

Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

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Threepence

CRACKS IN THE CITADEL

REACTION IS ON THE DEFENSIVE!

REVOLUTIONARY changes in the structure of society are brought about by the determined action of large masses of the population during periods of flux. Almost in a moment, as it seems, forms and practices sanctified by centuries are swept away, to be replaced by new ideas which reflect more revolutionary ways of regarding society and its functions. The study of revolutionary history gives only a dim explanation of the causes of these social cataclysms. What is it that makes a whole population, hitherto apparently docile to the ideas of a ruling class, suddenly throw off apathy and resignation and take the social initiative into its hands? Injustice and misery have existed for centuries, but it is only suddenly that the decisive protest is made, and the causes that go to produce it remain obscure. As Benoit Malon, the French Communist, remarked: "The Revolution always takes the revolutionaries by surprise." For this reason it is never sound to take the seeming apathy of a people as a final and unchanging condition, and so to turn away from revolutionary hopes.

But if the unknown force from below remains imponderable there is another aspect of revolutionary situations which can be studied with profit. This is what may be called the morale of the ruling-class. It has constantly been observed that a class can only govern effectively if it believes in its own ideology. Scepticism and iconoclasm can eat away the foundations of this ideology and in so doing sap its power to inform the decisive action necessary to preserve power, especially in moments of stress. This is the reason why the sceptical code of liberalism is so execrated by totalitarian regimes.

Both the Great French Revolu-

tion and the Russian Revolution were preceded by a slow intellectual erosion of the tradi-

tional conceptions of the ruling groups. When the decisive moment came reactionary ideology proved to be so thoroughly debilitated by the advance of thought that it was quite unequal to the task of inspiring an energetic resistance to the onslaughts of the workers. It is even possible that the mass of the ruled were obscurely aware of the intellectual weakness and bankruptcy of the reaction, and that this awareness provided the impulse to throw off lethargy in favour of revolutionary action.

Signs are not lacking that there is a waning of confidence in many of the traditional concepts of the ruling-class here, a

(Continued on page 4)

SHINWELL'S THREAT TO WALES

THE current issue of "The Welsh Nation" reports that over a hundred students of the University of Aberystwyth howled down Mr. Emmanuel Shinwell when he visited the Welsh town to open a Territorial Army recruiting campaign on February 14th. For half an hour the students held up a procession of military vehicles. They carried posters and banners with slogans such as: "Wales Wants Peace and Prosperity". The Welsh students continually shouted: "We want Shinwell, until at last he approached a loud speaker Army van. He was greeted with boos from the crowd. In the midst of the din, Mr. Shinwell said: "Do be respectful for your own sake. Never mind about me." He was greeted with a reply from the crowd: "We don't care a tinker's cuss about you."

Then, according to "The Welsh Nation", Shinwell "... uttered a taunt which will act as a boomerang upon him, if ever he again visits Wales. Addressing the students, he said: 'If you are not disciplined now you will be disciplined when we get you.'

It is a typical example of English imperialist, socialist arrogance. It sheds light on the methods of the English imperial army. It shows what happens to the eighteen-year-old Welsh conscripts.

It is a challenge to every Welshman to see that Shinwell's recruiting campaign will be a complete failure in Wales. It is a challenge to Wales to resist to the utmost English imperial conscription on Wales. Welshmen must use every means within their power to see that Shinwell's 'when we get you,' will never materialise."

"Who would be free themselves must strike the blow."

—BYRON

"Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."

—Dr. JOHNSON

Planning for Profit

ONE of the supposed benefits of over-all, national planning is presumably that what one loses on the roundabouts, one makes on the swings. That is, that taking industry as a whole, a balance can be struck wherein the less profitable sections can be maintained by the profitable sections until such time as they can be reconstructed. Or, if reconstruction is not practicable, can be maintained indefinitely so long as they are producing what is needed, even if at a loss.

But, like many of the supposed benefits of nationalisation, this is not how it works out. In coal-mining, for example, after making a considerable financial loss over the first year's working, the National Coal Board was able to show a profit on the second. The first years' loss was due to the large amount of reconstruction and mechanisation put in hand by the Board—and quite right, too. The second years' profits were due to the benefits being felt from this capital expenditure. But it is increasingly obvious that the idea of profit-making is now becoming of primary importance with the Coal Board—and to such an extent that it no longer takes the broad view of the industry as a whole, but is demanding profit from each and every pit—or closure.

Perhaps the way we look at this depends upon how we think of profit and loss. The capitalist, of course, considers making a profit the main function of industry—if not the reason for existence of industry. Oh, yes, he will wrap it up in high-sounding phrases about national greatness, the British (American, German, Argentinian, etc.) way of life and so forth, but what he is really concerned with is making a profit, and if his investments in the British (etc.) way of life

begin to show a loss, he will pull out and, if necessary, start selling arms to the enemy, or do something else equally British in the sacred name of the profit-making economy. That is looking at profit and loss purely from the financial point of view, taking only figures in a ledger as your guide.

Now, there is a lot of soul-searching going on at the moment among Marxists and other earnest social thinkers as to whether it is strictly true to regard the managerial mode of economy which is being put into practice in Britain now as capitalism. While it is broadly true that it is not capitalism in the old sense, however, it is obviously possible for a mode of economy to change its outward appearance without radically altering its essential nature, and in order to discover whether this in fact what has happened under nationalisation, we have only to take one or two of the essential characteristics of capitalism and see if they still apply. (For Anarchists it is even simpler. We look at everything from the point of view of its fundamental affect on people and not as to whether it conforms to our political theory.)

If we take the profit motive then as the most essential feature of capitalism and discover that it still applies to-day in nationalised industries, can we not then say that capitalism has not given way in any radical form to an economy which puts needs before profits, but that in fact it is strengthened by concentration in the hands of State boards?

At Godrergraig, in the Swansea valley, South Wales, the miners of the Tareni pit are learning just this lesson. Tareni produced some of the best anthracite coal in the world. 294 local men built their lives around their work in this mine, gave their sweat and blood to produce the basic material for the above-mentioned "British way of life". But the pit worked at a loss—financially. At one time last year, Tareni was losing £10,000 a month—£120,000 a year. As much as Winston Churchill was paid for his war memoirs.

So Tareni has been closed down—and is only one of many—and of the 294 colliers, 170 are now working at other pits, in some cases, owing to the seniority system, at wages half of what they were getting at Tareni. The other 124 were declared redundant; some have left mining for good, 70 are now unemployed with slim changes of getting work in the area, if at all.

The union agreed to the closure, although the men still claim the decision was "revenge" for the independent, militant attitude they have always adopted to the "bosses", whether private owners or the State.

The National Coal Board will this year show an increased profit. The efficiency experts will have earned their large salaries. And the figures in the ledger will be balanced by a derelict pit, a deserted village and 294 uprooted men. The national economy will be secure, and earnest social thinkers will still be wondering whether it is strictly true to say that capitalism still exists.

P.S.

FRANCO'S ATTEMPTS AT WHITEWASH

THE Franco regime in Spain is still shaky. After ten years of rule it has not been able to consolidate its position, and the reason is solely that it has never been accepted by its people. Aggression may be "condemned by world opinion" at first but after a year or two it begins to wear a more pleasing mask; dictatorships or conquests have always been recognised sooner or later, and the Fascist regimes were all able to settle down eventually. But Franco has not been able to do this because the conflict still continues. Hitler and Stalin and Mussolini not only defeated their opponents but were able to malign them and distort them to succeeding generations. In Spain, however, the working-class resistance to Franco—conditioned by its years of Anarchist influence—was defeated only by superior military power from outside and political treachery, never by loss of faith on the part of the vanquished. The other dictators could eventually claim that "national opinion", after being thinned out by death, imprisonment and hunger, was behind them. But Franco still cannot do that, with any degree of success.

The foreign policy of Franco's Spain has, of course, changed, since his old pals have all disappeared from the earth, and his would-be friends of to-day are the American militarists who have no ideological objection to his regime, and are quite willing to take him on Cardinal Spellman's word as being a faithful stooge for his new employers. Since he would be prepared to fight Russia to the last Spaniard (other than Generals and Bishops), he may be considered sufficiently democratic for current American politics—he would certainly get by the Un-American Activities Committee and that is all that matters. But there is one snag, and that is that the worth of the

Spanish Army—the Moors to-day unreliable, the regular soldiers worn out with fighting, and the masses definitely hostile—would ill compensate for the fact that the Russian Imperialists would have a wonderful propaganda weapon with which to divide France and Italy, and even cause awkward questions to Socialist Ministers in England. The Communists would have a big opportunity to woo working-class opinion, not on the debatable ground of which of the two Big Powers to support, but on the solid ground of anti-Fascism. (The Communists would certainly support Franco as a New Democracy if he would cast his lot in with Stalin, but that is another point.)

What is now happening in Spain, therefore, is an attempt to soften up opinion towards the re-emergence of the Spanish Government into world affairs, that is to say, into war. Franco can only move cautiously, for he has never been a free agent. He has the vast feudal and clerical domination to deal with. The grandees have never forgiven or forgotten one scrap of their bitterness of exile in the gambling-houses of Le Touquet. They are out to squeeze every ha'penny from the peasant, not only to take back the land but to grind them down and make any attempt at condonation impossible. The priests, with the mentality of the Middle Ages, have set their faces determinedly against any slight concession to freedom of thought for the Protestant heretics (they are too busy offering prayers for Mindszenty) let alone the "atheist rabble". Moreover, the Falange dare not be liberal because it knows that the stricken populace has so much to avenge with the slightest hope of liberation.

Franco has therefore been playing an old-fashioned game of condemnations in order to retrieve afterwards, the game played by the Tsar in his heyday. This is the only explanation of the numbers sentenced to death and pardoned by later reprieves. There is the utmost need for vigilance and constant protests against the death sentences being passed; but nobody should be deceived at reprieves coming from the Government or Papal intervention. The recent reprieve for our Anarcho-Syndicalist comrade, Enrique Marco Nadal, is cause for jubilation if we

could only hope it were coming into actual effect. But so many have been slaughtered, imprisoned for life, or 'disappeared' since the days of 1939 that it is impossible to know.

An Old Wrong Righted—But Why?

One of the interesting flicks of the snake's tail has been passed over in the British Press, with the exception of the *Jewish Chronicle*, and concerns the new Spanish official attitude towards the Jewish community. The Inquisition's heirs have relaxed their policy towards Jews, and freedom of worship has been allowed them in Spain once more (not being such 'direct competition' as the Protestants, maybe) but also an unprecedented offer of Spanish citizenship has been made to the "Sephardin" (the descendants of the once flourishing Spanish-Jewish community, expelled by the Inquisition in 1492). This community has kept its separate Spanish association throughout the centuries in the same way as the Jewish communities generally kept their links with Israel. In England, the Sephardic community dates back to Cromwell's days, and of upper-class associations, unlikely to be interested in such an offer, but in the East, particularly in the Levant, they are often nationless and comprise both the very poor and also the merchant class, in whom Franco is interested in order to strengthen his trading and political position in the Mediterranean, in Greece, Egypt, Turkey and the Balkans.

Franco has also favoured the Israeli Government, since although idealists amongst the Left supporting the new Government like to compare it with the Spanish Civil War (themselves on the anti-fascist side), the Right was equally prepared to compare it with the opposite side since it was a war against the Arabs whom (despite his use of them in 1936) Franco has always oppressed, in pursuance of the historic rôle of Spanish Imperialism. Victory for the Arab League in Palestine would have been disastrous from Franco's point of view in strengthening Moorish nationalism. The Labour Government is inclined to friendly moves

from Franco's Spain for the same reason that it makes overtures to Nehru's India; they can see only the "Moslem menace" in front of their noses and no farther.

This move of Franco's has been welcomed by some of the nationless Sephardic (now Eastern) communities in the Middle East and one can hardly blame them, knowing little of what has happened in Spain for five hundred years, let alone ten, and appreciating their position in a sea of intolerance and hostility (particularly in those countries where they have been more or less written off by the Zionists who are considered by many Oriental Jews to be strongly biased in favour of European Jewish settlers only). It is not even known how many, if any, have accepted the offer, and it is certain the Sephardic congregations in such countries as England would not even take such an offer of citizenship seriously. The Jewish congregations in Spain may certainly be glad of some respite in the persecutions they have faced since the importation of Hitlerism.

But what is important is that world opinion should not be deceived. Franco is not going to ease up in any respect and while liberal opinion may like to deceive itself once he is accepted as an ally, the fact remains that nothing has changed. The old gang are still in power, unaltered. They would like a King, not to "ease the people's grievance" but to give themselves more pomp and power and finally do away with the innovations since 1931. Racial persecution was only an imported aberration; religious persecution must and will continue for all non-Catholics but the present Jewish community in Spain itself is so small Rome may forgo its age-old attempts on their "stiff necks", for the sake of a policy of Mediterranean trade, alliance against the Arabs, and a pact with Israel. Political opponents will still be shot and imprisoned, but for the sake of show, to put papal clemency in the good light and deceive world opinion, reprieves may come off.

But the old shoddy jumble of feudalism will go on until the new generation of Spanish workers gets up and licks its wounds, and adds one more chapter to its gallant history.

INTERNATIONALIST.

THE article by our American comrades seemed to us to be necessary and valuable; we hope the following hasty notes will help to further the discussion it should provoke. We agree substantially with what the authors have to say, though we are not in accord with some of the attitudes implied. Perhaps other commentators will disagree with statements we should also contest if we had more space and time.

1. Tradition

There is nothing inherently wrong with tradition; it may be the crystallization of the best knowledge.

Not only the best knowledge; also the best emotional and physical attitudes, the best ways of feeling about the world and the most skilful ways of doing a job. But the world and the job changes; this determines, partly, whether a tradition shall become a convention or remain alive. It is determined also by the people living at the present moment: they live traditionally, or they may sleep in a conventional blanket, a system of manners, a prescribed pattern of thought and behaviour. A culture is the way of life of persons in a group; a tradition is this way of life viewed historically. It continues to live only by being compounded with what is contemporary. Conventions die; traditions change.

We feel that anarchists have tended too often to ignore the distinction between tradition and convention. The revolution, it is sometimes implied or directly stated, will break with the past, the capitalist system, present-day culture. This seems to the present writers to be a Utopian expectation, in the worst sense of the word. We live in the present; we are anarchists; anarchism exists with us. Ours was not an immaculate conception. We were born from parents who are dead; we saw them die; we are their immortality. To ignore the dead is as irresponsible as murder. To ask what exactly the dead wanted is foolish, but we do know that they made certain discoveries and erected certain values partly in the hope that we would be stimulated and sheltered. To condemn these discoveries and values as being products of a bad 'system' and therefore false is to be unjustifiably arrogant; it expresses a contempt for human beings. We are the 'system', as our forbears were. Unhappily, it is the pernicious habit of revolutionaries in general to use abstract words not as signs for concepts (which is useful) but as stimuli for emotion, usually conventional emotion. (*Freedom*: hooray! *Capitalist culture*, etc.: bang, bang!) We should always doubt, but not condemn. In particular we should doubt our own theories, and emotive statements disguised as theories. Faith supports convention; doubt renders a tradition supple.

When we find persons living exclusively in terms of their own past, we call them infantile. We say that their emotional drives have regressed or been fixated at an immature level. Such persons, we comment, are evading their present responsibilities (responses) and the necessity for self-expression and self-control. Now the future consists only of our expectations, which are based upon past experience. When we find revolutionaries suggesting that the Day or the Battle or the Barricades lie ahead, in twenty years time maybe, to-morrow, but never to-day in the present moment, we should ask ourselves if this is not also a regression, projected into the future. (It is surprising that no Freudian analysis of left-wing groups has been made along these lines.) How easy it would be if we could in fact break with the past, present-day culture! But actually we cannot without committing suicide without dying off into one of those comfortable Utopias mentioned earlier. In reality the revolution is part of evolution, as Kropotkin said, and we have to start now with ourselves.

It seems to us that the Resistance Group is aware of these points, and that their attitude to the anarchist tradition is an admirable one. But have they extended this attitude to other traditions? (A 'crystallization' of tradition is usually a convention.) Perhaps a failure here explains their pessimism regarding:

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TWO ARTICLES OF COMMENT BY READERS ON THE 'RESISTANCE' ARTICLE

2. Progress

... it is debatable whether any real progress has occurred in the era of the State ...

Though advance in some fields of endeavour has been notable, it is true that setbacks and standstills elsewhere have produced a general state of affairs which makes the above remark understandable. However, we think that some progress has in fact been made. The elaboration of mathematics and deductive logic before the middle ages, together with the advance of inductive logic subsequently, have prepared the ground for modern scientific method. The latter gives us knowledge of one kind of truth (or perhaps, of an aspect of Truth). Modern science was of some assistance to Kropotkin, and it led to the technological achievements which we would be unwise to neglect. Printing, for example, and therefore the diffusion of the ideas of the Resistance Group; electrical power, without which our hope of anarchy would be a rather sorry one, since a large percentage of the population would have to be conjured out of existence; medicine, which has supported anarchism in ways we need not specify. In another field, we believe that the arts of the medieval and Renaissance periods are probably superior to those of primitive craftsmen. Thirdly, certain moral advances have been made. Christianity (not its Pauline distortions) seems to us to have been an improvement on Judaic moral law, and on the moralities of some primitive societies. We agree that no general progress has occurred, but think that some

quite real advances have enriched the lives of some people at some times. We should be careful not to tip these babies out with the bathwater. Obviously our statements imply a criterion of:

3. Value

No consistent progress, in terms of human happiness, is visible ...

Our comrades imply that happiness is an anarchist criterion. This may be so, but it is also a criterion which has supported mass democracy, passive leisure, passive love, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Mr. Priestley, numerous song-writers (*Is everybody happy?*), the Southend Kursaal, and the happy happy felicities of the artist responsible for Jane's comic strip. Shouldn't we doubt, in the face of this authoritative array, whether happiness is in fact a primary value? It would be tedious to list the various theories of value that have appeared in the world, but commonsense tells us that we don't go after happiness as we go after a pound of margarine. We are happy when running to the shop, happy eating, and then happy no more. For happiness is usually a fugitive state, and we should look narrowly at the fact that Mr. Butlin restricts his guests to a fortnight's happiness at the most. Mr. Butlin knows a thing or two about values. Happiness, in our opinion, is incidental to the pursuit and attainment of other values. What are these values? That so many people should have thought that Beauty, Truth and Goodness were absolutely valid surely suggests that there is a strong desire for certain kinds of truth, goodness and

beauty; we have already indicated that some of these desires have been satisfied in the last few thousand years. Perhaps this persistent set of sentiments is psychologically constant in some ways; perhaps a psychological theory of value could be worked out (or we might look round at those already existing) as a revision of the older view and a corrective to that over-evaluation of happiness which has so far failed to help us to choose the valuable technological achievements from the worthless. The pursuit of an experience which is naturally fleeting produces satisfactions as thin as film, as short and dry as promiscuous intercourse; or else the dreary repetition of these things in the vain hope of making happiness permanent. Perhaps things could be valued by reference to the balance, complexity, delicacy, intensity and extent of our responses (which has a lot to do with responsibility) to them, by reference to the stability and flexibility of our attitudes, and the depth and pattern of our experiences. This would be in one sense an aesthetic theory of value. We have no space to enlarge on anarchism as an aesthetic view of life. But we have the support of Sam Goldwyn. He knows about Beauty.

4. Mutual Aid

In every crisis the human race resorts to mutual aid, but a free society ... requires something different than herd behaviour.

This remark suggests an idea of mutual aid different from that of the present writers. Probably there are various expressions of mutual aid, differing with the size of the

group, subjective pressures, and external conditions. (External hostility and reactive fear are of great importance. Compare the mutual aid of a guerrilla raiding party, Tube shelters, and an agricultural community.) Isn't it time the problem was properly studied, with reference to human beings under differing conditions? Kropotkin merely opened the doorway to a vast perspective here. We should stop lingering in the doorway and move on outside. Another phrase is very suggestive: "Mutual aid is a practical principle, easily enough learned." Why should mutual aid have to be learned? The answers to this question already exist; they need to be collated and drawn into connection with anarchism. The writers continue: "... repudiation of authority ... and independence, are much harder ..." We doubt this, feeling that social life as it is encourages aggressive attitudes (part-basis of defiance, rebellion, obstinacy, etc.), while tending to destroy and distort attitudes of love and sympathy. In a civil war there is a good deal of mutual aid, on separate sides of the frontier. To what extent is mutual aid bound up with hostility to other groups, or with fear of them? To what extent is our anarchism based on hatred for other people (disguised by abstractions and accompanied by an over-evaluation of human capacities)?

5. The Commune

We do not accept ... the anarcho-syndicalist concepts ... as the chief method of revolution.

At any time the concept of the commune is of equal importance, and owing to anarchist neglect of the matter, it is now of greater moment than any other problem. Just as nearly all our ideas about anarchy may fall into place around this central idea, so objectively our lives in an anarchist society would revolve about this local grouping. In anarchy the commune would be the point from which a local culture would exert its influence upon a wider one; it would be the chief transmitter of tradition; it would counter-balance the syndicalist organisation and prevent any attempt by a minority to obtain power. Syndicate and commune together, a vertical and horizontal division of society, would guarantee peace; it would stimulate local traditions while preserving sufficient general homogeneity to prevent disintegration of the total culture or decay of its parts. Most important, the communal grouping is the field within which mutual aid is actually effective at the present day. About the only good result of the atom-bomb discovery is to have produced a perceptible movement in favour of urban and industrial decentralisation. Though we should be careful not to give our support to our opponents, the desire for decentralisation, like some aspects of the regionalist movements, should receive our sympathy and encouragement. We should, the present writers feel, stress the elements in anarchism making for decentralisation, and we should learn all we can from community experiments. (These are chiefly of value for experimental purposes, not as an agent of revolution.) When we consider the immense difficulties ahead of a revolutionary movement in this country, we should be grateful to see the State unwittingly working for our ultimate profit. In the meantime, though the attention paid to the Peckham Experiment and similar groupings has been extremely useful, it really only serves to prompt us further. Among the tasks awaiting anarchists (of which a thorough study of syndicalism is one of the chief), is a full report on some existing community from an anarchist point of view. We suggest a piece of field research on a village with a population of two thousand or less; a Cornish or Scottish fishing village would be very suitable. Such a survey would have to present a complete report on (a) the village as it is: topography, local traditions, economic life—fishing and agriculture with detailed accounts of economic relations with external world, transport and other communications—family structure, group psychology, individual psychology, etc.; (b) as it was a generation previously; (c) how it changed and why; (d) what could happen in it should a revolutionary situation arise. This would give us some definite evidence on the practicability of anarchy in the real world. (The world is only real to-day, not to-morrow.) The difficulties thus theoretically estimated would be of the most value to us, for they would show us what is lacking in our general view of the situation, precisely why all these villagers are not already anarchists (and to what extent they are), and what further information we need for educational and propagandist purposes. The commune is, we think, the proper context for any discussion of:

6. Education and the Family

We support most of what our comrades say on this subject, but it seems to us that no information or theory regarding sexual mores and infant education is of much value unless it is related to our ideas concerning the commune. It is obvious that in some ways the commune (which we visualise as having its own creches, infant schools, medical centres, etc.) would supplant the family, with important effects on the adult attitudes of the children. In other ways it would strengthen the family and thus individual independence of communal opinion. We have Herbert Read's book on education, but this should be supplemented by a study of educational conditions as they are at present (available buildings, equipment, (Continued on page 3)

We Must Readjust ...

THE article on Anarchism in *Resistance*, which has been reprinted in *Freedom*, is, in my opinion, the most sane contribution that has appeared in the libertarian press for some time. The clarification and re-assessment of the anarchist position, and its relevance to contemporary Western society, which the article attempts has been, as you yourself say, much needed, and *Resistance* has performed a valuable service to the Movement. The realism of its approach is in welcome contrast to the sectarian dogmatizing and sloganized thinking that unfortunately exists among some anarchists whose guiding principle would seem to be: what was good enough for Bakunin is good enough for me.

Both Marxism and traditional Anarchism, while making a largely correct analysis of capitalist society as it then existed, made however, two important mistakes in their prognosis, and the sooner these mistakes are realised, the better. Firstly, they have both greatly underestimated the power of nationalism as a counter-revolutionary force. Nationalism, as we understand it, was largely a product of the French Revolution and, while declining somewhat over Europe as a whole towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, has since revived more violently than ever before. One result of imperialist wars, the last one in particular, has been not to increase international solidarity amongst the peoples of the different national states, but to increase the most chauvinistic forms of nationalism. Social revolution and the national revolution of oppressed peoples, with a racial rather than a social dynamic, have always been dangerously intertwined. The revolutionary struggles of Italy and Ireland, for example, as well as the resistance movements of the last war, all displayed this dual purpose, with the emphasis always on national and racial, rather than on social, revolution. And it seems highly probable that any revolutionary struggle that may arise amongst the colonial peoples will follow the same lines—as indeed does the present revolt of the Indonesians against Dutch imperialism.

The second and more important mistake that was made by both Marxists and Anarchists was the assumption, which

must have seemed reasonable enough at the time it was made, that as capitalism developed, the economic position of the workers would deteriorate and that class antagonisms would therefore both increase and become ever more clearly defined. As the contradictions inherent in the capitalist mode of production accentuated this process, the revolutionary consciousness of the workers would increase and the inevitable social revolution would draw ever nearer. The task of the revolutionary, therefore, was simply to prepare the workers for the coming open, revolutionary struggle and to make them more fully aware of the messianic rôle which history would soon call upon them to undertake.

The comments of the Editors of "Freedom" on the 'Resistance' article (see "Freedom", Feb. 4th and 18th) will appear in our next issue.

Though they differed profoundly in their approach to the workers, and in what they considered to be desirable means to the end, both Anarchists and Marxists shared this common prognosis of historical and social development and believed in the ultimate inevitability of the social revolution. The crisis might perhaps take more years to materialise than they had anticipated, but materialise it would in the end. Their implicit faith in the social revolution bore some historical resemblance to that of the early Christians with their conviction of the imminent end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ. The revolutionary dogma was, more or less, a variant of the messianic tradition.

For some time now, it has been obvious to all who have not deliberately cultivated a blind eye that, in fact, things have been developing very differently from how they should. In those countries where capitalism is most advanced, the material and economic, as opposed to the "psychological", position of the workers has improved and class divisions, instead of becoming distinct have become progressively more blurred. The proletariat that Marx and Bakunin wrote about now no longer exists—except in the minds of Marxists and some Anarchists. It turns out that social revolution was not the only and inevitable outcome of the disintegration of the classic capitalist society of the 19th century, but only one of at least two possible outcomes. Actually a sort of mutation has appeared in the form of what has been called the managerial society. Private capitalism develops into state capitalism and this transition is accomplished—supreme irony—by the political parties of the left; in the case of this country by the Labour Party. The contradictions of the capitalist system seem, not to have brought about its downfall, but on the contrary to have enabled it to develop in a manner previously quite unthought of.

Many anarchists appear to pretend that the economic position of the workers has not improved at all in actual fact. This is manifest nonsense to anyone who will take the trouble to compare the conditions of even a generation ago. It is true that the worker, and for that matter everybody in contemporary society, has less personal and economic freedom, and that

what freedom he has is becoming ever more restricted. But it is also a fact that he has more economic security than he has ever had since the beginning of capitalist civilisation. Admittedly, the price for this increase in economic security has to be paid for, under the new managerial society, by increased loss of freedom in all spheres. But then as Bernard Shaw once remarked: "Freedom means responsibility; that is why few people want it."

These, and other concomitant developments, have caused the revolutionary consciousness of the working class to decrease and not increase, and have contributed to the growth of that "slave-psychology" to which the *Resistance* article refers. Radical change is, for the most part, no longer even desired. All that the worker now desires is that certain comparatively minor injustices within the existing order should be rectified, and he is still prepared to strike, and to use other methods of economic pressure, to see that they are. But he does not desire, or envisage, a social revolution. 150 years ago groups of workers gathered together to read, or, for those who could not read themselves, to hear read aloud, William Godwin's *Political Justice*, a book which is by no means light reading and is written in a somewhat ponderous and academic style. Nowadays, they read *The News of the World* and even condemn *Freedom* as "highbrow" because it prints some articles that require a certain amount of care and attention to read.

It is simply no use trying to preserve our peace of mind by pretending that these things are other than they are. There is a tide in the affairs of revolutionary movements like that in the affairs of men: "which if taken on the flood leads on to fortune." The revolutionary movement has missed this particular tide and the boat that went with it, and it is worse than useless, indeed it is harmful, to remain standing at the quayside bravely and obstinately shouting "Revolution!" as your recent correspondent, Sean Gannon, would seem to advise. This may dispose of a certain amount of frustration and surplus energy, but it won't get us anywhere. The tide will no doubt cease to ebb one day and another boat may appear on the horizon. But there seems no immediate likelihood just now and slack water will probably continue for most of our lifetime. To go on talking as if the social revolution was a practical possibility in the foreseeable future, and a panacea for all the ills of humanity, is about as relevant to the present world situation as hoping for Divine Intervention.

This, in my submission is not defeatism, though it is true that it can easily enough become so. If we are to accomplish anything at all we must face up to realities. One reality that anarchists must face up to, is that, while it is not impossible, it is highly improbable that anarchism can alter the trend of world events one jot or tittle, or that anarchism is ever likely to have a mass basis. Let us realise this and stop living in a world of make-believe. To re-adjust ourselves to this position may not be easy but it must be done, and *Resistance* has given some very helpful suggestions as to how we might make a start and what we can begin to do here and now.

GERALD VAUGHAN.

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THE VANGUARD OF THE RED ARMY

FOR some weeks, the Kravchenko trial has inflamed public opinion, which has centred more upon the Soviet regime than on the legal points of the dispute between the author of *I Chose Freedom* and the Communist literary weekly *Les Lettres Francaises*. It was thus into a receptive polemical atmosphere that the Communist leaders have proclaimed their intention of aiding the Red Army, should it appear on French soil.

A preliminary campaign of posters and meetings began a short while ago, on the theme "Never will the French people go to war with the Soviet Union." As usual, the Stalinist press, the Communist cells, the "fellow-traveller" unions and organisations joined in the chorus. Now the watchword has become more precise. It is no longer a refusal to take part in the eventual war against Russia, but has become a question of aiding Russia even in time of war.

At the same time, the French Communist Party and its principal subsidiary the C.G.T., are undergoing a significant purge. Lukewarm or discontented elements, opportunist or sectarian leaders, in short, all those who don't follow the party instructions to the letter, are being excluded and replaced. Members of the Political Bureau in Paris are touring the provinces, presiding

over conferences and assemblies of the regional federations and kicking out the half-hearted and the sceptical.

Thus we are observing an important move whose motives cannot be found in the internal situation of France. In fact, in the political field, the Stalinists are continuing their propaganda in favour of a government of "democratic unity" seeking to enlist the support of the largest possible number of socialists who are dissatisfied with government

LETTER FROM FRANCE

policy and of Christians who are interested in social questions.

The policy of the "open hand" is still in vogue, both in the question of wages and in that of the big human problems of the day, and in order to secure effective command of this new "Popular Front", the Communist ranks are being purged and hardened. The wage struggle, strikes, anti-war meetings, the defence of the workers and peasants, are merely being exploited in order to gather the largest possible forces against the ultimate enemy, the United States, as represented by the parties and ministers of the Queuille government whose whole policy is based on American aid.

An article in *Le Peuple*, organ of the Stalinized C.G.T., spoke of nothing less than the formation of a Committee for uniting French workers and industrialists interested in the defence of the armaments industries... against the American gun merchants! We think this is the first time that a union organ has appealed for a holy alliance to safeguard French war factories against foreign competition. It is no longer concerned with expressing the needs and aspirations of the workers but seeks to exploit and utilise them insofar as they can be made to serve as weapons in the struggle between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.

These gymnastics are only possible if there is an absolute docility in the Stalinist organisations. Their ever-changing tactics can only be put into operation effectively if it is known that their followers will be unquestioningly faithful to the orders of Moscow.

To prevent any heresy or schism, the leaders of the Cominform have taken these steps. They have demanded from

Thorez and his lieutenants a public oath of allegiance to the U.S.S.R., in a way which will, through its repercussions inside the party, make it possible to eliminate all recalcitrants.

We can find no other possible explanation for the latest Stalinist move in France, Belgium, Italy and other countries. Certainly, in the eyes of average French opinion, this course has some inconveniences. But these are not political questions, they concern the oath of allegiance of a soldier of the Red Army—the C.P. has made known the role it will actually play in certain crucial situations.

The French government will evidently take advantage of this by legal action. But what can it do in fact? At the most it will find among the small fry some victims for the ancient espionage laws. This will not matter to the Russians who know how to create completely water-tight organisations for their various activities. The C.P. is quite distinct from the Soviet intelligence service. In the same way, the department for transmitting and carrying out Moscow's order is separate from the "façades" of the parties and unions.

Once more, the anti-Communists in the government find themselves incapable of any effective reaction. They will be beaten because they have shown themselves unable to lower prices or increase wages, they will be beaten because they are fighting in territory which the Stalinists understand perfectly, because they obey rules which the Stalinists do not respect.

The campaign against the Stalinists is being fought under patriotic and chauvinistic slogans. But this form of combat cannot be taken seriously because the Queuille government can only exist because of its complete subservience to the Americans.

Once again, experience shows that Stalinism can only be fought and beaten on the working-class field, that is to say, by a working-class which rejects slogans and fights its own battles with its own weapons.

Uncertainty and confusion will only be cleared away when revolutionary groups of workers are numerous enough in the eyes of the people to constitute a vanguard quite distinct from the fifth-columns of either Washington or Moscow. S. PARANE.

WHY GOTTFALDVO ?

Worldover Press.—The city of Zlin, according to brief announcements appearing in the press, has been renamed Gottfaldvo, after the Czechoslovak Prime Minister and Communist leader, Klement Gottfald. Behind this simple statement lies an interesting story which reveals the degree to which a transfer of industry from capitalist to state control can fail to eradicate huge powers in the hands of one individual.

Zlin, which is near Brno, Moravia, has long been a centre of the shoemaking industry. It became, before the war, also the centre of the great shoe empire built up by the Bata brothers, Thomas and Jan, who were finally banished and who started great plants in Canada and Argentina. The Bata works were taken over as a state enterprise; the modernistic factories and homes, constructed paternalistically by the Bata, made the transfer easy.

Director-General of the huge enterprise is a Dr. Holy, whose Communist allegiance has not prevented him from achieving a tremendous personal power, fully as great as that of a capitalist boss. He also became head of Exico, a mammoth concern in charge of the nation's exports, often called the "unofficial export ministry".

Dr. Holy's vast powers became more and more a source of concern to Czechoslovak Communists, who perceived the dangers in them, and who began to criticize such a set-up as contrary to Communist ideas of industrial control. Protests finally reached the point where

Dr. Holy had to take some action to protect his status with the Communist authorities. He conceived the idea of renaming the city after the Premier, gambling on vanity and Gottfald's personal prestige to do the trick. The Prime Minister acquiesced; after all, the same sort of thing had been done repeatedly in Russia, where the masses had rallied for hard laborious efforts at production behind a popular name. Zlin now has something under 50,000 inhabitants, but when the ambitious new plans for its expansion are realized, it will have 120,000. Dr. Holy is more entrenched than ever, and bids fair to dominate one of the "island industrial empires" of post-war Europe.

IMPRISONMENT FOR ADULTERY

If further evidence of the religious obscurantism that dominates life in Italy is required, we need only mention that earlier this month a Lecce court in the South-East of Italy sentenced a woman and her lover (who had been denounced by the woman's husband) to five months' imprisonment for adultery. This, again, is a law which has existed since the Concordat (between the Vatican and the State) of 1929.

THROUGH THE PRESS

SPELLMAN LEADS SCABS

Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, took 100 priests and seminarians grave-digging at Calvary cemetery here to-day.

The cardinal did no digging himself, but supervised the priests and seminarians, who divided into groups of ten. Because of the strike, 600 bodies have remained unburied.

"We will remain here until our task is done," said the cardinal.

The 300 regular grave-diggers demand a five-day week at the same pay as they have been getting for a six-day week. Their union's spokesman said to-day: "We think he (Cardinal Spellman) is being unfair to Catholic people... The seminarians are taking the bread and butter out of our mouths."

N.Y. Herald Tribune, 4/3/49.

THE PRICE OF AUTHORITY

Unfortunately, His Majesty's judges are subject to taxation. Their constitutional position would be much easier if they were relieved of it.—Mr. Justice Vaisey.

The Observer, 13/3/49.

THAT POOR LITTLE KING

Ex-King Victor Emmanuel of Italy, who died in Egypt on December 29th, 1947, intestate, left estate in England valued at £1,532,287 6s. 8d.

Most of his money in this country was invested in Treasury Bonds. He held, too, big insurance policies.

Duty paid on the ex-King's fortune was £78,248.

A Briton living here would have had to pay 70 per cent. of a fortune the same size—more than £1,000,000.

Foreigners are given concessions to encourage them to invest their money in Britain.

Evening Standard, 9/3/49.

SLUMMY BRITAIN

One-third of Britain's population is living in houses "unfit for human habitation", Mr. Paul Cadbury, managing director of Cadbury Brothers, told a conference of industrialists and architects in London yesterday.

The figure, he said, was ascertained from careful sources.

News Chronicle, 4/3/49.

PUBLIC OPINION AIDS ANARCHISTS IN SARDINIA

FOR two years, thirty-seven Italian workers were held in prison in the island of Sardinia following disturbances caused at a public demonstration in the Sardinian town of Carbonia. But for public agitation in Italy and protests from America and elsewhere they would still be in prison without any charge being preferred and without the prospect of a trial. Under pressure, therefore, the Public Prosecutor charged them with causing disturbances and incitement and two of the prisoners were charged with robbery. Among the 37 were a number of anarchists, and it is interesting that the line taken by some of the Communist defendants was to shift the blame onto the anarchists! The result of this mass trial which took several days, and which was an excellent opportunity for the anarchist defendants and their counsel (one of whom was a sympathiser) to put forward the revolutionary case, was that 18 of the 37 men were acquitted and all but a few of the remainder were ordered to be released as they had already more than served the sentences imposed on them by the Court.

It surely is a deplorable state of affairs that people can be arrested, held in prison indefinitely, then when they are finally tried, to be found not guilty and released, and yet have no redress in the matter. Of course, no material compensation will give them back the time lost in prison, but in this case since the injustice has been done

we wonder whether there are any fair-minded people in Italy who will take up the case of at least the 18 acquitted men. Certainly one can have no hope in the authorities. One of the defendants, our comrade P. Fancello, after his release was ordered to the police headquarters at Iglesias and made to sign a declaration that he would leave the town and never return. Thus the police of the "democratic" republic have the power to deport an Italian citizen from any part of Italy, just as was the case during the fascist regime.

The Carbonia trial is only one of many that have been taking place in different parts of Italy in an attempt to crush the growing unrest among the militant workers. In Reggio, Calabria, in the South, 18 workers appeared before the tribunal in connection with disturbances at a protest demonstration of unemployed. The sentences inflicted were light and all but three were released. Both in the Carbonia and Calabria cases public feeling was strongly on the side of the arrested men and certain sections of the Press did not hide their sympathies for the defendants. One cannot help feeling that the Public Prosecutor, who demanded heavy sentences, did not have his way because the Court feared the repercussions if they acquiesced. Apparently, huge crowds were waiting outside the courts and gave the released men a tremendous reception.

Birth Control Agitation

Less spectacular, though equally important, is the threatened prosecution of our comrades, C. Zaccaria and G. Berneri (who edit the anarchist monthly review *Volonta*) for a pamphlet they have recently published in Naples on the subject of birth control. An order was given to seize the pamphlet but we are glad to report that the authorities succeeded in finding only three copies! In a statement they point out that they are preparing their defence and they hope that it will show that the charge of "propaganda against procreation" which was a crime under fascist law (and it is fascist law that is being invoked against our comrades!) is a ridiculous one since "we are not making propaganda to stop people from having children if they desire them." They hope to arouse public indignation against this fascist legislation and to obtain that men and women will be free to think and discuss these problems. They also hope to draw attention to the serious population problem in Italy. ("15 to 20 million people more than we can feed"), where the sensible control of the birth rate is a fundamental necessity.

America which exist for the dissemination of progressive ideas on sexual problems. *Freedom* will be glad to hear from them with a view to offering whatever assistance we can to the pioneers of birth control in Italy.

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RUSSIAN DEFENCE

BUDGET LARGEST EVER

Marshal Stalin and ex-Foreign Minister Molotov, accompanied by most members of the Politburo, attended a joint session of the two Chambers of the Supreme Soviet. They heard the Finance Minister, Mr. Zverev, announce that the Government's Budget proposals included the largest defence appropriation in the history of the country.

The defence appropriation in the budget was 79,000,000,000 roubles—about 19 per cent. of the total of 415,150,000,000 roubles.

If the value of the rouble is taken to equal that of a shilling, which is regarded as a fair estimate to-day, then Russia will spend nearly £20 a head on her armed forces next year. Britain's defence budget calls for the expenditure of £758,000,000, or about £17 a head. British rates of pay in the Services, however, are much higher than Russian rates of pay.

Manchester Guardian, 11/3/49.

SYNDICALISM—NOW!

DESPITE the rigid press-boycott of all anarcho-syndicalist activities it is becoming more and more apparent that the idea of industrial direct action is gaining support amongst the international working-class.

In Spain a savage dictatorship is finding that our comrades of the C.N.T. have plenty of fight and though reaction is at present triumphant in the whole Iberian peninsula it is certain that a day will come when the paranoiac tyrants of Lisbon and Madrid will meet their well-deserved end. In Mexico, Argentina, Sweden, Holland, France and Italy, our comrades of the international syndicalist movement are gaining daily in strength and experience; but now let us turn to Britain and examine the situation here.

Since the end of the second Imperialist World War, there has been a marked increase in the number and frequency of "unofficial" strikes. The workers, realising the futility of arbitration and the compromise that goes with it, are taking to direct action.

The leaders of the reformist trade unions, senile decrepit Social Democratic politicians, have been finally corrupted and are now nothing more than lackeys of the State. Whenever the workers wish to strike, they are restrained by these Quislings with the words of jam to-morrow and arbitration to-day. They are constantly exhorted against action in the present.

Those who have listened to such talk have found that the union bosses were only playing for time.

Occasionally, a crumb is thrown by the arbitration tribunals to a hat-in-hand delegation. The dockers and railwaymen, however, were above such slavishness, and when they struck they showed the bureaucrats of Union and State that the workers of this country were not the puppets which Judas Deakin would like them to be. The solidarity of the dockers and railwaymen in the face of the Unions, the State, and the abusive capitalist Press, was an example for the whole working-class. We should now draw some conclusions from the victories and defeats of these militant fighters who ignored their treacherous leaders and carried on the struggle. A little reflection will convince anyone that there are many lessons to be learnt from the experiences of the strikers. Chief amongst them is the need for a fighting Syndicalist movement in Britain now. The time has come when we must leave futile theorising behind us and spread our influence deep into industry.

A Syndicalist federation is now not only a possibility but it is a necessity. It would give cohesion to the present strike movement and would present the workers with an alternative to the corrupt centralised trade unions of to-day. Such a Syndicalist federation would have as a short term objective the spreading of revolutionary propaganda in industry, and as a long-term objective, the organising of a fighting trade union movement on federal lines. It would reject all alliances with political factions and its ultimate aim would be complete Workers' Control of industry, agriculture and transport.

The workers of Britain are probably the only section of the world proletariat who have been disillusioned in authoritarian Socialism's cure-all—State control, and are still relatively free to act on the matter. Once such a Syndicalist movement becomes a serious threat to the capitalist

class, the State, executive committee of that class will attempt to suppress it. However, the nature of syndicalism is such that it will be too late then. A Syndicalist movement is an organic growth, is capable of going underground for decades and finally emerging at the opportune moment to strike the final blow—Social Revolution.

The time for talk is now long past. This is a time for action. Let us get down to the task and build a Syndicalist movement in Britain now.

SEAN. GANNON.

[Anyone interested in the formation of a Syndicalist federation should write for information to Sean Gannon, c/o 27, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.]

SPORT: Recreation or Dope?

THE recent controversy on mid-week Soccer matches and their interference with production and the Export Drive has come to a head with the replayed cup-tie between Manchester United and Bradford. Certain employers even went to the lengths of threatening dismissal to those absenting themselves for this match; and after the match, on the following day, many workers were sent home and consequently fined for their absenteeism.

Now the point about this authoritarian move is the absolute, blatant hypocrisy of it: the match is arranged for mid-week, the directors of both clubs are eager to fill the ground from the profit motive, the match is well publicised in daily and local press and, finally, every honest-thinking person realises that under the stress of modern industrialism recreation is vital to preserve the sanity of the workers concerned. In addition, it has been the proud boast of the employing class that English Sport has kept our political life free from riots, revolutions and industrial upheavals!

Under these conditions be sure the average Soccer supporter WILL ATTEND in all kinds of weather and

FROM AN OLD AMERICAN COMRADE:

DEAR COMRADES,

Enclosed please find one dollar which you may add to my subscription as I don't wish to fall behind. If I happen to be still paid up for a little time, you may use this dollar for your appeal to the Press Fund. I see in your last issue the necessity for it, to keep the paper going. I send also with the same mail a paper, as I figure this will be of some interest to you also.

I do hope I am able again to make an extra dollar in the near future—I am on the downgrade and the devil may know when the time comes that I have to cash in.

I wish to do whatever I can to help along. You may understand my situation, as I am 75 years and unable to do any

work. Besides at this age one cannot hope for much any more. My income is very low and especially the high cost of living puts me in much trouble.

Everything in this country is upside-down and are at the point that no one may speak any more what he thinks, otherwise he may land in jail or get deported. Of course, we get very used to such condition, as Europe is in, which gets it in the neck left and right and we are here not very far from it. It may take

FROM AN ITALIAN COMRADE:

DEAR COMPANIONS,

I'm a young adherent to the Piedmontese Anarchist federation and I would intend to enter into epistolary conversation with one or two companions from thence, it doesn't matter if they're either young or

a couple of years, but I am sure we get it also. All indications are that way.

Yes, years ago one could open the trap and argue or criticise, but now this all is stopped.

But in spite of all the misery, I am trying to make the best out of all the publications.

Wishing your comrades further success in your struggle,

I am, fraternally yours,
San Francisco. FRANK SHODRY.

aged, workmen or students. Now and then we could exchange each other our impressions on the actual events, our personal ideas on the problems particularly concerning our movement in the world, besides all other more general problems of science, religion, etc., which impassion us.

As you can notice by this letter, my knowledge of English is very rudimentary and imperfect, full of mistakes; thus I hope that, carrying on correspondence with some English companion, I will get a thorough knowledge of your language, without reckoning the mutual advantage from the standpoint of our reciprocal better acquaintance as companions in the same ideas. I have often asked myself which difference of expression can there be among you and the companions of the other sides of the world according to the different mentalities and local circumstances. Perhaps the answer to my question will be given me by the beginning correspondence. From me, I shall speak to you about the Italian movement and its very serious problems.

I read usually *Libertaire* and *Solidarité Obrero*, of our foreign newspapers; I shall read now *Freedom*, too, that has been told me to be written in an excellent manner. As short biographic accounts on myself, I shall tell you I am a student of the Turinese University in the ancient literary branch (*Belles Lettres*) and, at the same time, I am working in this Post-Telegraph Provincial Direction depending by the Statal Authorities, as one of the lowliest employee.

While I am expecting your welcome answer, I wish you may withstand strenuously to the reactionary alliance which is goaded everywhere against all the best forces of the progress and civilisation and may keep up the flag of the idea in this sea of filth.

Yours heartily,
Turin. VISCONTI GIUSEPPE.

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED

If any comrades would like to correspond with the writer of the above letter and also with a comrade in SWEDEN who has written in the name of the Anarchist Youth there, asking for correspondents, they can be put in contact through the "Freedom" Office.

MRS. GRUNDY AT WORK

Copies of a novel called *Eros Looks Down* were ordered to be burned by Birmingham booksellers yesterday after the stipendiary had ruled it indecent. Two booksellers were fined.

Miss Margaret Hall, secretary of the Catholic Action Group, said she had bought and read the book as a matter of duty. She found it objectionable and the Group told the police.

Daily Herald, 26/2/49.

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CRACKS IN THE CITADEL

(Continued from page 1)

failing vitality in what is called "morality", meaning that code of behaviour which, if accepted by the ruled, resigns them to the domination of the rulers. Here we shall draw attention to certain trends in the official attitude towards penal methods. Such matters may seem of small significance in themselves, yet we believe them to be straws in the wind, and to carry implications of a far-reaching character.

Progressive groups have long felt a horror at the manner in which the law deals with juvenile delinquents (children charged with offences against the criminal law) and so-called sexual offenders. This horror appears to be percolating through into official circles. For example, a report on "The Criminal Law and Sexual Offenders" has been published this week by a joint committee of the British Medical Association and the Magistrates Association, which proposes a virtual reversal in the general attitudes of the courts, and in so doing implies a thorough-going condemnation of the present methods of dealing with these cases. "The Committee is convinced that, in regard to sexual offenders, punishment without treatment is not likely to have a beneficial effect; indeed it can make these offenders worse, and thus more likely to repeat their offences. In a high proportion of cases imprisonment without treatment may have consequences to the community even more dangerous than to the offenders themselves."

The practical proposals of the Committee are of less importance than the changed attitude towards the "criminal". Everybody knows that people who expose themselves in public are not normal; everyone, that is, but the magistrate who treats these unfortunates as criminals, and pours out on them a lecture full of moral vituperation before sentencing them to disproportionate terms of imprisonment. But the Committee frankly regards these people as being ill and in need of treatment, an attitude which excludes the official one of regarding them as fully responsible

for their peculiar actions. And they make their plea not merely for obvious sexual offences, but recognize abnormal motives even in some of the cases of larceny and assault which come before the courts: "The Committee feels that attention should be drawn to the fact that crimes that ordinarily have no association with abnormal sexual urges may be committed for a sexual motive. Thus a theft or burglary may be committed from a desire to obtain an article of clothing that stimulates an abnormal sexual desire. Or an assault may be committed by a fetishist for the purpose of possessing woman's hair, or such a man may slash a woman's garment."

It must not be thought that the Committee is actuated by progressive ideas regarding sex—it is not; we find the same old anti-sexual conceptions, the same moral attitudes. But this only makes their proposals of greater interest. It is not difficult for progressive people to find matters to criticise in the conduct of the courts. But when those who accept many of the dearest tenets of reaction find themselves unable to uphold such conduct, we have reason to think that ruling-class morals are slipping.

Officialism and Child Crime

If the report we have been discussing were an isolated phenomenon it would not merit the importance we have attached to it. But there are other instances of a manifestation of lack of confidence in the typical attitudes of the ruling-class ideology which support our view that reaction is on the defensive.

Officially, those who break the criminal code are visited with official moral indignation and cold-hearted punishment. Society has been blankly unaware of its share in responsibility for the production of what is called crime. Now it is apparent that twinges of conscience are weakening the moral superiority of those who administer the machinery of class divided society. At a conference on Child Delinquency recently, the Home Secretary, Mr. Chuter Ede, called attention to three aspects of the problem which bore on the production of delinquency. He spoke of failure in the general climate of opinion, the unspoken moral standards applied by people, both old and young; of failure in social conditions—bad housing, lack of playing space, lack of facilities for the treatment of handi-

caps affecting particular individuals. The interesting point here is that he shifted emphasis from the guilt of an individual, which is all the law concerns itself with, to the social environment, and in so doing placed responsibility on the shoulders of society and its administrative organs. Such a shift of emphasis renders meaningless the ideas of punishment to the individual offender, makes him or her a victim, an unfortunate, instead of a criminal. It is an admission with far-reaching implications.

Ede was not alone. The Minister of Education thought that delinquency was akin to naughtiness and could similarly be deflected into useful channels. He was thereby endorsing the views of Judge Ben Lindsey advanced twenty years ago to an apparently unregarding official opinion. The Archbishop of Canterbury implied that some delinquency could be laid at the door of society through its encouragement of young mothers to go into industry, while the Archbishop of York thought magistrates insufficiently understanding.

Toppling the Shibboleths

Now, there are many sides to all this; but it certainly overturns the conception of morals as something unchanging and given by God. The questioning of official morality was regarded as impious, a kind of blasphemy, adherence to it must be automatic—of the "their's not to reason why" type. But now the very upholders of this kind of rubbish show a questioning, admit that their attitude does not "meet the demands of modern requirements", to use one of their favourite phrases. One sees the hypocrisy of a class which teaches as absolute something which it is beginning to have doubts about itself. It is up to those who are the victims of a rigid morality, the willing slaves of a servile state, to take the hint and extend their questioning a little further, not merely to "guilt" and delinquency" but to the conceptions of obedience in general and to the state in particular. To wonder whether loyalty to a particular group or nation or class is not secondary to loyalty to humanity and man in general. When the ruling class themselves begin to show doubts, the time has come for the workers to topple all the official shibboleths. Ruling-class morality may then be superseded by revolutionary conceptions.

Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

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

MARCH 20 Bert Smith

MARCH 27th John Robinson

"The Literature of Anarchism"

APRIL 3rd Sean Gannon

"English Revolutionaries"

APRIL 10th Tony Gibson

The Achievement of Freedom—A Concrete Programme

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. 29th

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 Leach, Willy Carlyle, John Goffney,
Eddie Shaw.