

WAR COMMENTARY

For Anarchism

"The glorification of the State, and the doctrine that it is every citizen's duty to serve the State, are radically against progress and against liberty."

BERTRAND RUSSELL,
"Roads to Freedom".

"The power of the State is partly legal, partly economic: acts of a kind which the State dislikes can be punished by the criminal law, and individuals who incur the displeasure of the State may find it hard to earn a livelihood."

BERTRAND RUSSELL,
"Roads to Freedom".

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A PHONEY PEACE

Our Struggle against War goes on

The period between September 1939 and May 1940 was popularly known as the phoney war. The period between May 1945 and some unspecified date in the future may well be called the phoney peace. The war has dragged on through many years, under leadership which has told us repeatedly it is inspired and brilliant but has failed to do anything to speed up the six years of drawn-out war, and that war is still unfinished. For even while the black market is raking off quick profits in selling at advanced prices Union Jacks which they bought up cheap after Dunkirk, the war in the East goes on. There is method in this madness. The idea is to get us accustomed to "war in peace": to be used to what were thought war-time sacrifices and restrictions being carried out in peace-time, and even if Japan surrenders, this "phoney peace" is scheduled to go on in the name of keeping order, occupation, preparation, and so on.

Our struggle against the war is therefore not ended, nor can it ever be ended except by dissolution of the system which breeds wars. Our first duty as revolutionists in the new period is to get our fellow workers to realise that the immediate necessity is for an end to all fascist tendencies brought in under war-time excuses.

Against the Defence Regulations

Mr. Morrison has revoked some of the Defence Regulations—84 in all revoked and 25 partly revoked—but left the vast majority. This is intentional bamboozling of the public into thinking that the Defence Regulations are finished, and using the phoney peace to get them accustomed to the others staying on. He announced to the House of Commons that the release of persons detained under the regulations had been authorised. This again was a deliberate attempt at misleading the public, since he means in fact that ONLY those who are detained under 18b are released. There are Anarchists in jail under Regulation 39A, but that is not revoked, nor are those persons released. Over a year ago—long before the recent trial directed against the Anarchist movement—we declared in *War Commentary* that there was a calculated plan of releasing the Fascists and arresting the anti-Fascists, the revolutionaries, Anarchists in particular. That is now proved true. The reason is because the Government no longer fears the Fascists: they were "dangerous" in the event of a foreign invasion (by the Nazis) just as the Communists

were "dangerous" when Hitler was allied to Stalin. Now that there is no possibility of a "1940" the Fascists come out. There is however the possibility of a "1918"—a revolutionary situation arising out of such problems as demobilisation and the lack of homes for heroes to live in—that is why the Government turns its attention to the Anarchists. It will step by step attempt to infringe the rights of freedom of speech, print and assembly as they affect the working-class. It is no use imagining that this will be relaxed because the war is over. Restrictions against those who might be in sympathy with the enemy are relaxed. Restrictions against those who are likely to be in sympathy with the international working-class in the forthcoming revolutionary situation are only just beginning. Our elementary first demand in the post-war period is a fight against fascism.

Against Conscription

Mr. Churchill has announced that conscription is to go on—for years. He gives as his excuse the fact of the war against Japan—the phoney peace excuse again—but avoided saying that conscription would finish even then. In fact he gave as his "personal and political conviction" that the "defence of the country should be shared equally by everyone". (This does not include M.P.s, of course.)

His intention is plainly enough to keep conscription on. First of all to give it a popular coating by saying it is "to relieve" men in the Forces from going to the Far East. Then to keep it on for good. Here it is significant to note what has happened in Canada. Canada has abolished conscription. Only volunteers are to go to the Far East. Peace-time conscription will not be operative in Canada. Why? Did anyone vote against it? Certainly not, they never had the opportunity—but thousands voted against it with their feet, and refused to go abroad; the population gave enthusiastic support to those who went on strike against overseas conscription; they fought the civilian and military police to protect "deserters" and "draft-dodgers"; soldiers and civilians acted in solidarity against overseas conscription.

We too demand the end of conscription. Already the high-ranking dodgers here are wangling quick demobilisation and a post-war career by flocking to become candidates for Parliament. The rank-and-file must voice its demand for like privileges in no uncertain fashion. It also has to take part in the social affairs of the post-war world: only this will not be done by elevation to Westminster one at a time, but by a movement of industrial resistance that will trans-

form society from a grabbing capitalist machine to a free world.

The object of the phoney peace period is to say there cannot be any demobilisation in the nature of "all out altogether" as Japan remains to be dealt with. Nevertheless, in the last war such excuses were put forward and mass solidarity forced on the Government the necessity for "all out altogether". When Mr. Churchill saw the soldiers marching on Whitehall after the last war, he did not make the sort of heroic speech he makes when the soldiers are in front of him facing the other side. He hid himself, and they demobbed themselves.

The masses are tired of excuses that we cannot have the end of conscription because of the war against Japan—then there will come the excuse that it cannot be ended because of occupation; then there will come the excuse that it cannot be ended because of the need for preparation for the next war with whichever Ally we fall out with first.

Industrial Conscription

Industrial conscription must be swept aside. No war-time excuse for maintaining production could now be operative—but as the peace is only a phoney one, we are told to remember Japan and stay under the heel of the Ministry of Labour. The fact that the worker cannot choose his job leads directly to the laws against absenteeism, bad workmanship, etc., since by this means one could get out of a job one did not like. One restriction on labour means conscription all round. The present laws are industrial serfdom. We look forward with confidence to the manner in which these measures will be swept aside, as will the identity card system, by spontaneous action such as led to the discarding of gas-masks, opened the London Tubes in 1940, and made short shrift of such efforts as the "Silent Column".

Amnesty!

All these demands are elementary demands of the struggle against home-grown fascism. We must engage in a demand for the release of all

political prisoners, conscientious objectors and all such war-time offenders. There are thousands in prison for such offences. The Fuehrer Churchill has decreed that these shall stay in jail.

The numbers involved, particularly as "deserters", are so vast that only a general amnesty will prevent a serious crisis, since the numbers already incarcerated are but a fraction of the general total who will be involved. The Government's idea is to hound and starve them out until they surrender or turn to crime. We must give a Canadian answer to the militarists who propose to set up concentration camps which naturally are not to be open for inspection by visiting cameramen. It is indisputable that the projected plans for making Dartmoor a centre for military "offenders" is now devised by those who want a British Buchenwald as an outlet for their sadistic impulses not for some time to be gratified by total war.

Such fascists must be exposed; such fascist measures must be resisted. We enter on a period in which only the utmost vigilance will prevent our going the way the German workers went; and we shall go not only with our eyes open but with their experience before us. We must never get to the state of affairs where the only means of deliverance lies in the régime toppling over by natural catastrophe or imperialist war. The edifice of tyranny must be cracked with our own hands. The alternative is too costly. Revolution will prevent such a sacrifice. No amount of "Never again" vows and pledges by the thousands who will now—as after the last war—turn to pacifist solutions until the next war, nor of preparation by those now wedded to militarism, will prevent either another world war, or the conditions when serious workers can even consider a world war as the lesser of two evils.

"Total War—Partial Peace"

As Anarchists we opposed the world war, recognising it from the first as imperialist, and not deviating from that stand. We knew that

those who pretended that Nazism (or Germany) alone caused the war would have in fact supported the war in any case, whatever the cause and against whomsoever it was waged. The evil things in Germany were merely useful from a war propaganda point of view: they certainly were true, but did not occasion the war. The war was caused by rivalry between imperialism. It has incidentally destroyed Nazism; as the last war brought in its train the overthrow of Czarism and Kaiserism; and the next war may bring the overthrow of another Imperialist colossus.

But total war is too costly for such incidents, and we must temper our natural relief at the cease fire that heralds the end of one stage of the long-drawn-out waste of lives and years that nothing can replace, by the thought that not only does the war go on in peace-time, but that we are back at the 1920 situation, with a quarter-of-a-century experience of political disillusionment to our credit. That last is just as well. The revolutionary movement was in the inter-war period relegated to the museums, Anarchism had almost become a piece of folklore. That period of recession in the international revolutionary movement is now ended. The experience in disillusion in political saviours calls forward the best traditions of the past wedded to modern needs: a movement of industrial resistance for the occupation and expropriation of the places of work, an Anarchist movement standing for the overthrow of all governments, and all systems of exploitation of man by man. That alone will end the Third World War before it begins. And simultaneously with that duty, let us make certain that our movement, struggling for the ultimate social transformation of society, plays the most prominent part in resistance against all those tyrannical measures the State is imposing on us in the guise of total war and partial peace. If there is not a free society on the ruins of capitalism, there will be a third world war. If we have not even managed to preserve the most elementary of personal liberties, not only will we find ourselves in a third world war, but in that third world war Britain's next rival imperialism will be using our plight as an excuse to "liberate" us.

FRANCE TO-DAY

By a French Correspondent

It is a truism to say that the French situation is dominated by extremely difficult economic conditions. The newspaper *Resistance* has published figures showing the depreciation of the buying power of the franc. In 1939 it was possible to buy for a thousand francs a man's suit or seven pairs of shoes. In 1945, the waistcoat alone costs a thousand francs. One can also buy for the same sum one shoe, left or right, as one wishes. The situation is no better regarding food. For a thousand francs one could obtain in 1939 a banquet for a whole family. To-day, a meal on the black market for one person will cost a thousand francs.

It is obvious that in these conditions one should have witnessed an enormous increase of all wages. This is not the case. Employees are still being paid salaries of three thousand francs a month while the increase in the wages of industrial workers has no bearing with the increase in the cost of living. To live at all decently one needs in France to-day five to six thousand francs a month; only a small minority possesses this minimum income.

The food distribution is so bad that all the newspapers, including the Gaullist newspapers, are obliged to organise periodic campaigns to demand the resignation of the food minister Ramadier and to denounce the black market. In fact, the black market can only exist with the complicity of the government.

A few months ago, the newspaper *Paris Press*, a staunch supporter of the government, strongly denounced the corruption of the ministries and pointed out that the big racketeers of the black market were able to work in all safety because they bought from the government departments the necessary papers to legalise their traffic. On the other hand the repression against people who go to the countryside in order to provide themselves with food is extremely well organised.

The Parties and Trade Unions

The attitude of the so-called working class parties and organisations is simply scandalous. For example, at the last meeting of the national council of the C.G.T. (corresponding to the T.U.C. in this country), these gentlemen found the workers' demands for an increase in wages completely out of place. But they stressed the necessity to work for the war and, by implication, to make sacrifices for it.

The Trade Union bosses have the support of the Communist Party. Here is a fact which I can guarantee as completely authentic: In an

aircraft factory in the Paris district, an old syndicalist militant had organised a campaign to demand an increase in wages. He was immediately accused of being a provocateur and Tillion, the communist Minister of Air, menaced the factory to deprive it of orders if that worker were not sacked immediately. This fact is, I repeat, absolutely authentic. And it is not an isolated case. The communists have set up a system of denunciation of all those who protest against their conditions. All those who present demands are accused of being anarcho-Trotskyists. During these last few months the campaign against all the movement to the left of the Communist party, has been resumed with a violence unknown since 1936-37. In this campaign the communists are not alone. In March, Teitgen, Minister of Information, broadcast a speech dealing with the "uneasiness" existing in France. According to Teitgen, it is the militants of "a so-called 4th International" who systematically spread disorder.

"Anarcho-Trotskyists"

During the last few weeks the campaign against revolutionary elements has been intensified. A weekly newspaper called *Nuit et Jour*, has published an article dealing with what it called "the latest shape of Nazi propaganda". Extracts from this article have been reproduced in another weekly possessing a big circulation, called "P", which is obviously under communist control. The article says "We learn that a satanic agreement has been reached between Trotskyism, this kind of anarchy of the 4th Fascist International, and nazism pure and simple which still hopes to survive by underground work in various countries. The Germans are proposing to assimilate themselves all over the world with the Trotskyists, that is to say the anarchists, enemies of communism in every country and who are certainly responsible for the death of the Russian ambassador to Mexico, Oumanski".

Why this violent denunciation of the Trotskyists and the anarchists as Nazi agents? The newspaper "P" gives one of the reasons when it declares: "We are witnessing in France to-day, particularly among some young people, a renewed activity of those suspicious elements, who must be denounced wherever they encrust themselves, as the agents of fascism and reaction."

It was inevitable that, in view of the attitude of the communist party concerning the most elementary demands of the workers, in view

also of the incredible corruption existing in the Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.), the people should try to find some new organisation in which they can have some faith.

It is this faith, which as "P" says, must be destroyed. The method is exactly the same as that employed some time ago in Moscow, but the reasons behind it are rather different and we shall only be able to appreciate them fully in the near future.

Change of Line

The Communist International is preparing a new turn, but this time a turn towards the left. The preparatory signs for this new volte-face are sufficiently clear to all those who are somewhat familiar with to all those who are somewhat familiar with the methods used by the communists. First of all, on the international plane, there is the complete renunciation of Ilya Ehrenburg's Vansittartist policy. After Alexandroff had attacked Ehrenburg in *Pravda* for saying that "the whole of Germany was responsible" (Continued on p. 4, col. 1)

LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

In a recent issue of *War Commentary* we drew attention to the bad treatment of conscientious objectors in the United States. Since then, we learn from the New York periodical *Call*, the jackbooted defenders of freedom in America have done even better than before, by sentencing Henry Weber, a political conscientious objector, to imprisonment for life.

Weber, a member of the Socialist Labour Party, was sentenced by court martial for refusal to drill. "Throughout his induction," says *The Call*, "he had repeatedly informed officials of his objection to killing and had, according to his wife, asked for assignment to a medical unit or non-combatant service."

"Weber was ordered by his captain to shoulder a gun for drill. Weber refused, whereupon the captain tried for forty-five minutes to convince him of the obstinacy of his position. Weber insisted that he would take the consequences before taking a gun."

The prosecution demanded death by hanging, and the court martial decreed hard labour for life. This was in California, not in Nazi Germany.



THE ATROCITY OF AUTHORITY

You've all seen the pictures. You've all heard the comments. Piles of grotesque looking figures, almost impossible to recognise as human beings. Reliable estimates are hard to get but more than 3,000,000 seems the likely number. Starved to death, every one of them.

Well, Bengal is a long way away and if pictures are shocking you can easily turn over to "Jane" or "Popeye". But perhaps you weren't thinking of Bengal, perhaps your mind was occupied by the newsreels of Buchenwald and Belsen. They have shocked thousands to righteous anger . . . and Bengal? Well, that was different, wasn't it, there was a war on.

Probably it was not much of an excuse for the Germans to say that there was a war on when they starved to death the victims of their concentration camps and anyhow many of the people living nearby must have known what was going on—why didn't they do something to stop it?

Possibly it is a good thing that memories are short, for otherwise people might remember learning that during the winter of 1943-44, while the Indians were dropping like flies in Calcutta, a reliable British newspaper report recorded that the European hotels were still serving seventeen course meals. The Europeans on the spot were deeply shocked at what was going on but their food supplies did not depend upon endless queuing for a handful of rice or a tiny meal from a charity kitchen. And so far as we in this country know they did not threaten to place themselves on an equal footing with the Indians unless sufficient shipping and rail transport was diverted to supply the elementary needs of the population.

UNLIMITED SACRIFICE!

In 1940 this country faced its greatest military crisis for centuries. An island, it depended almost entirely on its shipping to keep going. Yet through the whole of that period civilian rations never reached the point of affecting nutrition, let alone bringing millions face to face with starvation. In other words we set a limit on the privations we were prepared to bear in the name of war. The Indians, however, were not allowed to set any such limit. It was not of any avail for them to protest that they did not consider the war so important as to merit their giving their lives in slow starvation. There's a war on, they were told, and exports (for military purposes, mainly) were allowed, and imports were cut, and boats were confiscated and railways were taken over for munitions.

Certainly it wasn't as black and white as all that; there was plenty of Indian muddle as well. Our concern is not to paint black the British people, or the German people, or the Indian people, for after all they all exist under forms of government which make graft and private gain at public expense quite inevitable. The Indian ruling class do not come out of the Bengal famine any whiter than the British ruling class, but both must share the blame.

In Germany now the common folk, tyrannised for eleven

years under Hitler, are being forced to dig the graves of the victims of the torture camps. Perhaps it's a good idea in its own way—if we carry it far enough. Let the European and the Indian Quisling communities in India dig the graves of those dying of starvation. (For starvation still continues, even if it isn't "news" any more). Let the supporter of the British political system and the Nazi dig the graves, side by side, for those in the Occupied Countries of Europe who died from starvation. Nazism perpetrated the horror of occupation and the consequent oppression; British capitalism took the responsibility for maintaining a complete blockade for five years on countries which could not exist unless they imported large quantities of foodstuffs over the seas in ships.

Many of the people in the Nazi concentration camps had been transferred to Germany for forced labour. Often they went because there was not enough food at home for them, or for their wives, or for their children. If they went to Germany, they were told, they would be reasonably fed and they would be able to provide for their wives and families as well. From the Allied side there was no hope because the blockade kept the one reliable munition of resistance—food—away from them. So they went to Germany and some of them made a slip and landed up in the concentration camp. If their bodies are to-day among the piles we have seen can we say that the Nazis were completely responsible for their deaths?

THE GREEK FAMINE

Let's look for a moment at our gallant Greek Allies. Before the war they had to import by sea 70 per cent. of their foodstuffs. Then they fell to the Nazis. After a lot of pressure the British Government did agree to send a little food, when it became quite obvious that almost the entire Greek nation would die off if food were not sent. No evidence has ever been received that the Nazis benefited from that food, but, on the contrary there is a host of reliable evidence that the Greek people *did* benefit. Yet we refused to send food to the other occupied countries, some of them in an almost equally bad plight.

Well, some people will probably say, granted we ought to have done more, yet we did not use the methods of barbarous brutality, did we? On the whole that is true, although the records of our methods of maintaining "law and order" in India in 1920 and 1930 bear a striking similarity to many of the stories we have heard from Germany during the past five years. But, of course, India was the only place where they *had* to use methods in any way approaching those used by the Nazis. The opposition to the British capitalist machine was to feeble that it only showed any signs of succeeding in India and parts of the Colonial Empire. Had the menace of a people's revolution in this country become more real we should have found our razor-slashing Blackshirt occupying a far more honoured place in the National life.

THE ENGLISH CONCENTRATION CAMPS

The only time we in this island have faced any sudden sense of danger comparable with that engendered by the Nazis, was in 1940. Then we decided on wholesale internment camps and, for just a few weeks, the element of Nazism, not developed but feeling its way through all the same, was there. Refugees, some of whom had already suffered in Hitler's concentration camps, committed suicide in our own camps. Men of science and learning, being shipped to Canada in the Arandora Star, were drowned without a chance when the ship was torpedoed because they were locked below like felons. Women refugees, rounded up from all over the country, were made to journey for a week to the Isle of Man without a proper meal the whole time, forced to spend nights and days in buildings as germ ridden and as crowded as any concentration camp.

The phase passed quickly. Internees soon began to lead a moderately pleasant life, if any life in captivity can be even moderately pleasant. Yet during those first weeks the mask had been removed and the fundamental state of British capitalism revealed as something essentially the same as that of Nazi Germany.

After all, once you place your reliance on a man made state you are bound, in the final analysis, to use any methods to defend that state. Even in honest-to-goodness open warfare we have learned in the last six years that there is no filthy trick so low that we will not stoop to it, almost always on the pretext that the Nazis used it first.

AUTHORITY AND ATROCITIES

Only in this way can we get the atrocity business into perspective. Brutality and starvation in the Nazi concentration camp, the blockading of the Occupied Countries, mass starvation in India, the herding up of refugees like so much cattle . . . Singly these events may seem very different in kind and in degree but when we examine them we find that they all boil down to the same source. Set one man up in authority over another and ultimately you will have an atrocity. How can it be otherwise? For every one "saint" wielding power you are bound to let in five hundred blackguards, and if you let society run on a power basis the blackguards will always win in the end.

Must this be so? Isn't it just capitalism which is at fault? Well, admirers of the Labour "statesmen" should remember that Mussolini was a protagonist of Socialism before he saw the opportunity of real power. And the Labour Cabinet Ministers of this country? You could probably count on one hand those who kept true to the principles which they professed.

So we come back to the same old thing in the end and the sooner the workers of this country realise that they are being asked to shudder at the atrocities of the Nazi concentration camps because it suits the purpose of the manipulators of a society which is basically the same as that of Nazi Germany, the better it will be for us all.

GEOFFREY PITTOCK-BUSS.

Somewhere East of Buchenwald

These are my credentials for saying what I am going to say. I don't think I was meant to see what I did see during the two terrible days I was kept waiting at that little station 1,000 kilometres from Moscow, 1,000 kilometres from Murmansk. This was a prison train—Russian political prisoners. I have never seen anything which frightened me so much in my life. It made me sick with fear. For I thought, by some incredible act at Moscow, I might soon be on one. Better people than I had been deported.

This was at the end of winter, but before the ice began to break up the northern streams. There were about forty long red-painted freight cars in that terrible train. The N.K.V.D. guards at once posted themselves the entire length of it as it pulled in and slowly came to a halt at that station. It remained there all day.

Projecting from between the two sliding doors at the centre of each car were what I at first thought were the tails of salmon or of some other fish. They were not, of course. Approaching as close as the hostile backs of the N.K.V.D. would permit, I saw that each of these strange contraptions was a long V-trough made of two boards nailed together. They were the latrines for the poor wretches confined inside the dark cars. The remainder of the aperture between the two doors had been blocked up. The only light that could possibly enter that long red box on wheels was through two little apertures high up at either end—18-inch-square windows.

There were faces at these windows. Some of them opened their mouths and poked their fingers in them. This was the way they begged for food. From one or two of these ghastly squares, with a sub-human face it, was hopefully lowered a little canvas bag tied on to a piece of string. No one came near them. Nobody looked at them. All day the faces remained at the windows; eyes that looked at passing life with a dejection beyond description. And all day the bustling Russians on that platform went about their business just as if that quarter-mile-long trainload of human agony was not there.

Why didn't the Russians look at that terrible prison train? The right answer to that question brings up something which is singularly interesting. In the old Tsarist days the Russian political prisoner, sent to Siberia, was regarded by almost everybody as a hero. He was marched through the streets to the long green train in broad daylight. His relations and friends could, in that way, see him off. He (or she) could hold his head up, show just how bravely he could comport himself as he passed them. There was a moment of glory in all that, brief as it was. The Russian political prisoner in, or from, Siberia was the stock hero of Russian literature.

But to-day—what happens? The prisoner is never seen. He is spirited away in the night. He vanishes from sight as quickly, and in some cases as finally, as a stone thrown overboard in mid-ocean. "Forget him. Forget that he ever lived," is the Russian official advice to everyone. He is gone.

Negley Farson: *The New English Review*, May, 1945.

The Intellectual Failure

"THE YOGI AND THE COMMISSAR", by ARTHUR KOESTLER.

Jonathan Cape, 10s. 6d.

Arthur Koestler reminds one strongly of Aldous Huxley in the years of his youthful and never fulfilled promise. There are the same acute perception of the characteristics of a person or a situation, the same negative gifts of scepticism and iconoclasm, the same display of an apparently encyclopaedic knowledge, the same failure to build with all these qualities any really satisfying work of literature or any convincing social vision. Koestler is in one respect even more gifted than Huxley, in that his political sense is more acute, and is reinforced by an empirical knowledge of political activity from the inside which enables him to put this sense to good use in the exposure of pretences. Yet, for all the brilliance of the works which he has so far produced, none of them has yet shown him as a writer of really positive vision.

Even in his best novel, *Darkness at Noon*, he is still the brilliant journalist of fiction, entering fully into the spirit of the contemporary social phenomenon, rather than the constructive artist in whose work some living quality can be apprehended growing out of the ruins of tragedy and evil. This book, in fact, reveals a mental duality from which many of our contemporary intellectuals, and many socially conscious workers, are suffering to-day. They realise the evils which result from a particular authoritarian system and can envisage them with a remarkable destructive clarity, but this very clearness of perception often springs from the fact that they are still fundamentally in the state of mind which produces the evils they regard with such honest horror.

In its crudest form, this duality gives rise to the malady of Trotskyism, where the opponent of Stalinism sees the source of the evil in personal terms—had it not been for the corrupt aims of certain individuals Bolshevism as it arose in the revolution would have produced paradise. The system in itself is sacred, and is bound to succeed if the right people apply it. At the other end of the scale we get the people who realise fully that no good can arise from an authoritarian system of government, who accept all the negative criticism of anarchism, yet who have insufficient faith in man to see any alternative to authority. These retire into the ivory tower, become phoney mystics like W. B. Yeats or literary fascists like Ezra Pound. Koestler, who is one of the most talented of the independent Left intellectuals of this country, is a much more subtle case than the people who occupy these extreme positions. He realises all the faults in authoritarian societies up to the present, he has sufficient concern for mankind to make him continue in spite of this fact to hope for a social system that will not partake of these faults, yet he has not made that ultimate act of faith in the potentialities of man which results in the final rejection of authority as

the pattern of social relations and the acceptance of a libertarian co-operation as the basis of the administration of society.

Koestler, like most of the Left intellectuals who have preserved their independence of thought, is fully aware of the equivocal nature of the position in which he finds himself, and his latest book, *The Yogi and The Commissar*, is an attempt to investigate thoroughly the position of the revolutionary intellectual and to prescribe some line of development which might lead to more constructive results. It conveys an impression of considerable honesty, and is written with clarity and a display of knowledge. Its documentation is not always accurate, as when Koestler states that Nechaev

"lived for a number of years chained to the wall of a humid cell and when his comrades succeeded in establishing contact and offered to liberate him, refused because he preferred them to concentrate on more important tasks. But later, in the émigré atmosphere of Geneva, he became involved in the most squalid quarrels and died an obscure nobody."

In fact, Nechaev never left his humid cell, and the squalid quarrels took place many years before his death in prison. However, I am sure this error is an honest one, arising from a slip in research or possibly from the confusion of Nechaev's life with that of some other Russian revolutionary.

The book also suffers from a certain disjointedness, because it is put together from

articles which have been written over a number of years, and some of which have only a very tenuous relationship to the main theme.

Koestler sees the dilemma of the intellectuals expressed in the extremes of the Yogi and the Commissar. The Commissar believes in Change from Without, and that man's condition can be made perfect by a mere change in economic conditions. He believes that the end justifies the means, and thus enters upon a degeneracy of values in which at last he becomes dominated by the means and suffers a brutalisation and corruption which are destructive both to himself and to his end. The Yogi, at the other end of the spectrum, seeks Change from Within, but in the failure to communicate his own mystical uplift, attains a condition of inaction which admits the continuance or even the increase of physical evil without protest or resistance. "The Yogi and the Commissar may call it quits."

Koestler himself, it can be seen, hovers uneasily between, seeing the good in each of them, yet unable to reconcile these apparently contradictory tendencies. The duality from which he suffers is shared by many of his generation, and has resulted in that unfortunate lack of direction which has led so many of our intellectuals into compromise positions, into defending the lesser evil. Koestler puts their position

when he says:

"The collapse of the revolutionary movement has put the intelligentsia into a defensive position; the alternative for the next few years is no more 'capitalism or revolution' but to save some of the values of democracy and humanism or to lose them all; and to prevent this happening one has to cling more than ever to the ragged banner of 'independent thinking'."

But surely this is only another way of admitting the victory of the Yogi.

It is in reality this duality of Yogi and Commissar, of ideal and practice, of End and Means, that is at the root of the faults of modern social thought. The politician becomes the slave of his means, the visionary planner achieves nothing because he is blinded to anything but his end. Both neglect the fact that in reality there is no such duality. The means is part of the end, the practice of the ideal, and it is for this reason that reformist policies, and attempts to achieve revolutionary ends by the use of corrupt institutions are bound to fail. Koestler seems to realise this fact in a philosophical sense when he talks of the Gestalt theory of "wholeness".

The one social doctrine that has reconciled this duality is anarchism, because anarchism, unlike other social doctrines, is based on a moral concept of social values which influences and is influenced by the practical application of these values. Those who regard anarchism as a mere technique for the achievement of a change in the economic basis of society are committing a harmful error. Anarchism is not a system of tactics, it is a moral conception of human relationships. It realises that man will become free only when the change in his conditions is a complete one, a change from within as well as a change from without. Mutual trust, brotherhood, freedom of thought, are qualities which do not spring originally from without, from economic conditions. They germinate within, as the result of an inherent moral sense, but their subsequent growth can be changed by external factors. Without a fundamental change in moral conceptions, a mere physical change in the structure of society would be virtually useless. It is in its realisation of the interdependence of the moral and the physical factors in social change that anarchism offers the solution to the dilemma presented by Koestler in this book.

I cannot end this review without commending the section of the book entitled *Explorations*, which contains a lengthy and capable analysis of the rise of the Soviet myth, and a critical survey of the structure of Russian Communist society which is extremely well documented with valuable facts and convincing fragments from Koestler's own experience in Russia. Only lack of space has prevented me from commenting more fully on this section, which alone makes the book a very interesting one to those who wish to learn the scanty facts which are published concerning the real life of the workers in Soviet Russia.

GEOFFREY PITTOCK-BUSS.

THE POWER OF THE WORKERS

One of the greatest obstacles in the way of social progress is the all too common belief in the impotency of the workers. It is a belief encouraged by the enemies of progress, yet one which clear thinking would dispel for ever.

At first sight, the position of the masses does appear helpless. "On the one side," wrote George Barrett, "are the disciplined, uniformed ranks of the Government obeying the word of command—they create nothing, their highest virtue is obedience, which means the sacrifice of judgment, the one quality that would make them higher than the beasts. On the other side are the irregular, motley ranks of the workers."

It seems natural to conclude that power rests completely in the hands of the governors. But does it? Does not doubt creep in when, for example, we notice how the capitalists fear proletarian solidarity expressed in strikes? How often has united action by the workers overcome the strength of authority? None realise more fully than the bosses how immense is the actual and potential force of workers' unity.

Let us get rid of the false idea of governmental omnipotence. "The masses are governed far more ingeniously misrepresentation than by club or bullet." In reality, the rulers depend completely upon the workers, for it is not obvious that the workers alone are the creators of wealth? We rely on them, not the overlords, for the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the factories, the farms, the ships—all would cease to function without labour; and, let it be remembered, the very tools of compulsion and oppression—guns, bombing planes, tanks—are produced by the workers!

There lies the germ of revolutionary action. In the keeping of the masses lie the means of attaining true Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

P. C. R.

THE FIGHT GOES ON

This is an earnest appeal for funds, a call for cash, cheques, stamps or postal orders to enable the committee to carry on, and to develop with growing strength, the task of fighting against the ominous action of the Government and for the release of our imprisoned comrades.

The recent trial of the Anarchists proved beyond doubt that although the Fascist structure may have crumbled in other parts of Europe, the Fascist ideology is kept very much alive by people in high places in this country.

Totalitarian measures were used to imprison the Anarchists. The trial showed the rulers to be the enemies of liberty for the press, and opposed to freedom of speech.

One of the weapons which is used by the Government is the sinister and strong organisation of the political police. Soldiers' kits are still being searched, publications of minority organisations carefully read, the continuous prying on persons and movements is but the indication of what may lie ahead.

A true pointer of the trend in British politics can be clearly seen at this time. While the British rulers are releasing fascists from jail, and collaborating with their Fascist counterparts abroad, they are jailing the anti-Fascists at home.

We are fighting against the attacks on the primary rights of society, we are resisting the flagrant attempts to dictate, but we need money to carry on the campaign, to organise demonstrations and meetings in the struggle against suppression. Your response to date of £1,060 has been magnificent, but the expenses have been heavy. We are working now (and all the work is unpaid), with a debt of over £200. If our resistance is to be strong, effective and sustained we shall require funds to back us up.

Please donate as much as you can, as often as you can. You may not have the threat of prison hanging over you, but this IS YOUR fight too.

Full lists of subscriptions are being prepared and will be available shortly.

PRESTON CLEMENTS.

Freedom Press Defence Committee,
17 St. George Street,
Hanover Square,
London, W.1.

Anarchist Commentary LONDON PROTEST MEETING

ITALIAN WORKERS LIBERATE THEMSELVES

Just as the fall of Mussolini's régime was a direct result of the spontaneous action of the workers, the German collapse in Northern Italy has been due to the widespread revolt of the population.

Though the news of demonstrations, strikes, revolts and partisan activities has been deliberately played down in the National Press there is no doubt that the defeat of the Nazis was not due to the military activities of the Allies.

In Milan, Genoa and Turin general strikes were called and radio stations were seized. Justice was summarily applied to well-known fascists and Mussolini fell one of the first victims. The Press eagerly seized this opportunity for plastering the daily papers with gruesome photographs of the fallen dictator hanging from the gibbet and stories filled with revolting details of the execution. One cannot expect the Press to lose a single opportunity to excite human passions in a particularly base manner. But that Mussolini should have been executed by the people he has oppressed for so many years is only right. It was not for his former friends in this country and elsewhere to put him on trial. His crimes were too well known by the Italian people for them to need any trial to convict him. They knew that the Allies had collaborated with Badoglio, had let General Roatta escape, had left hundreds of minor fascist officials in power and they were determined that Mussolini should not escape them.

The workers of Northern Italy were not contented with overthrowing fascism. They also took over the organisation of industry, transport and other public services in a manner which astonished foreign journalists used to the muddle of Amgots' rule in Southern and Central Italy. The *Times* special correspondent reports that Milan is in perfect order:

"Milan is proud of the way it has gained its freedom. It had all been most carefully prepared beforehand. Within a few hours of the decision being taken, placards signed by the Committee of National Liberation, by the new Prefect of Lombardy, by the new Mayor, were posted all over the city telling the people what to do, and the insurrection went like clockwork and was carried out with remarkably few casualties. In this well ordered popular movement, and now that it is all over, in the bearing of the people at tramway stations during rush hours (for business is again in full swing), and in the well conducted queues outside the cheap restaurants, one can see proof of a strong sense of collective solidarity."

Amgot is taking a rather sour view of the independence and initiative displayed by the Italian people and though the *Times* correspondent reports that they are taking "a reasonable view of this independence" one can only fear from past experience that the organising powers of the people will be frustrated and crushed by Allied bureaucrats.

"VANSITTARTISM"

Anarchists have pointed out continually that the reason why so many people attack the "entire German nation" for the crimes of the S.S., Nazi Party and Gestapo, is because they do not want the State machinery of Nazi Germany to be disembodyed, nor do they want the Nazi criminals to come to trial. In the first place they want to have some machinery with which to keep down the German workers, and in the second place they do not want to have the Nazis in a position where they can indict their former accomplices.

No-one would, however, listen seriously if they asked us to let off the Nazi criminals. They have a better angle than trying sentiments, therefore, they attack sentiment, and appeal to the instincts for revenge, chiefly in an attempt

Continued from p. 1

sible for the crimes of Hitler", Ehrenburg has been obliged to disavow his jingoist propaganda of the last few years.

Alexandroff's article has had other repercussions. It is significant that in the "Victory issue" of *L'Humanité* (the organ of the French Communist Party), one does not find any longer the Germans referred to as *boches*, as was common practice up to a few days ago. It also refers to the crushing of "German fascism" and "Hitler's Germany" and not merely of Germany as it did before.

From the dispatches received from the part of Germany occupied by the Russians it seems that they are trying to put up a "liberal" attitude towards the German population. On the 10th of May, Robert Reuben, wrote that, in the eyes of the Soviet military government, the German people have been the victims, not only of Nazi propaganda but also of Nazi oppression. When one remembers what communist propaganda used to turn out only a few weeks ago about the wicked *boche*, one can only reach the conclusion that the Party line has changed once more.

Eliminating Witnesses

It is in this new twist in their policy that we find the reason for the communist party campaign against revolutionary elements. During the whole war the communists have denounced the Trotskyists and the anarchists as German agents because they maintained that the German people were not responsible for the Nazi's crimes. In order to prevent possible sympathisers joining the ranks of movements to whose ideas the Communist Party is now paying lip service, it is necessary to discredit them and assimilate them to the fascists. This will also make it easier to eliminate them physically if necessary. This method has been used before during the Moscow trials.

That the Communist Party everywhere is the direct agent of Moscow's foreign policy is a banality. But it is in France that this attitude of the Communist Party is more blatant, and one wonders if they will be able to execute this new somersault without losing the support of the bourgeois elements which they have secured thanks to their ultra-patriotic policy.

The complete absence of ideology has permitted the Communist Party to gain a fairly astonishing electoral victory but it has its drawback in the lack of stability of its membership. The small bourgeoisie which has supported the Communist Party during the municipal elections will not follow it so easily if it takes a somewhat revolutionary turn.

The Elections

The success of the Communist Party at the elections is astonishing not because of the trend it indicates, as in the present economic conditions the masses could only turn to the left, but

to thwart vengeance from the leaders, and divert it on to the workers (whom they hate in any nation).

This one can find proved from the most casual glance at any statement made by the anti-Germans fraternity, who include most of the appeasers of Nazidom, and its leading apologists.

It is expressed, for instance, in the statement made by an American colonel at the Gardelegen concentration camp itself, to Germans who had seen the atrocities, escorted by U.S. soldiers, and who might perhaps be in a mood to avenge themselves on the Nazis. The colonel said:

"Some will say that the Nazis were responsible for this crime. Others will point to the Gestapo. The responsibility rests with neither—it is the responsibility of the German people."

Daily Mirror, 28/4/45.

"Don't blame the Nazis, we're all as bad". Very much like the sophistry used so often to discredit social advance here: "Don't blame the capitalists, it's the workers' fault for not changing things".

LIARS & HYPOCRITES

The San Francisco Conference opened with four golden pillars to represent the Four Freedoms (including Freedom of Speech & Press). On the same day a Cabinet Minister, Mr. R. A. Butler, Education Minister, said to the Federation of University Conservative and Unionist Associations conference: "We believe that our one chance of freeing ourselves from the difficulties the war has brought upon us . . . is to give people their heads and trust them, to say there must be adventure, enterprise and risk . . . The Socialists wanted to shackle everyone down to control by the Government . . . Development of character is the main plank in our policy".

On the same day another prominent supporter of the Government, Lord Rosebery, said to the Liberal National conference, "A great number of controls could be taken off at once. Let me instance just one, the control of the Press. Freedom of the Press is vital to Britain. There can soon be no necessity for any Press control for security reasons, and the moment it is unnecessary for military reasons all control should be taken off and free expression of opinion permitted forthwith."

On the same day Mr. Justice Birkett passed sentence of nine months on three Anarchists for their association with Freedom Press.

ANTI-STALIN STALINISTS

A paper in America which has no counterpart here is the *New Leader*, organ of the right-wing social-democrats, and liberals, grouped in the S.D.F., Liberal Party and particularly supported by many garment workers unions (mostly supported by Jewish and Italian garment-

workers), edited by a group of well-known intellectuals who are mostly people who have been Stalinists or "fellow-travellers" (Eugene Lyons and Max Eastman being typical of those known over here) who have become disgusted with Stalinism. They talk often very virtuously of their belief in "ethical socialism" and the like, but alas, when it comes to it, they are not much different from the Stalinists. In their support for the war, and often very curiously simply out of their dislike for Stalinism, these "anti-Stalinists" have got up to just the same dirty tricks as the Stalinists, reminding one all too pathetically of how the alleged "anti-fascists" have imitated the worst tricks of fascism.

For instance, their downright lying misrepresentation of events on Greece, just because they thought the Stalinists might be behind it. Oddly enough, they were very fair and factual on Poland, because the Stalinists were obviously not behind it, though Greece and Poland presented identical problems with the Athens and Warsaw revolts betrayed in the same way for the same reason.

The latest exploit we note of the *New Leader* is its joining the ranks of the copper's marks. In the issue of 17th March, 1945, the *New Leader* columnist, Jonathan Stout, in the most prominent article makes a demand for the removal of certain officers from their commissions because they are Communists, and quotes the House Military Affairs Sub-committee, before which General Donovan gave evidence. Secretary Stimson had allowed the Army to give Communists commissions but Stout points out that several Acts of Congress ban Communists from "any appointive positions on a Government payroll". (Need one point out what essentially fascist legislative this is?)

One interesting remark was that quoted of Stimson's that the desired records of the Communists "involve the military relationship with our Allies".

For ourselves we are not much concerned with the fact of whether Communists become officers or not. We belong to a class of persons who are more interested in working their ticket than wangling a commission. But it is clear that those same enactments in America that prohibit Communists from being on Government payrolls speak of persons who "believe in overthrowing the Government by force and violence" and on these grounds the American plutocracy has managed to get into being such Hitlerian measures as the Criminal Syndicalism Bill and the various laws against Anarchism, including the oath of not being an Anarchist, taken before naturalisation or entering America.

Such measures these anti-Stalin Stalinists would obviously approve of. It is clear they are not amongst those who can throw the first stone at the Stalinists on the ground of their powers for intrigue and dirty work.

SOLDIERS' KITS SEARCHES CONTINUE

To The Editor of *War Commentary*.

Sir,
I know I incur possible retribution as a member of the R.A.F. by writing of what happened to me recently, but the principles involved are too important for my own feelings to be considered.

On April 11th I was apprehended by the Service Police and, in the presence of the Adjutant, my kit was searched. A large amount of my personal property, leather writing cases, two history books, writing materials (all to the value of £5 or so), together with back copies of *Tribune* and *War Commentary*, were taken from me.

Immediately afterwards I was marched off to the Guardroom, and there detained, no reason being given. This, it should be noted, was illegal, even by the standards of King's Regulations as I was not formally placed in close arrest.

Six hours later, at 6 p.m., I was placed in close arrest and charged with improper possession of public property found in my kit, namely three notebooks and a few sheets of notepaper, (value two to three shillings), though the items themselves were never detailed, either then or in the charge itself.

On Friday, April 13th, the charge was heard by the Adjutant and, although I freely admitted that I used the notebooks for myself as well as for R.A.F. purposes, I was remanded for further evidence. This by the man who found the property in my kit!

because of the methods used by the Communist Party to succeed in dominating most of the great industrial centres and particularly Paris.

The communists have, for the purpose of the elections, allied themselves with practically everyone. In some districts they have allied themselves with reactionaries in order to beat the Socialists, in others with the Socialists in order to beat the moderates and reactionaries.

We do not possess yet a complete picture of the election results. But whatever they are, the victory of the Communist Party seems certain. This victory however, can only have a meaning if it corresponds to a clear line of the national as well as the international plan. In fact, on the internal plan the directives of the Communist Party are perfectly vague and on the international plan one can see the beginning of an important change.

The political struggle in France has become, during these last few months, extremely violent. On the Atlantic front, for example, during the offensive on Royan, where there was still a pocket of German troops, a bloody struggle took place between the F.P.I. and the soldiers of the Leclerc division. The soldiers of Leclerc, are, in the whole, reactionaries as they have been recruited in North Africa with officers belonging to the colonial troops; the F.P.I. are mostly controlled by the Communists. The fact that this incident took place in spite of the orders of the Communist Party which forbids any political struggle as detrimental to the war, shows that the control of the Communist Party over its members is not as well established as it wishes it to be.

There would still be many things to say on the general situation in France to-day but information is difficult to obtain as one cannot rely on the Press which is submitted to a severe censorship. I hope, however, to be able, in future articles, to give a more detailed account of the political situation in France as it develops itself.

On Monday, April 16th, after five days in the guardroom, I was taken before the C.O., who awarded me 120 hours detention. I questioned the Adjutant, when he gave his evidence, about my personal property, and found out that he no longer had it. I also pointed out that the fact that the items of public property were not enumerated was contrary to the rules of procedure, and likely to make the charge more serious than the value of the items warranted.

The day my kit was searched the Provost Marshal's Deputy appeared on the camp and took away the articles taken from me during the search; and I was not allowed to go before the C.O. for the final hearing of the charge till he had returned to the camp, although he took no direct part in the charge or the evidence.

While detained in the Guardroom I was not allowed any contact with any person on the camp, and, contrary to usual practice my meals were brought to me. (I was not allowed to go to the Dining Hall even under escort).

All incoming mail I had to open in the presence of the Police Sergeant, who immediately took it to the Adjutant. He, in turn, decided

whether I was to keep it. Later on, all my mail was opened and checked before it reached me. I do not know if I received all the letters addressed to me while I was detained.

Two days after my detention was completed I was told that I could have my personal property returned to me. I received it from the Adjutant (obviously carefully checked, and anything with writing on it separated and noted), and at the same time he told me that no further action would be taken against me by the Provost Marshal provided I behaved myself.

What was the purpose of this? Simply to frighten me into silence. For some years now I have made no secret of my ideals and the way they conflict with the structure of the R.A.F. and the political structure of the present government. I have started two Service Magazines, one in the Middle East and still functioning, the other in this country and censored out of existence. A copy of a letter explaining the case of the latter magazine (published in *Tribune*) deeply interested the Adjutant during the search of my kit.

AN ERK.
(Name and address supplied).

Homeless Workers Arrested for Appropriating Empty Houses

An indication of the kind of incident which is likely to become frequent during the aggravated housing shortage after the war is given in the following extract from the *Blantyre (Scotland) Gazette*, for the 28th April, 1945.

"The housing shortage and subsequent 'squatting' problem in Blantyre was taken a step further when police unexpectedly visited two of the houses recently 'commandeered' by a number of homeless families and all of them were removed—the men and women to the police cells and the children to Hamilton Home.

"The houses raided by the police were Millheugh (a mansion consisting of over twenty rooms) into which five families of squatters had moved a little over a week ago, and Greencroft Cottage, into which two families had moved about the same time.

"All told, eight women, four men and about twenty children were removed by the police this morning. The action of the authorities was

unexpected and created a sensation when police and welfare officials arrived at the respective houses at 1.30 this morning.

"The men were apprehended at that time and at nine o'clock this morning welfare officials arrived at the houses in cars and ambulances and took custody of the children, numbering nineteen or twenty. The women were then also apprehended and taken to Blantyre police station."

The authorities are in no hurry to provide the workers with the millions of new houses which are required to provide reasonable living accommodation for everybody in Britain, but they obviously intend to treat with the greatest severity any attempt on the part of the workers themselves to rectify this lack by encroaching on the sacred rights of private property, even when the private property is a house that is allowed to lie empty while millions of people are without proper homes.

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"The Defence Committee have united many people to meet the danger of totalitarianism and suppression, a danger which comes from the so-called left, as well as from the right to minority organisations. Not only should we struggle against this threat but embody the freedom on which we pin our hopes."

Geoffrey Pittock-Buss made it abundantly clear that the recent Old Bailey Trial revealed that the people in power had laid down limits for society, and the crime of the imprisoned Anarchists was that they advocated a change of society, to a society based on simple human justice, freedom, brotherhood and equality.

The only one of the four accused to escape the clutches of the law, Marie Louise Berneri, made it plain to the audience, that she had not been intimidated by the persecution. She said, "I do not withdraw one word I have written or said, or retract from my position in the revolutionary movement, it is my intention to continue with the work I have been doing and to strive for the release of my imprisoned comrades."

In a spirited speech, Eddie Shaw aroused the enthusiasm of the audience in pointing out the serious issues at stake, "This struggle is a part of the same struggle that began in Italy in 1922, when Mussolini murdered his way to power," he said. "It was the revolt of the workers that brought about that baboon's downfall. Mussolini might have been hung from a lamp-post in Italy, but his spirit is still alive in this country, and if the British people want freedom, and equality, it will be useless for them to look elsewhere for liberation. They must liberate themselves."

The meeting responded in splendid style to Fredrick Lohr's appeal for funds to carry on the fight, the collection amounting to £64 9s. 7d.

"The disease of power had gone to the heads of the politicians and they had got hold of civilisation by the heels."

Fenner Brookway said that "The Governments of the United Nations have recognised a new principle of International Law, the principle of 'Vansittartism' whereby not only are generals and officers accused of war guilt, but the rank and file are also included. Are then the British soldiers to be accused of the infamies committed, in the name of this country, in Greece and India, and at the same time, be refused permission to read the truth in the newspapers which exposes and condemns such infamous action?"

War takes toll of human life and liberty still. We expect that, in some respects, we are a little clearer than the 1914-18 period, there can be no illusion as regards the material effect on the mental attitude of a very backward proletariat, whose education lacks revolutionary principles, and falls an easy prey to the State worship of the power politics of the period. Wages, rent, interest and profit play a very big part in influencing the masses, more dangerous than even property ownership as it affects a huge mass of people for good or evil.

The newspaper proprietors' strike in Sydney could not be regarded as a social upheaval, as all these employers are highly paid. The C.P. did capitalize the events to suit the circumstances. The unified forces operate from every angle to dope the workers.

Australia as you know has been very militarized. We now have the Imperial Division Navy here, welcome change to U.S.A. Economic life changes deepen against the masses. The money classes live in luxury, but the broad masses suffer from high taxes, and shoddy goods and high prices. Wages tax has led to lowered output and general inefficiency in all industries. Coal miners are always striking as a result of taxes and absentee fines. A terrific drought has brought about a terrible position on the land, awful losses of stock and grain. At last some rains have fallen.

For the bond-holders, Australia is a heaven. Debt piles up to the delight of these money changers who enjoy the waste and extravagance of the cost plus war economy. Labour in politics and in the industrial world is a lap-dog for the ruling-class except say in Broken Hill where the One Big Union idea prevails.

I miss Marcus Graham's paper (*Man*) very much.

There is a ready sale for our literature since the great illusion of the people's war fraud. The less said the better. We hope for peace but know what the result will be for the masses. The storm may break upon the horizon but will the hungry and the weak mass be able to stand to attention? Let's hope so.

We well know the trials you are all going through over there. Those who are active always suffer.

Yours fraternally,
DON LAING.
Sydney, N.S.W.

THE FREEDOM OF THE CITIZEN

I am told that Scotland Yard officers from the Special Branch carried out a close inspection of the identity cards of sightseers who attended the trial of the four anarchists at the Old Bailey.

Among those conducting this inspection were two of the detective inspectors who gave evidence for the prosecution, and all the particulars shown in the cards were recorded in the official notebooks.

What was the purpose of this extraordinary proceeding? It is rather late in the day to suggest that it was prompted by security considerations.

Nor is it possible to believe in view of the negligible size of the anarchists' organisation in this country, that the police were expecting some dangerous demonstration by the friends of those on trial.

It may, of course, have been no more than a clumsy piece of routine interference. But even if it was, it should be condemned.

This sort of action by the police, whatever their motives, is bound to be intimidating and impinges on the established principles of open administration of the law and the freedom of the citizen.

Maurice Webb in *Sunday Express*, 6/5/45.
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