Freedom
ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"The nations of the world are insane. They are spending one-third of their income preparing for the next world war."
—LORD BOYD ORR

Vol. 12, No. 3 February 3rd, 1951 Threepence

Freedom of the Air

BEVERIDGE STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

THE publication of the Beveridge Committee's Report on the B.B.C. raises the whole issue of the place of broadcasting in public life. But it does not require much consideration to show that the problems involved are very complex indeed, since broadcasting is a very powerful means for the dissemination of opinion, knowledge, and news—to say nothing of its musical and general aesthetic possibilities. The Beveridge Committee's Report is mainly concerned with detailed financial and administrative questions, and we shall neither concern ourselves with discussing them in detail, nor with remaining within the limitations it set for itself. Instead, we shall try and review some of the general problems involved.

State-controlled Radio and Commercial Broadcasting

Inevitably views in this country will be coloured by the experience—extending over a quarter of a century—of the British Broadcasting Corporation. It may be well therefore to consider the development of broadcasting in other countries. In the dictatorships, the control of radio by the State has resulted in the dissemination of false or grossly distorted news as a general matter of course: namely the filling of the air with Party propaganda only. It is not necessary to elaborate this aspect of the use of wireless any further, except to remark that whatever its faults the B.B.C., for all its remote control by the State, never sank to this level.

If the monopoly of radio propaganda by the State is seen at its most extreme in the dictatorships, the other extreme is represented by American broadcasting. In the United States there are literally hundreds of radio stations, privately owned. Time on the air is for sale at prices fixed by the exigencies of supply and demand. If you have the money you can buy your power to broadcast.

Needless to say, this means that the rich have an enormous advantage and powerful organisations can own and control their own transmitters. Minority opinion, even if it has the money, can only broadcast if it can find a station which is not concerned with the opposite point of view and so will tolerate it. Inevitably, much of the time is taken up with advertising.

Background for the B.C.C.

State-controlled radio on the one hand, and air-time for the highest bidder on the other: these are aspects of broadcasting which reflect the age in which we live, and they show the potentialities of wireless distorted to the point of travesty. They also provide a background against which the B.B.C.'s achievements and shortcomings can be studied. Even the most hostile critic will concede that the B.B.C. has sought to avoid the grosser pitfalls of both continental and transatlantic radio.

The method employed has been to seek to provide a social service, and to try to exclude obvious partisanship. But the results show how difficult it is to achieve such objects in the present social and economic order. We can illustrate this by reference to the Beveridge Committee's Report. They state that they found no evidence of bias in the news reports, and from the narrow point of view that the news is not coloured by the views of any of the major political parties, this is no doubt just. But from a wider point of view it is surely nonsense, for any presentation of news implies selection, and the grading of some items as more important than others. This very process of selection and grading must display the bias of any organisation. From this point of view, the news service does not differ greatly from that of the national daily press, except that it is less sensational than any except the *Times*. It thinks of first importance the doings of politicians, war news and sports items. But there are many people and organisations who think other matters of far greater importance. Some scientists and agronomists, to cite one example, think the most important world problem to be not war or its preparation (or, for that matter, the Test matches), but soil erosion.

The Question of Bias

One may say, therefore, that in quality of news the B.B.C. does not essentially differ from the better organs of the daily press—and it exhibits the same bias. When one looks at the means employed to try and make the B.B.C. a non-partisan social service, one begins to see why this must be so. For the governors are drawn from distinguished members of the world of affairs. They are men and women who are or have been active administrators, and they are therefore both the influences of our social mechanism and are influenced by it. Such people *reflect* the world as it is, and the choice of them as governors inevitably makes the B.B.C. a reflection of current administrative practice rather than an instrument for moulding such practice for the better. This is the reason that such organisations as the B.B.C. instead of acting as leaders of thought, exhibit chiefly the mediocity of the age. The very attempt to make them impartial yet practical, "in touch with affairs", defeats any higher aspirations from coming to fruition.

The Case of the Third Programme

Such tendencies are assisted by attempts to meet public demand, inevitable to any organisation which depends for financial support on mass sales—in this case, of wireless licences. The case of the Third Programme is the exception which underlines the rule. Its general quality is exceptionally high, and, *in the main*, it has signally succeeded in avoiding the vices of highbrowism and intellectual cliques. Hence its standing is very high indeed abroad, where it is rightly recognised as an extraordinary and unique phenomenon.

But it has only 90,000 listeners, and in a world where relative numbers are the ultimate statistical sanction, that is enough to outweigh all its imponderable merits. The fact that the Third Programme has to be *listened to*, and not merely heard as a background is not regarded as a factor of importance. Yet actually it makes it (and this is true even for those who find its content unsympathetic) the one consistent example of purposive broadcasting at a serious level, in striking contrast to the background habit of "turning on the radio" which makes broadcasting in many respects an opium-like vice, deadening thought rather than stimulating it as the Third Programme sets out to do.

Now it is not our purpose to champion the Third Programme simply as such, but merely to use it as an example of seriousness in broadcasting, and as an attempt to lift it above the level of lowest common demominator salesmanship which merely succeeds to supply that insulting abstraction, "What the public wants."

Decentralisation

If society were vital and active, broadcasting should find a place reflecting that vitality. The centralisation of broadcasting militates against any such regional vitalisation. It is encouraging therefore to find the Beveridge Committee recommending increasing devolution, both as regards Welsh, Scottish, Northern and Southern regions, but to reflect even more local cultural patterns. And it advises autonomy to such regions.

It also seeks to diminish the other great menace of centralisation—the exclusion of minority opinion. The recommendation that there should be a kind of "Hyde Park of the Air" is a welcome one, with its recognition that a minority viewpoint does not have to have a large minority backing before it acquires the right to be heard. It also implies that the public have a right to hear a wide variety of points of view, and the Committee clearly thinks the public capable of making its own judgments in its recommendation that a minority viewpoint should not immediately be followed by a "rectifying" orthodox statement.

Rights of Minorities

At the same time it is important to realise that this kind of provision for minority voices is very far short of "freedom of the air" even compared with so imperfect a thing as the freedom of the press. If one has a special point of view, one can now start a newspaper to disseminate that point of view. But one cannot start a broadcasting station. One cannot even buy time on the air. Without descending to the commercialisation of American broadcasting it might be possible for a broadcasting organisation to run, say, one station whose programmes were filled and paid for by selling of time on the air. In a capitalist world, such a concept would be in the right direction. Obvious abuses could arise but forethought or adjustment ought to prevent them. At present, however, there is no attempt to envisage a freedom to broadcast comparable to the conceptions of a free press and free speech.

Radio in the Free Society

Such discussion leads on to the possible rôle wireless could play in a free society. There is no space to discuss this at length here. But certain leading ideas emerge. Decentralisation with local autonomy, freedom of speech and radio and freedom of choice for listeners, would provide the bricks whereby the radio could play a living part in a society which possessed vitality because it reflected and responded to the needs of the individuals comprising it.

THE CLASS Z CALL UP
FOUR MILLION ZOMBIES

WITH Class "Z" Reserve coming so prominently in the news, it is somewhat of a reflection on the ingenuity of modern journalese that nobody has yet invented any short, easy name for this important group, such as, for instance, during the war, when the name "Bevin Boy" came as a godsend to editors even though it all but wrecked the compulsory mining scheme.

We accordingly present them gratis with the term "Zombie".—It is true that this word properly describes the bodies whom the voodoo-men of Haiti have raised from the dead and which hover between two states of existence, unable to claim their own soul. However, the bodies of Class Z men of this country, too, are to be brought back on the files of Whitehall, and they, too, are hovering between two states of existence, and if the voodoo-men of the Westminster bureaucracy get away with it, they will also be unable to call their souls their own.

The new Minister of Labour blamed the Press for creating anxiety about the recall of Class Z men. There is no reason why they should not let the public know that this is being discussed—it is, after all, not altogether a private affair between the Ministry of Labour and the War Office, but one which does concern the people whose bodies they want, and this is (after all) not Haiti. But we take leave to doubt whether the Press really would have discovered that Class Z was being discussed if the voodoo-men did not really want it to be known. The process is known as kite-flying. They wanted to test public reaction. "Well informed circles" let out a lot—at one time we were thinking that all men who served in the war were going to do a buckshee six months—and there was a great deal of annoyance and even indignation amongst those Zombies not yet resigned to their condition (which in many cases—oddly enough, but such is life in the half-world—took the form of resentment against the living who were getting away with it)—and behold, as the date for the announcement approached, the plan was gradually whittled down. Finally, of course, there must be far less indignation because so much worse was expected. It is not proposed that all the Zombies should be perpetually relegated to limbo. Only a limited number are to go back into the uniformed state. The others remain where they are. They stay in civilian life, liable at any moment by the behest of the Ministry of Labour, to go back into uniform. Such a position of serfdom is undoubtedly one that militarists have long wanted, but it used to be said that the English would never stand for it. Unfortunately, the English will stand for anything with a show of law about it—as I have mentioned before, Hitler could never have dragged them to the gas-chambers, but if an official form had arrived and told them to proceed there, they would have done so.

There is a certain amount of nonsense which makes such decrees sound more palatable to the gullible public, particularly the idea of preparation for war. It is true that "peace-time" conscription can be a swindle, recalling, as one can, the many young men called up in the first batch of "peace-time conscripts" in 1939, who said that it was not worth while resisting—it would only be for the summer—and who were mostly, if alive,

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FOREIGN COMMENTARY

The Price of "Liberation" in Korea

WHILST the battle of words rages at Lake Success, not always perhaps according to the old rules governing such diplomatic warfare, but nevertheless in the comfort of padded armchairs and with all the modern gadgets that science can provide to impress in the way of microphones and earphones, which at the flick of a switch provide the delegates with immediate translations into their own tongue of even the most obscure languages—far away in Korea the victims are daily increasing. "Liberation" must have a hollow sound to the Korean peasants who have in some cases been "liberated" three times already, whose homes have been destroyed each time they have been "liberated", whose rice fields have been churned up by tanks and heavy equipment as fast as they have made good the damage caused by the previous "liberators".

In spite of what is said to the contrary, the more one watches the antics of the world's diplomats and politicians the more is one driven to the conclusion that they have ceased to be human beings. For no human being could remain human and still accept the responsibilities for the cold war. When a politician, Chinese or American, declares: "We will not withdraw from Korea," he must know that translated into human misery and suffering, these words mean thousands more homeless people, thousands more killed and maimed soldiers and civilians. And for what? To be in a stronger bargaining position at the conference table, for it is almost certain that eventually the Korean war will be ended not militarily but politically. And at what a price one can only guess from reports reaching us so far from Korea.

One correspondent on the spot writes: "What has happened to hundreds of thousands of the South Korean population or the throngs from North Korea who fled southwards before the Communist advance remains a matter of conjecture. Some unofficial estimates put the civilian dead at 1,000,000. Others who have watched the refugees streaming southward from the 38th Parallel, then Seoul, say the final tally, if it ever can be taken, will double that amount." (*New York Herald Tribune*, 27/1/51.)

And as to the refugees, now estimated at between two and three million, an Associated Press report (13/1/51) quotes British soldiers as saying that they had stopped women refugees from throwing infants and small children into a river from a front-line bridge, whilst an American officer described how a woman gave birth to a child on the road. He added: "She just threw the baby into a ditch. What could we do? This is the front. Her own people did not care." Several hundreds were passing by while it happened. One outspoken English soldier declared: "I saw refugees in battle in France and at Dunkerque and it was a piece of cake compared to this. This is the most horrible sight I have ever seen. . . . The men who made this war ought to come out here and see it with their own eyes. It is a bloody shame, it is."

Is the responsibility all the politicians? Or must we, the ordinary people share some of it for allowing ourselves to be ruled by a handful of maniacs?

(More Foreign Commentary p. 3)

***CONDITIONS OF FREEDOM** by John Macmurray.* **(Faber & Faber, 6/-)**

Conditions of Freedom

THIS is a short book, consisting of three essays of even lucidity and unequal value, but it is succinctly written and contains matter for continued thought. Not all of Mr. Macmurray's neatly planned arguments are acceptable. but most of his ideas are closely relevant to anarchism and thus have an exceptional interest.

Our daily language seems inadequate to the discussion of freedom, which is usually treated as if it were something else: let us apply the word freedom to the process of consciously choosing; but choosing implies purpose, so that a discussion of freedom slips easily into a review of the goals one may intend, and thence to the array of possibilities among which freedom operates, and thus to liberty, a word pertaining not to the process of choosing but to its object, that which is chosen. Liberty lies in the realisation of what has been chosen, and we know the freedom of others only by inference, through their liberty. Liberty is subsequent to freedom in fact, but it is easy to understand why it should often precede it in conversation.

Mr. Macmurray does not discriminate between liberty and freedom, so that his arguments lack the depth they might have had, and lead sometimes to invalid conclusions. This is not to suggest that he has nothing valuable to offer. He begins with a commonsense definition of freedom, well worth quoting in full, that will give the reader an idea of his quality:

"There is a sense in which freedom is absolute. It is the sense in which freedom is the defining character of Man; the property which sets us apart from the rest of creation and fixes a gulf between us and the highest of the animals. This absolute freedom is simply our capacity to act—not to behave or to react, but to form an intention and seek to realise it. To act is to be free. As agents we are concerned not with the past or the present but with the future: not with what exists, then, but with what does not yet exist; not with matter of fact but with matter of intention. In action we stand between the past and the future, between what has been done and what is still to do. The present is merely the point of action. When we turn back from action —when we reflect—we see what has been done; and this is the world that exists, the world of fact. So we find this world of existence completely determined. We have no power anywhere to alter it. It is what it is, because it has been determined. This utter determinateness of all that we find in existence excludes freedom, we know. But this is no more than the knowledge that time is irreversible, and that we cannot alter what has already been determined . . . The future is the field of freedom, and when we act, we determine the future."

The double point of the word determine is nicely put, but the statement is not altogether satisfactory (for is not the present, which is the point of freedom, also that future which we determined yesterday?) and later riders suggest that it fails in exactness because it has to cover two concepts rather than one. When Mr. Macmurray says: "No man can compass his freedom for himself. He must accept it as a free gift from others," he seems to be speaking of liberty, as when he also says: "In its immediate simplicity freedom is the ability to carry out our chosen purposes; to do what we please." If a man is killed immediately after choosing, he has no liberty to carry out his intention; nevertheless, he has possessed freedom. This would not seem a verbal quibble to those who have literally died for freedom, as perhaps we all do.

Liberty is relative to what is possible, but freedom is as absolute as the consciousness of those possibilities. Freedom cannot be extended, for however many possibilities there may be, only one can be chosen; it can be increased only in the sense that one can be more intensely aware of it. as when one is a prisoner. When men are imprisoned by anxiety, or when they are changing cages, one hears much of freedom; as at the Renaissance. (A permanent increase of freedom, of course, would probably depend upon good health and other things which cannot be secured without liberty.) Freedom is rare, because consciousness is not common. Much of our time is spent in habitual thought and action, in selection but not in conscious choosing. Much of this inattention, which is a form of that indolence upon which political institutions rest and sleep, is probably necessary: we cannot be forever attending to freedom in the present moment, because we also live in time, which continually assimilates freedom. Inattention is the converse of the immense physical and mental activity devoted to unconscious and temporal processes; from these the presence of freedom derives, but an extension of the realm of the former does not always increase the kingdom of the latter. Freedom is timeless, if the present moment is so; for choosing is done in that moment, and only afterwards when the present has become the past, does one look back and see one's choosing as if it had been unfree. Though Macmurray emphasises this last point in his definition, and maybe intended to imply the first, he does not discuss the nature of time or of consciousness; another reason for finding his statement unsatisfying, and provocative.

His approach to what he calls the technological and moral relativeness of freedom is fresh, and he is shrewd and interesting on the subject of individual fear and despotic power. Occasionally he seems to contradict himself, as when he says that: ". . . the Russian Revolution has meant a great victory in the struggle for freedom to the peoples of one-sixth of the earth," but argues elsewhere that communism "ignores, when it does not oppose, the human unities of fellowship which alone, in the last analysis, make freedom possible." His assertions in favour of what he calls communism could be applied rather aptly to the State, which he defends mildly as being necessary to society. He does not ask to what extent society may be necessary to the State.

Readers of *Mutual Aid* should be interested by his distinction between 'society' (an association whose members are united in the service of a common purpose) and 'community' (whose members share a common life). Of societies he says:

"The common purpose creates the association; for if the purpose should disappear, the society will go into liquidation. It also dictates the form of the association; since the members must co-operate in the way which will secure the common end; and the ideal form for such an association is the form which realises the common purpose most efficiently. Each member . . . is a member in virtue of the function he performs in the society, and the association itself is an organisation of functions. Thus, though the members are persons, and the group is an association of persons, the members are not associated *as persons* . . . the society is an organic unity, not a personal

(Continued on page 3)

Lessons of December

VERDICT OF THREE DECCADES: From the Literature of Individual Revolt Against Soviet Communism: 1917-1950. Edited by Julien Steinberg. 634 pp. (Duell, Sloan & Pierce, New York, 1950. $5.00)

Comrade Workers, Kronstadt is fighting for you, for the hungry, the cold, the naked . . . Kronstadt has raised the banner of rebellion and it is confident that tens of millions of workers will respond to its call. It cannot be that the daybreak which has begun in Kronstadt should not become bright sunshine for the whole of Russia. It cannot be that the Kronstadt explosion should fail to arouse the whole of Russia and first of all Petrograd . . .

"Kronstadt Izvestia", 11/3/1921.

I

IT cannot be, but it was.

Just as the noble ideals and aspirations of the French Revolution were to end in the fratricidal suicide of the Napoleonic Wars, the Russian Revolution it seems will soon end in the suicidal fratricide of the Atomic War. Almost as a by-product of these French Revolutionary aspirations the world was presented with the sour plum of a century of bourgeois society. What the Russian Revolution will leave, remains to be seen.

It is a subtle irony that this collection, which as the editor states required three decades for its presentation should be given to us at a moment when (except historically—and indeed that is an important exception), it is practically meaningless. For from the tenor of the volume (the author is approximately a Social Democrat, and Kautsky and Kerensky are his heroes), although *all* these selections are from the socialist camp, there is nothing which would indicate any opposition to the coming war except in the terms of all liberals: "I am against this war (all wars), but . . .!"

At whom is this book directed? At Stalinoids, in the vague hope of winning them from the Communists? Perhaps. And one editorial paragraph might lead us to think so. But this is one small paragraph in many. At the general American public? The editor is not above quoting "our former ambassador to the Soviet Union, Walter Bedell Smith" on the character of Stalin. The Commies also quoted "our" former Ambassador to the Soviet Union: Mr. Joseph P. Davies, for his famous fantasy *Mission to Moscow*. *Their* ambassadors—and welcome to them.

II

Let us turn to the selections themselves. The book contains the early criticisms of Luxembourg and Kautsky, a long selection from the Kronstadt Pamphlet by Alexander Berkman, a description of the 3rd Congress of the Comintern and the first Profintern Congress, by Emma Goldman, some of Victor Serge's always fascinating descriptions of the personalities of the Revolution, selections from Andre Gide's *Return from the U.S.S.R.*, Hilferding's and Peter Meyer's articles on the theory of the New Society, and many others.

Unfortunately, their sum total leaves one bored and depressed.

Steinberg, a former editor of the American *New Leader*, seems also to have been impressed by the fact that "they" had spies all over the place. He therefore included a selection from Gouzenko. Perhaps he was really envious that "we" didn't have as good a spy system in Europe. Or perhaps Mr. Steinberg believes that "we" wouldn't do such a thing. Or does Mr. Steinberg think that U.S. destruction of "90% of the 100,000 of peopled town of Jinsen in 20 minutes by fiirebombs" is an unfortunate imperfection of "democracy". Or is this book aimed at history? If so, the editor would have done better—and his obvious knowledge of the field makes this seem possible—to have attempted some sort of broader critical analysis and/or history of the Soviet failure.

As it stands, or rather, does not stand, the book falls between three stools.

III

What then are the lessons of December? They are vast and deep, and we cannot really go into them here. But may I be permitted to hint at an outline?

The outcome of a revolution can (among many other ways) be considered as component of four factors:

(1) The objective economic situation: degree of industrialisation, state of agriculture, techniques.

(2) Character structure of the people.

(3) Knowledge of the leadership (and by leadership I mean the leadership *ideas*: to the extent that the correct ideas are in the minds and souls of the masses and to the depth that they are—to that extent will this factor be a positive one: to the extent that they are absent or superficial or confined to a small élite, to that extent will they be negative.

These three factors can be considered, (for the sake of illustration only) in the form of a mathematical equation: $T \times CS \times K \times X$ = Health of the Revolution. If the technique factor is high, then perhaps the character struture level and the knowledge of the leadership ideas may be permitted lower levels and the result, the Health of the Revolution still be at a variable level. If technical development is low, then character structure and knowledge of the leadership ideas must perhaps be high. (Here, of course, was where the Russian and Spanish experiments seem to have stuck.)

There seems to be a level below which no amount of heroism or knowledge will have a victorious effect. Although here too one would be wiser to leave the question open, and knowledge of the leadership ideas and objective economic situation turn into one another. Level of technology and character structure are also inter-connected. In fact, as *any* of the members of the equation approaches zero, the Health of the Revolution approaches zero. Likewise the opposite is also true: as *any* of the factors of the equation approach infinity, so (it seems) would the Health of the Revolution. (By objective economic situation, we of course mean first the local and then the *world* situation, and, of course, this must also apply to character structure and knowledge of the leadership ideas.

★

The Russian revolutionists inherited a terrible technology and a difficult character structure (but perhaps no more difficult than that of the other nations). This, together with the state of techniques, and the character structure of the rest of the world, left them with a considerable handicap. But the *coup de grace* was their system of leadership ideas: Marxist ideas. Once the revolution started on the grade down, the character structure of the leaders was such that they could not pull out.

The "Iron Leadership" compromised the "moon" to win the earth but were left only with the swamp. Perhaps generally the most idealistic pulled out first, then little by little the others followed, finally even Trotsky, then last of all, and to-day: those unwilling to face Western terror in the coming war.

★

I have left a space for X, the unknown factor in my equation. Sometimes (ludicrous. pathetic, childish or bathetic as it may appear), it seems that X is the only thing that can save us (if we are to be saved at all).

JACK GALLEGO.

From America

Retort

IT is a long time since *Retort* last appeared, as its editors have been engaged in printing their volume *Prison Etiquette*, and in translating Volin's *La Revolution Inconnue* into English. (They are now seeking a publisher, since those who can afford to are not interested in publishing an anarchist history of the Russian Revolution, while those, like ourselves who would like to, cannot raise the money necessary for launching a 700-page volume.)

A chapter from Volin's book is published in *Retort* under the title *The Epic of Father Gapon*. There is an article by Byron R. Bryant on the American "Catholic Worker" movement, "which professes to combine Catholicism and Anarchism"; a thoughtful review by Dachine Rainer of three recent books of Alex Comfort's; other book reviews, poems and a story. The editors consider that, "Ideally the radical personality should be a blend of cynicism and sentimentality," meaning "by cynicism, a deep mistrust of humanity, a strong capacity to believe the worst about both institutions and individuals; by sentimentality, an irrational regard for certain ideas, customs, traditions."

"What is most important is that both qualities be present in the same individual. Many so-called radical organisations have managed to divide the two among their members—a typical aspect of the division of function that prevails in such groups—so that the leadership have all the cynicism . . . while the rank and file have all the sentimentality, and feel nothing but tearful reverence for the leadership which systematically betrays them."

"An individual who is both cynical and sentimental is prevented from letting others betray or exploit him by the first quality, and is prevented from injuring others by the second, provided, of course, he is sentimental about the right things—specifically: the ideas of equality, brotherhood and liberty. He looks on the world with a clear and mistrustful eye, he sees the actions of men as they are—to a large extent cowardly, dishonest and opportunistic. But he is prevented by his cause from acting as he sees others behave."

Cinema

Life Begins Tomorrow

ON the rare occasions when a film of ideas is made, one gets a glimpse of the influence which the cinema could wield to stimulate thought and discussion. *Life Begins To-morrow** is such a film, and in a marked degree, for it sets out to discuss the central problems of to-day and does so in a most original and stimulating way.

That this film has received an "X" certificate which prohibits its exhibition to audiences below the age of 16 (no doubt due to the war and concentration camp sequences which make their mark only too forcibly) is not surprising. But it is unfortunate for in protecting the vivid and sensitive imagination of the young from the trauma of our age, the "X" certificate will probably make the film wholly uneconomic to distribute, and so prevent it from being widely shown.

Positive Forward Looking Attitude

In this review, the many technical felicities will be taken for granted and the space will be devoted to the ideas put forward. Of these, the basic one which underlies every section and gives uniformity to the diversity of the episodes, is simply that the age in which we live, for all its problems and horrors, is full of the potentiality of transforming human existence, as no age before it has been. Right from the start it castigates nostalgia for earlier supposedly happier epochs, and urges the need to seize the exceptional means available to-day in order to achieve mastery over events and over society. Hence all progress, all new ideas are to be regarded from the standpoint: "How can they aid man in his struggle towards fulfilment?"

Picasso, Gide, Le Corbusier, Sartre

It is this attitude which gives relevance to the episodes in which Picasso and André Gide and an eminent biologist appear. Picasso's detractors are by implication (and for the most part rightly) shown as backward looking yearners after past glories; Picasso the reacher after new forms. Gide, the old man, is shown ever eager to make use of technical advances: the biologist is introduced to put forward ideas and conceptions which shake and jolt accepted notions—in a word, to shock. Of these interpolated interviews with men of genius, that with Le Corbusier appears —rather surprisingly—the most practical in its relation to human life, and also the most *human*, with his insistence that trees and sunlight and space and leisure are essentials whose absence or curtailment starves the human spirit.

On the theoretical side, the contribution of Sartre is decisive with his assertion that the anonymous man-in-the-street is responsible for, and must realise his responsibility for, war and poverty and concentration camps and crime. Meanwhile, his words are driven home by a psychologist and criminologist who rightly asserts that prisons are factories of crime and criminals, and that the Hitler and concentration camp guards are products of their environment, to be studied, explained and understood. Emotional instability in infancy is touchingly shown to be at the root of delinquency in an all too brief section.

Science, the Saviour

There follows a long sequence on the horrors which science imparts to war, especially the possibility that radio-active clouds may extinguish all life. But, by antithesis, the latent possibilities of science, chiefly in regard to food production and the distribution of limitless power. are stressed as the positive side of the picture. Indeed, the latter half of the film confirms the hints of earlier sequences in becoming a paean to the idea of a beneficent science as the saviour of mankind. This is an old idea and, to the reviewer at any rate, a discredited one. But even so, the splendid garments in which the film clothes it make the maximum out of what substance it does contain. The internationalism of science, and of eminent scientists—Marie Curie-Einstein, Fleming—is a real thing, and the horrors which general staffs resist their work into have no place in the minds which advance the frontiers of knowledge. At a UNESCO open discussion, the journalist (who plays Virgil to the man-in-the-street's Dante in the perambulation of the contemporary *inferno*) cries out that "Science is Neutral". How untrue, and how sad!

Cold Comfort

It is here that the weakness of the film appears. Except for Le Corbusier's trees, and the infant's need for affection, there is scarcely any mention of, and no stress at all on, human relationships. The saviour science offers a cold hand to a world whose delinquencies stem from the defeat of the emotions, of social warmth; but whose achievements, such as they are, spring from co-operation and mutual aid.

These are anarchist contentions, but they also seemed the logical fulfilment of the ideas laid out in this film, and the praise of science seemed like a substitution, almost a *non sequitur*. The common man is shown in all his ignorance, his prejudice, his escapism, his fear of responsibility; but not at all in his warmth and hunger for affection and common striving with his fellows. For those who perceive it there was a definite suggestion that governments are delinquent; but none that the delegation of authority and decision *prevents* men from achieving self-determination and responsibility. As with so much progressive and humane endeavour, *Life Begins To-morrow* goes a long way; but it does not go far enough.

ANARCHIST.

"La Vie Commence Demain," now showing at the Cameo, Polytechnic, Regent St., London.

Conditions of Freedom

(Continued from page 2)

This organic, functional, impersonal character remains even where the common purpose is necessary and permanent."

Within these systems of functional co-operation, co-ordinated and maintained by the State ("If co-operation can only be secured by compulsion, then compulsion must be used"), communities may flourish as the expressions of fellowship and freedom.

"No doubt its members will share common purposes and co-operate for their realization. But these common purposes merely *express*, they do not *constitute* the unity of the association; for they can be changed freely without any effect upon the unity of the group . . . It follows from this that community cannot be brought into existence by organisation. It is not functional. It is not organic. Its principle of unity is personal."

He goes on to discuss the change from primitive conditions, in which "the two principles of unity, fellowship and co-operation, define the same group of people", to civilised ones, in which these principles have been dissociated. The decisive change occurred, he says, with the introduction of slavery. Seeing government and the State as organs of society, he fails to give them sufficient representation as dynamic groups of persons (e.g., slave-owners) whose ends may be less impersonal than this.

Though he observes that his two principles are not mutually exclusive, he often speaks as if these abstractions did refer to separate sets of people, rather than to two kinds of association possible among the same set. He completely ignores, therefore, the factor of size in human grouping, and the importance of the liberal association of groups as distinct from their submission to a central government. If groups are sufficiently large, and if they are subordinated to central government, then the more their members oppose a society, the less they will compose a community; the more they consider themselves nationals, the less they will behave as natives of a locality; and the more they are compelled to co-operate, the less co-operate to compel, the less fellowship there will be among them. Community is possible within the direct range of an individual's five senses; to some extent it is possible within the much wider ambience of imaginative sympathy; but reason alone serves only an impersonal co-operation. Nationalism encourages the fallacy that an association of millions of reasonable strangers can be a community; there is a confusion between Mr. Macmurray's two principles, aided partly by the physical standardisation of localities, and partly by the shallow imaginative sympathy inculcated by propaganda. But the case is different where small federated groups of persons are concerned. Mr. Macmurray starts with his two abstractions; had he begun with individuals, he might not have been as severe as he is about 'organic' associations. With this word he seems to refer not to society as he has defined it previously, but to 'primitive' fusions of fellowship and co-operation. Humanity is moving away from the organic association, he says; he does not say where it is moving to; presumably to a mosaic of communities within the State (as distinct from a federation of communities within syndicalism). Yet, if one looks round the western world to find some large-scale social system whose present condition clearly admits of a future, only one can be found: the libertarian collective settlements of Palestine. Here, to a considerable degree, community and society interpenetrate; though membership is conditioned by certain common purposes other than that of physical survival, functional relationships are adjusted to meet the requirements of fellowship. These settlements, which have existed now for thirty-five years, cannot be dismissed as experiments having no future in themselves. It is possible that, historical accidents apart, this social system which represents a marriage of western and eastern cultures, and the best genius of the Jews, will in a few more generations instruct the world as did the Greek city-states of the past.

There is no space here to review Mr. Macmurray's eloquence on religion as the source of culture, or his plea for Christianity. His book is full of points for debate; but no one would dispute his main conviction, tht community is prior to society, and that the basic conditions of liberty lie outside the political field.

LOUIS ADEANE.

ANSWERING A CRITIC

Our Anti-Stalinist "Line"

THE current issue of *Freedom*, which I received yesterday, contained more interesting articles than usual. I notice that *Freedom*, in the past few issues, has been harping, in its leading articles, on the theme expressed by the headline of the current issue, that the West is following in Russia's footsteps. While this certainly is the case, I think that the Anarchist movement underestimates the differences which exist, even now, between the totalitarian-managerial and "democratic"-capitalist states; for example, the anti-Communist legislation now being passed in the West is extremely liberal compared to the anti-Communist legislation which has been enforced in the U.S.S.R. for the past thirty-odd years.

Another aspect which surprised me recently; some friends of my family went on holiday to the Continent last year, and visited Catalonia, including Barcelona itself. They could go wherever they wished, and only their ignorance of the language prevented them from freely contacting the local population. So even Franco's regime is far freer than that of the Stalinists.

Edinburgh. B.G.

★

IT is with regret that I feel that I can no longer subscribe to your paper *Freedom*.

I am entirely in agreement with your philosophy and flatter myself that after many years of reading your literature I have come to understand it. In spite of this, I feel so strongly opposed to your anti-Soviet line that I must withdraw my support.

It is not that I am pro-Soviet but that, as all news and views about Russia are charged with propaganda value, the truth is hidden.

When the "Free Nations" cease threatening and provoking Russia and give her a fair deal among nations, I will allow that the odd brick from informed critics is not unduly weighted.

Yours, etc.,

Claygate. E.R.

WE occasionally receive letters such as the one we publish from E.R. and welcome such occasions to make our position clear, though we are under the impression that it is quite impossible to confuse our anti-Stalinist position with that of the Western "democracies" and their supporters.

In the first place, our opposition to the political regime in Russia did not first manifests itself with the cold war. We have been opposed to the regime of Lenin since its inception, and if E.R. is "entirely in agreement with" and has "come to understand" the anarchist philosophy, she should be as much opposed to the authoritarian regime in Russia as we are.

To publish a periodical such as Freedom *without ever mentioning Russia would be dishonest and incompatible with our views on the rôle of a free Press. Yet this is what our correspondent would have us do if she is to remain a reader! Why does she make no mention of our anti-Tito "line", or anti-American and British "lines". By the same argument why aren't these views "charged with propaganda value"?*

Whatever may be the faults of the "Western democracies" it is still possible to see for oneself what is happening, to obtain information about conditions and talk to people. Such facilities do not exist in Russia, and the task of establishing the truth about conditions in that country is therefore made very much more difficult. The fact that Russia's rulers deny these facilities is in itself significant. (We trust that our correspondent is not hoodwinked by the hand-picked delegations that go on conducted tours to Russia and return with glowing accounts of what they were shown. After all, there are people who go for their holidays to Spain and even without being escorted, return home with breath-taking descriptions of the shops laden with the finest articles and have completely failed to see the abject poverty of the people—nor have they visited the prisons filled with political enemies of Franco.)

But a considerable amount of information has seeped out from Russia in spite of the censorship. We have the testimonies of a number of prominent ex-Communists which cannot just be dismissed as a tissue of lies. To the ever-growing list one must add the former "General of the Spanish People's Army", El Campesino (alias Valentin Gonzalez) to whom reference is made elsewhere in this issue of Freedom.

From the point of view of the social revolution, the system in Russia is more dangerous than the capitalism of the Western democracies for the following reason: the Western democracies do not at any time suggest that they believe in anything but the status quo. *They are openly avowed enemies of the social revolution and only a handful of naive socialists ever suggests that capitalist democracy will be the vanguard of the social revolution. The Stalinists and the Communist Party on the other hand, pose as the pioneers of the Free Society which both our correspondent and ourselves desire. But their whole conception of the rôle of the individual in society is one which is fundamentally opposed to the Free Society. What is happening or is not happening in Russia to-day is immaterial to this argument. This evaluation of the Bolshevik position is based on the writings of Marx and the political Marxists, and we can but commend the* late G.P. Maximoff's *Guillotine at Work (Part I) to our correspondent if she wishes to study this question. Unfortunately, the myth of Russia as the workers' fatherland—assisted by a tremendous propaganda machine and the Winston Churchills and the Un-American Committees—dies hard, and it could be clearly shown that the defeats suffered by the working classes throughout the world during the past thirty years are largely explained by the part played by the Communist leaders who, while posing as the champions of the working classes, have betrayed them at every turn and have disrupted that essential unity among the rank and file about which they talk so much but which, at bottom, they—like all politicians seeking power—fear.*

For these reasons we will continue to oppose the system in Russia, and we are convinced that we serve the cause of the social revolution by so doing. And we can hardly believe that we serve the cause of American capitalism or play into its hands when we complain that Russia is not "Red" enough!

The Economic Roots of War

FOR many years now this paper has stressed the economic roots of war because it is becoming increasingly clear that contemporary economy can only exist by reference to war preparation and war production. This is a horrible conception. But it explains why war is so insistently knocking at humanity's door. And if it is true that practically no one consciously wants war (and we think this is true), then the reappearance of war must come from some other agency—the needs of a profit-making economy based upon some kind of value exchange.

We criticise such a mode of economy because of its intrinsic lack of morality or ethics or justice, and because it produces poverty and war. The it does so, and that it explains the institutional character of war to-day should not make us despair: it should simply make us determined to change our mode of economy.

Here are some indications in favour of our analysis.

German Steel and Rearmament

The speeding-up of German steel production was opposed by French industrialists both as a competitor in "their" markets ("theirs" by right of conquest), and as a threat to French security. But now American demand for European steel production has absorbed the entire productive capacity of both France, the low countries and Germany, so that the element of competition (for a too-small market) has disappeared (with the expansion of the market). Futhermore, it has advanced the economic rehabilitation of Germany. The re-arming of Germany will advance it still further, and hence will receive only feeble opposition. Who can doubt, however, that it will also advance the drift to war?

Italy Also and Japan

Such is characteristic not only of Germany. Mr. Leon Dayton, Economic Co-operation Administration (Marshall Aid) Chief for Italy, has declared that the economic reconstruction of Italy has succeeded "beyond the dream of even the most optimistic of its planners". But he adds that the defence needs of the West during 1951 "actually offer an unusual opportunity" for increased production and employment (*United Press*, 10/1/51).

On the same day, *Associated Press quoted* Shigeru Yoshida, Japan's Prime Minister, as saying that "the re-armament of Japan should not be undertaken without 'discreet handling as well as mature deliberation'." Note that he did not say that it should not be undertaken at all: only that it needs care.

International Capitalism

Exactly similar views about the good economic results of re-armament were expressed at the 74th session of the International Chamber of Commerce Council, meeting in Paris earlier this month. Mr. Philip D. Reed, the president—he is also Chairman of the General Electric Company, said that "the Council had agreed on three basic premises for co-operation during the re-armament period:

"(1) The need for safeguarding to the greatest possible extent the economic and social gains already achieved, which calls for an increase in production covering the largest possible part of defence requirements.

"(2) The need to avoid strong inflationary forces that might result from superimposing a major defence programme upon a major reconstruction programme.

"(3) Wherever new opportunities may arise under present circumstances to accelerate the re-establishment of free multilateral trade and convertible currencies, full advantage should be taken of such opportunities."

Walter Runciman spoke for English industry:

"Viscount Runciman, chairman of Walter Runciman & Company, England, said that changed conditions during the rearmament period could lead to a freeing of trade, since some countries, for example, would be able to earn more foreign currencies as raw material suppliers."

Whether these men are well-meaning or not is clearly irrelevant. It is not good or wicked men but the spur which re-armament gives to trade that conditions decisions. Is it needful to point out that wages go up with improved conditions? Or that the next stage after war preparation is war production?

An Indian Teacher in Japan

MISS Santha Rama Rau is an Indian girl who went to Japan when her father was appointed Indian ambassador in Tokyo after the war. As she wanted to meet Japanese people, and not just officials, diplomats and the Occupation staff, she got a job teaching English at a "progressive" school called *Jiyu Gakuyen* which had been started before the war under great difficulties by Mr. & Mrs. Hani. Describing the school, Miss Ran writes: "The difficulties the war years brought started with the name of the school. Great pressure was put on them by the Ministry of Education to change it because the word "Freedom" should not figure in the title of any institution. The Hanis refused to change the name, even though it meant that the Jiyu Gakuyen was not recognized as a school at all."

In one of her English classes, the meaning of the word "murder" was asked and in explaining, Miss Ran mentioned the trials held by the War Crimes Tribunal at Tokyo. A girl in her class said she wanted to ask some questions about the trials, and, encouraged by Miss Ran, she began:

"You too are of Asia, otherwise I could not ask. . . . Our leaders are accused of aggression and imperialism. Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Well, among the judges is a Dutchman and do the Dutch not conquer and rule Indonesia?"

I nodded feebly.

"Also there is a Frenchman, his country rules Indo-China. The Englishman left your country only in August but stays in Burma and Malaya. The Chinese say they rule Tibet and Sinkiang who do not wish them there."

"Yes," I said, "but those are old conquests. One cannot go back through history righting wrongs—one must begin somewhere."

"The Russians," Yoko said gently, "the conquests of his country in East Europe, they are old, too?'

"No, listen," I said, "I agree with you. Where conquests are so old that the people themselves have forgotten, one might as well leave *those* alone. But I think the principle should be that where a nation *wants* a conqueror to leave their country and yet they remain, that should be remedied." I stopped, suddenly wondering if that applied to the Occupation of Japan. "Besides," I said, trying to put myself right, "there were other things, atrocities and so on."

"Ah! those come in any war."

"Well, the Allies did not go around beheading captured airmen," I said on surer ground.

"Yes, those should be punished. But is it worse to behead a man than to shoot him or hang or kill him with an atom bomb?"

"It seems barbaric to the West or rather," I said, thinking of the far worse atrocities that the West has been guilty of, their concentration camps and torture chambers, "to the democracies." Then I amended that te, "to Americans," because of the atrocities of the democratic countries in their Asian colonies.

"It is," Yoko said thoughtfully, "the custom of the country. Some foreign customs seem barbaric to us, too." She apologized to me. "You said you wish us to understand these things. I do not criticize. There are many good things, but it is confusing. Is it not so?"

THE LOSERS

A British soldier serving in Korea writes me that he asked an elderly Korean what his people felt about the war. He replied that they would suffer equally from a Russian or American victory: "It does not matter to a blade of grass whether it is eaten by a horse or a cow."

Peace News, 19/1/51.

THE FILM THEY DIDN'T WANT

THE film "Chance of a Lifetime," in which workers take over a factory (see *Freedom*, 13/5/50), is on the British Film Academy's short list from which the best British film of 1950 will be chosen.

This is the film which none of the distributors would show when it was issued.

Foreign Commentary (from p. 1)

Community Experiment

EXPLODING A MYTH

HOW much longer will the myth that organised sport helps to bring the people of the world into closer and friendlier contacts persist? Sport has been the cause of more bad blood—and even more spilled blood—than anything we can think of. The reason, of course, is that the real sporting spirit has been always obscured by nationalistic pride.

Only last month, at a football match between an Indonesian team and one of Dutch soldiers, a shooting fray took place which lasted two hours because Indonesian troops were refused free admission. It is probable that the Dutch soldiers did not have to pay, though the report from Jakarta does not make this clear. The result, however, was five dead and several wounded.

THE MARCH OF TIME

AT the same time as *Picture Post* published a fascinating feature story on a tribe of Australian aborigenees, still uninfluenced by civilized man—and in spite of this, apparently very happy and peaceful (or should one say *because of this?*) a Reuter report from Darwin, Australia, states that the Waugitj tribe had formed a union and would strike until their terms were met.

"They want £A7 a week (£5 12s. sterling) instead of their present average of £A1, plus their keep, tobacco, and a weekly cinema show. They also want the right to go to a cinema when they like and not on Wednesdays only."

AN EXPERIMENT IN COMMUNAL LIVING

THOUSANDS of miles of ocean separate the unfortunate Waugitj tribe caught up in the meshes of civilisation from the libertarian community tucked away somewhere in Paraguay where, according to the Brazilian paper *A Plebe*, 600 people, living in three villages, are putting into operation the ideas of anarchist-communism, sharing in common the land and the implements for working it, as well as the produce of their labours. This colony was started some fifteen years ago by anti-Nazi refugees and given the charming name of Primavera (Spring). To-day the community is made up of people of all nationalities. And, according to *A Plebe*, there are other similar colonies in Paraguay, including one founded by Esperantists.

CANNED ARMIES

ONE has often been told that the American housewife prepares her meals with a tin-opener. But, of course, this may possibly be just Russian propaganda to demoralise America's male population! Yet, from an American source comes the information that experiments are being carried out to make it possible some day for military cargo planes to drop an entire infantry squad housed in a metal container.

Who knows that one day a brilliant American inventor may not hit on the idea of dropping containers of food instead of soldiers, accompanied by tin openers instead of machine guns. It might introduce a little goodwill into a starving world instead of more strife.

LIBERTARIAN.

They Demand More Production

And Offer More Austerity

AND so it goes on. Target after target, production increase after increase. And no more security, no more leisure, no more goods in return for our labours. Only more demands. Plenty of *them*.

Two years ago, when we were facing the dollar crisis, and the export drive was the way out of our difficulties, it was stated that production for export had to increase by 30 per cent, for all our problems to be solved. Whether that increase has been achieved has not been announced, but apparently we have filled the dollar gap, so we may take it that a *sufficient* increase has been achieved.

But has it? At a recent meeting, the Minister of Works, R. R. Stokes, said that there was no way out of our economic difficulties or any security for the future unless every man produced 20 *per cent more* than in the past.

Now these sort of exhortations are always so delightfully vague. Does this mean that two years ago the target should have been 50 per cent. more? Or that we have only achieved an increase of 10 per cent. and so still need 20 per cent. to reach the original 30? Does this mean that it was only necessary to increase by 10 per cent. to close the dollar gap and the original 30 was just eye-wash? And if, two years ago, it was only necessary to close the dollar gap for everything to be O.K., why is there no security unless we increase by 20 per cent. from now?

We don't know these things, because we are not kept informed. All we are informed about is the fact that more is wanted out of us. More sacrifices, more work; but for what? This remains vague. "To get out of our economic difficulties." "To close the dollar gap." "To correct the adverse balance of trade." And other inspiring phrases. Oh yes, I forgot—"To maintain our standard of living." That's a good one, and must not be forgotten. On 8d. worth of meat per week, increased prices for fish and rabbits, more to pay for utility clothing, pots and pans going off the market to provide metal for armaments, and soaring wool prices, we can well talk about "maintaining our standard of living".

Getting Nowhere

The worker to-day is very much in the position of a man walking up the down escalator. He keeps on going forward, but gets nowhere. He must keep making an effort; if he stops he is carried downwards.

The depressing thing is that there seems no end to it. As our editorial showed last issue, crisis gives way only to crisis. When one target has been hit, another, bigger, swings up in its place. And all the time, looming in the background, the threat of destruction which makes all the effort fruitless.

Is there a way out? At the risk of appearing dogmatic, we can only assert dogmatically—not as things are to-day. There is no way out, no security, no leisure, no hope of widening our lives or even of maintaining our standards of living, within the economic or political structures which dominate the world to-day.

For the workers, irresponsible and harassed, the dreary prospect stretches before us—more and more effort and sacrifice for less and less reward. A false prosperity will appear as rearmament develops, to be counteracted by more taxation, demands for payment for the National Health Service and increased prices for every commodity we need. To say nothing of the extended misery and real suffering that war will bring.

There is only one way out, but that is a very tough business. It means determination on the part of workers to take responsibility, to take decisions—and to decide to stop slaving for useless ends and unworthy causes. And to begin working towards the goal of workers' control, throwing away outworn money systems and meaningless targets and producing to satisfy our needs.

P.S.

4,000,000 ZOMBIES

FROM PAGE ONE

demobbed in 1945. (That is to say, not demobbed: this was only the popular impression, and in fact they were still on the reserve, still ready to be recalled at an instant from a worth-while job in civilian life to cleaning Army latrines for a fortnight.)

But, as we can see from what has happened since the end of the war, there is no such thing as a temporary state in these war preparations. Every single sacrifice made for "the war only" is still required; and there is not the slightest reason to suppose that they will not be required after the war with Russia. It may quite well be that they will go on requiring them after the war with the United States. There is no need for the public to let itself be bamboozled by the idea that preparations for war are only required until the end of that war. Everything that is demanded from them will last *their* lives out, even assuming these are not rapidly shortened by too many demands.

—But must you 'brasso-up' as well?

The present demand is that men who served in the Army between 1939 and the present time, are for the remainder of their virile lives to be subject to the requirements of the Ministry of Labour (for the cry to-day is not "'England expects . . ." but "The Ministry will consider . . ." (see Army Form D.406), whether for actual military service, as may be the case in some Territorial units, or for playing the fool for a few nights a week with the possibility of police-court proceedings in the background. What colossal impudence! But who can blame the powers-that-be? They are not thinking in terms of men but of numbers and names; truly, if the four million concerned all eventually turn up and not merely consider it necessary to re-train all over again at the whim of the Ministry, but even to keep their buttons shiny ready for inspection by an N.C.O. who has considered it necessary meticulously to carry out the job assigned to him, we shall be justified in referring to Zombies.

We do not delude ourselves that there are four million people in this country opposed to war, least of all if in our idea about opposition to war one naturally excludes those who are oppose to one side only (such as the fascists in Hitler's war and the communists in Stalin's). But surely there are four million people opposed to the principle embodied in the recall of the Zombies? If amongst those concerned, there were only four hundred, the shades of the prison-house would not be hanging over the country. There is not even war-time conscription in Northern Ireland, because the Government must consider the susceptibility of minority; there is no conscription in Canada, where the Government had also to consider the susceptibility of a minority, the French-Canadians; and if the majority here remain dumb (and there is no doubt whatever from Ministers' own statements that conscription moves are "unpopular"—although, oddly enough, "democratic" statesmen think they are being most democratic when they are ignoring the wishes of the majority) cannot at least a minority become susceptible? The Bevin coal mining scheme for other reasons made a minority susceptible, and in the end (even in war-time) the minority won.

The recall of the Zombies is not made in consequence of primary military need. In point of fact, the reluctance of conscripts to be trained has overtaxed the strength of the Regular Army. The influx of at any rate a batch of unwilling serfs would have serious consequences at the present time. But the over-riding motive is not the desire to have more men on the strength, which Whitehall knows perfectly well will have one purpose only: to drain the country's economic strength for the purpose of adding to the vainglory of a few officers, useless in normal times, who will have plenty of men to run round whitewashing the coals for inspection. One real motive lies at the back of all military conscription since first introduced in this country: it is a diplomatic pandering to France, and moreover, pandering to a France which has not existed since 1940. The old-time politician and general of France could not understand that Britain was serious unless she had military conscription, the primary object of which was to remove their doubts. To-day it does not matter in the least what they think, firstly, they have not the same freedom of choice, and secondly, the Russians could be in Calais before they had time to turn their coats.

There's (almost) a war on!

At this the mugs will begin to chant the incantation of the Whitehall voodoomen: the fact that the Russians could be here so quickly is the reason we must have blood sacrifices. In spite of what our critics may think, we prefer to be practical. There is no real connection between accepting the permanent principle of lifetime obedience to every whim of the Ministry of Labour and the final defeat of totalitarianism. If there were, how happy everyone would be to-day! They chanted the same charm in 1939; they had their way and won.

Have we really achieved so much by the destruction of one totalitarianism and the victory of another? Won't it be the same again? And in that case would it do so much harm if the Ministry of Labour *had* to consider the feelings of the people just a little? The majority want very little more than to be able to save the money they spend on tax and buy a television set. Would it really have harmed security so much if after 1945 they had fairly and squarely been demobbed? The State bosses know full well that if they needed it, they could always have got the customers to sign the register all over again and be called up in the same manner as before. But they were not prepared to make concessions to sheep. They kept the bodies in the Zombie state. Perhaps it may be that if we achieved some degree of freedom from the State—not "as far away as Paris is" but somewhere between the local drill hall and the police court, we might not be doing a great disservice to the eventual downfall of totalitarianism.

A.M.

Letters to the Editors

The Psychiatric Approach

DEAR COMRADES,

Alex Comfort's reply to comrade I.A. really gets us nowhere. One cannot help thinking that there is something of the political simpleton in his attitude towards the rulers of the contemporary world, that behind his scientific phraseology is the usual pacifist cry, "A little good-will all round would work wonders." His attempted analogy between the individual delinquent and what he terms "the opponents of anarchism", i.e., the rulers and their hirelings, is, to say the least, completely inadequate.

Let us examine the position in more detail.

The world of to-day is divided into two enormous "power blocs". Both blocs are characterised by two main things—gigantic, centralised state machines possessing immense powers of compulsion in the shape of the police, army, and the propaganda of the church, school and convention. The second thing is the lack of any real resistance to the *status quo* on the part of the oppressed, who seem to prefer their present psychological condition of "sociolatry" (that is, the desire to become a harmonious cog in a smoothly functioning industrial, welfare state, system of society) to their emancipation. What little revolt there is, is offered by an extremely small minority, is mostly vocal (the fear of nonconformist *action* on the part of the masses having apparently communicated itself, in this country especially, to many professed radicals who prefer the comforts of the armchair or their careers to the material inconveniences of being a militant revolutionary) and is becoming increasingly ineffective in the sense of furthering fundamental changes in human attitudes and relationships.

It is in such a situation as this that comrade Comfort comes along and contends that salvation does not lie in the revival of militant, revolutionary action and in the fostering of the rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressors, but in becoming friendly with the tyrants and helping them to become good boys! Does he seriously consider that a Franco, a Stalin, a Truman, or even an Attlee, will wholeheartedly welcome the attentions of the anarchist, Alex Comfort, desirous of giving them psychiatric treatment? It is true he attempts to support his attitude against the obvious reaction such a contention arouses in other anarchists, by attempting an analogy, inadequate as I have stated before, between the old lag and our delinquent rulers, claiming that anarchists cannot consistently advocate psychiatric treatment for the former and revolt against the latter. His error lies, however, in thinking that the position of Bill Sykes is the same as that of a "saviour of the people" or a "leader of the free peoples". That Bill Sykes and our rulers may exhibit similar psychopathological characteristics I do not deny. But surely there is a hell of a lot of difference between, say, a Haigh, and a Stalin? Haigh, after all, is a lone individual. Stalin is the controller of a state machinery as powerful and as efficient as any the world has yet seen. His answer to such an endeavour would be sharp and unhesitating. No, comrade Comfort, I am afraid that if we wish to see tyranny eliminated and the order of anarchy prevail, it will be futile to dispense with the masses and rely on the well-meaning, but unrealistic and, up to the present, undefined, efforts of the psychiatrist. When a social revolution removes the institutions and beliefs whereby our delinquent rulers, whether supreme heads of states or petty party bosses, can oppress and exploit us, then perhaps we can give them the psychiatric treatment that we advocate now for the powerless "common criminal". However remote such an event appears at present, I venture to contend it offers the only realistic revolution.

Yours fraternally,
S. E. PARKER.

Toads and Earthworms ?

I AM renewing my subscription because *Freedom* has an approach to current affairs quite different from that of other periodicals and not because, I agree with all I find in it. I think (for instance) your ideas on sex are hopeless, nor do I see what they have to do with Anarchism.

I am a firm believer in the family as a social unit. Your views I consider unsound biologically because the higher one rises in the scale of animal life the greater is the parental affection and responsibility, as for example, amongst horses, dogs, monkeys and man. You apparently want to return to the conditions prevailing amongst toads and earthworms.

H.C.L.

[Our correspondent misapprehends our attitude. We do not attack the family as a biological fact. Indeed, our interest in and support for the ideas behind the Peckham Experiment show this clearly. We do, however, attack the authoritarian family in which the pattern of the state is reproduced. Here, the parents wield authority, superior force ("power"), moral argument, and exact obedience. The children have to suppress their own strivings, their "nature", and learn to obey. They have to fit themselves into the world of adults and their emotional needs and affections are warped in consequence. When they grow up they inflict a like mutilation on their own children.

This is the pattern we denounce. We do not wish to demean human endeavour to that of toads and earthworms: but toads and earthworms do not twist the lives of their offspring as men do. Far from diminishing natural affection within the family we seek to free family life from those shackles which poison such affection, and release the biological family from socially-imposed chains.

But we also attack the family in its antithesis to society: for children are the responsibility of their parents to-day, society feeling little interest in them. We not only wish to see children and parents integrated within the family, but also in the large social pattern of the street, the village, the community. One is not only one with one's mother, father, sisters and brothers, but also with the world of men, women and children outside this circle. The family must not only be purged of authority, but must fall into its proper social perspective.—EDS.]

Other letters on p. 3

DEBATE WITH S.P.G.B.

FOR those of our readers who have heard that a debate was to be arranged in London between our comrade Eddie Shaw of Glasgow, and Tony Turner of the S.P.G.B., we regret to announce that the Executive Committee of the S.P.G.B. has refused to allow Tony Turner to debate with Comrade Shaw.

Meetings and Announcements

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP
CENTRAL LONDON
Regular Sunday evening meetings will be held in future at 7.30 p.m., at
THE PORCUPINE
PUBLIC HOUSE,
corner Charing Cross Rd. and Gt. Newport St., next Leicester Square Underground Sta.

FEB. 4th — F. A. Ridley
"1851—1951
A CENTURY OF BRITISH LABOUR"

FEB. 11th — Rita Milton
PRACTICAL ANARCHISM

FEB. 18 — Eddie Shaw
CONSCIOUS EGOISM AND ANARCHISM

COMRADES IN WEST LONDON
Will any Anarchists interested in forming a group in the West London area, please write to FREEDOM PRESS.

NORTH-EAST LONDON GROUP
Discussion Meetings fortnightly, 7.30 p.m.
Enquiries c/o Freedom Press.

Feb. 6th — Round Table
"ANARCHISM AS I SEE IT"

FEB. 20th
"FUTURE GROUP ACTIVITY

BRADFORD
PUBLIC MEETING
in the Mechanics Institute,
Town Hall Square,
Tuesday, February 13th, at 7.30 p.m.
Speaker: Eddie Shaw

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP
INDOOR MEETINGS
EVERY SUNDAY AT 7 p.m.
at the
CENTRAL HALLS, 25 Bath Street.
with
Frank Leech, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw, J. Raeside

Cooperation

SOME readers when renewing subscriptions recently remarked had they been notified earlier would not have allowed their subscription be so far behind. That we have been inefficient in sending out renewal notices cannot be denied! Our only excuse is that we are always working under pressure and many things remain undone. However, now that we have managed to put our finances in order, we shall be sending out renewal notices every two months so that readers will be informed in some cases one month in advance, in others one month after their subscriptions become due for renewal.

But we would ask our readers to co-operate by renewing when they receive our renewal card and thus saving us the extra work of notifying them a second time. We shall be sending out a new batch of cards at the end of this month, and unless they renew before then, it will mean having to send a second card to quite a large number of readers who were notified of the position of their subscription at the end of December but who have not yet responded. Will they deal with the matter now and in this way lighten our already heavy burden of office work?

★

IN just under a month our Special Appeal for the weekly "Freedom" has brought in £43. To achieve our objective of £50 this year we need not only to maintain the existing flow of contributions but to increase it to £50 a month. We thank those readers who have sent us contributions and encouragement following our announcement about "Freedom" soon appearing as a weekly. We are sure there are many more who support our effort, but have not so far responded. So much depends on your efforts during the next two months. For our part we are already going ahead with all arrangements for the change-over. There is no time to sit back and wait for others to do our part of the job. But neither can those friends and comrades who want the weekly "Freedom" sit back and hope others will see that we have the money, or the new readers we need to put the weekly on a sound footing!

Freedom — Weekly

Special Appeal
January 13 to January 27

Greenwich: D.J. £2/3/0; Nottingham: K.N. 1/6; Shepton Mallet: D.M. 5/-; Bolton: W.H.B. 5/6; Stranraer: T.H.N. 6/6; Bournemouth: D.B. 12/-; Whetsone: L.C. 5/6; Anon 2/6; Croydon: A.W.U. £1; Bury: J.H.M. 3/6; Wakefield: A.F. 1/6; Newport Pagnell: W.S. 4/-; Smethwick: E.W. 6/-; Newton Abbot: E.D. 11/-; Bristol: P.R. 11/6; London: J.S. 5/-; Abercarn: G.B. 3/-; Stockport: F.O. 1/6; Birkenhead: G.H.W. 17/6; Castle Douglas: M.A. 3/-; London: J.B. 5/6; Anon 3/-; London: G.G. 1/6; Liverpool: H.H.J. £1/1/0; Nelson: A.S. 1/6; London: Anon £4; Paterson, N.J.: F.V. 14/-; San Francisco: Social Group £8/15/0.

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TOTAL 1951	£43 13 5

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Special Subscription Rates for 2 copies
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Cheques, P.O.'s and Money Orders should be made out to FREEDOM PRESS, crossed a/c Payee, and addressed to the publishers.
FREEDOM PRESS
27 Red Lion Street
London, W.C.1 England
Tel.: Chancery 8364.

Printed by Express Printers, London, E.1, Published by Freedom Press, 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1