they put forward is that at present there are plenty of other jobs for workers displaced from the job of their choosing. If you are sacked from the docks because you are no longer needed there, there is a job waiting for you in mining or steel.

This attitude is one which is so insensitive to the nature of a man's relationship to his work that it shows clearly the great gulf which exists between the producers and the managers. Among the managers and the politicians this casualness to work is quite usual, of course. A man who is Postmaster-General this week may be President of the Board of Trade next, and Foreign Secretary the week after. But among real workers this butterfly genius is neither required nor appreciated. A man who has chosen to follow a particular trade or occupation just does not want to be kicked out of it and cheerfully told there are plenty of other occupations he can now take up.

It is not only a matter of interest or satisfaction in the work, either. A docker, for instance, develops a skill in working which earns him good money, but on being transferred to another job he becomes a beginner—and earns a beginner's money, and the thought that he is playing his part in national recovery is no compensation.

And yet—are we then to resist the introduction of machinery which eases our burden of labour? Are we to reject the leisure machines would earn for us? The answer is obviously "No!" And so we have a dilemma which appears insoluble—until we look at it from a revolutionary viewpoint and ask ourselves whether perhaps the overall system in which the machinery is being introduced is what is wrong?

As soon as we do that we see the thing in new perspectives. If we envisage a society in which money and the wages system have been abolished and in which economy has been freed from the restrictions money and capitalism in general inflict upon it, we see that the labour-saving machine becomes, not a threat to our standard of living, but a promise of a richer life. If the sole effect of the introduction of such a machine as this loader were to reduce the hours of work necessary for each worker to do, it could only be welcomed with open arms.

In a free society production would be based on the needs of the people. In their capacity as consumers, their needs would be known through the communes; in their capacity as producers the syndicates of industry would co-ordinate production to those needs, and profits, wages and costs would not pre-determine standards of living.

And man's ingenuity could be used to the full in the development of equipment to lighten labour so that in leisure the full potentialities of every human being would not be restricted or crushed.

THE RECENT FRENCH STRIKES

IF we needed any further proof to demonstrate the incoherence of working class action and to underline the utilisation by politicians and imperialists of proletarian aspirations, the strike of the miners which lasted for six weeks would provide it.

Unleashed at a moment when the negotiations between the East and the West had reached deadlock, while Marshall aid to the French economy was attaining a certain magnitude and was beginning to bear fruit, it appeared to the eyes of informed observers like an attempt willed, controlled and organised by the elements who, in France as elsewhere, act as Russian patriots and who to-day constitute the vanguard of the Russian army.

That opinion, confirmed by the daily chronicle of the strike, in no way excluded the strictly economic reasons which lay at the origin of the movement.

In fact, it is undeniable that the referendum organised by the Miners' Unions affiliated to the Communist CGT gave results clearly favourable to the strike. The underground workers, favoured to a certain extent—and a very relative extent—by the difficulties encountered by the administration in recruiting manpower, suspected in the decrees of the Socialist minister, Lacoste, a first attempt against the advantages they had gained.

What aims did these decrees pursue? First of all to fix the miner to his work, to augment and stabilise production. It was for this reason that social security was granted only to miners having at least six months of attendance at the pits. Secondly, to cut down the staff, and particularly the office staff. Finally, to struggle against absenteeism, that is to say, against days lost without an acceptable reason.

We should remember that these measures which tend to increase production and to stabilise manpower, had been extolled by the Communists when they were in the government. But in the present situation, placed in opposition, they considered that new regimentation a threat to their influence in the administrative machine. Numerous presidents or members of the administrative councils of the collieries are members of the party, whether they entered it to obtain their post or belonged to it already and were appointed for that reason.

The miners, whose advantages in goods (tobacco, fats, wine, coal) were in great part eliminated owing to the re-establishment of the free market, and whose wages diminished proportionally to the rise in the cost of living, thus voted the principle of a strike which, according to the union leaders, should not last more than 48 hours.

The magnitude of the battle, its length, the bloody incidents which have marked it, the scuffles between the forces of "order" and the strikers, the breakdown of the negotiations between the CGT Federation of Miners and the government, show that it was in fact a strike designed to shake the economic edifice and to prove to the American lenders that the Communist Party, although eliminated from power, maintained a considerable influence over the working masses.

The government manoeuvred with a certain skill, avoiding intervention of the troops during the first days of the strike and proceeding to the evacuation of the mines only after the decision taken by the Communist Trade Union machine to abandon the safety work. Psychologically, the Minister of the Interior, the Socialist Jules Moch, took the rôle of defender of the national heritage (the mines are

nationalised). The fear of the coming winter detached the population from the struggle. Finally various advantages (increase of wages, reclassification of questions of seniority, raising of dwelling bonuses), pushed the more lukewarm strikers into listening to the advice given by the other Union organisations, the Christian CFTC and the Reformist "Force Ouvrière" the partisans of a new referendum and inclined towards a return to work.

The "hardening" of the strike, the clashes between the *Gardes Mobiles* and strike pickets, if they gave the occasion for Communist propaganda to exploit the blood and set going rolling strikes in support, equally made the government of

(Continued on page 4)

Anarchists Active in Spain

However, it was our fortune recently to encounter a Spanish-speaking friend who knows his Spain without the intermediary of interpreters, and who has just returned from the Franco paradise. His impressions are not calculated to reassure those who incline to regard the Spanish Dictator as a promising recruit for the coming "Democracy".

For what he described was a veritable sink of corruption, misery, and ferocious repression. Graft is universal, the "Black Market" is everywhere and the glittering luxury of the ruling-caste flaunts itself unashamedly before the half-starved workers and peasants. Meanwhile, soldiers are everywhere, and the political police dog the footsteps of foreign visitors.

Meanwhile, a Spanish "Underground" manages to maintain itself, but its influence does not seem to be very great.

The old political leaders of the Republic-in-exile have been discredited by their long sojourn abroad and their party quarrels, the Communists are apparently negligible, and the armed risings of republican guerrillas meet with ferocious repression.

Only the anarchists still seem a powerful revolutionary force, and have retained an effective underground organisation. However, there is little open opposition to the dictatorship except for occasional anti-Franco slogans chalked on the walls. All is calm in Franco Spain—the calm before the storm?

The Socialist Leader, 13/11/48.

Book Reviews

MEREDITH BY SIEGFRIED SASSOON (Constable, 15/-).

GEORGE MEREDITH is one of the few middle-class authors of the 19th century who combined, with less desirable features, a certain quality of genuine radical feeling, and it was with justice that when he died in 1909 *Freedom* devoted a tribute to his continued advocacy of the emancipation of women from the disabilities and op-

A 19th Century Radical AND PAMPHLETEERS OF TWO CENTURIES

pressions which they endured during the Victorian era. Undoubtedly, he holds a high place among those who conducted and maintained that essential campaign. Siegfried Sassoon has just published a new life of Meredith, in which, writing with modesty and admiration, he once again traces the difficult life of this writer who, clinging to his own concepts of good writing in an age when the temptations to snatch at easy fame were even greater than they are to-day, was content to remain obscure until the sheer merit of his work made itself recognised when he was already an old man.

To-day, the complexity and richness of Meredith's writing seems somewhat out-

dated, but it might well be contended that we have gone too far in an austerity that leads to barrenness, and that there is something to be said for a writer who lets himself go in sheer love of the uninhibited use of fine and impressive language. His present biographer at least makes a good case for this aspect of Meredith's work.

Meredith, like many writers of his age, was a man of deep contradictions, and it is necessary to be emphatic about these. He was a great individualist, a great hedonist, and when struggles for liberation occurred his heart was in the right place. He supported the Italian struggle for liberation and befriended the enemies of Tsarist tyranny in Russia.

But, while having the good qualities of the nineteenth-century radical, he had also his weaknesses. He regarded uncritically the nationalism that accompanied so many revolutionary movements of the nineteenth century, and in his portraits of Mazzini, in *Vittoria*, and of Lassalle, in *The Tragic Comedians*, there emerges an unhealthy cult of the strong great man, which was all in keeping with his advocacy of conscription.

Mr. Sassoon does not attempt to gloss over these faults, and his book, although it is at times weak in its attempts at critical appreciation, is nevertheless a very honest and fair study of a writer who, for all his dangerous faults, perhaps even because of them, still deserves to be studied for his equally clear merits.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

of 1640-1660 than is generally supposed. There are also such notable examples of satirical writing as Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, one of the earliest attacks on the British tyranny in Ireland, and Arbuthnot's *The Art of Political Lying*, a pleasant squib against Machiavellian practices.

Naturally, such a collection cannot suit everybody's desires, and the present reviewer misses some passages from the excellent works of the important Leveller pamphleteers, such as Lilburn, Overton and Walwyn. Nor does it seem satisfactory to dismiss such an interesting work as Saxby's *Killing Noe Murder* by merely including its preface.

Nevertheless, all the material that is included has point and pungency, and the collection illustrates the lively writing and strength of argument of the pamphlet in its greatest period.

George Orwell contributes an able and controversial introduction, justly lamenting the decline in the quality of pamphleteering in our own age, and Reginald Reynolds provides introductory notes which illuminate the various extracts and give historical continuity to the selection.

L.T.C.

AN APPEAL TO THE YOUNG by Peter Kropotkin (Resistance Press, 6d.). Obtainable from Freedom Press.)

Kropotkin's *Appeal to the Young* has long been out of print, and this well-produced new edition is therefore particularly welcome. Written in 1880, during Kropotkin's period of active propaganda work in Switzerland and France, this pamphlet long enjoyed a wide popularity throughout the world, and was translated into many languages. A stirring call to the conscience of workers and intellectuals alike, it admirably suited the needs of the time, and some measure of the breadth of its appeal can be appreciated from the fact that the English translation, used with suitable emendations in the present edition, was made by the early English Social-democrat, Hyndman. But, though in the early days *An Appeal to the Young* was used by almost all sections of the Left in order to attract new adherents, its message remains essentially anarchist, and to-day, as David Thoreau Wick points out in his introduction, it is only the anarchists who are carrying on the revolutionary tradition which Kropotkin means when he talks of "socialism" in this pamphlet.

It still remains timely and inspiring, and the fact that the task it advocates does not now appear so easy of attainment as it did in Kropotkin's day does not mean that it is any less urgent.

G.W.

Controversy

on Comfort's BARBARISM & SEXUAL FREEDOM

I WOULD like to contribute the following comments on Dr. Comfort's pamphlet, "Barbarism and Sexual Freedom". This pamphlet, for all the valuable data it put forward and the intelligent conclusions reached on a range of subjects, is, I maintain, reactionary in its main tendency. Its main theme is, in fact, concerned with bringing up to date the traditional Puritan approach to sexual matters. I use the term "Puritan" in its historic sense. This bringing up to date of Puritan morals reforms their current application but does not alter their traditional quality.

The Catholic Church holds that marriage is ordained "for the procreation of children": Dr. Comfort re-defines the term "marriage", and in so doing builds up a case which maintains that all sexual intercourse ought to be "for the procreation of children" as a final intention.

When we come to consider the standards by which Dr. Comfort condemns the promiscuous fornicators whose intercourse is without intention of immediate or future procreation, we must admit that he has thrown away almost all the weapons of the old-fashioned Puritan moralist. He has abandoned the authority of God and of the property system, by which chastity has been upheld for so long; his strictures are put forward as those of a physician. Promiscuous copulation out of simple lust, he condemns as "a sign either of sexual maladaptation or of low intellect. Presumably many laymen who nowadays hold the Church's ban on sexual lust in contempt, will nevertheless feel guilty and uncomfortable when a man of science condemns them as either cranks or morons. Thus the physician may replace the priest in modern times!

DR. COMFORT raises a curious distinction between those who are qualified to enjoy freedom in sexual matters, and those who are not. He writes—

"Only individuals who are prepared to make it their business to work, to the best of their ability, for the production of that environment, are qualified to enjoy sexual freedom . . ."

The "environment" referred to is the family environment. By definition, therefore, those of us who are unconcerned with founding the family pattern which Dr. Comfort envisages, do not qualify for freedom in our sex lives. This is a somewhat curious viewpoint for an anarchist. In this connection I would urge most strongly that if we regard the sexual appetite as natural and healthy, then everyone of us qualifies for freedom in gratifying his lust, steadily or intermittently, conservatively or promiscuously, just as he wishes, without having to seek any sort of justification in eventual procreation. To put sexual relations in a special category because they may be anti-social in their results, is sheer muddled reasoning; eating, drinking, dancing, tennis-playing, theatre-going may also be anti-social in their results if indulged in in certain ways.

As a renovator of the Puritan tradition, Dr. Comfort does not do much more than revise conventional morals in the light of his scientific approach. It is when he advocates practical reformist measures to deal with the alleged problem of "adolescent promiscuity" that he treads on more dangerous ground. He quotes various authorities both for and against the contention that half-way stimulations such as mutual masturbation, "clothed intercourse", etc., are harmful to the present health and may lead to future mal-adjustment. He leaves an open verdict on the controversy. Then he goes on to advocate that adolescents should be instructed in such practices. If there is, in fact, a body of evidence indicating that these half-way stimulations of the genitals may lead to mal-adjustment and

neurosis, it seems to me to be utterly stupid and unnecessary to instruct adolescents in such practices—rather than countenancing straightforward copulation when the youngsters feel the need of it.

DR. COMFORT believes that adolescents should be deterred from actual coitus on the grounds that it is "bad form". He believes in, " . . . the inculcation of an early and unequivocal understanding of the responsibility and character of marriage." I think that he is entirely mistaken on this issue. An understanding of a thing cannot just be inculcated; inculcation necessarily implies the implanting of beliefs. I strongly oppose the idea that children should be subjected to an early inculcation with the particular beliefs which Dr. Comfort holds about marriage. I maintain that children and adolescents will benefit from less inculcation and more freedom to speculate and experiment. Given freedom in a practical sense, they will find out how to satisfy their sexual needs without troubling much over the "bad form" of copulation, or the techniques of "clothed intercourse", etc.

The question of unwanted pregnancies which Dr. Comfort raises in relation to adolescents, is purely no more of a specific problem for adolescents than for adults who may already have a large enough family. A girl is much safer if she is provided with scientific contraception than if she relies on the efficacy of self-control and mutual masturbation. These two latter specifics must raise the birth-rate and abortion-rate quite a lot.

TONY GIBSON.

BRITISH PAMPHLETEERS, Volume I, from the 16th Century to the 18th Century, edited by George Orwell and Reginald Reynolds (Wingate, 16/-).

A GOOD anthology of the rich pamphleteering literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth century social struggles in England, has long been needed, and in the present collection Reginald Reynolds, who has been responsible for the selection and arrangement, does a great deal to meet this want.

He reproduces copious extracts from some twenty-six pamphlets of the period, and the selection certainly gives a comprehensive idea of the various tendencies of thought represented. Some of the best pamphlet writing of authors like Defoe, Winstanley, Swift, Milton and Paine, is included and there are also some interesting and historically important works like *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* and *Tyrannopitri Discovered*, examples of the extreme libertarian literature which was more common in the revolutionary years

Bakunin and the Serbs - 2

BAKUNIN'S relations with the Serbs dated from the Slav Congress held at Prague in 1848 and at which he demanded not only the destruction of the Habsburg monarchy and of the Turkish empire but also called for the liberation of the Balkans "under the banner of the noble Serbian people". This appeal found a friendly reception among many Serbs, most of whom lived in the two empires and felt that they were badly treated by Vienna and Constantinople.

Although in the next twenty years he had few opportunities to assist the revolutionary movements in Eastern Europe in 1869, an Austrian delegate publicly implored Bakunin to use his influence among the Slav workers to induce them to take part in the activities of the First International. Bakunin and his two Russian aides, Ralli and Ross, immediately set themselves to work and soon established contact with a group of about thirty Serbian students who with Markovic at their head were studying at Zurich. Visits were exchanged and it was from these young students that Bakunin heard of a country which had neither capitalists nor big landowners but in which the whole population toiled for the government officials who combined the rôle of rulers and exploiters. Bakunin was so impressed by this form of oppression that in his book *State and Anarchy* he used Serbia as an example to demonstrate the inadequacy of Karl Marx's theory that exploitation would almost disappear once the Communist-led proletariat had captured the State and destroyed bourgeois capitalism.

In spring 1872, Bakunin decided to take up residence at Zurich and for the first part of his stay lodged with his most faithful Serbian follower, M. Hrvacanin. There, in spite of his financial worries and his struggle against Marx's authoritarian ideas, he found enough time to form three secret societies known as the Slav Brothers, the Serbian Brothers, and the Slav Section of the International. Further, the "Congress of Serbian Socialists" held in June 1872 under his

OF all Bakunin's revolutionary activities in various parts of Europe, his attempt to form a "Serbian Socialist Party" seems the only one that has been ignored by most historians. Even Professor Carr does not mention in his well-documented biography that the Russian anarchist was the first to try to organise a working-class movement in South-Eastern Europe.

chairmanship decided to organise a "Serbian Socialist Party" (SSP). Its programme drawn up by Bakunin and consisting of a theoretical and practical part was unanimously adopted by the Serbian students, many of whom were staunch Bakuninists.

The theoretical part of this programme included in a condensed form many of the demands contained in Bakunin's earlier writings, such as the destruction of the State, the rejection of capitalism and the abolition of marriage. It also advocated a federation of free communes, a communal ownership of the means of production, equal educational opportunities for all children and free love.

The second half of the programme deals with the tasks of an anarchist organisation and as such is of some interest in view of the well-known Marxist charge of amorality against Bakunin who at this very time was at the height of his revolutionary career. The practical programme of the SSP reads as follows:

(1) The Serbian people cannot free itself from social slavery so long as the Serbian, Montenegrin, Turkish and Austro-Hungarian States are not destroyed.

(2) The SSP can carry out the social revolution on the Balkan peninsula and in the South of Austria-Hungary only in conjunction with the socialists of all the countries that are on this territory; the party must therefore strive to form a union of socialists in the Balkans and in the South of Austria-Hungary and must organise itself as a section of that party.

(3) The SSP must not as a party form an alliance with any non-socialist

party. (4) Individual party members may with the permission of the SSP join other parties if these parties by their position or action contribute towards the instigation of a revolutionary movement for which the SSP strives.

(5) In order to spread social revolutionary ideas among the Serbian masses it is indispensable for the SSP to penetrate and embrace all the workers' associations which have been established in our country owing to the needs of the workers.

(6) It is indispensable to adopt practical propaganda and to penetrate into the life of the Serbian people, understand all its virtues, spread them and perfect them, and therefore it is necessary for every member of the SSP (a) to learn a trade so that he may earn his living as a manual worker and (b) to go to the people whenever there is a need.

(7) In order to spread socialist ideas among the masses it is indispensable to take into our hands the primary education and the diffusion of culture, etc., and especially to organise the teachers of primary schools into a section of the SSP.

(8) It is indispensable to spread social propaganda among the well-off part of the Serbian people, in particular among the young who go to school.

A few days after the Congress Bakunin and Markovic quarrelled bitterly as to who should control the new party. The pretext for this dispute was Markovic's sudden decision to regard the SSP programme merely as a draft and his insistence on drawing up a new programme at a Congress in Serbia itself. In this way he hoped to weaken the influence of Bakunin, whom has described as "an

2 Leaflets

WE have now available another printing of the fine little anti-militarist leaflet "It is for US to Decide", which is a re-print of an article and cartoon from *FREEDOM*. These are available to all readers for the price of 2/6 per 100 including postage.

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honest revolutionist but an absolutely hopeless organiser". This led Bakunin to accuse Markovic of being a Marxist and to expel him from the shadowy SSP. In return the young Serb later on blamed the anarchists for the split in the First International.

A minority of Serbian students remained however faithful to Bakunin and in addition to a few Russian revolutionists formed the Slav Section of the International. It was they who were responsible for an unsuccessful attempt to rescue the Russian revolutionist Nechajev when he was extradited by the Swiss authorities to the Tsarist government. They also smuggled anarchist leaflets into Serbia.

Markovic returned to Serbia and after spending nearly a year in prison died leaving a strong libertarian movement among the educated youth. His supporters followed him and Bakunin's advice of "going to the people" and tried to rouse the peasantry against the existing institutions. A similar movement took place in Russia but achieved little owing to the backwardness of the peasantry and the vigilance of the Tsarist authorities. In Serbia events took a different course because the ranks of those "going to the people" contained a certain number of students of peasant origin who in their eagerness to make libertarian ideas more comprehensible to the villagers reduced the whole anarchist philosophy to a simple slogan: "We want the lowering of the salaries of the civil servants." This demand was so popular in the countryside that a few years later the peasants allowed themselves to be organised into Radical Party founded by these former libertarian socialists. This political party, based on peasant votes, broke the dominance of the bureaucracy, gave the country a parliamentary system until 1914, provided most of the ministers for the successive Serbian and later Yugoslav governments and published until Hitler's invasion of Yugoslavia, a newspaper entitled *Self-Government!*

I.A.

PALESTINE

THE war in Palestine continues to take up headlines in the Press, as politicians bicker in pretences at armistices and parleys, not in the least in an endeavour to find a reasonable solution, but solely in order to preserve the balance of power existing in the "cold war".

The ironic nature of the war is that the opposing forces consider themselves as fighting against something which does not happen to be on the other side of the barricades. The thousands of immigrants arriving from Europe are passionately keen to defend their stakes in Israel, and after years in D.P. camps and concentration camps they are anxious to "fight back"; but, of course, the Arabs they are fighting against were not responsible for European anti-Semitism. The Arabs regard themselves as fighting against European influence; to them it is a "new aggression of the West against the East" and they regard it as a par with British Imperialism or the Italian war in Abyssinia.

There is a certain amount of truth in both claims, because undoubtedly much of the outside criticism of Zionism comes from anti-Semitism and support for Zionism out of sympathy with Jewish victims of Nazi and other oppression in Europe. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the majority of Zionists regard the Arabs in the same way as other colonisers have regarded other "native inhabitants", and it is hardly an answer for the Israeli authorities to claim co-operation from certain Arab tribes, such as the Druses, who have always been on unfriendly terms with other Arabs and inclined towards their enemies. Similar tactics were pursued by the British in India.

There is not the slightest question of Jewish superiority in any renewed outbreak of fighting, no matter how rated the Arab troops may have been in the past; and particularly since the British withdrawal enabled them to bring in thousands of Jewish D.P.'s and also munitions from all over Europe, as well as volunteers. The Arabs accuse Britain of betraying their interests in withdrawing at the particular time it did (had it withdrawn in 1936, for instance, the Jews could have been militarily defeated by them, since at that time they had no possibility of calling in large-scale immigration from Europe, importing arms from countries like Czechoslovakia, nor had they the thousands of British-trained troops from the war.) On the other hand, the Zionists generally have portrayed Britain as aiding the Arabs on the grounds of the association with Abdullah of Transjordan, and there is a left-wing picture (which is now accepted as truth by all Zionists) of Bevin forcing through a pro-Arab policy against the Cabinet's wish, and being able to call the war off any time he chose.

Bevin's ability to control the Arab States' policy in regard to Palestine (but not in regard to Egypt or the Sudan!) may be doubted. It is more certain that Britain has played a diplomatic

game of keeping in with both sides: influencing the Arab countries by the military missions under Glubb, etc., and relying on the pro-British sentiments of Weizmann and the Social-Democrats on the Jewish side. An alternative theory is pointed out by many: namely, that Britain and America—who are agreed on policy in every country in the world—may be not so much at loggerheads over this one small country as may be imagined. America ostensibly and loudly backs the Jewish side and calls on their support in the case of war. This is convenient for whoever may be President (having to placate the New York Jewish vote) and in addition, American influence among European Jewish circles can be considered. On the other hand, Britain ostensibly backs the Arabs—she has "traditional friendships" among the Arab countries, and calls on their support in the case of war. The Jewish vote in this country does not count very highly, and in any case is not generally pro-Zionist. Thus, whoever wins is an ally against Russia for Britain—or America!

It cannot be doubted that Palestine may be an important focal point in another war, since Russia has seen the weakness of the Arab countries, and that even such a small body as Palestine Jewry can resist them all, and if it had not been restrained, might by now have toppled them all over. Her striking point in a war might well be the oil fields of Iran and with only "Glubb's Girls" to stop them might soon be in Cairo. The Israeli leaders are well aware of their importance to world politics, and disinclined to give way over limiting their territory, to please the Arabs.

ARAB REFUGEES

Meanwhile, the most pressing of all post-war problems has received very little notice—namely the displacement of thousands of Arabs from their homes. These thousands became refugees not because of "misleading Arab propaganda" as the Israel Government claims, but because they feared the Jewish Fascists on Deir Yassin, when a village which had actually not co-operated with and even resisted Arab terrorists, was massacred by Jewish terrorists. As the thousands of Jewish immigrants come in, the Israel Government can only accommodate them in the deserted Arab cities, and in such towns as Jaffa, transform it completely from an all Arab city to a Jewish city. Before very long, there will simply be nowhere for them to go back to, and having gone, the Israel Government does not particularly want them back, however it condemned the methods which drove them away.

It is futile and unreasonable to blame the Jewish immigrants for this problem of Arab homelessness; they have themselves certainly nowhere else to go, and are naturally bitter at the cynical ease with which Great Powers who deny the great open spaces under their control to settlers, declare that they ought not to go to Palestine but elsewhere. They cannot be expected to stay behind barbed wire and bars until their death, as has been apparently the view of the British Government in its great Cyprus concentration camp experiment (which still goes on). They are no more likely to consider Arab claims than the thousands of Europeans who swarmed to build up America considered the Indians. In spite of all the bunk about peace by settlement and negotiations

between the Powers, under the United Nations delusion, the fact is that conflict in these circumstances inevitable, and victory will certainly go to the strongest side. The Powers are not really interested in any other solution, but are doing their best to use the Palestine struggle as one of the many pawns in the cold war.

NO EASY SOLUTION

As internationalists we ought not to delude ourselves into any other facile solution, but rather to look for hopes that in the future some measure of international co-operation will come about, not between governments or political leaders, but from the people from below, and in the meantime to expose such delusions as those spread by the leaders of all sides in any war. But the major deduction to be drawn from the Palestine conflict is the utter degeneration of Soviet Russia into Czarism, a fact known to everybody with the least perception who witnesses the flight of so many Jews from Europe, but one concealed not least by the Zionist parties who welcome Russian U.N.O. support, and who have in any case a certain vested interest in anti-Semitism. There can be no denying the fact that if conditions were normal and decent in Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the other countries behind the Iron Curtain, there would be no "D.P. problem": the fact of open and silent pogroms in those countries causes the great exodus from Eastern Europe to the overladen D.P. camps of Germany and Italy, and the great freights of human cargo leaving the Danubian ports. The Communists may deny responsibility for this, but the fact remains that all opposition to Stalin has been stamped out in those countries and if Stalin so wished, anti-Semitism could not last a minute. It has not been tolerated in Russia for many years because of its identification with and exploitation by the "White" Czarists, but now that Red Czarism is so firmly in the saddle, it is used throughout the Great Russian Empire of Eastern Europe to divide and rule.

INTERNATIONALIST.

TELEPHONE SNOOPERS

THE listening-in to telephone conversations by the police in this country and all other countries, is reasonably well-known by most people, and on the whole it is a method of detection which is generally considered distasteful. So much so, that in this country, the Postmaster-General, if asked whether telephone lines are "tapped", would refuse to answer the question and do anything but admit that they are. In America, telephone tapping has been a hobby indulged in for many years, and as far back as 1929 the United States Supreme Court ruled that wire-tapping by law enforcement agencies was legal. But the Federal Communications Act of 1934 provided the ground for the reversal of this decision and in 1937 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled, by a seven to two majority that evidence obtained by wire-tapping could not be used, in any federal court. The fight was resumed in 1938 when on the one side Mr. Dewey, unsuccessful Presidential candidate, then District Attorney of N. York supported wire-tapping on the grounds that its prevention would "protect murderers and gangsters", and his opponent stuck to the principle that evidence procured without a search warrant was a violation of the individual rights of citizens. Mr. Dewey for once was victorious. But before wire-tapping, the police had to obtain an order signed by a judge of the County Supreme or General Sessions Court.

The author of the article from which we have extracted the above,* goes on to point out that in the ten years that have passed, it has been estimated that almost a million orders have been signed. And obviously the number must be greater since these were only the official "tappings", in which what was heard might be used as evidence. But what of the chance tappings in the search for clues or the names of members of a political organisation which are useful for the political police records?

But the Americans are still not satisfied, and recently a special committee of the New York County Criminal Courts Bar Association began public hearings on wire-tapping. The hearings, which are to continue, produced conflicting testimony from both judges and lawyers.

Some attorneys said that wire tapping should be abolished because the real criminals are "wise to taps" and do not conduct their business over the telephone any more. Others conceded that it should be abolished except in extremely serious cases, such as espionage and treason. The American Civil Liberties Union, which has opposed wire-tapping for years on principle, suggested that orders for tapping be made as difficult to obtain as warrants.

Robert Daru, counsel to the committee, summed up the problem: "The sole question is—Do the ends justify the means?" Which is all very interesting and we hope will stimulate some organisation to obtain an enquiry into telephone tapping in this country.

*N.Y. Herald Tribune, Paris edition, (21/10/48).

Readers Write -

DEAR COMRADE,

Your invitation to readers to give their views about the nature of the future free society pre-supposes that such a society will in fact exist some time. This seems to me an unjustifiable supposition, another manifestation of the dream of Utopia which has apparently always haunted man. There have, of course, been many variants; some dreamers have preferred to place the new society beyond this world's borders, and all things considered, that seems the most reasonable situation. Since, despite all efforts to improve the world, any hope of a lasting change in society seems to recede still further, the belief in a Heaven after death is comforting, and what is important, cannot be disproved. In our own day, however, greater popularity belongs to those theorists who actually believe that their particular Utopias are not only eminently practical but are in fact almost inevitable; in other words that they represent the culmination of evolution. There is no need here to enumerate the various sects who claim to have the only true revelation. They include Marxists, Fascists, democrats, and presumably some anarchists. It is not, of course, surprising that people should construct Utopias; what is rather disturbing is the support they receive from masses of the people. It might be worth while to consider why the masses are a prey to such hallucinations.

The reasons seem to be several; one is the obvious disparity between the reality of existence and the visions all men have of what might be, but the encouragement to wishful thinking has always existed. Much must be due to the decline of religion through the growth of scientific thought, but there must be a further cause. It may be that it is to be found in the spiritual desert created by industrialism, through the destruction of man's organic relationship with nature, which is only productive of mirages. This may explain the extraordinary power parties and leaders can exercise over the people, who, deprived of all reasons for living, are ready to die for a hypothetical better world.

For anarchists this raises many questions; is anarchy merely one more unattainable Utopia, or is a free society in the far distant future not an illusion? In each case a different course of conduct follows. The first proposition leads to a purely philosophical anarchism, the second to practical politics. While I appreciate that this distinction is implicit in most anarchist thought, I believe it might be valuable to bring it more often into the open.

Yours fraternally,

J.P.H.

(We agree thoroughly with J.P.H. about the harmfulness of Utopian plans and of the kind of myths and promises peddled by political parties. But we would also point out that anarchists, unlike Marxists, do not in general accept any doctrine of social determinism, and do not regard the free society as inevitable. What they do contend is that a scientific attitude towards social and psychological facts demonstrates that a society based on free co-operation is both possible and desirable. But they do not minimise the difficulties that lie in the way of its attainment, nor do they attempt to make any Utopian plan of a society which, if and when it arrives, must clearly be formed according to the

social conditions of the time and the desires of the people who establish it. On the other hand, if one regards such a society as, not inevitable, but possible and desirable, and the only likely way out of the round of crisis and destruction in which contemporary society is involved, it is clearly necessary to make a working assumption of anarchy as the goal to be achieved, and to take such steps in the present as seem likely to make people conscious of its practicability and to bring it about with the least delay. This we take to be what J.P.H. means by "practical politics".—Eds.)

DEAR COMRADES,

You ask for readers' opinions on how—or the best way—to bring about an Anarchist society or workers' control. All past and present propaganda by the written and spoken word has and is bearing fruit. The evidence is to be seen and heard everywhere—in those who do not understand Anarchist philosophy yet live a free life and ignore the shame of Imperialism and other isms.

My opinion is: we shall evolve into the free society by living and co-operating together in our groups as Anarchists and thus setting an example to others. It is folly to talk of the rough stuff. Force has and is being tried and it is a failure.

Your FREEDOM, which I get and pass on is having a great influence with individuals—and as my life is amongst the rough workers who have little time for meetings, we do live our own lives and tell anyone who would tell us different where to go to.

Bristol. W.M. E. K. GRIFFIN.

DON'T LOSE HOPE COMRADE

DEAR COMRADES,

When I have read my anarchist papers, convinced that the great idea of anarchism is developing irresistibly, I ask my conscience to what extent I am helping to bring nearer the day when freedom and justice will prevail. And wishing to share my mental joy of life I look for an address, the one of an open-minded man to whom I take a chance in mailing him my jewels of thought: our anarchist literature.

Recently I found such an address in a nudist publication, it was at the bottom of an interesting letter to the editor. Thus, to my co-nudist friend, I sent some copies of *Freedom*.

But to-day I received the following communication from my co-nudist enemy. It reads:

"SIR,—Any more literature of a like nature will be turned over to the F.B.I. I am an American, and a good one, I hope."

Yes, our ideas weigh hard on a weak-minded... man.

Fraternally yours,

JULES SCARCERIAUX.

Los Angeles.

BANKRUPT'S HEAVEN

Sir Hartley Shawcross introduced us to a fantastic world where undischarged bankrupts live in expensive flats and eat in the best restaurants, and where people give each other enormous cheques for thousands and thousands of pounds, though nobody, recipient or donor, agrees why this money passes.

Here, as in other places, one has to ponder over the fact that apparently nothing stimulates a man like being an undischarged bankrupt.

It is apparently a most powerful tonic. One goes everywhere and all sorts of people keep calling on one. One gets everywhere.

Rebecca West in *Evening Standard*, 15/11/48.

MODERN MAN

Call-up Boards in ten of America's largest cities reported to-day that they had turned down 72 per cent. of all 24 and 25-year-olds as unfit. Half of those turned down are neurotics.

Daily Express, 2/11/48.

THROUGH THE PRESS

NOSTALGIA

There may well be some regrets that the opportunity has seemingly been lost of reintroducing a public expression of gratitude to God for the safety of mother and child. As lately as the birth of King George V the official announcement included the sentence "the Princess and the infant Prince are, God be praised, perfectly well." It is only necessary to contrast that language, dignified and appropriate, with a bulletin of recent times in which the public was told that the Royal child was "doing fine" to realise how greatly we have deteriorated from our forbears both in the proper use of words and in the payment of due reverence.

Observer, 14/11/48.

REMAND HOME FOR FUTURE MOTHER

A Gynaecologist, Dr. Amelia Esther Marrow, protested to the Nottingham magistrates on Saturday against 15-year-old girl, who was pregnant, being sent to a remand home among "some of the worst characters in the country."

The girl told the bench that she became pregnant so that she and the man concerned could be married.

She will come before the juvenile court again this week, when the magistrates will decide what action to take.

Daily Herald, 1/11/48.

THE SAME OLD STORY

Has anything been done about the Gorbals and its miserable slum-dwellers? Has Mrs. Cullen, the new Labour M.P., done anything?

A depressing report reached me yesterday from a Glasgow colleague. "I have just been renewing contact," he writes, "with the Gorbals scene, and I am sorry to say that if anything has changed it is for the worse."

People in the Gorbals, he tells me, are bitterly disappointed. They felt at the time of the election that the eyes of Britain were on their plight, and that, "with the candidates falling over one another in their eagerness to investigate the conditions, something would surely happen."

When Mrs. Cullen's political agent was asked for information, he replied dully: "There's nothing much we can do. We are short of timber and steel for new houses. We have asked the factors to carry out repairs to old properties; but they say they haven't the money... The Gorbals will have to be razed to the ground. It's a big job."

Mrs. Cullen has not yet opened her mouth at Westminster. It she would only indulge herself in one hysterical scream in the House it would at least draw attention to the fact that the Government itself has some responsibility for Gorbals.

News Chronicle, 12/11/48.

CORRECTION

WE regret that in the article entitled "More About the 'Citizen of the World'" in our last issue, André Breton, one of the French members of the committee formed to support Garry Davis, was referred to as a painter. André Breton is, of course, a poet and writer, and not a painter.

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QUESTIONS OF TO-DAY

THE popular daily press raises a periodic wail over its limited size and its inability to keep the public informed in papers of four pages. But during the past weeks most of its precious space has been devoted to the birth of a son to Mrs. Elizabeth Glucksberg and to the "tangled web of evil" as the Attorney-General described the revelations of the Tribunal. These have been the big news items of the fortnight and the chief topic of conversation among the public. Now, while I have nothing against the King's grandson, except that you and I will be expected to support him and while I am not entirely indifferent to the activities of ministers, lawyers, big business men and football pool promoters (I dislike them all), I am disturbed by the standard of values which elevates such topics to supreme public importance and neglects what, on reflection, are the real and pressing questions of to-day—how to remove the economic and psychological causes of war, how to make work attractive and creative, how to conserve and make the best use of natural resources, how to provide enough food for the growing population of the world, how to make our physical surroundings healthy and exciting.

DWINDLING ACRES

An American author William Vogt in a recently published book *Road to Survival*, gives a frightening account of the way in which natural resources have been exhausted. He quotes an American authority who stated in 1939 that "In the short life of this country we have essentially destroyed 282,000,000 acres of land, crop and rangeland. Erosion is destructively active on 775,000,000 additional acres. About 100,000,000 acres of cropland, most of it the best cropland we had, is finished... We are losing every day, as a result of erosion, the equivalent of 200 forty-acre farms."

MORE MOUTHS TO FILL

Meanwhile, as Sir John Russell told us a short while ago: "Taking the world over, every day between 50,000 and 60,000 more people have to be fed than were fed the day before: every week there are nearly 500,000 more, every month getting on for 2,000,000 more; every year over 20,000,000 more"; and he went on to say that since 1891 in England and Wales we have added 14,000,000 people to our population and taken away 4,000,000 acres of land that used to grow food. The food problem is inseparably linked

with the question of population and the question of population is indistinguishable from the question of birth control, but is this not still, even in this country almost a taboo subject in public discussion, even though the greatest task of our generation is to effect the transition from what Lewis Mumford describes as "an orgy of uncontrolled reproduction: machine-fodder and cannon-fodder: surplus values and surplus populations" to "not more births but better births, with greater prospects of survival, with better opportunities for healthy living and healthy parenthood, untainted by ill-health, preventable diseases, and poverty, not spoiled by industrial competitions and national war"?

NEW LANDS—OLD WAYS?

Some of the few big constructive schemes to be set in motion since the war have been those for growing food crops in undeveloped colonial lands, but can we be assured that the native populations will benefit from the exploitation of their territories or will they become a new agricultural proletariat losing the advantages of their old way of life and being denied those of the civilisation which is encroaching on them. And what of their land itself. Is it going to be worked out in a few years like the Mexican forests which become useless after seven years of banana cultivation, or will nature be allowed to replenish and maintain the health of the soil?

NEW FORCES

We hear a lot about the problems of the mining industry, of the efforts being made to get the miners to fine themselves for being absent from work, and we know that in this "free country" a miner cannot leave his work unless he is sacked, or is too ill. But can we be assured that equal energy is being used to make mining a less necessary occupation by harnessing other natural resources which will provide fuel and power from sources which are inexhaustible and which will make fewer demands on human life and enjoyment? Are the same efforts being made to utilise water power, wind power, tidal and solar energy to generate electricity for peaceful use as are displayed in the race to use atomic energy for purposes of warfare?

All these, the real questions of to-day resolve into one—are human energies being used for human purposes? If they are not, then, as humans, we must do something about it. C.W.

Put it into Action!

ANARCHISTS—especially young ones, like myself—are often perplexed by the problem of whether they can act in a manner consistent with their beliefs under an authoritarian régime. There are some things—income-tax for instance—participation in which appears to be unavoidable, at least from the standpoint of a wage-earner. But there remain plenty of ways to manifest our revolt against contemporary barbarism. Our daily contacts, trivial as they may be, with workmates, friends, people in the bus, our opinion of the girl-friend's new hat, all can be utilised in our fight to remain human.

Emma Goldman, in her essay "The Place of the Individual in Society", wrote: "The strongest bulwark of authority is uniformity; the least divergence from it is the greatest crime." The wholesale mechanisation of modern life has increased uniformity a thousandfold. It is everywhere present, in habits, tastes, dress, thoughts and ideas. Its most concentrated dullness is 'public opinion'. Few have the courage to stand out against it. He who refuses to submit is at once labelled 'queer', 'different', and decried as a disturbing element in the comfortable stagnancy of modern life. This is a truth grasped in its artistic, if not social, sense by many of the creative artists of to-day. Hence the wrathful denunciations of the orthodox critics.

One of the best examples of beliefs being carried into action is that of the nihilist movement of nineteenth century Russia. Contemptuous of those affectations of politeness by which people seek to demonstrate their respectability and conformity, the nihilists sought to re-establish social relationships upon a human basis. It is my belief that the methods which they used, crude as they may appear to this over-sophisticated world, contributed more to the ultimate disintegration of tsarism than all the efforts of liberal do-gooders. Anarchism has been called the philosophical heir of nihilism. Let us therefore become heirs in deed as well as ideal.

"But," I hear someone protest, "what you are advocating will only prejudice people against us. Reason and persuasion should be our only weapons. Such violating of peoples' feelings will result in disaster." This common objection might have had some validity in

the "age of reason". It is not so nowadays. Paul Goodman has called the mental condition of the modern worker "sociolatriy"—meaning a desire to become a cog in the industrial machine and an interest in assisting that machine to function efficiently. Such a mental condition can only be broken by "pressing the resistance", as another American anarchist termed it. We must shock people into thinking; attack them where their respectability is most cherished. Reason can only play a secondary part, that of convincing the thinking.

By acting, as well as thinking, as revolutionaries we shall realise the Bakunin maxim of the urge to destroy

being a creative urge. By negating uniformity and its corollary conformity, we shall be affirming anarchism and its corollary freedom. By being human we shall dissolve this air-conditioned nightmare. By our own personal revolt we can take the first step on the road to social revolution. It is for us to decide. To be an intellectual rebel is an easy task. To be a rebel in deed as well as thought can only be achieved by people willing to risk the ostracism and vilification that accrue to the lot of the revolutionary—a hard and thankless task, but a task which must be done if we are to create ANARCHY.

S.E.P.

'Reporting Absent Sir'

THERE is now in progress a recruiting campaign for the Regular and Auxiliary Armed Forces. Occasionally we hear of a "catch"; some rookie for the first time, or an old hand returning. Those who join for the first time are almost always the dupes of the skilful propagandists of Whitehall or Kingsway. The older men (and women) are enticed by the Re-engagement Bounty Scheme or are disillusioned in Führer Atlee's Bright New World. They rush blindly back to the security and comradeship of those prototypes of the Fascist State—the Armed Forces of the Crown.

I am an ex-Airman and the quoted price of my liberty for four years is £125. May I enquire of the Air Ministry how exactly one calculates the monetary value of a year's freedom?

I do not presume to advise those who contemplate re-engaging with a view to a career in the Forces. They assuredly know what is best for themselves. They know already that when they sign those papers they forfeit their liberty for a number of years (three to twenty-two). They realise that when they don their blue or khaki uniforms again that they are going back to the Services' ways of life. That this way of life entails complete subservience to the pocket Dukes who wear pips, bars, rings and chevrons on their uniforms.

They will be forced to address these little autocrats "by their posher rank" if Non-Commissioned; as "Sir" if of Warrant or Commissioned rank.

However, assuming that our Re-engaging Servicemen know all these things and are in no respect deterred from their course, let us follow their eager footsteps back to the Service.

They will arrive individually at the re-engagement depot, where they will be "kitted-out" and paid the first instalment of their Bounty. They will meet each other and exchange harrowing stories of life outside. It will be unanimously agreed that "Civvy St. is a dead loss". Benevolent reception officers will see to their needs and should any desire to visit the local town we may rest assured that Form 295 will be forthcoming as an "Open Sesame" to the Police in the guardroom.

Then the great day arrives. The depot is left behind and our happy band is bound for their first unit since demob-day.

They will be met at the railway station by an N.C.O. with a truck and soon they will behold the homely outlines of Nissen huts, barbed wire fences and the squat little guardhouse watching maternally over all. Then indeed there will be a warm glow around their hearts and they will enthusiastically shake hands with the first M.P. or S.P. they meet. He will greet them as long-lost brothers.

Not to be outdone by his subordinates, the C.O. will kill the fatted calf (Argentine; in 14 oz. tins) and do all in his power to welcome his Prodigals. They will settle down to wait for their pensions (1970 roll on!) and always barring such eventualities as wars, revolutions and inconsiderate dock strikes, they will live happily ever after.

Perhaps I lack the Grace of God—or maybe I am downright ungrateful and perverse—but whatever the cause may be I, at least, will remain a civilian.

AIRCRAFTSMAN 1910596.
(Ex-R.A.F.)

Special Appeal

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'But Things are Different Now...'

"PEOPLE who think they know what a miner's daily life is, and yet have not lived that life for thirty years, should not be offended when the truth is told them. We who live that life, who know what it means to have to scrub along throughout the year and have nothing to show at the 31st December, except poverty and, perhaps a comrade less who has lost his life in the mine, must show, not only to the paid officials, but to civilisation, if needs be, that we are not satisfied... And I believe that, during the forthcoming summer, the gospel of revolt, of direct action, of anti-leadership will spread, not because Harvey or any other person believes in it, but because of the oppression and tyranny that is taking place in the mines, due to the development of the trust and combine.

This is a factor that many ignore, but just as it has awakened the rank and file, so will it awaken he who follows the crowd, which is the function of a "leader". He always takes hold of any end of the stick, if, by taking hold, his own end of the economic problem is solved for him.

"Ideas as to social and industrial revolution and betterment do not originate in the heads of men, nor do they drop from heaven; they arise out of the mode of production, and men espouse them. Thus the ideal of direct action, open revolt against capitalism, with all its tools of Labour M.P.'s, parsons, and trade union leaders, arise from the existing conditions. The person who has nothing to lose except a 'soft job' will not fight for the overthrow of capitalism (except in election times, when he

moves further on the worker's back). To you, fellow-slave of the lamp and pick, I appeal to carry the fight. Do not wait for any leader to show you the way. 'The time is rotten ripe for change' of tactics. Make the change yourselves. You have the capacity for thinking: think and act then, for only thus will your freedom from all tyranny be secured."

—WILL LAWTHOR in
The Herald of Revolt, Feb. 1913.

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I have not retreated, nor will I retreat, from my standpoint of condemning those who indulge in the insane luxury of unofficial strikes.

—WILL LAWTHOR in the
News Chronicle, Nov. 18, 1948.

The Recent French Strikes

(Continued from page 1)

the "Third force" seem capable of maintaining or re-establishing order.

The action of the forces of repression, the appeals of non-Communist unions, and finally their tiredness caused the Lorraine coalfield to abandon the strike, and gradually, in the Loire, in the little fields of the South, in certain pits of the North and finally of the Pas de Calais, work was resumed.

It is easy to understand the difficulties encountered by revolutionary groups in intervening and defending conceptions at once militant and independent. It was equally necessary neither to act in support of the Communist manoeuvre nor to be utilised by the government.

The enormous disparity of the means used by the directors of the strike and the aims pursued (the strike struck industry at its foundations and risked bringing on a universal stoppage, while the differences between the workers' claims and the governmental propositions were slight), provoked diverse reactions, sometimes completely opposed according to regions.

Either it was necessary to push the movement to a conclusion and go beyond the limits fixed by the Communists, in resuming the formula "The Mine to the Miners". Or it was necessary to endeavour to obtain a maximum of advantages and provoke a new vote among the strikers, in order to resume work without waiting for the wearing down of the movement and the collapse of the proletarian forces.

It was thus that in the North the groups of anarchist miners proposed to

apply the extraction of coal and its free distribution to the families of the workers. To that the leaders of the CGT were vigorously opposed, in the same way as they were opposed to the proposition made by certain revolutionary syndicalist militants of St. Etienne, and which had the same object.

But elsewhere the conflict continued without any possibility of intervening. The strikers' meetings were carefully prepared and the minorities who wished to speak were shouted down and chased away. Attempts were prepared against the representatives of the non-Communist unions. All that was not in accordance with the Communist line was covered with insults and the independent workers saw themselves inexorably repulsed.

The strike was carried on with great slogans, without any problem being treated seriously.

The principle of nationalisations, whose practical effects were nevertheless visibly disastrous, since the miners found themselves before an employing State much more powerful than the old mining companies, was never put to discussion.

The strike was no longer either reformist or revolutionary, it became a sorrowful and tragic aspect of the struggle undertaken between the Communists and ministry which was guilty of leaning too openly in favour of the Western alliance.

In the other unions, some voices were raised to demand the letting loose of a general strike movement which would have rapidly realised the essential claims of the proletariat: the sliding scale and the fixing of a sufficient basic wage. But the leaders of the CGT made their

position clear at the Congress of Paris: no general strike. Without doubt the orders were themselves formal and the last hopes maintained by the Stalinists of entering into a ministerial combination "of the left" had to be carefully husbanded.

The practice of strikes of a quarter of an hour, of an hour, sometimes twenty-four hours, was on the contrary, adopted, so that we actually saw, while the discontent before the rise of prices became deeper and called for action, the crumbling of the efforts of the workers and the extension of feelings of discouragement and passivity among the proletariat.

The end of the struggle meant little to the Communist generals. Their aim had been achieved. They had indeed shaken violently the precarious balance of the French state. But they have left a disabled working-class, which became less interested in understanding and acting responsibly, and became more and more the prey of the uncontrollable mystiques of Stalinism and Gaullism.

The strike rotted away on the spot. But it has allowed the French conservatives, the reactionaries of the right as of the left, the immense stupidity of the statesmen to reconstruct their operative arsenal, crazy but easy to manage, of the truncheon, of the armoured car, the state of siege, requisitioning, and the administrative expulsion of foreign workers.

The communiqués sing of victory. For our part, we know that it is a defeat, whose organisers are the Stalinists.

S. PARANE.

Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

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

NOVEMBER 28th F. A. Ridley

"The Conflict of European Ideologies"

DEC. 5th Bert Smith

"The Failure of Philosophy"

DEC. 12th George Ineson

Communities

NORTH EAST LONDON

The next meeting of the NELAG will be held at Wanstead House (two minutes from Wanstead Tube Station) at 7.30 p.m.

NOV. 30th F. A. Ridley

"The Political Background of the Third World War"

Comrades interested cordially invited.

BRISTOL

Public Meeting
Kingsley Hall, Old Market Street, 7p.m.,
DEC. 7th, at 7 p.m. Desmond Medhurst
"Selfishness and Anarchism"

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

Indoor Meetings,
CENTRAL HALLS, Bath Street,
every Sunday at 7 p.m.,
Frank Leach, Willy Carlyle, John Gaffney,
Eddie Shaw.

BIRMINGHAM

Discussion-Lectures are held on alternate Sundays in Dick Sheppard House, 36, Holloway Head, at 7 p.m.
DEC. 5th. Business Meeting.

CHORLEY

PUBLIC LECTURES

Lecturer: Albert Smith, B.A.

SUN., DEC. 5th

"Some Modern Fallacies connected with War and Peace"

SUN., DEC. 19th

"The Anarchist Solution to World War III"

Both lectures will start at 7.0 p.m. and will be held in the Oddfellows Rooms, 9, Cunliffe Street, Chorley, Lancs.

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