Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Talk of the war but do not go to it."

—Spanish Proverb

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KOREA: U.N. & the P.o.W.

THE issue on which the armistice talks in Korea have apparently broken down, is that of the return of prisoners-of-war, and it involves right away some extraordinary paradoxes. Since the last war the Russians have retained in Russia many thousands of war prisoners who have never been repatriated. There are also many Japanese prisoners-of-war still in Russia and China. For years now the western powers have been demanding that the Russian bloc should disgorge these unreturned prisoners. In 1949, the British and American governments sought to include in the Geneva Convention a clause embodying the obligation of states to repatriate prisoners-of-war on the cessation of hostilities. They hoped thereby to deprive the Soviet Union of any possible excuse for retaining German and Japanese prisoners-of-war.

In Korea, on the other hand, the United Nations have taken the unprecedented step of declaring that they will return only those who are willing to go back to North Korea: that they refuse to repatriate by force those who are unwilling to return to the North Korean regime.

The Chiniese and North Korean delegation are insisting on the repatriation of all prisoners, so that in effect the pattern followed since 1945 has been reversed.

Now the position taken up in Korea by the United Nations regarding forced repatriation is unquestionably right. It is the same question as that of political asylum: no one should be forced to return to a political regime which they dislike or fear. But is seems certain (even if the paradoxical reversal of rôles did not already make one suspicious) that the primary aim is that of propaganda. If many thousands of North Koreans express themselves unwilling to return, then the communist North Korean regime has received a considerable blow to its prestige, while the United Nations appear as the upholders of a humane standpoint.

To recognise the political advantages of such actions must not be taken to mean that they are wholly insincere. But it would be folly to imagine that the United Nations are unconcerned about the political aspects of their policy. Such concern is, in fact, what is called political warfare and every state now uses it. From such a standpoint, it is more important for propaganda that a high proportion of prisoners-of-war should express themselves unwilling to return, than that they should be given political asylum. Once they have delivered the blow to Communist prestige, what happens to these prisoners only becomes a matter of face-saving.

How precarious their position is (for once returned to North Korea their fate would be sealed) is shown by a leader in the *Times* which remarked that "custom and international law both require nations to return their prisoners-of-war when hostilities have ceased . . ." but this can and must be ignored if a still higher principle of law or humanity makes it necessary." The *Times* ominously goes on to observe that the United Nations should be clear exactly what that principle is. It cannot be that all prisoners have a right to choose where they would like to live. After the last war, for instance, many German prisoners would have preferred to go to the United States, but no one suggested that this gave them a right to emigrate?"

The *Times* then proceeds to cast doubts on the efficiency of the screening of prisoners-of-war in Korea, and in effect provides a possible line of theoretical retreat if the United Nations found it expedient to abandon their stand on prisoners in the Armistice discussions.

"Political Eunuchs"

AT the annual conference of the Association of Scientific Workers held in London last week, Mr. Stanley Mayne, the fraternal delegate from the Institution of Professional Civil Servants, said:

"One of the most important problems affecting our two organisations to-day is the general conception of freedom. In the Civil Service we are particularly concerned. We have had a purge going on for some years. It has been generally productive of acute unhappiness, and, in some cases, of a measure of acute financial hardship to a relatively small number of people.

"We are now having a revised version of it. 14,000 beautiful forms being sent out for people to fill up, in which they are asked to state if they are or have been at any time members of either the Communist Party or the Fascist Party. There is another question in the form which says: 'Are you a member of any organisation which is associated with or in sympathy with the Communist Party?' A footnote to this reads: 'In answering this question you are expected not only to take account of your own views about the organisation, but to take account of the views that are generally held.'

"That sort of thing is stupid. The effect I see it creating is fear in the minds of the people concerned so that in fact we are creating in the Civil Service, at least, a collection of people who are complete political eunuchs. People say, 'we had better keep out of anything connected with politics' and as politics are very important to the everyday life of everyone that is a very bad mistake."

AMERICAN LETTER

The Cult of the Informer

THE informer, the nark, the stool-pigeon, like the hangman, has been awarded a just and traditional contempt in the popular mind, and in the literature of the past he has been most often the villain or, as in some of Conrad's books, the subject of psychological curiosity. It has been given to the totalitarian age to present to us that new species—The Informer as Hero.

From childhood the young Nazi and the young Communist have been inculcated with the duty to spy on their parents, their teachers and their fellows. In England the members of our ruling class forget the healthy taboo against tale-bearing which they learnt in the public schools, and earnestly recommend Her Majesty's loyal subjects to tattle about the extra two ounces of butter which Mrs. Jones managed to wheedle out of the grocer, or the young man of military age with no visible occupation who had come to live on the other side of the street. But it has been given to the Land of Ballyhoo to inshrine the Informer in the soft pink lights of publicity, and waft him to that heaven of popular regard where, one even begins to fear, he may one day be rivalling Hopalong Cassidy and the goddess of cheesecake.

Hollywood is already producing films about F.B.I. political spies. A recent book by a man who worked in a Communist front organisation for years as a stool pigeon has become a best-seller. Even academic circles entered the Informer cult when Budenz, Joe McCarthy's pet nark was given a Professorship in a Catholic University. And, finally, we are now able to witness the self-canonisation of that nauseating specimen of the genus Spy, Whitaker Chambers.

It is not necessary here to judge the rights and wrongs of the Hiss case, whether Hiss actually did or did not belong to the Communist Party, whether or not he actually did smuggle out documents for sale to the Communists. The case was, on the evidence that has been made public, certainly not proved beyond, as the lawyers say, the peradventure of a doubt. But that is beside the point, since the whole nature of the prosecution, based on whether or not a man should be condemned for his political opinions and activities, was an outrage to any decent conception of civil liberties. Not the least disgusting part of the case was the personal vindictiveness with which Chambers pursued his victim and used every device to ruin him. The fantastic thing about it all was that Chambers was self-confessedly guilty of the very offences of spying and of concealing information of which Hiss was accused, yet he went scot free—because of his services as an informer—while Hiss was sent to prison.

As if this were not enough, Chambers must needs provide the American public with a pious account of his activities, well-laced with Dostoevskian tortuosities and religious platitudes. Here is a sample:

"On that road of the informer, it is always night. I who have travelled it from end to end, and know its windings, switchbacks and sheer drops—I cannot say at what point, where or when the ex-Communist must make his decision to take it. That depends on the individual man. . . . I cannot ever inform against anyone without feeling something die within me. I inform without pleasure, because it is necessary."

All that we need say about this is that Chambers seems to have gone a very short distance from the fundamental Communist position if he can justify himself with the thought of informing as "necessary". He is merely using the old totalitarian ethics for a new master.

However, an informer has every right to publish his memoirs and justify himself to his heart's content. In a decent society his protestations would pass with contempt. But it is a sad commentary on modern America that *Witness* (Chambers' title) should have become an immediate best-seller. An abridged version was published in the *Saturday Evening Post* (50,000 words). Now the eight hundred-page book has been selected by the Book of the Month Club, to be wafted into hundreds of thousands of middle-class homes in the June mails. Koestler, recently admitted to the United States by special vote of Congress, wired his congratulations. And *Time* magazine, usually so economical with the space it will devote to books, has prodigally granted no less than twelve columns to the review and exposition of this book by—*Time* is eager to point out—a former contributor to *Time*. England goes crazy over its footballers, France over its velocipedists, Spain over its bullfighters; it has remained for America to go crazy over its stoolpigeons.

Out of *Witness*, we are told by *Time*, Chambers will make no less than 200,000 dollars—approximately £70,000. The price has evidently gone up since Judas was around.

JUNIUS II.

SYNDICALIST NOTEBOOK

T.U.C. Blessing for Rearmament

ON the factor which is going to adversely affect our standards of living more than anything else, and which is eventually going to lead to the destruction of millions of the world's workers, the Trades Union Congress has officially given its blessing.

In a declaration published last Friday, the TUC declared that "it believes rearmament to be an unfortunate but vital necessity".

The statement goes on to maintain that the choice is not between rearmament or the standards of living, but between peace on a basis of human freedom and the constant fear of aggression and perpetual tension in international affairs.

It would be difficult to find an assertion which contained quite such a reversal of truth or a perversion of working-class interests as that one.

In the first place, rearmament cannot be operated without a fall in the standard of living of the workers. The slump in the wool industry at the moment is in part due to rearmament. The huge purchases made by American buyers—for stockpiling for military purposes—helped to shoot the price of woollen goods beyond the purse of the average worker. It has led to the recession of trade in the shops and the fact that the warehouses in Yorkshire are packed with wool which was bought in last year's mad Australian markets which to-day cannot be sold at a price that will cover its cost.

As more production capacity is turned over to war materials, less goods will be available for the home markets. Inevitably prices will rise, as they always do when goods are scarce, and since the parrot-cry of the TUC is "restraint" in wage claims, the result is obviously going to be a fall in real wages, *i.e.*,, a fall in our standards of living.

As for the second choice: we reject the TUC's implication that the capitalist system of this country (or any other) is a system based on, or offering, human freedom. Nor can we accept that the armament drive will remove the "constant fear of aggression and perpetual tension in international affairs".

The recent statement by President Truman that the U.S.A. is going to spend another £1,118,000,000 on atom bombs, "because we must keep the lead over Russia," shows that an armament race is never won. Tension is never relieved, the fear of aggression never removed, for each side in the struggle is continually stealing a march on the other.

The real working-class industrial policy, which the TUC is incapable of putting forward, is one which does not defend capitalism, even as "the lesser evil" but which seeks to end, throughout the world, the system which produces fears and tensions, internally as well as internationally, and to replace it by a society free from the stresses of market economics and the domination of political tyrannies.

AFTER THE JOBS

AN interesting sidelight on the ambitions of some trade unionists is shed by a resolution carried by a large majority at the annual conference of the Associatlon of Supervisory Staffs, Executives, and Technicians (ASSET) at Clacton last week.

The resolution called for increased participation of trade unionists on the boards of nationalised industries. The arguments for the resolution were that workers had suffered from the fact that their representatives on the boards had been nominated, not elected, they did not have the confidence of the rank and file, and that the workers felt they were on the board to do the bosses' job for the boss.

ASSET's alternative, however, that TU members on nationalised boards should be elected, seems, to say the least, a little naïve. Are our political representatives less our bosses because they are elected?

If a trade unionist takes a job on a board, he becomes part of the governing body. Even if he sincerely tries to represent the workers, he still has to do it in the interests of the governing body.

But perhaps ASSET is really a little peeved because not enough of its members have made the grade. After all, they are the Supervisors, the Executives and the Technicians. Surely they are entitled to some of the plums?

MITIGATING WARS

DESPITE the fact that war is far more terrible and destructive now than ever before, it is not true to say that attempts to mitigate its ferocity by international agreements and so-called "rules of war" have been entirely futile. But since the end of the last war much confusion has reigned—chiefly as a result of the Nuremburg trials of war criminals.

After the assassination of Heydrich, Himmler's second-in-command of the Gestapo, the Nazis killed all the adult males in Lidice, the village where the assassination occurred. Such an act filled the world with horror and indignation, and properly so. But in the Biblical wars, Jehovah frequently orders that the defeated shall be put to the sword, men, women and children, all together. Such also was the usual practice of Tamburlaine and Genghiz Khan. When the Roman government impaled all the slaves who unsuccessfully revolted in the rebellion of Spartacus, so that they lined the whole of the Appian Way, it acted in a manner so barbaric that we of to-day are utterly appalled.

Reality of Progress

That we are so, argues a certain progress and shows that the rules of war are to some extent embedded in Western ideas. These rules gradually grew up during the Middle Ages, but R. T. Paget, the British barrister who defended many of the German generals in the post-war trials, remarks that "the laws of war were not then expressed in any treaties or pacts, but had become an ethical concept acknowledged by the soldiers of all civilised countries, and as such they were strikingly successful in mitigating the horrors of war. The wars of Louis XIV, of Marlborough, of Prince Eugene and of Frederick the Great were conducted with extraordinarily little injury to the civilian population ("Law and the Soldier" by R. T. Paget, K.C., M.P.; *World Review*, Feb. 1952).

This progress is important. The Greeks were no doubt more civilised than some of the above, but it is impossible for a modern mind to read Thucydides' account of how the remnants of Nicias' army were driven into a quarry near Syracuse in Sicily, and allowed to starve and die of disease *en masse*, while the ladies of Syracuse looked down on them as a sort of spectacle on their evening strolls—it is impossible to envisage this scene without uncomprehending horror.

In 1865 an attempt was made to codify the rules of war into international agreements. This was the purpose of a conference convened at Brussels in that year

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THE INDUSTRIAL WORKER—2

***THE BRITISH WORKER* (by Ferdynand Zweig. (Penguin Books, 2/6)**

(Continued from our last issue)

THE popularity of socialist ideas among the workers, says Dr. Zweig, differs according to the industrial group, age, status, education and upbringing. He found that almost every miner is "a socialist of one brand or another" and he met the other extreme amongst hotel workers, shop assistants, hairdressers, and so on. He found the greatest enthusiasm for socialism among middle-aged men, more doubts among the old, "while many young men show a complete indifference to political creeds." He found it more amongst craftsmen than labourers or managers and more amongst workers with "a higher than average educational standard."

"Socialist ideas have not generally come among the work people from outside, an artificial growth stimulated, as is often thought, by intellectuals; on the contrary, they are a genuine internal growth arising from their own needs, interests and feelings. Often they feel handicapped, outdistanced by others, badgered by the circumstances of their lives, and as individuals entirely helpless. This is the background of trade unionism, of the co-operative movement, the friendly society work, the social welfare work, and the movement for workers' education, all of which are impregnated with socialist ideas. As one timber porter put it to me: 'The worker is an instinctive socialist' whether he has heard the term socialist or not! . . . There is not a shred of revolutionary feeling in British socialism. The British worker believes in gradualism; he does not want to overthrow the existing social structure. As a matter of fact he does not feel very strongly or think very often about it. . . . His socialism is practical, and free of fanaticism. He often says: 'I am not a socialist, I am Labour.' Labour means a slow progress in the spirit of socialism, but not socialism as an all embracing principle of life."

"The core of British socialism is trade unionism. One might even say that socialism is the general theory of trade unionism. There is no possibility at all of developing a socialist movement on its own without the trade unions. Anyone who thinks otherwise is simply a dreamer who does not know the first thing about the British workers."

But what is the definition of this socialism? Dr. Zweig was often told, "Socialism means defending the interests of the workers against the boss class," or "Socialism means higher wages, shorter hours, and better conditions."

"The workers' conception of socialism is strongly imbued with ethical and religious elements. Many men define socialism by saying: 'I believe in fair shares for everyone,' or 'Socialism means fairness and justice for everyone.' British socialism is more than anywhere else an ethical or Christian socialism. Men are brothers and should help one another. That leads me straight on to another point: internationalism. The doctrine of the brotherhood of men, the strongest doctrine among the British workers, as interpreted internationally and not nationally. Socialism in one nation must lead you to National Socialism. Socialism means all nations working for the common good'—this view is often volunteered by men. For many of them socialism means a system of international peace, and the view that wars are the outcome of capitalism, of struggle, of markets, is very widely held."

"On the whole, a negative attitude against capitalism is much more usual than a positive attitude towards socialism. Talking to the workers about their socialism one is struck by the depth of the anti-capitalist feeling. Capitalism is a sort of bogey on which everything is pinned. It is selfishness, greed, a sink of iniquity. It is a system of servitude imposed on men without money. . . . The British worker is clear about his negative attitude to capitalism, but not very clear about the positive remedies. He is still exploring them. He knows the spirit in which the search for new institutions should be undertaken, the spirit of working for the common good rather than for individual profits; but he knows that this exploration must be undertaken caustiously, especially if men themselves are not socialist at heart."

"He distinguishes between an intellectual socialist and a man who is a socialist at heart, and often says that the men in high position on the nationalised boards, who claim salaries sometimes twenty times his own, are not socialists at heart, although they may profess socialist ideas."

Of the trade union movement, Dr. Zweig says: "The trade unions do not mean the same thing to every worker, but for some—coal-miners, railwaymen, dockers, building craftsmen, cotton spinners, printers—there is something sacred about them. The longer, and the harder the struggle the unions have been through, the greater the sacrifice their development called for, the worse the conditions which had to be overcome, the dearer they are to their members. . . . Every union has its own character derived from the past; and has crystallised its past experience into rules and customs. The union is the greatest bulwark of industrial conservatism. 'That has been the practice of our union and it must continue'. 'That is our custom, and always has been'. 'That goes against our practice and we can't tolerate it' . . .

"The unions mean a great deal to the men, even to those who do not bother about attending their meetings or who criticize their policy or leadership. The workmen feel strongly their individual helplessness in more than one way; they could not properly formulate their demands, they would not dare to present them, and nobody would listen to them if they made demands on their own. But if they appear in the mass, and have someone who can formulate and press their demands for them, their helplessness disappears. That gives them confidence and self-esteem. United, they have unequalled power. . . ."

But the changing rôle of the union was evident to Dr. Zweig. "Many men feel that they are too much in the power of the union, which has embraced too big a field of their activities. Sometimes they feel like babies, coddled and talked at. 'It's good to have the protection, but it isn't pleasant to have no air to breathe'."

Two-thirds of trade union members are in 17 unions with a membership of 1,000,000 each and more, and about a quarter of the total membership is in the two largest, the so-called 'omnibus' unions. "From being local in scope they have become national, and so more remote from an individual centre of trouble. One of the omnibus unions comprises as many as forty industrial sections, each section really forming a union of its own; power rests with the National Executive and the National Secretary, and these cannot keep in personal touch with more than a million of its members in so many industries. . . . The unions have also changed their character. The times of struggle are over; theirs is the time of achievement and fruition. They have grown not only big but fat. 'Let us sit quietly and enjoy the fruits of victory' is the spirit now. They have accumulated funds which run into hundreds of thousands. For instance, in the printing industry there are unions which have between £40 and £50 per head of their members. No risk can be taken to endanger the funds or to lose the prestige of the union. . . . The unions have also changed in their attitude to the employer. In the past, the employer was the villain of the piece, but those times are over. In the nationalised industries the owner has disappeared completely, and in private industries he is co-operative, recognises the union and grants it its proper place."

"The unions are at present the bulwark of industrial peace and lawfulness. . . . In many industries there is very close co-operation between the union secretaries and the employers, as well as between their associations. This often breeds suspicion on the part of the workers. In Lancashire you can hear an uncensored expression about the bosses and the union secretaries: 'They piss in the same pot'."

"Another development of major importance is the political trend within the trade union movement. The trade unions have become not only trade organisations but also political bodies supporting the Labour Party. . . . 'This close co-operation with the Government is a golden opportunity for us,' a very wise union officer said, 'but it deprives us of independence, and you know what independence means to a movement like ours. It makes us have a double loyalty'."

Here, says Dr. Zweig, "we touch also upon a basic issue: is the union secretary a servant or a leader? There is a great deal of dispute about the nature of his office. Some, especially young and vigorous members who may aspire to leadership themselves, argue like this: 'We don't need leaders; we are educated enough not to need them. We need representatives, officials who guard our interest and do our bidding. They have to do what they are told by the members, not what they think we should do. They are paid by us, aren't they? and get even more than we ourselves earn. If they want to do what other people tell them, they should get out and be paid by those people. But they shouldn't accept our money and work against us because other people don't agree with our demands; and they shouldn't sit in judgement on us. They are our servants, but they often behave like our masters, although they don't mind getting money from us'."

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REMINISCENCES OF MEXICO—3

THE LIBERTARIANS

A DICTATORSHIP is an unhealthy climate for anarchists, since it makes it almost impossible to propagate anarchist ideas. Therefore it is not surprising that in Mexico at the time of the revolution, there were not many anarchists to be found, *i.e.*, anarchists versed in anarchist theories. But the individuals who were anarchists by sentiment but knew nothing of anarchism or its theories, outnumbered the other anarchists a thousand-fold, or several thousand-fold. If the people had had a better inkling of anarchism and of the crookedness of politicians, the revolution would have taken another course. But it must be mentioned that it was difficult to acquaint the people with anarchist theories, etc., because the majority could not read especially amongst the poor the percentage of illiteracy was very high, and it was upon that part of the people that the fate of the revolution depended in the first place. As it was, every crooked politician could induce the people to follow him when he spoke of liberation from all oppression, capitalism, state, and church. *La Libertad* was the wonder word which brought the masses on the move. An American business man told me: "I have known the Mexican people for twenty years; they are a peaceful people, but that goddam word *Libertad* makes the Mexican pople crazy, and I have lost my good business in Mexico through it."

In the course of time when the people had trusted and followed several politicians, but saw no improvement of their personal lot, they became disgusted with all politicians and indifferent to all public affairs. This indifference was the reason for the reaction in Mexico.

The Zapata revolution was in the first place a movement of the peons, the agricultural labourers who worked on the big land estates. They owned nothing on the estates, not even the miserable earthen huts in which they lived. According to the law, they were free men, but that was only a fiction on account of their miserable economic condition. Nothing had been changed in their lives by the Mexican revolution of 1810 for the independence of Mexico from the rule of the Spanish kings. They were just as much slaves as their ancestors were, when the Kings of Spain granted big estates in Mexico to their favourites, and with these estates, all the Indians who had lived there, as slaves. Almost all the peons are full-blooded Indians; only a small percentage is of mixed parentage. But on the whole, the Mexican people are not for racial segregation, all races being considered equal. The miserable life of the peons was only due to their economic conditions and not to their race. They were in everlasting debt with the administration of the estates, because the wages of the peons were so low that even the most miserable existence was not possible on them. The administration furnished everything to the peon: he was forced to buy there on credit because he had no money, and when the administration charged him also for goods which he had never bought, he was helpless. But according to law, every centavo of the debt had to be paid before he was allowed to leave the estate, and this fact made him virtually a slave. All debts were put into an account book, and this book was the nightmare of the peons.

Zapata was only a simple worker, but he had managed to inspire the people with his idea of the indivisibility of liberty, *i.e.*, abolition of the state, capitalism and the church. After the reactionary forces, the federal army and Rurales were beaten, the abolition of capitalism was proportionately easy. The administrators of the estates and mines in the district of the Zapatistas, unwilling to risk their lives to protect property which was not their own, fled. The district of the Zapatistas was in the mountainous region south of Mexico City. It started in the suburbs of the capital and went far into the mountains. After the state and capitalism were abolished, the Zapatistas destroyed all documents of state and capitalistic administration which were prejudicial to them. Taking over the means of production for use instead of for profit was accomplished by Zapata with his Ayala plan, which provided that the estates should be expropriated and the land given to the peons. This plan was made according to the prevailing conditions. The peons already lived on the estates, at the point of production, and with the number of peons on each estate they could build up a community. And each community was at the same time the unit of production. In former times the peons received about 20 per cent. of what they produced, the owners of the estates taking the remaining 80 per cent. Now the peons received it all, and for the first time in their lives they could still their hunger, and even eat meat. All the necessary food was raised on the estates, only the industrial goods had to be brought in from elsewhere, because there was only a little industry in the district of the Zapatistas. Zapata solved this problem by the coinage of Zapata money. The Zapatistas were the only movement which had their own money. But this money was very well liked in Mexico because the metal of which the coins were made was worth twice the value stamped upon it. Zapata did his best to acquaint his men with libertarian ideas, and for this purpose he read to those who could not read, articles from Spanish-language anarchist newspapers which he got from the United States.

On the whole, circumstances were more favourable for Zapata to build up a libertarian society than for Flores Magón in Lower California (see FREEDOM, 7/1/52). The majority of the followers of Flores Magón were strangers in Lower California and most of the population were hostile to them, while the peons of Zapata were the inhabitants of the country, and his friends. The Zapatistas were peaceful as almost all Indians are. (The "wild Indian" is only a discovery by savages in our own civilisation.) They were well satisfied to live in freedom, and they never tried to enforce their ideas and way of life on other people by force of arms. But they were forced by the government to defend themselves, for the government waged war on them. And the government was unable to beat them for a long time, but at last it found a traitor in an individual called Guajardo who enticed Zapata into an ambush and killed him. The government of Carranza paid 100,000 pesos for this murder. But the Zapata movement existed for quite a while after the murder. The period of its existence was about as follows: In the year 1914, when it occupied Mexico City it was at the peak of its development. In the year 1920 it was still strong, and in the year 1925 it was no longer one of the government's objects to fight it, so far as I know.

In the summer of 1920, I was in the north of Mexico and I met by chance a Mexican comrade whom I had known well in former times in the I.W.W. of the U.S.A. He was a train-conductor, and he invited me to come with him to Mexico City, because there were comrades there who intended to build up a syndicalist movement. I accepted his invitation and we rode down to the capital. Here he introduced me to his friends, and that was an international gathering—Mexicans, Spaniards, Italians, Americans, Argentinos, anarchists and syndicalists, altogether about thirty comrades, but only one anarchist from Mexico. Someone suggested that we should hold meetings and deliberate whether anything could be done against the reactionary government of Adolfo de la Huerta, the tool of Wall Street, and his generals. This suggestion was accepted and thence we held meetings in different places in the city. And soon our meetings became known, and more comrades, mostly Mexicans, came to them. Our discussions during these meetings were mostly on the theme: Libertarian socialism against authoritarian socialism. Several of the Mexican comrades who had come to us were authoritarians, but we were for libertarian socialism and slowly the Mexicans began to take our point of view. Then we encountered resistance from the Communist Party of Mexico. This party existed only in the shape of its bureaucrats and a few members. But they came to our meetings and tried to spoil our discussions with the pretension that only the Communist Party was competent for revolutionary discussions. The Bolsheviks in those days had much credit with the workers, and there were many who believed in the Workers' Paradise, they had not yet had the terrible experience of it which the world had later. To cut short the pretensions of the Communist Party and have a counterpoise against it, we decided to form a branch of the I.W.W. (Although we were not entitled to, since none of us were delegates from this organisation, but only wandering members.) However, syndicalists don't believe in bureaucracy but in direct action, so we formed our Mexican branch, *Los Trabajadores Industriales del Mundo*. Now we were anarchists and syndicalists combined, and we considered it a good union.

We continued with our meetings, and soon our group had grown to fifty comrades besides many sympathisers. Having arrived at this point of development, we considered our group capable enough to start serious work. But we could never make a social revolution with our group and sympathisers alone, we needed the people of Mexico City. Therefore we decided to call upon the people by means of pamphlets spread over the city. The printing had to be done secretly and the distribution by the comrades of our group. I lived with three comrades in a house in which was a printing press and the printer was on our side. Ten thousand pamphlets were spread over the city calling for social revolution. At the same time we made connections with the Zapatistas. Zapata was dead, but the movement still existed even near Mexico City in the suburb of San Angel. Our propaganda with the pamphlets had good results: the workers and the people took notice of them and so did the bourgeois newspapers. The newspapers called us criminals, bandits, etc., but did us the favour, in their zeal in denouncing us, of printing copies of the pamphlet on their front pages in red ink. In and around Mexico City was a garrison of at least 10,000 soldiers. How to fight, or better, how to neutralise them, was a question. Non-violence is all very well, but what will you do when the reactionary forces attack you? Give up? We tried to neutralise them, or at least a part of them by making propaganda amongst them with our pamphlets.

At this point in our development, the force of the State appeared in the form of the Attorney-General of Mexico, who had us arrested for high treason. But not all the comrades were arrested, only four of us. Of course, we expected to be shot, there was no alternative in those days in Mexico. After we had been under arrest for two days, the prison guard told us that the president, Adolfo de la Huerta wanted to see us. Why he should wish to see us was an enigma to us—perhaps to make fun of us. Next day, we were brought to the government building, and led into the room of the president. As soon as we were face to face with him, he assailed us with wild reproaches. The comrades answered him in the same terms—men who expect to be shot do not weigh their words.

While we disputed with him, another man was shown into the room. It was Morones, the reformist leader of the Mexican trade unions. Soon the president changed his tone and spoke conciliatorily. He and Morones promised that the workers' conditions would be improved and that they would have more independence in the future by forming workers' councils and taking part in the administration of their places of work.,

That was the end of the affair. We were free agents again only because the president feared that the people in Mexico City would make trouble if one of us was shot. Nobody on the presidential throne of Mexico was, in those days, safe from being chased off it. The word *Libertad* had no longer the fascination of eight years before, but it was not dead yet.

I am absolutely convinced of the necessity of the social revolution, but since those days it has been my opinion that no man or group of men is able to make a social revolution. Zapata was without doubt a great man and a real revolutionary, but when he died, the movement died with him. True, it died slowly, but it died. A minority of the people at least, must have a clear conception of the social revolution, and the conviction that it is necessary. Then we will reach the much wished for aim—*La Libertad*.

WILLY FULANO.

FEAR no more, neither what is without nor within. Search fully and freely your self; hearken to all the voices that arise from that abyss from which you have been commanded to shrink. Learn for yourself what these things are. Learn to decide your own measure of restraint. Value for yourself the merits of selfishness and unselfishness; and strike the balance between these two: for if the first be all accredited you make slaves of others, and if the second, your abasement raises tyrants over you; and none can decide the matter for you as well as for yourself; for even if you err you learn by it, while if he errs the blame is his, and if he advises well the credit is his, and you are nothing.

Be yourself; *and by self-expression learn self-restraint. The wisdom of the age lies in the reassertion of all past positivisms, and the denial of all negations, that is, all that has been claimed by the individual for himself is good, but every denial of the freedom of another is bad; whereby it will be seen that many things supposed to be claimed for oneself involve the freedom of others and must be surrendered because they do not come within the sovereign limit, while many things supposed to be evil, since they in no wise infringe upon the liberty of others are wholly good, bringing to dwarfed bodies and narrow souls the vigour and full growth of healthy exercise, and giving a rich glow to life that had else paled out like a lump in a grave-vault.*

—VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

Freedom
THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY
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NO REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS WITHOUT REVOLUTIONARY AIMS

THE Bolshevik Party in Russia achieved its dominant position chiefly from the tactical skill of its leader, Lenin. Lenin was throughout his life preoccupied with the problem of how to seize power and his prominence in the international socialist movement prior to 1917, was chiefly due to the theoretical position he had built up on this large question. It is much more difficult to discover from his writings a clear conception of what revolutionary socialism aimed at.

Lenin crystallised an important section of socialist opinion and gave coherence to those who were rather impatient of discussion of the aims of the revolution. The Communist movement which he founded has been very vague about socialism or communism and has been deliberately concerned almost exclusively with what for them has become the basic problem: that of seizing power. Those who are attracted rather than repelled by Lenin's activity and thought, and who are drawn towards the communist Party are content to shelve "idealistic" consideration of the aim of the revolution, the problem now they always declare is the practical one of seizing power. Where Lenin wrote of the working-class seizing power, his latter day followers have absorbed his doctrine more explicitly and think in terms of the party seizing power.

It might be thought that where success in this tactical issue has been achieved, it was time to consider the aims of the revolution. But actually the tactical problem only shifts: from being how to seize power, it becomes *how to retain power.*

At the time of writing, it is not clear what precisely were the aims of the Communist Party in France in its highly organised clashes with the police. It seems reasonable to suppose that it had no very far-reaching aim. A demonstration against General Ridgway could serve as a testing-out ground for certain exercises of party shock troops (a formation originally introduced into party political tactics by a disciple of Lenin, though a renegade one, Mussolini). Such an exercise would serve to maintain party morale as well—and also to maintain the communists' pose of revolutionary fervour.

Here it is important to stress the point made earlier: the stress on tactics and the virtual extinction of discussion on revolutionary aims. Such extinction, in practice, makes Leninist tactics not revolutionary at all but merely party political. And it is important to recognise that the shock troops of Stalinism have nothing in common with revolutionary conceptions.

Important not merely for the sake of clarity, but also because the revolutionary cause should be kept clear of the mud which Stalinist tactics may cause to be hurled at it.

The great revolutions of the past have been inspired (though not very clearly) by certain revolutionary aims, but they have been movements of the populations almost as a whole, and not of the well drilled shock troops operating against the police while the populace stand by inactive.

Such highly disciplined manœuvres are not in any sense revolutionary. Where they have a determined aim (in France recently the aim appears to have been no more than tentative, a practice, so to speak) they are simply political manœuvres to achieve power. In this they have more in common with the democratic procedures they repudiate, than with revolutionary conceptions. The impetus of the revolution must spring from the population at large, and as such cannot be amenable to party discipline or precise preparation. The revolutionary aims are of the highest, the most idealistic character. They cannot dispense with tactical considerations but they have absolutely nothing in common with his seizure of power by *coup d'état* with which the Communist and Fascist Parties have familiarised us.

AMERICA DELIVERS THE GUNS . . .

LAST week, the vessel *Charles Lykes* unloaded trucks, munitions and arms at Saigon, Indo-China, and it was made the occasion for a ceremony since this was the 150th American ship to bring arms to Indo-China. In a speech, the American Minister said: "The American people are happy and proud to be able to deliver to their friends in the French Union these legitimate defence tools." How twisted must be the minds of politicians when they can talk of a purely colonial war in which a vast expeditionary force from France is engaged in an effort to retain French domination in Indo-China, as a *defensive war.*

. . . AND GERMANY THE BUTTER

LAST month it was announced by the Ministry of Food that Britain had bought 1,500 tons of butter from Western Germany at a specially reduced price of 2/9d. per pound, compared with the West German wholesale price of 3/11d. per pound.

Since then, W. Germany has joined the crusade against Russia, and will shortly be starting a rearmament drive. And Germany not being America, one assumes that it will be a question of guns or butter.

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

RUSSIAN IMPRESSIONS

SOUTH WALES miners who recently sent a delegation of nine to Russia, have issued a report which says the delegation was impressed by the coal mines which were highly mechanised. Miners were paid a basic wage and a bonus for exceeding the target set for each colliery. Wherever possible, piece-work rates applied.

Mr. D. D. Evans, a union official who led the delegation, says: "We were rather staggered to find women employed in the pits." It was explained, however, that because of the shortage of manpower in the war, many women went into the pits and were now reluctant to leave. They were reduced as circumstances permitted. They had the same pay as the men, but had to do only 70 per cent. of the normal target for the job.

Mr. Evans also says that in the past three months there has been a reduction of 25 per cent. in the cost of living.

The reason given for women being employed underground may have satisfied Mr. Evans, since he does not appear to make any comment. But we would refer him to the chapter in Marie Louise Berneri's *Workers in Stalin's Russia* dealing with "Women in U.S.S.R.", in which he will find references to the report published by a similar delegation from Durham who visited Russia in 1936: "We always condemn in plain, honest pit terms, the employment of women underground. There is no need to overstate the position or moralise about it. In our opinion, the employment of women underground is wrong and especially so in a Socialist State, and it should be made illegal." The French miner, Kleber Legay, who visited Russia at about the same time, expressed himself equally forcibly. "I expressed my surprise," he writes,* "on learning that under a Socialist régime women are obliged to do such work and I pointed out to him [the Ruusian official] that Russia is the only European country, even taking the fascist countries into account, where women work underground." The excuse given by the President of the T.U. to Legay at the time was that it was better to see women working in the mines than to see them, as in France, given up to prostitution! That may impress French admirers of the Russian paradise but it would obviously not go down well with admirers from South Wales. And the war is as good an excuse as any for justifying every kind of excess.

**Un minem chez les Russes* (Paris, 1937), quoted by M. L. Berneri in *Workers in Stalin's Russia* FREEDOM PRESS, 1/-).

COLOUR BAR EVEN FOR TRESPASSERS IN S. AFRICA

A SOUTH AFRICAN farmer's notice board (a photo of which is published in the *Cape Argus*) has been the subject of a question to the Minister of Justice. The board is adorned with a skull and cross-bones and the following wording: "DANGER! *NATIVES, INDIANS & COLOUREDS: IF YOU ENTER THESE PREMISES AT NIGHT YOU WILL BE LISTED AS MISSING. ARMED GUARDS SHOOT ON SIGHT; SAVAGE DOGS DEVOUR THE CORPSE.* YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!"

The question put to the Minister is "whether the owner of the farm will be prosecuted for such threats of violence, if not, why not; and whether the Minister will take steps to have the notice board removed." What interests us particularly is the fact that this farmer's special attention is reserved for all but white intruders.

AMERICA INC. *versus* GOD INC.

WE have for a long time thought that only God was more efficient than American enterprise. What the former achieved in the way of world-building on day and night shifts makes you want to pinch yourself to be sure you are not dreaming. But the Americans are not deterred. God hasn't announced any new feats for centuries; time instead is on America's side We will not list again all their achievements, for the latest is surely a real foretaste of things to come and, as public speakers are always saying, "symbolic". Last month in Santa Rosa, California, *a complete church was built in one day* as part of a nation-wide Presbyterian campaign to raise money to build new churches throughout the country. We know God did more than that in one day—or did he? After all, the apologists for the Bible tell us that you must not read these references literally, and that a biblical day may easily be thousands of years. If that is so, then God is out of business, for not only have the Americans really succeeded in building a church in one day, but by all accounts, with ample supplies of atom bombs could literally destroy the world in a few hours. LIBERTARIAN.

MITIGATING WARS

☞ Continued from p. 1

rather surprisingly by the Czar of Russia. Other conferences followed, culminating in the Hague Convention of 1907.

The Hague Convention applied only as between nations who had accepted its provisions and abided by them. To quote R. T. Paget once more: "It's effectiveness may be judged by contrasting the suffering imposed by the German war in the West, where the Convention was applied, to that imposed by war in the East, where it was not."

Paget points out that the rules of war make a clear distinction between soldiers and civilians. "The Napoleonic concept of a nation in arms, and the new ideology of nationalism that was born with the French Revolution, increased the severity of war, and French troops did on occasion behave with great brutality to civilian populations." He goes on to say that "the basis of the Hague Convention was that war should be confined to armies. This proposition was unacceptable to the Communist government of Russia, who believed that every citizen's duty was to wage war upon an invader." This was why the Russian government did not accept the Hague Convention as to land war. (They did, however, accept it regarding sea warfare.)

Effect of "Ideological" War

The effect of using ideological propaganda to whip up war hatreds is entirely baneful in this connection. "Laws of war must always be based ultimately upon mutual confidence and respect, and that confidence and respect have been destroyed." What a tangle the conflicting impulses of progress in opinion and the increasingly totalitarian nature of warfare has got us into is illustrated by the cameraderie of soldiers expressed in Goering being treated as a guest by his first captors, only to be tried as a war criminal afterwards. One is reminded of the exclusiveness of mediaeval chivalry: "After the battle of Poitiers, in the fourteenth century, the victorious Black Prince of England knelt before the captive King of France and served him at dinner, whilst the common soldiers of France were slaughtered without mercy outside" (Paget).

In a debate in the House of Lords recently, Field-Marshal Lord Wilson said that there was no little concern and doubt among officers of the three services on the question of whether they would be regarded as war criminals in future wars. Field-Marshal Montgomery had already declared that "the Nuremburg trials have made the waging of unsuccessful war a crime, for which the generals of the defeated side would be tried and then hanged."

In the Lords debate, Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield asked: "What was the position of the airman ordered by his government to drop an atomic bomb on a highly populated country in Europe, or of a young submarine officer ordered to sink unarmed merchant ships without warning?"

Both Lord Simonds (the Lord Chancellor) and Lord Jowitt, the leader of the Opposition, stated that the law was that obedience to a superior order was not a defence where the order was obviously wrongful. But Lord Wavell pointed out that "the man who was usually the least able to question the legality of an order —the private soldier—was the one who had to make up his mind at once whether or not to obey. And Lord Saltoun said, "either our Army obeyed first and cavilled afterwards, or cavilled first and obeyed afterwards: in the latter case we should lose our wars."

In practice this, of course, is the military position. One should not forget the case of an officer, William Douglas Home who, during the last war, refused to obey an order to bombard a town in Northern France which had already surrendered. He was court-martialled and sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, despite the obvious criminality of the order. In his case the Army clearly held that obedience came first, even though the leniency of the senetence showed that they felt the order to be wrong.

Public Indignation

The Nuremburg trials no doubt reflected the natural feeling that the Nazis were criminals. But such a feeling was natural only to ordinary people. The Government who prosecuted at Nuremburg had already expressed its opinion in its appeasing attitude towards the Nazis before the war, and in Eden's public remark to the effect that "we" did not object to what the Nazis did at home, but only when they began to export their ideas.

Atomic weapons and jellied petrol bombs show that the aims of the Hague Convention are not likely to be applied in any future war. But that does not mean that the public must not feel indignation at horrible methods of waging war, and must not seek to make their indignation effective. Such selective indignation may not be logical without condemnation of war itself: but the abolition of war itself is unlikely to be achieved by peoples who are tolerant of its constituent horrors. Perhaps the recognition that combatants have to consider their consciences before the duty of obedience will turn out to be a major step forward after all. ANARCHIST.

NYLON NOTES

Judge Sylvester Ryan, of the United States Federal Court, ruled recently that the Dupont de Nemours, the largest chemical, munition and nylon producers in the United States, must in future grant licences for the manufacture of nylon to anyone seeking them. He rejected a United States Government request that licences be granted without royalty payments.

The ruling is aimed partly to prevent Duponts gaining a stranglehold on nylon and other synthetic fabric production in the United States, and partly to carry out a decision of the court last year to break up what was described as a world-wide cartel formed by Duponts, Imperial Chemical Industries, and Remington Arms Company.

—*Observer*, 18/5/52.

THE SOVEREIGN GERMAN STATE

MANY people listening to the news of the re-establishment of a sovereign German State and of a German Army, must have cast their minds back a very few years to the day of "unconditional surrender", "never again", and the other slogans of the last war. You will remember the school of thought led by Lord Vansittart which claimed that there was some original sin in every German man, woman and child which made them the eternal enemies of decent people, and an opposing school which maintained that there were some "good" Germans who suffered under the Hitler régime just as much as the people of the occupied territories.

When the "unconditional surrender" was accomplished however, the hard-hearted military leaders found their friends, not among those who had been the victims of the dictatorship but among those who had profited from it, and those who lost everything were left to their fate. And the masters of Western Germany to-day are to be found amongst those who "didn't do so badly" in the nineteen-thirties.

There are some terrible words, written after the first world war by Sir Oswald Stoll, the impressario. "Only those who sacrified income, profits, and life, went down. Only those went under. Only those lost the war."

And indeed it is only those in every country who took seriously the exhortations and demands of their governments who lost the last war and are the destined victims of the next one.

You hear in conversation, condemnations of the folly of the German treaty and predictions of its consequences. But where in the press, apart from the cartoonists and licensed jesters, do you find denunciations of it? The *Daily Express*, which until the war broke out insisted that there would be no war, and then became the most bellicose and Vansittartist of all the daily papers, published last week a bitter cartoon by Osbert Lancaster, showing an old junker reading the paper and saying, "No atom bombs or V2s. This is another Versailles!" but there was no editorial condemnation of the lunacy of giving new scope to the German military class whose economic power was carefully left intact by the conquering governments in Western Germany. (The *Daily Worker*, of course, was full of reproaches, but had nothing to say about military preparations in Eastern Germany.)

But in the great ideological crusades of the twentieth century no-one is very particular about where he chooses his allies. In the war against Fascism, Communism was our friend (at least after the unconsummated honeymoon between Hitler and Stalin), and in the cold war with Communism we are not squeamish about injecting new life into Fascism.

But some of us are. Some of us are not willing, in M. L. Berneri's words, to choose between the plague and cholera.

End of Full Employment?

THERE is no doubt that Clement Attlee is more astute than most people think. This insignificant little man must be given the credit for having chosen exactly the right moment, last October, for a General Election.

Either he must have the credit or his economic advisers are smarter than those of the Tories, for who can doubt that Attlee knew that Full Employment was at an end and that he had better get out while the going was good?

The Conservatives, on the other hand, have come unstuck all round. In opposition all through the immediate post-war period of full employment and relative prosperity, they have only come back to power through the failure of the Labourites to maintain the enthusiasm and hopes for change of 1945.

With their huge majority in the House, Labour was able to bulldoze through its reforms—nationalisation and the Health Service—and hoodwink the public, for a time, that these were great and permanent benefits. Because, however, it had no alternative to capitalism, the Labour Party was not able to stabilise its economy. It could only echo the old capitalist parrot-cry "Export or Die," and the late lamented Sir Stafford Cripps, brilliant and honest as we are assured he was, could think of nothing brighter than (after denying it nine times) to devalue the pound sterling.

It was a temporary, stop-gap, measure. But what made it "necessary" was the fact that British businessmen were finding it harder to sell their goods in the world's markets. By the simple act of devaluation—*i.e.*, reducing the cost of £1's worth of goods from $4 to $2.80—Cripps enabled British manufacturers to cling to markets which were shrinking fast.

That was in the autumn of 1949, and we were told at the time that the full effects would not be felt for about 18 months. Before those effects—harder work for less reward—began to be felt, Attlee went to the country, in February, 1950. It is interesting to speculate on what might have transpired had Labour won a large majority again then. Would they still have gone to the country in 1951?

I think the chances are that they would, for they couldn't have escaped the results of Cripps' policy, which by then had brought high prices and a fall in real wages, and had ceased, after two years, to maintain any grip for British commerce on world markets. Labour had shot its bolt. It was extremely fortunate in coming to power when its policy of Full Employment would have been in practice whichever Party had been in power. It had plain sailing (more or less) for six years, but last October the storm warnings were lifted and it was clearly the time to get out and let the Tories step in.

So almost as soon as the Conservatives get in they are landed with a slump. What propaganda this makes for Labour! Just as there would have been full employment from 1945-50, whichever Party was in, so to-day there would be unemployment, whichever Party was in. But Labour has had the luck of the draw and so its post-war record, on this issue, looks pretty good.

Now, what of the slump itself? In textiles it has been put down to Japanese competition, but this is not strictly true. That has helped to some extent, but in fact the slump has come before Japan has really got going again after the war. And it is not as though Japan has taken all our markets and is now working full steam; there is a slump in Japan, too. And in India. And in Germany. It is, in fact, world-wide.

It is recognised that Japan is able to compete with Britain only on the basis of the low wages and long hours Japanese workers suffer, together also with the speed at which they are forced to work. It is reported that girls tending the looms in some Japanese mills are put on roller skates!

The average hourly pay in textiles in this country is 2s. 7d.; in Japan 7½d. In the West African market Japan can sell at 1s. 9d. a yard cloth for which the British price is 6s. 4d. Truly the anarchists always maintained that cheap wages anywhere are a threat to workers everywhere.

But it is not only in textiles that the slump is coming. Although Germany is coming back as a competitor in the markets for engineering products, she is not yet seriously interfering with British markets. *But those markets are filling up already.*

The managing director of one of Britain's largest engineering organisations, Mr. Alan P. Good, of the Brush Abol Group, said recently that there were signs that many overseas markets for metal consumer goods, such as motor cars, are more or less saturated. And he thought this condition would spread to the market for capital goods.

And we have certainly seen Canada, Australia and India cutting their orders for motor cars, while Peron in Argentina is no longer interested in our finished goods—he wants the machine tools to make his own engineering products.

British industrialists have three courses open to them to-day. They are being forced into the position where the only goods they can sell abroad are those of extremely high quality and technical skill: "High Conversion value" exports with "high brain content", like electronic products and aircraft. To that end, the mills towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire will be "rescued" by other industries.

The second course British industry must follow is the selling to other countries of capital goods to develop their own industry. This, of course, is a short term and suicidal policy for British business. It is the condemned man building his own gallows. For as other countries develop, they will in their turn compete with us (Israel is the latest to join the international scramble for markets) and eventually begin producing their own machine tools as well.

The third way is bound up with the first. Obviously the markets for highly technical products are not vast. Unemployment on any large scale will not be solved that way. The only way it can be dealt with is—rearmament and war. The vast production—destroyed as soon as made—which modern war demands, will absorb hundreds of thousands of otherwise unemployed workers, and the surplus can go into the forces.

During the last war, American industry doubled its capacity. Since 1946, Britain increased productivity by 40%. All this potential has got to be used. The thing about capitalism is that production has got to go on. You just cannot make what is needed and then sit back until more is needed. Overheads mount up; shareholders have to be paid; profits have to be made. It doesn't matter what you are making as long as you can sell it—which demands buyers.

There is a world-wide depression on its way. But it is not that the people of the world have all their needs satisfied; they just cannot pay for what they need. Only governments can pay—and they only need armaments.

A few years back, President Truman said that a depression would provide a reason for going to war. That depression is now on its way. P.S.

The Industrial Worker

☛ Continued from p. 2

In his chapter on *Views on Life and Ways of Expression*, Dr. Zweig says of the worker, "His great realism makes him distrust all ready-made formulas. Practice and common sense count much more for him than theories and doctrines. . . . He knows that absolute consistency up to the bitter end is the ruin of any cause; hence his 'up to a point', which is repeated time and again in all his discussions. When you ask a worker whether religion is a good thing, or socialism or education or anything else, the most probable answer you will get is: 'Up to a point.' This phrase 'up to a point' dulls and damps any discussion with the worker and can be very annoying for the intellectual, but personally I believe that it is a concentrated way of expressing the wisdom of their experience that even the best can be turned into evil by exaggeration. . . . The right proportion or the right balance is all that matters in life. That is why life is so difficult, because there are no ready-made formulas or rigid principles to go by. . . ."

*

I HAVE quoted at great length from this very interesting book (and there are many other ideas and conversations in it that could be mentioned), but I have not commented on the accuracy of Dr. Zweig's observations. This would be pointless because there are countless exceptions to any generalisations about national character, as people were anxious to point out when George Orwell's *The English people* was published. It is doubtful whether the sociologist's apparatus of sample surveys, questionnaires and so on would give any more accurate picture, and it is notable that Dr. Zweig's observations are very much the same as Orwell's.

Without making a social survey, I would take a bet that only a small proportion of FREEDOM's readers are industrial workers, so there are probably many who would gain in social understanding by reading this book, but there are two groups to whom it is especially to be recommended, those who idealise "the workers" as an embodiment of revolutionary wisdom—a hangover from the cruder variety of Maxist hot-gospelling, and a view which should be dispelled by day-to-day observation, anyway, and those who despise "the workers" on account of what they regard as the cultural barrenness of their lives, as though there was some absolute standard by which the leisure-time pursuits and hobbies of the middle-class intellectual could be measured and found superior to those of the industrial worker.

Since this paper is concerned with propagating the ideas of anarchism, we may ask: Does the *British Worker* throw any light on the industrial worker's attitude to anarchist ideas? I think it does. If anarchism is thought of as an extreme political doctrine, a theory or a philosophical system, it evidently hasn't got a chance. Professor Mace says in his introduction to the book: "The philosophy of the British worker is 'that life is what you make it.' To 'keep smiling' is the highest duty. *But every philosophy he holds, even his own, is true only 'up to a point.' This eternal reservation may well be, as Zweig remarks, annoying to the intellectual, but it must break the heart of the fanatic.*"

But if anarchism is thought of as an attitude to life which condemns authority—whether political, economic or spiritual, and seeks to foster free association for the common purposes of life, then the British worker as delineated in this book has very many qualities which can make such an attitude fruitful, notably those deeply rooted conceptions of solidarity and "fair play" which are common to a good many "isms", and several varieties of religion, even though some anarchists regard them, rather quaintly, as the exclusive attributes of their own movement.

The British worker is not many generations removed from the industrial slave of the early nineteenth century.* The transformation of his life has been due very largely to the growth of the Trade Union movement. Now, as Dr. Zweig says, the unions have grown not only big but fat. In another of his books he quotes the well-known words of Keir Hardie:

"If Socialism meant, as its opponents say it would, stagnation, then it would fail, and the Socialist State would have to give way to one more adapted to the needs of the race. There can be no finality in Socialism. There is no thing over which 'finis' is written anywhere in life. Either we are going forward or we are driven back. There is no such thing as standing still. Movement and change are of the very essence of life."

Movement and change are of the very essence of life. Political socialism has in fact reached the stagnation to which Keir Hardie referred. And the undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the present situation of the workers' organisations which Dr. Zweig's study reflects is a symptom of this. British trade unionism, he says, "was always experimental, piece-meal, varied, committed to the methods of trial and error, deprived of general theories and doctrines, and imbued with a great sense of responsibility and common sense. It has grown organically and was not shaped, moulded or planned by anyone. And so it will continue growing and bringing forth new shoots."

Perhaps the tendencies towards a demand for workers' control in industry is merely one of these shots. If so, our task as propagandists for freedom and independence is to nurture them. C.W.

*See J. L. & B. Hammond: *The Town Labourer*, G. D. H. Cole: *Short History of the British Working Class Movement*; F. Engels: *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*.

THE PRIVACY OF PRIVATES

The term "private soldier", according to the Secretary of State for War, is not intended "for literal interpretation". We have never heard of a soldier who did take it literally, still less of a sergeant-major. Of course, there have been men who treated their sergeants as they might treat a troublesome foreman, and it is true that they usually ended in the only private place in barracks, which is the detention cell. That was the limit of their privacy.

—*Manchester Guardian*, 21/5/52.

Anarchist Summer School 1952

Will be held in London over August Bank Holiday weekend

Further details will be announced next week in FREEDOM

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY

I HAVE not read Tony Gibson's *Youth for Freedom* but I did read H.C.L.'s letter in FREEDOM (3/5/52) and may be permitted to comment on his remarks on the place of the family in society.

The problem has been discussed from two aspects—the biological one and the social one. From a purely biological point of view it seems to be clear that fatherhood is not indispensable to man. It is known that there was stage in man's primitive development when fatherhood was not recognised for the simple reason that the connection between the sexual act and birth was not understood.

However, the division of the problem into biological and social aspects may be a purely artificial one, for a custom so universally practised by mankind for so many thousands of years may eventually become a "biological need". The question is whether the family in its present-day form is only a product of the abnormal social conditions under which man lives; and if such a framework need necessarily be retained in a future free society.

I believe that much light may be shed on this problem by the observation of the social experiment carried out in this country during the last 40 years in the "kibbutzim" (communal settlements).

In the kibbutz monogamy is retained, but the social unit is not the family but the community. The child is not brought up by its parents, but in children's houses where he is looked after by trained nurses and educators. The mother is freed from slavery to home and children, and takes her place in the community as a worker on an equal basis with the other members. "Parents' Love," which is generally recognised to be essential for a child's normal development is not lost in the kibbutz, for the parents devote their free hours to their children. It remains only to be said that kibbutz children are among the healthiest, both physically and mentally, anywhere to be seen.

The lesson to be learnt from the above is that the family is only an evil when it becomes an economic structure. In present-day capitalist society the family is essential, for it is the only means of survival in a régime of "each for himself," a régime whose keynote is the battle for economic existence. It represents a stage in the development of man, and in a future anarchist society where the economic survival of individuals and their children will be the concern of the community, the family as we know it to-day, will inevitably disappear.

Jerusalem, May 23. J.D.

THE COMMUNITY IDEA

I SHOULD like to make a rather belated reply to Philip Sansom's letter of a fortnight ago, in which he attempted to discredit the community idea.

Anarchism has always envisaged society as being composed of self-governing, autonomous communities, federated regionally for *specific* purposes. This is true from Godwin onwards. It is true of Kropotkin. It is true of such FREEDOM PRESS pamphleteers as George Woodcock, Herbert Read and John Hewetson. Are these men religious-maniacs, or neurotic cases?

It is a great pity that the community movement has been largely religious, but that is no credit to the anarchist movement, who have preferred to ally themselves with the quite distinct philosophy of syndicalism and the myth of achieving the millennium through revolutionary violence. And, of course, P.S. is a syndicalist rather than an anarchist and quite typically only mentions anarchist communalism as a sort of last resort to make up for the deficiencies of a syndicalist society.

In that respect, anarchism is necessary to syndicalism, but sydicalism is not necessary to an anarchist society. The one is hierarchichal and centralising in tendency, the other is egalitarian and local. To speak of anarcho-syndicalism is like speaking of Quaker-Catholicism, and the contradiction involved has weakened and obscured the anarchist approach to the problems of society which should be pacifist, constructive and experimental, non-violent, cataclysmic and millennial.

Stockport, May 24. J.R.H.

GEOGRAPHY NOTES

Comparing post-war Soviet geographical textbooks, especially those published between 1948 and 1950, with their pre-war editions, it is striking that they contain no reference to the following former Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics:

1. The Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of the Volga Germans, abolished during the war.

2. The Autonomous Soviet Republic of the Crimea, abolished after the war. The new textbooks do not refer to the fact that for centuries the Crimea Peninsula was inhabited by Tartars.

3. The Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of the Kalmuks, invaded by the Germans during the war, was abolished after their retreat. The following people are no longer listed as inhabitants of the Caucasus: Kalmuks, Chechens, Ingushs, Karachais.

4. The Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of the Chechen Ingush and the Karachi Autonomous Province, which formed the main part of the withdrawal of the German Army.

—*Peasant International Agency*, 10/5/52.

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World Housing Shortage

THE United Nations' report on world social conditions, discussed in the front-page article of our issue of May 24th, includes the following facts about world housing conditions:

In Africa, "The number of people who for the common good of the world need to be rehoused is just about equal to the total number of people."

In the United States, 1,500,000 housing units must be built every year for the next ten years to fill current needs.

In Europe, 5,667,000 homes were destroyed in the war.

In India, nine of ten homes are only of one room, and every lavatory serves an average of 23 people.

There is no country without a housing problem and the gap between need and supply is getting larger all the time. One of the main causes is the backwardness of the building industry as regards technology and organisation".

This is undoubtedly true, but a far greater cause is the standard of values which regards so many things as more important than housing which "doesn't pay".

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Weather Permitting
HYDE PARK
Every Sunday at 3.30 *p.m.*
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Liverpool, 8
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