

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Personalities are not formed
by what is heard and said,
but by labour and activity."
—ALBERT EINSTEIN

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Threepence

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

FRENCH "JUSTICE"

ONLY very occasionally is the iron curtain surrounding police methods on the Continent lifted briefly to permit the general public to have a glimpse at the workings of "justice" in their country. In France, where the police appear, at least to a foreign observer, to have absolute power, one was officially told that all was not well some time ago when certain organs of the Press gave publicity to a case in which a man held for questioning was so badly beaten that he eventually died from his injuries. A police inspector was directly implicated and received a minor prison sentence and one or two higher officials resigned. After that brief glimpse into the workings of French "justice", after the half-hearted protests had petered out (and they were half-hearted and petered out because of a fatalism among French opinion that one cannot do anything to curb the power of the police), the curtain dropped again, and things have continued as before. But again this month a sensational case, in conjunction with two trials in progress have once more brought before the Bar of world opinion methods of extracting confessions which should shake French opinion into some kind of action which will curb their police once for all, and at the same time give food for thought to the public in other countries such as Italy, where similar conditions exist yet without any apparent concerted action to expose them.

rather than be taken off to the police station, and perhaps get a beating, he would make a bolt for it. The policeman started blowing his whistle, then drew his revolver and fired after him. It was fortunate for my friend that it was dark and that the *filk* was drunk and he got away without being hit.

But to return to the case of Jean Dehaye. After spending three years in prison, a confession to the crime was made by another man in prison, the details of the method used by the police in obtaining the original confession came to light, and the innocence of Jean Dehaye established.

AT the recent Protest Meeting against political trials in Spain, the speakers drew attention to the fact that many of the men and women in prison had been held there without trial for a number of years. But this is equally true in Italy and in France. The trial in Genoa of a group of young anarchists arrested for their demonstration against the Spanish Consulate in Genoa was held some fifteen months after their arrest. In Sardinia, where two anarchists had been arrested for their activity in connection with strikes, they were held in prison for more than two years without even being charged and only as a result of public protest and pressure that they should be charged and given a trial, was this in fact done. In France accused persons have awaited trial not for months but years. It was even recently disclosed that one-third of the present prison population in France consists of persons who are awaiting trial.

Maitre Maurice Garçon, one of the few French lawyers with the courage to express publicly his concern at the way trials are conducted in France pointed out, in a recent debate, that the arrests of suspects has become a measure of coercion to extract confessions, that the man awaiting trial has to submit to the same régime in prison as a convicted person and that if he has to await trial for more than six months, the State owes him no sort of reparation or excuse when he is released.

IT will indeed be a pity if French opinion—at least that section of it which is shocked by police methods and the incompetence of the magistrature to ensure the most elementary justice in a large number of cases—allows itself to be lulled into a feeling that something is being done, now that the Minister of Justice has sent a strongly-worded letter to public prosecutors and the magistrature and the Ministers of the Interior and of National Defence have circularised the police and the gendarmery to put an end to "the patent abuses of prolonged interrogations—and that they need do nothing further in the matter. Ministers come and go (especially in France) but the police organisation remains, whatever the régime or Government in power. The police can only be curbed—in any country—by a public opinion which will not tolerate third

degree methods, and will expose every example that occurs. Throughout the world there are always men and women who will lend their names to a cause which condemns the inhumanity of régimes in other countries, and this is a good thing. But too often nowadays it is not a sign of their internationalism but of nationalism and expediency and this is obviously the case with politicians and others who profess their democracy when they expose the horrors of the forced labour camps in Siberia and extend the hand of friendship to Franco or Salazar, Peron or Tito. Are there no men and women in France to-day who will lend their names to the formation of an organisation, without party affiliations, for the purpose of defending (or should one say "promoting") civil liberties in that country? There seems to be no shortage of issues they could take up, and we have no doubt that they would have widespread support among their countrymen. I have yet to meet a Frenchman who had a good word for the French police, or read of a film star who is reported as saying of them: "Your policemen are wonderful."

LIBERTARIAN.

The Italians Again

THE Italians in the mines have been under fire again. At Bulcroft the 31 against whom the recent strike by young haulage hands was directed, are still suspended on full pay (since they have done nothing to break their contracts), while the unions try to persuade the miners to take them back.

But another action has been taken against the Italians by a minority in the National Service Hostel in Doncaster, Yorkshire, where the usual sort of complaints have been made—with the usual lack of foundation.

This is a large hostel, with 91 Italians and over a hundred Poles and Yugoslavs, as well as other nationalities and, of course, British.

The hostel has its residents' committee, some members of which have been making attempts to call a meeting of all the residents to demand the expulsion of the Italians. So far, the committee has failed. Mainly because the anti-Italians are in a minority on the committee, and this vocal minority—one of whom, as one would suspect, is a Communist—cannot find support either among the other committee members, or among the residents as a whole.

After a committee meeting was held two British miners who are members said: "The allegations made against the Italians do not represent the views of any large proportion of the five hundred men at the hostel." Another committee-man, Mr. John Melia, said: "I wish the Italians to remain; you have got to live and let live."

Mr. John Kerr, aged 28, referred to an incident which was alleged to have caused the trouble. He said: "It has been reported that I was kicked by an Italian. I certainly was kicked in a football match, but it was an accident."

On behalf of about a hundred Poles and Yugoslavs at the hostel, Mr. A. Ksiezzyk, a Pole, said: "We have no complaints against the Italians and we wish to live happily with them."

So it is obvious that petty incidents—accidents like the kick at football—are being played up by a minority, and it must be for an ulterior motive, since a rational approach shows no basis for opposition or resentment. It is not even simple stupid anti-foreign sentiment, since no allegations are made against the other nationalities, only the Italians.

This can only be, as we indicated, two weeks ago, a carrying into this country of the campaign the Italian CP has been running to persuade Italian miners not to come to this country.

As such, the comrats are only carrying out once again a slimy political manoeuvre for the sake of the Kremlin's foreign policy, and workers are the first to suffer. Those workers who, for any other motives, support this campaign against Italians, must be pleased to realise that they are the tools of these cynical totalitarians. P.S.

India - After the Elections

GREAT things were expected of the independence of India. Much was expected by the Indian people, much too was expected by British progressive opinion, which had been stirred by events in two countries between the wars—India and Spain, which transcended divisions of radical support, in direct contrast to the amount that was known about them. And the lustre of Gandhi shone a great light over the accomplishment of independence. It was considered a great thing that the struggle should have been non-violent, at least on one side, which naturally enough was the side that took the biggest beating and got the most sympathy and the least result.

Many circumstances combined to add up to the compulsion on the British Raj to quit, the greatest of all being the realisation of what it would mean to have an India that was really hostile, a sub-continent that would reproduce the melancholy post-war history of British Malaya, French Indo-China, Dutch Indonesia and other surrounding countries.

Nevertheless, to have cast out Satan is a great triumph, even if Beelzebub has taken his place, and the Congress Party are still capitalising on the fact that "it" won independence, which is a claim of Oriental magnificence only surpassed by the still more stupendous claim by certain Occidentals that one member of the British Conservative Party saved the whole free world from tyranny, except such parts as he handed to one of his Allies.

In the recent elections, Pandit Nehru re-established his claim to lead the country hands down. There is no doubt that he enjoys terrific personal popularity, and it is, for that matter, undoubtedly true that he individually is an honest and sincere man. But as a politician he is inevitably part of the machine, and the conquest of power by Congress has led to a great carpet-bagging triumph of every mediocrity who had jumped on the bandwagon. From a wealth of newspaper cuttings sent me from India, the picture stands out of vast indignation, especially from the townsman who sees the spectacle before his eyes, and most of all from those who suffered imprisonment, deportation, lathi-charges, exile or confinement in the Andaman Islands in the old days, and now sees how all the Congressmen wallow in the luxury formerly enjoyed by the pukka sahib, not one politician being able to walk two paces any longer, but requiring the latest limousine with liveried chauffeur, which is not quite the thing they expected from a party which has risen to power preaching the simple life.

I said "not one politician". That is inaccurate. One exception proves the rule, for one politician has aroused the country by walking across it. The tour of Acharya Vinoba Bhave has stirred India simply because he (considered by many the true successor to Gandhi) has actually continued the simple life and scorned the delights of parliamentarism. He has walked across India begging for land for the peasants. He put it that: "My object cannot be achieved by obtaining a little *bhoodan* here and a little there. My object is to transform the whole society" (*Harijan*, 17/11/51). Thus he commenced this tour to ask for land for the peasants, admitting that he thought that "changes could be brought about peacefully by appealing to the good sense of the propertied class". This has been an illusion in the West since mediæval times, but Acharya Bhave has already obtained much land in these months of his campaign. We cannot believe it will bring about the change he foresees, but what is significant is that this one man even so has achieved something whereas the whole costly apparatus of government has achieved nothing.

Unemployment, hunger, black market, and everything else flourishes under the aegis of government, which in no way can induce the propertied classes to slacken their grip one iota, but this campaign is successful, contrasted to the complete breakdown of governmental reform, even if it does not achieve the social emancipation, only a firm Gandhian would believe it could. What is the governmental recipe? Only to insist on the fact that there is a menace of communism—which, after all, according to them, arises out of the very economic system they are preserving—and that they must suspend civil liberties by imposing and re-imposing the Preventive Detention Act. Alas for Congress, the very fact of political detention is sufficient to awaken memories in India, and this alone makes the Communists popular. Dozens of detenus were returned in the elections, despite the fact that where the Communists were not banned they were losing ground. The Indian people have been told by Congress often enough in the past that the Raj detained only those who would help them. In this manner the Congress fosters the claims of the Communists to lead the peasants. The impudence of Indian Communist claims in this respect received a very apposite answer the other week in a leading Bombay paper, from an Anarchist who asked them pointedly if they were going to lead the Indian peasants in the same way as they had led the Russian peasants to forced collectivisation or liquidation.

INTERNATIONALIST.

Doctors Advise Divorce Reform

THE Council of the British Medical Association, in their evidence submitted to the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce, recommend that where a marriage has broken down and there is no hope of conciliation, separation by mutual consent should be a ground for dissolving the marriage.

Such grounds have been already acceptable for many years in Scandinavia, and present a strongly rational contrast to the present English position, where "collusion" is a ground for refusing divorce.

The Board also concerned themselves with measures to relieve the handicaps under the existing law.

They state that the General Council "emphasizes its opposition to any general relaxation of the marriage bond" and calls for more research into the causes of failure in marriage, and for better machinery for conciliation and advice.

"The marriage bond" can mean many different things. We are afraid that the overwhelmingly general meaning attached to it is the literal one of legally tying two people together. But the essence of such a relationship is the free and mutual regard of two people for each other

and the responsibilities which they voluntarily undertake when there are children. Society should be concerned to provide the best means for preserving the health of such relationships, having regard for the development and happiness of the individuals and the children concerned as the most important aspects. To-day, far too much emphasis is placed on the sanctity of the institution of marriage. Public figures are too much concerned with how men and women's actions affect the "sanctity of marriage", and not enough with how the institution of marriage affects men and women. Institutions should be made for men, not men made to fit institutions.

ALL IN A DAY'S SPORT

Three auxiliary policemen who were pig-shooting in Pahang yesterday saw eight terrorists and opened fire. They killed three, including one woman, and captured another woman wounded.—*Reuter* (20/4/52).

Entertainment à la Americaine

HOLLYWOOD.
America's next atomic blast, in Nevada next week, will be televised across the U.S.—*Reuter*.

Food Production in Britain

SOME further observations on this topic were made recently in a letter to the *Times* from Mr. Roland Dudley. He drew attention to the possibility that Australia might soon become a food-importing country and hence not only cease to be a supplier for Britain but become a competitor for New Zealand food exports. Supplies from Argentine are fast waning, and the rapidly increasing African population will consume every increase in food production there. The same holds good (even more forcibly) with regard to Asiatic countries. Food supplies from Russia are obviously not a reliable source. Meanwhile, the increasing competition of Germany and Japan for available food surpluses will still further complicate the problem. The only remaining available food producers are the dollar areas which for obvious reasons present difficulties in present-day economy.

He goes on to point out that privation, if not starvation, lies ahead if British food resources are not developed, "as a few of the best farmers have actually done and shown that an enormous increase of good food, including plenty of red meat could be provided." He sug-

gests names of such men to act as an advisory committee to the Ministry of Agriculture.

On the question of the capital required, Mr. Dudley points out that money spent on the armed forces or on rearmament is wasted if there is insufficient food for soldiers and workers.

"A proportion of this large sum, if allocated to food production in the most fertile country in the world (Great Britain), would be a permanent investment of the highest possible order. Sufficient and efficient machinery has proved this last season that we can defeat the wettest harvest on record. New varieties of cereals have shown that we can nearly double the existing average yield. Finally, an entirely new approach, political as well as technical, to the development of our land is vitally necessary if we are to prevent what might be a most appalling calamity."

Though written from a different standpoint from that of *Freedom*, this letter suggests a growing realisation of the feasibility of increased local food production in Britain.

BACK TO VICTORIA

or the Merry Widow's Revenge

THE course of intellectual fashion seems ever devoid of moderation or equilibrium. Like a Saturday night drunk, it weaves its tortuous way, and if we find it on one side of the road this year, we can be sure that before a great deal of time has passed it will be seen lurching rapidly over on to the other pavement. In the twenties and thirties it was fashionable to hoot the Victorian age. Its great men were just great fools, its ideals were poppycock, its literature and art were just stuffy monstrosities, fit only to keep company with the canaries and the aspidochelons in the parlours of aged Cheltenham spinsters.

Now the trend has been reversed, and we are in the midst of a Victorian revival. Our literary critics and historians chirp with admiration at those bearded and Dundreariid figures who excited only laughter twenty years ago. Dickens and Tennyson and Carlyle are read and written about once again. Victorian furniture and knick-knacks, after a generation in the attic, have all at once been raised to the status of antiques. And a new Victorian myth emerges in which we are told to look back with envy on those good old days of peace and plenty, when Palmerston threw his weight about Europe, when Gladstone said whatever he did say in 1884, when W. G. Grace batted away the quiet, long afternoons at the Oval.

Something of this spirit is to be seen in the new books which are appearing on the Victorian age. Scoffing at the Victorians is ruled out as bad taste. As Mr. David Thomson remarks in *England in the Nineteenth Century*: "the days when Mr. Lytton Strachey could afford to laugh at the foibles of the 'Eminent Victorians' have passed". And Mr. Thomson further sets the tone for his book by adding, "At least the Victorians found greatness, stability, and peace; and the whole world, marvelling, envied them for it."

Indeed, it is true enough that we cannot afford to laugh at the Victorians. For we are suffering very largely from the actions of the Victorian ruling class. The destruction of British agriculture, the leading of the imperialist free-for-all, the mad cult of "export or die"—all these found their origins in the nineteenth century, and have come to their disastrous fruition in our age. They are the products of what Mr. Thomson means by Victorian greatness. As for Victorian stability, it existed certainly enough for that enormous middle class which filled all the dejected London squares which have now largely lapsed into slum or semi-slum, but for the worker who usually had the alternative of working for a subsistence, of starvation, or of rotting in a workhouse under prison conditions, the great Victorian stability can hardly have been very impressive. Victorian stability was a ruling class condition based on the disruption for the lower classes of whatever stability had existed in the peasant and artisan era, and equally on the systematic destruction of the stability of primitive cultures in the lands which were colonised to make a market for Manchester and Birmingham. Victorian peace—did it exist in the Crimea, in the Transvaal, in India, in Burma, in the countless Negro societies which were decimated to make a manufacturer's holiday? Did it even exist at home, in the bitter struggles that sent Queen Victoria fleeing to the Isle of Wight during the Chartist agitations of 1848, or

in the 1880's, when the new arousing of working-class militancy was expressed in such events as the Great Dock Strike and the Bloody Sunday demonstration?

Yet if you bear in mind the bias from which it is written, Mr. Thomson's book is not bad history. It does give, within a relatively short space, a comparatively complete picture of the political condition of Victorian England, and it does not entirely neglect the social situation, though this is constantly subordinated to the political aspects.

Mr. Thomson's idea of Victorian greatness, as I have shown, lies in the vision of the self-assured free-trade empire of the middle class, with its rule of the seas and its policy of balance of power in Europe. To the more real greatness of the Victorian age he is often curiously blind. The vast popular demonstrations when Napoleon III tried to extradite political refugees who had sought asylum in England, the hostility which was shown by people of all classes when continental reactionaries like Haynau came to England, these betoken another aspect of Victorian life, a widespread and demonstrative love of genuine freedom which has very largely been suppressed in English people to-day, and which owes its decline very largely to the consequences of the false Victorian greatness of imperialism.

And, even if the mid-Victorian age might by some restriction of vision be classed as an age of stability, this can certainly not be said for the late Victorian age, from the 1870's onwards, when the whole structure of Victorian belief was undergoing a rapid disintegration which was closely interlinked with a vast and complex undercurrent of rebellion and discontent—an undercurrent whose tributaries ran through every social class.

Another new Penguin book, *Nineteenth Century Opinion* (2/6), a series of extracts from the magazine *The Nineteenth Century* (compiled by Michael Goodwin, the editor of its successor, *The Twentieth Century*) gives a most interesting docu-

mentary picture of this aspect of Victorian disintegration.

The Nineteenth Century was edited by James Knowles, an enterprising and, for his age, a remarkably broad-minded man. Anarchists, indeed, have a special reason to appreciate Knowles, for one of his favourite and most regular contributors was Kropotkin. Kropotkin not only contributed many scientific articles to *The Nineteenth Century*, including the whole of *Mutual Aid*, which was written under Knowles' encouragement and appeared first as a series of articles in his magazine, but also many essays on various aspects of anarchism. Parts of two of these essays, *The Coming Anarchy* and *The Scientific Bases of Anarchy*, are included in Michael Goodwin's selection.

For the most part, the remainder of the volume contains expressions of opinion of the middle and upper class thinkers and polemicists of the time. It was a period when education and literary expression were still very largely a middle-class monopoly and, except in the writings of Kropotkin, John Burns and Tom Mann, the middle-class attitude is very evident, and the "lower orders" are mostly regarded as people to be done good to, rather than people capable of achieving their own good.

A number of things impresses one on reading through this book. One is the way in which, in the actual physical details of life for the majority, things have actually improved since the Victorian days. There are articles on such subjects as the hours worked by shop-girls (a fourteen-hour day was the usual thing, with sixteen hours on Saturday), on workhouses where the drunken functionaries regularly beat up the inmates, on boys working a sixteen-hour day for sixpence, on hospital rackets, on the infamous fur-pulling industry, and so forth.

This section is a really depressing gallery of the sufferings of the poor in the heyday of Victorian "greatness". To—

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THE ECONOMIC CHANGE

The Observer and Kropotkin

WE quoted in our last issue the remarks of a leading article in *The Observer* discussing the implications of the crisis in the textile industry. The article after hinting at the changed structure of industry in this country which the fact that Britain is no longer the "workshop of the world" make overdue, concluded, "All this will amount to an economic revolution, and it obviously cannot be achieved in a day. But the time is not too early—indeed, it is already late—for setting the great changes under way."

But this conclusion was not very willingly reached, and *The Observer* cannot forbear to remark, at the expense of the British industrialists' unwelcome competitors, "Every country striving for political independence has striven also to escape the stigma of being a 'colonial economy'." The ambition to develop home industries, like the ambition to own a front parlour, has often been a matter more of emotion—a kind of irrational economic snobbery—than of logic."

The answer to this sneer was given over fifty years ago in a book as prophetic then as it is timely to-day, Peter Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops*. "Knowledge," he wrote, "cannot be cultivated for home use only. Knowledge and invention, boldness of thought and enterprise, conquests of genius and improvements of social organisation have become international growths; and no kind of progress—intellectual, industrial or social—can be kept within political boundaries. . . . Those who dream of monopolising technical genius are therefore fifty years behind the times."

"To endeavour to revive the past would be useless: a new departure must be taken by civilised nations. . . . Of course, there will be plenty of voices to argue that the former supremacy of the pioneers must be maintained at any price: all pioneers are in the habit of saying so."

"The monopoly of the first comers on the industrial field has ceased to exist. And it will exist no more, whatever may be the spasmodic efforts made to return to a state of things, already belonging to the domain of history. New ways,

new issues must be looked for: the past has lived, and it will live no more."

After citing many examples of the tendency in his day, Kropotkin says, "It is time to conclude, and, for every unprejudiced mind, the conclusion is self-evident. Industries of all kinds decentralise and are scattered all over the globe; and everywhere a variety, an integrated variety, of trade grows, instead of specialisation. Such are the prominent features of the time we live in. Each nation becomes in its turn a manufacturing nation; and the time is not far off when each nation of Europe, as well as the United States, and even the most backward nations of Asia and America, will themselves manufacture nearly everything they are in need of. Wars and several accidental causes may check for some time the scattering of industries; they will not stop it; it is unavoidable."

Kropotkin in this modest, but truly great book concluded, too, that: "A reorganised society will have to abandon the fallacy of nations specialised for the production of either agriculture or manufactured produce. It will have to rely on itself for the production of food, and many, if not most, of the raw materials; it must find the best means of combining agriculture with manufacture—the work in the field with the decentralised industry; and it will have to provide for 'integrated education', which education alone, by teaching both science and handicraft from earliest childhood, can give to society the men and women it really needs."

DOES IT MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE?

The first half year of a new Government draws to an end without sign that anyone in authority has had any worthwhile new ideas on how to increase output of houses or to decrease cost, and it seems fair to say that so far the utterances of the two Ministers concerned have been very disappointing. One doubts in fact whether one Minister has given his mind to the problems or whether it matters whether the other one does or not.

Architects' Journal, 17/4/52.

Let Us Remain True to Ourselves — Armando Borghi

Armando Borghi, the writer of this article, is one of the most outstanding figures in the older generation of Italian anarchists. During the years after the first world war he was a co-worker with Malatesta and was secretary of the then influential Italian Syndicalist Union. In exile, wrote one of the most compelling indictments of the Fascist régime in his book, *Mussolini—Red and Black*. The following article is translated from *Umanità Nova* of 6th January, 1952.

WHEN Anarchism came into being and assumed a form and shape of its own, which differentiated it, in depth, from its progenitors of kindred ideas—such as democracy, republicanism and socialism—all of these tainted with authority—what did it demand of that world in which we may say it had its birth?

Did it ask the reformist elements for permission to be born? Did it proffer friendship to the régimes of the so-called lesser evil?

If it did not, was that a mistake? If it had really done these things, would anarchism have had any *raison d'être*? Would it have had the power to burst forth into life?

Anarchism was born because the old democratic elements had rejected their own logical democratic conclusions. It was born because the old democratic ideas of Mazzini, of Herzen, of Garibaldi and Blanqui had become bankrupt and had been relegated to the dusty files of history. It was born because the State, in anyone's hands, could never turn into an instrument for liberation, for justice, for equality, for tolerance, for equilibrium in the international field. It was born, not because a social "class" was coming into being within the framework of the great industries but because there was a ferment of ideas, a clash of thoughts, of strivings, and yearnings for a solution in harmony with the premises and promises of liberty.

Was it a mistake, then, for anarchists to think of striking at the roots of the evil?

If it was, then let us have the courage to say so. Let us rack our brains to build an anarchism that would knock in vain at the closed doors of "practical" charity, an anarchism that would have nothing in common with old anarchist practice because it would follow the other parties. If it was a mistake to strike at the roots of evil, we should recognise the fact that those practical Socialists were right when they accused anarchists of "demanding too much", of wanting it "too soon", of knowing what they wanted.

The denial of the State was the cardinal idea of anarchism.

It meant the denial of the kinship of the State to liberty, to socialism.

Was it an "excess" to make this denial?

Was it an arbitrary *a priori*? Was it no more than a blueprint drawn up by an architect who had failed to acquaint

himself with his terrain or his building materials?

What about the facts, the ugly facts? Did they give the lie to anarchism? Has the State disarmed? Has a just social order been achieved? Has war been abolished?

Leaving aside for the moment the States which are powerless for historical or geographical reasons, where is the State dreamed of by philanthropic politicians—the State which is harmless and peaceful, the State which protects the weak?

Is it, then, an absolute principle? Yes, if you wish. It is an absolute, not set aside by the relativity incidental to the attrition of life and of struggle—a relativity which ever remains faithful to its own principle. We cannot conceive of a dog's bones as being part of a human skeleton. I have made previous use of this metaphor. A dollar bill can be exchanged into the small coins that may be needed, but if you cut up the bill into a hundred pieces so as to get the one hundred pennies, you will get neither the dollar nor a single cent out of it.

A form of "practical" anarchism has

made its appearance nowadays, which demands—and not for wartime only—that we make use of the machinery of the State, or at least of the communal State (see Ernestan and Souchy).*

And this at a time when, with the coming war, even the defeated States are staking their last card in the gambling den of nations for a chance to become a Great Power.

What appalling blindness to think that they can thus force history!

Let us grant that, in making the mistake of interventionism in 1914, the followers of Kropotkin coated their error with a veneer of anarchism, and that, unlike the Social Democrats, they did not become liveried lackeys of the State. This enabled them, once the war was over, to return to their own position. But, even so, to repeat the same mistake for the third time, after the bloody fraud of two wars of "liberation", is, I think, fantastic. An anarchist here or there may lose his head—not for personal advantage, I know, but out of a desire to do something. But the State will never act on sentimental motives. War is its trade. If it cannot make war properly, it will make peace properly, with a view to preparing for war. If the anarchists were strong, they would impose their will against war. At least, they might try to. Being weak as they are, they cannot even think of joining in an imaginary war of liberation.

*See Letters to the Editors, FREEDOM, on "The Lesser Evil" by W. Fritzenkotter, 1/3/52, G. Ernestan, 29/3/52.—EDITORS.

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SOCIOLOGY AND THE STATUS QUO

ANYONE who has read much of the growing number of books and pamphlets and learned articles on industrial psychology, "human relations in industry," and so on, will have seen how, with a very few exceptions, their authors take it for granted that the present industrial system is the only conceivable one and that the task of industrial sociologists is to improve relationships within industry so that strikes are avoided and output increased.

The extent of this conception of the part to be played by sociology in industry was discussed in a recent broadcast on *Social Science in the United States* by Mr. Alfred Schenkman, who said:

"Many of the studies going on now in industrial relations are sponsored by business concerns with gigantic financial resources behind them. The management of many industries regards human relations research as of 'top priority'. Of course, many more managements remain uninterested in the possibility of sociological investigations of their communities.

"Now comes a new phenomenon. Again and again in the literature of human relations we find the recurring theme that the use of more 'intelligent' managerial techniques can help to 'control' the workers. We must ask this question: is the good of the employees always the motivation for making industrial relations studies? The answer is that it is not. Some unions have voiced their suspicions of these 'researches' in no uncertain terms. And sociologists have themselves criticised much of this work. A few of them are afraid that it is a bureaucratic device, which has greater political than scientific significance. 'Many group researchers in social science,' according to one critic, 'are assimilated members of the American business community.'"

Mr. Schenkman deplored the tendency of sociologists to be sheep rather than shepherds, but this is a tendency very deeply rooted in the social sciences generally, whether among the psychologists who seek to "adjust" their patients to an abnormal normality, or the social workers who deplore their failure to

the state does not betray itself. Nor does it make revolutions of "liberation", even when it claims it does. If the State should intervene, when a revolution, on its own wind, goes a little too far, it postpones, it corrects, it arrests the revolution. It will smother and strangle it, and will often go to war in order to accomplish this.

Let us remain true to ourselves. Let us not deny the facts which, after all, prove us to be right. In the leading nation of the Atlantic Pact there is less hunger than elsewhere, even at the bottom of the scale. Let us say so. There is less reaction than elsewhere, even though there are elements that hanker for suppression. Let us say so. Why deny it?

There was a time when we recognised the difference between Crispi and Mussolini, between De Rivera and Franco, between Bismarck and Hitler; we may as well recognise the difference now between Truman and Stalin.

What of it? Just because the Bolsheviks have gone berserk with authoritarianism, does it mean that the bourgeois régimes have turned lily-white in the eyes of anarchists?

Never! They are just what they were when the newly-born anarchist movement started a "social" war against them.

Let us not deny these facts:

(1) It is more than true that Russia is the major slaughterhouse of freedom.

(2) America is also rushing to the slaughter, under the pretext of a war for

Continued on p. 3

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

Nineteenth Century Opinion

ed. Michael Goodwin 2/6

This anthology of extracts from the first five volumes of *The Nineteenth Century*, 1872-1891, includes Peter Kropotkin, William Morris and Oscar Wilde.

Marx Against the Peasant

D. Milrany 25/-

Marx and Engels have insisted, on, supposedly, "scientific" grounds, that as a class of producers the peasants were doomed and dying. The strange thing is that in every revolution since 1811, in Russia, China, and elsewhere the Communists were able to seize power only where they could urge the peasant into action, and afterwards, to keep their power, they were obliged to crush their former peasant allies.

This book examines Marxist agrarian theory and shows that nowhere has it come true in the course of economic evolution.

Soil and Civilization Edward Hyams 21/-

A study of man's relationship to the soil throughout history.

The Mistaken Land

Michael Ardizzone 8/6

After four years' close observation of the South African conflict the author believes that country to be on the verge of chaos and bloodshed.

Obtainable from
27, RED LION STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1

We Are Not Neutral

FREEDOM has often declared its belief that the workers of the world will derive nothing but disaster from choosing to support either America or Russia in the cold war or any shooting war which may ensue. In our view there is no salvation with either government, or their allied or satellite governments. Such a position has often led to the criticism that anarchism is unrealistic, or that we do not fully recognise the danger of Russian Communism, or American Imperialism: that one cannot be neutral, and so on.

FREEDOM is not neutral: we are most passionately on the side of those who are at the receiving end of government activity—the populations of the world, whether in England or Europe or America, or Russia or Asia, or in the colonial territories.

A correspondent attacks us for our remarks about Lord Boyd Orr. But we have also received much more hostile criticism on the same issue from a valued contributor to FREEDOM, which raises another aspect (though not a new one) of our general position. We may be against the Russian and American systems but does that mean that we must condemn the efforts of those who went to Moscow to attend the recent International Economic Conference—several of whom have received friendly comments at various times in FREEDOM?

We do, in fact, condemn such attempts. First, because they appeal to governments while we believe that it is the peoples of the world who must initiate the changes that will make for peace and justice. But also because, essentially, the attempt by men of good will to use the Russian Government and accept certain facilities extended to them to come to such Moscow Conferences is wrong and muddle-headed.

It is wrong because the same people would have denounced any acceptance of similar invitations by Hitler and Franco. Yet the Russian régime is of the same order. It is muddle-headed because the Russians intend to utilise the eminence and good will of such men for their own very different ends. Lord Boyd Orr and Sidney Silverman and Emrys Hughes, to name only three, were front page news for the *Daily Worker* and the economic conference heavily figured in the Annual Congress of the Communist Party at Easter.

The last thirty years of history is strewn with men of good will who have sought to collaborate with or use the Communists. Henry Wallace was the only American representative to vote against the imprisonment of Eugene Debs: but collaboration with the Communists has completely destroyed any power for good which he may have influenced in politics. And there are dozens of others. The present men of good will who attended the Moscow conference will find that they, too, have been used.

Such is our opinion. Events will show whether we are right or wrong. Our opinion is founded upon past history: but it is also based upon the intrinsic wrongness of accepting as "genuine" the "good will offers" of men whose régime is, and always has been, ruthlessly brutal. Whose political organisations abroad have always sought to exploit revolutionary and progressive feeling for Russia's own ends and not for the ends of social justice.

Let us add that we adopt the same attitude towards those whose hatred

Printing--The Weapon of Ideas

I ONCE saw an old French print illustrating a scene from "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." It showed a printer bending over his machine, while his apprentice looked wonderingly through the window at the great spires of the Notre Dame Cathedral, and underneath was the caption: "Ceci tuera cela" . . . this will destroy that—the press will destroy the church—printing will destroy architecture—truth will destroy superstition.

The invention and development of the art of printing, which was bound up with the revolt against clerical obscurantism, represents a revolution in the history of man. From that period onwards there declined the wonders of architecture, the henceforth to be unsurpassed temples, churches and mosques built to the glory of God, in which creative instinct could in the Dark Ages alone be expressed. Instead there began the steady progress of intellectual development made possible by ideas expressed through the printed word. The early printer was also a reformer or a scholar; and for centuries printing crafts kept alive a sense of the morality their métier required, quite as much as did doctors.

To-day, great printing presses, equipped with enormous labour-saving devices, churn off millions and millions of meaningless words. While human labour no longer toils to build Notre Dame, the Alhambra or the Pyramids, and the highest pinnacle of architectural refinement is the Odeon Cinemas, printing no longer retains any degree of responsibility in the old manner. The mediaeval printer who set his pages laboriously by

hand felt constrained to set forth the truth that it might prevail. When the printers at the press sending out thousands and thousands of copies of London's old professed radical evening newspaper set up the type for series of letters on spirits, fairies, how chance rules our lives and what not that have been a constant feature of its pages for the last year or two, they can only be thinking of it as a job at which a living can be earned.

However, on the occasion when the printers in 1926 refused to set up the leading article in the *Daily Mail*, which was taken by Churchill to be the signal for the General Strike, they were doing more than asserting their solidarity with the miners who were being attacked. They were also reasserting a principle that had lain dormant in the printing industry for two hundred years, in the only way it could be reasserted to-day. The master printer-publisher survived for many years, in particular in the provinces and also in the colonies where the master-printer published the local paper. But as the works required became bigger and the master-printer required printers' labour to exploit before he could publish anything, the division arose between the printer and what he printed.

The printers' concern had of necessity to become combined to how much he could earn at his craft. It no longer rested with him what the matter was he composed, whether it was Bibles for Buenos Aires or speedway programmes for Belle Vue. Such matters became the concern of writers, journalists and others who knew little or nothing about the means by which what they wrote was disseminated. They had no control of

publishing themselves, but were concerned only in the actual setting of pen to paper.

It is because of this division that freedom of the press so often becomes an academic issue, as nothing beside freedom from the press. Who cares that some millionaire peer may publish what he wishes—far more need they worry if ever some unlucky chance brings their names into the papers. The publishing of the capitalist press cannot possibly be shown to be freedom of the press. A few proprietors may publish as they wish, but others must by economic circumstances possibly write, but most certainly print, as they are told.

In a free society one can visualize that in thinking in terms of industrial unionism—in which printers and writers are not divided by craft—one would also return to the mediaeval idea of the self-responsibility of the printer, and freedom of the press might be thought of as freedom to the press—that is, the availability of the machinery to all who considered they had something to say, and who were prepared to use their labour in saying it. No doubt some

might print the most fantastic nonsense regarding the flatness of the earth or the desirability of a State, just as to-day one receives leaflets from Jehovah's Witnesses. This does not matter. What matters is that in a capitalist society the concentration by a few monopolists of the dissemination of news and ideas, reinforced a thousandfold by modern inventions such as radio, films, television (with which we shall deal another time), parallel superstitions may be pumped into people's minds—particularly in regard to leadership—with an intensity that was not possible in the Darkest Ages of man.

As a means of providing the transitional stage by which one passes from capitalism to a free society, the idea of industrial unionism throughout all branches of printing, can be seen to be fundamental, as a means by which printing and the dissemination of ideas can be linked, instead of the writer sitting in his Ivory Tower and the printer in his chapter, imagining that both pursue different callings. The alternative to State control and private control is always workers' control. A.M.

Back to Victoria

Continued from p. 2

day the worst of these abuses have gone. And they have gone, not through legislation, but because an enlightened public conscience and a working-class awakening to knowledge of its own power demanded it. The legislation merely limped behind to put in the commas and dot the *ts* to what was an inevitable change.

Another impressive fact is that in our daily existence we have gained a great deal of liberation from the pressure of an arrogant and self-satisfied public opinion which the Victorians endured. The lives of middle-class young women, for instance, in that age, were more like those of nuns than of self-respecting human beings, and I think that in matters like these all classes have gained an immense advantage. Once again, a matter of personal rebellion, something quite outside the political sphere, which merely crowned the tendency with the dubious gift of women's suffrage and which now takes every opportunity of restricting these hard-won freedoms where it can.

But these changes, as well as the circumstances that were changed, had their roots in the duality of the Victorian era. They were part of the disintegration of Victorian "greatness" (the official kind, I mean). But they were also part of that urge towards freedom which at times becomes so marked as a popular

passion during the nineteenth century. And here, I think, is one point in which we have regressed from the nineteenth century. Matters which were burning concerns for the Victorians, for the writers in the *Nineteenth Century*, are so taken for granted by us that we have in a large measure lost that itch to improve the world which, in good ways as well as bad, characterised the better Victorians. We have become, in a subtle and often hidden way, more resigned and more stagnant than the very generation that we used to despise for the same faults.

In reading *Nineteenth Century Opinion*, one is liable to have a tired kind of feeling, one has a tendency to say: "What a fuss over something that seems so unreal!" It is a fatal tendency. For all their absurdities, for all their pettiness, for all their gross blindness, these people at least had the power to get excited over public issues, to thrash out according to their lights. And that is a virtue too evidently absent in our own day. And here comes the other side of the picture. For we are stagnant and apathetic over public issues precisely because of that increasing power of the State which was the issue of the power politics, the imperialism, the steady centralisation of the Victorian era.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

Let Us Remain True to Ourselves

Continued from p. 2

freedom because it is trembling for the safety of its vast store of wealth.

(3) Russia has created a State Capitalism, which, like the capitalism of the Vatican in the Middle Ages, is enjoyed by its own hierarchy only.

(4) America has created, alongside of its concentration of capital, the precarious "capitalism of the workers" as co-partners in the profits of its victorious wars.

(5) Both powers are hungry for land, for markets, for expansion, for domination in Europe, in Asia, in Africa. Each of them has, in every corner of the globe, old links to replace with new golden chains in a conflict for domination. In this frenzy of grafting the usual imperialist lies upon fragments of the truth, under the sham banners of Christ or of Socialism, the whole thing appears to be a two-faced Janus. To the anarchists it is just a two-headed monster.

Since the Marxist authoritarian aberration has produced the results which anarchists have predicted; since capitalism has not died—and could not die—as a victim of historical fatalism, swallowed up in the vortex of "the class" and the Marxist votes (even this had been predicted by anarchists) let us not commit the folly of shutting our eyes and abandoning our ideals in the holocaust of a war.

In the face of the countless human sacrifices demanded by this "lust for liberation", when East and West meet in this great encounter, even the folly of a so-called libertarian war would provoke in us the compassion which we may feel for a mother who sacrifices her children and herself for fear of a dreadful future.

But let us be careful. We know our-

selves. We are made of the same stuff as everyone else in this world. With us, feeling is father and child of an idea. The day we fail, we shall die with our feelings and our ideas.

When a new day dawns to-morrow, we shall have to answer to the free men of the East and of the West, when they themselves have seen clearly through the masks of their "liberators". We will give our answer without uttering a single word; we will hold up our hands, clean of any complicity with the cannibals of militarism of every persuasion, and with the priests of every church that is giving them its blessing.

Let us remain true to ourselves.

ARMANDO BORGHI.

EIRE—A 'Different' State?

DUBLIN: Easter Sunday.

I HAVE just been watching shiny new gun-carriages, tanks, armoured cars and young volunteer recruits march past de Valera as he stood in front of the Post Office in O'Connell Street—that very building used by the "insurgents" as their headquarters in the rising in 1916.

As the aeroplanes roared overhead, I asked myself for what purpose is this show of pomp and power of a tiny State? Is it against Britain, merely as the main enemy, that these arms have been forged? Beives of policemen—kind-hearted men who can be seen patting little children on the head—are still required, as instruments of the State, to protect, now, the new Customs House that has arisen as a replica of the old that de Valera and his friends so cleverly set on fire 30 years ago. What have been the benefits to the people of Eire during these years and what are the limitations of the aspirations of the founders of this new State Machine?

To-day there is no conscription in the Free State; and the British visitor needs no passport and finds food cheaper and as plentiful as in his own country. Eire needs to import coal and steel, but needs no Commonwealth nor Empire from

which to do it, nor armed forces in strategic points throughout the globe to defend its trade routes. When will Britain's pride allow it to gain prosperity like this other island in the North Sea with no predatory interests?

Eire's neutrality in the last war was a prolonged act of courage—the country might have been invaded by Hitler or by Churchill and the recently and dearly won freedom lost again—but it was no act of pacifism: only one more step in the struggle against Partition. The world has gained by this neutrality, for by her stand Eire has pointed once again to

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British deception in pretending to be the champion of small nation's rights to self-determination. In a broadcast in May 1945, Mr. Churchill made it clear that in certain circumstances he would have violated Irish neutrality and that he would have justified this action by Britain's necessity. In reply, Mr. de Valera said: "It seems strange to me that Mr. Churchill does not see that this, if accepted, would mean that Britain's necessity would become a moral code and that when this necessity became sufficiently great, other people's rights were not to count."

"It is quite true that other great Powers believe in this same code—in their own regard—and have behaved in accordance with it. That is precisely why we have had the disastrous succession of wars—World War No. 1 and World War No. 2—and shall it be World War No. 3?" "Surely Mr. Churchill must see that if his contention be admitted in our regard, a like justification can be framed for similar acts of aggression elsewhere and no small nation adjoining a great Power would ever hope to be permitted to go its own way in peace."

Similarly, the gerrymandering of the electoral divisions in Ulster by the British, to ensure a permanent Partition, despite even the views of the people of Ulster themselves, is a denial of the "democratic process", and remains a burning question which keeps alive anti-British feeling.

The type of government that has developed since the Easter Rising is very different from that which has gripped the Soviet Union since the Rising in Petersburg one year later. Is it too much to fancy that the function of the State Machine in Eire is to end Partition; and that when this is done the Machine will "wither away"?

ANTHONY WEAVER.

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

A Free Community

RECENT issues of FREEDOM have printed articles which have pointed out very clearly the psychological ills which mankind has inflicted upon itself by its authoritarian rulings and its authoritarian beliefs. "Mankind's Arrested Development" from the writings of Dr. Chubb, and "The Authoritarian Personality" so ably epitomised by Bob Green, were two of the most outstanding. They clearly show that the present social system gives rise to neuroses, aggression, frustration, and many other ills. Recent research in the realms of psycho-somatic medicine has shown that neuroses thus formed may give rise to a vast number of complaints which have previously been thought of as merely physical and fatal. If, then, we could only alter the foundations of our social structure, we might be free of "all the ills that flesh is heir to."

These are facts which are clear for all to see, yet the vast bulk of mankind goes about blindly, either unable or unwilling to see them. Many people admit that social administration is far from perfect, but it is only the details and not the structure that they wish to attack. Of those who admit that the structure is wrong only very few will agree that there could be any possible alternative to an authoritarian régime, and the majority of these are unwilling to make any active effort to effect an alteration. Many who can see some of the evils do not realise the full implications of the material and physical ills that the social system is responsible for producing, and being thus unaware of the cause of their ills they are not sufficiently stirred to resistance.

In fact, mankind is so enmeshed in the present system that it has neither the wish nor the ability to contemplate any fundamental change. How, then, is any change to be effected? What is to be done by the handful of people who believe in something better and have sufficient faith in their fellow human beings to try to construct a way of life which will give full expression to the goodness in man instead of destroying it?

Workers in the fields of psychology

and social science give us pictures of the true needs of mankind and of the results of our failure to satisfy them. Industrial workers sometimes manage to form federations or co-operatives to counteract in some measure the evil results of capitalism.

Educationalists have advocated educating young people in an atmosphere free of all tyranny and thus enabled to live in mutual love and co-operation with their fellows. Unfortunately the number of educationalists willing and able to undertake this task is too few to make any impression in so vast a field, and the handful of citizens thus educated are ill-fitted to compete in authoritarian society. Moreover, no school can be entirely free of the insidious influences of an interfering authoritative power, and few children entirely escape the binding power of family ties and tyrannies even with the most enlightened parents.

It will seem, therefore, that it is well-nigh impossible to do more than scratch the surface of our power-ridden system.

In spite of the immense difficulties to be overcome; in spite of trials and failures in the past, I still believe that the way which holds out the greatest promise is to try to form a free community where all coercive factors are absent. This is the only way in which freedom may have its natural expression and growth without internal dissension and strife in the initial stages. It is true that any free community will be beset both by the powers and the difficulties in the world surrounding it, but it would have immense advantages within itself. There would be nothing to divert the energies of its man-power and every individual could throw himself wholeheartedly into the task of maintaining and improving the common lot. Work would be the spontaneous expression of the desire to create. The limitations which arise from the divisions of society into groups and classes would not occur.

If such a community were to continue and flourish it would demonstrate to the rest of the world what can be accom-

plished by people working together in freedom. It would be interesting to see in what directions men might develop unhampered by false moral standards and irrational doctrines, loosed from restricting laws, free to express themselves and to seek to satisfy their natural urges, restrained only by their love for one another. They might create new forms of culture, and their language would contain no words for hate and aggression, fear and punishment, because such things would not exist.

Such a community might well be started by men and women moved by the need of humanity for a better mode of living—men with faith in and love for their fellows, with vision to see ahead, with enthusiasm to work and strive for a better, freer, happier future. It could not be started lightly or easily or quickly, but must be the subject of many months of careful thought, consideration and preparation. It would be helpful if those considering it could live under the same roof for a time while still pursuing their ordinary occupations. This would give them a chance to learn to know each other, and to discuss and prepare the project freely before taking the next step.

Much has been said and written about communities lately, but I have yet to find anyone prepared to consider taking action.

Have we naught but theorists in this matter?

Reading.

D.I.D.

"The deeper I have gone into the history of the past century, the more I have been led towards the conclusion that the development of conscription has been an important factor in damaging the growth of the concept of freedom."

Capt. B. H. LIDDELL HART

LORD BOYD ORR

AS FREEDOM has so often quoted with glowing approval the remarks made by Lord Boyd Orr, it is a little disconcerting to find him referred to, in your article on the Moscow Economic Conference as a "softie". You have previously made much of his remark: "The nations of the world are insane. They are spending one-third of their income preparing for the next world war." Cannot this remark, too, be attributed to the fact that Boyd Orr is, in your words, one of the "men of good will, but soft heads"?

Is the measure of his "woolliness" (a very overworked term of abuse these days), the degree in which his remarks can be made to serve FREEDOM's line?

What a pity that you should have preferred your newly-published book, *Mankind Is One*, with two quotations which are evidently now of no value, since you have suddenly discovered their author to be soft-headed.

Muswell Hill.

A.T.

[Our correspondent is surely rather muddled. Our admiration of Lord Boyd Orr's work in the field of nutrition—in which he is eminent—remains quite unaffected. What he says in the field of politics—in which he possesses no eminence—is quite another matter, and our disagreement with his political actions in no way compels us to disregard him as a nutritionist. Our correspondent will find admiring references in the files of FREEDOM to many men; he would be wrong in thinking we therefore agreed with their every utterance. Examples at random: George Orwell, Lewis Mumford, Kropotkin, Rudolf Rocker, Lord Boyd Orr. All, however, supported either the First or Second World War, while FREEDOM opposed both. In this we must think them wrong—and they must equally inevitably, think FREEDOM wrong.]

FREEDOM does not try to hush-up differences of opinion with men whose work in special fields we have extolled: we do not have one face in private and another one in print. Hence we regard the suggestion that the term "woolliness" (overworked, by the way, by whom?) is mere abuse for those who do not serve

FREEDOM's line as rather unworthy. Perhaps it is by now unnecessary to defend the use of quotations from Sir John Boyd Orr—nutritionist and human biologist—in our publication Mankind is One.—Eds.]

FREEDOM'S ANNUAL VOLUME

I THINK the idea of issuing a FREEDOM yearbook is a most felicitous one. By coincidence, the day I received my FREEDOM with the announcement of the new yearbook, I was just reading a translation of a sketch of Kropotkin's life by the Polish authoress, M. Orsetti, and was struck by Kropotkin's remark that in his interest for socialism he could not find too much help in books but felt it necessary to consult stocks of magazines to get a realistic idea of effective socialism. Some of us have a fetish of books and tend to underestimate magazine articles; so your idea of issuing a yearbook will give emphasis and permanence to some of the really good articles in FREEDOM.

ROLAND BARTA.

Colorado.

DIRTY WORK & ALL THAT

MAY I congratulate you on the really brilliant article "Who Will Clean Out the Sewers," in your current issue. The case for anarchism, free from sloppy idealism and sentimental rhetoric has seldom been put with such wit and good humour.

Manchester.

H.K.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

OPEN AIR MEETINGS

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

INDOOR MEETINGS

at the
CLASSIC RESTAURANT,
Baker Street, W.1
(near Classic Cinema)
Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.

APRIL 27th—S. E. Parker on
ANARCHISM—WHAT IS IT?
MAY 4th—Mr. Carlton on
MARXISM DEBUNKED

NORTH-EAST LONDON

DISCUSSION MEETINGS
IN EAST HAM
Alternate Wednesdays
at 7.30

APRIL 30—Mary Canipa
THE PROBLEM OF FREEDOM

WEST LONDON

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

LIVERPOOL

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

GLASGOW

OUTDOOR MEETINGS
Begin again at
MAXWELL STREET
Sunday, 20th April at 7 p.m.
With John Gaffney, Frank Leech,
Jane Strachan, Eddie Shaw
Frank Carlin

MIDDLESBROUGH

Anyone interested in forming a group in this area is asked to communicate with D. C. WILSON, 3 Norman Terrace, South Bank, Middlesbrough.

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I. W. W. AND THE ASSEMBLY LINE

IT is significant that the decade 1920-30, which saw the perfection of the middle period of the assembly line and its full penetration and blossoming in all fields of industry (i.e., the semi-automatic assembly line as typified by the Ford auto-assembly) also saw the introduction of the totalitarian state in modern times: Russia, Italy, Germany.

The revolution in Russia must be considered a socialist failure. While there has been a raising of the technical level, it was accomplished in a thoroughly barbaric way and could have been done in many other ways. Even the capitalist barbarism of industrial development equalled perhaps but did not exceed the Russian barbarism.

Who, anyway, is interested any more in a mere raising of technical levels? We have had enough refined bombs, refined marvations, prisons and tortures. We want to live. The Stalinist argument that Russia would have become like Africa or India if the Bolsheviks had not maintained their iron grip, moves me not, except to tears. It may or may not have been true. At any rate some refuse to play the hangman even for the good of the community. And at any rate the end result is a semi-mechanised barbarism. In Italy, too, the forced drive for modern technic took place on the backs of the workers in this decade. In Germany it was (economically speaking) a struggle to maintain her technic on the same level with America and England, a struggle that could only have a chance of success (given the imperialist nature of world economy), on a forced fascist and predatory base.

We have been here talking of one factor: the technical. Now let us come to the character base.

In America, this decade witnessed the death (as a major factor) of the I.W.W., the most alive and promising of all movements in the history of the U.S. radical movement. (All the later "leaders" of the Marxist movements and many others were connected with the I.W.W. at one time or another, anyone who had any feeling and was a worker in the period 1905-1925 felt the spell of the I.W.W.)

From where did the I.W.W. draw its strength? From the fact that they were "Wild" Wild, wild, wobbles. Migratory workers, sailors, lumbermen. The wobbly we remember is just that "wild-eyed agitator", the bundle stiff going from town to town, roaming the wide country, organising workers, the workers that stood at home.*

*He is a romantic, revolutionary figure. This is not to deny his real political competence. Perhaps as we shall see later: to affirm it. For all your old stuck in the mud "scientific socialists" have got us as a semi-scientific police state in the U.S.S.R. and if the Wobblies have failed, too, at least they failed gloriously.

There were miners, too, though mostly in the West where mining was probably not the tame and settled occupation it was in the East. (But they withdrew early.) There were also Jewish factory workers in N.Y. and textile workers in New England and New Jersey, but these seemed unable to hold out long and fell to conservative business unionism à la Dubinsky, or some few individuals to Marxism, or most just to nothing. [In all the history of the I.W.W., figures have a mysterious meaning (as in all radical movements). Sometimes the I.W.W. would organise a strike and it would have 5,000 members. In a few years' time the strike was forgotten and so was the I.W.W., in that town at least, politically, anyway.]

It was thus this same decade that saw the full development of the semi-automatic assembly line, that witnessed the decline of the I.W.W. and its practical disappearance from the American political scene. The conversion of a good deal of its membership to the Communist Party is the main reason generally given, but this is a negative reason. Bolshevik successes explain why I.W.W.'s were attracted, it does not explain why they did not stay or never came back even after Bolshevik failures.

What was the character of this original I.W.W. cadre? It was libertarian, it was freedom loving, its men were wild, they loved to travel, they couldn't stay put, it was a young movement, it was a movement of the most oppressed (it held large numbers of foreign minority groups Finns, Mexicans, Jews, Russians, Italians). It was a movement that seemed to have an aura of the lover about it. Its greatest hero, Joe Hill, went to his death, the name of a woman who might have saved him (he thought he would be acquitted) sealed on his lips, for not wanting to involve her. "The Rebel Girl," that is the title of an old Wobbly song. Many women were active in its ranks.

This movement of these wayfaring strangers, of these free voyagers, this movement of lovers was quite ill-fitted to the job of nut tightener on a belt system, precisely the job that the semi-automatic assembly line of the 20's demanded. This stationary unfree technic, a technic for home-bodies and un-adventurers, on which the later conservative unionism of the C.I.O. was to base itself. [Although the C.I.O. started partly on a "radical", "revolutionary" (i.e., mostly Stalinist) base and among less settled, comparatively unskilled workers, too. The industrial union idea was Wobbly, an idea theoretically based on I.W.W. technical analysis, but emotionally and more correctly on his instinctive feeling of solidarity with his

fellow workers. The C.I.O. later became the perfect transmission belt of the State's control over the workers.]

The I.W.W., I want women, I won't work. (It saw no particular fascination in being a wage slave, but actually had an ideology of the exaltation of labour. It rejected the idea of capitalist "responsibility for work," i.e., work as punishment.)

"I won't work"; this is the poor, hopeless taunt that the hoosier (the reactionary mass man) threw at the Wobbly. As if his entombment in an infinity of useless motions had any real meaning. Outside of supporting him almost accidentally and contributing somehow to the totality of capitalist production (he may have been making guns for all we know and he considered his work better than the Wobbly's so-called idleness (mostly a myth, anyway). The Wobbly took pride in real work.

And the early Wobbly was generally a single man and responsible for no one but himself.

Even to-day, where the Wobblies do have any strength, it is in the maritime

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industry, the free sailor, he is a Wobbly —of all the trades still among the most individualistic and free. Again the way-faring stranger, the man in movement.

Where (for example, in Cleveland machine shops) the union has membership in a mass production industry, the membership is the least active of all and the least radical. They are home-bodies in Cleveland.

This is simply not the unionism for the mass man. This is not the union that gets along (fuses) with the State. (It has refused to sign the Taft-Hartley affidavits.) This is not the union for the mass assembly line. Not technically nor even rationally is it not so, but it is just not it emotionally.

Theoretically, this age of the semi-automatic assembly line was better adapted for the growth of Marxist movements than to that of syndicalist or anarchist movements. It may be significant that the countries where revolution most nearly achieved success: Russia and Spain, the anarchist and libertarian character of the movement was also most pronounced. These countries were also countries in which the pre-capitalist, pre-mechanical forms still had their greatest strength. Spain was the great country of the Anarchist movement and had large numbers of revolutionary anarchist peasants, a fact without parallel in modern times. In Russia, too, the soviet movement was more libertarian than Marxist in character; Lenin was called "anarchist" by his Bolshevik comrades when he declared (in words, anyway) for "All Power to the Soviet". What he did later on was, of course, something again.

(The Marxists had their concentrations in the huge factories, the mass production industries of the cities: Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The anarchist proletariat is traditionally a proletariat of small industry. Swiss Watch Makers, for example. This, of course, has led them to being charged with petit-bourgeois tendencies, by the Marxists.)

One thing is certain (though): the whole flavour of Anarchism is opposed to the assembly line attitude. Decentralization has been a theme of anarchist theory for over 50 years now, although one could wish for greater concretization of the theory. The revolutionary collectives of Spain and Palestine are the closest approach to a free society (on any kind of scale) in modern times.

A study of their production techniques (from the radical) the work democratic point of view would prove valuable. For example, what changes (if any) were effected in the worker-machine relationship in the mass production industries of Barcelona during the Civil War?

JACK GALLEGÓ.