

SLAVERY IN OUR TIME

THE breaking up of illusions is a painful process and no surprise ought to be felt at the tenacity with which men and women cling to comforting conceptions long after it has become apparent that they possess no substance. In our own times, the shattering of illusions has become such a break-neck process that judgment feels dizzy for lack of certainties on which to base it. More especially because of the extinction of an illusion which has for centuries been unquestioned, and which underlay the whole outlook of the West—the illusion of progress. Progress as an inevitable process in which the function of progressive and humane spirits was to go on from one hard-won conquest to the next, secure in the feeling that it was only a matter of time before the next position was gained, that the future could only be better than the past, and that retrogression was unthinkable—"It can never happen again."

History since the Renaissance seemed to lend colour to this optimism, and progress seemed to touch the whole world with its cleansing fingers. Even in Tsarist Russia, the liberation of the serfs by Alexander II, appeared as a triumph for the forces of progress in social circumstances of the most favourable kind. If this victory in the dark Russia of the tsars appeared to give the highest kind of gloss to the comforting feeling of progress, it seems to fall to the Russia of to-day to reverse in the most forceful way the comforting illusion and to open up a vista of a new age of darkness.

Nevertheless, it will not do to see Russia as the sole villain in the world's melodrama, though such a view may suit the national ends of imperial rivalries. For though reaction shows its darkest face there, there are few enough trends in Russia which are not to be discerned in embryo at least in the regimes of the democratic West.

Slave Labour

Anarchists have long known of the existence of what amounts to slave labour camps in the Soviet Union, and have not hesitated to denounce them. Now, after so many years, the governments of the West have also discovered their existence and are appropriately shocked. There can be no doubt that it is salutary that

such wide publicity about the concentration camps of Russia is now available, for it helps to clear away some of the illusions so dexterously hung round the "country of socialism". And if it succeeds in inducing a proper sense of horror at the idea of herding men and women into hopeless hordes deprived of everything that makes life valuable, and worked literally to death in degrading and miserable circumstances, it may stay the march of this kind of reaction elsewhere.

If it succeeds . . . Thirty years ago the idea that slavery could ever be revived was unthinkable, so firmly was the belief in inevitable progress implanted—much less the idea that it could be revived in a more brutal and inhuman form than ever before. But it is an unfortunate accompaniment of the break up of illusions that the disorientation produced is so profound as to make normal reactions, one does not say impossible, but certainly unlikely. If there is one fact more dreadful than the retrogression of the totalitarian regimes, it is the apathy, almost amounting to indifference, with which their revelation is received.

After six years of war, Nazism is overthrown; in the Russian zone of Germany there are now said to be more persons in concentration camps than under the Nazis. This fact and the many others like it make nonsense of all those grounds for waging six years of war; make the sacrifice of human life and happiness meaningless. It is not surprising that people cling to their illusions, for this conclusion is almost unacceptable emotionally.

Governments Chose Their Time

The existence of slave labour is no new thing. Yet one did not hear an official word about it during the long period of wartime alliance with Russia. But officials knew well enough about it all at that time. Among the clauses of the Stalin-Sikorski agreement were arrangements for the release of Polish socialists deported to the slave camps after the 1939 invasion of Poland by Russia. There can be no doubt that the British and American governments are not shocked by a new discovery; they use their knowledge when it suits them in the cold war of propaganda against Russia. And when it suits them they keep silent.

Much propaganda is now being made about the slave labour camps of Czechoslovakia, particularly regarding German populations. But these camps existed before the Communist coup under the democratic regime of Benes and Masaryk. One of our comrades visiting Czechoslovakia after the war saw these camps and prepared a memorandum for the Freedom Defence Committee. Attempts made at that time to publicize the existence of such slavery received no support from the governments of the West.

The Russians are being brought to book also because of the discrepancy between the figures for the repatriation of German prisoners of war in Russia and official Russian figures for German prisoners captured during the war. It is clear that large numbers are being retained in Russia, and it is right that the fact should be widely known and denounced. But it is difficult to feel that our government is actuated by strict adherence to principle; for did not the Freedom Defence Committee have to draw attention to the continued maintenance of German prisoners in this country for years after the war was ended? And the same principle of expediency which governs the Russians affected the British government for it was openly said that while there was a shortage of labour on the land, prisoners-of-war would be retained. We are not attempting to suggest that

the British treatment of P.O.W.'s is on all fours with the Russian methods; it obviously is not. But clearly a principle has been set aside. Not only do the democratic governments choose their moments for indignation about cruelty abroad, but their own actions are swayed by "practical" considerations of expediency, not by principle.

Don't Flinch

It thus appears that the voice of truth is a voice crying in the wilderness until the truth happens to suit the book of the controllers of propaganda and publicity. More important still, it is clear that abuses which had been thought by the victims of the illusion of progress to be destroyed once and for all, are reappearing in as virulent a form as ever, and all the old battles have to be fought out again ever more bitterly. Worse still, the psychological atmosphere of our time is such that indignation is blunted. We have sup'd too full of horrors.

Yet it obviously will not do to flinch away. Swayed by the illusion of progress our fathers can be excused for not being more critical of the bases of our society. We can claim no such excuse. It is apparent that our social system provides no security for the good or the truthful forces, and indeed seems to provide the soil for the development of all those things which have for decades been regarded with horror. The break up of the illusions is the occasion for a re-examination of our social ideas, for radical measures and revolutionary conceptions.

KRAVCHENKO REVELATIONS

SO far as the Paris Press is concerned the Kravchenko case is providing as much "copy" as the Linskey Tribunal did in this country. Every sitting of the Court which is hearing the case is reported in banner headlines on the front page and detailed accounts take up as much as one page of the morning papers. Kravchenko, who is the author of a book dealing with conditions in Russia, entitled *I Chose Freedom*, has been accused by the Communists of not having written the book. He has sued the French Communist paper *Lettres Francaises* for libel and though the Court has been sitting for at least a month it appears that they are still far from the end of the trial. At present they are examining the original manuscript, in Russian of *I Chose Freedom* as well as the manuscript of the English translation. In general, the English Press has paid little attention to the trial, and what interest has been shown has generally been of the more sensational evidence, such as when Kravchenko was faced by his ex-wife, or when witnesses and lawyers nearly came to blows, etc. . . . Yet in spite of these aspects of the case and much

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Attack on London Anarchists

OUR friends of the North-East London Anarchist Group have for some months been holding their meetings at Wanstead House, the headquarters of the Wanstead and Woodford Community Association. Recent issues of the *Stratford Express* have reported meetings of the association at which it was proposed that the Anarchists, and the Communists who also hold meetings there, be excluded from the activities of the association. The matter was referred back to a further meeting, and the following letter was sent by a local resident to the *Stratford Express*:

"I was distressed to read that it was proposed at the Council meeting of the Wanstead and Woodford Community Association 'that the Communist Party and the Anarchist Group be excluded from the activities of the Association', and to learn that few voices were raised to protest at the intolerant spirit of the proposal to forbid these bodies from holding meetings at Wanstead House. It was felt necessary to justify their use of the house on the grounds that the renting of rooms was a much-needed source of income. Now, if it is wrong, it is wrong whether the Association can make money out of it or not. But is it wrong?"

"Mr. Kirby and Councillor R. Sim are not alone in their opposition to the views and activities of the Communist Party, but how ridiculous to think you can get rid of the Stalinists by preventing them from holding meetings! The idea is dangerous to all who cherish freedom, for is it not a historical fact that the first step in the ruthless elimination of all opposition to the present regime in Russia (and the Fascist regimes in Germany and Italy), was the denial of facilities for holding meetings? We cannot destroy totalitarianism by adopting its methods."

Turning to the anarchists, it is not easy to see why Mr. Kirby regards them as among the 'groups of people whose avowed intention was to undermine and destroy the very community they (the Association) were trying to build.' I am sure that he is free from the hoary misconceptions of anarchists as sinister bomb-throwers—the bomb-fanatics of to-day are busy splitting atoms on the side of law and order—so I assume he must be merely misinformed. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines anarchism as 'a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government—harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being.'

"Councillor Sim, on the other hand, said that the anarchists were 'people who wanted to play at something', which, though more charitable, is hardly just when we consider that some of the greatest of social thinkers have declared themselves to be anarchists. As examples, one might cite Peter Kropotkin, author of *Mutual Aid*, one of the classics of the community movement or Dr. Herbert Read, whose *Poetry and Anarchism* was described by *The Listener* as 'a brave, stirring and affirmative book written by one of the best informed and alert-minded men in a perplexed generation.' Nor should the Association forget that one of the most remarkable community experiments, the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham, was described by its founders as 'anarchy'."

"In the circumstances, I do not think it is out of place to remind the members of the Council that when, a few years ago, Wanstead Flats was threatened by the plans of neighbouring boroughs, it was the anarchist newspaper, *Freedom* (3d. fortnightly, 27, Red Lion St., W.C.1), which gained for the Wanstead Flats Defence Committee, the support of the Freedom Defence Committee (a non-political body), and of a famous authority on population and town planning problems."

"I hope that on reflection the Community Association will realise that the anarchists are on their side in the effort to build a rich and fruitful local community life."

Quanta la Gusta

THERE is a popular song sweeping the country at the moment—all popular songs "sweep the country"—of which I was irresistibly reminded on two occasions recently when I have been present at meetings of the newly-formed London League for Workers' Control. It's a little thing that goes something like: "We gotta get goin'! Where we goin'? Watta we gonna do? We're on our way to somewhere, the three of us and you!"

The League has been launched on the initiative of a few of the leading members of the Commonwealth party, who called together a few more people known to be interested in the idea of Workers' Control, and the thing was started. Where it will end up is another matter, but when reformists express the idea that it is more important to "get crackin'" than to make sure of our aims and principles first, anything might happen. To be honest, we must admit that the Anarchist movement—in English-speaking countries at least—has always had aims and principles and never got crackin', but surely the opposite has proved far more dangerous in the light of our experience with many political parties.

Not that I am against impatience. The world must owe a lot to the impatient, fidgety people who act as spurs in the thick hides of the complacent. I am very impatient myself at times, and never more so than when faced with confused ideas on the part of those who should know better. But people concerned with the establishment of a movement for the propagation of the ideas of Workers' Control should be more concerned at the beginning with thoroughly thrashing the matter out than with getting through an agenda in accordance with the prescribed timetable.

At both the meetings of the London League for Workers' Control I have attended, the Chairman has been J. Allen Skinner, a capable chairman of the Trade Union school. Now, I may be particularly slow-witted, but the speed at which that chairman got through the business of motions, amendments, secondings, referendums-back, rulings-out, voting and plain squashings, left me breathless. Oh, very capable. But what does he know about Workers' Control? That appears to be beside the point, but his particular brand of gettin' crackin' seems to be taking the glad news into the Trade Unions. (Good News—God is love!)

Another thing which has left me rather breathless is the ruling (at the moment referred back to the Executive Committee—and with some support among the members) that all members must be members also of their appropriate trade

union. What is the fascination the T.U.'s have for socialists? Like rabbits fascinated by the snake, they don't seem able to take their eyes off them. Or is it that the success of the unions (from the organisational, financial point of view, I mean!) represents something they themselves strive for? "In order to reach the worker, we must go into the unions" they say, as if workers live, sleep, eat, work only in trade union branches, and exist only in relation to the unions. Certainly, the workers are already organised in the unions, but they are organised in ways we don't like, and in any case, if we are advocating Workers' Control of Industry, it is at the point of production where that control must be effective and it is there our propaganda will be most effective. Such organisation as is necessary for the establishment of Workers' Control must be workshop organisation—workshop committees, workers' councils at the point of production, propaganda cells stressing continually the need for the direct application of control over the work. The trades unions to-day just don't come into it at all, except as another oppositional force to be reckoned with.

I have let two or three weeks go by before writing on these meetings of the League, because, frankly, I wanted to cool down a bit and view them as objectively as possible. I have failed; I'm afraid I cannot be objective about them. I have seen, on the part of some of those responsible for launching the League, a definite fear of carrying the logic of Workers' Control to its conclusion—because it will conflict with their political pre-conceptions.

Not that the idea behind the League is a bad one. On such points of agreement as Anarchists have with other bodies, joint action can be beneficial, and in such organisations, Anarchists could have a good influence and may be able to prevent complete demoralisation into reformist mediocrity.

In fact, anarchists will be able to supply the answers to the popular song's questions—"Who will be there? What'll we see there? What'll be the big surprise?"—although the way things are with the League at the moment, I'll vote for the señoritas with dark and flashing eyes. P.S.

Comrades who are interested in the London League for Workers' Control (and don't be put off by my slipshodness!) can get information from the Sec., W. F. Taylor, 12, High Street, Hampstead, N.W.3, from whom details of a similar initiative in Manchester may be obtained.

A. S. Neill on the Family

IN his new book, *The Problem Family*, A. S. Neill gives this subject the importance it deserves. It is by no means an exhaustive study but, in spite of all the irrelevances, non sequiturs and wordy parentheses so typical of Neill's writing, it provides some stimulating reading. All his other books on education have dealt with the child of school age, but the discerning reader will have detected a very definite progression in Neill's thought and a continuous attempt to delve more deeply for the forces which govern human conduct. The influence of Wilhelm Reich, apparent in his previous book, in this one is more marked and his inspiration is freely acknowledged. Reich has helped to make more conscious the things which formerly Neill has only felt intuitively.

Studying the nature of the pre-school child has convinced him of the tremendous importance of the early days of life and made him realise more than ever that most of the difficulties encountered at school are caused by early mishandling and parental ignorance and that the problem child is in fact made a problem in the cradle. The following quotation from an American booklet of instructions to expectant mothers is almost sufficient in itself to prove Neill's case. "Private Parts: these should be kept scrupulously clean to avoid discomfort, disease and the formation of bad habits. Thumb Sucking: this filthy and pernicious habit may be prevented by placing the baby's arms in a cardboard tube in order that it may not be able to bend the arm at the elbow."

Self-Regulation

Neill contends that the sickness of humanity is largely due to this kind of repressive training of children. It begins in the nursery with the very first interference of child nature by the introduction of a time table of feeding. Neill seems to ascribe this and other repressive measures partly to the ignorance of parents and partly to their "hate of young life and nature." I wonder how far this is true. I have always considered that it is largely due to the influence of the so-called experts and that the parents so influenced usually consider themselves to be enlightened people. Actually, this is yet a further proof of Neill's thesis in *Hearts not Heads in the School* and it is ironical to think that if these people had not been educated they would bring up their children far more wisely because they would act instinctively and naturally, instead of by reference to some rationalised regulation. If it had not been for these "experts", such absurdities as "the mother who snatches a child from the breast because her stopwatch tells her that the baby has had enough" would never have been possible. According to Neill, a baby if left to itself will evolve its own time table and is capable of self-regulation not only in milk feeding but later on in solid feeding as well, and will automatically choose the food that is best for it. "A child given complete freedom to eat what it wants," says Neill, "will select a balanced diet in less than a week."

Neill has some interesting things to say about thumb sucking, but not all of them very accurate. He gives the impression, though it may not have been intentional, that all thumb sucking is the result of repressive practices. One has only to enquire, however, at the maternity department of any hospital to learn that many babies suck their thumbs as almost their first action in life, presumably because they like having something in their mouths and the thumbs or fingers are the most convenient. In any case, it seems to me that Neill's emphasis is wrong here. It is not thumb sucking in itself about which we should be concerned but the suppression of the habit, for it is that which can have such serious consequences.

The Fanaticism of Cleanliness

Then there is the question of clothes and this is closely connected with the parents' desire to impress relatives and friends. "No child should ever be asked to behave in such a way that Aunt Mary will approve." We have all heard the raging of the irate mother, "Now look at the state of your nice coat. Just look at your new gloves."

"BUT we believe it is necessary to go behind education in any formal sense to the beginnings of the education of children, the family; and beyond the question of learning to the questions of

morality and authority in the family. This subject has been treated superficially by most anarchist thinkers, ignored by many, seldom given the importance we believe it has."—*Resistance*, Nov., 1948.

Londoners are familiar with the dreary procession of proud parents through the parks, in their Sunday best, keeping their children to the paths when the poor kids are longing to tear around on the grass or to climb up the bank after sticks. I have seen a little boy in Regents Park, dressed up in solemn Sunday clothes, being spanked for taking off his glove to pick up a shining autumn leaf. "Every child," says Neill, "has the right to wear clothes of a such a kind that it does not matter a brass farthing if they get messy or not."

Worse by far is the attitude to so-called cleanliness. Nowadays, the child has lost the right even to evacuate his bowels or empty his bladder when he likes. He has to fit in to yet another time table. Parents boast of how well-trained their children are, which usually means that they have never dared to let their parents down by "doing it" on the carpet. I know parents whose children are almost afraid to go to sleep in case they should wet the bed. Of these cleanliness fanatics Neill says: "Any mother, who by word or expression shows that she disapproves of a child when it soils its garments or the floor, is helping to increase the sickness of the world." It really is outrageous that children should be given complexes about their ordinary natural functions and besides it is all so completely unnecessary. If children have self-regulation from the beginning and are left to go at their own speed they will automatically begin to use the pot anyway.

Sexual Activities

If mistakes about feeding and evacuation are bad, according to Neill mistakes about sex are the most dangerous of all. "Every neurosis starts with the early genital verbot. A child left to touch its genitals has every chance of growing up with a sincere happy attitude to sex." To-

day, as Neill admits, there are many parents who make no ban on masturbation. He takes no credit for this fact but it should be said here that no one has done more to give enlightenment on this question than A. S. Neill. Some of these enlightened parents, however, stop at the next step, heterosexuality, and stiffen with alarm if a small boy and girl have sex play. "I wonder," says Neill, "how much impotency and frigidity date from the first interference of a heterosexual relationship." Neill, with customary frankness, is quite honest about his own position at Summerhill. "I know that adolescent sex is not practical politics today. I know that I can write giving my opinion that it is the right way to to-morrow's health, bodily and psychic, but



if in my school I approve of my adolescent pupils sleeping together, my school would be in great danger of suppression by the authorities, so that I was a little smug in writing that Freudianism advocates saying what you like but not doing what you like. My school, however, is a very small item in human life and I am thinking to the long to-morrow when society will have realised how dangerous sex repression is."

Incidentally, Neill has some interesting things to say about sex education in school and he sees the limitations of pseudo-scientific sex instruction:

"Doctors know all about the anatomy of sex but they are not better lovers than the South Sea Islanders; most likely they are not nearly so good. The child is not so interested in daddy's statement that he puts his wee-wee into mother's wee-wee, as to why he does it. The child who has been allowed his own sex play will not need to ask why."

The Patriarchal Structure

The root of the whole truth seems to Neill to lie in the patriarchal family. "Man rules the home and he rules the land and he makes his home such that it furthers patriarchal rule." Home discipline, according to Neill, is fundamentally aimed at continuing patriarchal power whether it be in the church or the parliament or the city council. Authority is vested in those who desire an obedient youth and, as Reich points out, the best way to get obedience is to unman youth by an elaborate system of sex prohibitions and alarms. Reich said that capitalism must castrate the workers symbolically in order to get its full supply of docile, obedient, unrebelling wage slaves. It is true, but if capitalism dies, and it is dying fast, man-made authority will still demand the castration of youth for a long time to come.

Incidentally, of the subjection of women Neill says, "Many women, even if dimly, realise that the home is a prison for them, a homely harem, and they no longer accept Sultanship as their criterion of life and love." He ends his discussion of the patriarchal family with a challenge: "To be free souls happy in work and friendship and love or to be miserable bundles of conflicts hating ourselves and humanity. It is the challenging question of humanity and it must be answered. My answer is: Abolish the authority in the family. It may not be your answer but if you reject mine it is incumbent on you to find your own answer."

Anarchist Point of View

I make no apology for the lengthy quotations. My aim is to help to get this widely read and I think the best method

is to let it speak for itself. This is in some ways Neill's best book, partly because it contains his ideas on so many different subjects and partly because in it he has worked out his own particular point of view more thoroughly than in any previous book. Anarchists will be interested to discover how closely it has come to coincide with their own. Just a few examples: "The battle is between the believers in human freedom and the believers in the suppression of human freedom." "If the capitalist is to be replaced by the bureaucrat, then authoritative society will continue." "Extend bureaucracy under Socialism or Communism and the family will adapt itself to its new master and duly suppress the children sufficiently to make them obedient servants of the state and the town council." "I say we are pawns of the politicians and trade merchants and exploiters and we are pawns because we were trained to seek life negatively, humbly fitting ourselves into an authoritarian society, and ready to die for the ideals of its masters." "How shall we ever get the politicians and bureaucrats to give up their control of the state?" Perhaps man will have "to start again with a clean slate or better with a slate with 'Freedom' writ large on the wooden frame."

Neill constantly assures us in this book that he is writing for the ordinary parent and teacher. But it seems to me that some of our own anarchist educationists can learn much from Neill about freedom for children. A writer on education in this very journal recently laid it down dogmatically that he considered the free schools should aim at producing pacifists. This is going further even than Ferrer anticipated and one is tempted to quote the well-known dictum of the Jesuit. It has long been clear to me that many people support the free schools for the wrong reasons. The anarchist, it seems to me, should be supporting the free schools not because he hopes to turn out young anarchists or pacifists but because, being an anarchist believing in freedom and the individual personality, he can do no other. Perhaps Neill's chief virtue lies in the fact that he has no political or social axe to grind and believes in freedom for itself. So that Reich could truly say to him, in discussing the point that function is more important than purpose, "Your life work has been founded on the principle that function comes first. You don't have Summerhill in order that children should study or learn to work or become 'ists' of any kind. You let them function in their own play-work fashion and you postulate no purpose for them at all."

Spreading the Idea

This is an important book. It is to be hoped that it will have a wide sale and especially that it will find its way on to the shelves of every library in the land. For however much we may agree with its point of view, we must bear in mind the weight of prejudice and the strength of reactionary force opposed to these ideas. "Nevertheless, I remain an optimist," says Neill, "I see a very minute fraction of children growing up in freedom and happiness, sincere, brave, lovable in a world of hate and I am optimistic enough to believe that this spirit of Freedom will grow until man is as healthy and uninhibited as the lower animals are. It will take a long, long time."

The only way we can help to shorten the time is to do all in our power to spread the idea. Neill sees some hope, for example, in the Emergency Training Colleges, where there are many young men who have entered the teaching profession because they believe in it, many who have come out of the forces with a new angle on life and many, if they are encouraged, refuse to adopt the old ideas of education. This book, for all its iconoclastic fury, is essentially a hopeful book and will have been worth writing for this alone, if it succeeds in inspiring those parents and teachers, who hold a similar point of view, to work with greater effort for their goal with new hope. "Unneurotic life is on the horizon," says Neill, "and if by a miracle atomic warfare does not come, freedom to live and love and work will triumph in the end." TOM EARLEY.

CO-OPERATION

(Worldover Press).—Three new co-ops which appear to be genuine novelties have been started in different parts of the world. In France, a Readers' Co-op has been established to bring together readers and authors who want to publish their own works. Each member must take at least one share, of about a dollar. A co-op committee of experts will read manuscripts; summaries and criticisms are published in a monthly journal, and members decide which works they want to see in print. In Surinam, where hunting adds materially to food supplies, a Hunter's Co-op has been set up on producers' lines, shareholders splitting profits from a central warehouse according to game secured. In Milpa Alta, Mexico, a co-op formed exclusively of women poultry raisers and gardeners will undertake collective work for their common advancement, but along democratic lines.

Planning: Herd or Ego?

THIS little story raises a question that planners of all people cannot ignore; to what extent should the State interfere with personal liberty? The answer should be clear. It is that the State, being merely an organisation and not an organism, should exist only for the good of the individual and should curb him as little as possible. This is not universally believed. Two opposing ideas can be discerned in the world to-day. One might be called the Crystalline. It holds that the individual has meaning only in relation to the community, just as the elements of a crystal do not achieve meaning until joined in a definite form. The other is the Organic. Here the elements have significance in themselves and co-operate through individual qualities to satisfy community needs, which are in the end personal needs. In architecture, these two ideas are symbolised in the respective works of Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright. The planners do not seem to know which attitude to adopt, but there are indications that in their search for mechanical perfection they are leaning towards the Crystalline. The engineers, because they deal with inorganic materials, tend naturally towards the Crystalline. In spite of this they make more and more use of the word Tolerance. This word is heard too rarely in planning jargon,

MR. J. F. G. Roberts wants to build a bungalow in place of an existing shack on seven acres of land he owns at Stratton Strawless. The county planning committee suggested he should be found a suitable alternative site nearer a communal centre. . . . Although told by the clerk that it had no power to rescind a decision by the planning committee, the council referred back the veto on Mr. Roberts' plan to live alone." (Sunday Express, 9/1/49.)

even in England, where a liberal respect for human values and an instinctive aversion to any sort of rigid perfectionism have been the best of the national qualities. We have always tolerated our individualists, our cranks. Indeed, we have often been proud of them. This is as it should be, for all creation and all progress can only stem from the individual eccentric.

The present tendency in planning, as in all social organisation, is to restrict and frustrate the individual. This is aggravated by over-centralisation, one of the worst expressions of the Crystalline attitude. Bertrand Russell has been warning us repeatedly against this in his recent Reith lectures on the B.B.C. The more power is centralised, the less is direct human contact between individuals

ON this page we reproduce the leading article from last week's *Architects' Journal*. It is interesting not only for its clear exposition of the issues involved between the two social theories which it defines as the Crystalline and the Organic, but also because it represents an encouraging tendency which shows that the teaching of Kropotkin and Patrick Geddes are beginning to take effect amongst social scientists, and that the work of more recent libertarian thinkers, for example Lewis Mumford, Herbert Read and Alex Comfort, has not been in vain. Readers will remember that last year we reprinted a similar editorial from the bulletin of the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction ("New Earth or Perfect Hell", *Freedom*, 15/5/48) which was a fine statement of the anarchist position with regard to physical planning.

The author of the *Architects' Journal* leading article considers that "so long as there is physical shortage . . . the State must retain control", but it is not true that the State will maintain the condition of physical shortage since States do not use the wealth of natural resources and human activity for human purposes, but

possible, and the less tolerance is shown for those personal foibles which can alone bring colour and purpose to living.

The ideal human society might be defined as a harmonious anarchy. But so long as there is physical shortage, the individual must be in some degree in conflict with society, and the State must retain control, for the problem of liberty, is almost entirely economic. We are, however, in sight of solving the problem of adequate production, thanks to modern science, a fact which those who adopt the Crystalline idea do not wish to accept.

Meanwhile, a precept for the planners from Aristotle and also a slogan. The precept: "For the proper administration of justice and for the distribution of authority it is necessary that the citizens be acquainted with each other's characters . . . where this cannot be, much mischief ensues, both in the use of authority and in the administration of justice; for it is not just to decide arbitrarily, as must be the case, with excessive population." The slogan: "De-centralise. Tolerate. Let Mr. Roberts live alone."

—*The Architects' Journal*, Feb., 1949.

for preparation for war ("War is the Health of the State," said Randolph Bourne); and for the pie-in-the-sky economics of export? It is an understatement to say that "those who adopt the Crystalline idea do not wish to accept" the fact that we are "in sight of solving the problem of adequate production". For only the organic anarchic form of society would be capable of putting into effect the principle of "to each according to his needs"—the economic freedom which is the only real basis for any social freedom. All the same, it is encouraging to see a paper like the *Architects' Journal* ranging itself, consciously or not, on the side of anarchy.

THE Cercle Libertaire des Etudiants, 28 rue Serpente, Paris 6^e would like to get in touch with anarchist students in Britain or the United States. Comrades interested, please write to the above address. We have also been asked by a member of the F.A.F. (French Anarchist Federation) to put him in touch with an English comrade able to write in French. We shall be glad to send his address to anyone interested.

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APPEARANCES & REALITIES OF A MUNICIPAL ELECTION

IT is something useful, particularly in general surveys of the economic or social situation of a country, to pause for the study of a local event, in order to judge better the influences which are brought to bear on the particular facts.

The municipal election of the town of Grenoble (100,000 inhabitants) is one of these events.

It is an industrial town, whose principal trades are glove-making, food products, metalwork and textiles. Its life is to a great extent self-centred and lies outside the major poles of attraction constituted by Lyons and Marseilles. Its population is marked by the constant immigration of Italians, who are easily assimilated. Tourism and winter sports attract a great number of summer and winter visitors, whose presence helps to maintain a large shop-keeping class.

The elections were made necessary by the resignation of the Gaullist, Christian-Democrat and Socialist councillors after the disorders which broke out in the town on the day of General de Gaulle's arrival. The Gaullist group was weakened by the withdrawal of sympathetic members, scared by the violence used by the 'General's henchmen. As the strongest group was formed by the communists, the succession to the control of the municipality was taken by them while waiting for the counting of the votes.

As it was a question of a partial election, taking place in a calm period, all the parties conferred on it a great importance, and wished to make a token

election out of it. Duclos, secretary-general of the Communist Party, went so far as to say that "the world has its eyes fixed on Grenoble." And Pelewski, the right-hand man of de Gaulle, declared on his side that "the municipal elections have a national and international importance."

Three lists were presented. The Communist Party formed one in which figured, apart from its own militants, "unitary" socialists (that is to say fellow travellers) and "progressive" Christians, that is to say Stalinoid Catholics. The centralist parties, supporters of the government and the Third Force, gathered together and

LETTER FROM FRANCE

constituted a list in which figured radicals, catholics and socialists, augmented by a number of independents chosen from among the representatives of the liberal professions. As to the Gaullists, they presented not only their own men, but also numerous sympathisers and independents.

The tactics of propaganda were very different. The Stalinists, broken in to an experienced technique, worked systematically all the social strata. Their controlled organisations realised a great propaganda effort. The candidates who were connected with Trade Unions occupied themselves with the factories; those who specialised in the defence of tenants harped on the recent increase in rents; those who were petty shopkeepers protested against excessive taxes. At the same time they turned to profit their functions at the town hall to carry out spectacular distributions: coal for the old people; the opening of heated rooms for the destitute and workless. Promises were not spared, and the old slogan "Make the rich pay" was resurrected.

This infiltration was accompanied by a rapid but massive agitational campaign. The great Parisian orators were called in, and spoke of the threats to peace, of the rise of fascism, of the question of wages and prices. Simultaneously, the militants of the subsidiary organisations were occupied feverishly in gathering together and attracting all those who could be interested by any one of the points of the Communist programme (and we have seen that this programme was almost universal, satisfactions being, if not given, at least promised to all categories of the population). More than a dozen different types of poster were pasted on the walls.

At the opposite pole, the Gaullists, regarding the Communist core as impermeable, set themselves to gather votes among the members or sympathisers of the Third Force. On the local plane they defended the management of the preceding council, which had a Gaullist majority. On the national plane, their orators, who also had come from Paris (Malraux, Pelewski, Chaban-Delmas, Michelet) spoke of the Russian menace and of the need to constitute a European bloc inspired by France.

As to the Third Force, they neglected to organise public meetings (officially because they only wished to concern themselves with the administrative questions of the municipality, in practice because they lacked orators likely to stir up public enthusiasm).

After this flood of propaganda, of posters, tracts, meetings and demagoguery, the elections gave a new council whose composition differed very little from the old. Instead of 14 Communists (including one fellow-travelling socialist), 10 Third Force and 13 Gaullists, there are 15 Com-

munists, 12 Third Force and 10 Gaullists. The council is still unmanageable without a compromise.

After the insults, the denunciations, the rigorous manoeuvres, bargaining is in progress between the Communists and Third Force on one hand, Gaullists and Third Force on the other, and even between independents of all types.

There are, however, some lessons to be drawn from this experience. In the first place, municipal autonomy is dead. Its finances depend to a great extent on the goodwill of the State, that is to say of the party in power. It follows that the parties which clash on the local plane are merely subsidiaries of the vast political machines, themselves solidly dependent on international currents of influence.

Secondly, the effective management of the town is carried on by the actions of clerks and workmen, and the cesspools have been emptied, the streets paved, the dead buried, lighting assured, and children taught, before, during and after the municipal crisis which "attracted the attention of the world".

Finally, the transfer of national and international struggles into the municipal domain removes from the electors any possibility of having a say in the administration of their town, since they are made to choose, not honest and competent delegates, but omniscient gods. They are no longer asked to choose a mayor or a specialist of urban architecture, but Truman or Stalin, Moscow or Washington.

Without doubt we must seek in this paradox the explanation of a curious phenomenon; there were about 40% of abstentions.

There is one final point. In opposition to the communists there is no one to struggle in the midst of the working-class. Against Stalinist machiavellism and technique, there are only opposed the Gaullist bludgeon or governmental repression.

Thus, the working-class pursues, not its historic mission as certain pseudo-materialist messiahs announce and pretend to believe, but its passive rôle as a tool in the hands of the possessing classes or the totalitarianisms.

Three candidates for power presented themselves to the municipal electors of Grenoble. The power of all three can only rest on the working-class, which is indispensable to all power, but which is also inexistent as an enlightened and voluntary force. S. PARANE.

Naughtiness in the Y. C. L.

WHEN the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia emerged from the recent Peoples' War in place of the late unlamented Kingdom (but no great improvement on it) it was decided to build a lot of new roads and railways.

No sooner did they get their cue than the busy bees of King Street organised Youth Brigades of adolescent Stalinists to take part in this heroic piece of Socialist reconstruction.

It was entirely coincidental (?) that they acquired great faith in the New Order by doing so. In the great brotherhood (and sisterhood, too!) of amateur track layers, those stalwarts of British Stalinism, the Young Communist League were well to the fore.

They built their railroad by day and spent the nights in singing such old favourites as *Bandiera Rossa*, *Pick and Spade* and the *Red Flag*. In keeping with Joe Bent's Union Jack in Hyde Park, let us suggest that the British contingent should have rendered *Rule Britannia*. Shut up, you nasty people in Malaya, Indonesia, Greece, Palestine and Ireland!

They sat around the camp-fire and shouted all together in fifty different languages: "Long live the Peoples' Democratic Anti-Fascist Popular Communist Party!" Hear! Hear! Hosannah!—Amen! And when they left their labour of love and returned to unconverted England they knew in their dear little hearts that Uncle Tito was too, too wizard. Alas for Willy G. and Harry P. (who have dutifully parroted the clichés of the Cominform tirade) there are still far too many Y.C.L.'ers who think that Josip Broz is wizard.

This deviation on the part of impressionable youth is understandable from a psychological standpoint. The Bolshevik teen-agers are at a stage in

life when "love at first sight" is a common phenomenon. But the Party bosses ignore this aspect of the case and regard it as an unforgivable act of mutiny. Meanwhile, a silent grim battle goes on behind the closed doors of the Communist meeting places. The Party leadership has made another *faux pas*. They will make many more ere the final dissolution of their Party by the forces of Revolution.

The Y.C.L., at present the weakest section of an eclipsed movement is off the line to an unknown extent. Its members, indoctrinated in a land of "Socialist Reconstruction" cannot stomach the vituperative Cominform statement. Words such as "Turkish terror", "nationalist", and "opportunist" have been applicable to the U.S.S.R. since its very beginning. The Y.C.L.'ers are still young and innocent enough to be honest enough to appreciate this!

The matter will inevitably be "regularised" soon; some will recant, others will be excommunicated. Yet there has been a minor revolt and while that is possible amongst Stalinists there is hope for them.

Some of the red-starred, starry-eyed juveniles may yet try a copy of a revolutionary newspaper or perhaps even listen to an anarchist speaker. While there is that chance, there is the certainty that the intelligent among them will deviate yet more, this time to the only truly revolutionary movement—Anarchism!

SEAN GANNON.

NEWS in BRIEF :

SEGREGATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

(Worldover Press).—One of the most emphasized steps taken by the government of South Africa in its plans for total "apartheid", or racial segregation, is the establishment of a system on trains that closely resembles the Jim Crow practices of Southern states in America. Certain cars are marked "For Europeans only", and platform stops are to be arranged so that in getting on and off the trains, whites and Africans will not have to mingle. In some cases, subways have been arranged so that Africans must use them in going out of the stations, while main waiting rooms are prohibited.

During one case in a Cape Town Magistrate's Court, it was testified by a rail official that Japanese and Chinese would not be segregated, but could use the cars intended for "Europeans".

U.S. ARMS IN LATIN AMERICA

(Worldover Press).—Latin American liberals are pointing to what they imply is an almost automatic relationship between the purchase of arms in the United States by democratic governments south of the border, and prompt overthrows of those regimes by army force. Peru, it is pointed out, bought \$6,000,000 worth of U.S. arms and aeroplanes, and in a few weeks its government was overthrown. Venezuela imported \$1,000,000 worth of bombs, equipment and rifles, and its democratic Gallegos government was tossed out shortly thereafter. The Latin Americans are noting that arms shipments have been made recently from the United States to Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico and El Salvador—where another army coup recently took place.

Premature Adults?

IN the recapitulation theory we find the view expressed that every child is a recapitulation of the evolution of mankind; and in spite of some controversy, there is I think, general agreement regarding the fundamental idea. Now, I think this can be correlated with my own view that the psychology of the child and of the savage have much in common—for the lack of differentiation between consciousness and the unconscious, between factual and phantasy: fetishes regarding objects and food; and (I would suggest) the desire for a "religion", are very much the same in both cases.

The evidence seems to show that a "religion" is a vital part of the savage's culture—an integral part of his social structure; and where Western Civilisation has destroyed the religion and culture of the savage it has accordingly broken down his sociality and dignity. The savage gone Western, and aping the whites, who has lost his self-respect, spontaneity, and "racial" dignity, is an incongruous and unpleasant sight—but might not the same be said of the child who has been turned prematurely adult and who has adopted the adult's ways?

However, I am not suggesting that our educationalists use quite the same technique as our empire builders; but what I do suggest is that we do our best to destroy the child's "childishness" with an education based on our over-conscious, factual, adult philosophy. Perhaps some people think that the objective/scientific point of view is an absolute one; I disagree, for whether we like it or not, man is a subjective being, and a mechanistic materialist philosophy is only really suitable for an automaton.

In my opinion, children are not just small adults; they can and should be regarded as a different species; and a species which appears to be very much immune from the type of dog-

matic/metaphysical education which affects adults. Further, I would say that the natural child is a primitive creature, a creature for whom a phantasy life, a "religion", a mythology, and a subjective attitude are as vital as its daily bread; and if we force him to be ashamed of his fairyland and Father Christmas, and compel him to repress these beliefs, if we talk him out of his phantasies with our over-conscious adult rationalism, then we are doing incalculable harm. The child must be allowed to live out his unconscious life before he grows into an adult: his liking for the Christmas Story is no mere streak of irrationality; it is a most consistent and natural part of his cultural life. The progressive schools have been too much of a reaction against old standards and I for one, suspect that several babies have been lost whilst dispensing with the dirty water. They apparently believe that a scientific education can be attained simply by granting physical freedom for the children, and by replacing the Bible lectures with the theory of evolution. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the personality of the child is too big for such methods, and if anyone can tell me how a child can have complete freedom without the extirpation of the personality of every one of the teachers, and an environment consisting of a mental vacuum, I should be greatly interested. However, I do not think such complete freedom, or agnosticism, is either necessary or desirable, and the least we should expect from the school is a compensation for the bad influences of the outside environment.

There is still a long way to go before we work out an approach to education compatible with the personality and potentialities of the child, but I think we could get off to a good start if we stopped telling the boy "to act like a man", and gave him instead a pride in being a child.

D. W. HOPPEN.

THROUGH THE PRESS

THE BIGGER THE LIE...

Moscow radio said to-day that the foundation of Soviet life rests on freedom of speech.

Commentator Isayev declared in an English-language broadcast, picked up in London by the Soviet monitor, that Russian trade unionists expressed their opinions freely on Cabinet ministers as well as each other. This criticism, he said, often appears in the labour press. "On freedom of speech rests the foundation of Soviet life," Mr. Isayev said. N.Y. Herald Tribune, 15/2/49.

AFTER THE ELECTIONS

According to well-informed opinion here, the civil rights programme for Negroes—which commands the overwhelming approval of both Democrats and Republicans—may be the first plank to collapse in President Truman's electoral platform.

The reasons lie, first, in the fanaticism of about a dozen Southern Senators opposed to civil rights, and, secondly, in Congressional arithmetic. Under this the Democratic Party, deprived of this little Southern group's votes, instead of being in a majority, will find itself in the minority. Observer, 20/2/48.

WHAT THEY GET UP TO

The Rev. Willis P. Miller, 28, pastor of the Disciples of Christ First Christian Church at Lynn, Mass., shared his pulpit with a new "assistant"—a ventriloquist's dummy named Victor who interrupts his sermons and Bible stories with questions, and, occasionally, quips. Time, 21/2/49.

MORE EXPENSIVE THAN ETON

The weekly cost of maintaining a boy in a remand home is £6 14s. 11d. A girl costs £4 8s. 3d.

This was stated at Bristol City Council meeting yesterday. Eton school fees are £300 (278 a year ago). Harrow asks £298. News Chronicle, 23/2/49.

SOC. v. SOC.

The Northern Ireland Socialist Party broke off relations last night with the Eire Socialist Party—"because of the Eire Party's decision to form branches in Ulster." Daily Express, 22/2/49.

VOTING OR BLIND GUESS?

The Japanese people went to the polls to-day to elect 466 members of the Lower House, in the third general election since the surrender.

Interest in the election since the campaign began has been noticeably lacking and a high rate of abstention is expected. Officials of the election supervision committee point out that before the war the rate of abstention was only 17 to 20 per cent, whereas it rose to 28 per cent. in the 1946 election and to 32 per cent. in 1947. One reason for the general apathy is that, as a result of the tightening of the election law, it has become almost impossible for ordinary people to know who the candidates are and for what they stand. Manchester Guardian, 24/1/49.

EDUCATION

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D. W. HOPPEN.

FREEDOM PRESS

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ANARCHIST ACTIVITIES

NORTH EAST LONDON GROUP

THE North East London Anarchist Group has been in existence 2½ years now and during that time its main activities have been the organisation of a discussion group and the issuing of a manifesto. We have at all times attempted to avoid a narrow approach to the subject of anarchism, so much so that our discussions have ranged over such varied subjects as spiritualism, the position of the artist, and Quakerism. Recently, our meetings have been concerned with biotechnics, the universality of religion, the problem of conscription, and last Tuesday a projected series of talks on great anarchists of the past was inaugurated by a really excellent analysis of Bakunin's career by F. A. Ridley.

However, we have never envisaged the group's activities as being confined to dis-

cussion alone. Our main object has been to find a new point of departure for anarchists, to replace the obviously worn conceptions of the past. Our efforts in this direction may not have been entirely successful, but this is perhaps due to the exceptionally unfavourable circumstances in which we are now fated to live. No-one can deny that the times are unusually unsympathetic to the spread of libertarian ideas, a fact which makes it even more imperative that we should ascertain exactly what we want and why. We feel that anarchism is not so much a theory of society, though it is that too, as a philosophy which should touch our lives at every point, not at some future date, but here and now. Two things for which we claim especial importance are the necessity for group co-operation rather than mass persuasion, and the keeping of an open mind on many things anarchists are apt to take for granted,

insofar as that is compatible with our beliefs. For instance, we have recently found it possible to discuss methods of co-operation with the local I.L.P. group with regard to matters on which we find we are in agreement, and from this a working arrangement of joint meetings has arisen. Finally, we welcome such articles as the reprint from *Resistance* recently published in *Freedom* as a genuine attempt at the essential task of re-examining anarchism under the light of present knowledge and events.

Pressure of events has recently led us to change our place of meeting to Wanstead Community Centre House, a procedure which has shocked some worthy councillors, whose conception of anarchism can only be described as naive. So far, this has not proved a set-back, but even if it does, comrades in N.E. London can always be assured that our meetings will continue to take place on alternate Tuesdays, and that they will always be welcome. M.N.

THE BRISTOL ANARCHIST GROUP

THE public meeting of the 4th January, held as usual in the Kingsley Hall, Old Market Street, was again devoted to questions and discussion. These free discussion meetings have always given non-anarchist visitors a chance to put forward their own particular explanation of the old saying, "Anarchism won't work." But at the same time, these visitors have always been the instigators of a lively and thought-provoking discussion. This meeting, although much smaller than usual, due to an unavoidable delay in getting it announced, was no exception.

Many points were touched upon, such as the taking over of the means of production, the abolition of the wage system, the defence of an anarchist society against invasion, in fact, the same old questions once more.

The most noticeable feature of the discussion was the way in which most people manage to confound the present-day methods of "running affairs" with those of the proposed anarchist society. "Supposing a number of people decided to carry on producing luxury goods such as cosmetics or expensive evening gowns, while the majority of the community are organising the production of essential goods—what would you do?"

Well, the question and the definitions, and the answer can only be suppositions, but until you have tried to explain fully such a question, it is amazing how many misconceptions have to be cleared away before an understanding is finally reached.

The main purpose and the main activity of the Group is to tell people about anarchism—the free discussion meeting is our best medium. P.W.

OVERDUE DISCOVERY

Moviemaker Sam Goldwyn welcomed television with some rolling prose for the *New York Times Magazine*: "The future of motion pictures, conditioned as it will be by the competition of television, is going to have no room for the deadwood of the present or the faded glories of the past." And a good thing, too, thought Goldwyn: "It will take brains instead of just money to make pictures."

Time, 21/2/49.

Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

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

MARCH 6 Charles Hatcher
"Organisation in Industry"
MARCH 13 George Melly
"How to make a Bomb"
MARCH 20 Bert Smith
"Materialism"

HAMPSTEAD MEETINGS TEMPORARILY DISCONTINUED

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.
NEXT MEETING MAR. 15th

BIRMINGHAM ANARCHIST CIRCLE

Regular fortnightly discussions are being held without premeditated subjects. All comrades and readers of "Freedom" welcomed.
S. E. Parker, 72, Coldbath Road, Billesley, Birmingham, 14.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

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

ANTI-ELECTIONEERING IN GLASGOW

OUR meetings at the Central Halls every Sunday, attended by audiences varying from 100 to 300, have continued ever since the Summer School. The questions and discussion have been of a high standard. We are about to concentrate on a campaign of boycotting the election booths. We have a canvas on a frame fixed on the back of the motor saying: "Vote for NOBODY—say the Anarchists." This was used in conjunction with the loud speaker at Morrison's meeting here recently. There is a Municipal Election in Glasgow in May and the 'Labour' Jobholders are getting the wind up and have started early with their preparations. In January they tried to book our car with loud speaker for May 1st, 2nd and 3rd. We naturally refused; instead it will be used as described above. We hope the Workers will

respond, as a first conscious step towards social sanity. What we lack at the moment is numbers of active Anarchists willing to take our literature everywhere. We also wish to widen our circle of speakers.

A proof of the logic of our Anarchist consistency is shown by our attitude to the "Mindszenty" case. At our meeting on the 12th inst. I spoke on this subject. Eddie who had not been on the platform, and had not spoken to me, followed. Both of us adopted the same analysis as *Freedom* on this question. I had opened up by stating that being "Atheists" we were very lucky... we couldn't be "Excommunicated". This was too much for two R.C.'s who immediately got out. These new defenders of "Free Speech" will lose considerably by their publicity! FRANK LEECH.

THE TWO C.P.'S

UNITY between the Conservatives and Communists is not so new or extraordinary as both would like to make out. Their affinity of interests is as close as those of the two Imperialisms and capitalist Powers they support. We saw during 1941-45 how close this United Front could be. The "Communists" supported Churchill to the point where their patriotic adulation became embarrassing to the old-fashioned jingoes who preferred to tinge their out-dated flag-waving with a slightly more radical flavour. The most diehard Conservatives spoke on fellow-traveller platforms: such as Viscount Castlereagh. This served to give the required Right Wing Tory flavour to Communist pro-Russian campaigning, to invoke the same sort of patriotism as the Russian Nationalists called for at home, while it removed the pro-Nazi tinge that this circle of Tories had acquired from their activities immediately before the war. Diehard Tories such as the Duchess of Atholl, who before the war was the first Tory fellow-traveller, were left in the van as the *Daily Express* whipped up its incredibly pro-Russian burst of enthusiasm that has somewhat disappeared now. Even so late as 1945 when the war was over and there was no particular need for the united front to be maintained, they could not forget the joys of unity—at Paddington, Lord Beaverbrook counselled

Communist hecklers to "vote for Stalin's pal, Churchill, while the Communists urged the electorate that there was no reason why Churchill should not be included in a Labour Government (as indeed, apart from the views of both Churchill and the Labour Party, there was not).

However, Mr. Churchill's position since the war as being unlikely to be Prime Minister again unless there is another war, which has of course nothing whatever to do with his enthusiasm for another war, has led to coldness and tension between the erstwhile Tory-Communist friends. While the Tories support a cold war against Russia, needless to say, the Stalinites will be opposed to them to a certain extent.

But we hope nobody will run away with the idea that this opposition is anything but expedient, for an interesting example of a new C.P. campaign for unity with the Tories comes to light from Hackney. Hackney like most East End boroughs has an overwhelming Labour majority. In this case there are only three anti-Labour members; Councillor Blaston for the Commies and Councillors Hegerty and Milbourne for the Connies. Councillor Blaston often moves motions which nobody seconds. On Wednesday, 23rd February, Councillor Milbourne, following the usual Tory line, moved a motion attacking the Labour Council for two items relating to direct labour schemes for the erection of Council dwellings, supporting these being given out to tender or to "responsible and reputable firms". That is to say, attacking the whole scheme of Council building, as opposed to allowing this work to be done by so-called "free enterprise". As Mr. Milbourne was away, Mr. Blaston nobly

KRAVCHENKO REVELATIONS

(Continued from page 1)
valueless evidence, since it was evidence by "stooges", the trial has revealed much information in regard to the Russian political system and conditions in that country. At the hearing on Wednesday, February 24th, a woman gave evidence which, by the way it was presented, had the stamp of truth about it and undoubtedly created a very strong impression on the Court and on the politically-minded public following the trial. The woman was the daughter of the well-known philosopher, Martin Buber, and wife of the German Communist Heinz Neuman. She herself had been a Party member from 1921 to 1937, and her husband undertook a number of important missions for the Party, but like so many other faithful Party members he was denounced as a deviationist and was eventually arrested and held in the Loublianka Central Prison of the N.K.V.D. At the end of 1937 he disappeared. But his wife, though she could obtain no work in Russia, was refused an exit visa by the Russians who later, in June, 1938,

arrested her. She was charged with counter-revolutionary activity, and though she denied the charges, no trial took place. She was transferred from prison to the camp at Karaganda in S. Siberia. Readers of *Freedom* have already been introduced to this notorious camp, in connection with the Spanish republicans interned there. Mrs. Neuman described the camp which is more than twice the size of Denmark. At first Mrs. Neuman was given clerical work, but after she had made an application to have her case reviewed, she was transferred to the punishment section of the camp where she was kept until 1940. She disclosed that in these camps there were four different rations. The worst rations were for those in the punishment section, the second were for office workers and drivers, the third for building workers, while the best rations were reserved for technicians and engineers. When the defence counsel asked whether it was a closed camp Mrs. Neuman answered, "There are no walls. One lives in a Steppe. Escape

is impossible as armed sentries of the N.K.V.D. patrol the area." Asked by the judge under what conditions she lived in the camp she said that she occupied a hut "where I could touch the roof by raising my hand."

In 1940, that is, after the signing of the German-Soviet pact, she and other German political prisoners were handed over to the German S.S. and the next five years were spent in the camp of Ravensbruck.

In cross-examination, Mrs. Neuman revealed that there were both men and women at Karaganda, but that sexual relations were forbidden or punished by three days' solitary confinement. Naturally this was no deterrent and children were born in the camp, but were separated from their mothers. "We lived at starvation level. When a woman arrived at the camp we would say to her, 'Find yourself a man and he will steal food for you.' The woman would then prostitute herself, that is to say, would choose two or three men so as to eat twice or three times as much."

TO THE EDITORS—

LETTER FROM PORTUGAL

(The following letter has been received by us together with copies of the Portuguese anarcho-syndicalist organ *A Batalha*, illegally issued in opposition to the dictatorship.)

Dear Friends,

We have received the newspapers *Freedom*, *Libertaire* and *Solidaridad Obrera*, for which we thank you very much. Through these we are following with interest the principal events in the world. We send our good greetings to all comrades.

This month, as everybody here and abroad knows, Salazar and his men have the intention of showing to the public opinion of the world that they are "democratic men" and so he gives some "Liberty with conditions", of which all members of the Opposition take advantage, to hide the crimes of the regime. However, great persecution continues.

The political fight is between two men: one, Carmona, the present Portuguese President of the Republic, and the other, Norton de Matos, former Portuguese Ambassador in London, who is an old member of the Republican Party and who is gathering all "democratic opposition" (since Catholics, Republicans, even Socialists and Communists are supporting him).

We enclose some copies of *A Batalha* the organ of the Portuguese C.G.T. (General Confederation of Labour), the clandestine organisation of workers, at present the only anarcho-syndicalist organisation. As you may see, we are obeying our principles and not giving collaboration in this "political fight" but are giving our adhesion in the anti-fascist struggle.

With the greetings of Portuguese comrades,
Lisbon, 31/1/49. XXX.

stepped into the breach and seconded the motion.

He said: "I think any member of this Council out of common decency, ought to second another member's motion in circumstances like these, to give him a chance of stating his views." Thanking Councillor Blaston, the mover commented: "He is the only one on the Council who would do such a thing."

Is this not a direct invitation to the Tories to second the Communists' motions? Is it not hypocritical for the Hackney Communists to make housing a local electoral issue if they are prepared to support the Tory attack on direct labour? Councillor Blaston dissociated himself from the motion he seconded and did not vote for it; but we may fairly assume he was not interested, as a Communist, in free speech for the Tory underdog. He was interested in getting a working agreement to put forward his own propaganda. This is an issue likely to arise in many East London boroughs following the concentrated effort of the Communists to get representatives on those councils dominated by the Labour Party. They would certainly be as prepared to make use of Tory support to get a voice in local affairs as they have in the past used Labour support to get a voice in national affairs (and particularly in the trade union movement).

When in municipal power we have little doubt as to what Communist councillors, Communist aldermen, Communist magistrates, will do for the people. We have had an example of "revolutionary" magistrates in Glasgow, when the I.L.P. got to places of municipal power and managed to get "Revolutionary Socialist" J.P.'s to send people to prison. There is much dissatisfaction with municipal socialism and place-hunting careerism in the Labour boroughs. If anyone is putting his faith in the Communists to be any different, or in a Tory-C.P. campaign to wake up the complacency of Transport House, they are in for a big shock. LONDONER.

NOT INTERESTED?

DEAR COMRADES,
Most readers of *Freedom* are, I hope, also readers of *Resistance*, and will regret with me that the group is having difficulty in bringing out their paper regularly. I, for one, cannot help feeling that it is largely their own fault, and this criticism to some extent applies also to *Freedom*. *Resistance* has never made a serious attempt to build up an appeal to working-class activity. Mere reports of workers' militancy are not enough; there should be articles favouring Workers' Control as a stepping-stone to anarchist-syndicalism. Workers, male and female, are not interested in Sex, Art or Education. It's no argument to say they should be, they are not, as all who are in direct connection with them know. They regard these questions as secondary. They are interested in the cost of living, in the length of the working day and the conditions under which they have to work. And to some extent in their freedom. They are critical of T.U. leaders and of T.U.'s. They do want to know how Workers' Control will function and they are frightened, especially in the nationalised industries, that the "Comms" under the T.U. and Government officials will be more whips in the hands of the bosses.

Many, most, have not reasoned out all these questions, but what is equally important, they feel them to be so. These are the questions that the open-air speaker has to face in industrial districts. These questions would, or could, be the starting-off point for a basis of organisation on anarchist-syndicalism. To create a movement along these lines means a vigorous open-air agitation in the parks and street corners; the circulation of our literature in the workshops can be done by those who cannot speak.

This is not thinking in terms of "1914"—it is a realistic view of things as they are to-day. There is a public wanting to hear of Anarchism and Syndicalism, but they want that message in language which they can understand. What use would it be to offer to a dock-labourer in London, Glasgow or Liverpool *Resistance*, *Politics*, or many of the articles in *Freedom*? It is not the ideas, it is the language in which they are expressed that would put the workers off.

I will probably be told that *Freedom* is not read by manual workers but by middle-class workers, that labourers are hopeless and it will be pointed out how few workers support the "Left-wing" papers. That at present is only too true. Every few years we get these slumps, especially after a war. Some years ago, we had a similar situation in Dublin; the intellectuals saw the evils and what they thought a way out. They wrote and lectured, without any effect, and they became convinced the fight was hopeless. It took men, labourers who lived workers' lives, who spoke their language, men like Connolly and Larkin, to translate the ideas into the language of the people. Their slogans became DEEDS. They altered the thought of Europe and U.S.A. and perhaps many other parts of the world.

The line of action I am advocating is in the tradition of Anarchism in its more heroic days. If it's not taken we may degenerate into little middle-class circles, forever discussing "The Function of the Orgasm" and similar favourite topics of the mentally emasculated.

MAT KAVANAGH.

* The current issue of *Resistance* is the last until the group has accumulated sufficient funds to finance the next number.—Eds.

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