





# THE BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE OF 1926

BEFORE the 1914-18 war there was in Britain a lively and influential Syndicalist movement. In those days even the Socialists expressed ideas and points of view which to-day would be termed sedition, and the Anarchist and Syndicalist movements were the spearhead of wide-spread revolutionary feeling among the workers.

There are, to-day, social analysts like, for example, F. A. Ridley, who consider that one very good reason for Britain going to war with the Kaiser in 1914 was to break the revolutionary influence the Syndicalists were creating.

Whether that was so or not, it certainly had the desired effect. Four years of jingoist propaganda, the institution of conscientious objectors, the default of the Social-Democrats into the nationalistic camps—all the effects of war hysteria and patriotism whittled down the support previously given to revolutionary internationalism. And then, of what was left of the militants, many went over to the Communists in the first flush of enthusiasm following the Russian Revolution.

When those who had been to Russia to see for themselves returned a few years later, however, and told of their disappointment with the reaction and corruption of the Bolshevik régime, the old militants became disillusioned, and instead of returning to the true revolutionary concepts of Anarchism and Syndicalism, dropped out of working-class movements altogether.

### No Syndicalist Movement

Thus it was that in 1926, the year of the British General Strike, there was no Syndicalist movement to speak of in Great Britain. How different might have been our history—the history of the

It is twenty-five years this month since the British General Strike of 1926, when the workers of this country walked out in sympathy with the miners, locked-out by their employers in an attempt to force longer hours and lower wages upon them.

The defection of the union leaders, and the organising ability and courage of the rank-and-file presented a lesson to the world of the correctness of the Anarchist and Syndicalist case. It is a lesson that has not yet been learnt, but there are many signs in industry to-day that workers are seeing the dangers in leadership. If they realise fully their own abilities, the rebirth of a Syndicalist movement in industry and successful working-class action become a possibility.

world—since then, if there had been!

For 1926 saw the last great struggle of Trade Unionism as a fighting force for the workers against the alliance of the employers and the State. The last struggle... For since then the unions, come lock-out, depression and war, have done nothing more than establish their essentially reformist and retrogressive character, and entrench themselves as disciplinary, wage-bargaining organisations, not for the workers, but for the State.

But the story of the General Strike shows that, although there was no organised Syndicalist movement, the ideas which had always been taught by the Syndicalists had by no means been forgotten. And the leaders of the strike—if "leaders" they can be called—were only too well aware of the relevance of syndicalism (and especially its "no-leaders" principle) to the workers' struggle and they were terrified that the General Strike, originally called in sympathy with the locked-out miners, would develop into a revolutionary social general strike.

As one of the union leaders of the time, Charles Dukes, said afterwards: "Every day that the strike proceeded, the control and the authority of that dispute was passing out of the hands of responsible Executives into the hands of

men who had no authority, no control, and was wrecking the movement."

One might have asked Dukes, who rose to be Lord Dukes before he died recently, just which movement he was referring to. For certainly the movement of the General Strike was not wrecked by the rank-and-file who were coming more and more to control it, but made by them. And the responsibility for the tragic failure of the strike and the betrayal of the miners must be laid fairly and squarely at the doors of the union leaders of the day—Charles Dukes, J. H. Thomas, J. R. Clynes, Ernest Bevin, and the Labour Party leaders like Ramsay MacDonald and Philip Snowden.

### The Development of the Struggle

The background for the 1926 struggle had been laid the previous year, when the unions had vigorously resisted the mine-owners' demands for wage cuts and a longer working day for the miners, to meet foreign competition. Not being ready for a showdown then (July, 1925), the owners withdrew, giving the Government time to organise its strike-breaking forces—the O.M.S. (Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies)—and the Special Constabulary. For a subsidy the Government granted the mine-owners

was payable for nine months only, and the wage cuts were postponed until April 1926. It was obvious the struggle had also been postponed—to be renewed when the ruling class were in a stronger position to cope with it.

During the April, the owners renewed their pressure, but the miners were determinedly standing by their slogan "Not a penny off pay, not a minute on the day." So, May 1st, 1926, found a million miners locked-out.

Then began the rôle of the T.U. leaders. Terrified at the thought of a real struggle with authority, instead of loosely leading the workers who were looking to them for a lead, they spent their time begging the Government not to force the issue. The Government's answer was to send warships up the Clyde, the Thames, the Tyne and the Humber, and establish armed camps in London and all the main industrial towns, and to give the commandos carte blanche for all the violence they "thought necessary". In London, the T.U.C. conference had voted almost unanimously for a General Strike in support of the miners, and the struggle was on.

### The Workers' Strategy

Ernest Bevin drew up a plan of campaign. The workers were to attack in

two sections—"front line" and "reserve" troops. The workers, however, thought differently. When the "front line industries—all transport, dockers and the printing trades—came out, the "second line" workers in textiles, engineering, ship building, chemical and kindred trades, refused to wait for the word of command and walked out in immediate support.

The stoppage was 99% effective. Previously-trained students and business men drove a few buses and trains under heavy police protection, but picketing was efficient, co-ordination between areas quickly organised and food supplies were in many areas carried on only by the strike committees, or by their permission.

No newspapers appeared. Churchill's *British Gazette*, a duplicated sheet, was soon answered by the union's *British Worker*, also duplicated—and here surely was a weakness. The Government had the B.B.C. at its disposal, the workers no such means of communication or propaganda. Surely if the strike had continued the printing workers would have seized a press of one of the dailies—or even re-started the *Daily Herald* and spread encouragement and ideas among the strikers.

But the strike did not go on. Suddenly and without warning the General Council called off the strike. The men went back, only, in some cases, to come out again as vicious victimisation was practised by employers. But the miners stood firm, and for a further six months stood out alone, until driven by hunger to accept the employers' terms.

The story of the British General Strike of 1926 here but superficially told, is a story of a tremendous effort by the British workers against both the spite of a reactionary Government and their betrayal by a cowardly leadership.

All that was fine in those nine days, from 3rd to 12th May, 1926, was carried out in spite of the so-called leaders, who were beaten before they started. Their love for the British Constitution was greater than their care for the workers' they were supposed to represent, for J. H. Thomas spoke for them all when he said: "I have never disagreed that in a challenge to the Constitution, God help us unless the Constitution won." All the time the leaders were terrified lest the workers should take control into their own hands.

As it was, the workers showed their initiative, their organising power and their courage. All they had that they should not have had was a belief in leaders. That was where a Syndicalist movement could have proved so valuable. Let us hope that when the next General Strike comes along, the workers will be so organised that a betrayal by leaders is impossible.

## SCHOOLS AND PRISONS—2

### Reclaiming Lost Sheep

The salient point of difference between the reformist methods and the ancient methods of penology, which simply hanged, locked-up or banished the enemies of the State, is that of *reclamation*. The State actually seeks to capture the spiritual allegiance of every individual. This is upheld as a greatly enlightened attitude by many people who style themselves "progressives", but in fact its logical end is portrayed in Orwell's satire *1984*, where the rebel against the mores of his time is eventually brought round by police methods to a state of loving the dictator and the curious morality of his time.

In order to fit them for their calling, prospective schoolteachers and prison officers are given a special training. This training has much in common for both callings. It includes both education and training, and training in the maintenance of discipline. This word discipline, which fairly hums in the lecture rooms of both sorts, originally stemmed from the Latin word *discere*, meaning "to learn"; nowadays it has been significantly debased to mean "to bring under control, train to obedience, drill, chastise" (Oxford Dictionary). The training includes practice in the handling of children or criminals, and the most important part of the candidates' ability—ability to discipline—is thereby tested. Perhaps the reader can decide for himself whether the following extract comes from a report on the training of schoolteachers or prison officers.

"Discipline is necessary in any com-

munity, and the more necessary in proportion as the community is more artificial. . . . Discipline by force is comparatively easy to obtain, but has precisely no value when obtained. To govern by the consent of the governed is as clearly the aim of — as of any other administration, not merely because in the long run it is expedient, but because only discipline voluntarily accepted has any value as training for life. To give an objective lesson of the advantages of an ordered community—that is worth while."

Inmates of the State's schools and prisons may be a little cynical as to what methods are actually used to obtain the consent of the governed, but the great idea is there in both institutions.

At present it is pretty well the scum of the earth who go in for ordinary prison service; about 70% of them are ex-army N.C.O.'s who are so enamoured with their petty power of position that they cannot bear to return to the anonymity of civilian life. The remaining 30% come from the various morbid types, attracted more by the prospect of throwing their weight about than by the pay and amenities of prison service. Young bullies who are too stupid to join the race-mobs, police marks down on their luck, occasional "muscular Christians"—these form the basis of the civilian recruits. The upper ranks are almost entirely exemplary types, and accept a surprisingly low salary for such a filthy job. Their curious motives are shrewdly commented upon by von Hentig:

"The police force and the ranks of prison officers attract many aberrant characters because they afford legal channels for pain inflicting, power-wielding behaviour, and because these very positions confer upon their holders a large degree of immunity; this in turn causes psychopathic dispositions to grow wild. . . . It is more and more disorganised. . . . It is wrong to limit the group (of moral imbeciles) to the criminal. It is often forgotten that many of our legitimate vocations require a lack of emotional sensibility. Prototypes are the executioner, or the officer who applies the lash to the prisoner. Yet these are only the crassest instances, those which cannot be smoothly concealed behind the screen of means justified by end."

### The Shepherds

There is a growing class of do-gooders who have an itch to work with "delinquents". These workers, the officials of the future, are truly half-schoolteachers and half-prison officers. Their lives are devoted, so to speak, to rounding-up lost sheep and to gelding all the uppish young rams to prevent their straying again. On them the reformers and idealists place their hope for the future. They hope that the old prisons with the high, spiked walls can become supplanted by prisons without bars, intensively organised and staffed by high-powered psychiatrists, and peopled by convicts who are too will-less to escape. Such institutions will form a suitable background to the State schools of the future; those who are backward in profiting from the benefits of Secondary Education will go on to them for a further period of training (all done by kindness) to make them accept and love Big Brother. Most of the effort in this direction is being focused on "delinquent" children,

for in this field, as in many others, it is the children who attract the attention of reformist do-gooders. Perhaps it is because work with the little ones is a nobler cause, or perhaps it is simply that children are easier game. Children are less coherent in their opposition to being mucked around—whereas adults are more able in arguing the point and defending their perfectly normal actions against the charge of "delinquency".

I quote from Cyril Burt's *The Young Delinquent* a table showing the percentage of different sorts of juvenile "delinquency":

TABLE I.

Classified List of Juvenile Offences. Showing in each category per 100 delinquents of either sex. Offences with opposite sex.

	Boys.	Girls.
(i) Of similar age and willing (including soliciting) . . . . .	11.4	36.5
(ii) Of younger age or unwilling (assault) . . . . .	2.4	0.0
<b>Perversions.</b>		
(i) Offences with same sex . . . . .	3.3	1.4
(ii) Masturbation (excessive) . . . . .	4.1	2.7
(iii) Indecent exposure . . . . .	0.8	1.4
<b>Obscenity (excessive, including "corrupting others" by talk) . . . . .</b>	2.4	7.6
<b>Angry Reactions without Violence.</b>		
(i) Bad temper (excessive) . . . . .	3.3	6.3
(ii) Incurability, being beyond control . . . . .	5.5	12.2
(iii) False and dangerous accusations . . . . .	0.0	4.1
(iv) Insult, and other forms of mental annoyance . . . . .	0.8	1.4
(v) Cruelty to children or animals (without bodily injury) . . . . .	1.6	2.7
<b>Wandering.</b>		
(i) Truancy from school . . . . .	17.1	4.1
(ii) Truancy from home . . . . .	12.2	7.6
(iii) Sleeping away from home . . . . .	4.1	2.7
(iv) Running away (with intent to remain away) . . . . .	6.5	5.4
<b>Secretiveness.</b>		
(i) Lying (persistent or extravagant, and including the mere concealment of other delinquencies) . . . . .	4.9	13.9

Space forbids that I should quote all other categories included in the above table, but I have quoted enough to demonstrate to all my readers that, had they been found out, at some time or other their actions could have led them to be classified as "delinquents", and rendered them liable to the ministrations of magistrates, approved schools, psychiatrists, official birching, probation officers and statistic mongers. Each individual reader can decide just how he would have reacted to these ministrations. That well-meaning men can indulge in such fantastic nonsense as the above table indicates, is just another instance of how our society is still obsessed with the idea of Original Sin, and sees in the most ordinary of childish reactions a "delinquency" which must be eradicated.

The official attitude of the school and prison is that of seeking to adjust the individual to a legal code and a system of morality, which are themselves the main cause of individual unbalance and neurosis. If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that we are all "delinquents" within the accepted meaning of the word, but we manage to keep off the

official register by successfully concealing our "delinquency". The more rational course to adopt, therefore, would seem to be to give up the tremendous strain on lives (particularly in youth) involved in the perpetual effort not to be found out, and to turn our energies towards a direct attack on the law and the moral framework under which we live, with a view to reconstructing our mores most radically. Here it is indeed significant that children, whose actions are more instinctually and naturally determined, have to suffer a severer proscription of their behaviour than adults, who are permitted a somewhat wider latitude of behaviour without incurring the label "delinquent". The prison-school and school-prison in their modern development, stand as a monument to mankind's tragic folly in refusing to recognise, approve and accept the rightness of our animal nature, and the futility of striving after an un-human ideal.

TONY GIBSON.

### COMMENT

## Make Mine Music

LONDON has a concert hall at last. Since the destruction in 1941 of Queen's Hall, which though it could hardly be called beautiful, was acoustically the best hall in the country, we have had to put up with the Albert Hall, or Kensington gasometer, as it is known among the locals, and the Central Hall, Westminster, with its odour of (non-conformist) sanctity, both of them unsuited in acoustics or aesthetics for music.

But since last week's performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony ("with the revolution in the last movement", as reader Clara Cole put it.), we have had a setting for music, with such a difference as the one critic wrote: "To me it seemed as though instruments and human voice had never been heard in their full range before," and in surroundings as near to perfection as we are likely to find them. The Festival Hall reflects great credit on all who built it, including those who talked the London County Council into approving the scheme.

The underground railway runs beneath the site, and Hungerford railway bridge is within a hundred yards, but not the slightest external sound is heard within. The hall has been compared to an egg in a box—a bowl of sound surrounded and insulated by an envelope of subsidiary rooms, including the glass-walled restaurant overlooking the river. When the 1951 exhibition is over, the Festival Hall will be completed by the addition (on the Belvedere Road side), of a small theatre planned for chamber music and cinema projection, an exhibition gallery and an orchestra practice-room which will be a replica of the platform in the hall itself.

Everything has been done to give the best possible conditions for performing and listening, after exhaustive consultations with musicians and musicians—from the music stands which run on rails (no tripping over tripods) to the seats which are each designed to give the same reverberation when empty as when occupied (for you, reader, are the equivalent of 4.7 square feet of open window). The wall linings are adjustable so that the hall can be finely "tuned" to give the acoustic

conditions which experience finally demands.

The appearance of the hall is dictated by its purpose. (Inevitably its elevations of glass and Portland stone (concealing reinforced concrete) lack the fantasy and elegance of its temporary neighbours, the exhibition buildings, but it is harmonious, honest and quite lacking the pomposity of most monumentally big buildings. Seen across the river it is impressive and exciting. There is a proposal to erect between the hall and the Waterloo Bridge (where the old Shot Tower stands), the long-proposed National Theatre. Architecturally, this would be a serious error, two buildings of similar size creating what the trade calls an "unresolved quality" between the two bridges. Far better to lay out the site as gardens.

The Festival Hall, because its acoustic clarity will expose slipshod playing, may improve standards of performance, but what we need urgently in London is more enterprising programmes. The Season of the Arts in May and June gives us a musical feast in the new and the old halls and theatres, but many of the dishes are all too familiar. (The Morley College Concerts Society is a performance well as Michael Tippett's *A Child of our Time*, on May 30th at the Festival Hall.) After the Festival the choice of programmes will presumably be in the hands of the concert promoters who lease the new hall. Dare we hope that they will be more adventurous than they have been in the past?

Freedom's ubiquitous spies report that at the embarrassing mixture of patriotism, religion, Pomp and Circumstance on the day before the inaugural concert, a load of big-wigs were stuck in the lift. From the lift-car's telephone, the attendant called to his mate, "Hurry up, Charlie, I've got the lady Mayores down here!" "That's all right, Bill," was the reply, "We've got the Queen of Sheba up here." And, to end on a social note, an exclusive Freedom interview reveals that the Royal suite of lavatories are no different from the public ones. O, ultimate triumph of Democracy!

## FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

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\*The Criminal and His Victim. von Hentig.



# A FASCIST HANGOVER IN ITALY

## The Institute for Industrial Reconstruction

### SKELETONS AT THE FEAST

THE Festival of Britain has evoked a deal of sour comment from all sorts of angles. Even our contemporary, the *Socialist Leader*, has taken a rather severe line about it. But of course the chief grumblers—one might think they were professional grousers their plaint is so continuous—come from His Majesty's Opposition.

Our society breeds sourness, and those who are hostile to cheerful and gay pleasures are always sure of considerable following. It is one of the legacies of puritanism, and we can say to these sour pussies, with Sir Toby Belch, "Dost thou think that because thou art virtuous there shall be no cakes and ale?" Perhaps the saddest thing is that the carping, so palpably absurd, is not laughed to derision. But political folks are so solemn that we are not far from the *reductio ad absurdum* illustrated by the following British United Press cable for May 4th:

"BERLIN, Friday.—The East German Communist Party said to-day that Betty Grable's legs are being 'used by warmongers to distract the masses from their real goals, to confuse the working class and cover up the real causes of their social misery.'"

H.M. Opposition's criticisms have not gone as far into the ludicrous as this it is true, but they are not all that far from it. And, of course, it illustrates the pettiness of politics. Probably most of them don't care two pins for the Festival, but since it is organised by the Government, then as Opposition, they must try and make capital out of it. The Labour Party is full of long-nosed killjoys, but since the Festival is Herbert Morrison's special pigeon, they support it. Can one doubt that if the Labour Party were in opposition, they would be declaring that the Tory Festival clowns were fiddling while the working-class burned, etc., etc.

And what of the anarchists with their eternal plague-on-both-your-houses? Aren't they always crabbing, too?

Now we disclaim the title of professional grousers. Our criticism of the government doesn't carry the tag "put us in power and we'd do it ever so much better". The Conservatives criticize Labour knowing quite well that if they were in they'd be doing just the same—and that Labour would be the grousers, doubtless using the same insincere arguments. Let us make it quite clear: if we were to undertake to run the country and arrogate to ourselves the right to tell the other fellow what to do (and see that he damn well does it!) we should make the same sorry mess of it that all the rest of the political upstarts do.

Now the Festival is clearly a very gay affair indeed. And it is a great victory for the lively people in the arts and architecture. A corresponding defeat for the Munningses, the stuffy and the respectable. During the dreary decades of our time, the lightness and airiness of modern architecture, the sense of sunshine and colour, have been one of the few signs that the joyfulness of the human spirit has not completely gone under to the Mrs. Grundies of the business and the marxist world. The festival has been described as an enormous joke. But it is a joke which presages some brighter things for the people, for this spirit has already shown itself in the post-war building schemes which have already produced working-class flats of a cheerfulness and lightness and life-easing quality quite unusual before the war.

Finally, the question arises: how is it that a government has been able to achieve this? It seems likely that the answer lies in their adopting a procedure already familiar in the administration of the great national

FASCISM in Italy was officially abolished on 25th July, 1943, and again on 25th April, 1945. All fascist emblems were destroyed, a large number of fascists imprisoned, and some of the most abhorrent laws removed from the statute book. An anti-fascist campaign, consisting mainly in calling "fascist" that which had previously been known by other unpleasant names, was started, and freedom of speech and thought was proclaimed.

Yet Fascism is alive and prospering in Italy to-day, quite apart from that defunct group of "nostalgics"—the official neo-fascists.

How does this come about? The reasons are political, judicial, psychological and, especially, economic; for we find that this grandiose campaign of anti-fascism has done nothing to destroy the large economic institutions of the fascist state. This means that the corporate basis of fascist society and the omnipotence of the state in the economic sphere have remained untouched.

In a preceding article I spoke of the Sulcis mines as an example of sham nationalisation—to the advantage of a group of bureaucrats and shareholders, and the discomfit of the Italian taxpayer. I said that this was an example of a very widespread system which oppresses Italian political and social life in a most reactionary manner.

In this article I intend describing one of the chief pillars of the state's economic structure—the I.R.I. This was originally bequeathed by Italian Industrialism to Fascism, and is at present being handed to the political parties which have succeeded the latter.

Immediately after World War I, Italian industry was faced with the difficult task of peacetime reconversion. This problem proved insoluble owing to the nature of Italian heavy industry, which owed its birth and development to the war itself. Its output was far too large for the internal market, and it was incapable of competing on foreign markets because of

the shortage of raw materials and equipment, and because of its orientation—accustomed as it was to protective duties.

During the war the banks had ventured into industrial speculation, largely financing the war industries. Thus they found themselves in deep water when, during the depression which followed the war, dour difficulties.

The State then intervened, first sporadically and in a limited way, and then, in the years 1929-1932 by founding the I.M.I. (Istituto Mobiliare Italiano), an Institute whose aim it was to furnish medium-term loans to needy industries.

But even this measure was inadequate. The industries needed long-term loans which would enable them to continue paying salaries even though they were incapable of any real production. And so, on 23rd January, 1933 (when fascism was orientating itself towards a policy of extreme imperialism), there was founded the I.R.I. Its initial tasks were: to take over bank debts, to grant long-term loans to industry, and to liquidate industry's half thousand million lire with a total circulation of 13½ thousand million lire.

The I.R.I. was divided into two sections: one for industrial loans, the other for industrial settlement. The first section with a capital of 100 million lire (to-day approximately 10,000 million lire) was to grant loans to industry for the improvement of plant and technique, an expense which should have been met out of the enormous war profits which, however, then as now, were left entirely untouched. The second section was the result of the reorganisation of the banking system, and its centralisation in three very large banks: the Banca Commerciale Italiana, the Banco di Roma, and the Credit Italiano.

As a result I.R.I. (that is the Italian State) had become the master of both the Italian banking system, and the countries' most important heavy industries. The strange situation arose wherein the

State did all the paying, and the ex-owners drew all the profits.

The first section was subsequently suspended, having largely accomplished its task. The work was transferred to the second section which was voted 1,000 million lire (1000,000 million at present). This amount was later doubled, and came mainly from repayments of the loans originally granted to industry.

At the end of World War II the Italian economic and financial situation appeared in much the same light. Those industries reorganised by I.R.I., and especially those created for the wars in Abyssinia, Spain and World War II, found the same necessity for reconversion, and with the same desire that the reconstruction be brought about at the State's expense. The banks, highly bureaucratized, as ever without any desire for independence, remained the possession of the State. The I.R.I. continued functioning without disturbance (its officials obviously blackshirts), and was reorganized by the law of 12th February, 1948.

According to this law, apparently inspired by democratic concepts, the I.R.I. is no longer dependent on the State, but has its own legal status, its own capital, and its own autonomous administration, the Council of Ministers simply reserving the right of stabilising the trend of its activities.

Thus industries like BREDA-ANSALDO and others of various types are enabled to continue, even though they only produce a ridiculous quantity of products at a price far too high for the internal market, and uncompetitive for export. (This is illustrated by the fact that in the dockyards the state pays a subsidy of 50% on every ship built for export.) In addition, Italian industry is further compensated by promises of future arms projects which will enable it to resume its former functions. (Needless to say all the profits will flow into the pockets of the shareholders.)

The organisation of I.R.I. has remained the same. Its function has become that

of a holding company at the head of a group of industries which are all controlled and directed by the managers of I.R.I. Such businesses are:—

- STET, founded in 1933 (Telecommunications).
  - FINMARE, founded in 1936 (Maritime Finance).
  - FINSIDER, founded in 1937 (Mining Finance).
  - FINMECCANICA, founded in 1947 (Engineering Finance).
- Through these businesses I.R.I. controls, *inter alia*:—
- 2% of the production of electrical energy;
  - 16% of telecommunication business;
  - 43% of iron and steel production;
  - 12% of engineering business.

In addition I.R.I. owns a considerable block of the shares of chemical and mining industries, and 25% of the moneys deposited in nationalised banks.

These figures are compiled from an official publication of the Bank of Rome. But they become even more revealing when we consider the fact that, as was the case in the shipbuilding, the mining, the engineering industries and the banks, the State has always intervened with all the power at its disposal to aid these concerns in moments of difficulty. It does this in the main by imposing protective duties which reached their maximum point during the dictatorship, but which continue in several sections of industry.

To sum up: the I.R.I. clearly demonstrates that in Italy the State, industry and the banks belong to but one and the same circle of interests. It was this circle which brought about Fascism, when the Italian workers tried to solve their economic problems by occupying the factories and by trying to revolutionise the Italian social structure in 1920. It was this same circle which later, on the side of the Allies, overthrew Fascism when they found it more "statist" than they deemed necessary. And it is this circle which to-day, even though it can exert but little influence on international political trends, finds itself automatically forced to look for war-like solutions, and is stifling all attempts at protest from within the country.

PINO TAGLIAZUCCHI.

### FOREIGN COMMENTARY

## Bringing Western Civilisation to Malaya

LAST week we dealt in this Commentary with the question of atrocities, and attempted to illustrate the twisted morality of ruling classes wherever they are found. Yet another clear example of this is provided by recent events in Malaya, where, using what we would have thought was by now a threadbare excuse, the most horrible atrocities are committed in fighting "communism", and in protecting the Malays from themselves, as it were. The *Reuter* report is too important and revealing for it not to be quoted in full:

"Because they helped Communist guerrillas the entire population of Busut village in Selangor will be removed to a resettlement camp to-morrow. Security forces threw a cordon round the village last night and told the 450 inhabitants to pack their belongings and dismantle their houses ready to move to Sungei Chua, fourteen miles away.

A Government spokesman in Kuala Lumpur said that the villagers had actively supported terrorists for two years. They had given them food and paid at least £105 a month in subscriptions.

At Sungei Chua the people of Busut will be under the emergency regulation which restricts their movements from their place of residence. In February, one thousand six hundred residents of Jenderam were also moved to a detention camp and their village is expected to be destroyed.

In the Mersing area of Johore yesterday terrorists dragged four Chinese, one a woman, from their houses and killed them. Two men and a woman were slashed to death with knives and another Chinese was shot. In the past 24 hours security forces have killed two terrorists and wounded eight."

A later message states that Pusing, which is described as the "worst town in Malaya" because of its terrorist activities and which was fined £4,600 only in January has now been given its "last warning" against "collaborating with the terrorists". We are not told what the last warning indicated, but from the foregoing it might mean anything from detention without trial to scorched earth. Such is the fate of being a man (or

woman) of the Resistance when you are on the wrong side. And, perhaps to "persuade" these "terrorists" that there can only be one point of view, the Federal Government announce that they have banned 411 publications from the Malay Federation.

Is that the way the West hope to persuade the Asiatic people that Democracy is Best?

Not that the Communists go about matters in a way which will commend their methods to the people of Asia. In Shanghai notices are being posted up outside the gaols announcing at least twenty executions a day. And it appears that before being shot the victims are taken through the streets in open trucks for all to see them, and one supposes

to inwardly digest the advantages of being governed by the Eastern bloc.

When finally some light appears out of this darkness, as it must do eventually, will the people of Asia have learnt the important lesson, for which they are paying so dearly, that no-one is better qualified to run their lives than they themselves; that there is nothing to choose between masters, for whatever they promise, they remain masters?

### • SOUTH KOREAN POLITICS

WE did not know that we were as near the mark as we actually turned out to be last week when we referred to the "incident" in Taegu where 187 villagers were executed, and added that scapegoats would be found, they would resign and the "incident" would be closed. It now appears that in fact the two ministers were leading members of the Minju Kook Min Party, a Democratic Party which stands for the conversion of South Korea from a presidential to a parliamentary government. The *Manchester Guardian* (5/5/51) comments: "Dr. Syngman Rhee may be glad to see their departure. This looks like an echo of the pre-war fights between him and the South Korean Parliament."

### • AMERICAN JUSTICE

THIS is a subject which cannot be discussed in a few paragraphs and which we hope will receive attention by *Freedom's* American collaborators sometime, but for the record, and for those who may still have no fears about the irrevocability of the death penalty, because they have no fears about the fallibility of Justice, the case of Rudolph Sheeler of Philadelphia should be food for thought. He was found guilty of the murder of a policeman in 1936, and had spent twelve years in prison before it was proved that he had not in fact committed the murder. Now the Pennsylvania Legislature are proposing to compensate him for the twelve best years of his life (he is now only 35) which have been spent behind bars. Will the legislators also learn a lesson from this experience?

### • SERVES HIM RIGHT!

MA HONG-CHANG was the leading shock worker in a machine shop in Communist-controlled Manchuria, and his was the output which was set as a goal for all industrial workers in China.

Last week the Party's news agency revealed that Ma Hong-Chang has been in hospital for the past nine months recovering from the ill-effects of over-working. We are sure few Chinese workers will have sent him flowers during his illness, and we hope that during these nine months he will have learned the wisdom of leisure and the folly of thinking oneself better than the next man!

LIBERTARIAN.

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art collections, but unusual in general governmental enterprise; that of choosing architects and planners of imagination and ability—and then letting them get on with it. The method is vindicated by the results. It is no mean achievement to plan three years' work and then open just in time on the appointed day. The brilliance of the South Bank puts the life-denying grumblers in the shade, and is a triumph for Gerald Barry and Hugh Casson and their fellow workers.

### Famine and Food Supply

FROM PAGE ONE

some parts of the delta. Above all, these is the loss of the valuable silt which, on the old system, used to revive the fields every year, and is now trapped behind the great dam at Mettur. These things can doubtless be guarded against, but they suggest that a more cautious approach to irrigation expansion may be wiser in the long run" (*Listener*, (12/4/51).

### Ignoring the Peasant

All these grandiose schemes tend to ignore altogether the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of the peasant, placing all hopes in the brains of technicians and planners. It is the besetting sin of the age of faith in scientific achievement to forget that there are millions of land workers who not only know their work, but also know what are the obstacles in the way of improving it. But these men's voices are not heard when the outlawing of famine is discussed; nor are the economic difficulties of peasant cultivation sufficiently weighed. Finally there is the chronic malnutrition of the Indian peasants which limits their capacity to work a full and arduous day, or to look with active plans on the future. Merely to lift the pall of peasant despair would release a fund of potential creative activity. The health and future of Indian agriculture lies not in hydro-electric irrigation schemes or fertilizer plant, but in just this mobilizing of the potential energy of the small peasant communities.

### Population

It has been calculated that if one takes an optimistic estimate of the attempts to increase food output, this may amount, by 1953, to ten per cent. But by that year the population will have increased by fifteen per cent. of the 1941 figure. Hence to leave out the problem of population control is to abandon the feeding problem to hopelessness. It may be necessary to consider the problem of whether the present population is absolutely in excess of the capacity of India's soil, though this seems unlikely. Nevertheless, with control over their land, a free Indian people would still have to weigh the problem of stabilising their numbers rather than contemplate a never-ending struggle to increase soil productivity.

The problems of making birth control an effective force are, of course, enormous. But a beginning has to be made, and much could be done to make the work of the pioneers already in the field easier by the removal or reduction of obstacles. Clearly no immediate results can be expected, but the longer the matter is deferred the more hunger victims there will be. To give Indian women control over their own fertility, and to give Indian peasants control over their land would be the start of radical measures for ending the hunger lives of nearly a fifth of the world's population. Meanwhile, the general principles which apply to India apply also throughout the globe. J.H.



# The Place of the Foreman

IT has been announced that the second "specialist productivity team" has sailed in the *Queen Elizabeth* under the arrangements of the Anglo-American Committee on Productivity. Its function is to supplement the work of the first team now in America studying methods of training within industry and in technical colleges, at the level of the "operative".

The second team's attention will be directed to training for supervisory duties up to but not including higher management.

"Higher Management" one assumes to mean directors. Therefore this team, which includes two technical college principals and representatives from the Ministries of Education and Labour, and is led by the Chief Educational Officer of one of the country's most important electrical firms, is going to America to get the "know-how" on Foremanship and Management.

One must also assume that what are pleasantly termed "defence considerations" are at the bottom of this keen desire among American business interests that their British counterparts (and competitors) should be as well-informed and as efficient as possible.

Whatever may be the reason for this co-operative endeavour internationally organised training for managerial workers is of some interest and might well indicate the desirability of investigating a present trend to incorporate supervisory workers in the state managerial structure.

Ever since the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, the foreman has held a unique position in the factory and workshop. He was from the men but not of them. Through skill and a "sense of duty" he had got on in the world, and though his efforts had possibly inspired fear, mistrust, or even hatred in his previous workmates, he remained a staunch defender of the system and more often than not believed with his boss that their interests were identical.

Changes in the internal structure of industry followed the larger groupings of the twentieth century, and allied to this growth the practices of Industrial Psychology, "Welfare", and cost and production rationalising experiments, gave a new and changed emphasis to the foreman's work. Wartime "speed-ups" and dilution then accelerated the process of centralised "scientific management".

By 1945 the foreman found that he had lost his "creative" functions. His workers had developed into little more than machine-minders, and his job merely to supervise them and ensure that there was no deviation from the plan imposed from above. His old function of hiring and firing was vested in a Personnel Department, materials were allocated to him after being bought by some distant centralised purchasing department, and production executives laid down immutable processes which it was the foreman's job—as an N.C.O.—to see carried out without question.

As the new industrial professions hastened to entrench themselves by forming professional examining bodies it became evident to the foreman that his

"non-commissioned" status had become permanent. His interests he found were now identical not with the boss, but with the men; although this was not too clear during and shortly after the 1939-45 war when the foreman, in his lone position, found not only his conditions attacked by the employers but also his authority threatened by the powerfully grown craft unions and shop stewards' committees. His dissatisfaction and growing weakness of position compelled him to consider union organisation as a protection.

During the first world war attempts had been made to form a Foreman's Union. It made little headway, as foremen still considered themselves to be on the ladder of management and were reluctant to jeopardise their "good jobs". But the conditions that followed 1940 changed the whole scene. The Foreman's Union became A.S.S.E.T.—the Association of Supervisory Staffs, Executives and Technicians—and it began to recruit heavily among supervisory and technical workers in transport and the engineering and allied industries.

Its membership in 1949 was 16,000, and as it is open to "all managerial workers of the rank of foreman and above", though most of the members were foremen, there was an influential admixture of superintendents, managers, "progress-chasers", and "executives" of every kind. What is more surprising is that it even attracted numbers of professional industrial consultants, directors, and managing directors, of the new modern school that treats "Management" as a mystical divine calling.

A.S.S.E.T. is affiliated to the T.U.C. so it at first appears that in a comparatively short time the foreman has changed completely from the position of boss's "strong man" into that of unity with the workers. It may be that the "higher management", too, has entered A.S.S.E.T. imbued with the traditional aims and principles of trade unionism, and anxious to defend its wages and conditions. The day of the employed manager is here—and despite their tirades against nationalisation, industrial captains know that to be a fact—but it cannot be to give themselves collective bargaining power against the bosses that such high executives have joined the movement: for they are the bosses!

But there is another side to the picture. A.S.S.E.T. is affiliated also to the government-sponsored British Institute of Educational Body whose aims are to increase industrial efficiency. It includes industrial magnates, managers of nationalised industry, professional "executives", civil servants, and representatives of employers' organisations as well as delegates from A.S.S.E.T. Associate membership is also open to officials of any Trade Union. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to suggest that at the moment when foremen had at last organised themselves alongside the trade union movement, these representatives of state and private capital entered the field and received the organised foremen into the new managerial ranks in order to "neutralise" them and—by identifying him with the Myth of Managerial Efficiency—return the foreman promptly to his old position on the right-hand side of the boss.

Furthermore, the three-cornered tie-up between trade union officials, industrial technicians, and the government, through the B.I.M., indicates that if there is any protection of interests the interests will be those of the professional managers—and on a long-term basis.

When Burnham wrote *The Managerial Revolution* the trend he indicated was already well advanced in Russia and Germany. The need to beat the Germans in the 1940s and now a desire to meet the Russian threat in the 1950s seems to have put this country well on the same road as its adversaries.

No doubt the "specialist production teams" will return from America with many bright ideas, but an increased mechanisation of the worker as a unit of production cannot fail to have its effect on the psychological level, in further increasing the gulf between the worker and what is becoming a mechanised system of management.

Perhaps it is not accurate to say we are already living in a managerial society; but the growing cohesion between large-scale industrial management (either State or "private"), the T.U.C., and technological terminologists in the House of Lords, is not a very convincing indication that Labour's path still leads to the old ideal of Workers' Control.

L. V. BEHARRELL.

## Letters to the Editors

### ANARCHISM AND SELF-INTEREST

DEAR COMRADES,

I cannot agree with Harold Sculthorpe (*Freedom*, April 28th) that it is wise or inaccurate to base anarchism on a philosophy of self-interest.

The conscious egoist approach might make us appear (though hardly "in the eyes of the world" since people interested in anarchism generally know what it means) to accept the acts of anti-social individuals. But on the other hand, it is much more attractive to the cynical young people of this disillusioned era, and in my experience a much easier way of introducing them to anarchism, than talk of mutual aid, which sounds at first vaguely reminiscent of Self-Sacrifice and all that Christian Hooley.

Getting the best out of things for oneself is neither a distasteful idea nor a new one. All religious and political creeds recognise, at least tacitly, that people are egoists interested above all other things in themselves. Each one tells you, in effect, "worship this deity or abstract quality, put that group or class of persons in power, and your interests will best be served." Most of them add, "and when everybody does this, everybody's interests will be served, in Heaven or the Ideal Society."

The anarchist case is that religious and political creeds are all false, that by surrendering your power over yourself to any people or principles, you only harm your own interests. You must take the responsibility, says the anarchists, of consciously and rationally thinking out what your interests are, and working directly towards those interests, in co-operation with the people who share them.

Anarchy, "a society where the domination of man by man is impossible," can only endure where people are egoistic enough, and suspicious enough of others, never to give anyone power over them. It can only come into being if at least a large number of people consciously recognise, within authoritarian society, that it is not in their interest to have bosses. If property, the penal code, and the other institutions whereby men become other men's masters are to be permanently abolished, no man must be mug enough to be another man's slave.

Conscious egoism, therefore, is as essential a part of anarchism as mutual aid, or a belief in the social nature of men, as well as a more profitable idea from the contemporary propaganda point of view.

DONALD ROOMM.

Bradford.

### CATHOLIC ANARCHISTS

I have just read S. E. Parker's "The Catholic and Anarchism" in the March 31st issue of *Freedom*. One might suppose that, if a writer is going to condemn a movement, he might at least consult some issues of the organ of that movement. But it is apparent that Mr. Parker has read nothing in the *Catholic Worker* on the subject of anarchism. Most of these articles I have written. And I have made it clear that I do not believe in a theocracy or in the clergy "running" society. I believe that no one's liberty should be curtailed, that if someone wants to practise birth control he should be allowed to do so. As a Catholic I accept the authority of the Church and find it reasonable to do so because it deals essentially with matters beyond the scope of reason. I don't expect you to agree with this and would not approve of any attempt to force you to. What I do object to is your intolerance in insisting that, because I am a Catholic, I must support every form of intolerance and regimentation going. Well, I don't, and have no intention to be railroaded into that position.

Most Catholics will oppose anarchism. Most Catholics opposed the French Revolution. But when it became apparent that the French Revolution was here to stay

### ROSE RUDERMANN

The death of Rose Rudermann removes one of the last links with the old revolutionary Jewish Anarchist Group in the East End of London.

She was an active member of the Berners Street Club which was founded in the early '80s, before either *Freedom* or *The Workers' Friend* were started. Her life story covers a period of intense labour activity, perhaps more eventful than any preceding time.

The bookshop Rose and her husband ran in Hanbury Street was the rendezvous of the foreign comrades, many of whom were helped by the Rudermans who fed them and found them lodgings.

Never in the limelight, always busy organising the social side, which was the means of raising the money for the weekly anarchist paper *The Workers' Friend* until the war of '14 finished its useful career with the interment of Rudolf Rocker and some of his comrades.

Rose Rudermann reached a ripe old age, and those who knew her have many memories of her never-flagging zeal for the cause of Anarchism and her many means of inspiring work for this movement which she served so well.

MAT KAVANAGH.

the Church made the proper adjustments. She would have to do so in an anarchist society. Unless it is run by intolerant anarchists who would allow no one the right to religious belief. I'm afraid some anarchists have the identical psychological makeup that the Stalinists and Fascists have. I realise why anarchists, particularly Spanish and Italian, should be bitter about the Church. But to react with wholesale condemnations is rather petty in those who are the harbingers of a new society.

ROBERT LUDLOW.  
(Associate Editor)

★  
WE do not suggest that because Robert Ludlow is a Catholic, he "must support every form of intolerance and regimentation going". We know from his articles that this is not so, but we do suggest that a member of the Roman Catholic Church who accepts the authority of the Church must, by the fact of his membership, lend his support to every form of intolerance that the Church investigates. Robert Ludlow may believe that if someone wants to practise birth control he should be allowed to do so, but does his Church hold this point of view? Let him ask his parish priest.

His argument about the French Revolution is very odd. In admitting that the immutable authority of the Church is subject to alteration to recognise a fait accompli? And that the day before the "proper adjustments" were made, Catholics accepted the authority of the Church in believing one thing, but altered their opinions next day in obedience to authority? This reminds us of nothing so much as the policy somersaults of Communist Party members, who also accept the authority of their hierarchy. Robert Ludlow realises why the Spanish and Italian anarchists should be bitter about the Church. It is precisely because Spain and Italy are the countries where the "authority of the Church" is most widely accepted, with the resultant bigotry, ignorance and poverty that is always to be found in a "Catholic" country. If the Church as a social force believed like Robert Ludlow, that no-one's liberty should be curtailed, it would be unnecessary for anarchists to attack it. But we cannot refrain from condemning it because some of its members are more tolerant than the authoritarian body they support. Nor can we refrain from condemning the illogicality of their position.—Eds.

## No Threat to Civil Liberties?

ALEX COMFORT, in a letter to *Tribune* (9/3/51) says: "If a Bill now before Parliament becomes law, it will be an offence to possess any written matter the reading of which might induce a Reservist to refuse duty, or even to accept it with less enthusiasm than he might otherwise have done."

"Although I am not a member of the Labour Party, I would be sorry to see some of its most respected members removed to prison, and for this reason I feel it a friendly gesture to warn them to pay particular attention to their press-cutting books, and to any old Party literature in their possession."

"These might contain, for example, Sir Stafford Cripps' statements on war and rearmament—that 'every possible effort should be made to stop recruiting for the Armed Forces', and that the threat of war can be met only by a general strike, and that the workers must now make it clear beyond all doubt that they will not support the Government or its armaments in the mad policy which it is now pursuing."

"They might contain the Prime Minister's strictures upon recruiting and rearmament when these were pursued by the Tories. They might even contain the works of Keir Hardie."

"Members of the Government are not, I think, in any immediate danger, for they will without doubt have long since destroyed their copies of these terrible and delinquent statements, though they would be wise to search carefully in the attic. One copy, after all, is enough."

Commenting on the letter, the editors of *Tribune* say: "If the Reserve and Auxiliary (Training) Bill involved the invasion of Civil Liberties which Alex Comfort describes, we would oppose it root

and branch. But the simple fact is that it doesn't."

The simple fact, on the other hand, is that it does, as a reading of the text will show. Section 6 (1) of the Bill as introduced in the House says that: "if any person endeavours to incite persons called up or liable to be called up under this part of this Act to failure in the performance, or to evasion, of any duties or liabilities under this part of this Act which they are, or may become, liable to perform or discharge, or to incite such persons to perform or discharge any such duties or liabilities otherwise than to the best of their ability, he shall be guilty of an offence . . ."

and sub-section 2 makes it an offence to have possession or control of any document of such a nature that the dissemination of copies of it among persons liable to be called up would constitute an offence; and sub-section 3 provides for the issue of warrants to search premises for evidence of an offence against sub-section 1 if the police can show to a Judge that there is "reasonable ground" for suspicion.

In one respect the text of the Bill goes further than the 1934 Incitement to Disaffection Act, which contained the safeguard that persons accused should have acted "maliciously and adversely".

When the Act of 1934 was introduced, it was violently attacked by the Labour Party. The *Manchester Guardian*, commenting that "the political amorality of lawyers is a matter for endless wonder", remarks: "The Attorney-General was an elegant non-political young barfighter in those days but the Prime Minister should have recalled how he startled the pigeons in Trafalgar Square with his vehement denunciations."

The *Guardian* points out that "the statute book is already stuffed with repressive Acts", but the *Tribune* which until recently described itself on its front page as "Socialist, Fearless, Independent", thinks that this new Bill which is wider in its scope than any of the earlier legislation does not involve the invasion of Civil Liberties.

## OH, DON'T LET'S BE UNREASONABLE

Mr. Rex Warner (in the UNESCO publication *Freedom and Culture*) thinks it unreasonable to insist that the writer should have freedom to oppose the State, since this would give him the right to indulge in intolerable subversive activity; he is content to claim for the writer the right not to support the State.

Time Literary Supplement, 9/3/51.

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