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Freedom

A N A R C H I S T F O R T N I G H T L Y

"Until not a man will be exploited or oppressed by another man, we will never bend the banner of Freedom." VANZETTI.
 "It is true, indeed, that they can execute the body, but they cannot execute the idea which is bound to live." SACCO.

THEY WANT THE POWER

The Crisis is the Excuse

THE economic crisis has been officially declared open by government representatives. The Prime Minister has made a pompous and uninformative speech, and parliament has departed for a long holiday, but not before passing the Supplies and Services (Transitional Powers) Bill, which once again vests in the ministers and the civil service all the powers of governing by decree which they possessed during the war. Once again an economic crisis has been used for the purpose of attacking the freedom of the workers.

There is no doubt that a real crisis of under-production does exist in this country. There is also no doubt that, while it could have been prevented, and could still be surmounted by radical social measures, it could not have been prevented and can only be halted temporarily and partially by the kind of action which the government, or any other government, can take. British capitalism is, in fact, reaching a stage when crises will be come steadily more severe, and will, in addition be seized on with alacrity by the ruling class as means to consolidate their weakening hold over society.

The capitalist economy of an industrial country like England depends on export. At an early stage in the industrial revolution the home markets for industrial products became glutted. It was then that the capitalist governments pursued a deliberate policy of making Britain dependent on foreign sources for foodstuffs and raw materials in order that markets abroad could be created for industrial goods. Up to 1939, with ever-deepening crises, this arrangement continued to work.

The "Dollar Crisis"

As a result of the resultant rise of America to the highest position among world imperialisms and the industrialisation of semi-colonial countries like Argentina and Brazil, has destroyed the markets for British capitalism. The balance of exports and imports can no longer be maintained, and British capitalism has become inevitably the debtor and poor relation of American imperialism. The so-called dollar crisis represents the situation seen through capitalist eyes. To continue its present system of exploitation and ownership, the ruling class of England has to continue with the pattern of financial and industrial imperialism which it has always maintained. It is the only way in which it can keep its power, and in order to adjust itself to the altered situation it is bound to impose steadily heavier burdens on the workers.

But the crisis can also be seen in concrete terms. As it affects the workers, it consists of a chronic scarcity of food and consumption goods; its cause is a vast underproduction in this country, and a draining of essential machinery and other goods into the export market in order to maintain the capitalist economy.

In fact, there was no need for such a crisis ever to have arisen, if efficient

methods of industrial and agricultural production had been used and if the workers had been given an incentive to induce them to work with real enthusiasm.

Agricultural Efficiency

As we have always maintained, British farming presents the most amazing picture of deliberate under-production. If the intensive methods used in such countries as Belgium and Holland had been applied to the equally fertile land of Britain, the result would be ample food to provide abundantly for all the people. But even during the war, although a larger area of land was cultivated, these intensive methods were not applied, so that our land still produces only a fraction of what it could. Not only is this the case, but where too much food is actually produced to suit the profit-making motives of our present society, it is allowed to waste. Examples have been the vegetables ploughed in and fruit allowed to rot because a so-called "glut" provides more food than the shops can sell at the high prices they insist on charging.

Other examples of the way in which capitalism deliberately restricts production can be found in the industrial field. Capitalists, instead of installing new and efficient machinery into such establishments as textile mills, prefer to work the old obsolete machines, in order to avoid the expense of new, and to get their profits by paying wages of sometimes £4 or less to their employees. Wartime factories, such as those for manufacturing magnesium out of seawater, and the nitrates factories which could easily be turned over to manufacturing fertilisers, are allowed to go derelict, because their use would conflict with established chemical interests.

In Holland surplus straw is turned

into paper and cardboard; in England five million tons of surplus straw, enough to supply our whole paper industry, is allowed to waste because its use in this way would interfere with existing arrangements. Patents of simple and efficient processes of production are bought up by the capitalists and not even used, for fear of interfering with the restricted production which gives scarcity value to their products.

The Fiction of Manpower Scarcity

The man-power crisis is a complete fiction. In fact, there are 1,400,000 idle men in the armed forces, more than a million people in wholly futile employments in the civil service and local government, many hundreds of thousands of people engaged in completely unproductive and unnecessary work connected with the financial system, including bank clerks, insurance employees, middlemen of all kinds, stock-brokers, etc. It is unnecessary and unfair to attack the spivs. They are merely the independent minority in this great mass of useless workers. The manpower crisis exists because it is necessary for the present system to have armed forces, bureaucrats, financiers, etc. The fact that the government agreed only very reluctantly to a token reduction of 80,000 in the armed forces is clear indication of this.

The crisis has thus arisen out of tendencies towards under-production which are inevitable in capitalism, and which the ruling class choose quite deliberately because an abundance of goods would defeat their own profit motives.

Another important element in the crisis has been the fact that there is no real incentive to work with any enthusiasm. Of course, the workers are apathetic and irresponsible; how can one expect them to be otherwise, when state socialism gives them no more hope of a better life than capitalism did before it. As we pointed out in January last,

"Solidarity, interest in work, the sense of social responsibility, the direct control of industry by the workers, and all the other factors that give men the feeling of working for their own good rather than the profit of the state or of private capitalists, are totally lacking in work to-day."

They Want The Power !

As the ruling class cannot and will not provide these natural incentives to work, they are trying to make up for them by the methods of force and starvation. The new Act gives the government undefined rights over the

liberty of the individual. There is a sinister tone about Morrison's statement in the House of Commons:

"We have no preconceived notion as to how we propose to utilise the Bill, but what we want is the power."

Indeed, they want the power! And that power will be used, as has already been shown by the new Control of Engagement Order, to tie the worker down to his job and prevent him becoming a free and responsible being.

Similarly, the whip of necessity is being employed. It is significant that the really important cuts will be in food imports, which affect the workers' standard of living, in timber, which will affect their chance of getting a new house, and in films, which may well deprive them of one means of amusement—however inadequate it may be for that purpose.

The Tories, using the privilege of a party out of power, have for once spoken the truth. The Labour Party are indeed preparing the basis of a totalitarian order. The measures they are taking are indeed, as Lord Vansittart and Churchill have pointed out, those which led in Germany to the

government by decree of Brüning and the rise of Nazism.

The Path To War

But the Tories themselves would do no different, and, indeed, they may be the inheritors and completers of the Labour Party's policy of totalitarianism. For British capitalism to-day has reached that stage of recession when it can only exist by imposing steadily heavier burdens on the workers, and enforcing these by more and more violent repression. The end of this process will inevitably be war. It is significant that the armed forces receive the slightest cut of all.

Capitalism and state socialism alike lead to scarcity and war. They prepare the death of the workers and make what is left of their lives not worth living. The only way out of this crisis and of the permanent crisis in which the workers of Britain are involved to-day lies in the ending of the systems that need scarcity and conflict for their perpetuation, and the establishment of a society where men will control their own lives and produce for their own use rather than the profit or convenience of the ruling class.

Miners Pay the Price

IN a blue upholstered armchair, behind a leather-topped desk, in an office six floors above fashionable Berkeley Square, Lord Hyndley of the National Coal Board (£8,500 a year) lifted one of his three telephones to be told of another disaster.

In the blackness of the pit, deep under the waters of the Solway Firth, thirty-four tons lay piled miserably under hundreds of tons of jagged rock, and seventy others sat on their haunches coughing their lives away in the poisoned air.

For the fourth time in 37 years the mining village of Whitehaven in Cumberland has known the terror of a pit disaster. For the fourth time the women and children of miners have heard the dread alarm and gone running to the pit-head to anxiously wait for news of their menfolk down below.

Causes Not Known— Officially

The causes of the terrific explosion in the William pit, on Friday, August 15th, are not yet known. It is another fortnight before the experts and the officials will have made their inspections, after the pit has been made safe for them to venture down. But whatever the causes, and however dangerous the work of rescue undoubtedly was, there was no lack of volunteers when the call for rescue workers went out. The fellow-workers of the trapped men offered their lives in an effort to save the men below.

Lord Hyndley also arrived on the scene.

But The Men Will Know

But however long it may take the experts and the officials to discover the cause of the disaster, one thing is fairly certain now. The men working on the spot will know the cause, and they will probably know what might have prevented it, just as the men on the spot know the causes of disputes and what might have prevented them. But the men on the job have been told to let nothing interfere with their work, to sweat and slave as never before to rescue the state from its economic predicament.

And they are told to believe that, even if Lord Hyndley does get £8,500 (and never risks his skin) and even if Sir Ben Smith does go round the country buying up mansions for N.C.B. officials, still the miners must not question the rightness of the State to order their lives and working conditions. Even if the bodies of 104 men are dragged out through a 100-yard wall of broken rock, while the noble lord flies to shake hands with the rescuers, miners everywhere must believe that equality of sacrifice is a principle and a fact in our new Socialist Britain!

Shinwell's Hypocrisy

That other gallant arm-chair miner, Emanuel Shinwell, had this to say of the disaster: "... whenever you think of coal, remember there is blood on it. Whenever you are resentful about the miners because you think they are not pulling their weight, you must reflect on the arduous and dangerous character of their toil."

What hypocrisy! Does Shinwell think of what when he is reviling striking miners calling them, with his usual gusto, Lawther, "criminals, saboteurs, irresponsibles," etc.?

No, Shinwell sets the targets, but the miners pay the price, and we prefer the blunt challenge of our miner comrade Tom Carlike (*Freedom*, last issue) when he said: "Our lives are at stake; for our lives we will fight and strike!"

We do not go so far as to say that in the free society which is our goal, workers will never have accidents. But we do say that in that free society human lives will be valued more highly than profits and market economies, and that men and machines will not be worked beyond their capacities in an unequal and frantic chase after superficialities. When workers control their own lives and work, and the welfare of each is the concern of all, the needless sacrifice of working people—either in peace or war—will be but a memory of a less enlightened past.

Stop Press

Direct Distribution HOUSEWIVES FIX OWN PRICES !

THE incident referred to briefly on page 3, of the grower who distributed his produce from a lorry at cheap rates, shows every promise of developing into something really important. He, and other growers in his locality, have banded themselves together into a Direct Trading Association, and have already established their own market in Croydon.

There, they have the use of the arcade of a large store, where they set up long stalls and started off by asking the housewives to fix what they thought was a fair price for the vegetables. This the women were not slow to do, and prices were agreed upon from one-third to two-thirds of the current prices in London shops.

Naturally, the stuff has sold, and the growers are making a fair profit. By afternoon that day, the stall was bare and overjoyed housewives were going home laden with fresh vegetables they would not have been able to afford at ordinary market prices.

At the moment of writing, it is indicated that not only these Sussex farmers, but growers in the Midlands and Suffolk are forming their own trading groups. It is a fine example of direct action by primary producers to distribute necessities direct to where they are needed without the help (?) of middlemen, and to prevent the infamous ploughing back of good food for the sake of high prices.

INDIA—A CHANGE OF MASTERS

THE transfer of power in India has taken place, with pomp and pageantry, and a rather too self-conscious atmosphere of "being in the presence of history". Viscount Mountbatten, the Viceroy, becomes an earl and Governor General. Pandit Nehru's position is unchanged as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for India, doubles his salary and becomes Minister of State for Commonwealth Affairs. But the highest slice of the political spoils goes to Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the Governor-General of the new Dominion of Pakistan and President of its Constituent Assembly, which has given him the title "*Quaid-e-Azam*", while Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the Pakistan Prime Minister referred to him as "the Ataturk or the Stalin of our States"—a remark the appropriateness of which depends upon your evaluation of these figures.

No End to Poverty

Thus is power transferred, but what of the Indian peasants and what of the workers in the great industrial cities? Can they now feel that the country is theirs, that the burdens of poverty, squalor, starvation and ignorance will be lifted

from their backs? We have heard much of the hauling down for the last time of the Union Jack and the hoisting of the saffron, white and green of India, and the green flag of Pakistan, but for the nameless Indian masses will these prove the "colours of liberty"? The streets of Delhi ring with the cry *Jai Hind—Victory is Ours*, but will it not be a hollow victory for those who for years have fought and suffered for this day, to find that they have exchanged subjection under British Imperialism for exploitation under the nascent Indian capitalism?

Useless Words

In his speeches Pandit Nehru has championed the Indian masses. He declares that his government aims "to bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, peasants and workers of India."

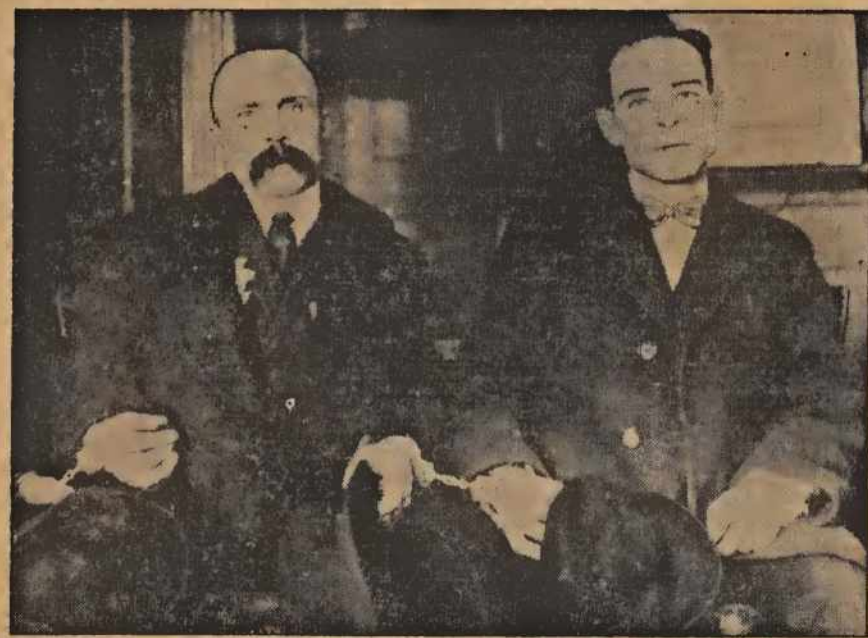
But Nehru's government depends on the support of the Indian industrialists whose interests are inevitably directly opposed to such a policy, and since the first concern of every government is to perpetuate its own power, Nehru will find an ever-greater pressure upon him to pay no more than lip-service to the high ideals of his inaugural statement.

Those sincere and genuine elements in India who really believe in the possibility of a "two-stage" liberation of the Indian people;—first the throwing off of foreign domination and, secondly, defeating native capitalism; should study the experience in Ireland and reflect on the shameful betrayal of the Irish working class. For we may be sure that James Connolly and Padraig Pearse and countless others did not fight and die for the clerico-feudalism that is the only result of their sacrifices. It does not matter to the Indian peasant or factory-worker whether his exploiters skin is white or brown—what does concern him is the fact of his exploitation.

No-one Mentions Them

That is why, in this "historic moment" our thoughts and sympathies are not with the astute politicians of New Delhi, dividing up the spoils of office, or with the "British Quislings" of Pakistan, swearing the loyalty to 'George VI, his heirs and successors', but with the poverty-stricken and half-starved toilers in the fields, bazaars and factories, whose aspirations and whose interests are the same as those of the "left-out and shut-out millions of the weak and poor" throughout the world.

THE CASE OF SACCO & VANZETTI



consisting of Judge Robert Grant, President Abbott Lawrence Lowell of Harvard University and President Samuel W. Stratton of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as "an advisory committee in connection with the Governor's investigation of the Sacco-Vanzetti case". These men denied the defence's demand for public hearings. They interviewed the police, 11 of the jurors, the District Attorney, Katzmann, and Judge Thayer in private, without the presence of the defence counsel. They took no account of a confession by a Portuguese gangster named Madeiros that he had participated in the crime and that Sacco and Vanzetti had not, even though the defence were to show that the gang to which he belonged fitted every detail of the murder, while dozens of loose ends were left in the identification of Sacco and Vanzetti as the killers.

Of the Governor's "investigation" an American journalist said: "Governor Alvan T. Fuller never had any intention . . . but to put a new and higher polish on the proceedings. The justice of the business was not his concern. He hoped to make it respectable. He called old men from high places to stand behind his chair so that he might seem to speak with all the authority of a high priest or a Pilate . . . If this is a lynching, at least the fish-peddler and his friend may take unctious to their souls that they will die at the hands of men in dinner-coats or academic gowns . . ."

Vengeance of a Class

John Dewey wrote of these men: "Without disrespect to the important activities which are identified with the names of the men who formed the committee, it is no exaggeration to say that their place in the historic memory of mankind will be settled by the document they have written. And in justice to them, the future will recognize that the document is something more than a personal expression; that it is typical and symbolic, a representation of the state of mind that must be widespread in the educated leaders of the American public in the third decade of the twentieth century." Dewey was only saying in obscurer words what Sacco

wrote to his friends and comrades 18 days before his execution on hearing that the governor had rejected the last appeal: "We are not surprised for this news because we know the capitalist class hard without any mercy the good soldiers of the revolution. We are proud for death and fall as all the anarchist can fall. It is up to you now, brothers, comrades! as I have tell you yesterday that you only can save us, because we have never had

the truth should have been discovered after Sacco and Vanzetti were executed!" Admittedly, that would have been horrible, but the truth is worse—the facts were known before the execution, were heard by Judge Thayer . . . were presented to the Supreme Court of Massachusetts . . . all to no avail."

In retrospect there is yet another dreadful aspect of this case which is more apparent now than in 1927. If the legal machinery had been twisted in a totalitarian country, that would be just part of the nature of the regime. But America is not regarded as a totalitarian country. It has a famous constitution, is one of the "freedom-loving nations", a defender of democracy. Yet in the Sacco-Vanzetti case, the American ruling class manipulated all the "safeguards" of justice to the individual, and ruthlessly extinguished these two anarchists after seven years of suspense. They did this without the obvious trappings of fascism. Such things are even more appalling in a "democracy".

And the powerlessness of a non-revolutionary working-class in such a situation is also appalling. Almost 100 per cent. of the presidents and teachers in some women's colleges supported a petition in favour of the two men. Demonstrations, often of an almost violent character, took place all over Europe and America. Men of the eminence of Shaw, Einstein, Rolland cabled appeals to Governor Fuller. And 50,000 people followed the funeral at Boston's Hanover Street—to be charged by mounted police as it turned into Tremont Street, and dispersed. The "conscience of the world" was stirred, but the American ruling class carried on unperturbed with its calculated killing—just as it had done 40 years before in Chicago, or 10 years before with Mooney and Billings. As Sacco had maintained throughout, only direct action by a determined working-class could save them.

Greatness Of The Men

To look back on the seven-year-long agony of these two men is a painful, an upsetting experience. It leaves one with a terrible sadness and also a great anger. (Continued on page 5)

"If it had not been for these things I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died unmarked, unknown, a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man as now we do by accident. Our words—our lives—our pains—nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler—all! That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph."—Vanzetti's final statement.

The Red Scares of 1920.

During 1919 and 1920, the United States Attorney General Mitchell Palmer carried out a carefully planned and publicized campaign for the wholesale arrests and deportation of "Reds". Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were deported to Russia under this campaign. Its source was the fear excited by the Russian Revolution in the minds of the American ruling class. Among its effects was the legal murder of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, in the State of Massachusetts, one of the most conservative and diehard strongholds in the whole of America.

The brutality and lawlessness of the Palmer raids on radical agitators; especially on anarchists and IWW militants, were authoritatively condemned by decisions of the United States courts which severely criticized the Department of Justice. The Attorney-General never

higher courts. Meanwhile, his department had achieved its aim in creating a hysterical middle class opinion which ensured that any man or woman of revolutionary opinions was unhesitatingly found guilty of any crime they were charged with, whatever the evidence . . .

On April 15th, 1920, two employees of the Slater and Morrill shoe factory were shot dead by two men in the main street of South Braintree, Massachusetts, and the wages money which they carried, amounting to £3,000 odd, stolen. The murderers escaped by a car. Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested on May 5th and charged with the killing. The killing was obviously the work of a professional gang.

Vanzetti On Sacco

I have talk a great deal of myself but I even forgot to name Sacco. Sacco too is a worker from his boyhood, a skilled worker lover of work, with a good job and pay, a bank account, a good and lovely wife, two beautiful children and a neat little home at the verge of a wood, near a brook. Sacco is a heart, a faith, a character, a man; a man lover of nature and of mankind. A man who gave all, who sacrifice all to the cause of Liberty and to his love for mankind; money, rest, mundane ambitions, his own wife, his children, himself and his own life. Sacco has never dreamt to steal, never to assassinate. He and I have never brought a morsel of bread to our mouths, from our childhood to today—which has not been gained by the sweat of our brows. Never. His people also are in good position and of good reputation.

Oh, yes, I may be more witfull, as some have put it, I am a better babbler than he is, but many, many times in hearing his heartfelt voice ringing a faith sublime, in considering his supreme sacrifice, remembering his heroism I felt small small at the presence of his greatness and found myself compelled to fight back from my eyes the tears, and quench my heart throbbing to my throat to not weep before him—this man called thief and assassin and doomed. But Sacco's name will live in the hearts of the people and in their gratitude when Katzmann's and your bones will be dispersed by time, when your name, his name, your laws institutions, and your false god are but a DEEM REMEMORING OF A CURSED PAST IN WHICH MAN WAS WOLF TO THE MAN . . .

The two arrested men had never been associated with crooks and had a steady record of work.

Sacco and Vanzetti were anarchists. The day before their arrest they had learned that a comrade of theirs, also an Italian, named Salsedo, who had been held for some days *incommunicado* by the New York police, had been found dead on the pavement outside the fourteenth floor offices of the Department of Justice. When they were arrested, they assumed that it was for being radicals, and they were not immediately told of the murder charge. Accordingly, they made certain untrue statements with the object of covering up certain of their comrades who were seeking to conceal revolutionary literature. These untrue statements were twisted by prosecution and judge into evidence of "consciousness of guilt", and were the grounds for condemning them to death. They were electrocuted after 7 years in prison, on 22nd August, 1927.

Framed

To explain these untrue statements, Sacco and Vanzetti's defence had to show that they were anarchists who were alarmed by the Palmer raids. Seizing this opportunity, the prosecuting counsel, Katzmann, played on their revolutionary, anti-militarist and atheist opinions for all they were worth. The jury were specially selected by the sheriff's deputies from persons whom they deemed "representative citizens", "substantial" and "intelligent"—in a word, middle-class and conservative. The foreman of the jury, before the trial began, was heard to say, "Damn them, they're Reds; they ought to hang anyway, even if they're innocent."

The judge was Webster Thayer. During the agitation for a re-trial, reputable witnesses deposed that Thayer had declared to them privately, speaking of the anarchists, that he would "get them good and proper". After the verdict he said, "Did you see what I did to those anarchist bastards . . . ?" Of the defence counsel he said, "No long-haired anarchist from California is going to run this court." In his summing-up, he referred to Sacco and Vanzetti as "conscious of guilt as murderers or as slackers and radicals"—the term "slackers" referring to their evasion of military service during the 1914 war. Of Vanzetti, he said to the jury, "This man, although he may not have actually committed the crime attributed to him, is nevertheless morally culpable, because he is the enemy of our existing institutions."

The District Attorney, Katzmann, who prosecuted, made use of expert opinion favourable to the prisoners in such a way that it appeared damning to them. The expert involved, a police gun specialist named Proctor, subsequently publicly put on record his actual opinion and expressed his view that it virtually exculpated the two men. But when the Defence Committee sought to bring new evidence and challenge the false evidence by getting a new trial, the judge who heard the plea was . . . Judge Webster Thayer. He found no reason for a new trial.

When a Commission censured Thayer for his obvious bias and prejudice, this was made the basis of a new plea. But the judge who heard this new plea was . . . Judge Webster Thayer. He found that he had not shown prejudice and bias.

Governor's Advisory Committee

Nevertheless, the miscarriage of justice, the manifest frame-up, was so obvious that to meet general uneasiness Governor Alvan T. Fuller appointed a committee

ANARCHISM: PAST & FUTURE

The Editorial Minority's View

IN expressing certain disagreements with my comrades of the editorial group, I must point out that I do not regard these disagreements as in any way fundamental; they are differences of emphasis rather than principle; perhaps they arise from a slightly less rosy view of past events.

In general, while I found Herbert Read's discussion of the need for closer attention to psychological and sociological research extremely important, I agree with the main criticisms of his attitude, and particularly of his tendency to accept the growing strength of the State, which, as has been pointed out, seems rather to show the signs of weakness than stability. On the other hand, this very fact renders the task of education all the more important, since, if, as we believe, the workers still have the necessary strength to overthrow the State by militant direct action, it is more than ever important that they should do so with the full consciousness of the opportunities this destruction will open up to them.

Revolutionary Situation

For this reason I think we should not expect too much from revolutionary situations as such. A working-class may become sufficiently conscious of its opportunities to throw off its present rulers, and sweep the slate clean. But a vacuum can attract evil as well as good, and, if I may be excused for using a Biblical analogy, the workers in most historical revolutions have found themselves like the madman from whom a devil was cast out and seven other devils, finding his mind clean and empty, promptly entered in. The negative consciousness that precipitates a revolutionary situation is not sufficient. There has to be a positive consciousness that is aware of all the pitfalls, that can distinguish the genuinely revolutionary tendency from the spurious revolutionism of political parties and careerists, and so far most of the workers in times of revolution seem to have lacked that consciousness. This applies even to the workers in the Spanish revolution who, in spite of long anarchist traditions, allowed themselves to be taken in by specious contentions of the need for transitional government. This is no counsel of despair; it is merely a reason for a completely realistic attitude towards the colossal work that will be involved in awakening a really widespread revolutionary consciousness.

On the question of non-violence, I cannot help feeling that the reply tends

to make confusion worse confounded. To begin with a subsidiary point, I fail to see how anarchism can stand if it fails to recognise the fundamental brotherhood of man. Certain individuals may violate that brotherhood, and then it is necessary to act against them, as one would act against a man who endeavoured to murder one. But, just as we do not accept the theory of punishing the murderer or the necessity of hating him, so, while it may be necessary to act against the ruler or the capitalist, it should be only to deprive him of his power to harm us. Once the tyrant is displaced and rendered harmless, he should be allowed the same choice of realising his brotherhood as any other man. Otherwise, by a logical process, our whole attitude towards crime is destroyed, and we are forced back on a new system of discrimination between man and man.

Violence

On the question of violence, I do not deny that there are occasions when there may be no way of stopping it taking place in a revolutionary situation; there may even be occasions when individual acts of violence are justifiable. But it seems to me that the attitude of my comrades shows too great a tendency to accept violence, not as something that is occasionally unavoidable, but as rather a virtue and a necessity.

My contention is that violence is never a virtue and rarely a necessity, and I think that its practice will always be a danger to the cause in which it is used. We should never forget Bakunin's warning that violent revolutions are "always an evil, a monstrous evil and a great disaster, not only with regard to the victims, but also for the sake of the purity and the perfection of the purpose in whose name they take place." That is the warning of a man who has too often and too easily been accepted as the prophet of violence for its own sake.

The connection between violence and power is an intimate one. Psychologically, the man who wields violence tends after a time to be corrupted by it in the same way as the man who uses power; the brutalising effects of the constant use of violence were one of the most evident features of the resistance movements during the last war. A spontaneous burst of violence may be harmless; the kind of continued and organised violence which exists in prolonged civil war inevitably tends to crystallise into inhuman shapes and to produce power complexes among its

practitioners. For this reason I think that violence is such a danger to the revolutionary cause that we should discard it as far as possible, and in no circumstances should indulge in the kind of romantic glorification of it which seems to tempt many revolutionaries.

Does Violence Succeed?

Personally, I think these dangers outweigh all the supposed advantages of violent action. For the pursuit of the class struggle the workers already have vast resources at their disposal in the form of strikes, sabotage, etc., and their true strength lies in the field of militant industrial struggle. It would not be difficult to interpret revolutionary history in such a way as to show that the actual fighting on the barricades signalled a time when the revolution was already in decay. The great moment of the Paris Commune, for instance, was when the fraternisation of the soldiers with the populace took place. The introduction of fighting destroyed that brotherhood in an instant; the time of the barricades coincided with the steady internal degeneration of the commune into an authoritarian form. Similarly, the great moment of the Russian Revolution was when the soldiers accepted the brotherhood of the workers; the subsequent periods of violent action coincided with the assumption of power by an authoritarian party. The whole history of the European resistance movement during the war was a melancholy one; violence merely led to greater violence on the heads of the people the resisters were trying to free, and the only really important victories won by the resistance were those produced by the great strike movements of the Danish and Dutch workers, which completely defeated the resources of the SS and the Gestapo. The results of periods of prolonged civil war on the revolutionary cause have been even more depressing; in their "military" aspects even the Machnovist movement and the Spanish revolution began over a long period of time to show symptoms of authoritarian tendencies. We accept the axiom that "power corrupts"; the corollary is that violence, which is ultimately a form of power, also corrupts. Therefore, while I acknowledge that at times there may be no means of preventing it, and even that isolated acts of violence, such as assassinations, may have actually had good effects, violence in general is too great a danger for our own cause to justify any calm acceptance of it.

G.W.

Square Pegs in Round Holes

ONE of the many degrading aspects of wage work under capitalism is that the vast majority of workers take their jobs for economic rather than vocational reasons. That is, that they have to take some kind of a job in order to live, without being able to make a choice or ever discover (in many cases) what occupation suits them best or what kind of work they find most interesting.

In the days of haphazard free enterprise, when there were long dole queues, the worker on leaving school gravitated into some dead-end job where he was welcomed because, being young, he would be cheaper to employ than an older man. Reaching manhood, when he could claim man's pay, he would find his services "no longer required", when he would join the grey army of unemployed. And then began the depressing, demoralising search for work—any kind of work—to give him back that feeling of being needed, of being useful, which is the fount of the dignity of labour.

To-day, in spite of appearances, the situation is not so very different. Youngsters leaving school with the prospect of being conscripted a few years later, before they have time to learn a trade—which make no difference as far as being called up is concerned—can hardly be expected to take a long-term view in choosing an occupation. They will take a job which will pay them most for the few years before their call-up and leave their future to the Labour Exchange. For with the new re-imposition of labour direction, very nearly all choice in occupation is going to be in the hands, not of the worker himself, but of the man behind the grill at the Labour Exchange, through whom all jobs will have to be obtained.

The Results

There are plenty of arguments on questions of principle against both these influences against the workers' chances of full employment in occupations of their own choice. Leaving those aside

In Brief

KEEP MOVIN'

AS a postscript to our recent article on taxi drivers, the following quote from the *London Evening Standard* may be of interest:

"Mrs. A. M. Stevenson, a Cambridge taxi-fleet owner, starts radio-telephone control of her vehicles on Monday and plans thereby to carry more passengers despite the 10 per cent. cut in petrol allowance.

The taxis will not return to her head office, but will be diverted to fresh customers through orders given over the air.

"Mrs. Stevenson, who owns the 'Camtax' taxi service, said to-day:

'Camtax Calling'

"After some difficulty the Post Office granted me a wavelength, and have allotted 'Camtax' to us as our call-sign. "So on Monday, when 12 taxis go out fitted with radio-telephone, we shall be saying over the transmitter: "Camtax calling No. 60. Go to such-and-such an address and pick up Mrs. Smith."

"The range of the transmitter is 15 miles. "We have taught our drivers to use the sets. For the past week they have been trained in a taxi fitted with the first set."

No more cups of tea on the way back, boys!

Meanwhile, the 10 per cent. petrol cuts will affect the earnings of taxi drivers who haven't the advantages (?) of such an efficient organiser as Mrs. Stevenson as their boss.

The cabmen claim that the cut will mean that their cabs will have to stand in the garage three days a month. Present petrol allowance is 150 gallons, which will be reduced to 135. An attempt to obtain the exclusion of the cab trade from the cuts will possibly be made by the cab section of the T. & G.W.U. Failure to prevent the cuts operating may result in increased fares to offset loss of working time.

SUSPENDED FOR WORKING OVERTIME!

AT a time when the Government and the T.U.C. are cooking up laws and directions to compel workers to work harder and longer hours, the Hastings branch of the Bricklayers' Union has distinguished itself by suspending seven bricklayers for working overtime!

We should like to think that this action is a deliberate resistance to the Government's more-work-for-less-return policy, but we know the Unions a bit better than that!

The men say: "We feel the union should allow us overtime during the summer months. It would give us some compensation for the wages lost during the winter."

Apart from that, the men are working on new housing for the Hastings Corporation, and we should have thought housing was fairly urgent, but, of course, the union knows best!

for now, evidence has now come to light to show the effects of putting square pegs into round holes on the health of the workers concerned.

Between September, 1942 and December, 1944, three doctors of the Medical Research Council's Industrial Health Research Board surveyed a cross-section of the British working-class, mainly in the Birmingham engineering industry, but also checking one factory in Liverpool and three in London, finding practically the same results in each case.

They found that ten per cent. (9.1 per cent. of men, 13 per cent. of women) suffered from definite and disabling neurotic illness, while a further 20 per cent. (19.2 per cent. of men, 23 per cent. of women) suffered minor neurosis.

Neurotic illness caused between a

quarter and a third of all absences from work due to illness.

Widows or women living apart from their husbands showed 15.5 per cent.

In this report,* which has only just been published, the doctors disclose that each of their 3,000 "guinea-pig" subjects was examined twice over a period of some months; firstly, for physical strength and intelligence, and secondly, for psychiatric and physical upsets. In the second examination the doctors were assisted by trained social workers.

Effect of Disliking Work

The effect upon mental health of having to do work which they actually dislike is shown by the fact that of men who dislike their work, or found it boring, 18.3 per cent. had neurosis. Among men who like their work, the comparative figure was 7.4. For women also this was true, the corresponding percentages being 21.3 and ten.

Boredom and discontent were commonest where workers had more skill and intelligence than they were called upon to use, a fact which indicates that workers are happiest when working to their fullest capacity, or giving of their best.

We are glad to see this fact, brought out by medical opinion, for it refutes one of the commonest arguments against the abolition of money or individual profit as an incentive to work: "if there were no advantages to be got from working and studying, everybody would want to be a road-sweeper, or something equally easily mastered, and would not bother to study to become doctors or technicians." An argument patently absurd and part and parcel of capitalist mentality.

Domestic and Sexual Causes

Domestic circumstances also had a strong bearing on neurosis. Among widowers, or those separated from their wives, "definite" nerve trouble was commonest (18.8 per cent.); it was lowest among the normally married men (8 per cent.). Among married women carrying on full home duties it was 7.9 per cent., though the same group showed the highest rate of absenteeism.

These are figures which illustrate pretty definitely the healthy effect of a stabilised sexual life, although in the cases of widowers and men living alone they might have the added responsibility of fending for themselves in the home.

Land Notes

RURAL MELANCHOLY

During the hardly remembered early days of the war, plans and blueprints, reports and recommendations for the bright future were as plentiful and as soon forgotten as New Year resolutions. In view of its long and disastrous neglect, agriculture was one of the most discussed and debated of these hobby-horses of morale-boosting publicists and guilt-stricken politicians. A more intelligent, though unrealistic group of writers on country topics was that known as the "pioneers of rural reconstruction"—such people as Adrian Bell, H. J. Massingham, Lord Northbourne, Rolf Gardiner, Sir R. G. Stapleton and Lord Portsmouth. The last-named, who was the author of the prophetic pre-war book "Famine in England", gave two broadcast talks recently, the first of which analysed "the Anatomy of Rural Melancholy", while in the second, he discussed the task of "Remaking the Village Capitals of England."

Lord Portsmouth first asks the question, "Why are some forty-two million people concentrated in cities, or what to Cobbett were the great wens of Britain?" He denies that depopulation was due to the reasons usually given: bad housing, low wages, and lack of amenities, and states:

"The flight from the land is far more truly a flight to false values than anything else. I do not mean that all townsmen's values are false, but that our civilisation is sick because it has accepted wrong material and mechanistic standards and these, among other things, are depopulating the land. The skill, creativeness and responsibility involved in a job are not the criterion by which it is judged. The world, which wanted cheap food for the industrial millions all engaging in a war of exports, never cared to put right the wrongs of the countryman. It relied on his love of the land or his peasant ownership to make him work, and then exploit the land. At the same time it denigrated all the things he stood for."

The fact that the one main rural industry that survives is farm work itself, says Portsmouth, and the disappearance of various village trades and crafts, have destroyed the basis of the village community.

In the second talk he reminded his listeners that:

"from Anglo-Saxon times, it was the individual village, decentralised for nearly every purpose, that had so much to do in moulding institutions, forming the English sense of independence and self-reliance; indeed this helped to give the Englishman his capacity in times of stress and disaster to work in close loyalty and self-help with his neighbour."

and deploring the disappearance of organic communal village life, went on:

"... I don't agree with certain urban-minded theorists who think that, as farmers, we ought simply to mechanise to the nth degree and so produce a very high output per man, leaving output per acre to take care of itself. But this could only happen on about half our acreage, even if it were possible; the rest is too steep, or wet, or cut off into odd shapes for it. Moreover, in the half that did rely on machines only, the village would have lost all hope of organic community, and, therefore, in the end become impossible to populate."

He tended to contradict the remarks he made in the previous talk,

DIRECT DISTRIBUTION

FOLLOWING on what we had to say in 'Land Notes' in our last issue about ploughing in farm produce and the alternatives of direct distribution, we were very pleased to see this news item in the "News Chronicle" of 15th August:

Cucumbers at 3d each and cabbages at 2d. a lb. were sold from a lorry at West Croydon last night.

The seller was Mr. J. F. Addison, East Grinstead, owner of 18 acres of market gardens.

"I expect I am contravening all sorts of regulations," he said, "but this stuff is due for the plough at the end of next week. This is the only way to get it to the public."

"When I sent two tons of cucumbers to the market last week all they could offer was a shilling for a 56lb. box, and 1d. for cabbage. Nearly all my beans had to be ploughed back this season because I could get nothing for them."

"To-day's expedition is an experiment, but I think something of this kind is required from the growers," he added.

[Hear, hear!—Eds.]
(See Page 1)

when he pooh-poohed the idea that improved housing, higher wages and more amenities would be a factor in repopulating country districts, by advocating all these things. Then follows an appeal for an integral approach to the whole problem, when he very sensibly observes that:

"Life was not brought back to the Tennessee Valley merely by exploiting it for aluminum and phosphates. The rivers were harnessed to stop erosion and help navigation, so too were trees planted and farmers taught to farm to save the soil. But, because the approach was organic, the water power from the harnessed river brought electricity to the farm and made local minerals available for conversion. The point is that the Tennessee Valley redemption scheme is not based on specialisation, but putting

first things first and branching from them along every natural opening."

The talk ended with a rather lame appeal for the lifting of death duties, especially in the case of landlords with a sense of social responsibility, like (one imagines) Lord Portsmouth himself; it would I think, be incorrect to merely to dismiss him as just another diehard old aristocrat born a few hundred years too late, even though he is a onetime Tory M.P. and Chairman of the Central Landowners' Association. From some points of view (witness the quotations above), his attitude must be regarded as far more enlightened than that of many 'progressive' politicians. But the real and fatal weakness of Lord Portsmouth's group of writers, including even that first-rate agricultural authority, Sir R. G. Stapleton, is that they leave completely out of account the economic basis of society. As G.V. said in these notes a year ago: "they appear to be genuinely unaware of the fact that under the existing Capitalist-Imperialist set-up it is just not possible to have a prosperous home agriculture". Or in the words of George Orwell: they want a "kind of moralised feudalism, a society neither plutocratic nor equalitarian". They "are aware that *laissez-faire* capitalism is finished but are frightened of the real alternatives. They want more charity but not more justice—redistribution of income, for instance, but not a redistribution of property. In other words, they want a better world with the same people at the top."

Like Massingham, and like many others who worship a quite false and idealised picture of the past, Portsmouth is an inveterate mediaevalist. He yearns for the days when, in his view "Countrymen of all classes were intensely conscious of their responsibilities and aware of their personal standing and individuality". But in his nostalgia for the days of *noblesse oblige* and the respectful touching of caps, he forgets the picture drawn of his own class by one of his prophets, William Cobbett: "There is in the men calling themselves 'English country gentlemen' something superlatively base. They are, I sincerely believe, the most cruel, the most unfeeling, the most brutally insolent; but I know, I can prove, I can safely take my oath, that they are the most base of all creatures that God ever suffered to disgrace the human shape."

It is a pity that such a perceptive observer, and such an intelligent farmer, so much of whose social criticism is valid and correct, should be unable to free himself from the arrogant assumptions and traditionalist preoccupations of his class, which is doomed by its own folly, by economic changes and by historical evolution. C.W.

Almost alone among social movements to-day do anarchists stress the importance to health and independence of a free sex life, and although there is nothing in this report advocating the freedom we demand, the figures do show that an insufficient home life is destructive of nervous health.

True for To-day

Although the survey was made in wartime, the doctors are of the opinion that their findings still hold good for the peace. Of course, they do. In fact, the disillusionment and disappointment spreading among all workers to-day could be calculated to increase neurosis and unhappiness.

Our future is dark and unsettled, our work monotonous and unsatisfying. The wonder is that neurotics are still in the minority!

*The Incidence of Neurosis Among Factory Workers, H.M. Stationery Office—1/-.

Catering Workers Strike

IN our last issue we drew attention to discontent in the catering industry and the threat of a week-end strike by Lyon's Corner House workers. On Saturday lunchtime a lightning strike was held by 1,000 Lyon's workers at the Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch and the neighbouring Corner House.

At the Cumberland, the reason given for the stoppage was a threatened action by the management against the secretary of the workers' action committee, J. Hogarth, who is also the union representative on the job. He had been served with an injunction by the company to restrain him from inciting or organising unofficial strikes.

The workers also claimed they had been promised a discussion on the question of tips, which had not taken place.

No Warning

A strike at a meal-time, however, is always calculated to make a catering management jump to it, and the workers were only out about three hours before the company agreed to withdraw the injunction. No warning had been given to the management of the workers' intention to strike. Indeed, the decision was only taken a few minutes before they walked out, leaving the tables half-laid and 720 hungry customers without their luncheon.

The Company's Offer

The Corner House strike was equally unexpected. The threat to strike given the week before had been withdrawn pending negotiations, but when the staff heard the Cumberland were out on another issue they did not hesitate to join them. And although the company had only agreed to consider their claim for £4 per week, excluding tips, on the understanding that the strike threat was withdrawn, the strike probably had the good effect of underlining the determination of the workers. For only three days after the strike, an official of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers announced that waiters and waitresses at Lyon's Corner Houses had been offered "floor money" varying from 15s. to 25s. a week according to the floor on which they were working. Whether this is going to be accepted by the workers on anything but a "to-be-going-on-with" basis is not yet clear.

The dropping-off in tips following the report of the Catering Wages Commission on tips arose out of confusion over what class of establishment was to be affected by the new wage scales for catering workers. These affected workers in *unlicensed* premises. Lyon's Corner Houses, of course, are licensed, and wage scales for this class of establishment are not yet agreed upon.

FRANK PIAZZA AGAIN

THE case of Frank Piazza, the Savoy Hotel waiter and shop steward, whose suspension in March led to strikes in several London hotels, has been brought to the front again by the fact that he has now won his case before the National Arbitration Tribunal.

He was suspended for alleged indiscipline, and was kept on the payroll without working until only a few weeks ago, when, while the Tribunal was sitting, he was dismissed.

In the opinion of the union, at whose request the dispute was referred to arbitration, the award in his favour obliges the Savoy to reinstate him in his old job. The Savoy management, however, have shown themselves to be singularly unaffected by what the union thinks, and will most probably refuse to reinstate Piazza.

A little direct action will do the trick...

INCENTIVES?

Kent farmers have been warned by the County Agricultural Committee that prisoner-of-war labour will be withdrawn if they tip them for extra work.

Evening News, 6/8/47.

Letter from **France**

REBIRTH OF REVOLUTIONARY UNIONISM

At the same time as Communist influence in French political life is noticeably declining, with the loss of prestige of the Soviet Union in French governing circles; organised labour is freeing itself from Stalinist clutches.

Changed conditions, not entirely in working-class affairs only, have favoured the birth of an independent trade-unionism.

The great swindle of Resistance "Unity" has ended, both in people's actions and in their mental attitudes. On the other hand, the "Western" regrouping favoured by the Marshall Plan, has resulted in an anti-Soviet line-up. The anti-communist political climate has had its effect on the trade union movement.

It would, however, be an obvious over-simplification to explain these tendencies solely in terms of internal or foreign politics. For working-class affairs have also influenced it.

All those minority groups which have continued to fight against Stalinist intrigue, in spite of the patriotic chorus, and the "Holy Alliance"; have done so under the harsh imperatives of the class struggle.

STALINIST BETRAYALS

We have previously mentioned the *Livre* strikes, those of the P.T.T. employees, of the railwaymen and Renault workers. All these took place against the will of the communist bosses of the C.G.T. The strikers have been denounced as provocateurs, as agents of the trusts, as diversionists. Insults, threats and shady manoeuvres by the Stalinist bureaucrats have hampered those who have remained faithful to the principles of independent militant unionism, of solidarity and of free expression at working-class meetings.

But these strikes have clearly posed the problem before the eyes of a mass of wage-earners, duped by demagoguery and Communist propaganda. More than the reviews and weeklies of the various minorities, the actual example of industrial struggles wittingly broken up and betrayed by the "Party of the People", will open their eyes.

The minorities do not lack voices. They have not only the organ of the old federation, *Force Ouvrière*, strongly influenced by the socialists of the S.F.I.O., and destined to link all the supporters of a democratic trade-union movement, but also *L'Action Syndicaliste*, organ of the old minority of the *Democratic Ouvrière*; without taking into account the *Cahiers du C.E.T.E.S.* circulated amongst trade-union groups, other bulletins, periodicals and various more or less ephemeral leaflets.

They all have one characteristic in common, an equal hatred of communist dictatorship, a common desire to break the Stalinist stranglehold of the C.G.T.

"CASHING IN"

Imperialist influences (American and British) have made themselves felt in opposition circles. Thus, the U.S. diplomatic service, has a trade-union attaché, closely connected with certain of the opposition leaders. The C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. have their delegates in Paris, plentifully supplied with instruction and funds. As for General de Gaulle's *Rassemblement du Peuple Français*, they too are busy trying to build up little circles of sympathisers within the big industrial unions.

What a Surprise for the (Argentine) Duce!

SENORA PERON will not, according to the latest reports, visit us after all. After the Government decided to give her what practically amounted to a State reception—the Cabinet to have met her, the Queen to have received her, a long programme mapped out for her by industrialists and the like, Senora Peron announced that she would not visit England after her friendly visits to Franco and the Pope.

An insult to her would-be hosts here, who had prepared so much and swallowed so many insults on her behalf? This is unlikely because it is stated that Senora Peron's "postponement" of her visit may be due to "hostile Press comment". We have not seen much hostile comment in the Press, which has fawned upon her, and lavishly entertained us with stories of her reception in Spain; surely this means fear of a hostile reception which obviously would not have come from the upper crust of business men and Labour peers who would have greeted her. It rather looks as if Eva Peron was afraid that being the wife of a dictator she might have had a hostile reception from the working-class of this country.

To her perhaps the "uncultured Anglo-Saxons" are still of the breed that last century produced the Barclay and

Nevertheless, there are genuinely revolutionary elements, which have been the first to combat Stalinism in the proletarian arena. It was a young metal-worker named Bois who led the Renault strike committee, which, thanks to the solidarity of the foundry-workers, has struck a resounding blow to the formidable political-industrial apparatus of the C.P. It was the rank-and-file militants who organised the postal-workers' strike, despite the opposition of the Federation. And it was a minority committee outside the union which started the first railway strike at Villeneuve Saint Georges, which in turn brought out all the railway-workers, forcing the Federation to negotiate.

THE FRENCH C.N.T.

The libertarian and anarcho-syndicalist forces had already started the C.N.T. (*Confédération Nationale du Travail*), linking together all the main groups of workers, in the building trades, the metal, railway and food industries, etc.

The successes won by independent working-class action, without political support or external help have aroused great interest amongst the French bourgeoisie, the adherents of the "Marshall Plan", and the imperialist groups. That is why considerable caution is needed in attempting to interpret the real meaning of the differences of opinion within the trade union movement.

But one thing is certain. When the C.N.T. clearly defined its revolutionary position; unequivocally condemned all compromise with the State; called for direct action and declared for a free

society of producers as the first aim of the whole movement for workers' emancipation; the possibilities of capitalist or imperialist intervention were reduced.

When the veteran strikers of the P.T.T. decided to leave the official federation, where they no longer had the right to express themselves and where they had to put up with officials who preached class collaboration; we could not but applaud. When the catering workers and Metro employees of Paris, disgusted with reformism and with the political trickery of the Stalinist bosses, started their own independent unions, we supported them.

But when we see certain reformist leaders, ousted from their union jobs by the Stalinists, dreaming of a governmental or corporative unionism on the "Labour Front" pattern, and hoping to fool the workers into forming new organisations on these lines, we must put the workers on guard against them.

We must not put ourselves in the position of defending, under the pretext of anti-Stalinism (which in France, as in America, is a magnet for all sorts of adventurers and would-be dictators), the "Christian" unions, reserved for strike-breakers, or company unions, or State syndicates.

OUR TASKS

The only safeguard, far more than all the statutes and rules and regulations, which are always open to juggling and evasion, is to keep up our activity in the factories, dock-yards and offices, our participation in all revolutionary movements, our patient work of education and enlightenment, our struggle against

the union bureaucracy.

We are anti-communist only insofar as we fight against all tyranny, exploitation and dictatorship.

Otherwise, we would run the risk of being made use of by any Right-wing organisation, seeking for working-class cannon-fodder for a war against Russia.

That is why the anarchist groups must keep up a constant fight on two fronts, ceaselessly working to build up an independent revolutionary consciousness, looking neither to Moscow or to Washington, free from the deception of capitalist "democracy", and from the slave mentality of the technocrats and the political police.

Young forces are joining us and neighbouring groups, matured by long and hard experience, are linking up with us.

Thus we greet with pleasure the re-appearance of the syndicalist review, *La Révolution Proletarienne*, which represents the views of hundreds of seasoned militants. We do not subscribe to what we consider to be the illusions of Pierre Monatte (the adversary of Malatesta's ideas at the Amsterdam Congress) on the rôle of the syndicate, and its possibilities, but we are nevertheless happy to work side-by-side whenever possible, and in mutual esteem. There are not many revolutionaries who have kept their faith intact and maintained, through 40 years of struggle their intellectual honesty. And there is no greater solidarity than that of people who remain true to their ideal, those who are known as idiots by the political careerists, because they will not capitulate. S. PARANE.

Conference on Revolutionary Working Class Organisation

[We print below a report we have received from a Dutch comrade of a conference held in Brussels at Whitsun to discuss the question of revolutionary working-class organization. The conference was organized by the group of Dutch workers who publish the revolutionary paper "Spartakus", advocating anti-parliamentary communism. *Freedom Press* was invited to send a representative to this conference, but was unable to do so. Our Dutch correspondent advocates "Council Communism"; that is to say, the organization of revolutionary workers in committees ("councils" or "soviats", in the old sense), aiming at the taking over of the means of production by the workers themselves, and the total abolition of the wages system. In a covering letter he writes: "We go on slowly but surely in the cause of council-communism. We are convinced that much hard work and continued propaganda of an uncompromisingly revolutionary and non-party nature is necessary and that a labour movement does not grow up in a single night..." We entirely concur in this opinion.—Eds.]

The object of this meeting was a discussion of mass movements, the various problems which centre round this phenomenon and the possibilities of a better contact. The discussions were attended by Communistenbond Spartacus Holland, the Belgian Bordigist Party, the Belgian Union of Council-Socialists, Gauche Communiste de France, which publishes *Internationalisme*, the Editor of *Le*

Proletaire and comrades from Italy and Switzerland.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain sent its declaration of principles and a French group sent its best wishes.

The subjects for consideration were: the present situation, new forms of class struggle, task and organisation of the vanguard, the State, dictatorship of the proletariat and proletarian democracy, and concrete proposals.

The discussions were held in an atmosphere of good comradeship, though there was quite a range of opinions. The subjects overlapped and were not treated in a systematic manner. It was unfortunate that the constitution of the Belgian Union of Council-Socialists, which was rejected by all the other groups, was treated here as it took much precious time and hampered a regular discussion on far more important subjects. The points of view diverged too much or were not sufficiently co-ordinated to gain the desired result, so the conference did not lead to very concrete results.

Though the Anarchists were not represented, the chairman was one and he said that we could not, at present, expect anything from the mass, but that there was still work for the militant individuals. The stand this old comrade takes is the independent class movement, but it is clear that behind the difference in terms there is also a lack of common opinion.

The Leninists of "Internationalisme" were convinced that the masses had to overthrow capitalism, but they could not arrive at the necessary degree of consciousness, for in spite of their form of struggle, they would never overcome the trade union consciousness. A revolutionary party is the necessary condition for revolutionary development. This point of view was given in a clever, thorough and interesting way.

With regard to the spontaneous strikes they and the Bordigists were pessimistic as they did not see in it a new course or a way in which the independent control of social life by the workers would ripen, but merely an expression of international disorder without any guarantee of leading in a revolutionary direction.

With regard to the situation of capitalism, many contrary views were pressed. A representative from Brussels thought it as dead as a doornail, while others were of opinion that it was still going strong.

A Belgian Council-Socialist had little confidence in the masses but wanted to cooperate with the middle-class in a plan for socialism. He advocated free schools and universities so that proletarians could take key positions and be able to control social life.

Spartakus wrote a pamphlet "The New World" for this occasion which was also translated into French and will soon appear in English. Its central point is the significance of the mass movement, which was explained here in all its effects on the various aspects of class struggle.

Le Proletaire joined our views. As a reconciliation of class-contrasts is impossible, the aim of the masses will develop accordingly.

TENSION RISING AMONG JEWISH AND ARAB WORKERS

Following on a demonstration strike of 40,000 Jewish and Arab workers employed by the War Department in Palestine in protest against the non-recognition of their trade unions and against the conditions of employment, tension is again rising among the Jewish and Arab workers. Negotiations entered into between the General Federation of Jewish Labour, Arab Trade Unions and representatives of the War Department have resulted in deadlock, as the War Department representatives announced that they had no power to negotiate or come to any decision.

The facts of the case are that, after the outbreak of the war, when the military began to employ civilians on a large scale, a new sector of employment was created where thousands of Arabs and Jews worked together. From the very beginning the Histadruth set out to promote co-operation between all War Department employees and to further their common interests, and from the outset the employees have made constant and repeated representations to the appropriate military authorities. In spite of continuous representations these demands have not yet been fulfilled. Moreover, recognition for the Jewish and Arab trade unions in which War Department employees are organised, has been consistently withheld, even though it is they who have conducted negotiations with the authorities on a "de facto" basis.

Following the strike, a joint delegation of Jewish and Arab War Department workers was received by the Director of the Government Public Works Department at which the workers' demands were again put forward and immediate Government intervention with the military authorities requested.

Finally, last week, a joint delegation representing all organised War Department employees was received at the military headquarters in Jerusalem. In negotiations lasting a full day, the representatives presented their demands for basic rates of pay and other improved working conditions, since the conditions for War Department employees are far below those accepted and generally practised in industrial and Government concerns.

The struggle of the War Department employees for their rights is noteworthy for the co-operation between Jews and Arabs, not only as fellow-employees, but through their respective trade unions which, despite differences of a political nature, have jointly undertaken to bring about an improvement in the workers' conditions.

Jewish Labour News, 10/7/47.

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The Fallacy of 'Justice'

Twenty-one years ago an American named Frank Harris and his friend Wilbert MacQueen were stopped by two policemen in Philadelphia, and shots were exchanged between the two pairs of men. In the fray, MacQueen was killed, while Harris and one of the policemen were wounded.

Harris then found himself arraigned for the murder of MacQueen. The police evidence was piled up against him, and the court brushed aside Harris's pleas of innocence. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

At last, after twenty-one years, a friendly lawyer, by securing an expert examination of the bullet that killed MacQueen, has proved that the gun Harris carried could not have fired it,

and the man who had served 21 years' imprisonment for a crime he could not have committed was released from prison—his only compensation a suit of clothes and ten dollars, less than half-a-crown a year for his sufferings.

Apart from the intrinsic interest of the case, and the kind of treatment which is meted out to a man after half a lifetime of unjust imprisonment, this case offers an interesting vindication of one of our criticisms of State "justice". A fact which the law always fails to recognise is that evidence is always suspect, and that a man can often have the most compromising facts against him and yet be completely innocent of the crime of which he is accused.

It is merely another example of the impossibility of gaining justice through the law. Even if there were anything to be said for punishment, the impossibility of deciding with any real objectivity the merits of a case of this kind is such that for one man who finds himself released after so many years, there must have been very many men who were executed or who served long terms of imprisonment for crimes which they did not commit. One has only to consider the number of murder cases in England in recent years in which men have been sentenced to death when some kind of doubt existed of their actual guilt to realise how enormously unjust, even according to its own standards, the law is.

COMPLETE

Cairo plans to have its "Fleet-street", where large newspapers will be published in press "palaces" within a stone's throw of each other, says Reuter.

Plans are already taking shape. One paper is in operation; two others have taken sites, and an evening paper plans an up-to-date building—with an entrance hall, capable of seating 300, dining rooms, drugstore, hair-dressing shops, and a prayer site.

Star, 9/8/47.

THE STATE OF GERMANY

HAVING just returned from a visit to Germany, one cannot help feeling the tremendous waste of human activity; how a once active people is completely degenerating because of lack of food and its consequences. Most of us know that the Germans are under-nourished and half-starved, but to have been amongst them and seen it is another story. I was prepared to believe that conditions were frightful, but not quite as bad as they actually are.

The majority of people live on a diet which we would not feed our animals with. Nearly every meal consists of some kind of brown mush, cereals or beans cooked in water. The fat and meat rations are so minute, that they contribute almost nothing. To feed in a restaurant a German has to give up fat, bread and cereal coupons, although his meal never contains a gram of fat, nor does he get any bread. A restaurant meal usually consists of boiled potatoes and one vegetable, such as carrots, turnips or brown beans. There is nothing else to be had, no bread, no meat, no fish, not even a cup of tea or coffee.

The Food Shortage

The town people simply do not know how to manage, and many with whom I talked said that they had been hungry for two or three years. And even to get their miserable and totally inadequate quantity of food entails whole days of effort, standing in endless queues, going out to the country or carrying on barter trade for tiny quantities of food which to us would not seem worth the trouble. But many are far too weak even to leave their houses. In the streets one only sees the comparatively healthy. The really sick and the old are never seen; theirs is a fate of death by slow starvation.

Combined with this there is an almost complete lack of other consumption goods. Even the smallest items like cotton or shoe laces have enormous scarcity value, while new clothes have been almost unobtainable since the middle of the war. German people look surprisingly neat and clean, but their clothes are always old and mended in the most complicated manner. The lack of good shoes is particularly noticeable. I saw many women going bare-footed, and soon became conscious of the envy with which people noticed my own comparatively new shoes.

Of course, as usual, things can be bought on the black market. But black market prices in Germany are not like those in France or England. The prices of foodstuffs have risen out of all proportion; a pound of butter costs 200 marks—the monthly wage of a skilled worker, a pound of coffee 500 marks—about 250 times its value in normal times. Ten cigarettes cost between 60 and 90 marks—approximately £2-£3 in English money. This black market is carried on initially by occupation troops—British, American, Belgian, Danish, Norwegian, etc., who for some reason are all in evidence in the British zone. But after this the goods are sold from German to German, and many of the young people follow no other occupation but buying and selling these black market goods all day long. The moral degeneration resulting from this kind of life is only too evident. Yet to be able to live every German has to indulge in some kind of black market activity.

German Youth

In fact, the question of German youth is a very critical one. What future they have is doubtful. Ordinary productive work has come almost to a standstill, except for land work and mining; the

normal occupations and crafts hardly exist any longer, because of lack of raw materials and the destruction of factories and houses, although some of the latter are already being rebuilt out of material salvaged from bombed sites. And, of course, as the wages are so pitifully small and the black market provides a far easier source of income, many of the younger people do not feel inclined to work for their living.

A considerable number of Germans are employed by the Allied military government, as drivers, mechanics, cooks, porters, cleaners, etc. The British occupation authorities, of course, much prefer to employ these Germans, as their wages are low, while economic insecurity and the possibility of getting extra food renders them often subservient. The British officials positively enjoy themselves in the rôle of sahibs. At one hotel where I stayed, which could accommodate twelve people, but where usually only two or three people stayed, there were employed thirteen Germans and five English soldiers. This waste of manpower is going on all over Germany.

Officially, the German workers and the British soldiers were supposed to keep apart; the Germans had to eat in the cellar, the British tommies had their own dining room on the ground floor; but I was glad to see that they all cared little about these regulations, and fraternised admirably. On the whole the British private soldier is liked in Germany, but the personnel of the Control Commission, the civil administration, are hated by British soldiers and German civilians alike.

The Universities

To return to the question of the German youth. The manual workers are at a loose end, with no future before them, and the students and intellectual workers are in no better position. For instance, at Göttingen University only 8 to 10% of the applicants can be admitted for study. The examinations are made particularly difficult, to avoid having too many students. The great problem here is again how to house and feed them. Göttingen used to have a population of 47,000 inhabitants; now there are 100,000, mostly refugees from the Russian zone. Furthermore, the British army school occupies 33% of the University lecture rooms. Then there is a drastic lack of books; most of them were destroyed during the war. On the whole study is made so difficult that the young people give up in desperation. Despite the two student restaurants and the 4,500 meals which are served every day, under-nourishment is so devastating that almost all the students are under weight, particularly the men; the average deficiency in weight is 10 to 15%, but in some cases it is as much as 30%. And medical evidence shows that 5 to 6% suffer from tuberculosis; this means that the percentage among the workers is probably even higher.

According to many Germans, the universities are still the strongholds of Nazism, or rather of militarism, although I was assured by the rector of Göttingen University that all the students were very unpolitical—in fact very critical of any kind of politics. Unfortunately, this rejection of politics is not of a positive kind, but usually indicates a desire to evade any kind of social responsibility. I came across it again and again, but after discussion it often boiled down to the attitude: "We don't want to bother our heads about politics, all we want is some good leader who will get us out of this mess." Such a desire to shelve personal responsibility helped to bring Hitler into

power, and if the Germans continue in this way of thinking they will get a new Nazism. Naturally, they see democracy as the farce it is, but I could see little evidence, except among isolated individuals, of any positive rejection of political leadership as such. The conditioning of generations has still a very strong hold, and is encouraged by the conditions of occupation, and, while the only hope is that the German people will think and act for themselves, I encountered little reason for undue optimism on this ground.

Social conditions on the whole are so depressing that many people fall a prey to the tendency to put their hope in another war. Over and over again I heard, "If the Americans and British do not declare war soon on Russia, we shall be completely lost." It was little use pointing out that any case they would be the sufferers; that does not seem to matter in the slightest, and many people, workers and intellectuals alike, say they would join up in a war against Russia, although so many of the young men are wounded and maimed (I was struck by the number of crippled young men one saw in the streets); in this mood they become any easy prey to Anglo-American inspired militarist propaganda.

The Russian Zone

The Russian menace is a word in constant use by British and Germans alike; every day one hears new stories of terror and persecution, and people from the Russian zone continue to stream across the frontiers illegally into the British zone. Many of them prefer to start again with nothing rather than live in their own homes. From many refugees to whom I talked I got the impression that unless you are a Communist life is hardly worth

living there. The old concentration camps used by the Nazis are still standing, and packed full, while many thousands of Germans are regularly being spirited away to Russia for forced labour.

Another interesting fact is that the Russians continue to use the underground factories built by the Nazis for manufacturing flying bombs, rockets and other war material. These factories work 24 hours a day. Nobody knows what is being produced, but one can make a reasonable guess.

Under the Russians, the peasants have a particularly difficult time. 90% of all goods produced have to be handed over to the Russians. This allocation is made at the beginning of the year, and has to be fulfilled, no matter whether their live-

stock die or crops fail. This means often that the peasant has to buy milk and eggs on the black market to make up his quota, and many have had to leave their farms and flee into the British zone because they could not keep it up.

The same applies to German industry. Most of the factories are being dismantled; the machines go to Russia, and are completely useless by the time they get there. Even railway trucks and telegraph cables have been taken up, so that almost all the railway lines work on single tracks, with a consequent dislocation of transport.

End Occupation

Clearly, the only move that can make any immediate effect on the German problem would be for the occupiers to get off the backs of the people and leave them to carry out their own reconstruction without the crippling burdens that are laid on them. This also is the only way in which the resurgence of Nazi ideas is likely to be halted.

But a great deal can be done if workers elsewhere will show their solidarity with the Germans. It is surprising how even the smallest act of friendship helps them to overcome their feeling of isolation. Food parcels, for instance, have a moral effect out of all proportion to their material value, and action on the part of the British people to demand an end to the occupation and the zoning system would undoubtedly help vastly to counteract the spreading of despairing doctrines of authority and war.

INGEBORG WOODCOCK.

ANOTHER ONE . . .

Gen. Dornberger, who during the war, was in charge of Germat experiments on rocket bombs, has been flown to the United States from No. 1 P.O.W. Camp at Island Farm, Bridgend.

He is to assist American scientists. Dornberger had been at Bridgend camp for only about three months.

He was taken to Germany about three weeks ago to see his family and obtain documents and files.

After returning to Bridgend to collect his luggage he was flown to America.

He is understood to be receiving an additional allowance from the American Government for his collaboration.

News Chronicle, 7/8/47.

Some go to Russia, some to America. Ah, well! That makes it fair, doesn't it?

Brazilian Exploitation

News of social unrest steadily continues to filter through from Brazil, where changes of government have made no alteration to the vast exploitation of the workers and peasants. A recent report in *The Economist* (9.8.47) backs these stories with some quite startling information about the actual conditions of living in this country.

According to this report, the standard of living of many of the Brazilian urban poor is now little higher than that of the average German, while prices have risen to such a catastrophic height that it has become one of the most expensive countries for living in the world.

Food prices in the cities are now more than four times as high as they were before the war; clothes cost almost five times as much as they did in 1939. Wages have certainly risen, but not to nearly the same proportion, and the gap between costs and wages is growing steadily.

Capitalist Greed

Behind these figures lies an almost fantastic story of capitalist greed and incompetence. It was recently revealed by deputies in the Brazilian Congress that foodstuffs, imported duty-free from abroad were being sold by speculators at a profit of no less than 500%! One Brazilian textile manufacturer stated publicly that if his mills did not make at least 100% profit on costs of production, he would close them down. Government measures to control this profiteering have been nominal and useless. An export ban on textiles which was supposed to ensure

cheaper domestic supplies, had no effect at all; on the contrary, while it was in operation, the prices of clothes jumped about 7%. The textile manufacturers preferred to manufacture fewer goods at a higher price, in order to ensure their profit, and merely sacked their employees, some 50,000 men being thrown out of work in Sao Paulo alone, while retaining more or less the same return for themselves.

In other ways Brazil remains a speculator's paradise. Interest rates on loans have pushed up to 15%, as against about 3% here, which means a larger share than ever for the capitalists. In Rio, where there is a desperate housing shortage, landowners have pushed the price of sites up to £500 a square metre, making it impossible to build anything but luxury flats.

Food Shortage

This wild capitalist carnival has resulted not merely in a vast rise in prices, but also in a positive fall in the production of food and other vital necessities. The population of Brazil has risen by more than 10% between 1939 and 1944, but the actual volume of food production has fallen by about 5%. In the mining areas and in the north-eastern districts there are really bad food shortages, and malnutrition exists over large areas of the country. The shortage is due largely to the fact that, as in England, land workers are paid such miserable wages that they are forced to go into the slightly better paid industrial occupations, but there they become entrapped in a vicious circle, since the rising cost of living nullifies wages, and is only aggravated by the shortage of land workers and consequent under-production of food.

The situation is worsened by the fact that agriculture has little modern equipment, while the transport system is proving wholly inadequate to convey food supplies from areas where they are relatively abundant to those where they are needed. This again is due to capitalist greed—since money has been spent on equipping factories which would provide a quick return rather than concentrating first on the more basic requirements of rebuilding agriculture and equipping railways and ports.

American Imperialism

Meanwhile, behind the rapacious activities of native capitalists, there stands the shadow of American economic imperialism. 60% of Brazilian imports come from the U.S.A., the adverse trade balance is increasing steadily, and the time is approaching when Brazil will accept an even greater economic dependence in the new American empire.

It is a grim story of greed and ruthless exploitation behind which we can discern the terrible sufferings of an oppressed people. Brazil is, potentially, a land of plenty. There are few countries more amply endowed with valuable natural products. But even in such a land the inevitable tendencies of capitalism create a scarcity that is wholly artificial and could be remedied almost immediately by a rational social reconstruction. It would be difficult to find a more terrible example of the complete inefficiency of the capitalist system.

Sacco and Vanzetti

(Continued from page 2)

When Vanzetti was in the electric chair he said, "I wish to forgive some people for what they are now doing to me." He had been urged by his lawyer, W. G. Thompson, only a few hours before, to forgive all, and not to ask for any vengeance. Clearly, Vanzetti meant that he could not forgive Fuller, Thayer, Katzmann, and the cold-hearted old men of the governor's advisory committee. Nor can we forgive them. These men are damned forever, and properly so. Doubtless it is the operation of the system of society in which they held key positions which warped them from being feeling human beings into cold, vicarious hangmen. But men are first of all men, and only secondarily the products of society. That they forget their humanity and willingly assume the rôle of supporters of an unjust society is the reason for all the cruelty and pain and injustice in society, and they cannot be absolved from responsibility. Such men make the violent cleavages in society inevitable; they are the true authors of the brutality of class struggle. This was surely what Vanzetti meant when he wrote:

"There is no spirit of sacrifice in this deed. I simply realize to be in merciless hands and do my utmost to say to my enemy that he is wrong.

"Authority, Power and Privelege would not last a day upon the face of the earth, were it not because those who possess them, and those who prostitute their army to their defence, to suppress, repress, mercilessly and inescapably every efforts of liberation of each and all the rebels.

"The struggle for the liberty, between the oppressor and the oppressed, shall continue beyond the life, beyond the graves. I know what they have done and are doing to me and to thousands of others, rebels and lovers. And I know that they are and will always be ready to do against us. I know the millions of youth that they slandered, the virgins that they have torn in the breast; the millions of wives that they have widowed; the millions of bastards that they let to miasma in the gutter, or grown to fabricide. I know the old fathers and mothers whom they killed by breaking their hearts; and all the children that they starved and are starving to death; and the hospitals and the crazy houses filled of their victims, and the little criminals, victims, irresponsible and semi-compelled to crime that they mercilessly executed and entombed alive. They have never had pity . . . and they never will have it.

"Until not a man will be exploited or oppressed by another man, we will never bend the banner of freedom.

"I will ask for revenge . . . The only vengeance that could placate me is the realization of freedom, the great deliverance which would benefit all my friends as well as all my enemies . . . But till that, the struggle goes on, till we are breath to breath with the enemy, fighting with short arms, till then, to fight is our duty, our right, our necessity . . . Justice is suppressed with fire and iron, by the tyrants and their blackguards, and for iron and fire the liberation calls.

"This is war for plutocracy against liberty, against the people.

"We die for Anarchy, long live Anarchy."

The pity, the humanity, the selflessness of these two workers in the end triumphs even over the horrors of their case, and one's final feeling is one of exaltation before the greatness of the human spirit.

J.H.

Middle East Notes 'Liberating' Italian Colonies

NEEDLESS to say, the average person at home is not in the least interested in the sandy, arid, trackless desert known as Libya; with the exception of those who may know it as the last resting-place of their lost in the Eighth Army. And yet Libya, useless and unprofitable, is costing you a million pounds a year and will sooner or later cost more lives, while, for the privilege of looking after this waste of space, the Great Powers will soon be snarling like dogs.

EMPIRE OF SAND

Mussolini's former Empire was a gigantic triumph of colossal waste. Money poured into Libya like "gold on sand" and there is nothing to show for it. It possesses nothing of value, except Tobruk, which is a natural harbour, a lone port for a thousand miles of Mediterranean, and for this strategic spot the Great Powers are prepared to carry the burden of the rest of Libya. The occupying power has to look after the population, at present in the grip of starvation, and a recent Egyptian "Red Crescent" Mission said that its mental starvation after years of Fascist Imperialism, was worse than its physical malnutrition. Whoever Power gets Libya will have to look after the Libyans; needless to say they are all prepared to hold schools to "indoctrinate" the

Arabs, who would, however, prefer to see the whole lot clear out and leave them to themselves to struggle out of their plight as best they can, without being subject meantime to foreign oppression.

"LIBERATION"

The present situation is that France, which "liberated" the Fezzan, is holding on to it; Britain which "liberated" the rest of Libya, has divided it into two parts, (to the indignation of the Libyan Arabs). Tripolitania and Cyrenaica—no doubt with an eye on future sharing-out. (A wartime promise was made to the Grand Senussi, Sayed Mohammed El-Senussi, that the Senussi people, who had suffered so much under Fascism, would never again be subjected to Italian rule if they helped the Allies. This is the sort of promise often made by Britain! It will probably be kept. It would apply to Cyrenaica but not necessarily to Tripolitania).

Meantime the British Military Administration controls both these artificially created states at a terrific cost to the British tax-payer and consumer, who has to forego so much to "save" in view of the crisis, and yet sees what is saved, squandered on such enterprises as this gigantic "white elephant", in order to get, if possible, another Singapore or Hong-Kong—another useless fortress. This is in spite of the fact

that we are supposed to be giving up our Mediterranean interests in Palestine and Egypt, and our interests in India—on the route to which, lies Tobruk!

QUEUE FOR THE SPOILS

The United States are also after bases in Tripoli. France wants to keep Fezzan (next to French Tunisia), Egypt wants trusteeship—either for herself or the Arab League, Britain holds on, and even Russia has put in a claim. All for an arid desert and a backward population which must be supported but would prefer to do the job itself, at whatever suffering. Whichever power wins will not only squander money on the thankless desert; it will also, in the course of years, face an Arab rising. All the political parties are anti-foreign. Anti-foreign riots have been called by the Kotla Party of Ali El-Fighi Hassan; the Arab Liberation Committee is working for independence in Cairo; the United Nationalists, at present the dominant party, are turning more extreme.

WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

You, who are doing without at home and have taken over Mussolini's bankrupt empire on the strength of your sacrifices, will one day be asked to go over the sands on which so many British soldiers perished, to see that these "backward Arabs" do not prevent us from wasting our money on them.

A.M.

ERICH MÜHSAM

This article on Erich Mühsam has been sent to us by a German comrade who himself underwent ten years' confinement in Nazi concentration camps for his anarchist opinions. For obvious reasons, as he is still in Germany, we cannot give his full name.

★ Twelve years ago the following report appeared in the official German press: "The social-democratic (sic) writer Erich Mühsam, known for his activities in connection with the Munich hostage murder, who was in custody, has ended his life by committing suicide."

Those of us who knew Mühsam knew also that a vile murder had been committed. A few months later, we received a detailed report, which appeared in the illegal newspaper *The Black Front*, concerning the occurrences immediately preceding Mühsam's death. Whoever has been in custody in Germany knows what was meant by the official report "Committed Suicide".

Mühsam's Death

I would like to reproduce an account given me by a friend of mine who shared Mühsam's imprisonment. He wrote:

"With Erich Mühsam I often talked, and came to like him very much. In the prison of Sonnenberg he was never left alone. He had to live through dreadful days there; nearly every day he was beaten. One day Mühsam and the former deputy to the Berlin Diet, Kasper, had to dig their graves in the

middle of the prison court-yard with large coal shovels. While both comrades were being tortured in this way, we other prisoners had to form a circle round them. It nearly broke our hearts. One of our comrades said to the cruel S.A. bandits: 'You criminals, here is my breast—shoot me. You are sadists and not human beings.' This comrade was immediately taken away. When Mühsam and Kasper had finished the digging they were told: 'We won't shoot you to-day; that death would be far too easy.' After this occurrence Mühsam endeavoured to get a transfer from Sonnenberg. A short time afterwards his death was reported in the press. Tortured to the point of desperation, and then a cowardly murder, this was the fate of our comrade Erich Mühsam!"

Mühsam had won our hearts, and it was a precious surprise for me when at Christmas, 1945, my wife gave me a picture of him. To avoid unnecessary danger I used to remove this picture from the wall in special circumstances and hide it behind the chest of drawers. But once, after the visit of my comrade Otto Schuster, who had come to see the picture, I got so annoyed at this game of hiding that I swore not to remove the picture any more. The next day my fate was sealed. The secret police arrived, and their first move was towards the picture. "Who is this?" was their first question. "A good friend of mine," I replied. The

official was not satisfied with this, and went to my neighbours to see what he could find out. His success was nil, and he had to be content with "A good friend of mine." With the picture and some books under his arm, he climbed with me into the car, for a journey which was to end only in May, 1945. Mühsam played a fateful role in my trial, and to-day I am still grateful to the judge who recited Mühsam's poem, "Long live the noble warrior tribe!" If I say to-day that Erich Mühsam's life was a deciding factor in my own, I am not exaggerating.

Many a comrade could not understand why Mühsam preferred to remain in Germany although he was already in possession of a ticket for abroad. Erich hated nothing more than avoiding danger, when his conscience opposed it.

Let us remember the usual criticisms of the bourgeois and even left-wing press about his person, which found expression in the most contemptuous terms, such as "coffee-house philosopher" and "ideal anarchist". Not even with the report of his death did they honour the truth, but instead transformed him into a "social-democratic writer". A social democrat of all things—when he had poured out his scorn at them in his poem, "The revolutionary".

We old comrades knew the circumstances that sealed his doom. The Munich hostage murder, of which Mühsam could not approve, was revenged on his person. As always, it was the tragedy of anarchist fighters to pay other people's bills.

The Munich Rising

For taking part in the Munich rising, he was sentenced to a long term of hard labour, of which he served more than four years. Part of his sentence was remitted under the amnesty.

The Red Aid had a valuable co-worker in Mühsam. In Max Holz's fight for liberty, in the campaign against the official murder of Sacco and Vanzetti, everywhere, when it was a question of mobilising the workers in the fight for socialism, he stood in front.

Whoever had the opportunity of hearing Mühsam speak will never forget the experience. At anti-militarist meetings he castigated most strongly the position of the social-democrats.

Later, his plays appeared, first *Judas*, the history of a betrayal, and then his well-known play on Sacco and Vanzetti. In reading his magazine *Fanal*, one learned to value the realism of his articles, and there was no problem he could not tackle in a masterly fashion. One of his

last works was *The Liberation of Society from the State*, in which, as a pupil of Gustav Landauer, he contributed valuably to the discussion of the problem of socialism and the state. In an article called *Bismarckism*, he pointed out the devastating consequences of the Marxist dogmas. At his 50th birthday there appeared a volume called *Collections*, which gave a valuable survey of his literary and poetic works. Erich Mühsam was a courageous fighter in the struggle for freedom and against the oppression and exploitation of the international proletariat. To work in his spirit should be our future task.

On Bravery

I will conclude by quoting some of Mühsam's own words on the subject of bravery:

"It is not he who is forced into danger that is brave, nor he who runs towards danger wantonly, but only he who takes on himself because of his beliefs what his conscience demands. Therefore do not praise dangerous deeds, and the glory of an upright conscience will arise. The bravery of unconditional acknowledgement does not need any danger, just as it will not allow itself to be frightened by it. Whoever seeks danger for worldly honour is brave because he fears the judgment of the world. The truly brave man does not fear any judgment but that of his own conscience. Bravery is ruthless right-doing, it is unquestioning submission to self-recognised morals. Whoever obeys an external moral code, whoever follows commands which crush his own consciousness of good and evil, is not brave, even if his deeds are equal to those which the world praises as heroic. To fight without the motive in one's heart, only to avoid recriminations and punishment, is to be brave because of cowardice, it is to shield the lack of courage with courage.

"The courage of death, which dares everything even when there is no prospect of saving life, has nothing to do with bravery. Not for the sake of living or dying is it seemly to be brave, but for the sake of conscience and humanity.

"When the time comes—and it must come, for it is dawning already and the world is pregnant with it—the time when the fight of the people is for moral values and their consciousness supplies the weapons, only then can bravery come to its true recognition. Because then it will be revealed that the fighting man is only brave when the cause for which he fights is at the same time his own personal cause and that of humanity.

W.R.

THE FILM IMPORTS CUT

Perhaps the austerity cut in American films is not of great importance. But the likely effects of it on British film production will serve to illustrate how the universality of capitalism makes any arbitrary move rebound almost as much against the mover as against those competitors who are aimed at.

It is inevitable that the American industry will retort by banning English films—closing their American market in fact. Now, I am informed by a worker in the industry that it costs about £300,000 to make an average film in England. About £200,000 are expected to be re-ouped in England; the remaining £100,000 is sought in the receipts from showings abroad—that is, in the Dominions and America. The loss of the American market is therefore serious, and will result in attempts to cut down the cost of film production. But even then the home market will not provide all the receipts to cover costs, some of which must still be sought abroad—but still abroad minus America.

Then there is another serious disability. The British film industry cannot provide enough output of films to supply the needs of the cinemas in the country. These will therefore look around for old films—in short—the quality (as the present-day picture-goer understands it) of cinema entertainment will go down. Thus box office receipts will fall, and since it is box office receipts which provide the basic finance for the production of films, the home industry will be proportionately crippled.

Thus the effect of the American film cuts will not be what the optimists think—a great opportunity for British films. If the foregoing analysis is correct, it will mean a decline in the standard of film entertainment and a slackened interest in the cinema. And it will demonstrate once more how tightly the meshes of capitalism are drawn, and how little play is given to those who imagine they pull the strings.



PRIMITIVE FOLK

A BOOK AND A FILM
A SOUTH SEA DIARY, by S. H. Powell. Penguins, 1/-.

The Eskimos and the South Sea Islanders alike have become subjects for romantic thought on the part of Western Europeans; the Eskimo in his igloo is usually a slightly comic figure, the South Sea Islander a noble and enviable savage living in complete idleness while the coconuts and breadfruit drop down from the trees to feed him. Both views are completely wrong; nevertheless, the lives of the Eskimos and the Polynesians have a great deal to teach us, both sociologically and in the realm of the values of ordinary human intercourse. The reprinting of a

book and the revival of a film that give some really honest attention to these matters are therefore to be welcomed as contributions to a balanced social outlook.

The author of *A South Sea Diary* went to Tahiti, and took a coconut plantation. Instead, however, of cultivating it with hired labour in the European way, he entered into a relationship with a native girl and lived in the Tahitian manner, cultivating his own plantation and mixing freely with native society. As a result his book contains some very illuminating observations on Tahitian life and the freedom of personal activity which is its characteristic feature.

The Tahitians are fortunate among the South Sea Islanders in having failed to succumb to any great extent to the influence of the missionaries. They are nominally Christian, but have not let it interfere in any way with their rational attitude towards life; they worry very little about marriage, and, if common ownership as a whole has died away, community of property within the family still remains. The writer makes some shrewd observations on the artificiality of mechanical civilisation, and the corrupting power of money values, as shown in their impact on the peoples of the South Seas. He also draws an interesting comparison between South Sea Islanders, like the Pitcairners, who really submitted to Christian dogma, and the Tahitians with their freer attitude. The Pitcairners, in reaction against their religion, develop a really pathological sexuality, while the sexual relations of the Tahitians are natural and unexaggerated.

NANOOK OF THE NORTH. London Pavilion.

More than a glimpse of a harsher and more primitive form of communal life is given by Flaherty's film, *Nanook of the North*, which has just been revived. Flaherty escaped from the sham backgrounds of Hollywood into the real frozen north, and went to live among the Eskimos, so as to record their real day to day life. The result was one of the first documentary films; it is still one of the best of its class, devoting itself to describing a real section of human life, without sentimentality or padding. The Eskimos are shown in their hard daily life of hunting, fishing, building snow huts, in their own frozen land. Perhaps not sufficient attention is given to their actual social organisation—the film is concerned merely with one family, and we are told nothing of the interestingly libertarian and communist relationships which exist in the larger units of Eskimo society. But the regular tasks of obtaining food and shelter in these miserable wastes is shown very amply, and one is left with an admiration—almost envy—for these people who can seem so much more contented with their simple life than the majority of prosperous civilised people and who manage with such scanty means to order their lives with such a specialised capability.

G.W.

Alec Craig: "THE VOICE OF MERLIN".

The Fortune Press, 7/6.
Alec Craig, better known for his books, *Sex and Revolution* and *The Banned Books of England*, here tells in verse form the story of Merlin. But he makes it also the story of Arthur, the legendary first king of a united Britain. In a highly personal treatment of the theme, he contrives to discuss matters of politics, of war, and of the relationship between the sexes, which are extremely relevant to our own time. That this is intentional is indicated by the author in his preface, and his treatment adds to the perennial interest which is intrinsic to the legendary tale. Altogether an agreeable volume.

J.H.

CENSORS RUN WILD!

THE latest news in the world-wide morality drive comes from South Africa, where copies of the works of Francois Rabelais, one of the classic French authors, have been seized by the customs authorities at Port Elizabeth on grounds of indecency.

Rabelais's masterpiece, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* is, of course, one of the most amusing books in literary history, as well as being a masterpiece of style, and the seventeenth century English translation of Urquhart, which is probably the one that has been seized, has the rare distinction of being almost better than the original. It had a very profound influence on Joyce in *Ulysses* and his subsequent work. But it has also a particular interest for anarchists, and at the same time an added reason to be unpopular with reactionaries, in that Rabelais was an early libertarian thinker. The motto of his philosophy was "Do what you will!", and in his little fantasy of the Abbey of Theleme, he envisages a community of men without laws, based merely on freedom and mutual trust, and puts forward the fundamentally anarchist point of view that men are made violent and evil by force, and that if they were allowed to develop in freedom they would naturally tend to live in peace and justice.

This action of the South African government is, of course, merely part of a general campaign in many countries against any work that offends the dictates of conventional morality. Such Catholic countries as Ireland have long had enormous lists of banned books, taken from the papal Index, while in England it was only recently that *Ulysses* could be published, in a suitably expensive edition, and such books as Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* remain on the banned list and have to be smuggled into the

country by those who wish to read them. From Australia comes the news that Lautreamont's *Lay of Maldoror* has been seized by the police, while in America a large number of books are still intercepted by the Customs or postal authorities. Perhaps the most startling example of this moralistic censorship has been the recent action against Henry Miller in France, which at one time was regarded as an example of tolerance in a dark world. Now, however, the combined Communist and Catholic puritanism has started a campaign of bigotry even there, and while Miller was tolerated so long as his works appeared in English only, their recent translation in French and the popularity they have achieved has scared the authorities so much that they are attempting to ban his works in both languages.

Nor is the drive against literary freedom carried on wholly in the field of moral censorship. There is also a determined tendency to interfere with the freedom of the critic. This has long been exercised in a veiled way by advertisers in various periodicals, but a more sinister gesture was that of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in trying to interfere with a B.B.C. film critic's freedom of expression. In a recent libel action, arising out of this incident, M.G.M. lost their case, but they have by no means thrown in the sponge, as has been shown by their lodging an appeal.

All these are signs of a tendency towards totalitarianism of expression as well as of opinion. We are not far off the "degenerate art" campaigns of the Nazis or the party-lining of art by the Soviet authorities, when such incidents take place. They should be resisted by every possible attempt to enforce the freedom of the written and spoken word, which is, after all, the foundation of more concrete freedoms.

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Letters to the Editors

A Lost Cause?

DEAR COMRADES,

Enclosed my annual subscription for *Freedom*. It is the only paper that I entertain at the present time, yet I am fully convinced that anarchism is a lost cause. There are two chief factors that definitely control and shape the lives of mankind, namely, "working-class ignorance" and "upper-class power". There is not a revolutionary organisation in existence that can even hope to combat these two human forces. Governments are placed in power at one time, then kicked out of office by the ignorant masses who know not what they do, poor fools. I have lived long enough to remember the glorious promises of the socialists of 40 years ago, and to witness the pitiable grovelling of the socialist leaders to royalty, and to financial bosses. I am of the opinion that anarchism is unable to eradicate these two great forces from the set-up of human ways of life. The past and present generations have so formulated and consolidated highways of human procedure that the future generations are predestined and condemned to traverse them in the years to come. The game of life is a farce, yet most fascinating and pitiable.

A.E.D.

[We do not agree with this pessimistic point of view, but welcome the comrade's letter because it indicates the magnitude of revolutionary tasks.—EDS.]

Blum On The Socialist Dilemma

DEAR COMRADES,

I was interested to read the French Socialist leader Leon Blum's remarks on the issue before socialists—either to compromise and play the political game, or to reject political action altogether and admit the Anarchists were right—as quoted in the article from the *Libertaire* in the last issue of *Freedom*. M. Blum has put the logical alternatives of social-democratic reformism or Anarchism in a plain fashion before—I recall that at the (British) Labour Party Conference in 1940 he vigorously defended the French Government's suppression of anti-war and "unofficial" movements, by pointing out that democracy was not the freedom to

do as one wished—"that is not democracy, that is anarchy".

Again, he silenced opposition from the Right at Riom, when, challenged by the Vichyist judges for reforms such as holidays with pay and shorter hours in the face of German rearmament, by asking what they would have done, stating that France was on the verge of Revolution in 1936 and the "Popular Front" measures successfully frustrated the revolution more effectively than his accusers could have done.

The logic of M. Blum in showing the alternatives to the workers of social-democracy or Anarchism—while it is a complete defence of his position from the point of view of the accusing bourgeoisie or the would-be left politician, is one that is most instructive to the politically conscious worker who has the experience to draw the obvious conclusions, and it would be most instructive if any of our French comrades would compile some of M. Blum's statements of this nature showing what some British Labour M.P.'s admit in private—that there is no half-way house between sheer political opportunism and authoritarian social-democracy on the one hand, and Anarchist revolutionism on the other.

Fraternally yours,

K.A.B.

Marriage

DEAR COMRADES,

In view of the unremitting and systematic toil of Clergy, Magistracy, "Welfare" Workers, Professional Moralists and Sexologists (Reich and Hodann are notable exceptions) in the cause of Compulsive Marriage, would it not be possible for *Freedom Press* to issue either as a pamphlet or article in *Freedom* the inspired and radiant diatribe of Shelley penned as a note to Section V of *Queen Mab* (1813). His thesis, "A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage", is as valid to-day as it was in Regency England and, later, in the ranks of Owenite Socialists, whose lineal and spiritual descendants accept as sacrosanct the institution most inimical to the diffusion of libertarian philosophy.

Yours fraternally,

D.O.

SHELLEY ON MARRIAGE

NOT even the intercourse of the sexes is exempt from the despotism of positive institution. Law pretends even to govern the indisciplined wanderings of passion, to put fetters on the clearest deductions of reason, and, by appeals to the will, to subdue the involuntary affections of our nature. Love is inevitably consequent upon the perception of loveliness. Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty: it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear: it is there most pure, perfect, and unlimited, where its votaries live in confidence, equality and unreserve.

How long then ought the sexual connection to last? What law ought to specify the extent of the grievances which should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other: any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration. How odious an usurpation of the right of private judgment should that law be considered which should make the ties of friendship indissoluble, in spite of the caprices, the inconstancy, the fallibility, and capacity for improvement of the human mind. And by so

much would the fetters of love be heavier and more unendurable than those of friendship, as love is more vehement and capricious, more dependent on those delicate peculiarities of imagination, and less capable of reduction to the ostensible merits of the object.

Christian Morality

The state of society in which we exist is a mixture of feudal savagery and imperfect civilization. The narrow and unenlightened morality of the Christian religion is an aggravation of these evils. It is not even until lately that mankind have admitted that happiness is the sole end of the science of ethics, as of all other sciences; and that the fanatical idea of mortifying the flesh for the love of God has been discarded. I have heard, indeed, an ignorant collegian adduce, in favour of Christianity, its hostility to every worldly feeling!

But if happiness be the object of morality, of all human unions and disunions; if the worthiness of every action is to be estimated by the quantity of pleasurable sensation it is calculated to produce, then the connection of the sexes is so long sacred as it contributes to the comfort of the parties, and it naturally dissolved when its evils are greater than its benefits. There is nothing immoral in this separation. Constancy has nothing virtuous in itself, independently of the pleasure it confers, and partakes of the temporizing spirit of vice in proportion as it endures tamely moral defects of magnitude in the object of its indiscreet choice. Love is free: to promise for ever to love the same woman is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed: such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all inquiry. The language of the votarist is this: The woman I now love may be infinitely inferior to many others; the creed I now profess may be a mass of errors and absurdities; but I exclude myself from all future information as to the amiability of the one and the truth of the other, resolving blindly, and in spite of conviction, to adhere to them. Is this the language of delicacy and reason? Is the love of such a frigid heart more worth than its belief?

Hypocrisy and Hatred

The present system of constraint does no more, in the majority of instances, than make hypocrites of open enemies.

Persons of delicacy and virtue, unhappily united to one whom they find it impossible to love, spend the loveliest season of their life in unproductive efforts to appear otherwise than they are, for the sake of the feelings of their partner or the welfare of their mutual offspring; those of less generosity and refinement openly avow their disappointment, and linger out the remnant of that union, which only death can dissolve, in a state of incurable bickering and hostility. The early education of their children takes its colour from the squabbles of the parents; they are nursed in a systematic school of ill-humour, violence, and falsehood. Had they been suffered to part at the moment when indifference rendered their union irksome, they would have been spared many years of misery: they would have connected themselves more suitably, and would have found that happiness in the society of more congenial partners which is for ever denied them by the despotism of marriage. They would have been separately useful and happy members of society, who, whilst united, were miserable and rendered misanthropical by misery. The conviction that wedlock is indissoluble holds out the strongest of all temptations to the perverse, they indulge with restraint in acrimony, and all the little tyrannies of domestic life, when they know that their victim is without appeal. If this connection were put on a rational basis, each would be assured that habitual ill-temper would terminate in separation, and would check this vicious and dangerous propensity.

Prostitution is the legitimate offspring of marriage and its accompanying errors. Women, for no other crime than having followed the dictates of a natural appetite, are driven with fury from the comforts and sympathies of society. It is less venial than murder; and the punishment which is inflicted on her who destroys her child to escape reproach is lighter than the life of agony and disease to which the prostitute is irrevocably doomed. Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature;—society declares war against her, pitiless and eternal war: she must be the tame slave, she must make no reprisals; theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy: the loud and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She dies of long and lingering disease: yet she is in fault, she is the criminal, she the forward and untamable child,—and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous.

(Continued on page 8)

MARRIED BLISS: TIRED

Mrs. Katherine Franklin, 47, of Indianapolis, drenched her husband with petrol, threw a match at him, and stood aside as he died. "I got tired of arguing with him," she said.

Mrs. Franklin's 10 children were also left homeless, for their father, in his struggles, set the house on fire.

—AND SCARED

A special guard was put on a prisoner at Neungamme internment camp who declared him an "upper SS group leader, defiant and unrepentant". Then it was discovered his "record" was false. He was hiding from his wife.

Both from *Evening Standard*.

LORD JOE ON HIGH

Marshal Stalin was present at an air pageant, held near Moscow yesterday in celebration of Russia's Aviation Day, says Moscow radio. Squadrons of planes spelled out "Stalin" in formation flight. Latest types of jet aircraft then took part in mock air battles, and the pageant ended with a mass parachute descent.

News Chronicle, 4/8/47.

AN EXAMPLE

Definitions: Candidate.—A politician who stands for what he thinks people will fall for.

Evening Standard.

At the election of 1935 he refrained from putting the full rearmament programme before the electors. The temper of the country, he explained later, was too "pacific" to warrant any such candour.

The Observer, 3/8/47.

TRYING TO BE HELPFUL

Mr. N. Bower (Con., Harrow W.) said we should take a leaf from Russia's book by trying to make available additional quantities of rationed goods at higher prices.

People ought to be allowed to get such additional goods in this country if they were prepared to pay for them, for they could get them at present in the black market.

"I do not know if it is known, but it is not difficult to get clothes without coupons if one is prepared to pay the price," Mr. Bower added.

"Clothing coupons are offered for sale within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster at 2s. each, and I can tell the Minister of Food, if he does not know it, where he can get almost unlimited quantities of rationed foodstuffs, if he is prepared to pay the price.

News Chronicle, 7/8/47.

Through the Press

ECONOMICS AND MOTHERHOOD

There is general agreement, I find, with Dr. Robert Sutherland, who has been telling health experts at Oxford that 20-25 is the ideal age for motherhood.

Some doctors would lower the age to 18. This makes it all the more tragic that economic necessity means that most women have children nowadays after those age limits have been passed.

A Harley-street specialist told me to-day the reasons for estimating that age as the ideal time. It is not merely that bones are adult but supple and muscles are more elastic.

From 18 to 25, he said, a woman's interest in the opposite sex is at its healthiest. She is toned up, feels and looks at her best, is not exhausted by years of work in factory or home and, it seems to her, if only subconsciously, the natural and desirable thing to have children.

This is ideal for the baby as well as the mother. Babies born to youthful mothers are more likely to have proper bone formation and be generally happier and healthier.

An important point in their well-being, if only psychological, is that they are far more likely to have brothers and sisters. A first baby who arrived when his mother is 35 is obviously more likely to be an only child.

But my doctor friend stressed that these views are relative and general. The Romans thought fifteen was the ideal age; in Victorian times it was not unusual for girls of sixteen or seventeen to have children.

With modern knowledge, he said, there is no reason why a woman should not have an easy birth of her first baby when she is 35.

Star, 6/8/47.

Not the only way in which Capitalist economics conflicts with Nature. The law, too, has played its part in pushing up the average age of motherhood.

BIGGER AND BETTER

The simultaneous explosion of two of the atom bombs which can now be manufactured could make the U.S. uninhabitable, Mr. Robert Hutchins, Chancellor of Chicago University, said in a speech here.

Evening News, 6/8/47.

GOOD ADVICE

Out of our sight! We're depressed and half killed with

Your antics Oh vanish, the citizen begs. Go where a Board is something to build with,

Go where a Sitting may lay a few eggs. Take your White Papers to wrap up the sandwiches,

Go where the Piers run their heads in the sea,

Go where the Commons are nice bits of land, which is

Open to all for a stroll after tea. Go, if you're riders, get horses, cut cackle,

Go where the Whips in the stable are laid,

Go where a Lobby's a place for the sports-tackle,

Go where Bill is a bloke or a country-man's blade.

Go where to graft is the gardener's lingo,

Go where a racquet's no word of disgrace,

Where breaking a promise is still deemed a sin, go

And give us a month with just peace in your place.

Observer, 27/7/47.

Go to—Anarchy, in fact!

WHO TALKS TOO MUCH?

Andrei Vishinsky, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister, has told George Kolitch, former Canadian Military Attache in Russia, why Soviet wives cannot join foreign husbands abroad.

Kolitch married a Russian girl while with the Canadian Embassy in 1944. When leaving for home he asked why he was not allowed to take his wife to Canada.

Vishinsky replied: "We have no racial prejudice as to whom our women may marry.

"But it's up to us whether or not they leave the country. The duty of Russian women is to produce Soviet children—not children of the Canadian Government.

"Most woman who marry foreigners are of the wrong type to be examples of Russian womanhood. They try to exchange the hardship of building Russia for the ease of other countries.

"Women talk too much and thus they give a wrong impression of the Soviet Union."

Evening Standard, 1/7/47.

JOKE OVER

It's an old Johannesburg custom to show the tourist looking at a gold mine, a brick of gold, worth perhaps £8,000, and tell him that if he can carry it away it is all his. Princess Elizabeth and the king are among those who have made the attempt unsuccessfully.

Donald Parry, the Cambridge cricketer who all but played Rugby for England (he was reserve three times), has put an end to all this.

He succeeded without any apparent difficulty in heaving a brick on to his shoulder and marching off with it.

Agitated officials called him back and explained that the promise was only a joke.

Evening Standard, 5/8/47.

MANNERS MAKYTH SKATERS

If you want to go roller-skating at Alexandra Palace—home of television—you must wear a collar and tie, and you cannot skate in your shirt sleeves.

Mr. F. Gomez, manager of Alexandra Palace, told me that the idea was to keep undesirable people out of the rink, and also to preserve a certain amount of respectability.

But some male skaters to whom I spoke had other ideas! One described the rule as old fashioned, and another as "being extremely silly, because skating is hot work."

Mr. Gomez intends to keep up the ban and told me there is nothing unusual about it. "Lots of dance halls have similar rules," he says.

Reynold's News, 10/8/47.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

One break with tradition which we shall see at the royal wedding is the bridal coach drawn by six dapple-greys instead of the stately Windsor greys of other days.

One of the King's representatives, I am told, has just been to Utrecht where he bought two more dapple-grey horses. These will be used with the six sent to the King last year by Queen Wilhelmina as a victory gift.

Traditional Windsor greys are now few. The Royal stables have been cut by two-thirds since 1939, and the dozen or so left will be required for other Royal carriages.

Star, 6/8/47.

As if you cared!

WHAT HOPES?

"I must make the frank statement that I do not think there is a hope of getting them out," said Mr. Bevin in Parliament yesterday when asked about British wives in the Soviet Union.

He told Cmdr. J. F. W. Maitland (Con., Horncastle) that while the British Government had every sympathy with the wives the Government could not undertake to pay on their behalf the Soviet tax levied for childlessness, if indeed they were called upon to pay such a tax.

News Chronicle, 7/8/47.

What hopes for peace if even such an affair as this cannot be achieved?

IS YOUR JOURNEY REALLY NECESSARY?

Thirty men will walk 200 miles from Bishop's Stortford, Herts, to the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Norfolk, and back, next month, carrying an 8ft. cross of ash weighing 90lb.

Afterwards the cross will be erected in Bishop's Stortford as a memorial.

Evening Standard, 25/7/47.

THAT WOMAN AGAIN

Ten people have been detained for questioning following incidents during Senora Peron's tours here. A tomato was thrown at Senora Peron's car in Berne and stones were thrown in Lucerne. To-day Senora Peron was going to St. Moritz.

Evening News, 6/8/47.

ACCOMMODATING

Although Eskimos live on fish and seal meat and never touch bread, the religious are obliged under pain of heresy, to ask Heaven each day for their "daily bread". To overcome this paradoxical situation the Vicar of Christ, Pope Pius XII, has issued a Papal Bull (Decree) for the benefit of Catholic Eskimos.

In future when Eskimos recite their Pater Noster (The Lord's Prayer), they will ask for their "daily fish" instead of the mysterious "bread".

News Review, 14/8/47.

VOTE FOR WHAT?

About 6,000 negroes, expected to vote in to-morrow's Mississippi Democratic primary election, must, under a new State law, swear their disapproval of Federal anti-lynch laws and Federal laws helping them to vote.

About 12,000 negroes are registered to vote in Mississippi—which has more than 1,000,000 negroes.

Negroes in Mississippi voted for the first time in sizeable numbers last year.

Some later testified that they were bullied after expressing a desire to cast their ballots. *Evening Standard*, 5/8/47.

Ain't Democracy grand?

Are You Spiv-Conscious?

In the last couple of years the spiv seems to have been steadily claiming the public attention. Some reference to spivs may now be heard daily on the lips of the most conventional people; the national press now prints the word remarkably frequently, and without inverted commas; the Prime Minister recently announced that part of H.M. government's future policy consisted of the elimination of "drones and spivs". He did not define either term—there might have been a heated and personal controversy in the House if he had.

What is this figure who has come so much in the limelight, and who lives, as it were, on the fringe of everyone's consciousness? Some attempts have been made to define him, but such definitions tend to be contradictory and, moreover, unable to explain the sudden appearance of the spiv as a public figure. The word 'spiv' itself is of dubious etymology. Ten years ago it was a little-known word in cockney slang meaning nothing more than a professional thief. To-day, who can say exactly what it symbolizes in the public mind? Figures which take a sudden and powerful hold on the general consciousness and imagination have a not inconsiderable significance.

The all-pervasive influence of the spivvy world was shown recently in an amusing instalment of "Jan's Journal" in the *Evening Standard*. Jan, the farmer, related how his bank manager (and local J.P.) pressed him to supply black-market milk, how a touring dealer invited him to sell eggs profitably but illegally, how the local police sergeant blackmailed him to supply black-market cream, and how when he unburdened his soul to the local vicar about all these many temptations to illegal profit, the man of God promptly outbid the egg-dealing spiv in an offer for the eggs!

The modern spiv, it seems, is not the humdrum thief in the old sense, but one who is seeking to profit by evading the numerous controls which affect our lives so closely to-day. Spivs work the black-market, they deal in profitable goods in short supply, they manufacture and sell identity cards, discharge papers, etc., they run the various gambling rackets, and still continue the old lines of forging cheques, picking pockets, raiding shops, etc. The spiv type has always been with us; it is only in these recent years of tightening State control, however, that he has become an outstanding public figure. Respectable citizens like the banker and the clergyman find that they too are impelled to indulge in spivvy tactics when their personal

comfort is affected. The erstwhile thief, low and contemptible, is now becoming a figure to envy and emulate in his modern guise of the spiv. The spiv is unconcerned with controls, he does not bother to fill up forms, he evades conscription, he does not queue up at the labour exchange, his clothes are colourful, his sex life is not austere, he holds in contempt the whole dreary business which is associated with "honest work" to-day. No wonder the spiv has become a much discussed figure; he has become, in fact, a popular figure in the true sense of the word. The man in the street, reacting to the same old exploitation of his labour plus the added dreariness of increasing regimentation by the State, is naturally coming to regard the spiv with envy and admiration. He too will act spivvy if he can; it seems the natural way of avoiding the full weight of the State's exploitation of the individual.

In bygone capitalist society, few men cared to or dared to avoid economic exploitation of their labour by becoming professional thieves, but under the new economic and political system which is being ushered in, a great many people are prepared to take the way of the spiv. Government and Trades Union dignitaries are well aware of this, and hence the drive against "drones and spivs" (which no-one imagines to include the bourgeoisie who live on unearned income). We have yet to have an Act of Parliament or a pronouncement of a High Court Judge to define just what a spiv is. Perhaps it is being left purposely vague in order that anyone the authorities dislike may be dubbed a spiv.

Mr. John Sands, late of Scotland Yard "big five" is clamouring for a veritable police *carte blanche* to stamp out the spiv. He writes in a recent newspaper article:—

"I would have a routine notification of the local Labour exchanges, but I strongly advocate immediate police action at both ends of the enquiry and a short circuiting of all official channels, for in the capture of the spiv 'time is of the essence of the contract'. They are wily and elusive birds to catch, and swift action is needed.

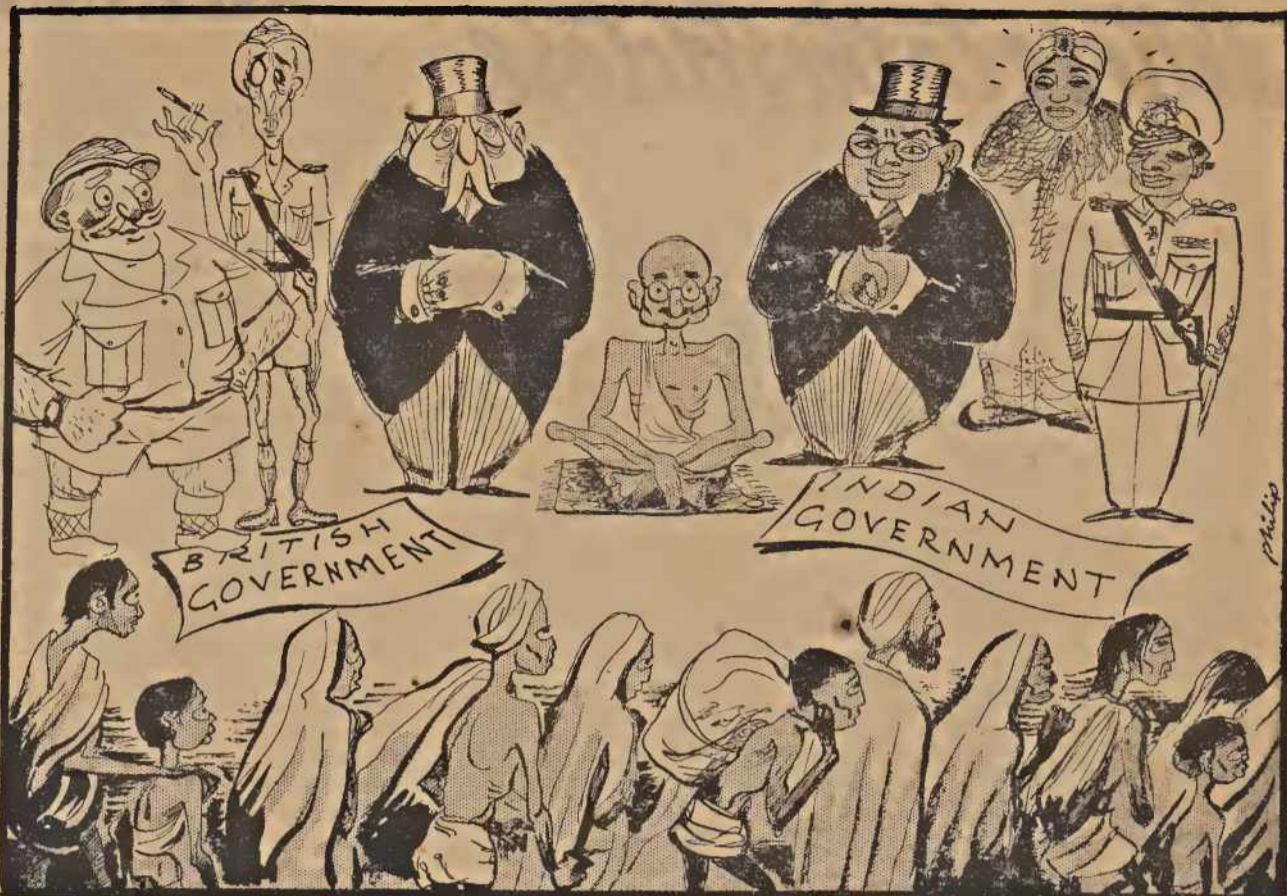
"That, in my opinion, is the only procedure likely to be effective in roping in the spivs to do a real day's work instead of their present worse-than-useless occupation.

"For, remember, these people cannot be run down and arrested as criminals. They are careful not to break—ostensibly, at least—any criminal law, so that the task of tracking and arresting them is very much more difficult than in the case of the crook."

You do not need to break any law, therefore, to be a spiv; you can be subjected to "tracking and arresting" by the police simply because they say you are one—so demands ex-superintendent Sands.

It would be a gross over-simplification to suggest that the Labour Government has given rise to the spiv; it would be nearer the mark to say that the Labour Government and the spiv are both symptoms of the same trend, the trend of increased direct State control. Many people think that if the State succeeds in consolidating a real totalitarian grip over the community, the spiv will be done for. This is a very mistaken idea; the more bureaucratic control there is, the more the spivvy way of life becomes an avenue of escape to a large number of people.

In a recent article entitled "New Forms of Resistance in Russia" (*Freedom*, 3/5/47) the writers, Rainer and Cantine, revealed some remarkable facts about the degree of 'fiddling' which the average Russian worker engages in to-day to make life tolerable. The Russian State, having brutally suppressed most of the usual forms of working men's defence and resistance, the workers were now forced to resort to an oblique line of resistance, constantly evading anything like hard work for their exploiter, the State, and making various forms of 'fiddling' and black market dealing their real occupation.



THE GREAT CHANGE

SQUATTERS MOVE AGAIN

The squatter movement continued to show sporadic signs of life which demonstrate that the great example of last autumn is by no means lost on the homeless. In Shropshire last week, for instance, seven families moved into some of the fifty empty huts in the military camp at Donnington, making their way through the fences when the sentries' backs were turned. Up to the time of writing, no attempt has been made to evict them; the soldiers have not interfered with them, and the only action taken by the authorities against them has been the cutting off of the electric light.

Meanwhile, at Bentley, near Doncaster, the authorities are attempting to evict 352 squatters who occupy a hostel which the Ministry of Works are demanding for the accommodation of pit trainees, including a number of Poles.

The County Court Judge has, naturally enough, decided in favour of the Crown, and ordered the squatters to leave within four weeks. The squatters, who in any case have nowhere else to go, are preparing to resist the decision, and are calling for help on the local trades union rank-and-file. They have held meetings

and demonstrations, and seem to be determined to stand their ground. The only feature which marred their attitude has been a certain amount of prejudice against the Poles as such; clearly the Poles cannot help the fact that the authorities wish to evict the squatters, and the whole question of using the hostel for trainees

is no doubt for the most part an excuse for this eviction. In any case, by falling for the propaganda of racial prejudice, the workers always do harm to their own cause and play into the hands of the ruling class. It is not the Poles, but the authorities who should receive the undiluted resistance of the squatters.

ANARCHIST SUMMER SCHOOL

An Anarchist Summer School will be held in Hampstead, London over the weekend of September 6th and 7th. A limited amount of accommodation will be available for comrades out of London, but enquiries must be made IMMEDIATELY as time is already short.

A programme will be available on application to:—
PIP WALKER,
5, Villas On The Heath, Hampstead, N.W.3.

How to deal with Bureaucrats!

In England we are very conscious of suffering from a plague of unwanted civil servants. In other countries it is much the same, and at least one French town has found the attentions of the tax collector so irksome that its inhabitants have resorted to direct action to rid themselves of this nuisance.

Chalons-sur-Saône, according to an account in the *New York Times*, was afflicted with a tax collector who made a particular nuisance of himself:

"He would ring up delinquents in the middle of the night, badger them at their places of employment, write them scurrilous letters and, in several instances, threaten exposure of a citizen's extramarital attachments if he didn't come across with the tax without further

delay.
"A group of the persecuted compared notes and determined on reprisals. They constructed a strong wooden cage, inserted the obnoxious collector into it, attached a sign to the bars reading "Wild Pig", rode him through town atop a hearse, and then dumped him, cage and all, into the Saône River. The gendarmierie fished him out, almost drowned.

"The embattled citizens will be prosecuted for attempted murder. But not one takes that seriously—any magistrate imposing sentence would probably get the same treatment. The tax collector, who is slowly recovering, will take up another profession—far, far away."

SHELLEY ON MARRIAGE

(Continued from page 7)

tuous matron, who casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom! Society avenges herself on the criminals of her own creation; she is employed in anathemizing the vice to-day, which yesterday she was the most zealous to teach. Thus is formed one-tenth of the population of London: meanwhile the evil is two-fold. Young men, excluded by the fanatical idea of chastity from the society of modest and accomplished women, associate with these vicious and miserable beings, destroying thereby all those exquisite and delicate sensibilities whose existence cold-hearted wordlings have denied; annihilating all genuine passion, and debasing that to a selfish feeling which is the excess of generosity and devotedness. Their body and mind alike crumble into a hideous wreck of humanity; idiocy and disease become perpetuated in their miserable offspring, and distant generations suffer from the bigoted morality of their forefathers. Chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition, a greater foe to natural temperance even than unintellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, and consigns more than half the human race to misery, that some few may monopolize according to law. A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage.

He would ring up delinquents in the middle of the night, badger them at their places of employment, write them scurrilous letters and, in several instances, threaten exposure of a citizen's extramarital attachments if he didn't come across with the tax without further

be promiscuous: on the contrary, it appears, from the relation of parent to child, that this union is generally of long duration, and marked above all others with generosity and self-devotion. But this is a subject which it is perhaps premature to discuss. That which will result from the abolition of marriage will be natural and right; because choice and change will be exempted from restraint.
In fact, religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude: the genius of human happiness must tear every leaf from the accursed book of God ere man can read the inscription on his heart. How would morality, dressed up in stiff stays and finery, start from her own disgusting image should she look in the mirror of nature!

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A DIFFERENT CRISIS!

YOU ARE probably just as tired of the word "crisis" as we are, but we should like for a moment to draw your attention to a different crisis from the one you have been hearing so much about lately.

Every four or five weeks the Freedom Press group holds a debate, not on the state of the nation, but on the state of Freedom Press, and we can assure you that it is a pretty depressing business to discover every time that we are rather more in debt than before. Depressing because it means that our work cannot develop as we should like—and as we think you would like, too.

All this year we have produced only one new booklet. Not because we have no writers, no ideas, no enthusiasm, or no ability; but because we have no money. We are prepared to do all the work of production—are you prepared to share a little of the cost and assist if possible with the distribution? If you distribute a few copies of FREEDOM, could you not have a little collection, say once a month among those readers? We are not asking much—

a few coppers REGULARLY from every reader who thinks that the work of Freedom Press is worth doing, will make all the difference between our being able to go ahead with that work, or being in a state of perpetual crisis.

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LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Sunday Evening Lectures
Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.
at 8, Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1

There will be NO meetings during the whole of August. Watch this column for the announcement of the re-commencement of the lectures with an entirely new series.

N.E. LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

NEXT MEETING:
at Flat 3, 43, New Wanstead
(Nr. Green Man, E.11)
TUESDAY, AUGUST 26th, at 7.30
DISCUSSION LED BY ERIC MAPLE
"AN ANARCHIST MANIFESTO"

Any enquiries to:—
27 Red Lion Street, W.C.1.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

Open Air Meetings
at Maxwell Street, (Argyll St.)
every Sunday at 7 p.m.

Speakers: Frank Leech
Eddie Shaw Preston Clements

BIRMINGHAM ANARCHIST GROUP

Regular fortnightly public discussion meetings are held on Sundays at 7 p.m.
at Dick Sheppard House,
36 Holloway Head.
Next Meeting:
SUNDAY, AUGUST 24th.

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