

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

October 6th, 1951

Threepence.

SUSPECT THEIR PROMISES WHEN THEY START

Going a-Wooing

As the electioneering racket begins to get under way, the various baits which the politicians hope will encourage us to swallow their hooks, and to make their appearance, and the baits are pretty stale.

If there is anything which confirms our opinion of the poverty of thought current in politics to-day, it is the staleness and superficiality of the policies of the electioneering

mentally, both parties are appealing to the people on the record of the government of the last six years. The Conservatives are attacking it and the Labour Party, apparently, smugly content that they have a good record, are affording to rest on their laurels, admitting, perhaps, some shortcomings, but claiming that no other party would have done better. At the latter point we are inclined to agree. Anarchists do not believe in politics only because politicians are dishonest. Most of them are our criticism of existing politics—which might be answered by an idealistic conception, the politician, could ever be produced in sufficient numbers to be effective—goes much further than we maintain that any political party taking on the government of a capitalist state, has to act in well-defined ways. The rules of the game demand it, and although official differences may be apparent in the various political programmes, in practice—they operate in much the same.

Labour's Tory Policy
We pointed out last week the growing similarity of the party programmes, and their sham arguments develop, the differences become less and less. For all the years of the Labour government, we have had operating in name a Tory foreign policy. This was admitted from the very beginning of the Labour rule, when Ernie Bevan took over the Foreign Office and announced his policy of "continuity". And certainly, the British soldiers, sailors and airmen who since 1945 have had to carry on the battlefields of the world the "continuity" policy of the men who sit in offices, the fact that we had a Labour government instead of a Conservative must have seemed a very academic distinction indeed.

As the nationalisation of industry after industry took place, too, a retreat from the so-called socialism which inspired the first take-over began to be apparent. The structure of the iron and steel industry—the last to be taken over—is very different from that of coal-mining—the first. Not all the steel industry has been

nationalised, to start with, only the biggest firms having come under State control, and among them, competition, on the good old Tory principle, is encouraged.

The Tories' Labour Policy
On the other side, the Conservatives having realised that the Welfare State is here to stay, are claiming that they thought of it first. While maintaining their opposition to nationalisation, they are announcing that they will hand back to private hands only two of the State's industries—steel and road transport. And it is interesting to note that these were the only two which were, before nationalisation, completely in private hands and were making a profit. The power industries—gas and electricity (and water)—were partly under municipal control, and the railways and coal mines had been either losing money for years, or growing steadily more inefficient through lack of capital replacement. These industries the Tories are quite happy to leave in State hands.

And while Labour are wooing the middle classes, to get their votes, the Tories are now wooing the workers, to get theirs. The latest stunt from Conservative headquarters is not only the suggestion for an Excess Profits Tax—except on profits ploughed back as capital—but also the plotting of a "Workers' Charter", to be worked out with the employers and the unions "to secure greater unity and co-operation in industry by giving work people security, incentive, and status, and to encourage co-partnership and profit-sharing". Are we really expected to fall for that sort of stuff?

Incidentally, in his speech at the recent T.U.C. Conference, Hugh Gaitskell suggested that maybe production bonuses and profit-sharing schemes might be the answer to the Socialist search for incentives in an inflationary period.

For years the Liberal Party has been the only one putting forward co-partnership and profit-sharing as parts of their policy. Now both the Labour and Conservative Parties are picking at the rags of Liberal thought, seeking patches for their own threadbare theories.

Ignoring the Fundamentals
What a farce it all is! All the arguments, all the venom, the mud, the hullabaloo of an election—what does it all mean? The fundamental questions are the very ones which the parties choose to ignore.

We, the ordinary people, who seek nothing but the satisfaction of our simple needs in return for our just contribution

sometimes because of them) the attitude of society is still predominantly anti-sexual. The Pope shrewdly plays on this when he declares that the "sexual propaganda . . . seemed to take no account of the experience of the ages that sex initiation and instruction could only be gravely unhealthy and prejudicial unless closely linked to constant discipline, to vigorous self-control and, above all, to resort to the supernatural forces of prayer and the sacraments."

It is necessary to say once again that "discipline" and "self-control" (meaning abstinence rather than the proper realisation of natural desires in healthy love associations) are the seed bed for neuroses, sexual delinquency and sadistic crimes. And that the sex-denying teachings of religion lay the foundations for the almost universal unhappiness in marriage.

to society; who seek to live in peace with the peoples of all nations, neither exploiting nor being exploited; who have our creative abilities and would find satisfaction in using them to the full for the benefit of all—what have we to gain by choosing between one set of masters or another?

The nagging fear at the back of all our minds of another world war, is a fear which the continued existence of government—no matter what its label—will make a certainty. Both Tory and Labour are agreed on re-armament—even the "rebels" in the Labour Party object only to the degree of re-armament—and they both carefully skate over the obvious fact that none of their promises can come to fruition because—to put it in a nutshell—they are hell-bent for destruction.

We shall do well to resist the advances of those who woo us with such tawdry offerings, for such dangerous ends.

CHARLIE CHAPLIN SAYS HE IS AN ANARCHIST

FOR years the Communists have claimed the great film comedian, Charlie Chaplin, as, at least, a fellow traveller. And the current American hysteria, which labels as Communist anyone not a patriotic enthusiast for the American way of life, has helped the illusion.

Now, however, in an interview with Paul Holt, published in the *Daily Herald* 25/9/51, we get Chaplin's own admission. Holt writes:—

"I asked him if he was a Communist. Down in the valley men hate him because they believe he is."

"Communist? I'm a comic!" he said, as though to be a comic was more important. "I can't understand Karl Marx, so how can I be a Communist? I think . . ." he said, pondering. "I am an anarchist. I wish . . . I wish governments would go away and leave people alone more. People can get along without governments. I can."

SYNDICALIST NOTEBOOK

Co-operation Through Authority

SIR GEORGE SCHUSTER, speaking at a Ministry of Labour Manpower Exhibition last week stressed the need for a new attitude to Industrial Relations. He said, "The ideal objective, should be to make each industrial unit a harmonious, live co-operating community spontaneously working together for a common purpose."

This may sound very much like an anarchist attitude to industry. But in case anyone is under the illusion that Sir George is putting over an anarchist "line", let us pursue his remarks a little further. He assured the meeting that he was not advocating what was usually known as workers' control, as it was "impossible to conduct a modern industrial enterprise successfully without the exercise of authority, without the guidance of leadership, and without the practice of discipline. The rank and file could not themselves supply the creative leadership which was required."

When Sir George speaks of spontaneously working together, for a common cause, we know he means the successful "exercise of authority". How meaningless can words become?

WHY DO THEY DO IT?

WE have, when necessary, deplored the "workers right or wrong" attitude so prevalent in left-wing movements. We think that organised labour often behaves in a very foolish way. We had, for example, recent strikes against foreign labour in industry, and whilst we recognise that unity is strength, we believe it only to be so when it is the unity of all workers, in all industries and in all countries.

There is another case in point, where two thousand workers from a Glasgow engineering firm struck against the refusal of a fellow worker to rejoin their union (Amalgamated Engineering) after he had resigned for personal reasons. The man left his job after eleven years, rather than rejoin. We do not yet know the

DISHONOURABLE ARMIES

MILITARISM is seldom subjected to dispassionate examination. Those who regard war as a necessary evil are content to leave it at that and discuss it no further. For anti-militarists it is so self-evidently wrong that again there can be no real discussion, only denunciation. Of course, such a generalisation is only incompletely true. FREEDOM tries to examine the place of war in modern life and so examines some aspects at least of militarism. Then there are those, like Mussolini, who expound a philosophy of war as not an evil but the cradle of certain virtues. Herbert Read, in some chapters of *Poetry and Anarchism*, examines this view as put forward by an Englishman, Douglas Jerrold. But FREEDOM at one end and Douglas Jerrold at the other are exceptions. In the main, it remains true that militarism is generally undiscussed, only supported or denounced.

A recent correspondence in the *Times*, however, has broken through this general rule, with the rather surprising (to some people) result that the views of anarchists have been to some extent vindicated by people who certainly do not share anarchist general convictions.

Honour of the German Soldier

The subject blew up following some remarks about the honour of the German Army in the course of comment on whether Germany should contribute to Europe's defence. Obviously, if the European defence forces are to contain elements of the German Army, it will not help co-operation much to stress the atrocities, brutalities, war crimes, etc., committed by German Generals. But the storm broke when Mr. R. T. Paget, K.C., M.P., declared that the German Army fought well and honourably and compared its commanders to Field-Marshal Montgomery or Alexander. He has also published a book attacking the trial of General Manstein (for whom he acted as defence counsel), which has called forth a lofty, if somewhat unconvincing

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CHARLIE CHAPLIN.

rebuttal from the former Attorney-General, Sir Hartley Shawcross.

Paget's letter provoked a storm of criticism. One writer, Mr. D. P. Waley, quotes Mussolini's dictum "Believe, fight, obey," and declares that German soldiers who carried out atrocities in obedience to orders from above were guilty: "If the men who serve in a European army are to have a code of 'Crederet, combattere, obbedire,' they will not be soldiers of a 'free' Europe in any sense."

Occupation Authorities

Louis Lévy, writing as vice-chairman of the Socialist International, reminds readers of the shooting of hostages and the mass execution of civilians carried out by the German Army. "It is not even necessary," he adds, "to refer to Poland." Stueplnagel, the Commander-in-Chief in Paris during the occupation, writes Lévy, "was not a member of the S.S. nor of the S.A., and was probably not even a Nazi: he was a general of the regular army, believing certainly in the honour of the Wehrmacht. The trouble is that the sense of honour of General Stueplnagel, of the great majority of the German generals, and of their champions like Mr. Paget, is quite different from the sense of honour of the common people in Europe."

Another writer, C. J. Hamson, points out that German militarism kills the "soldier's sense of personal moral responsibility." But, unlike the other writers so far, he seems to have an uneasy feeling that unexpressed nationalism is present under all this argumentation, for he concludes his letter thus: "Mr. Paget indulges in comparisons between the Wehrmacht and the Allied armies. It is probably true that the allied armies committed atrocities. But, if he believes in comparisons which seem to me irrelevant, would he cite a single instance where any of the forces in the west systematically committed atrocities in pursuance of superior orders?"

Allied Atrocities

Paget, himself, thrown on the defensive was able to come back with some powerful body-blows, but at the same time exposed the weakness of the militarist position. In an able letter of 28th September, he wrote: "Mr. Churchill has said that the Germans must contribute (to European defence, that is) on honourable terms. Captain Liddell Hart has quoted General Eisenhower's statement 'recognising that the Wehrmacht fought honourably, and Mr. Eden has endorsed that statement. This and the release of the Wehrmacht commanders is necessary if German soldiers in a European army are to respect themselves or be respected by their own people.' Such is a logical position for those who see armies as the essential elements of alliances and political line-ups.

Paget scores in drawing attention to the fact that "the honour of a soldier"—which he admits to be "an inadequate creed for a fully civilised human being"—nevertheless has "on countless occasions caused soldiers to mitigate the savagery of political directives. The student of military history is constantly being struck by the fact that in war the politician is almost invariably more savage than the soldier, and this includes democratic politicians."

"War is Horrible"

Finally, answering Mr. Hamson's challenge regarding allied atrocities committed under orders, Paget declares: "A second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, at a time when it was known

THE POPE ATTACKS SEX

THE Pope has recently launched a vigorous attack on "sex books" urging Catholic fathers of families throughout the world to unite to combat "this plague". He is reported to have declared that "this sexual propaganda exaggerated beyond all measure the importance and the significance of sex in normal life".

The Roman Catholic Church in every country is the main bulwark against progress in regard to legislation affecting sexuality, or provision of facilities for birth control advice. The "Catholic vote" deters all political parties from campaigning for progressive sexual ends. Despite all this, it is fair to say that sexual morals have undergone something of a revolution in the past thirty years. Abstinence and ascetic codes of behaviour are gradually being recognised for the life denying forces they are.

Nevertheless, despite the enormous volume of books on sex (and

(from an Indian correspondent)

THE people are not asked before elections what they like to have, but are told what they must think they should have.

People are asked to put the seal upon their own doom. That is political democracy. It is supposed that the elected are the representatives of the people and "therefore" serve them.

If the parliament has a party which is bigger than others separately, but has not a majority for any party, an absolute majority, then there may be a coalition.

ELECTORAL MANIFESTO

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K. J. KENAFICK: Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx. Paper 6s.

27, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

of the members of the parliament. They will talk but nothing will change, as if they did not exist there. In an English constituency, only those who poll highest, whatever the total number of votes cast to other, rival candidates, are elected.

The fact is that the moment I vote for another, I lose my rights. I cannot be present there and argue for myself. A lawyer is a typical "representative" of the people.

DISHONOURABLE ARMIES

"A Moral Duty to Disobey"

Continued from p. 1

that Japan was seeking to surrender, for the scientific purpose of ascertaining whether a plutonium bomb was as effective as a uranium bomb. A mass fire raid was carried out on Dresden on February 13th, 1945, at a time when we knew Dresden was packed with refugees, and approximately 250,000 refugees were killed that night.

Mr. A. K. Hudson, sheds some more realistic light in a letter of 26th Sept: "The honour of the German soldier is a dangerous, hypnotising phrase; it betrays a way of thinking which is altogether out of place in the year 1951.

Morality—or Discipline?

It remained for the Hon. William Douglas Home to point out some more inconsistencies and absurdities. He compares Mussolini's "Credere, combattete, obbedire" to Tennyson's "Their's not to reason why, Their's but to do and die."

CALEB WILLIAMS

Continued from p. 2

hates him; one might say that his very curiosity about him is a manifestation of his love for him; and at the end, when he is driven in final desperation to inform on Falkland as a murderer and Falkland reveals himself, in his confession of guilt, in his true nobility, and then dies, Williams is struck down by the most bitter remorse.

The root of Williams's miseries is a single daring intellectual speculation, that Falkland's manifest guilt can only have arisen from his having committed murder. But Godwin himself had just committed, in the writing of Political Justice the most daring speculation of his time; and it was a speculation, as he well knew, that at that particular moment in history could easily have brought misery down on him, in the shape of a prison sentence and probably transportation to Botany Bay.

But while this may explain Williams it doesn't explain Falkland, who, whatever else he may stand for, cannot stand for the arbitrary power of William Pitt. To explain Falkland I believe we have to go behind Political Justice and further back into Godwin's history. . . When he

have to pay according to the conspiracy of the lawyers sent to conspire together in parliaments. The people's case is safe in their hands. The people have only to obey and—pay. Nice representation this. It is for this conspiracy that all are asked to go to polls. They are muddled by promises to do good.

The fact is that no-one can represent another and be identical in interests with the represented. The electors cannot vote every day and have to wait for the next elections. In the meanwhile, the elected are allowed to vote for themselves every day as it suits them.

Politics is illusion.

cludes: "I wonder how Mr. Waley would write if the correspondence were headed 'The British Soldier.' Would he write. . . If the men who serve in a British Army are to have a code of 'Credere, combattete, obbedire' they will not be the soldiers of a 'free Britain.' . . . If he did so, and he is—as I suspect—a civilian, he would be preaching not Conservatism, nor Socialism, nor Liberalism, nor Communism—all of which creeds insist on military discipline—but pure anarchy. If he were a soldier he would find himself in the guard room in peace time and in Wormwood Scrubs in war time. And quite rightly. No army can exist without its discipline. What has Mr. Waley to say to that? Perhaps he will consider laying off the German Army so that he may do his homework first?"

It might appear from Douglas Home's letter that he is in favour of discipline, and that his reference to anarchy is derisive. Actually he has special authority in what he writes. For when he was in command as an officer after the invasion of Europe in 1944, he received orders to bombard a town which had already surrendered—and he refused to obey the order. As a result he was court-martialled and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. This was in a democratic army.

Pacifist Action Holds Up the Army

IN view of the correspondence we have recently published on the issue of violent or non-violent resistance to the State, we have pleasure in drawing attention to a recent instance where passive resistance was—apparently successfully—put into operation in Wales.

The Sunday Times (30/9/51) reports:

"Military traffic to and from the Army training ground at Trawsfynydd, Merioneth, was held up for more than three hours yesterday by a group of 120 Welsh men and women who formed a human barrier in the road at the en-

A SUBJECT RACE IN ENGLAND?

I WAS very interested in the letter of "Dromengro" (see FREEDOM, 22/9/51) and Augustus John's letter in FREEDOM, 29/9/51). In my boyhood days, 60 years ago, I lived with gypsies, and as my grandmother was a tatcho puro ratti, a genuine old pure blood romany, I know much of their make-up.

Regarding these new afflictions imposed on them, I cannot see any escape for them in this island, they are penned in, in a country much centralised. In Nazi Germany, Hitler had many thousands killed in the gas chambers, but many got out of Germany. Stalin tried in many ways to cajole the gypsies into being cogs in his workshop, but in spite of all the water-tight regulations in the U.S.S.R., many escaped, and got even farther off than Kirghistan, for gypsies have many ways and means of their own.

There is, however, no such escape here, no frontiers to get across into a new country, and I am afraid that the gypsies are doomed to be driven off their open air life on the road to herd into the slums of the cities, where they will carry on an existence somehow, minus the time-clock. But as gypsies will not fit in with town life, they will gradually be eliminated—a slow process of getting rid of a nuisance in the machine age.

I take exception to the heading, "A Subject Race in England," for the gypsies, persecuted in every way in every age, but never subjected, are a people who in rags feel superior in the wisdom of life to the gorgios who submit like sheep to the loss of individual freedom. The gipsy will tell you that the things he knows are not found in books, but learned from life, a life less fettered, less restricted than is the life of the gorgio, and he is scornful of the most cherished customs and duties and fetters of civilisation, he will laugh at you inwardly.

Though gypsies are very proud of their individuality, in their life they are very communistic, and have not the reverence for private property so general amongst gorgios. To me anarchism is the nearest approach which offers much to a people who are lovers of freedom. Certainly they know nothing of anarchism as a philosophy of life, but I feel it has more in common with their make-up than any other system.

Generally with the gorgios the gipsy is secretive, furtive, due to past persecution and always on the alert expecting a blow of some kind, but among his own people he is open, never smug, and as is their nature, free. The heritage of the road has been the gipsy's for centuries. Now it is to be wrested away from him by the welfare state. It is a most foolish thing to drive the gipsy into the towns, but it is just part of the octopus which aims to destroy what is natural, in every direction.

Moss Side. PANT-MENR

FRANZ KAFKA

THE references to Kafka in Mr. Isaac's remarkable article, "The Gipsy of Anxietly" (FREEDOM, 15/9/51), lead to mind a cryptic entry in Kafka's diary in 1913: "Don't forget Kropotkin"

Mr. Max Brod, Kafka's editor and biographer explains that Kropotkin's memoirs, and those of Alexander Herzen were his favourite books. London.

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Total Previously acknowledged 1951 TOTAL TO DATE

* Readers who have undertaken regular monthly contributions.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

OPEN-AIR MEETINGS at HYDE PARK Every Sunday at 3.30 p.m. INDOOR MEETINGS NOTE: New Meeting Place: BIRD IN HAND, Long Acre, W.C. (2 mins. Leicester Sq. Underground Station) Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m. Admission Free—Free Discussion OCT. 7—S. E. Parker on VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE OCT. 14—Albert Meltzer on THE MIDDLE CLASSES—BACKBONE OR BELLYACHE?

NORTH-EAST LONDON DISCUSSION MEETINGS IN EAST HAM

at 7.30 OCT. 17—Albert Meltzer THE INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST MOVEMENT Enquiries c/o Freedom Press

SOUTH LONDON

Meetings suspended for the time being. Readers interested in possible future activities, please contact S. E. Parker, c/o Freedom Press.

GLASGOW

OUTDOOR MEETINGS at MAXWELL STREET Every Sunday at 7 p.m. With John Gaffney, Frank Leech, Jimmy Raeside, Eddie Shaw

BRADFORD

At the MECHANICS INSTITUTE (Saloon) Monday, Nov. 19th, at 7.30 Eddie Shaw on THE APATHETIC THROG

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