

Accidents at Work

THE Chief Inspector of Factories, Mr. G. P. Barnett, has recently issued his report for 1950. It shows that, while "familiarity breeds contempt" and workers are inclined to get too easy-going in their attitude to dangerous machines, in too many cases insufficient instruction and the needs of production are to blame.

The number of accidents which occur within the first few days of a worker taking over a new job is an indication that they are left on their own before they are properly schooled in running the machine.

One man was put on a mincing machine "very casually" on his first day of work. Within an hour he had lost a finger.

An eighteen-year-old girl put on a board-bending machine caught her fingers under the blade on the second day at work. The guard had been removed to facilitate working.

Compressed air badly injured a man who unscrewed a plug in a pipe—something it is unlikely he would have done if the workings of the machine had been properly explained and the danger points pointed out to him.

Mr. Barnett maintains that what he calls "special interest" accidents are always the result of a failure of the human element and that in most cases the danger could be foreseen. But he points out that "designers and makers of machines are still not giving sufficient thought either to the elimination of danger points or their adequate protection.

The real trouble is, of course, that there is no co-operation between the designer who design and make machinery and those who are going to use them in production. It is one thing for a machine to be tested in prototype for efficiency, speed and wear and tear, but quite another to be operated for long hours day in and day out for months in production line. Especially when the original design might be "modified" to get more output.

Bosses and workers should take "adequate precautions", says Mr. Barnett, so that the work can be done safely. But the workers are not in control of the conditions under which they work. Loose clothing (pullover sleeves) and girls' long hair can get caught in machinery with terrible results, and these can be corrected by the workers if they

are made conscious of their dangers, but what can they do to affect the actual plant without bringing pressure on the boss?

Every worker knows how demands for improvements can get bogged down in negotiations. Many firms have "suggestion boxes" for the workers to put forward their ideas for improvement in productivity. They are seldom interested in safety devices which do not increase production. The shop steward, if he is a good union man is also infected with the production bug and will urge the worker to keep going while he "will see what can be done".

And the workers keep going—until there is an accident—and then it's the workers' fault and maybe something is done about it. But a worker has to lose a finger or a foot, or be scalped or burned, before the management is jolted into action.

The production drive also means that we do not hear so much about the effects of fatigue as we used to. It has been proved long ago that long hours without breaks leads to more accidents, but the demands of the moment are pushing that into the background.

A correspondent, A. Lazenby, of Huddersfield, writes: "Reading or listening to Reports of experts and know-all administrators placing the onus upon the worker who puts himself out of the production line through carelessness, one observes the care taken to omit the consequences of imposed punishment upon workers who use the toilet or drink tea as not prescribed on the Work Notice Board."

And he encloses the following notice: COUNTY BOROUGH OF HUDDERSFIELD. BOROUGH ENGINEER & SURVEYORS' DEPARTMENT.

TEA BREAK.

Please note that in future the break for tea shall be from 9.30 a.m. to 9.40 a.m. There will be no break in the afternoon.

(Signed) T. F. CLIFFE.

Borough Surveyor & Engineer.

It is not made clear to us whether this has been done with the agreement of the

trade union. It probably has.

Now, this may seem a small thing, but it is precisely in these small ways that all the gains that have been made by working-class struggle can be taken away. A few minutes on the day here, a slight "adjustment" there, with the balance always swinging against the underdog, unless he actively resists it.

Up in Huddersfield, round about 4 o'clock some afternoon, a worker will be gasping for a "cupper". His work will demand a stimulant which will not be there, and a rest which will not be allowed. His attention will falter, his hand will slip, there will be an accident—the fault of another careless worker. Or will it be the fault of Mr. Cliffe, the Borough Engineer and Surveyor.

We suggest to the workers in Huddersfield and everywhere else that they take greater control over their conditions of work.

And we suggest they ask Mr. Cliffe one question: "Does he have a cup of tea in the afternoon?" P.S.

BUDGET: SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS THE WORKERS STILL PAY

MOST budgets are of the borrow-from-Peter-to-pay-Paul-type, but Mr. Butler's Tuesday proposals are unusually so. Indeed, many an earnest citizen studying the morning paper on his way to work next day must have been trying to puzzle out whether he 'gained more on the swings than he lost on the roundabouts.

The natural and inevitable question, "How does it affect me and my earnings," was fully exploited by Mr. Butler, with many novel features. For the mass of workers the Budget represents much the same as a rise or cut in wages so directly does it now affect the earning and spending power of everyone. Thus income may well be raised by concessions in the field of income tax, pensions, and Family Allowances, while the cost of living will go up with the increases in food prices (estimated at 1/6 per head per week) caused by reduction in the subsidies, and entertainment tax

and postal charges.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer claims that the Budget changes will increase incentive to earn extra by overtime and no doubt the increased cost of living will also supply this incentive in a more familiar manner. Nevertheless, workers will be left wondering whether their real wages—what they can buy with their wage packets—will, on balance, be up or down. Mr. Butler declared that the miner, for example, would be able by extra production to recompense himself several times over for the cuts in subsidies.

This means in fact, however, that the worker will pay more whatever happens; but will secure more wages only by extra work, and this is offered by the Chancellor as though he were giving something away. The Treasury will gain in hard cash, the worker in more intangible ways.

Now this result is inevitable, and could have been arrived at by the simple expedient of considering the Chancellor's task—he has to secure a surplus of £500 million in the current year. And he has to do this in order mainly to finance the armaments programme, which, in itself, can only mean a change-over from consumable goods production to arms production, and so inevitably a rise in the cost of living. The £500 million must, in the nature of things, come mainly (indeed, in the last analysis wholly, since labour is the source of all wealth) out of the pockets of the workers, for increased exports are unlikely to supply much of it.

The answer to the question "How does it affect me?" is therefore, "Guns instead of bread and butter."

Syndicalist Notebook

RELAXING SATURDAY BAN

THE appeals for loyalty and for constitutional, democratic irresponsibility made to the miners of South Wales by their political leaders are having effect.

The ban on working the Saturday morning shift, which was finding widespread support three weeks ago, is now, it seems, on the wane. But there is one reason for this which may mean that it is only a temporary relaxing.

This is that on Friday, March 14th, there is a national delegate conference of the N.U.M. being held in London. This has been called to consider a recommendation (from the National Executive) that the Saturday work agreement should be extended for another year. It is not expected that there will be a vote at this conference, but that its recommendation will be remitted to the rank and file for final decision.

It is probably the case that at many of those pits where the men are drifting back on Saturday mornings, they will vote against the National Executive's recommendation and will then be in a

stronger (moral) position to refuse Saturday work even though the national majority may vote for it. In other words, they are just marking time for the moment.

Another reason for the drop in support for direct action may be the denunciation by the leaders (including Aneurin Bevan, who refused to address a large meeting in S. Wales) of the whole move as a Communist plot. It is certainly true that a great many workers, rather than be thought Communist-led, would prefer to make no protest at all. This is just another of the many ways in which the C.P. do a great dis-service to the working-class and are an embarrassment to genuine militants.

GLASGOW TRANSPORT WORKERS URGE BAN ON MID-WEEK SPORT

WHEN there is a conflict of interest between two groups of workers, there is nothing much a commentator can do but simply report the fact.

In Glasgow, public transport workers have for long complained that the City has not enough transport to adequately deal with its needs. They are now coming out to support a campaign to ban mid-week sport, which, they claim, puts an "unbearable strain" on transport when a football crowd coincides with the home-going rush from work.

The campaign is being launched by the Scottish Fuel Efficiency Committee, chairman of which is that popular(?) Glasgow dignitary, Sir Frederick Dollan.

Under the influence of the Committee, some works have now posted notices warning that men absenting themselves to go to football will be liable to instant dismissal. This sort of thing can be dealt with by the workers in a simple and straightforward manner, but the transport workers' protest is rather a different matter.

The only answer is the provision of more transport—sufficient to cope with both football and work crowds. There isn't much hope of that, with tanks considered more necessary than trams, but any other solution will inevitably penalise either one section of the workers or the other.

CREWE BUSMEN OBJECT TO CLIPPINGS

BETWEEN two and three hundred busmen on the Crosville Motor Services in the Crewe area have given notice to strike as a protest against the employment of conductresses.

The company claim there are not enough conductors; the men say there are.

The real objection conductors have against clippings is that, being paid less than men, their employment is a threat to the men's jobs.

This is yet another reason for equal pay for equal work. If women were paid the same wages as the men, the companies would have no reason for employing them in preference to men. It is in the men's own interests to fight for equal pay for women.

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

AMERICAN MILITARY TRAINING BILL DEFEATED

THE American House of Representatives last week virtually rejected the U.M.T. Bill (Universal Military Training Bill) when they sent the Bill back to committee by 236 votes to 162.

The U.M.T. Bill proposes that all able-bodied youths should be liable to six months military training as soon as they reach the age of 18, and they would be kept in the Reserve and subject to recall for a further 7½ years.

This proposal to put the United States on a permanent war footing in every respect (we refer readers to the article on "Permanent War Economy," FREEDOM, 9/2/52) has the support of Truman and General Ike ("War Solves Nothing") Eisenhower. The opposition, according to Washington reports, came from "a number of church, farm, educational and other organisations".

Even the amendments put forward in an attempt to make the Bill acceptable, could not save it. One amendment proposed was a six-year limit on the training and the delaying of the U.M.T. programme so long as the present Selective Service remains in force. Another called for compulsory military training in high schools.

The verdict in political circles is that though the Bill can be again brought up, it appears to be dead so far as the present session is concerned.

From the reports we have read, the reason for the stand taken by the House against the U.M.T. is not clear. The voting showed Democrats and Republicans divided for and against the Bill, though more Republicans supported it than opposed it, whilst the reverse was the case with the Democrats. It was therefore not just a straight issue between the two parties. It would be encouraging to feel that the House represented a strong opposition throughout the United States, but there is no evidence to support this at present.

Of course there are those politicians

who will now work on the public for when the Bill again comes before the House. Already we have the kind of comments which are calculated to make the public panic into acceptance of the most reactionary measures. Said Sen. Richard B. Russell, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee: "Failure of this Congress to pass a U.M.T. Bill will be a blow to our national defense... little short of a national tragedy." Heard that one before, anybody?

THE WESTERN IRON CURTAIN

A PASSPORT with a visa from one of the Iron Curtain countries would now appear to be a way of branding a man or woman as an undesirable alien so far as the "democratic countries" are concerned. There may be an element of exaggeration in this, but it is sufficient for a person to believe that he runs the risk of being turned back because of the Russian visa in his passport, for him to restrict his movements. And this seems to us a very dangerous trend.

The specific case we have in mind is that of the Italian non-Communist writers, Carlo Levi and Alberto Moravia, who have been invited to attend celebrations in Moscow on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian writer, Nicolai Gogol.

The Rome correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* puts it this way: "This has put them in a dilemma, European writers who accept Soviet visas and the inclusion of the Soviet Union in the list of countries named on their passports run the risk of a refusal of both a British and United States entry visa at some future date. Britain has abolished visas for Italians and for

many other Continental citizens, but such citizens may still be turned away on landing at Dover, either for the above or for some other reason.

Both these writers have visited Britain and America several times. What are they to do? Refuse the Soviet invitation, and thereby throw away the only chance they are likely to have of "seeing the Soviet Union at least once"? The discussion in Rome on this subject is now in full force. Either they may accept the invitation and face the prospect of no further visit to N.A.T.O. countries or they must refuse it.

Two years ago, the *Corriere della Sera* wanted to send Signor Moravia as its correspondent to Moscow. The Soviet authorities then refused him a visa. To-day, the same authorities invite him and his novelist wife, Elsa Morante, on Soviet terms: as guests of the Gogol celebrations.

It is clear to us that just what the "democracies" complain of about Russia—that her citizens are not allowed to leave their country to see how other countries live—is happening in reverse. So that we can eventually expect a solid iron curtain, for we have already reached the stage where some of the very few Russians who are allowed to visit this country, even if only to attend phoney peace congresses, are turned back; some of the few non-Communists invited to visit Russia dare not accept for fear of reprisals by democratic port officials when they see the incriminating visas in their passports.

We are reaping the harvest of the witch-hunt policy instituted in America. The disease is being brought to Europe with the guns and dollars. Like the Colorado beetle, it can be controlled at the beginning if each outbreak is given the utmost publicity and the pest routed out. But indifference is fatal. It leads to totalitarianism, to suspicion and spying.

A Lesson from Grimsby Will Workers' Control Work?

OUR industrial correspondent (in an article reproduced in our reprint volume MANKIND IS ONE), described last year the Stevedores' Co-operatives started on Merseyside and in London. The *New Statesman* published recently an account by Mr. R. H. Clements of a similar venture by the dockers of Grimsby on the East Coast (which has met with similar obstruction by the Dock Labour Board):

When the docks were nationalised, and as dockside workers the dockers were registered with the centralised agency of the National Dock Labour Board, they felt that the time was ripe to end the relationship between dockers and the private stevedoring companies which had so many unpleasant memories. 'We felt,' as one Grimsby docker put it, 'that the nationalised industry would welcome workers' control.'

In Grimsby, as in no other port in the United Kingdom, the dockers' desire to gain something more than higher wages has a long history. It dates back

to the foundation of the Co-operative Stevedoring Society in 1894, which, with the aid of the Grimsby General Workers' Friendly and Protective Society struggled against private interest more to 'subsidise' the meagre wages than to actually establish a form of workers' control. But its operation was a forerunner to a move in that direction. In the 1919 Annual Report of the Society, for instance, the General Secretary talked not merely of bonus and increased wages, but of the 'great struggle for advancement and emancipation of our class.' Calling for harder work, he said: 'You will not only benefit the efforts of the Society, but will show the rest of the Transport Industry, how co-operation effectively works in the interests of the community as a whole.'

"Under the Government's instructions to reduce the number of the stevedores on the docks, the Society was disbanded at the start of World War II, but the idea was kept alive. Indeed, to men

HERE, at last is a history book that gets down to relevant facts and, what is still more rare, judges those facts in the light of reason and justice. The scope is immense—from the dawn of human civilisation to the end of the *pax Romana*. What emerges, as the central theme, is war, and the second part of the book is an analysis of the causes of ancient wars. Criticising previous historians for their callousness, their blind and immortal acquiescence in a criterion of success, Professor Grant proceeds to revalue the events and personalities of the past from the firm ground of the present, finding "the real anomaly—a serious danger in education—in the current habit of condoning in the ancient world (unlike many ancient thinkers themselves) pernicious conduct, such as aggression, which must not be condoned to-day."

He finds the causes of ancient war to be (i) sovereignty and self-sufficiency; (ii) irrational emotions such as racialism; and (iii) inequalities in the social structure. He recognises that "the chief function of governments throughout the ages has been war-mongering," and he makes clear that the economic consequences of war have always been the destruction of real wealth. He does not, perhaps, give sufficient attention to the rôle of money in the origins and development of aggression, though he does admit in one place that the trouble begins when the integrity of a food-producing society is disrupted by the need to procure metals for the manufacture of weapons of aggression. He does not mention the irrational basis of money-value, or estimate the pressures created by usury and the accumulation of public debts.

Professor Grant shows that war is always associated with the particularism of States, and he comes to "the only possible conclusion that is not of a highly anti-social character . . . that there must be no division between the ethics of the State and of the individual." He comes near to admitting that public immorality is due to the existence of the State, but he feels that the evils of the State can be mitigated by federation and eliminated by a World State. He does not explain how the evil impulses that seem inseparable from the possession and exercise of power are to be prevented. It is true, of course, that "the alternation of war and peace rests with human decisions

Ancient History, by Michael Grant. (Methuen, 7s. 6d.)

by HERBERT READ

and efforts," but there is nothing in his survey of ancient history to encourage the belief that such decisions and efforts will ever be the outcome of political organisation.

The author mentions the stoic philosophy of the Brotherhood of Man (later absorbed by Christianity but always relinquished by the Christian Church under pressure from the State). He assumes that such a brotherhood can co-exist with the administration of a World State. It has not yet been proved that brotherhood can co-exist with the administration of a trade union. He can show that many of the wars of the past "were directly caused by extreme hereditary differentiation of political and economic classes," but he does not tell us how a World State can be organised without an extreme differentiation of political and economic classes.

In short, though the book gives the most realistic view of history known to me, it ends on a note

of "somehow" which is very unrealistic. "The elimination of particularism must somehow be achieved by peaceful and not by forcible means." Naturally; but the cure for particularism is not universalism so long as universalism is conceived as a concentration of power. The difficulty of governing people, as Lao-tse said, is through over-much policy. "He who tries to govern the kingdom by policy is only a scourge to it; while he who governs without it is a blessing.

"To know these two things is the perfect knowledge of government, and to keep them continually in view is called the virtue of simplicity.

"Deep and wide is this simple virtue; and though opposed to other methods it can bring about a perfect order."

It is possible that the cure for particularism is not universalism but egoism, which is the art of cultivating ones' own garden, as recommended by Candide.

MOST human beings want to like, to love their fellow men. Yet in their everyday lives they, for the most part, practice self-love and are more or less hostile toward all those whom they conceive to stand in their way. The reason for this tragic disparity between what they feel to be right and what they do is simply that the structure of this society is such that the life of the person becomes reduced to a competitive struggle for existence. Under such conditions, men everywhere become nasty, brutish, and cruel. Under such a system it is hard for them to do otherwise, for the first law of life is and has always been self-preservation (the satisfaction of basic needs), and if the individual will not do everything in his power to gain security for himself, who will?

Western society, in short, does not encourage the development of goodness because goodness is not what that society is interested in. Goodness belongs to a frame of reference other than that in which we make our living. It belongs to the covert rather than to the overt part of

our culture. What we must do is to enthrone goodness, human relations, in the place at present occupied by economics. The idyll of the market place must yield to those of humanity. A society such as ours, in which human relations are submerged in the economic system, can rescue itself only by submerging its economy in the matrix of human relations.

And this is the task that the schools must assist in undertaking, no less than the rescue of man from his debasing enslavement to the principles and practices of an acquisitive society. . . . Let no one be deceived. Unless Western man is able to release himself from the degrading tyranny of his enslavement to the religion of economics, he is as certainly doomed to self-destruction as all the portents indicate. Man cannot live by bread alone. Physiologically, and socially, he can retain his health and flourish only in love of, and co-operation with, his fellow man.

—ASHLEY MONTAGU: *On Being Human* (New York, Henry Schuman, 1950. \$1.95).

The extracts below are from the speech of a French educationalist, Jean Guhenno, at a conference on Adult Education held at Elsinore, Denmark.

IT is in that chaotic and uncertain field, that half-way house between the heights of knowledge and the depths of ignorance, where passions smoulder in a light at once too strong and too weak, and where embryonic knowledge does no more than give men ground for their prejudices and a form for the folly within them—it is there that the seeds of war are sown. And wars are waged with these people who have been taught to believe and not to think, these intermediate men. Never has this area of public opinion been more disturbed, more stormy and more perilous.

It is a commonplace to say that civilisation is passing through a crisis. May I read you a few pages in which one of our French writers tried to analyse that crisis as early as 1920? These words were written by Valéry, in the twentieth year of the present century, just after the other war, the war that was waged by my generation in the belief that it would be, as we used to say, "the war to end war". Elsinore, moreover, is particularly appropriate as a place in which to read them again. Listen:

Now, on a vast battlement of Elsinore, stretching from Basle to Cologne, and reaching out to the sands of Nieuport, the marshes of the Somme, the chalklands of Champagne and the granite hills of Alsace, the European Hamlet faces millions of ghosts.

WHAT IS EDUCATION FOR?

He is a Hamlet of the mind. He is meditating on the life and death of truths. His ghosts are the subjects of all our disagreements; his remorse is for all on which we pride ourselves; he is weighed down by the burden of knowledge and discovery, powerless to embark anew on those boundless endeavours. He reflects on the weariness of beginning the past over again and the folly of constantly seeking something new. He wavers between two pitfalls, for two dangers continually threaten the world: order and disorder.

When he picks up a skull, it is a famous one. "Whose was it?" This was Leonardo. He invented the flying man, but the flying man has not done quite what the inventor intended; we know that to-day the flying man astride his mighty swan (*il grande uccello sopra del dosso del suo magno cecero*) has other things to do than to fetch snow from the mountain tops to scatter it, on hot days, in the streets of the cities. . . . This other skull is that of Leibnitz, who dreamed of universal peace. And this was Kant, *qui genuit Hegel, qui genuit Marx, qui genuit*. . . .

Hamlet is not sure what to do with all these skulls. Supposing he left them behind! . . . Will he cease to be himself? His terribly penetrating mind considers the path from war to peace. That way is far darker and more dangerous than the way from peace to war; it troubles all the nations. "And I," he says, "I, the intellectual of Europe, what will become of me . . . ?" And what is peace? Peace is perhaps that state in which the natural enmity of men takes shape in creation instead of being turned to destruction, as in war. It is the time of creative competition and the struggle to produce. But am not I weary of producing? Have I not exhausted the urge to rash experiment and had recourse too often to subtle compounds? Must I abandon the hard course of duty and my loftier ambitions? Must I follow the rest of the world and copy Polonius, who is now the editor of a big newspaper? Or Laertes, who is something in the air force? Or Rosenkrantz, who is doing something or other under a Russian name?

Farewell, ye ghosts! The world needs you no more. Nor me. The world, which gives the name of progress to its fatal desire for certainties, is trying to combine the advantages of death with the good of life. There is still some confusion, but yet a little while and all will be explained; we shall at last see the miracle of an animal society, the perfect anti-heap for ever more.

This was grim meditation in the twentieth year of our present century. Yet, if we were bold enough to continue it on the battlements of Elsinore, how much we might add to it. What an advance, if I may call it so, in the space of twenty-nine years! That meditation bore witness, at the time, only to a profound despair, a dreadful doubt and an immense weariness. But that very despair, doubt and weariness have merely led us further on the downward path. I shall say nothing here—to avoid casting gloom over the discussions—of all we have been forced to learn of man and men in the last ten years. I shall not speak of that world which another of our writers has called "the concentration world", and which stretches far beyond the boundaries of the concentration camps, for it perhaps involves us all; we

bear a great blemish. We now know that Sade was right and that man is "that", too, "that" of which we dare not speak. Man has perhaps never undergone so deep a change as in becoming the mass-man into which he is turning. What has since become of the individual, who stood in such peril in 1920? What an advance here, too! We march together, we shout together. Is there anywhere we do not go in company? We go to the factory, to prison, to the concentration camp, to death—always together. We think together . . . or we believe we do. In fact, we can never think together. Thought is not an exercise which can be done in company. But we do everything else together. I remember the inscription which used to be put on graves: *Hic jacet*, followed by a surname and Christian name. It stood for the passionate desire, even in death and among so many million dead, to remain oneself, an individual. But now the sole desire of every man is to be saved or lost with the multitude, to think, so to speak, by proxy, and the common grave may soon become, by law, the fittest charnel-house for these depersonalised masses.

I REMEMBER when I used to meet many young men every week, all of whom were very learned; they were from the teachers' training colleges in Paris, in the Rue d'Ulm and on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. They knew . . . They were, in fact, sometimes rather too proud of knowing and irritatingly inclined to despise the ordinary people they represented. How often I wished they had the critical circumspection, the wisdom and shrewdness, the natural grasp of truth possessed by their grandfathers who could not read. The unlettered old man of sixty years ago, who made his mark for signature and could not read, was at least protected by his suspicion. It was not easy to take him in. He was a sly old fox. He could be terribly sharp. He had no book-learning, but he knew all that our senses can teach us. He could read earth and sky; those were his books. He watched them as hardly anyone can watch them now. Tracks on the sandy roads and a sighing in the wind were signs to him that no one now regards. Moreover, he was steeped in great traditions, in what we can only call oral culture. He knew legends and stories, proverbs and songs. Not all wisdom was closed to him. There was a meaning in death and a meaning in life. He was not set in a world like that of which Sir John Maud spoke so eloquently: "a world he had not made"; he was at all times in a world he was making and, above all, he believed in the truth. He had a wonderful respect for truth and those who sought it. He sensed that truth was difficult to find. He longed with his whole being to know it. He had no hope in anything else. That ignorant man, knowing at least that he did not know, was much nearer to Socrates than many people to-day who think they know. It was only the apparatus, dialectics, the *logos*, which he lacked. He was in a world full of lies, perhaps, from which he suffered. He was in a world full of injustice, from which he suffered, but it was his faith and hope that he might be saved by the grant of justice and truth, and that was enough to give true dignity to his ignorant life. What have we seen since? What do we see every day? That men who have merely been taught to read, to write and to count may only be better

slaves, and it is probably still more difficult to protect men from half-education than from ignorance. There is reading and reading. Reading means nothing unless it is the ability to distinguish truth from lies on the printed page and to recognise the subtle and insidious combinations in which they may sometimes be found. It is necessary to learn to read and to go on learning to read always, but it must be realised that it is the most difficult of studies and the making reason is never, and will never be completed. To teach people to read so that they trust the first print they see is only to train them to a new form of slavery.

WE cannot contemplate unmoved those generations of young men who, every July, leave school at the age of 13 or 14 and henceforth are at the mercy of chance alone for the development of their capacity of thought. It is true that they can read. But at every street corner they are assailed by the loud-speaker, the wireless and the newspaper. These young peasants and workmen are a prey to every form of propaganda. All parties struggle for control of these simple and defenceless young people in whose hands the future rests. How can they make a choice? What a clamour all around them! Each of them is swayed by the prejudices of his family, his immediate environment, of his country. The printed page is taken as proof. They read only to confirm their prejudices. The propaganda spirit even persuades them that they are traitors unless they stick to their own newspaper or if they venture to seek guidance elsewhere. Reading becomes the most formidable means of regimentation, and a certain vanity in the ability to read in some measure arrests thought. We have indeed a tremendous task before us if we are to preserve the sense of truth in all men.

Continued on p. 3

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SOREL, BUCHNER AND MUMFORD

A Note on New Books

THE Harvard University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege) have published *Georges Sorel* by Richard Humphrey, at 25/-. This is the first full-length study in English of the French philosopher. This book discusses not only Sorel's dubious espousal of syndicalism, but also his views on the family and sexual relations, and "his conception of moral as opposed to economic or political freedom."

Readers who are anxious to know more about Buchner, upon whose play Alban Berg's opera *Wozzeck* (described in *FREEDOM*, 2/2/52) was based, will have two new books to assist them. They are *Georg Buchner* by A. H. J. Knight (Basil Blackwell, 21/-) and *The Plays of Georg Buchner*, to be published in the Spring by Vision Press at 15/-, which will include a long introduction by the translator, Geoffrey Dunlop.

In his book of essays, *City Development*, Lewis Mumford, the author of *The Culture of Cities*, *The Condition of Man*, and *Technics and Civilisation*, referred to his changed ideas on population problems which he said he would explain in the book he was busy on. This book is to be published this year with the title, *The Conduct of Life* (Secker & Warburg, 21/-).

STRANGLER BY DEFENCE

BECAUSE it is opposed to the very conception of government, of administration from above, and is therefore committed to a revolutionary outlook, an anarchist paper like FREEDOM, inevitably takes a broad view of events and is concerned with the basic issues of social welfare and the relationships between peoples. Such a standpoint makes for a certain sanity and level-headedness for which many readers express themselves grateful. But it also has considerable drawbacks. Whereas the daily press and the political weeklies can spend columns upon nice details of day-to-day events and discuss this or that governmental or international policy in a seemingly down to earth manner, FREEDOM can never lose sight of the general framework, the general international mechanism within which these policies operate. And the deadly point about this general structure is that it doesn't change much, not even after a world war.

Inevitably, therefore, our comments present a certain sameness, and also a certain gloom. Despite this tendency to depress, it does not do to neglect the basic questions or to pretend that they are not true.

As we go to press, the Budget is about to be announced; the expenditure of other nations on defence is also known. We do not need to be told that to-day the Budget means, how to adjust everyday life to the enormous expenditure upon arms. And this is the same in every country.

Analysing the Soviet budget, the *Times* quotes the Finance Minister, Zverev as saying that the "Soviet Union believes that the aggressors must be met with arms," while Marshal Malinowski wrote recently in *Red Star* that the threat of American aggression made it necessary to be ready for a third world war, and to increase defence expenditure for that purpose. These quotations would do, with the necessary alterations, equally well for British or American statesmen.

This year the Soviet Union is spending 23.8 per cent of its total expenditure on defence, compared with 21.3 per cent. last year and 18.6 per cent. in 1950. Before 1940 the Soviet Union spent 26 per cent. on arms, but, as the *Times* points out, the total budget itself is much larger now so the absolute expenditure on arms is greater.

Russian politicians accuse the U.S.A. of spending 80 per cent. of revenue on arms, but do not say that their own budget includes many items which do not appear in the less centralised economies of the west, and which therefore tend to reduce the proportion spent on defence. On the 80 per cent. figure, the *Times* is curiously mild—"This is ridiculous and the true figure is nothing like so high."

The main point that emerges is that all countries are strangling the more rational aspects of their economic life by a fantastic expenditure on arms. Yet General Eisenhower has gone on record as declaring that "war settles nothing"; and despite disillusionment ordinary people can only be brought to accept war because they feel that in some way they are stopping it from occurring again. Every Budget expenditure on arms is referred to as "for defence"...

FREEDOM has often pointed out the connexion between the economic depression caused by increased com-

Background to the Dark Continent

AS the hold of the European colonial powers lessens in Asia and it becomes clear, despite the flow of troops and arms into Malaya and Indo-China, that it is only a question of time before the British and French have to withdraw; Africa becomes more and more important in the struggle for power in the world. There are many indications that the British authorities intend that Africa shall be the "last ditch" of the colonial empire. Concessions have been forced by African nationalism in Nigeria and the Gold Coast; there are awakening demands for self-government among the politically-conscious minority of the people of the East African territories of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika; the rivalry of British settlers and South African nationalists, and African fear of them both, is bringing to a head the dispute over the proposed federation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland; the people of the protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland live in fear of South African expansion; the sufferings of the South-West Africans have been made known to the world by the Rev. Michael Scott; and the Union of South Africa itself, seems continually to be on the brink of a racial war.

We read every day in the press the latest news of the seething political disputes over different parts of the huge continent, but very little about the historical and cultural background of the non-political majority of the African peoples, of whom M. Michel Levis, in the Unesco pamphlet *Race and Culture* (which we reviewed last year—see our annual volume *MANKIND IS ONE*, p. 209), wrote: "Not merely of Africa's sake, but for that of the rest of the world, it is regrettable that the rapid expansion of the European nations, at a period when the material equipment available to them was out of all proportion to those in the hands of other peoples, should have nipped in the bud a score of cultures whose full potentialities we shall never know."

WHAT IS EDUCATION FOR?

We cannot believe, however, that it is impossible. Our profession, our life demands the belief that the great wisdom latent in men is waiting to be stirred and to become conscious and active. Even people in our profession must perhaps be simple enough to think that things are still going so badly in the world only because this latent wisdom is not taken into sufficient account. The leaders of world affairs often scorn that wisdom. In some cases, their culture has become only a great sophistry; they employ it solely to justify their domination. The man who can speak is very influential among those who cannot. Socrates seems to have had more disciples than Socrates in the history of mankind. I remember beginning my adult life with a protest against this terrible trickery and a denunciation of the gulf there then was, and perhaps still is, between humanity and the humanities, between the great mass of mankind and an aristocratic and sophisticated culture that was losing the will and the power of deliverance. There is no problem more urgent than the reconciliation of erudite thought and popular instinct, basing the

petition and the contraction of markets on the one hand, and rearmament on the other. We have increasingly stressed the vital rôle (the word "vital" carries all the irony of our age in this connexion) which war plays in contemporary economy, both for the west and the Russian dominated areas. Now it becomes necessary to stress the domestic corollary of all this: that the needs of "defence" are everywhere strangling the aspects of economic activity which make life tolerable. The task of the Budget everywhere is to reduce consumption. We prepare a new war, we poison our lives with anxiety and paralyse rational endeavour and ambitions; and we draw in the belt as well.

This African background was described in a most interesting study by Prof. Massimo Salvadori in the *India Quarterly* (Vol. VI, No. 4), under the title "Problems of Darkest Africa," a part of which we reproduce below. Prof. Salvadori excludes from his survey the Union of South Africa in the south where "8,000,000 Negroes and 1,000,000 Coloured and Indians have few, if any, political rights; the country can up to now—things may change—be considered to all intents and purposes White Man's property," and Northern Africa whose peoples, he says, "can keep their distinctive civilisation in face of the pressure of other nations."

DARK AFRICA, the land of the Negroes one hundred and ten million of them, is the area from the Sahara to the Union of South Africa. It is nearly four times as large as the Union of India with the exception of less than 400,000 Europeans settled here and there on the highlands, in the mining districts, in the towns; of about 300,000 Asians (Indians in British East Africa, Arabs along the eastern coast, Syrians in French West Africa); with the exception also of a few score thousand survivors of primitive populations, Bushmen, Hottentots, and Pygmies, there are only Negroes.

Nations scarcely exist in Dark Africa. The largest unit towards which loyalty is felt is usually the tribe, of which there are hundreds. Many have become known to the outside world from the Yolufs of West Africa (the blackest of the blacks, probably the ancestors of most American Negroes), to the Zulus and the Matabeles of South Africa; from the Mandé and the Haussa founders of empires to the Yorubas, the Ashantis, the Dahomeys of the Gulf of Guinea; from the Lundas of the Belgian Congo to the Himas west of Lake Victoria.

Until two generations ago, only a few coastal strips in Dark Africa were ruled by European or Moslem Governments. Then there was the mad colonial scramble of the last quarter of the 19th century. To-day 42% of the area of Dark Africa and 47% of its population are part of the British Commonwealth and Empire. The French own about one-fourth (including Madagascar). The rest is divided nearly equally between Belgium and Portugal, except for a small Spanish colony, the western provinces of Ethiopia, and independent Liberia where

60,000 Americanised Negroes rule two million natives.

Spontaneous Development of Negro Civilisation

When they first came in contact with Europeans, the Negroes of Africa were not the backward savages described by early travellers, missionaries, and others. The legend of Negro backwardness was spread through the reports of people who were unable to understand what they found. Of course the cultural level of Africans was then and is now considerably lower than that of most Western and Eastern nations. But if we look at Negroes and Whites from the vantage point of total human development, the difference does not appear so great. Modern man has after all been on the earth for hundreds of thousands of years. Various groups have evolved at different rates of change because of geographical conditions and historical accidents, and in the race towards civilisation African Negroes are not so far behind as conceit leads many to think. A century ago, before the progress of the Negroes was halted by White invasion, many tribes were at the same stage as the ancestors of to-day's proud Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians twelve or fifteen centuries ago; what are a few hundred years in the face of thousands of centuries of human development? Romans were unjustified in laughing at the Barbarians of the North fifteen centuries ago: who can say that Westerners have any right to scoff at the Barbarians of the South? Are there not white communities with as low or lower cultural level than many African communities had one hundred years ago?

For the last eight hundred years or so African Negroes have been going through the birth throes of civilisation. They have been doing what Hamitic peoples did in the lower valley of the Nile five or six thousand years ago, what Aztecs and Incas were doing in the highlands of Mexico and Peru. If making the transition from tribal organisation to the political structure of the State is taken as an index of the birth of civilisation then the Negroes can be considered to have entered civilisation, as the transition from tribal to State organisation has been taking place since the 11th century. They progressed in spite of a debilitating climate, an unfavourable geographical environment; they struggled valiantly against Christian and Moslem flesh traders, until finally they had to give in to the overwhelming power of European nations.

At the time of the Crusades, when wild European hordes were lured into the deserts of Asia Minor by religious fanaticism, and later when despots were consolidating their rule in Europe, Mandé first, then Songhai and Haussa, were founding civilised States in the plains of western Sudan.

Without any help from outside, the Ashantis (who fought bravely against the British), the Dahomeys (ditto against the French), and the Yorubas formed States which lasted for centuries. Their "customs" or festivities in which human sacrifices occurred horrified Europeans and Americans, forgetful that their own

Continued on p. 4

ARMS AND EXPORT

At the present time rearmament and exports are inseparable. The exporters look to defence to ensure conditions wherein more and still more goods may be made and sold abroad in freedom, while defence looks to the exporters for the wherewithal to buy essential materials. Thus may "guns and butter" be achieved.

—Advertisement for District Bank Ltd. in *The Listener*.

CONFESSION

"Schizophrenia is the occupational disease of all governments."

—Rt. Hon. Harold Wilson, M.P., in *The Listener*, 6/3/52.

ENTERTAINMENT

Television audiences to-day watched a young unemployed labourer sitting on a ledge of the forty-seventh floor of a Cincinnati building, threatening to jump. Cameras poked from the windows of buildings near for two hours captured for televiewers the sight of the young man's father, policeman, and a Roman Catholic priest pleading with him.

—Manchester Guardian, 5/3/52.

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MANKIND IS ONE

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This volume contains 120 articles which were published in FREEDOM during 1951, and is the first of similar volumes to be published annually.

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Clothing: the Touchstone

IN previous articles in this series,* I touched upon certain fundamental aspects of the manner of living in society. It is a dubious proposition that "clothes maketh" man, but they undoubtedly form a fundamental necessity of life, like housing and transport. It might well be argued, of course, that this necessity was more traditional than fundamental, but it will at least be universally agreed that there are one or two transitory phases between the nakedness of the ancient jungle and the nudism of the New Forest, and the sort of society most of us are ever likely to live in is well between the two.

Having accepted the sartorial means of adornment in our daily life, it does form a touchstone of the kind of society in which we live, and the place which we occupy in society. The briefest of studies of changes in fashion will reveal the evolution of the class structure of society; it is no accident that once the aristocrat dressed in ruffles and knee-breeches (symbolical of wealth and idleness) and now wears a lumber jacket and baggy trousers as he potters about his farm, long since overtaken by the industrialist, who in turn is yielding to the chartered accountant of "private enterprise" and his opposite number in the Civil Service. It is no accident either that both these latter types of gentlemen dress as alike as possible.

Clothes have long since been a sign of one's place in society, one's occupation, and they have even become in more recent years, a frequent sign of political opinions; we have often had occasion to remark the evolution from corduroy communism to pinhead conservatism, and the greatest benefit of television has certainly been to show the startled viewer of socialist sympathies how utterly impossible it is to distinguish members of parliament any more. The radio betrayed their class accents, and now scientific progress reveals that their manner of dressing also points to the dwindling of real political differences, and the non-existence of class ones.

The effect of the war in Korea was to push up the price of wool to fantastic and unheard-of levels. When it later became evident that there was to be no war on a general basis, and when some of the governments stopped bulk buying, the price fell heavily. However, it fell from the heights it had reached—which had not, generally speaking, been passed on to the consumer, who does not buy raw wool but the finished article of clothing—so that, however it falls, it is still going to touch a very high figure.

The effect of this has been a see-saw in prices so that as soon as the price goes down, people begin to buy, and then up shoots the price again, forced up by the hordes of speculators, merchants, buyers and middle-men who stand between the wool and the cloth, the cloth and the tailor, and sometimes even between the tailor and the customer, too. If, however, people stop buying, as they did recently when they saw a slackening of prices being effected, the whole clothing industry, weaving and tailoring, slumps down to a pitch of serious unemployment, which can only be alleviated, apparently, by people starting

*Housing: the Cinderella (July 21 & 28, 1951); "Road Transport: the Spoilt Princess" (Sept. 15, 1951).

to buy, which will then push the price up again beyond their means. A vicious post-war circle of either unemployment or high prices which has not been broken for the very simple reason that what is involved is social and not industrial. There is no lack of skill of the workers in the industry, no shortage of technical ability, no slackening of people's desire to wear clothes, and even good clothes (or certainly flashy ones, as any High Road market shows). The crisis is simply and solely due to financial manipulations, unreasonable speculation and exorbitant governmental stockpiling, inseparable from the society we live in.

Like so much else the clothing industry in general is another sacrifice to rearmament (one should say "armament"; there has never been any slackening of it to speak about). There cannot be any pretence of this being a temporary issue; we know full well now that even matters coming to a head in war will bring no end to this vicious circle. (Why this time, any more than last?) How, therefore, to ensure that we can clothe ourselves without sacrificing everything else to do it? Gandhi produced a way for the peasants of India, in the idea of the handloom with which to produce their own cotton dhotis, that revolutionised the economy of the Indian people and contributed to the unprofitable debit sheet with which British Imperialism was faced, and which in the finish made it quit India. In an industrialised society like ours, and also taking into account current prejudices in the matter of clothing, this is not likely to be a very feasible proposition here. Our clothes have to be produced by tailors, but we do not need all the hordes of non-producing profiteers as well. How can at least some of them be eliminated in present-day society?

We have referred to people building their own homes; this is something that could be extended into every aspect of society. But by and large "each to his trade and the cows will be well tended," How pleased the working tailor would be to cut and sew suits for people who were laying the bricks of his house! How delighted the bricklayer would be at the television set the radio mechanic might assemble for him! There is no reason why a "commune" should be only agricultural, or why schemes of mutual aid could only be practised in a limited circle, in present-day society. The most striking example we have seen was the Peckham Experiment, a health scheme run by working people for themselves.

The great stumbling block is simply and solely lack of opportunity; the impossibility of gathering those willing to undertake such schemes together; the fact that they do not know each other, they are separated by miles of dwellings and different customs, and the Huddersfield weaver might know nothing of the East London tailor.

Many have tried an alternative proposition: the one-man business, "work at home"; for some it has brought prosperity, others are worse off than they ever were working directly for a boss, they are now tied to their sub-contractors, and the sweatshops of the clothing industry are a direct result of this idea of the one-man business.

We must therefore press for two things: decentralisation (which alone can bring people together in such schemes as that of Peckham; schemes relying for their success on local initiative) and workers' control, the first germs of which would be seen in such work co-operatives, whose greatest value would be in times of industrial strikes or unemployment, and which would prove to the participants, perhaps to their surprise, that they could actually run industry themselves without the interference of State or employer.

In trades needing smaller equipment such schemes are possible, and tailoring is one where it is eminently practical, to a far greater degree than any of these innumerable master tailoring businesses are practical. And there is getting to be no alternative, or otherwise there will soon be nothing made, perhaps, but uniforms and denim overalls.

Schemes of mutual aid are at the very least a means of forming the framework of a new society in the shell of the old, and the wearing of a "mutual aid" suit might yet become the touchstone of our desire to achieve a free world. Then we might begin to appreciate the absurdity inherent in the present situation when jobless tailors hang around on the pavements outside closed doors, because people want the clothes they would be only too delighted to make, but by their wants have sent up the price beyond their ability to pay. One of those ironic jests of this "civilisation" which appear so grim when—as was reported not so long ago—some Indian ladies killed themselves in shame at not being able to afford cotton saris to cover themselves, while some French ladies were being prosecuted by Franco's police at Biarritz because they wore so little, thus offending a régime which could bear to see bones in the ravines but was shocked at skin on the beaches. A.M.

COMMENT

THE PIGS PROTEST

THAT the late George Orwell was a very painful thorn in the side of the Communist Party is a fact too obvious to need much repetition. An example of this was given by an item that appeared in the *Daily Worker* for Tuesday, March 4th. It referred to the B.B.C.'s production of Orwell's *Animal Farm*, broadcast on the previous night.

Orwell's satire, according to this discerning stalinist literary and radio critic, is a "neurotically vicious anti-Soviet tract"; "repulsive"; as a book "unreadably dreary"; as a radio feature "a nerve-jangling farrago of unpleasant nonsense". Among these unusually refined pieces of "criticism", two paragraphs, in particular, have a peculiar implication which deserves comment. They read:

"He [Orwell] tried to show that ordinary folk are stupid and that enslavement by one tyrant or another is their natural lot.

"He used his farmyard fable to put over all the lies about the Soviet Union which capitalist newspapers have been plugging assiduously for a generation."

To pass over the usual unsubstantiated and conceitedly arrogant implication that all opponents of the stalinist régime must by virtue of that fact be supporters of capitalism, these two paragraphs contain the added implication that capitalist newspapers have assiduously told the workers for a generation that their natural lot is to be slaves of a tyrant (i.e., the particular ruling class the newspapers support!) That Fleet Street occasionally and unwittingly drops a brick no one would deny, but that its scribes ceaselessly proclaim that their working-class readers must inevitably be slaves is, to say the least, wishful thinking *ad absurdum*. The task of the anarchist would be much easier if they did, instead of talking about "freedom and democracy" as they do. But then, absurdity and wishful thinking are ever the characteristics of slaves—stalinist as well as capitalist.

Can one wonder why we anarchists cry "a pox on both your houses", when confronted with apologists for Truman and Stalin? S.E.P.

pride in socially useful work, undeveloped human potentialities which that society throws away each day.

FOR WHAT AND FOR WHOM?

In the House of Lords on February 19th, a Labour peer, Lord Pakenham, demanded "A nation-wide inquiry to find out every kind of incentive that makes a man or woman work hard—and to suggest how these things could best be linked together to produce maximum effort." Speaking in a Lords debate on the economic situation, he said that the churches should take part in the inquiry.

"Every kind of incentive should be studied—self-interest, love of family, team spirit, patriotism, and the promptings of conscience among them," said Lord Pakenham. He believed that we had not done enough to develop effective substitutes for the "old harsh forces that drove the wheels of society"—the undiluted profit motive, the terror of unemployment, and of want in sickness in old age.

In fact, Lord Pakenham wants to play on every emotion of the workers—in the interests of greater production, to "get at" them in every possible way. He did not propose to study the effect of responsibility, of autonomy, of the urge to control one's own destiny. For if it was found that the key to the economic problem was in the control of industry and that the logical solution was workers' control, can it be doubted that the workers would begin to ask, "Production of what, and for whom?" And if people began to produce for the satisfaction of their own needs, what would become of the arms programme demanded by the American hysterical militarism, and of the export programme demanded by the obsolete economics of nineteenth century financial empire-building?

Both American Negroes and American Indians are still under the influence of the shock they received when Europeans tried to force their ways on them! as a result they have become apathetic and their creative abilities have been numbed.

The complexity and variety of their institutions in the pre-colonial period, and of the beliefs and value underlying them, are as sure indication as any of the creativeness of the Negro mind. Before European influence exercised its demoralising and disintegrating influence, Negro societies knew democratic, oligarchical, and monarchical forms of government. Most of them possessed the one institution which characterises to-day's free nations: government through discussion by an assembly. The autocracy which is basic in the political structure of other nations had only just begun to make its appearance. Even in what well-meaning but usually ignorant travellers considered autocratic governments, the power of the ruler was limited by the will of an assembly representative of some sections at least of the people. This was the case not only among the Hima States of East Africa where parliaments carried out most governmental functions, but also among the Lundas, the Yorubas, and the Hausas.

The term pagan erroneously used by missionaries covered a number of religious beliefs, some animistic and some deistic, some monotheistic and some polytheistic. And if Europeans want to criticise what it pleases them to call fetishism, they had better examine the innumerable examples of fetishism still existing in countries of Western civilisation, from the wearing of charms to the frantic adoration of idolised human beings.

The agriculture which provided a living for most African Negroes was no more primitive than the agriculture of certain parts of southern Europe and Latin America. Negroes knew how to care for their animals as well as Europeans did until a couple of centuries ago. Many crafts had developed, from pottery to weaving. Metal-working had reached, particularly among the Bantus, as high a degree of proficiency as that known in parts of Europe in the Middle Ages. There was both individual ownership of property and collective ownership; actually most tribes possessed a successful blend of both, such as Westerners seem to be unable to produce. Among African Negroes there was enough collective ownership to give a sense of security to every member of the tribe, and enough individual ownership to give most of the people economic freedom and the advantages which go with it.

(To be concluded)

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting
HYDE PARK
Every Sunday at 3.30 p.m.
TOWER HILL
Every Friday at 12.45 p.m.
MANETTE STREET
(by Foyle's, Charing Cross Road)
Every Saturday at 4.30 p.m.

INDOOR MEETINGS

at the
PORCUPINE, Charing Cross Rd.
(next Leicester Sq. Underground Station)
Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.

MARCH 16—E. V. Swart on
SOUTH AFRICA'S TREK FROM PROGRESS
MAR. 23—Tony Weaver on
CHILDREN WHO ARE MALADJUSTED.

NORTH-EAST LONDON

DISCUSSION MEETINGS
IN EAST HAM
Alternate Wednesdays
at 7.30
MAR. 19—S. Corio on
MY VIEWPOINT
Enquiries c/o Freedom Press

WEST LONDON

A Group has been formed in West London and any comrades interested in working with it are invited to contact—
C. Brasnett, 79 Warwick Ave., W.9

LIVERPOOL

DISCUSSION MEETINGS at
101 Upper Parliament Street,
Liverpool, 8
Every Sunday at 8 p.m.

GLASGOW

INDOOR MEETINGS at
Central Halls, Bath Street
Every Sunday at 7 p.m.
With John Gaffney, Frank Leech,
Jane Strachan, Eddie Shaw

Will Workers' Control Work? Continued from p. 1

who had been members of the old Society all their lives, it was not something which could be suddenly forgotten. After the war the 10/54 branch of the Transport and General Workers Union formulated the idea into a practical scheme. This time the Co-operative Productive Federation supplied the dockers with model rules for a productive society, and in 1949 the General Workers Co-operative Stevedores Society Ltd. was established in the docks of Grimsby and her sister port of Immingham, to carry on the trade of stevedoring, shipping brokers and agents.

FALSE HOPES ON NATIONALISATION

"If the men felt that the nationalisation of their industry would automatically bring workers' control they were sadly mistaken. The National Dock Labour Board in Grimsby at first even threatened to take away the men's cards

because, it said, as members of the Society they were no longer employees, but employers. How then could they belong to the N.D.L.B.? But the threatened withdrawal of cards never took place, and the Society was allowed to operate in the docks. It was a hard struggle to obtain their first ship for discharge. The first letter the Society sent out received not one reply, and the fact that they are not able to obtain much advance information—vitality essential in stevedoring—because they are not allowed to become members of the Master Stevedores' Association, is another hurdle they still have to clear.

"When the National Coal Board did at last send them a ship, the Co-operative reduced the price per standard of timber from 12s. 3d. to 8s. 9d. And the reduction still allowed for an ample margin of profit to go into the funds of the Society. 'We knew what our slice of the cake was before,' a member of the Committee of the Society said, 'but now we are getting to know the size of the cake, and we're getting more and more dissatisfied.' The Coal Board expressed its thanks for the excellent work the Society had done, but it did not send many more ships."

There are a number of aspects of this account which underline the points made from time to time by our industrial correspondent in these columns, and in his pamphlet *Syndicalism—The Workers' Next Step*. It illustrates that the syndicalist element in the British Labour movement is by no means such a "half-forgotten dream of workers' control" as the leader-writers of the daily press tell us. If the workers would attempt to satisfy their economic and social aspirations in the economic field—as the Labour Party leaders (waving the Com-

munist bogey like the red flag that used to be carried in front of traction engines) are so diligently telling them not to, they would very soon see how these "half-forgotten dreams" could be realised.

MORE THAN CASH

It can be seen, too, from the last paragraph quoted above, that the Grimsby stevedores' motives are more than a bigger "slice of the cake". And those people who, with short memories, or with no experience of the meaning of unemployment, get exasperated by the punctiliousness of dockers generally in insisting on "their rights", should note that Mr. Clements says elsewhere that "The Society has waived some of the indemnities that are claimed by private stevedores. These include stoppages for bad weather and those which are the men's fault."

In considering the benefits of workers' control it is worth remembering that many of the so-called "restrictive practices"—which are vitally necessary in the society of to-day if the workers' interests are to be protected, especially with the continual one-sided demands for "sacrifices" which are being made "in the national interest"—could be dispensed with if they were their own masters. That workers' control is more efficient, and can reduce costs, is one implication of Mr. Clements' article.

Where is the irresponsibility, greed, unwillingness to put in an honest day's work, lack of organising ability, and so on, that make syndicalist aspirations utopian in the eyes of its "realistic" critics? The experiments of the dockers at Grimsby, and on the Mersey and the Thames, though made within the framework of capitalist society are an illustration of the great volume of goodwill,

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