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Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

The MacArthur Legacy

GENERAL MacArthur's letter to the leader of the U.S. Republican Party has stirred up a new hornets' nest about Korean policy. He favoured the use of Chinese Nationalist troops from Formosa, and "the opening up a second front in Asia"—in a word, the opening of a war against Communist China. To support his position, MacArthur reports troop concentrations in nearby Manchuria. But there have been many instances already—and we have drawn attention to them in *Freedom*—of reports being exaggerated or even invented to give colour to Korean operations for political reasons.

On the other hand a military commander working under a propaganda sounding-board such as the United Nations is obviously operating under difficulties, and MacArthur's "indiscretions" no doubt reflect military exasperation. In addition to being a militarist, MacArthur is a reactionary politician: but he was these things before the war in Korea was even envisaged. We have little patience with those who supported United Nations intervention in Korea, but do not now like the consequences and so seek a scapegoat in MacArthur. Let this be the occasion for a stock-taking regarding the war in Korea.

Material Cost

The casualties of the nine months' war have been enormous. The Allies are said to have lost over a quarter of a million men—more than the total British casualties during the six years of the last war. American dead are reported as being over 50,000. The North Koreans and Chinese are stated to have lost between half and three-quarters of a million. The dead therefore may number as many as one million men—as many as died during three years of the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, the most savage and costly struggle in recent history. These figures take no account of Korean civilian victims. Three million South Koreans have been uprooted from their homes.

The Christian Children's Fund have stated in America that more than 100 children were killed when an orphanage which it administered in Seoul was bombed—by United States' bombers. (Such results are not therefore the sole prerogative of German, or Japanese, or Russian or Chinese bombers: they are results of war, and those who favour war must take responsibility for them, and take them into account in assessing the "success" of their policy.)

Political Consequences

The North Korean forces nationalised the land and liquidated private landlordism as part of its propaganda struggle. The peasant was not however given the land: he received occupancy rights and (according to

the *Manchester Guardian*) generally had to pay more in taxes than he had formerly paid in rent. In short, he exchanged the private landlord for the State as landlord.

The South Korean administration could hardly restore the landlord without losing political capital and adopting a hopelessly reactionary position. Actually, its agrarian reform law passed by the South Korean Assembly in 1949, and re-affirmed in Seoul last September, is as far-reaching as the North Korean, with the added attraction for the peasant that it gives him full ownership of the land. No doubt, in a predominantly peasant economy the peasant feels the full weight of the State's exactions, nevertheless.

Political consequences north of the thirty-eighth parallel include the consolidation of the rule of the (Communist) Workers' Party in the "Democratic Front". Dissatisfaction is directed to "reactionaries", "impure and vicious elements"—i.e., the non-Communist participants in the government. Meanwhile, the Communist Party itself is being purged. No doubt, those who question the advantage of their country being used as a stepping-off ground for the great Powers' struggles, those who are not fully committed to faithfulness to Russian policy at whatever cost, are being eliminated, and serve as scapegoats for internal dissatisfaction with the régime. The war therefore has hastened the stranglehold of the Communist Party and of the Russian dominated elements within it.

In the South, we have already drawn attention to the unbridled tyranny of the police. The United Nations' commission confirmed the fact that there were no though it was said that there were no children amongst them, and all were claimed to have had some kind of trial. On December 23rd last, Syngman Rhee declared an amnesty for 2,639 persons who were pardoned or set free without trial. But some of these died as a result of maltreatment and torture received in prison.

The U.N. commission has soft-pedalled the police tyranny, to avoid providing the Communists with propaganda ammunition, so that the picture is no doubt as grim as ever. The *Manchester Guardian* calls attention to the miserable plight of the civilian Chinese residents in Korea. "They have been suspected and persecuted

by both the Northerners and Southerners and by their own compatriots in the Communist armies. The Kuomintang consul in Korea has collected some very shocking stories."

Finally, one must always remember that Korea is a small country fought over the territory round Seoul has been fought over four times in nine months) by foreign armies, as well as the inevitable tragedies and ravagement of civil war.

Military Gains

Militarism has, however, made many gains. Again to quote editorial comment in the *Manchester Guardian*: "Independent military observers said to-night that Korea had been and still was the great testing ground for the United Nations and possibly for the Communist armies as well. Many American officers have welcomed the opportunity to bring out new weapons and train soldiers in the battlefield... American and British veterans of the Korean war are going home as instructors of the West's growing armies... the Communists have, in turn, been taught to make maximum use of cover darkness, and dispersal as protection

against air attack... Once more the parallel with Spain is apparent, with the great human and social struggle submerged under military experimentation. No further comment is needed.

The Moral Issues

What has happened in all this to the moral issues? The defence of freedom cuts a sorry figure against the background of grim facts. Yet it is this moral question which swayed support for the United Nations' intervention.

General MacArthur's open preference for carrying the war into China, indicates how insecure is the "peace" for which everyone longs. These are the men and the policies which sway our lives, and our control over them is about nil. The summary of results in Korea which we have given—and it is a fair one—show the kind of satisfaction which thinking people have achieved from following the orthodox policy of support for governments, for United Nations' "action", for government controlled "resistance to aggression". The net result of this policy is to bring us near to the brink of World War III and to formidable destruction in Korea itself.

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

IF war comes, most of us have a fairly good idea of what it will be like. Even the shortest memories do not easily eradicate events burned into them by anxiety and fear. And it is not so long since London, Coventry, Clydeside, Swansea, Merseyside and the other "targets for to-night" were echoing to the crump of high explosives. While on the Continent and in the Far East, unthinkable terror was released in the path, and in the wake, of the contesting armies.

The last war ended with the atom bomb and the next will probably begin with it. But even if this particular weapon is not used, and the contestants practice "civilised" warfare—i.e., using everything short of the atom bomb and gas—we can be sure that sufficient advance has been made in ordinary high explosive, incendiary and other "restrained" types of bombs to make things very unpleasant indeed.

Permanent Cold War?

But supposing that war does not come. Supposing that our rulers decide it may be more profitable after all to postpone indefinitely the shooting war—could we then relax our austerity and sit back and enjoy the fruits of our labours, practising the arts of peace?

Not very likely. In the first place, although it is conceivable that the shooting war could be postponed, or at least limited to far-away places with strange-sounding names—so that it all seems unreal and unimportant—it is very unlikely that the cold war in general will be called off. It has all the advantages of a hot war and none of the disadvantages.

For this reason, if for no other, it is clear that our immediate future is simply going to be a repetition of the crisis-after-crisis formula that we know so well. And not only military crises, but the economic crises inseparable from war preparation. In making this statement we do not use our own (usually infallible!) judgment. The Government's Economic Survey for 1951 confirms our gloomy prophesy.

Let us look at what it promises us. It tells us that the cause of all our troubles is rearmament—although we seem to remember certain economic crises in 1947 and 1948 and 1949, before rearmament was thought of—but let that pass. Since we earned a balance of payments surplus of £229 million for 1950 and an increase in our gold and dollar reserves of £290 million it may have been that if it had not been for the beastly Russians we may have been on the road to recovery by now. May have been!

But fortunately the Russians are there to be the scapegoats. Somebody will always be found to blame for the unworkability of capitalism. And the Russian Government, after all, is very blameworthy—for many more things than our Government thinks.

THE DOCKERS ON TRIAL

AT the time of going to Press, the Old Bailey trial against the seven dockers is still in progress. The case is being tried before the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Goddard, and the prosecution is led by the Attorney-General Sir Hartley Shawcross. It may be said that the State is bringing up its big guns to deal with the dockers.

As we write, Shawcross has made his opening speech, and the prosecution are working their way through the 32 witnesses deemed necessary to prove that these seven men dared to incite a strike. The first witness was a Ministry of Labour official, called to show that no notice of a trade dispute had been lodged with the Ministry.

Counsel for the defence of the three Merseyside men, Miss Rose Heilbron, K.C., asked this witness, "I suppose if someone gave you a complaint against the weather and told you to register it as a trade dispute, you would do so?" Witness answered, "Yes, if my immediate superior told me to do so."

Shawcross' opening speech was full of phrases about "blackmail", "ransom", "strangling the nation" and so forth, calculated to show the dockers as desperate men instead of workers fighting for a decent standard of living against obstruction from their employers and their "own" unions. "That way," said Shawcross, "is chaos and anarchy."

We shall carry a full report and commentary on this important trial in our next issue.

"Whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to this country than the whole race of politicians put together."
—JONATHAN SWIFT

Can one rightly regard the supporters of such orthodox policy as "thinking people"?

But we have nothing but contempt for those who originally backed the war, but now want to cut their losses, and declare that "we should not meddle in the internal political problems of other nations". There were plenty of such people who regarded Nazism as no concern of theirs between 1933 and 1939. And they to-day look with a like indifference on Franco and Peron.

Obviously the issue of tyranny is a moral one which cannot ethically be side-stepped. Yet the results of intervention are seen in Korea, while orthodox opinion has no answer to central Europe or Spain or Argentina—nor, let us add, any effective policy for remedying ills in the West.

How can the dilemma be resolved—if not by the adoption of a revolutionary position? The orthodox methods of reliance on governments and delegated authority have resulted in present-day Korea, in the post-war world with its two great hostile camps, each seeking to strengthen itself by the suppression of internal criticism. Over the past twenty years examples of the viciousness and futility of such methods have been piling up with ever-increasing frequency. The first step towards cutting through the tangle and despair of world politics will be taken by the successful libertarian revolution which avoids the nationalist snare.

war purposes. This shortage pushes up prices, so import costs will be higher by £850 million.

The very wet winter has reduced the crop acreage on the farms; electrical goods and motor cars will be much scarcer on the home market because of Services' requirements; load-shedding by the power plants will be more frequent next winter, although the coal target will be 3-6 million tons higher than last year's production.

The measures to meet these conditions are impressive. They are:

- (1) Self-Restraint—"There should be no unreasonable increases in wages, salaries or profits."
- (2) More taxation—see last Tuesday's Budget.
- (3) Waste and inefficiency must be eliminated.

So doesn't the future look rosy? "At best," says the Survey, "we face in the immediate future a decline in the rate of increase in the national output, a worsening of the balance of payments, a fall in supplies of some consumer goods, and a continuing rise in prices."

"At best." The Survey does not tell us what the worst will be, it simply says that its "best" may well prove to be optimistic. We can, however, see quite clearly what is really on the way.

Already, the inability to pay inflated prices for work is forcing smaller manufacturers in Yorkshire to close down. As more shortage in textiles develop, widespread unemployment will ensue. Higher prices for all commodities will bring hardship even to reasonably-paid workers, who will be driven to produce more and more.

To "cure" unemployment and meet the needs of the armament manufacturers (no talk of shortages there) direction of labour will inevitably be introduced, whether attack threatens or not.

Is it Necessary?

So the outlook is pretty grim. Shortages, unemployment, high prices, "restraint" on wages, austerity with a vengeance, and behind it all—the imminence of war.

Is it all necessary? Of course, it is not. Since 1938 the productive capacity of Britain has increased by 60 per cent. Nobody could convince us that with the technical potential we have in 1951 we could not create abundance—and leisure—for all the peoples of the earth. But we are harnessed to lunacy and destruction, and until we shake off that harness, we must expect to take the consequences.

That workers in control of industry could not do worse than the present controllers seems obvious. That workers' control would be saner, more humane, and more satisfactory with regard to our needs, is a fairly safe bet.

SECRET PRISONS IN BRITISH ZONE

Man Held Two Months without Trial
A REUTER report from Dusseldorf (April 6th) quotes Sir Owen Corrie, British High Commission judge for North Rhine-Westphalia, as saying that he was dismayed to learn that there were secret prisons on this side of the Iron Curtain. He was hearing a case in which a Ger-

man, Albert Löhle, was sent to prison for two years for trying to obtain a British officer's passport.

The prosecutor, Mr. E. Band, said that Löhle had not been brought before a judge until January 15th, although he was arrested by British Intelligence officers on November 3rd last year. Löhle, he alleged, had been held in custody under a secret order issued by the former High Commissioner, General Robertson. The order, he said, stated that persons could be held in custody if the offence with which they were charged was being investigated by British Intelligence.

Mr. Band alleged that "secret" British prisons had existed in West Germany where people arrested by Intelligence officers were frequently held longer than is allowed under normal procedure.

If this kind of thing happens in "peacetime" what can one expect when war comes and both sides join in a real crusade for "freedom"?

7 PER CENT. OF Z MEN FAIL TO REPLY TO NOTICES

MR. J. Strachey (Secretary for War) stated in the House of Commons last week that some 7.4 per cent of the Class Z reservists warned for recall had not yet acknowledged receipt of the warning notices, although acknowledgements were still being received. In addition, 1,734 warning notices have been returned as untraceable.

"What can we do to Stop Them?"

ASKS ALEX COMFORT IN HIS HOLBORN HALL SPEECH

I DO not think that I need stress tonight the possibilities of the situation we find ourselves in. I believe that your own experience, which may have brought you here to-night, has been the same as mine. Wherever I go, in scores of letters from people I do not know and have never met, in conversation with friends and in talk I overhear as I go about, one question is being asked—what can we do to stop them? Not "what can the government, or UNO, or the Church, or my political party, do?" but what can we do, we individuals?

Our political leaders are perpetually exhorting the public to see the issues more clearly, through their spectacles, to face them more squarely, along the lines which they suggest. I submit to you that it is the great credit of the ordinary people of this country—and, if we can judge from recent Gallup polls, to the credit of the ordinary people of America—that they do recognise the issues, and recognise them in spite of the two opposing streams of propaganda which depict the West or the Soviet Union as either angel of light or devil incarnate. I submit to you that the public here, and I firmly believe the public in all countries, do increasingly, and in spite of the din of propaganda to which they are being subjected, see the facts as they are. Instead of an opposition of blameless right and unmitigated wrong, of freedom and tyranny, whichever way round you care to put it, they see a couple of groups of frightened politicians, culturally incapable of understanding one another, ready to sacrifice anyone and anything except their own inerrancy, blundering closer and closer to something which will destroy all of us. The public are not Communists, they are not, in its developed sense, pacifists—if they have a conscientious objection it is to laying down their lives fruitlessly at the instance of lunatics.

Because the position is abundantly clear. If anyone was in doubt, the Korean war should have dispelled that doubt. I think that perhaps the British Government is just beginning to realise the effect which that war, its streams of refugees, its massacre of villagers with petrol bombs, its empty pretensions of liberation and its filthy reality, is having on public opinion. It is not a matter of objecting to war as an abstraction in ethics. It is not even a matter of preferring Communism to war. It is simply the perception that whoever else can survive another war, this country cannot. It is an indefensible aircraft carrier allied to a wholly irresponsible Power, a power which is perfectly prepared to re-enact not only the horrors of Korea or the horrors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, but to expand them to equal the horrors of the German extermination of Jewry, if, in General Eisenhower's very frank words, that will bring them military advantage. War in the past may have been an instrument of policy, under which, although the people invariably lost, the leaders who promoted it stood to win. Revolutionaries

and reformers could criticize the selfishness of a ruling class which hoped to profit from other people's suffering. Not even that is true to-day. The atomic bomb and the frenzy of contemporary politics do not reflect any such intelligible plan. They are the work not of a cynical policy, but of mental patients.

For this country, war is not an alternative—it is simply the end of our existence. According to the American civil defence chiefs, we shall soon get used to atomic bombs. Well, it has rightly been said that defeat would mean the end of America, but war would mean the end of Europe. War between America and Russia could not be won by either side. It would involve the overrunning of Europe, and probably Britain, by the Red Army, followed by its systematic devastation by the Americans. It would end in a compromise of exhaustion between two embittered tyrannies. We should see Korea re-enacted in Europe, we should see the retaliatory butchery of the population of Russia. If there were the smallest moral justification for throwing away our lives in this way, if anything whatever, except worse misery, could come from it, many of us would feel that we should sacrifice ourselves to resist tyranny but every normal person will draw the line at sacrificing others, millions of others, by burns, torture, starvation, and radiation-sickness. It is not cowardice, but precisely the moral bankruptcy of the whole so-called anticommunist campaign, which I believe the public recognises, and from which it revolts. The war against Germany showed that in what they believe a good cause the most unlikely people are willing to

die for a blunder, a swindle, or a piece of lunacy.

Let there be no mistake about it. The people who are most certain of Russia's warlike intentions are not enemies of tyranny. They did not stop Syngman Rhee's executions, or deplore Chiang's police state. They have not scrupled to collect and uphold a long series of discreditable tyrannies. We should not enter a war against China, or against Russia, as the allies of the liberation, but as the dupes of bloodminded old men who hate the achievements of communism far more than its vices, who by their folly have provoked and aggravated its intransigence, and who are now attempting to pre-

serve world peace by the one measure calculated to turn that intransigence into open war, the rearmament of Germany and the release of the Nazi war-leaders. In such a coalition our allies are not the oppressed peoples but Franco, Senator McCarthy, Gen. MacArthur and the strategic bombing experts. And we have no right to pretend we do not know these people for what they are. They entered Korea, and we with them, as champions of independence. UNESCO prepared plans to make the country a model industrial democracy. I wonder to-day who would have the hardihood to suggest that any Korean would prefer such liberation to the worst that a local tyranny could do. They have razed every city and town, they have stood for the massacre of civilians, the execution of women and children, the torture of prisoners, the destruction, much of it spiteful and purposeless, of £400 million

of property, and the production of about 2 million casualties and 4 million homeless. And it this struggle, a very minor campaign of the world conflict, which is being extended to Europe. We are the next Korea, here, and unless we prevent it, soon.

Nobody, I think, will accuse me of being a Communist. I hate the State as an institution, and I hate the arbitrariness and the narrowness of the Russian State. May I also say that like the vast majority of people in this country I have for the Russian people exactly the same friendship as I have for all peoples, increased rather than diminished by the sufferings they have undergone. I know that they want peace, as all peoples want it.

I could respect, though I could not support, anyone who thought that armed force might be used to-day to liberate someone, either from abuses in the East (Continued on page 4)

Some Press Comments on JOURNEY THROUGH UTOPIA

"... One can do worse these days than to take such a journey as Miss Berneri devises, with herself as guide... [it] is both diverting and instructive."—*New Statesman & Nation*.

"... even our readers, once so familiar with the journalism of Marie Louise may allow themselves to be a little dazzled by the brilliance of this posthumous work—it is so calm and coherent, so well organised and well written, and so disinterestedly readable."—HERBERT READ in *Freedom*.

"Miss Berneri's comments, explicit and implicit, are for the most part acutely discerning... This fascinating work..."—*Times Literary Supplement*.

"... the most interesting work on the subject."—*Time & Tide*.

"... a masterly account of interest to all sociologists and very particularly, to Freethinkers who tend naturally to criticise existing institutions."—F. A. RIDLEY in *The Freethinker*.

"... she has bequeathed us a comprehensive and valuable survey, copious in quotation and acute in comment."—*Punch*.

"Marie Louise Berneri... has left us a book of great value... she writes with scholarship and a deep knowledge of the social background..."—MARK HOLLOWAY in *Socialist Leader*.

THE MUDDY WAR by M. L. B.

On the second anniversary of Marie Louise Berneri's death we are reprinting this article of hers which first appeared in our issue of 21st February, 1948. The "revelations" which have been made since the article was written can only reinforce her contentions. Political leaders rely on an ill-informed public to which they can reveal or conceal facts to suit the requirements of policy.

WHETHER or not it is a cold war, it is certainly a muddy one. Washington State Department has not been able to resist the temptation of having a good smack at Russia, and has published a number of German State documents concerning the relations between the Soviet Union and Germany in the period 1939-1941. These documents were seized by the American forces when they marched into Germany and have been kept on ice for nearly three years before being made public. Nor are all the documents being published now; we are given a selection,

a *hors d'œuvre* so to speak, and the rest are probably kept in reserve for even more propitious times.

We would like to avoid noticing this dirty business; we would rather deal with beautiful and inspiring examples of international solidarity but the task of a paper is to look at facts, however unpleasant and however much one despises the way in which they are presented. And indeed it is difficult to imagine anything more revolting than the use governments make of secret documents.

When a private individual holds a document which might compromise a person and he tries to use it for his own advantage, it is called blackmail and it is punishable by law. But when a Government uses documents obtained by their informers, spies, and diplomats or by war and plunder and uses them to blackmail or blacken another government, it is called international politics.

We are not opposed to the publication of these documents, which are of great historical value, but we strongly condemn the use which is made of them. We also condemn all secret treaties, protocols and negotiations. It is ridiculous to talk of a democratic government when that same government, which is supposed to represent the wishes of the people, is able to take momentous steps in its foreign policy with the knowledge of only a selected few. The chief lesson to be learned by the publication of these documents is that nations are committed to alliances defensive or offensive of which they are completely ignorant.

But this is not the conclusion governments want people to reach by the publication of these secret documents. They are used either to blackmail the governments, in whose interest it is that they should remain secret, or to blacken these same governments and create a feeling of hostility among nations.

It is doubtful whether this is in fact a very effective method because, for each document in the hands of the Americans and detrimental to Russia, Moscow will probably bring out one which will smear either Washington or London. Mr. Bevin's wisdom in not allowing himself to be rushed into the publication of documents is probably dictated more by self-interest than by any feeling of discretion or magnanimity.

Already Moscow has hit back by stating that Britain and France did not wish to

come to an arrangement with the Soviet Union in the negotiations which began in March 1939 and that their aim was to "get Germany and the Soviet Union to come to grips as soon as possible". Moscow also threatens to publish documents seized in Germany by the Red Army concerning the relations between Hitler Germany and the Governments of Britain, France and the U.S.

If we consider the documents published in Washington, as we shall consider those which Moscow intends to publish, it is not to wax indignant at the behaviour of any particular government. None of them has a record to be proud of. If Stalin made a pact with Hitler, Britain helped Nazism to get into power, and neither Russia nor America, neither France nor Britain, was in the least concerned with crushing Nazism but merely played the game they thought more suitable for their imperialist interests.

We said all this long before these documents were published, not because we were better informed, but because we had no reasons for concealing facts. Mr. Churchill, who is now so anxious that the documents should receive wide publicity, knew of them when he lavished his praises on Stalin. To describe the records as "an appalling story of cynical diplomatic duplicity such as few people in this country would have deemed possible," as Cummings does in the *News Chronicle*, is a gross exaggeration.

In fact these documents prove little that has not already been made public through other sources. They prove that the Soviet-German pact was an *active* alliance, i.e., that, while it lasted, these two countries helped one another by exchanging goods and by encouraging their respective territorial aggrandisements. This had already been revealed, in particular by Kravchenko, in his book *I Chose Freedom* (see *Freedom*, 15/11/47).

They show that Soviet and German leaders and diplomats exchanged congratulations, compliments and toasts. But didn't we have photographs of them shaking hands and smiling at one another? One could readily imagine that the usual compliments had been exchanged.

They show further that Litvinov was sacked and replaced by Molotov because the former was in favour of an anti-fascist alliance and a Jew, not a very suitable envoy to send to Germany. This also had been pointed out long ago.



The Soviet Government tried its best to make the pact palatable to the Russian people because, in the words of the German Ambassador in Moscow, in his report of September 6th:

"The sudden alteration in the policy of the Soviet Government, after years of propaganda directed expressly against German aggressors, is still not very well understood by the population. Especially the statements of official agitators to the effect that Germany is no longer an aggressor run up against considerable doubt. The Soviet Government is doing everything to change the attitude of the population here towards Germany. The press is as though it had been transformed... In a judgment of conditions here the Soviet Government has always previously been able in a masterly fashion to influence the attitude of the population in the direction which it has desired, and it is not being sparing this time either of the necessary propaganda."

This also is no "revelation". The Russian Press and the testimony of several Russian exiles are there to prove that there was an immediate and thorough change of line.

The documents also give some information which is not of the kind to hit the headlines but which is perhaps more important than the more publicised one. In December, 1939, for example, when Hitler gave the order to expel thousands of Jews from German-occupied Poland into the Soviet sphere, the Russians sent the Jews back to German-held territory. This will seem an incredible story to those who see in Stalin the defender of the persecuted Jewish people but some of these Jews have survived and they could have told their tragic experience if anybody had been ready to listen to them. But nowadays human suffering does not count unless it is related in *secret* documents. The victims of Russia's senseless act whose sufferings make such good propaganda material for the U.S. are now in D.P. camps in Germany. They can die of starvation and despair; the world does not care, but they have achieved immortality in the published records and, supreme irony, they are used as fodder in the propaganda for another war.

Marie Louise Berneri Committee

THE Committee's special edition of "Journey Through Utopia" is now sold out. The public edition (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 16/-) is still available, however, from Freedom Bookshop, and postal subscribers to "Freedom" will find enclosed with this issue a descriptive leaflet issued by the publishers.

We will soon be sending out our third circular letter together with a balance sheet. This will be sent only to readers who have written to the Committee. Will others who are interested please send us their addresses?

The volume of articles and essays by Marie Louise Berneri which is being prepared will be called "Neither East Nor West". We are confident that her examination of the social and political questions of the last ten years of her life will not lose its value in the future; in fact, the quickening tempo of events and the conflict of rival ideologies will make many of her topical articles more significant to-day than when they were written.

Marie Louise Berneri made a particular study of the Russian and Spanish revolutions and this will be reflected in two of the Committee's forthcoming publications. The first of these will be "Russia's Third Revolution" by Ida Mott. This 40,000 word book tells for the first time the complete story of the 1921 uprising of the Kronstadt sailors against the Bolsheviks—the greatest single act of anti-Communist revolution by the Russian people themselves. Readers who sent orders and subscriptions for this book when it was first projected as a limited subscription edition by Freedom Press, will have their orders passed to the Committee.

We are also preparing to publish a volume on the collectivisation by the Spanish workers and peasants in the 1936 revolution. This is certainly the most important and yet the most neglected aspect of the struggle in Spain.

When the Memorial Committee started we estimated that we needed to raise

£1,000 as a minimum working capital to enable us to set about our publishing programme on a big enough scale. We have at present received less than half that sum and since the cost of paper, printing and binding are continually rising, we are anxious that as many volumes as possible should be in the press in the near future. For this reason we need to raise the rest of the money urgently. Will those who cherish the memory of Marie Louise Berneri, and those who never knew her but have been influenced by her writings, help us to continue her work?

Contributions, enquiries, and orders for the illustrated brochure "Marie Louise Berneri, 1918-1949: A Tribute" (5/3d. U.S.A. \$1. post free), should be sent to the Marie Louise Berneri Memorial Committee, c/o Freedom Press, 27 Red Lion Street, W.C.1.

Third List of Contributions

London: Anon 14/-; London: A.W.H. 1/9; Merriott: M.A.W. 9/6; Glasgow: S.M. 3/-; Utah: B.M.C. 1/6; Selsdon: J.P.H. 9/6; London: R.W.M. 8/3; Leeds: C.L. 4/6; Bolton: W.H.B. 5/3; Beverly: A.D. 5/-; New York: M.K. 8/9; New York: R.L. 1/9; Long Dene: N.E. 1/6; London: W.G.A. £3/12/6; Liverpool: H.H.J. 5/3; Los Angeles: R.S. 16/3; Vancouver Island: G.W. 10/6; Cape Town: C.D.F. £1/10; New York: S.B. £2/11/7; London: V.R. £4/11/5; Oslo: K.P. £1/13/0.

Total ...	£18 15 3
Previously acknowledged	£408 16 4
	£427 11 7
Deduct (payment for books, wrongly entered as donation) ...	8 15 0
Total to March 31st, 1951	£418 16 7

PRACTICAL ACTION AGAINST WAR BEFORE TOO LATE

REPORT OF HOLBORN HALL MEETING

A PUBLIC MEETING, organised by the London Anarchist Group, was held at the Large Holborn Hall on Wednesday, 28th March. The chairman, Philip Sansom, opened the meeting by explaining its purpose. He emphasised that the anarchists were quite clear in their attitude to war: they recognised that it was an inherent symptom of Capitalism, and have abolished Capitalism itself. The anarchist approach is a realistic one; a terrible war threatened, and we are concerned to take what immediate steps we can to stem the tide which most people are accepting so helplessly.

He introduced the first speaker, F. A. Ridley as one who although he did not declare himself to be an anarchist, had co-operated wholeheartedly with the anarchists in the last war, and was a most valued ally.

F. A. Ridley expressed himself to be very happy once again to co-operate with the anarchists who, he said, were belying their fictional tradition by being about the only people who were not prepared to make bombs nowadays. He dealt in detail with an analysis of the international rivalries of power-groups, and explained that if there were to be another major war, it would not be the third world war, but the first world war, for the whole planet would be involved, and the conqueror, if any, would dominate the whole world. Such a war would have to be fought, in every sense, with totalitarian weapons, and this being so, any idea of fighting it in defence of ideas of democracy and freedom is plainly ludicrous. He painted a grim picture of the regime that would be the outcome of such a war.

"Britain," said Ridley, "was providentially designed for atom-bombing." He pointed out how this island, with its concentration of population and industry in certain restricted areas, would be quite helpless in the event of an atomic war. In such a war there might be some doubt as to whether Britain would be bombed by Russia or by America—but unquestionably it would be bombed.

Ridley reiterated the chairman's remarks about the revolutionary solution being the only final solution to the problem of war, but he pointed out how the tide of history was not flowing in our direction and that it was therefore incumbent on us to oppose this ugly symptom of a sick society itself—war—and that meetings of this nature were a necessary part of the struggle.

The next speaker was Tony Gibson. He began by pointing out that although the Government of Britain could declare a major war, such a declaration could not be implemented by the country, for, as Ridley had pointed out, atom-bombing would soon smash Britain's industrial war-making capacity. This island's rôle of unshakable aircraft carrier for American or Russian bombers, would involve unimaginable chaos and misery for the

surviving population, and it is towards this disaster that the government's policy is heading us.

Tony Gibson cautioned people not to misunderstand the purpose of the meeting. "People sometimes come to public meetings to get comfort and solace from the speakers on the platform, he said, "so that they can go home with a nice warm feeling inside them—a feeling of vicarious satisfaction that someone is doing something about something. You will get no solace from this anarchist platform; we must point out in the plainest terms that if anything is to be done to avert the threatening catastrophe it is you who must set about doing it."

He mentioned the activities of the Peace with China Committee, and condemned this movement as a political racket as it served to canalise the very real anti-war feeling prevalent in the country into ineffectual channels. The thousands of post cards which they caused to be sent urging Mr. Attlee to do his very best for Peace, are useless, as Mr. Attlee is already doing his best—but according to the distorted view of a power politician. Peace efforts through the machinery of the State have proved to lead to nothing but bigger and bloodier wars. We can hope for nothing through political channels; what we can do is to render the government incapable of declaring war by making it plain to them now that we are not standing for their war-policy, and do this by our actions.

Tony Gibson urged that every individual should realise that no-one can make effective his war-resistance but himself, and that it is unrealistic to lay down any general policy of action which all could subscribe to. Each man knows in what particular sphere he is most powerful, and it is up to him to use his own power, and not to wait for a leader to harness it for him. He dealt with the question of martyrdom:

"Let me make myself plain; I am not calling for martyrs. I declare before you all that I myself am not willing to suffer for my principles; any time I have to suffer for is unwillingly and in spite of my principles. There is too much suffering in the world to-day, and most of it is carried on in the name of sacred principles."

He pointed out that the anti-war movement had hitherto been ineffective precisely because ordinary people are repelled by high-falutin' principles, and they had been misled to suppose that war-resistance implies martyrdom for the individual—but it is the State that demands martyrdom, and the act of war-resistance is a rejection of martyrdom. He again stressed the power of individual action, as opposed to political endeavours, and reminded the audience that their power lay in their own hands.

Alex Comfort now spoke. He read a paper, the text of which we are able to print in full on page 2.

Jimmy Raeside, our comrade from Glasgow, was the next speaker. He told the audience how the support for the Anarchist meetings in Glasgow was such that nowadays the doors had to be closed and latecomers turned away. But "I am surprised," said Raeside, "that on the subject of this meeting here in London the hall is not packed to the doors."

Apathy, however, seems to be fairly general. While it is clear that the population are not falling for the Government's propaganda, still they seem to think they have to live up to the British people's reputation for remaining cheerful under all circumstances.

Jimmy Raeside reminded the audience that he had been told by an American civil defence expert that Britain could "take" atomic bombing—we should soon get used to it! But I wonder," he went on, "whether the Government intend getting used to it? Or whether the two Brabazon air liners will be used when the Cabinet decide it's getting too hot to stay!"

After all, he pointed out, it is not incompatible for our Government to send troops to Korea and at the same time sell rubber—a vital war material—to Communist China. While under a trade agreement Russia is still selling manganese to America for war production. "They will undoubtedly," said Raeside, "get it back."

Referring to his imprisonment as a C.O. during the last war, Jimmy Raeside said that although it didn't seem so good at the time, looking back, and seeing some of the men who came back, he thought a few months in jail infinitely preferable to a few years in the army. "But what I am looking for now," he continued, "is a sign of—if you like—some animal-like desire for self-preservation, some popular action for survival instead of going like cattle to the slaughter."

Raeside described to the audience the recent action of the workers of Lyons who, on strike for higher wages, had each personally received a note from the French Government ordering them back to work, and refusing their demands. Not one worker went back. Instead they all gathered in the streets and made a public bonfire of the Government orders. The next day the Government announced pay rises for the strikers of from 3/- to 5/- in the pound!

"In other words," said Jimmy Raeside, "those workers used the only argument Governments understand—power! If the workers of Britain did the same and compelled Attlee to go to Truman and say that the British would not stand any reduction of living standards for war preparations—then war would be averted." If that is not forthcoming, every individual must take such action as he thinks best to avoid annihilation.

The last part of the meeting was devoted to questions and discussion. Although a certain amount of this time was wasted by the set speeches of those who had come only to grind their political axes, many valuable ideas were put forward from the floor, and the meeting was lively enough to show that practical action against war can be undertaken in many different ways.

All those interested in future meetings in this campaign should watch for further announcements in *Freedom*.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITORS AND POWER

IT seems to me, that the London Anarchist Group's Sunday night lecture on March 4th (Edgar Priddy on "The Individual and the Group") was a little confused. There is a saying, the more you live, the more you learn. So I did last Sunday. For the first time since I learned the meaning of anarchism, I heard the speaker, as an anarchist, saying when he answered a question, that some power is necessary in a movement. But when I said, "Yes, I know it exists, unfortunately, but it shouldn't be in an anarchist movement," he then said he did not see power, at least not in his group. So I don't know what he meant before. Maybe he used the wrong term? I would like to believe that he meant to say that if some comrades have got more knowledge, they should share it with the others. This means teaching, guiding, advising, but not leading in the sense of power. I hope, therefore, that comrade Edgar Priddy will answer and explain what he really meant.

Now, about the power seekers. They are several sorts. One sort which Tony Gibson mentioned are the Herbert Morrisons and the Will Lawthers. I don't bother much about them, they leave us very quickly (and the sooner the better), because their ambitions cannot be fulfilled in our movement, they have to look for it somewhere else. But the other power seekers, though not careerists, nevertheless do a lot of "damage inside the movement". Some of them think if they have more education, they should be superior. They shouldn't forget that it is only thanks to the toiling masses, which let themselves be enslaved for centuries that their enslavers can buy education for their sons and daughters. And the children from the working class, some of them very gifted, are forced to go into filthy factories and mines or as farm labourers, to help their parents make both ends meet. And then what is education without common sense and intelligence—those precious things we cannot buy with money . . .

Now comes a third kind of power-seekers. Years ago we had a large movement and really great intellectuals, and people from all classes and many, many working people, and we all felt equal. If some liked to exercise their power, or snobbery, we didn't give them any chance

ALEX COMFORT'S SPEECH (Continued from page 2)

or from abuses in the West. That is not so to-day. War will liberate nobody from anything. If we co-operate with it in any shape or form, we shall place ourselves in the hands of men as devoted, through their own fears, to the commission of unlimited and purposeless crime as were the Nazis—more unlimited and more purposeless.

What then can we do? Those of us who are on this platform have, from our various points of view, very often criticized parliamentary government. We are united in claiming that it affords no real voice to the individual and no real safeguard against psychopaths in office. Now whatever you may feel about this theory, it must be plain to you that you may be able to change the policy of the government, but that you cannot do it by voting. Unless we are prepared to vote for the Communist Party, or for minority movements which have no hope of making their voice heard, we have no choice even between statements of policy, still less between the reality. If anyone is going to act to-day it must be ourselves, as individuals, not through any of the vehicles of political office but through our own exertions. The only barrier between this country and war is public opinion, public resistance, the certainty in the minds of those who wish to make war that they cannot make it with us. And above all things, I ask you to realise that they cannot go to war without us. We are not impotent. If those who to-day ask the

question "What can we do?" will realise that, we can prevent war.

Believing that we can answer their question. And this is my answer to it—strengthen your resolution, determine where you stand. By all means make your voice heard. Call your own neighbours together and discuss the thing with them. Join your voices, singly or in groups, to any of the organisations which are rendering anti-war feeling vocal and with which you feel you can agree. But having done all this, remember that at the last resort you have both the duty and the right to refuse, as an individual, to participate in war or the preparation of war.

You have no right to claim that you do not know what such a war would involve—over and above the mockery of innumerable conventions and pacts against genocide and massacre, from Geneva to Nuremberg, by which those who call you to fight still claim to be bound. You have every right to safeguard your own life and the lives of your innocent fellow men by the same refusal which we hoped for, in vain, from those Germans who supported Hitler. Sir Stafford Cripps said, in 1938, "the workers must make it clear beyond all doubt that they will not support the government in the policy it is now pursuing." Before those speeches are withdrawn as seditious I urge you to read them again.

Let me conclude with this. I believe that if every one of us resolves here and now, first, that our protest shall be heard, that he will not keep silence, and second that he will under no circumstances willingly take part in war or the preparation of war, I believe that we can succeed, and that in that undertaking we will be acting together with, and in the interests of, the people of all countries. Let every one of us use the voice he has, and the conscience he has, and I believe we can succeed.

ALEX COMFORT.

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

How essential it is for us to have the unremitting support of all those comrades and friends who support our efforts to publish *FREEDOM* weekly, is shown by the almost monthly increases in prices, which affect the production costs of all papers, and are threatening many long-established journals.

Last month it was an increase of nearly 20% in the price of newsprint.

This month it has been announced that printed matter postal rates will be increased by 50% [from 1d. to 1½d. on every copy of *FREEDOM* sent through the post]. This will add about £200 a year to our budget. Already, in establishing the subscription rate for the weekly *FREEDOM* at 15/-, we have only allowed 2/- for postage, which is less than a half of the actual cost.

If therefore the proposed new rates are imposed, we shall probably be obliged to increase our subscription rates by 2/- per annum.

How hard is the road along which the really Free Press must travel! And one feels inclined to add, having glanced at the foot of this column: how few people there are in the world to give it a helping hand!

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I shall be glad to hear from everyone interested—both C.O.s with their personal problems, and people who can render effective assistance in this matter. Please write c/o *Freedom* Press.

Yours fraternally,
TONY GIBSON.

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Meetings and Announcements

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP CENTRAL LONDON

Regular Sunday evening meetings will be held in future at 7.30 p.m. at THE PORCUPINE PUBLIC HOUSE, corner Charing Cross Rd. and Gt. Newport St., next Leicester Square Underground Sta. APRIL 15th Jack Rubin YOUTH AND REVOLUTION APRIL 22nd Albert Meltzer WHY NO UNITY ON THE LEFT? APRIL 29th Mat Kavanagh THE BATTLE OF SYDNEY STREET

NORTH-EAST LONDON GROUP

Discussion Meetings fortnightly, 7.30 p.m. Enquiries c/o *Freedom* Press. APRIL 17th "CONSCIOUS EGOTISM—FOR AND AGAINST" A Debate. Proposer: Ted Mann Opposer: Edgar Priddy MAY 1st "CHRISTIANITY AND CRISES" Les Watson

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP INDOOR MEETINGS

EVERY SUNDAY AT 7 p.m. at the CENTRAL HALLS, 25 Bath Street, with Frank Leach, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw, J. Raeside OUTDOOR MEETINGS At MAXWELL STREET from April 29th

FRENCH CORRESPONDENT WANTED

If any French reader would care to correspond (in French and/or English) with an English comrade, will he please write to *Freedom* Press, 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1, England.