

# STOP PLAYING THEIR GAME!

## They Have Fooled Us Long Enough

It would be difficult to imagine a more pathetic confession of administrative bankruptcy or a more incongruous appeal to popular trust than the broadcast on March 18th in which Attlee, speaking as the inspired but inept oracle of the Labour government, discoursed on the national economic crisis and the government's nebulous plans for overcoming it.

He began with a tribute to what has already been done since the war, a tribute that made one wonder immediately just why there was an economic crisis.

"Millions of men and woman," he told us, "have returned from the forces and from munitions to civilian life. Industries have been restarted with great energy. As a result the number of employed persons is greater than in 1938, the output of goods had by the end of 1946 almost reached pre-war level, and exports had exceeded pre-war level."

And yet, we are in the midst of an economic crisis, fuel and food and clothing are short, cigarettes are as scarce as ever they were during the war, fruit and vegetables cost astronomical prices, and the quality of almost all the goods we receive is lower than it was before the war. What is the explanation?

It is quite clear. More people than ever before are engaged on export manufacture, when we need goods primarily for home consumption. This fact is caused as much as anything else by a foolish agricultural policy of the government, which has failed to increase the productivity of the English soil to an equivalent of that of Holland and Belgium, which would have relieved us of the need for importing large quantities of food. A further example of this inept agricultural policy has been seen in the floods caused by bursting dikes in the Fen District. No doubt this is partly due to excessive water pressure; it is also due to an inefficient organisation for dealing with floods. One may say with certainty that a similar disaster would not have happened in Holland under such circumstances.

### Unproductive Workers

But there is also the fact, which we have often pointed out in *Freedom*, that while there may be more people employed than in 1938, there are no more employed on productive work. Out of the 20,000,000 employed persons in Britain, at least a third are doing quite senseless work. These include 700,000 civil servants, 400,000 employees of the gambling industry, the people still making munitions, the police force, local council clerks, all the people involved in capitalist finance, such as bank and insurance employees, etc. All these people are retained in quite unproductive work merely in order to carry out the regulations imposed by the government, to prepare for another war and to administer the various rackets involved in the money system.

But we must also remember that there are a vast number of men still in the forces, engaged in fulfilling various commitments, not of the British people, but of the British government. Attlee admitted this when he said:

"We could have recovered quicker if we had brought all our men home from abroad—but then we should have failed in our duty to our friends."

Whose friends? We are quite certain that the people whose interests are at present cared for by British soldiers in Palestine, Greece, Egypt, India and Germany are no friends of the British workers. They are the same unprincipled international capitalists and financiers who have caused two wars and hope to profit by a third. The fact that they are friends of Mr. Attlee and the Labour government shows clearly where his sympathies lie. The real friends of the British workers in all the occupied countries should be the workers of those lands, whose best interests would be served, as would our own, by the withdrawal and demobilisation of British troops to return to productive work.

### Voluntary Compulsion

In order to end this chaos of present-day capitalist Britain, Attlee talks glibly of a plan. Of what the plan will consist he is the reverse of explicit, but some of his vague phrases at least give us an idea how useless it will be for

any real recovery. He says, for instance, that

"In peacetime we need the same willingness and public spirit and we need a plan. But we cannot compel people. That is the point you must realise."

Just how far off compulsion are all the various government regulations and restrictions is surely evident! This kind of hypocritical talk reminds one very much of the early days of the war, when compulsion was always introduced after a great smoke-screen of voluntarism had been laid down. That a government which still administers EWOs in several industries and has just brought in a new conscription bill should talk of not compelling people is as ridiculous as it is deceitful.

It is quite clear, in the minds of the government, that the plan, whatever it is, will be operated from above, and that the people will have no say in its nature.

"The Government's part is to see to it that those needs which are the most urgent come first, and to plan the future development of the country on sound lines."

The "soundness" of the government's plans is amply indicated on a passage from the latter part of Attlee's speech:

"We are short of everyday things like china, sheets, towels, and household goods generally. We are also short of machinery, factories, houses, and materials. We must increase our exports."

An excellent way to solve our shortages at home! It must not be forgotten that the present fuel crisis was at least in part due to the fact that mining and electricity generating machinery had been shipped abroad by British capitalists instead of being used to increase the fuel production at home.

### Governmental Games

Attlee ends with a clownish caper on the playing fields of Eton.

"We understand teamwork from the games we play. We will continue to play our games, but we must not let them take precedence of work. Let us take our work in the spirit in which we take our play, remembering that belief in victory is half the battle."

But there are two sides in most games, and one sets out to beat the other. In the game at present being played in Britain, there are the governing classes, including bureaucrats, capitalists, trade union bosses, on one side, and on the other the workers. It is a game with marked cards and aces up the sleeve, in which the governing classes have decided to win by whatever means lies in their power.

It has become clear during the past two years that the workers are in a completely apathetic state towards all appeals from the government, and all tales of woe. They do not doubt that a crisis exists, but they are becoming increasingly disinclined to work themselves to death in order to help capitalism out of its troubles. Nor is compulsion likely to do more than induce further resentment, as has been shown by recent strikes and go-slow movements.

### A Practical Plan

The only plan that will end the recurrent crisis of capitalism is one that is based on the free activity of the workers. That is the plan which the anarchists have to offer. Let the workers take over the factories, and they will realise they are working for their own eventual good. Abolish the state and the money system, and millions of men and women will be free to embark on productive work of their own choice. Let the soldiers come home from abroad and return to a civilian life that will have a purpose in making wealth for the workers in general, and in so doing, let the British workers earn the friendship of those of the countries at present occupied. End the export for financial gain of goods needed in this country, and, by modernising English agriculture, make unnecessary the import of food from abroad—thus releasing it for countries where it is more needed.

By working in free co-operation for their own welfare, and not for that of capitalists and union parasites, the workers of Britain could soon end the present crisis, and bring about a society in which productive work and leisure were balanced by the rational use of science to produce enough food and consumption goods for everybody. The central need remains, as always, the abolition of those compulsive institutions, such as the state and capitalism, which crush down the workers and prevent them working in freedom for a society where the needs of every person will be abundantly fulfilled.

## NO FRATERNIZING FOR RUSSIANS

A more timely moment could not have been chosen by the Russian Government for the promulgation of its new decree banning marriages between Soviet citizens and aliens. The Moscow conference is in full swing and speeches and articles try to persuade the world of the friendship uniting Russia to the Great Democracies, yet if a Soviet citizen falls in love with an American, or a British, let alone a German subject, he or she is prevented by law from marrying.

It may be argued that this decree is more humane than the practice which has so far existed, of letting Soviet girls marry foreigners and then preventing them from joining their husbands. The latest attempt of the British Government to persuade the Russian Government to grant exit visas to Russian wives of British officers and soldiers who served in Russia during the war was made a few days ago on the highest level and has met with a final refusal. Of the 27 Soviet girls who married British servicemen during the war, only 12 were allowed to leave the Soviet Union in 1945; the others have

been waiting, for as long as five years in some cases, for permission to join their husbands.

The Soviet Government has never relied on the supreme qualities of its regime to keep its citizens within Russian frontiers. To try to leave Russia is considered "treason to the fatherland" and punishable by death. But marriage with an alien does not necessarily imply that the Soviet citizen would leave his country. There might be cases where the "alien" would be willing to take up residence in Russia. How does the Russian Government justify the ban on alien marriages in those cases? By the superior racial qualities of the Russians? By the corrupting influence a citizen of a bourgeois state could have on a Soviet citizen? But what if a British communist fell in love with a Russian girl?

No doubt those communists who were disgusted by Hitler's law forbidding Germans to marry Jews will find some powerful argument to justify this new decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.

## GERMAN WORKERS DEMAND FOOD

### 100,000 IN DUSSELDORF STRIKE

The long-suppressed discontent of the German people with the worsening food situation has at last begun to come to a head. This is taking place most actively in the Ruhr, which has been one of the worst-hit areas and which has the most solidly working-class population in Germany.

The demonstrations began with a three-hour strike of 35,000 workers in public utility concerns, who marched to the Military Government headquarters in Wuppertal in a great demonstration protesting against the catastrophic conditions and demanding

some alleviation. For the period of the strike, water, gas and electricity undertakings did not function, and the trams ceased to run.

This was the largest demonstration in Germany since the end of the war, but more was to follow. On the 27th March, 1,500 women in Cologne protested against food shortages and the continued requisitioning of houses for British families. On the same day 4,000 people in Aachen marched to the Military Government headquarters and presented a petition.

On the next day there was a general

strike in Dusseldorf. All transport services and factories in the city were closed down, and more than 100,000 people came into the streets to demonstrate against the Military authorities. Military cars were overturned and stoned, and windows were broken in office buildings.

Since then, there have been demonstrations in Dortmund and other Ruhr towns, where, among others, the miners, who receive specially large rations, have struck in solidarity with the rest of the population.

These demonstrations and strikes have been occasioned by the steady decline in the food situation in the British zone. At the beginning of the autumn promises were made that the ration would be in the neighbourhood of 1,550 calories. But the authorities have failed miserably even to reach that wholly inadequate level, and during the past few weeks the actual rations received have sunk to about 800 calories. Apparently there is now plenty of grain at Hamburg and Bremen, but the transport system to the Ruhr is quite inefficient, and, in addition, it is estimated that within two months some 30,000 tons of grain have disappeared in transit—no doubt finding its way on to the black market to feed the well-to-do.

The growing discontent of the German is likely to break out into even greater demonstrations unless conditions change, and the Control Commission authorities are palpably worried. But, instead of immediate supplies of food, they are already resorting to the showing of force by parading tanks in the streets, and they will doubtless attempt a bloody suppression of any rising that took place at the present time.

## THE GOLD COAST RITUAL MURDERS

Owing to the obduracy of the colonial authorities, in the face of widespread public protests both in Britain and Africa, three of the men sentenced to death for an alleged "ritual murder" have now been hanged, themselves victims of what looks very much like a judicial murder. No protests now can save the men who have been hanged, but there are still four men left in prison who can be released if sufficiently strong protests are made, and if the case is not allowed just to die now that its most sensational phase is over. Moreover, such a flagrant miscarriage of even so-called democratic justice should be used to expose and to try and overthrow the corruption of British colonial administration. It is therefore desirable to consider the case in its wider implications.

There has been a rapid taking of sides over this question, and one of the most disquieting facts is that a number of newspapers which in general maintain a certain decency of approach, such as the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Economist*, have actually come forward and stated

that it is unfortunate that attempts should be made to stay the execution of these men, since according to the newspaper editors in question, such "weakness" would be a direct encouragement to African natives who would believe the power of West African medicine to be greater than that of the English law.

Leaving aside for the moment the general theoretical question of ritual murders, these newspapers completely ignore the fact that there are many details in the case in question which make it very doubtful indeed whether the men were in fact guilty of murder, and also that there were a number of irregularities in the case which make the conviction bad in law.

To begin, no body or portion of a body has been discovered which has been identified as that of the alleged victim, and no tangible proof has ever been brought forward that he was actually murdered. The most that has been ascertained is that he disappeared. The evidence on which the men were condemned was wholly circumstantial,

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As prisons really are. This photograph shows the interior of a Wing at Wandsworth Prison. Warders are seen snooping (through the spy holes) on the prisoners in their cells.

man, nevertheless, represents many a prisoner who inflates his own importance to his by no means duped companions in order to try and keep up the self-respect which the prison clothes and regimen seek to destroy. There is a cheerful coloured prisoner, forever begging cigarette-ends from his fellows or obliging warders, forever railing gently at the English because they "are always smiling".

Then there is the elderly self-pitying schoolmaster, a paederast, one infers, eternally ashamed that a man of his education should be in prison. The merchant navy officer whom he seeks to befriend, exhibits the normal unthinking prisoner who quickly adapts his morals to the environment of prison.

These men, and several others, are shown in the too close proximity which makes them get on each other's nerves, lose their tempers, fight, hold

warders, who are his constant companions (they do it for the extra money and their kindness comes from their inevitable pity for the boy); upsets the governor who hopes for reprieve which doesn't come. The condemned cell sequence provides the dramatic moments, and I can testify to the demoralizing effect of an impending execution, for I have been in prison (Wandsworth) when a man was "topped", as the prisoners say. We were cleared out of the main buildings, cleaners and all, for one can hear the drop throughout the whole place. And the clock was stopped so that we other prisoners couldn't hear the exact minute when the state committed its cold and revolting murder. Yet despite all these precautions, or perhaps because of them, prisoners can think and talk of nothing else. Douglas Home didn't have this experience, and that perhaps explains why the full tenseness and expectancy and horrible fascination of

but imprisonment and penal servitude gets almost none.

It is impossible to convey in an article the way in which the play portrays the effect of the indignities of prison—in the insulting clothes, the insulting food, the insults of the warders, and the superiority of the governor—it shows these factors moulding the thoughts and words and actions of the group of prisoners. One can mention the scene in which the old bigamist Brown has a visit from his wife, and has nothing to say to her—a scene which provides comic relief, but which is not overdone. The homosexual problem is treated with extraordinary tact, and is utterly truthful. One must leave the play to convey this and more, and it does it very well indeed.

Of course, it cannot give a documentary account which misleads at no point. It cannot show the solitary existence in one's cell, which forms more than half a prisoner's day. The governor and the chaplain (do some of us recognize them?) do not represent typical governors and chaplains—the picture is altogether too favourable to them. The warders on the other hand are remarkably exact. There is a brutal bullying one and a genial easy going human one. Both types exist, but the former are numerically predominant. It is right to show the brutal type not wholly immune to human feelings, while the genial one is so unnerved by the execution that he becomes irrationally strict—I have seen this kind of thing happen. It shows how warders' behaviour is affected by the nature of the job they do.

**The Actors**

The cast is remarkable. For one wonders how men who have not presumably been inside can have absorbed so much of the atmosphere of prisoners. The IRA man dominates the group and Julian Somers (who plays the part) stands out on that account, but also for his immensely convincing rendering. Stanley Beard as the genial screw, King, and David Duncan as the brutal Jackson, are quite excellent. But there are many others who are no less good, and there are no weak members of the cast. Altogether they give an honest and straightforward performance, which is just what is wanted in this exceedingly welcome play.

ANARCHIST.

# THE DRAMA OF PRISON

ANYTHING which helps to enlighten people about what goes on in prison is immensely welcome, and it is this which gives importance to the prison play "Now Barabbas . . ." now running at the Vaudeville Theatre in the Strand. For the most significant thing about the play is the fact that it is about prison and prisoners and is running in the West End. It is making those who see it think about prison no longer in terms of a vague threat which "makes for righteousness", but in terms of shouting warders, frayed nerves, starved human impulses—in a word, it is making prison life real, at least to some extent, to those who have never been to prison.

I am not in a position to say how much it tells such a person about prison, because, having been imprisoned three times, I can claim a more thorough knowledge than a play can give! Yet if prison has lost its bloom for me, I am in all the better position to say how far this play accords with the reality. With some minor reservations which I shall make later, it is very real indeed.

**William Douglas Home**

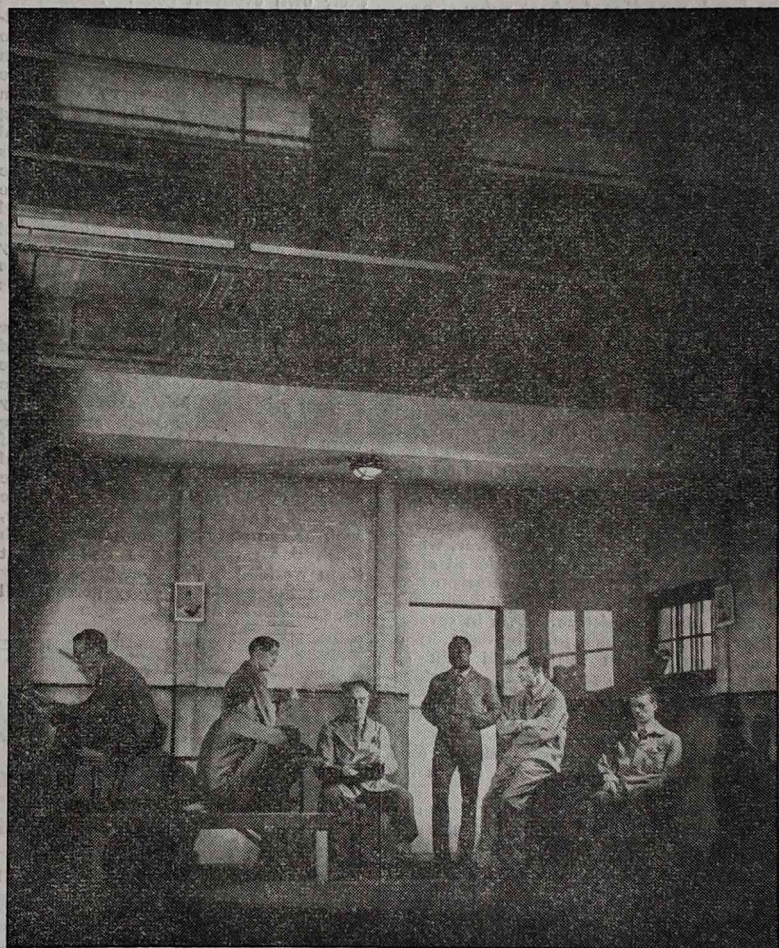
But first a word about the author, William Douglas Home, for how did the son of an earl come to acquire such "inside" knowledge, if I may be allowed the pun? As an officer in the battle of Normandy he was ordered to shell a position of which the defenders had already offered to surrender. He refused to be a participant in such a gratuitous massacre, and disobeyed—thereby showing far greater human responsibility than the brutal idiots who issued the order. Result: sentenced by court martial to prison—first at Wormwood Scrubbs, then at Wakefield Model Prison. In prison, Douglas Home was well liked by his fellows; and he seems also to have liked them, for his character drawing is extraordinarily exact and penetrating, while at the same time sympathetic. He has drawn on his own experience (except in one major particular—the condemned cell episodes) and this explains some contradictions, for he has made a composite picture out of a model and a local prison.

We are shown some aspects of the daily lives of a group of prisoners in close contact with one another; of the warders, the governor, the chaplain;

and a young fellow condemned to death for shooting a policeman and whom we see in the condemned cell. The action is episodic, in short flashes, but extraordinarily quick and integrated.

**Typical Characters**

The ordinary prisoners include an IRA man doing 7 years, of so forceful a character, domineering even, that he dominates almost all his fellow prisoners. There is an effeminate homosexual, portrayed so clearly that one can recognize in him dozens of "poufs" (as prison slang calls them) who are present in numbers in every prison—I can recall about ten in one shop alone. There is the old boaster, Brown, another perennial type, forever describing scenes with the governor in which he comes out best, though the audience has already seen what actually transpired. There is another type of boaster, too, in the "squadron leader" who tells each newcomer that he flew his 'plane at "zero feet above Trafalgar Square" and got court-martialled "as an example", while actually he is a small-time crook with many sentences, during the last of which, as the governor reminds him, he calls himself an Admiral! In some degree a caricature, this



As the prison appears at the Vaudeville Theatre. The action of the play is episodic, in short flashes, but extraordinarily quick and integrated.

each other in contempt, but whose need for human contact makes them seek friendship and sympathy from at least one among them. They are shown making trivial requests to the governor, cadging tobacco, and always shouted at by the warders. For in prison, both the brutal warders who predominate, and the occasional genial ones, all shout their orders up the long halls and landings—"get a move on there, shut-up talking, stop smoking, get back to your cell there, get inside and slam your doors . . ." nothing but shouting and noise.

**Frayed Nerves**

This is the atmosphere of the play and of prison—nerves eternally on edge. It is this that makes the characters show each other photographs of their girls, sets them quarrelling, makes them, unwillingly or willingly, form homosexual relationships; for the perpetual sexual starvation is the emotional backcloth of prison life, perhaps its most inhuman component.

Of a more dramatic kind are the frayed nerves of the young man condemned to death. His presence in the prison upsets the chaplain who visits him daily and likes him; the two stupid, but none the less, kindly

an execution is not realized.

There is another criticism here. If the public go home thinking about the ethics of capital punishment instead of about the dreary death that prison is, these condemned cell scenes will detract from the chief value of the play. For capital punishment receives plenty of public discussion,

"Revolutions are never made, neither by individuals nor yet by secret societies. They come about automatically, in a measure; the power of things, the current of events and facts, produces them. They are long preparing in the depth of the obscure consciousness of the masses—then they break out suddenly, not seldom on apparently slight occasion . . . The social revolution means the destruction of all institutions of inequality, and the establishment of economic and social equality."

BAKUNIN.

**ANARCHISM — Interpretations**

"Bloody revolutions are often necessary, thanks to human stupidity; yet they 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 perfection of the purpose in whose name they take place . . ."

"One must not wonder if in the first moment of their uprising the people kill many oppressors and exploiters—this misfortune, which is of no more importance anyhow than the damage done by a thunderstorm, can perhaps not be avoided. But this natural fact will be neither moral nor even useful. Political massacres have never killed parties; particularly have they always shown themselves impotent against the privileged classes; for authority is vested far less

in men than in the position which the privileged acquire by any institutions, particularly by the State and private property. If one would make a thorough revolution, therefore, one must attack things and relationships, destroy property and the State: then there is no need of destroying men and exposing one's self to the inevitable reaction which the slaughtering of men always has provoked and always will provoke in every society. But, in order to have the right to deal humanely with men without danger to the revolution, one must be inexorable towards things and relationships, destroy everything, and first and foremost property and its inevitable consequence the State. This is the whole secret of the revolution."

BAKUNIN.



A group of "prisoners" from the Vaudeville Theatre. They play the parts of I.R.A. terrorist, brothel keeper, bigamist, homosexual, confidence trickster, etc. "The cast is remarkable"—writes "Freedom's" critic.

Recently the headlines of the national dailies were blazoned with the news that the agreement between the National Union of Mineworkers and the National Coal Board providing for the long-promised five-day week was signed and it would be operative from May 5th next. Coupled with sundry other minor benefits such as the abolition of bath dues, in the words of Will Lawther, president of the Mineworkers Union, "This agreement places the British miner in the best position of any miners in the world, not forgetting John L's." Which, of course, may be so but it does not follow that the conditions of the British miner is necessarily bettered by this agreement. In fact, strong resentment has already been expressed by miners to

# MINERS AND 5 DAY WEEK

this agreement, even before the ink was dry on the paper. The reason for this resentment soon becomes obvious when it is observed that there are certain clauses and conditions attached to the "golden" agreement.

In the early stages of the negotiations which preceded the signing of the agreement, the miners were given to understand that there would be no loss of weekly earnings as a result of working only five shifts instead of six shifts to the week. It was also understood that there would be paid to all miners a bonus shift based upon a national average. This would have meant an increase in

wages for the day wage miner and a reasonable average for the piece-worker; quite acceptable to both. As it is now, under the published terms of the agreements, the day-worker will get his normal daily wage plus one-fifth for the five shifts to make up his money for the sixth shift not worked. The piece-worker will only get a plus of 16 per cent. on his earnings for five shifts which is, of course, less than one-fifth and does not fully compensate him for the loss of earnings for the sixth shift. However, worse is still to come.

In order to qualify for the bonus payment, the miner must work five complete shifts; if he is injured or is away on trade union work (note) he will still get his fifth or 16 per cent. plus for the shifts actually worked. But the sick man is penalised; for a miner absent for any other cause including sickness will get only the normal day's pay or piece-rate for the time worked. This is indeed Dead Sea fruit. Hitherto, most payments made to miners in compensation for shifts lost through no fault of their own, such as transport failure, breakdown of pit machinery, extreme adverse weather and other "acts of God", carried the proviso that all other shifts in the week must be worked in order to qualify for the payment, exceptions being made in the cases of injury and sickness, etc. We now witness a step backwards, for the new agreement excludes the sick man, robbing him at a time when he needs the money most, and once more places him, as always, in the category of a suspected malingeringer. Such treatment, to say no more, is despicable and disgusting in the extreme, and is but a retention or continuation of one of the worst aspects of Tory policy. Even so in

their blind anxiety to eliminate "absenteeism" the negotiators of this agreement are likely to defeat their own ends. The effect of such a discriminatory clause may be to impair efficiency and safety in the pits by compelling a sick miner who, fearing the loss of the bonus, continues to

work out the week in an enfeebled state of health. The existence of this clause alone will do much to fan the smouldering flames of discontent and will do nothing to appease the miners' resentment to other odious aspects of State control.

TOM CARLILE.

## CLYDE DOCKERS' STRIKE

(from a Glasgow Comrade)

If the Ministry of Labour succeed in their move against the Glasgow dockers, then another 500 men will be added to the 27,000 unemployed in Glasgow—a very unpleasant prospect for the workers of this city, with its visible evidence imprinted indelibly in every street and every other face of the bitter struggle for existence that has taken place in the years before.

The Glasgow dockers were not satisfied with the Ministry's excuses or the Port Director's explanations for the sacking of one man in every seven on the grounds of redundancy. In reply to the authorities' move to serve 500 notices of dismissal on March 26th, 3,800 dockers struck work on Monday.

The Ministry of Labour argue that this is a part of the national plan for the registration and decasualisation which in the case of the Clyde would involve this displacement. Attempting to sweeten the bitter pill, they explained that it is only the recently employed and those who do not work hard enough who are affected.

The challenge is made to the authorities to show evidence where the normal work expected from the Clyde dockers has not been carried out satisfactorily. The charges made of slacking or irregularity are sheer nonsense coming as they do a few months after the lavish praise showered on the Glasgow dockers for their Herculean efforts over the past seven years when the Clyde handled 80% of Britain's traffic and achieved the record turn round of ships.

The dockers claim that their post-war record of achievement is as great as it was before, even though the labour force has been reduced voluntarily by 1,700 workers, and any further reduction would impair the efficiency of the port, and cause disorganisation.

Secretary of the dockers' trade union Michael Byrne says that thousands of tons of machinery and other goods normally shipped from Glasgow are being sent by road to English ports, despite protests from manufacturers, while, after 30 years in the docks, Glasgow men are thrown on the scrap heap.

The dockers contend that as they work on the job they are in a position to pass an opinion, which is definitely that they are not getting a square deal.

Faced with strike action, the Port Director is prepared to argue over the number of men involved in the 'redundancy' order, although he has no power over the order itself. The dockers' reply is one of Solidarity—One Out, All Out.

Trade union involved is the Scottish Transport and General Workers, one of the very few free and independent unions in the country. This union is not controlled by Transport House, nor does it pay any political levy. The Committee will not tolerate any political affiliations or interference. It is a dockers' union for the dockers.

This freedom has not been achieved without cost. They lost their funds through the courts to Ernest Bevin, but their independence has given solidarity and strength which in the industrial struggle has obtained for these men better conditions than operate anywhere else in the country.

It is not surprising that the opinion is widespread that an attempt is being made to break up this free trade union and to bring the Clyde dockers under the Transport House whip. It would obviously serve a political end to have all the dockers ironed down to the lowest level and well disciplined before they become servants of the King under nationalisation.

The strikers have no complaint against the dockers of other ports to which much of the Clyde traffic has been diverted, stating on the contrary that a levelling up, and not a levelling down, is their desire. The Press in this strike is again distorting and misrepresenting the workers' case with streaming headlines about "Rations in Danger!"—a malicious mis-

representation by which it is obviously hoped to bring the dockers into public disfavour.

Time and again I heard from the Union Committee the determination not to sit idly by and see Glasgow go back to the black depression of pre-war days.

In reply to the misrepresentation, the strikers, through Secretary Michael Byrnes, make this statement:

All the men want is that cargoes which were their pre-war prerogative should come back to the river, and that the city, as well as the dockers, should get a square deal.

If we admit that 500 of our labour force are redundant, we become parties to the drift South tendency.

To acquiesce with the cut is tantamount to admitting that the Clyde is getting a fair share of the country's cargoes.

We deplore the action of our civic leaders in bringing warships to the Clyde instead of cargo ships. The reaction of the citizens, 27,000 unemployed, and the 500 'redundant' dockers could be imagined.

Work is essential, not regattas.  
P. C.

## Land Notes

# Insanity Fair

UNLESS perhaps one is a professional journalist, writing an article is rather like going to the dentist or getting up in the morning—one tends to put it off till the last possible moment, with results that must often be regrettably obvious to the unfortunate reader, and it is with a somewhat guilty conscience that I sit down to hastily write these notes.

By way of making a start here are two quotes:

(1) "Instead of increasing our agricultural efficiency by further mechanisation we are exporting machines we need so badly," said Mr. E. H. Gardener, National Farmers' Union Vice-President, at Salisbury last night. "It is a remarkable achievement that the export figures of agricultural goods are nearly four times what they were in pre-war days. It is even more remarkable when you appreciate that every one of these agricultural implements would have been more valuable if it had been kept at home." (*Reynolds News*, 9/3/47.)

(2) "Agricultural machinery, including parts, to the value of £5,250,000 has been ordered from the U.S. and Canada for delivery this year; orders are now being placed for 1948," stated Mr. Tom Williams, Minister of Agriculture, yesterday." (*Daily Mirror*, 19/3/47.)

Truly, the world gets queerer and queerer; so much so indeed that one sometimes wonders if it is worth while bothering to point out the fact.

## Merry-Go-Round.

The merry-go-round arrangement referred to above is, however, almost naive in the simplicity of its operation compared with one that was told me by a farmer friend last week-end. The Ministry of Food had contracted with the farmer to grow a certain acreage of a particular variety of early potatoes for seed, which seed the Ministry of Food proposed purchasing with a view to re-selling to the Spanish Government who were going to sell it, through the usual involved channels of wholesalers and merchants, to the Spanish growers. When the resulting crop of potatoes had been harvested in May the process was to be repeated in reverse. The Spanish Government was to buy the ware to sell to the Ministry

of Food who would sell it to the wholesalers, who would sell it to the retailers, who would finally sell it to that almost forgotten nonentity, the consumer. But the whole ingenious arrangement fell through because U.N.O. decided to recommend that diplomatic relations with Franco Spain be formally broken off. So the Ministry of Food, not having apparently foreseen the possibility of this token gesture by the peace-loving nations of the world, had to purchase the original seed potatoes at seed price and put them on the market for consumption at the ware price—the difference, of course, being borne indirectly by the consumer just the same in his capacity as tax-payer.

All of which reminds me of that little story of the English farmer who, while bagging up his ware potatoes, lost his penknife. In a few months time, when he came to plant out the Scotch seed potatoes he had purchased from a merchant, he found his long-lost knife.

## Alice-in-Wonderland Dept.

Before we leave this Alice-in-Wonderland Dept., here are a few more news items over which you can laugh, cry, or be merely bored, as you please.

Firstly, the current buying price of wheat as purchased by the Government from the growers in three different countries: (a) English wheat—average 73/- per quarter, (b) Canadian—98/- per quarter and (c) Argentine—140/- per quarter. A quarter of wheat is still a quarter of wheat wherever it is grown, so why, you may well ask, such discrepancy in prices? Well, very briefly, there are important British investments in the Argentine (see the recent Argentine railways deal) and certain parties have to be propitiated. Lest it might be thought that 140/- per quarter was a bit mean, the Government have gratuitously given the Argentine an extra seven million pounds for frozen meat also. In the words of the Minister, "The Argentine Government satisfied us that perhaps the contract was not as liberal as it might have been, and we gave them this extra seven million pounds." Charity, it seems, does not, after all, always begin at home—not where the farming community is concerned anyway.

## More Of The Same

Then, here is Strachey, as reported in the *Daily Mail* (25/3/47). "It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of beginning the rehabilitation of our livestock industry."

And now Dr. Summerskill in the House of Commons on March 6th, as reported in the *Farmers' Weekly* (14/3/47). "We agreed to facilitate the shipping of animal feeding-stuffs to Denmark (my italics) in order that she could produce more milk products for us."

A very small increase in imported feeding-stuffs in this country would have enabled many animals to recover from the recent weather who have died, or will die, through malnutrition. Losses in sheep alone are estimated at two million, and more are dying, or probably will die, because pineapples at 10/- and 15/- each in the shops are imported in preference to a bag of maize which might have saved the lives of half a dozen sheep.

Meanwhile, Strachey states, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, that he hopes soon to import as many monkey-nuts as were imported before the war. I should not, by now, be at all surprised to learn that he is also arranging to import monkeys to eat them.

## Straightening It Out

Here, in conclusion, since there is not space for much else, is a cutting from the *Sunday Express* (23/3/47). "When farmer J. L. Brighton, of Newton Flotman, applied to the Ministry of Agriculture for a permit for straight wire he received one for coiled wire. 'No straight wire is available anywhere,' said the Ministry. 'But,' said Norfolk dealers, 'the only wire we have is straight. We can't get coiled.' Now the Ministry has sent Mr. Brighton a blue-print for making coiled wire straight."

If you have managed to read through all the above, do you wonder that one's style is apt to become a bit peevish? The only consolation that may perhaps be derived is that even if, in the initial stages, anarchy did mean a certain amount of chaos, it could not conceivably be more chaotic than the social order under which we exist—I nearly said live—here and now.

postal workers for an improvement of their very low standards are being resisted by the "Socialist" government.

Referring again to the article, the writer says "At the present moment, in nearly every industry, workers have complaints which they are seeking to have redressed, and the present method of 'negotiation' appears to be either extremely slow or practically ineffective;—and in many industries actual conditions of work are so unhealthy, uncomfortable and inefficient, that it is becoming imperative for the workers to take to some form of drastic action".

The foregoing is in general a true description of conditions in industry today. There must be some reason why the workers do not take drastic action! That reason is that the centralised administration of the unions has placed the power of veto action by the workers in the hands of permanent officials and others who are influenced more by ambitions to become permanent officials than anything else. As everyone knows, the trade union officials consider the political fortunes of the Labour Party to be paramount, and as these are embarrassing times for the Labour government, strikes cannot be countenanced because they would lead to further embarrassments. We are getting the necessary evidence in industrial disputes to-day, to prove conclusively that the trade union officials are adamantly opposed to the workers taking action to secure improvements of any kind; and so we can be certain that the idea of a "stay-in" strike would be anathema to the union bosses.

The conception of the "stay-in" strike is, however, something which is most likely to be strengthened as a result of the frustrated efforts of workers confronted by the alliance of industrial, political and union bosses. More and more workers are being compelled by events to realise that the idea of union leaderships acting as organisers of strikes, or even any other form of direct action, is an idea completely out-of-date. When one considers the powerful organisation represented by a great hostile press, parliament, and the intimidation of the union bosses, strike action to-day—always "unofficial"—is a much more serious matter than hitherto. As workers learn to appreciate the changing social conditions accelerated by the aftermath of an imperialist war, they will give more attention to methods of making union organisations effective. Being convinced of the ineffectiveness of present-day methods, consideration will be given to the different ways of enforcing their claims whilst remaining at work.

When the workers in industry adopt the "stay-in" strike, or "working-to-rule" strike as it might be called, they really render quite redundant the bureaucracy, since the very conditions of such a strike require local organisation with the closest possible contact with individual workers.

But the "stay-in" strike also represents an ideological advance on the part of the workers. It brings the workers closer together. In ordinary strikes there is always a glorious sense of workers' unity, which persists long after the strike, finally becoming dissipated in the return to bureaucratic control. There is the possibility in the "stay-in" strike to extend unity to the workers in other industries whose prejudices are often inflamed by the propaganda of the capitalist press. For the workers could undertake to run the industry partially so as not unnecessarily to inconvenience other workers. If the busmen, for example, or railwaymen, decided to run such partial services, they could organise to maintain and service the vehicles, and take the fares directly. The miners could produce the coal and sell directly; in other industries too, production could go on and the workers keep control of their own products. When workers are ready to take this logical step in their vast numbers, no state coercive apparatus could prevent it; the intriguing of the union bosses would be of no avail.

(Continued on page 5)

# BACKGROUND TO FRENCH PRINTING STRIKE

The movement of the Paris newspaper workers allows us to see from the inside the picture of the French press and the exact role played by the principal protagonists: the Government, the parties, papers, and the organised workers.

For about a month, linotypists, typographers, machinists, proof-readers, etc., have ceased work in the printing works producing newspapers, weeklies and reviews. At the same time and as a consequence, the related branches of activity: distribution, editing, administration, sale, have been paralysed. That represents 50,000 workless in Paris. But the social repercussions are enormous: the three million Parisians are deprived of news and have to be content with radio or official bills on which are posted certain items of information.

To know the development of the conflict, it is necessary to return to the morrow of the liberation, when the new status of the press was organised.

## The New Press

At the departure of the occupying forces and the arrival of the allied troops, the resistance organisations seized the most important printing works, and particularly those of the *Petit Parisien*, the *Intransigeant*, the *Paris Soir*, and *Le Matin*. The great parties and movements shared out this booty. The DeGaullists, socialists, communists and M.R.P. were the first and practically the only beneficiaries of these measures.

Newspapers which had appeared under the occupation or under Vichy were forbidden, their proprietors and editors hunted down and their goods confiscated. The clandestine sheets *Combat*, *L'Humanité*, *le Populaire*, and a whole series of other papers animated by members of the resistance took their place and used the requisitioned material and printing works.

Legally, the goods of the press collaborators were placed under sequestration, the resistance papers becoming clients of the State organisation. In reality, most of these political organs lived through a period during which the conduct of finances was carried on with great fraud, and debts amounting to some hundreds of millions were inscribed in the books of the Société Nationale des Entreprises de Presse, the name given to the sequestration organisation.

Each party placed its supporters as editors, administrators, inspectors. The number of journalists trebled in less than a year. The price of newspapers rose from 50 centimes to 3 and then to 4 francs.

On the other hand, it was necessary to have a preliminary authorisation, given by the Government, to obtain the right to publish a paper. Only the resistance movements obtained that authorisation, and a traffic in influence was rapidly organised. In the same way, it was a governmental service which granted or refused the paper necessary for the press.

## The Putrid Press

What was called the putrid press, that is to say the press of pre-war years and of the occupation, the press which was rotted by money and the pressure of powers interested in manoeuvring French opinion, did not allow itself to be buried easily.

In the first place, there were among the people of the right and the extreme right, authentic resisters to whom the "new masters" had to give the right to appear. The catholic papers, the sheets of the M.R.P., dailies like *Figaro* arose and were maintained.

On the other hand, the clumsiness of the Communists, the ignorance of the new editors, the monopoly spirit which governed the distribution of paper, provoked a reaction which led all the non-resistant or anti-Communist elements to

## War Resistance In Austria

Austrians can once more join together to voice their opposition to war. The Allied Occupation Authorities have just given permission to the "Society of the Opponents of Military Service" (Bund der Kriegsdienstgegner) to function again after its long eclipse under the Nazis. And the revived Society feels it has plenty to do. One of its first attacks will be on the efforts of the present Austrian Government to be allowed to have its own army again.

Austrian branch of the War Resisters' International, the Society has so far enrolled a considerable membership and is distributing its anti-war literature on a large scale throughout Austria.

In many parts of Germany, also, local groups of war resisters are now affiliating directly with the War Resisters' International. They plan later on to amalgamate into a single and autonomous German War Resisters' Movement. Already, distributed widely in Germany is the International's first post-war pamphlet in German, *Der Kriegsdienstgegner* (The War Resister).

(Worldover Press.)

This welcome news, nevertheless prompts the sobering reflection that the Allied government are glad enough to see pacifism in defeated enemies, but do not welcome it at home. War resistance is not tolerated in Russia . . .

The following article on the Parisian newspaper workers strike was written before the strike had ended. The conclusion of the strike with the virtual rejection of the workers' demands must not be considered wholly as a defeat. They

combine and seek to change the law.

Groups of financiers and industrialists acquired numerous organs, using resisters as men of straw.

No part of the resistance being revolutionary, either by principle or tactics, the ideas of private property came uppermost, and a series of court judgments intervened, giving back to the old proprietors their goods. Almost simultaneously, the directors of sequestration started to demand from economically unstable newspapers the payment of their debts, which led to the disappearance of numerous resistance papers.

There remained, facing each other, the organs of the strongly-disciplined parties and the sheets of the important economic groups. A few "independents" combined in order to survive.

In February, a law was passed suppressing the preliminary authorisation. But the State continues to be the distributor of paper.

## The Parisian Federation of Printers

The printing workers' syndicates are among the rare organisations which have escaped Communist colonisation. They are syndicates with a fifty-years' old tradition of struggle, and their members include a strong proportion of the extreme left: syndicalists, revolutionary socialists, oppositional communists, libertarians.

Under the occupation, the militants of this federation participated in maintaining the syndical organisations but not many of them defended the patriotic positions of the official resistance. Strong in their past of struggle, enjoying conditions of life superior to the average, they gathered

were fighting single-handed against the whole weight of a hostile government, the antagonism of the official trade unions and the Socialist and Communist Parties, as well as the reactionary ruling class. But still they carried on for over a month,

together tenaciously for the defence of their corporate interests.

When the Stalinist tide came, the printers stood their ground and in spite of the major excommunications launched by the C.G.T., they retained their spirit and their militants. In Paris as well as in the provinces, most of the militants were re-elected with large majorities, in spite of the communist campaign.

But the conflict became acute when the printing workers, in spite of all the government orders, in spite of the appeals to sacrifice and the hymns to production, launched their series of demands. They wanted to guarantee the purchasing value of their hour of work and three times in a year demanded a 25% increase, i.e. 75% in all.

To the governmental arguments, and particularly to the discourse of Ambroise Croizat, Communist Minister of Labour, they replied: "The press has changed its master, but no part of it has returned to its true proprietors; the workers. We have thus no interest in working more nor in gaining less in favour of a new bourgeoisie, whose faults, while being different, are no less immoral than those of the old ones. If there are economies to be made, suppress the corruption which reigns in your administration, but do not seek to cut our wages."

The rotary machine operators, mostly communists, were soon in conflict with the Minister of Labour who denounced them by press and radio as agents of the trusts. Sympathy towards the Stalinists was transformed into hatred, and the organ of the Communist Party *L'Humanité*, experienced several days of slow working. In the provinces, notably in Lille, the printing workers, in solidarity, made the Com-

munist organs appear with one white column—that which contained the speech of Croizat.

During the whole of 1946, the movements of demand continued. Administrative personnel, rotary operators, and journalists went on strike or demanded increases of wages, with results generally favourable.

Then came the campaign of lowering prices, launched by the Socialist leader Blum. The government counted much on the anti-Stalinist sentiments of the printing workers and on the sympathy which the Socialist Party retained among them to hinder new claims. But the workers, stating that the cost of living index had suffered a new increase, put forward new demands. After long negotiations, they went on strike at the beginning of February.

## The Present Conflict

The Ramadier government, which had succeeded the Blum government, and intended to continue the price-lowering campaign, immediately took up its position against any increase of salaries. The Strike Committee did not wish to give in to them.

Several newspapers, notably *France Soir*, were ready to give in and even attempted to appear. But the stiffening of the government attitude stopped them from doing this.

The shock troops of the Communist Party (Communist Youth and Defence Committees of *L'Humanité*) wanted to take by force the printing works where the organ of the Communist Party was published. Three hundred, then on the next

day four hundred men attempted to take by assault the premises where the strikers were entrenched. The printing workers resisted, bombarded the assailants with lead ingots, and remained masters of the ground.

A leaflet of the Printers' Federation exposed its point of view to the working population and denounced in the same terms the old corrupt press and the press of the resistance.

Some newspapers wished to arrange publication in London or Brussels. Immediately working-class solidarity came into play and the Printers' union in Brussels called on its members to break this attempt at scabbing.

In Paris, little by little, the newspapers have accepted most of the claims of the strikers. It should be noted that no newspaper appearing at present in France—with the exception of perhaps two or three weeklies—lives by its sales. All have to face deficits running from 1 to 4 million francs a month.

The needs of the parties to influence opinion, the value of the press to financial or religious groups, demand the reappearance of the papers, that is to say, to give satisfaction to the strikers.

Neither the insults nor the insinuations thrown at the printing workers, nor the equivocal attitude of the C.G.T., nor the attacks directed by every means at the Printers' Federation, one of the last bastions of independent syndicalism have succeeded in breaking down the morale of the printing workers.

There remains the government, entangled in its financial calculations, but incapable of halting the increase in the price of meat, or of providing wine in a country overflowing with it. This government, composed, let us remember, of all the great democratic parties: Communist, Socialist, M.R.P. and radical, wishes to break down an obstacle which it thought had been eliminated long since, a conscious, clear-headed and combative working-class will.

## Gold Coast Ritual Murders

(Continued from page 1)

based on statements made by members of an opposing political faction within the native state to which they belonged. Already, one of the leading persons concerned in this evidence has been stricken with remorse since the conviction and has admitted that the convicted men were actually the victims of an intrigue based on political and tribal feuds. This fact, of course, renders invalid all the evidence against them.

Furthermore, great play has been made by the Colonial Office and the newspapers mentioned above on the fact that the men were tried by a native court and found guilty by a native jury. However, as has already been indicated, inter-tribal feuds run very strong in the area in question, and it has in fact been stated that the jury consisted almost entirely of a tribal group who were hostile to the accused.

Lastly, although according to West African law, as according to British law, a trial at assizes must be preceded by a magistrate's enquiry, no such subsidiary court was held in this case. The men were tried directly by the assizes, and therefore the conviction is legally void.

It is thus extremely doubtful whether any of the men in question were actually involved in a "ritual" murder. But, even if they were, it is interesting to reflect just how far the British administration has any moral right to condemn them. The ritual murder is presumably held to have some kind of magical significance and, according to the various groups, like the Leopard and Gorilla societies who practice such acts, to have eventually some practical result. But, in point of fact, the British authorities, in West Africa and even at home, are equally guilty of ritual murder. For what is an execution but a ritual murder? It is necessary for the Old Testament ritual of revenge, "A life for a life", that a murderer should be killed. And, moreover, the white medicine men, with their horsehair wigs, who sit on the bench, contend that such a killing has some kind of magical result, in that it prevents other men from murdering. In fact, of course, the ritual murder of a hanging is as pointless and ineffective as the ritual murder of the African jungle.

Both are the products of the superstitions that still keep men under the grip of tyranny and violence.

But perhaps the real ritual murderers of the Gold Coast (not the victims of frameups as in this particular case) have at least a certain moral advantage over the so-called civilised peoples of the world. For all their savagery and superstition has not brought them to the kind of wholesale murder which is perpetrated in war. The justifiers of the Hiroshima bomb and the destruction of the German cities by cascade bombing have no room for moral indignation against the pathetic thugs who carry out a few murders a year in the African jungle. Both are equally to blame, but we should get a sense of proportion and realise that the mass-murderers who govern the great powers to-day are far more dangerous to humanity as a whole than all the medicine men of the African jungle. Let us free ourselves from our own ju-ju before we begin to criticise others.

## Foreign Commentary

# UNRRA & Displaced Persons

THE jobs undertaken by UNRRA have been many and numerous. Undoubtedly there must be thousands of men and women who are alive to-day, thanks to the food and medical attention received from that relief organization. On the other hand a writer in the American *New Leader* attempts to demonstrate that the closing down of UNRRA will not be regretted by many Displaced Persons because of its reactionary policy towards those DP's who refuse to return to their countries of origin. The writer points out that—

"It was part of UNRRA's original task to repatriate as many of the Displaced Persons as possible. On the other hand, it was specifically instructed that where the DP's had fears about returning, no coercion was to be employed. The DP's were to be provided with all possible information and then they were to be permitted to make up their minds for themselves.

"UNRRA has sent no refugee back at the point of the bayonet. It has turned no one over by force to NKVD. But if it has not resorted to physical coercion, it has in repeated instances resorted to measures of psychological and moral coercion. It has suspended newspapers printed by camp inmates; it has prohibited them from receiving newspapers in their own languages other than those printed by the regimes which demand their return; it has opened the camps wide to Soviet liaison officers, Soviet literature, and Soviet cinemas; it has given the Soviet and satellite liaison officers complete access to the lists of displaced persons; it has repeatedly warned them against the bleakness of their future if they should refuse repatriation; it has compelled the camp authorities to terminate schools and vocational courses, and it has shunted the refugees about pointlessly from camp to camp; it has made life miserable by screening and re-screening them; and finally, where ordinary persuasion has failed to work, it has endeavoured to bribe the DP's by offering volunteers for repatriation 60 days' rations."

## THE VATICAN AND THE NEW REPUBLIC

At the time of writing, the Italian Constituent Assembly will have voted on Article 5 of the Constitution dealing with the relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the State. Article 5 reads as follows:

"The State and the Catholic Church are each in their own order independent and sovereign. Their relations are regulated by the Lateran pacts. Any modification of the pacts, bilaterally agreed, does not require any revision of this constitution. Other religious con-

fessions may legally organise themselves according to their own statutes, provided that they do not infringe upon the juridical order of the Italian State." Owing to the inefficient distribution of the Italian Press in this country (papers reach the newsagents at least nine days late) the general reaction to this Article cannot be gauged. The Rome correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* (25/3/47) however refers to the indignation of Italian Protestants and Jews whose leaders called on Signor de Nicola, provisional head of the Italian State, to draw his attention to the meaning of article five.

"Their complaint was that the Italian State would contribute from taxation to the salaries of priests but not to those of pastors or rabbis. Non-Catholics would therefore have to pay towards maintaining the Catholic Church. Further, the Lateran pacts make teaching in Italian schools conform to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, an imposition on all non-Catholic children. Further, the Catholic Church, the Lateran pacts, and the Concordat forbid divorce in a country where adultery is practised on an immense scale, and only the very rich can get annulments of their marriages from Sacra Ruota on the most curious ground." The *Guardian's* correspondent concludes by pointing out that:

"Perhaps one of the least desirable results of article five will be an increase in anti-clericalism, which is already rampant in post-war Italy." And indeed the last two issues of our old friend *Don Basilio*—the satirical anticlerical Rome weekly—devotes most of its space to denouncing Article 5 which it denounces in banner headlines as the "Fascist Concordat". *Don Basilio* (whose circulation was put at 250,000 copies in a recent article in *News Review*) takes the credit for much of the opposition to the Lateran Treaty and it is interesting to note in the section of the paper devoted to activities of the groups, that the Anarchists have played a large part in the public agitation against the Vatican stranglehold on the Italian masses.

## Arming For Peace!

The politicians were not so stupid as to make the mistake they made in the 1914-18 war and refer to the last war as a "war to end wars". Nevertheless simple people can be forgiven if they assume that once the enemy has been defeated, humiliated, starved and demilitarised, he will not be likely to start another war—at least not until his former enemies find it convenient to help him to rear; and that the victorious countries could afford to disarm. But, of course, that is far from being the case. All the victorious countries are maintaining huge

armed forces and not stinting the Services all the money they require. France is no exception to the rule. And in the last few days 52,000 million francs were voted for the armed services for the second quarter of 1947. This represents an expenditure of about £430 million for the year.

## . . . And Justify The Expense

Meanwhile, France's private war goes on in Indo-China. What is becoming very clear is that the war in Indo-China is most unpopular in France. So much so that at a bye-election being held in a few days time the Communists have been concentrating on the peoples' opposition to this colonial war to win votes. The comments in the Press are also of a more reconciliatory nature, unlike their attitude at the outset. *Combat* (27/3/47), the independent daily, has just completed a series of articles by a Frenchman who has just returned from Indo-China where he has been serving as a soldier in General Leclerc's army there, and in the concluding paragraph he puts forward the view that mistakes have been made by the French. "Viet Nam wish for autonomy is understandable and must be respected."

## Stranger Than Fiction

The following item has been taken from the American Magazine *Time* (24/3/47): "In 1926, a handsome, excessively rugged individualist named George Plummer McNear, Jr., bought the bankrupt Toledo, Peoria & Western Railroad for \$130,000 down (price: \$1,300,000). The road had one great asset—transcontinental freight trains used it to get around Chicago.

"In a short time, McNear was making money on his 'two streaks of rust'. Then he started battling labour unions. In 1929 he rode a cowcatcher through an engineers' picket line to break his first strike. In 1941 he took on the railroad brotherhoods again, rode out shootings and fires, finally refused Government arbitration and lost his road by seizure.

"When he got it back, the brotherhoods walked out again. Then, in February, 1946, the fight took an ugly turn. Two pickets were killed in a battle with guards on an armoured train. The guards acquitted of manslaughter charges; McNear was never linked with the shooting.

"But one night last week, McNear's rugged individualism boomeranged. As he strolled near his home in Peoria, somebody murdered him with a single shotgun blast. At week's end there were few clues but \$41,615 in rewards."

And to think that the white man wants to bring civilization to the Ju-Ju man!  
LIBERTARIAN.

In spite of certain passages of the New Testament, it is not very often that we find Anglican clergymen, or those of any other denomination for that matter, imbued with a sufficiently strong feeling of the essential brotherhood of man to make them fight actively for this concept.

An exception, whose sincerity and tenacity compel our admiration, is Michael Scott, the white priest who has taken a leading part in the struggles of the South African coloured peoples to end the discrimination which is practiced against them by the vast majority of the whites.

Michael Scott first came into the news last year, when, as reported in *Freedom*, he joined with the Indians of Durban in their protests against the "Ghetto Laws", which disenfranchise the Indians and forbid them obtaining land outside a very restricted area. Michael Scott took an active part in the demonstrations of Indians who squatted on forbidden land, and went to prison for three months for his participation. At the

# The Man Who Defies The Colour Bar

time, he said:

"So long as the colour bar is maintained in economic, political and religious life, it seems to me that there can be no realisation of our hopes of progress and development for any of the races."

Since his release from prison on this first charge, Michael Scott has again come up against the authorities. Deciding that his place was among the people he wanted to help, he went to live among the poor negroes in the squalid Tobruk squatters' camp at Orlando, near Johannesburg, a settlement inhabited, to use his own words, by—

"... homeless people outlawed by the law; landless people with no votes or rights or hopes in the land of their birth, but as helots of another race perpetually migrating in search of wages

and bread and a place to bear their young."

But even this action was against the laws of the democratic Union of South Africa. Michael Scott was brought before a Court of "Justice" on the 13th February, 1947, for contravening the regulations which forbid a white man to live in a native village without the permission of the Minister of Native Affairs and the concurrence of the Johannesburg State Council.

While, however, the case was under discussion, an outbreak of smallpox occurred in the native settlement and, since Scott was one of the few people who would do anything about it, the authorities were forced to allow him to go back to tend the sick people and try and stop the epidemic. They

intend, however, to bring him before the courts again once the epidemic is over and the scare has passed.

This case is an example, not merely of how the coloured people are treated in South Africa, but also of how any white man who tries to help them is equally persecuted. The king may drive quickly past tribes of Zulus in ceremonial dress, or speak to them through a microphone, but the Royal family are kept conveniently distant from the realities of the life of the majority of "His Majesty's subjects" in South Africa, and one can be sure that they will not go out of their way to meet Michael Scott or any other of the few white men who are struggling to destroy the colour bar and give the Negroes and Indians equal rights.

## Middle East Notes

### A LABOUR PASHA SPEAKS

THE comic opera Labour Party in Egypt, sponsored by Nahil Abbas Halim Pasha, whilst a serving Minister in a Right-wing Government, and by leading members of the Egyptian upper class, held a meeting in Cairo at the Palace of Nahil Abbas Halim on the 6th March, to consider the development of further branches of the Party.

Nahil Abbas Halim issued a very profound and true warning to the Government. In a manifesto issued he stated:

"Within three years, if the present state of affairs is allowed to continue, the Government will lose all authority and there will be anarchy.

"He warned capitalists and the Egyptian Government of the 'writing on the wall', adding that the conditions of the poor have been going from bad to worse."

*Egyptian Mail*, 7/3/47.

He then went on to declare that "the only salvation for Egypt is the advent of the Labour Party" which would thwart the impending danger of "communism" and anarchy. He warned that owing to the impending fall of State revenues, "foreign capitalists would have to flee by night, to save their Egyptian money from the Egyptian Government," and of a "tax massacre" of the landowners who would hasten to sell their land, bringing the price of land to nothing.

To prevent the disaster to State revenues, foreign capital (i.e., imperialist capital) and land values and the drift to the time when government would count for nothing, and there would be the free society of Anarchy, the Pasha proposed the advent to power of the Labour Party. He is quite right in assessing the historical role of Social-Democracy as counter-revolutionary. Egyptian "Socialists", accepting the principles of the Labour Party direct from present day Britain, take it for granted that it is the function of a Labour Party to prevent revolution and betray the workers. In this they are wiser than the ardent politically-minded Labourites who study Marxism in England. The only point the Egyptian Labour Pashas have overlooked is that the usual idea is to work your way up from the masses, represent yourself to them as a militant leader, gain their confidence, and then betray them. It is true, the British Labour Party is recruiting its new M.P.'s from the upper classes, but the old phalanx of trade-union leaders still remains; the Egyptian Labour Party, whose future is directed in the palaces of the mighty, can hardly impress the fellahkeen and workers as any different from the other political parties, unless it learns the lessons of the British Labour Party more thoroughly than that.

A. M.

# RUSSIA'S CONCENTRATION CAMPS

ONE of the most original products of Bolshevik genius in the department of social control was the *polit-isolator*, the prison-camp for political dissidents. That was something entirely new in the line of coercion. The idea was to isolate, separate from the rest of society, all persons with views dangerous to the State. The *isolator* devised by the Russian Bolsheviks was imitated by the Italian Fascists and later National Socialists. The use of "camps" instead of, or in addition to, prisons, suggests that the number of the "socially dangerous" persons in the country featuring this institution, is very large.

The first inmates of the early Bolshevik concentration camps were mostly rival socialists with whom the Leninists had closely collaborated as fellow revolutionists before the fall of the autocracy. They were Mensheviks, Maximalists (a kind of near-Bolshevik), Socialist-Revolutionists (populists), and Anarchists, with a sprinkling of rank and file Communists who had offended the Party leadership. Some of the Tsarist police, and especially the secret police were incorporated into the new State apparatus. The monarchist opposition to the new State was never dangerous enough from the propaganda angle to merit the *isolator* treatment. The Civil War was, in its way, a patriotic war against foreign powers. After the Civil War, the monarchists were no longer a threat to the rulers of Russia. But it was different with the "democratic" socialist rivals of Bolshevism. They had to be kept separated from the people. Many were forced out of the country. Others were put behind barbed wire.

The early isolators were located in the old Tsarist jails and in newly constructed camps in East European Russia (Kazan) and in the near-Arctic North (Archangel, Solovetsky Monastery). With the consolidation of the Bolshevik regime, the camps spread to Siberia, the vast stretches of which now offer the stage for the important economic operations of the great Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs.

### Progress In Concentration Camps

As the Communist modernizers of Russia began to take in hand and guide the economic life of the millions under their command, their difficulties in social management became more economic than political. The opposition of the socialist and anarchist intellectuals—rivals of the Bolshevik intellectuals who had fooled the war-weary peasant soldiers into handing them over State power in November 1917—had practically disappeared. Efficient Bolshevik repression had killed all hope

We referred to the following article, published in the American news letter *Looking Ahead* (31st December, 1946) in our last editorial. We feel that this detailed account of the birth of the concentration camp in Russia and its development to a major institution is particularly interesting at a time when we hear many protests about the use of German slave labour by the Russian

Government. The employment of German prisoners of war as forced labour must be condemned but one must not forget the millions of Russian prisoners who have been submitted to similar conditions during the last twenty years. We regret that shortage of space does not allow us to give the article in full.

EDITORS.

of political opposition. There is none in Russia to-day.

Citizens came to be "isolated" in the concentration camps not because they wanted to have something to say about the government of their country, but because they did not want to work as fast as was required by the State-Boss, or because they kicked about wages and conditions, or because they protested against the high prices of foodstuff, or because, as farmers, they refused to exchange their produce at prices offered them by the State-monopoly middleman.

As a result, the "class" make-up of the population of the Soviet concentration camps changed radically. They came to contain very few political, intellectual, inmates and very many uncultured, low-brow non-political workers and peasants.

Alert Bolshevik realism soon grasped the idea that the concentration camp had a positive, cash-and-carry role to play in the construction of Soviet socialism. With the introduction of the Five Year Plans, Russian society became a "militarized" society. State coercion became the dominant factor in the economic process of the country. The number of criminals grew so great that it was impossible to feed them all without bankrupting the Socialist State. Then Bolshevik inventiveness sparkled again.

The imaginative, resourceful Bolshevik police department conceived a new economic form. The old Tsarist Katorga was put on a scientific, business basis. History now had the modern, "complete" concentration camp, where the guests do not stay idle behind the barbed wire, but, under the guidance and protection of special police, they build canals, lay railroads, cut lumber, burrow in iron mines, work in foundries, in exchange for their lodging and keep.

If you give the con-camp inmate a minimum allowance of bread just for working, and give him food above the minimum if he works well, and deny him any food if he refuses to work or slows up—why, then the entire problem of labour and management relations is solved with a minimum of speeches and

humanitarian make-believe. (Indeed, some Soviet concentration camps even have a kind of self-government. Much of the camp administration, except the superintendent and guards, is made up of prisoners. The trustee self-government stresses, of course, production. The model is the "trustee" trade-union in non-prison Soviet industry.)

We have (or had) something like it in our own South: the Georgia road gang and the Louisiana turpentine camp. However, the few tiny con camps in our dear South are small, petty-bourgeois potatoes compared with the big-socialist, many-millioned convict-labour enterprises of modern Russia. An authority like Kravchenko estimates that at present no less than 20 million men and women are so employed in the USSR. Our non-scientific witnesses say that rumour among con-campers themselves puts the figure close to 30 million. It is hard to believe this. However we shall see that the Soviet labour and concentration camps are the most effective and successful sector of what another authority like Henry A. Wallace calls Soviet economic democracy. (Do the county supervisors in charge of Southern road-gangs have to pass an examination in the Fundamentals of Leninism to get their jobs? No. That is another kind of democracy.)

### Soviet Concentration Camps Before The War

Here are some facts and figures (from good Soviet sources) that illustrate the importance of the camps in preparing the USSR for the recent international alteration.

According to a decree of the Central Executive Committee of August 4, 1933, published in *Pravda* on the next day, 12,484 convict labourers were liberated for exemplary behaviour, upon the completion of the White Sea-Baltic Canal, with 59,516 such workers having their sentences reduced for the same reason. 72,000 men and women were thus rewarded. No less than 300,000 must have laboured under OGPU management to build the Canal. (We know that the Cheka later became OGPU.)

On December 17th, 1935, the *Izvestia* published an article giving a lyrical description of the grandeur of the task accomplished by the B.A.M. camp, the inmates of which double-tracked the eastern part of the Trans-Siberian railroad. According to the article, the heroic convict labourers had turned over with their picks and shovels two and a half times as much soil as was moved in the construction of the White Sea-Baltic Canal and fifteen times as much as was necessary to build the famous Dnieprostroy. This great labour was accomplished under typical North Asiatic conditions—the ground permanently frozen, winters with temperatures of 40 to 50 below zero, the sticky heat and Siberian mosquitos in the summer time. A fault-finding bourgeois commentator might have added that many miles of this road are ballasted with the corpses of forced labourers.

In July, 1937, the Volga-Moscow Canal was finished, and 55,000 con-labourers were granted conditional liberty. Here, too, the most tractable were freed. Those who had not pleased the police taskmasters went on to other socialist achievements. In 1936, convict labour under the guidance of the NKVD built 700 miles of highway connecting Yakutsk with the Komsomolsk and Khabarovsk railway lines.

The great Lenin had already foreseen that to attain security in face of a possible foreign attack, the Bolshevik State might have to retreat into Russian Asia. The Pittsburghs of the Urals, which played an important part in the defeat of the Nazi invaders, were prepared with the co-operation of the NKVD.

The four initials of this interesting organization stood for the Russian "Ministry of Internal Affairs". The economic importance of the Soviet concentration camps became so important that the police department in charge of the camps was now a full "ministry". The NKVD marshalled millions of convict labourers. The latter were not only shovel men (and women, since woman early attained economic equality with man in the Soviet republic) but also engineers, doctors and other technicians. Sometimes the NKVD reached out for an unfortunate engineer who was needed in one of their enterprises. Here and there are able persons who have not the gift of winning the approval of their superiors. In a society like the USSR, where every man flatters, for safety's sake, the official above him, the socially inept sometimes find themselves working for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and learn to be sociable behind barbed wire.

(To be continued.)

### Alternative to Strikes

(Continued from page 3)

So, we see the "stay-in" strike leads straight to the principle of workers' control of industry, which is an idea the politicians of the Labour Party consider "academic" nonsense, and the union bosses view with all the horror their constitutional characters can muster. It is, therefore, very surprising to find a union journal daring to publish an article discussing the bureaucrats' nightmare.

The acceptance of the principle of workers' control of industry implies the necessity for organisation in industrial unions, with local all-embracing committees; and as the workers would control directly their own affairs in each locality, there would be no need for a centralised bureaucracy. We have to recognise however that the idea of a national leadership dies hard, and so we must emphasise that the so-called leaders do not lead anything or anybody. Even in the present state of ineffective trade unions it is the ordinary worker with natural qualities who remains to inspire his fellow men, and in the form of industrial or syndicalist unionism, there will be ample opportunities of service to one's fellows and to society as a whole, from the naturally equipped leader. But there will be no positions of self and power to degrade and ultimately to corrupt such leadership.

We workers to-day, in this period of political perfidy, this time of social disintegration and totalitarian drift, must appreciate the need for a social outlook that will guide through the day-to-day struggle for social amelioration to social and individual freedom founded on the basis of workers' control of industry. Cannot we now take the practical steps for the formation of our industrial unions?

G. W. ROOKE.

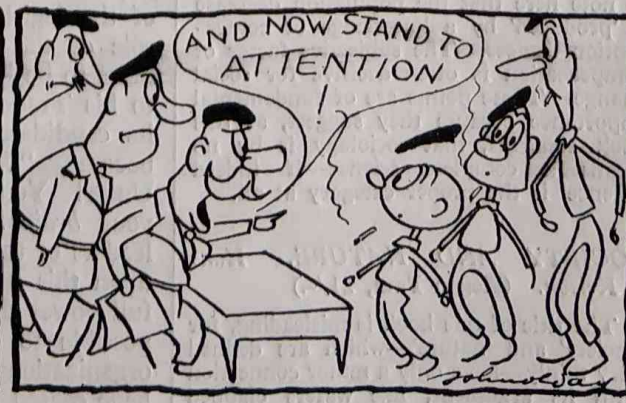
### THE THREE MUSKETEERS—5



### THE NEW ARMY (dreams and reality)



### By JOHN OLDAY



"Such wonderful comradeship"

Louis Adeane Reviews Two Important New Books

# A Handbook on Sociology

A HANDBOOK OF SOCIOLOGY.  
Ogburn & Nimkoff. (Kegan Paul, 25/-)

THIS is primarily a reference book; as such it should offer all the relevant facts in an easily available form. It does: the range of facts covered by this book is exact and is very extensive indeed; from its heights one can glimpse almost every material aspect of the modern world. A brief and biased selection: one is reminded that in the U.S.A. there are ten million syphilitics and that the probability of developing a serious mental disorder is nearly 1 in 10; one learns that in an unspecified County Home for the Uncared-For there were (1940) 325 patients cared for by one nurse; one finds that a comparison of Army recruits (white) with criminals (white) showed a slightly higher test-intelligence among the criminals. These are notes on American life, but the book draws its material from nearly every place and historical period. The vast array of facts gathered into six hundred pages is presented in a lucid prose and a clear type; it is attended by numerous tables and a fairly thorough index; every chapter has its own summary, bibliography, and notes for discussion. In short, the first two requirements for a handbook are adequately and admirably met.

But there is a third requirement. This is that the relevant facts should be selected and presented in an unprejudiced way. On the whole even this difficult task is achieved. The authors wish to show that social life is a resultant of four factors, which are:

Natural (or geographical and climatic) environment; Group (family, tribal, national) environment; Biological inheritance (inherited tendencies); Social inheritance or culture (customs, mores).

They think that of these four the last is the most important factor in the shaping of society—which is to say among other things, that social institutions are not based on an unchanging 'human nature' but can be altered by educational and other means. This is not a very original view, but it does involve a summing-up and balancing of various contradictory doctrines held by psychologists and others, a summing-up that in general is remarkable for its objectivity and clarity. It is not often that one finds orthodox sociology probing the hollowness of class-equality before the law, exposing the mechanism of propaganda, or pointing out

the connections between the origins of property, war and the State. One has been assured before that no one race is mentally superior to another, but to find as much attention being given to Kropotkin on co-operation as to Darwin on competition is indeed refreshing.

I have implied that this is a guide, a juxtaposition of orthodox sociological theories rather than a fresh synthesis. Having made it clear that as such this work is unusually comprehensive, fair and lucid, and that no better book of its kind could be had even at its rather high price, I would like to offer the intending buyer a few warnings regarding the defects of his purchase.

An evident timidity sometimes assails the authors. The concept of revolution receives a page of discussion in this book, and the writers seem to be unaware that a revolution need not be carried out by a small power-group. (Even so, 'Marxist' is mentioned only once; 'dialectic' never.) The word 'syndicalist' does not appear, though capitalist and fascist economies are described at length. ('Philosophic anarchist' is mentioned once, hurriedly.) As a contrast to this cursory treatment of a vital factor in social change, American business economy is described unsoundly and to the exhaustion of the reader. With timidity goes an even greater naivety. "The life of a city is . . . excellently organised" (p. 585) say the authors who seem never to have encountered waste nor heard the word 'necropolitan'. Indeed on the subject of the city this book is singularly ill-informed and the reader is advised to supplement its information with a bus-ride to the nearest library. If the journey does not enlighten him, Mumford's *Culture of Cities* or Sinclair's *Metro-politan Man* will do so. "If the government is well organised so that trade and economic life flow smoothly, the situation is favourable for the peaceful arts" (p. 536) is a remark hardly borne out by the Italian Renaissance. The peaceful arts are treated in a rather patrician fashion altogether, which has an obvious bearing on the authors' definition of 'psychopaths': "We compare them with ourselves, that is, with what we expect, and if they deviate widely we class them as abnormal" (p. 146)—a definition that may make a 'psychopath' out of anyone 'deviating' from the group-norm: i.e., pacifists, anarchists, artists, or any other individual. It is of course the orthodox definition; but one might as well point out yet again the possible political consequences of dropping a value judgment from psychiatry. "Clearly the idea (of self) is acquired, not inherited, since little babies do not have it" (p. 112). Little babies do not have an adult sexual orientation either, which appears through maturation. As the authors have already pointed out that 'personality' is acquired, their demolition of the 'self' leaves nothing of the individual to be discussed by sociologists.

There are some superficialities. Two tables of working-class expenditure (p. 315) give 13% and 11% respectively as the income-proportion spent on Rent; common experience gives a different proportion. Again, religion and the diffusion of cultures receive a rather shallow treatment. The question of the accommodation of one culture to another is examined, but one would like to learn a little more about the cases where accommodation does not take place. Melanesia is glanced at, and the general case here is well known; more recent examples are to hand however. The reader will find a very illuminating account of the penetration of West Africa by white culture in Gorer's *African Dances* (Penguin).

All the inadequacies mentioned above are almost inevitable in a book covering such a wide field and offering so much. A final criticism might be directed not so much at this book as at orthodox sociology in general. The present authors explain that the stress they place on technics is due to their belief that ideas and 'fantasies' play a smaller part in life. Thus though they talk a great deal about the effect on the present of the past, they virtually ignore the effect on the present of the future. It is obvious however that attitudes mainly orientated to the future (fear, hope, etc.) play a very large part in social change; the falling birthrate is an immediate example. The authors prefer to note here that the population decrease is 'produced' by a knowledge of contraception devices. The subjective factor of compensation is often decisive for social change. These points are of fundamental importance because they suggest, as this book confirms, that sociology is by no means a complete science—if indeed 'science' is the proper category at all.

*SOCIETY AND NATURE*, Hans Kelson. (Kegan Paul, 21/-)

The title of this book is misleading, for 'society' and 'nature'—which are defined very thinly—have only a minor connection with its argument, like wafers clapped round ice-cream. Anyone wishing to profit from the book had best begin with the last chapter, where the theme is made explicit. It is this: primitive man inter-

prets nature not according to the law of causality but according to social law, of which the chief element is retribution; as the cognitive element in man is extended the idea of causality is detached from that of retribution; so that whereas at first nature was seen as part of society, in our day society is seen as part of nature. Mr. Kelson attacks the primitives first, and pursues the emancipation of causality through Greece and Rome to modern times.

He begins by asserting that: "the idea that events are determined by laws of



nature, the concept of the principle of causality . . . is entirely beyond the grasp of primitive man. One can speak of 'causal thinking' only if the regularity perceived in any succession of events is also considered necessary". Even, Mr. Kelson insists, "a tendency to causal thinking is out of the question for primitive man". (My italics.) This seems, to put it mildly, an overstatement. One would have thought, from the author's examples and others, that primitives have a very close and acute sense of the 'necessary regularity' in events; no death takes place in primitive society without a cause being found; there is as much 'regularity' between cause and effect as there is in modern conditionism for instance, which recognises that all effects are also causes and are due to a multiplicity of factors so complex that an event can only be said to be 'conditioned' by other events, not 'caused' by them. It is true that the primitive's search for a cause is dominated by subjective considerations, which is why he finds causal relationships that modern man would consider misplaced. That the chief of these subjective considerations should be a socially-determined fear of retribution seems debatable however, particularly when "no sharp distinction can be drawn between the reaction termed 'vengeance' and that termed 'retribution'" (p. 50). Retribution may imply reward rather than

the feared punishment; it is clearly a different thing from vengeance; in any case, Westermarck testifies that vengeance among primitives is often personal and non-moral—i.e., non-social. Elsewhere Mr. Kelson is anxious to show that the primitive "still lacks any ego-consciousness" (p. 24), this being the reason for his reliance on the social principle of retribution. So that it is interesting to find this author remarking that personal vengeance "can be explained subjectively only by the feeling of inferiority" aroused in the avenger. How one can have inferiority feelings without ego-consciousness is not made clear. And had the Greeks, also dominated by the retribution principle, no ego-consciousness either? Certainly primitive man had a good deal less 'ego-consciousness' than modern man; but that he had none at all is contradicted by Mr. Kelson's own examples, let alone the evidence of Crawley and other anthropologists.

As for later history, it is clear that for the Greeks the concept of destiny had replaced that of retribution, a difference in kind, not degree. (It is curious that a book on causality should not mention determinism, fate, responsibility, redemption, or luck. True, free-will gets a contemptuous word: it is a fiction.) The pagan element in Greek religion, at least in the Eleusinian mysteries, places as much emphasis on reward as on punishment. As for Mr. Kelson's view that all myths have as their prime content the retribution-principle, it is a gross distortion of the facts as abundantly supplied by himself. The hero, for example, represents the breaker of taboos and expresses in some sense man's revolutionary striving; the tasks he undertakes are incidental to this end. Even Prometheus was left alive.

The emergence of the civilised idea of causality was in fact due to a number of factors of which an increasing objectivity in human thought was the chief. Grudgingly giving his case away, Mr. Kelson admits this on the last page but one of his book: "Along with the generalisation of the notion of law goes a certain objectification . . ." It is a book carrying a wealth of anthropological material gathered from many sources, and I suppose there are about 3,000 additional notes. It is unsuitable in thought and cumbersome in style. A boat so overloaded, so clumsy in rig, so tenacious of a one-sided course, will not surprise us when it sinks.

L. A.

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## TIME MARCHES ON

By MAT KAVANAGH.

THE complete answer to the pessimist is "You do not know, or have forgotten, the great social changes that have taken place even in your own lifetime." Fifty years is little in the history of a movement, yet most of the political reforms and many of the economic ones that the reformers fought for have been realized. Years of strenuous effort and self-sacrifice put in by the old pioneers have built up a Labour Movement which was but a dream to them, deemed impossible of realization by the pessimistic and the faint-hearted.

As the Labour Movement has gained in extent, it has lost in depth. This evolution was inevitable once it had been steered into strictly legalistic and constitutional channels. The old revolutionary zeal and evangelistic fervour had to be tamed down, for the Party had now become a power. In the words of John Burns, the first Labour M.P., "The days of the agitator had gone, the day of the legislator had begun!" The role of the worker came more and more to be limited to paying his dues to his Trade Union, and to vote for its candidate. The real slogan had become, "Workers of the World, Unite! You have nothing to lose but your brains!" So fully have the leaders of the labour movement acted upon this motto that since attaining full power they have done everything possible to emasculate the workers' organizations completely. These have ceased to be "organs" and have become mere appendages of the political Labour Party—mere barrel "organ"-izations, with the Trade

Union bosses turning the handle and the workers paying up the coppers! Labour leading is now a flourishing profession, and vastly more remunerative than most! The Labour Movement is now the happy hunting ground for all sorts of needy adventurers—journalistic and legal failures—for what other profession offers such high incomes for so little work, together with a pension and perhaps even a seat in the House of Lords? The class conscious worker can have little but contempt for such.

In taking over the machinery of capitalism, the Labour leaders must, of necessity, maintain capitalism. The State can never be utilized for the emancipation of labour; only by defiance of the State can any radical change be achieved, for the State can only be a conservative force. The Labour Government has given ample evidence of this during their term of office. They have sought to ban strikes, and have employed soldiers as blacklegs on a bigger scale than any previous government. In attempts to organize labour on a totalitarian plan they have gone further than a Liberal or Tory government has ever dared. In dealing with the overseas affairs of a bloodstained imperialism they have shown no vestige of the "Solidarity of International Labour" that the Second International once used to speak of. In their treatment of our coloured comrades they have been fully as ruthless as the Blimps could desire.

Time marches on, however, and the pessimist has his answer, for on every side there are signs that labour is awakening. Strikes—now always

unofficial—at home and in the colonies, soldiers in revolt against enforced slavery of militarism. In the East End of London, the dockers in conference demand not nationalization, but confiscation of the means of work. On the Clyde and the Mersey there are symptoms of revolt, mainly against the legal tying up of workers' activities through the collaboration of the Trade Unions with the State.

These truths are forcing themselves on the workers not from the effect of Anarchist propaganda, but from the actions of the government of Labour leaders, forced along totalitarian lines by the logic of capitalist structure. For the only way it can move is within the capitalist economic system. Time marches on, and its lessons are driven into the brains of the disillusioned workers and soldiers. They have seen the failure to achieve emancipation through the State, for the Russian revolution which awoke the sympathy of workers all over the world has turned to Dead Sea ashes.

Time marches with longer and more rapid strides since 1917. The worker of to-day has been the witness of the wonderful revolt of the Spanish workers, combining destruction with construction. For while destroying old and vile institutions they built new and true ones. The truth is gaining ground in spite of the politicians and priests—the truth that only by direct action of the mass, as opposed to political and parliamentary action, can the worker be freed. The emancipation of the working class must be the task of the workers themselves. "He who would be free, himself must strike the blow."

## CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE

As the characteristic national sport, gossip about the Royal Family is a serious contender to football, and the *Sunday Pictorial* recently introduced the "pools" element by a poll of its readers as to whether or not Princess Elizabeth should marry a Greek Prince. The subject aroused widespread interest and has been discussed by every shade of the Press, thus demonstrating that the importation of the 20th-century American religion of adulation of film stars and its attendant rites of speculating on their matrimonial affairs has not destroyed our own aptitude for obscuring important issues with our own especial balderdash.

In accordance with present-day trends, politics raises its ugly head, the *Daily Worker* thundering against any alliance with the Greek Royal Family, and the "Left" Labourites taking up the cue. When Queen Victoria married a German Prince there were political protests by the Tories against the foreign alliance which was sponsored by the Whigs, but the circle has turned, and to-day it is the "Left" which is worried about a foreigner being Prince Consort.

We may be sure, however, that if they are making a fuss about the prospective Prince Consort there is a situation arising that they want to obscure. In Victoria's time there was a serious political crisis over the politics of the Ladies-of-the-Bedchamber, which was quite sufficient to dwarf the famine in Ireland and the Chartist agitation in the eyes of the politically-minded minority. And most important of all, in our own day the British Press maintained an almost complete conspiracy of silence against the Spanish Revolution (treating it as a Civil War between Republicans and Fascists and ignoring altogether the libertarian achievements), but compensated for that by a manufactured crisis as to whether it was right for a proposed Queen of England to have previous husbands living.

We are not interested in the politics, nationality, colour, religion or anything else regarding the husband of the Heiress-Presumptive (and what a presumptive it is). However, we ought to say that our advice to all Royalty when marrying is to choose a husband for his ability to use his hands for the ignoble purpose of work, if need be, as an insurance against the time when the people get tired of the tyrannical pyramid of government and the gilded ornaments that so graciously and uselessly adorn the summit.

A. M.

## Socialism and Authoritarianism

DEAR COMRADE,

I was very interested in your comments on "E.M.'s" letter concerning Socialism and Anarchism. As you rightly pointed out, those Socialists who follow in the footsteps of William Morris are as much opposed to Authority as any of the followers of Kropotkin. I am sure there are many Socialists like myself who do not seek their salvation at Westminster or Moscow. In the task that lies before us both Socialist and Anarchists can find ground for "Mutual Aid".

L. H.

## The Price of Freedom

DEAR COMRADES,

I wholly endorse the import of the letter from "Rationalist" which you publish in *Freedom* of March 22nd.

The price of *Freedom* should be not one halfpenny less than 6d. per issue, and this purely on the journal's merits. Either to provide or to accept the paper at a price less than 6d. is a belittlement of the cause for which *Freedom* stands, while the maintenance of a Free Press Fund is nothing less than degrading.

I do not believe there are any readers who are so impecunious as to be unable to afford 6d. per issue, but if there are, and if an editorial note to that effect is published in *Freedom*, maybe some of us who are not so impecunious would take it upon ourselves to adjust matters.

P. P.

## Political Terrorism and Anarchism

DEAR COMRADES,

In the issue of *Freedom* dated March 8th, 1947, your correspondent A.M. is interested in the military exploits of the Stern Group and the Irgun Zvai Leumi in Palestine, and points out how all the usual methods of State repression have failed to dislodge them. He concludes his article with this sentence: "Yet when the atomic bomb first exploded into the news we were told by some of our friends that now there was no hope of any upsurge of workers overpowering the capitalist class!" By this does A.M. mean that revolutionaries must resort to armed force to carry out the social revolution? Surely not. It is not by following the example of right wing reactionary fanatics that an anarchist way of life will bring benefit to mankind. In fact, by these methods we should play into the hands of the power politicians and their too numerous supporters; for however much we may condemn State tyranny let us not, in our march forward, be guilty of tyranny ourselves. It is by spreading the influence of anarchist ideas verbally and

# Letters to the Editors

in print as well as living anarchist lives that the revolution will be carried through. History teaches us that all armed revolutions have failed miserably or have ultimately been betrayed. I agree entirely with those who believe that the State will never wither away of its own accord but must be destroyed utterly, but the State will never be destroyed unless it be by peaceful means. By that I mean, mutual aid and mutual love. However much we may respect and admire the militarist struggles of minorities, let us realize that their methods are not ours and that in man's glorious march forward to true emancipation, militarism must play no part.

J. S.

(While feeling much sympathy for these views, we regard them as being more wishful than rational. It is impossible to go into the question of violence here, but there is one point: we are often told that revolutions used armed force and they failed. This is often taken as proof that they failed because they used armed force. But revolutions also express brotherly love—only pacifists don't attribute failure to that. The cause of revolutionary failure (and all revolutions have failed so far) requires rather deeper analysis than that.—Eds.)

## Funny, eh?

(A reader on the Gold Coast, West Africa, sends us the following letter.)

The B.B.C. came through with the announcement on the 19th February that U.N.O. had given China 200 tons of goods to sell at Black Market prices to replenish their tottering financial situation. Nations condoning Black Marketing. Funny, eh?

On the same day, 19th February, a Ball in South Africa is held for coloured people. The King is attending this Ball, and the Queen too, and perhaps the Princesses. Unlike the Civic Ball on the 18th February where 15,000 white elements registered. As last year, the coloured Ball is not mentioned with numerical strength. It is just a Ball and perhaps it is meant for Indians and Asiatics in South Africa and none of the owners of the land. Those men that God really put there, the Africans. Isn't this funny?

People begin to talk glibly of racial discrimination, stoppage of Black Market, and Intelligent Nations indulge in these. Life is a funny thing, and no wonder Shakespeare says the men and women are

merely players. They have their exits and their entrances, and one day, God's own day, all this nonsense will be stopped, and class distinction and inequality of living and class discrimination will stop.

C. D. M.

## Rumania Holds Up Relief Parcels

DEAR EDITOR,

I refer to your article "Famine in Rumania" in your issue of March 8th. A relative of ours, who lives in Cluj, wrote to us complaining about the exorbitant prices of insulin, obtainable only in the black market. We decided to take upon us a financial burden and to supply her

with the indispensable insulin. Since May last year 6 parcels of insulin were dispatched, three by post and three through the Red Cross. Of all six, only one Red Cross parcel reached its destination! A parcel of babies' clothes, sent to a pregnant woman, never arrived either. On enquiry our relative found out that hundreds of thousands of parcels were and are still lying in Bucharest, waiting to be delivered.

Official insolvency is a thing beyond the grasp of human imagination. Whilst those in authority are able to buy all they need in the black market, they withhold thousands of parcels with medicines, food and clothes from despairing men, women and children, sent to them by their relatives.

We have known the corruption of pre-war Rumania. It is typical of the new political trend that in face of the appalling poverty among the peasants and workers the channels of private foreign relief meet such revolting obstruction.

A. R.

## What Price Freedom?

Dear Comrades,

Please find enclosed subscription for 6 months for an additional three copies of "Freedom" . . . I should like to add a few words of thanks and praise for the way you manage to produce "Freedom" so regularly and well. And am inclined to agree with "Rationalist" in the current issue that readers would gladly continue to pay an increased subscription rate. I think many of us are inclined to regard donations to the Press Fund as something we can make any old time and seldom get around to doing it, whereas when our subscription falls due we know it is something which must be attended to soon.

P.B.

Helston.

Dear Comrades,

Could you please send me 6 extra copies of "Freedom" next time you send my copy. Lately, it seems to disappear with various people as soon as it arrives, and my turn to read it comes when it is in pieces . . .

Mrs. P.H.

Nottingham.

Dear Friends,

After several weeks of persistent "bullying", I have succeeded in persuading [?—Editors] a socialist

workmate to subscribe to "Freedom". I herewith enclose his 3/-, his name and address is as follows . . .

It seems to me that your suggestion of "two subscriptions per anarchist" is quite a good idea, and so I am enclosing a second 3/- sub. for myself.

A.E.

Leeds.

Dear Editors,

My full support for the suggestion that "Freedom's" price should be raised to 4d. or 6d. Readers who really want a paper produced to their taste will be willing to pay more for it, and I don't think it will hinder your chances of getting 2,000 more readers . . .

J.P.

Ashton-under-Lyne.

[These are a few of the letters we have received in response to our appeal to readers to help us solve our financial and distribution problems. We shall welcome further comments on "Rationalist's" letters regarding the price of FREEDOM, but in any case will not contemplate any increase in the price of our paper until we have consulted our comrades, distributors, and subscribers, and obtained their opinions.—Editors.]

## GERMANS PROTEST

Three hundred and fifty Germans carried out an orderly demonstration in Dusseldorf yesterday to protest against the requisitioning of their homes for B.A.O.R. families.

Reynolds News, 23/3/47.

## BY ANOTHER NAME

A new type of Army "glasshouse" is provided for in the Army and Air Force (Annual) Bill just presented to Parliament.

It will be known as a "military" corrective establishment, and men serving sentences there "may be temporarily allowed out on parole."

It is not proposed to set up Air Force corrective establishments as alternatives to detention barracks, but under the new rules "a man in the Air Force may be sent to a military corrective establishment."

Evening Standard, 21/3/47.

## THE LEOPARD CAN'T CHANGE IT'S SPOTS

Seven thousand Russian deserters were rounded up recently in the Brandenburg area, but many more are still at large.

They are believed to be fighting men who, having learned German and acquired civilian clothes, are unwilling to go home.

That some, however, are still in uniform seems clear from the advice given by the naval commander at Gustrup, where robberies by Russians have been reported.

He told Germans who complained to "sprinkle ink" on the burglars. The stains would be noticed on parade if the burglars were in fact Army men.

News Chronicle, 27/3/47.

## COMPROMISE

I can let you into a secret. Like their sisters in the WRNS and the WAAF, members of the ATS will in future be "the girls in blue."

The committee of Service women who have been considering new designs for uniforms have agreed that whatever colour is adopted for walking-out uniform it must not be khaki, I understand.

Blue is the colour chosen at present, but final decision rests with the King, who interests himself in all Service uniforms. Working dress will continue to be khaki.

Matters have reached an advanced stage and a leading West End fashion expert has been called in to give final advice.

War Office phraseology to describe present ruling design is: "A compromise between a military cut and a woman's figure."

The Star, 27/3/47.

# Through the Press

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Morticians of America (undertakers to us) are considering methods of corpse disposal after an atomic bomb raid.

After hearing about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, one might think there would not be much scope for internments conducted with decorum, etc. But a mortician must live, I suppose.

Mortuary Science, trade organ of the American internment industry, says one of the undertakers' problems is that no one could safely remain long near the body of an atom-bomb victim unless protected by lead-lined clothing.

It also says that cremation would be unwise because radio-active particles might escape through the crematorium chimney.

Daily Worker, 11/3/47.

## THE SPORTING PARSON

Parishioners of St. Barnabas, a large working-class parish, have a parish magazine that features racing tips by the vicar, the Rev. J. S. Clarke (37), ex-Navy padre.

To-night some were studying his tips for the Grand National. "Given heavy going, Jack Finlay should do well," he writes in his monthly letter, "and I fancy Bricett, who won at Cheltenham in December over four miles, should have a good chance of at least a place."

He also mentions Lovely Cottage and Prince Regent. Most parishioners are going to "have a little go" on his fancies. "Over-the-sticks is darned good fun," the vicar commented when I asked him why tips were included in his parochial letter. "I used to hunt, but there is no opportunity now."

## THE LAW AND THE PROFITS

Throughout his investigation, Sir Valentine appeared in court practically every day. Interviews with BBC staff were fitted in at all hours—in the evenings, at week-ends and between briefs.

For it all, Sir Valentine receives a comparatively small fee; I have heard it placed at around £1,000.

This will not worry him. Sir Valentine is one of the highest-paid KCs in the country; his income is between £30,000 and £40,000. After paying taxes on an extra £1,000 he would be left with £25.

Evening Standard, 24/3/47.

## THE ROYAL TOUR

Cost of alterations to the battleship *Vanguard* to take the Royal Family to South Africa was £170,000.

This was disclosed in the Commons early to-day by Mr. W. J. Edwards, Civil Lord of the Admiralty, replying to questions put by two M.P.s.

Daily Mirror, 19/3/47.

## NAVAL INITIATIVE

Mr. J. P. W. Mallalieu, ex-naval rating who wrote "Very Ordinary Seaman" made the Commons roar with laughter last night when he told M.P.s about some very extraordinary ones who ran a series of rackets in naval barracks.

At one of these barracks where Mr. Mallalieu—now Labour M.P. for Huddersfield—served, he came upon the strange case of "Compassionate Leave Inc."

This racket was worked by three men. "One thing they did not have—compassion," he said. "They ran their hut as a strictly business concern."

Then there was the racket aboard *H.M.S. Victory*—Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar. One man conducted people on visits.

"When he reached the point on the ship where Nelson died," said Mr. Mallalieu, "he told the visitors that it was the custom to turn out the lights and for them to doff their hats."

"While the lights were out he dropped two half-crowns into his hat and said, 'Thank you, sir.' Immediately there was a fumbling among the visitors. When the lights were turned on his hat was usually full of money."

Even ex-Scotland Yard men brought in to crush the rackets failed to beat the barracks staff. The ratings called them "jet-propelled crushers."

Some of these naval racketeers ran the barracks under a most elaborate and carefully worked-out system, "controlled by some of the most skilful racketeers in the service of the King."

They would ease themselves into key jobs where they could dispense patronage and exact toll. "One type of patronage was to dish out freedom from draft ships," said Mr. Mallalieu.

"Another type was to hand over to a man a job in which he, too, could dispense patronage."

Daily Mail, 19/3/47.

## CIRCULAR TOUR

Former Tory members, defeated at the General Election, are running away from their constituencies instead of fighting to get them back.

This is a bad practice. They should stay where they are known . . . or perhaps some of them think their old voters know them too well.

The Hon. William Astor has made a tour of exploration. Defeated at East Fulham, he made for St. Albans, where he was selected.

Then, hearing that a candidate was wanted at Aylesbury, which is a Tory seat, he abandoned St. Albans.

But Aylesbury preferred Mr. Spencer Summers, former Secretary for Overseas Trade. So, like the dog in the fable, Mr. Astor then had no bone at all.

But he did not give up hope.

He made for the Wycombe division of Bucks, where he now awaits formal adoption.

This should make it unnecessary for him to complete the circular tour back to East Fulham.

Mr. Astor has recently bought Bletchington Park, Lord Valentia's Oxfordshire estate, for £80,000. It is at present occupied by the B.B.C.

Sunday Express, 23/3/47.

## THE BLACK INTERNATIONAL

A recent issue of the Spanish Jesuit organ *Reason and Faith* has advanced a view of Catholic and Protestant relations which goes far to show the situation in the Franco regime. This paper says that while democracy may be the best form of government for a country in which the Catholics constitute a minority, it may not even be a good form where Catholics are predominant.

Worldover Press, 14/2/47.

## FOOD FROM GERMANY?

First of 30 aircraft flying 75 tons of food relief stores as a gift from the U.S. Army zone, was expected at Heathrow from Germany to-day.

Evening Standard, 27/3/47.

## AMERICA AT PEACE

Thirty-six murders a day are being committed in the United States, and the crime wave has reached its peak, according to a report by J. Edgar Hoover, the police chief.

In the past twelve months a major crime has been committed every 81.7 seconds. Murder, manslaughter, rape, or murderous assault was committed every 5.7 minutes.

Reynolds News, 23/3/47.

## 55 AIR ENGINES THROWN IN SEA

Mr. J. Wilmot, Minister of Supply, who had been asked how many R.A.F. aircraft engines had been dumped into the sea at Takoradi, Gold Coast, said in a written Parliamentary reply.

"Fifty-five aircraft engines, which originally cost £3,280 each, were disposed of in this way."

"They were surplus to R.A.F. requirements, and were dumped after unsuccessful efforts had been made to sell them, either as engines or as scrap."

Evening Standard, 21/3/47.

## INCENTIVE

Mr. Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Health, plans to present medals to local authorities and their architects who design attractive new houses. There will be two types of Bevan Medals—one for town and one for rural housing.

Daily Express, 25/3/47.

## RATHER LOW

Sale of shellfish on the sea front at Hunstanton, Norfolk, has been banned by the urban council. One member said it seemed "rather low" to sell shellfish on the promenade.

Reynolds News, 23/3/47.

## IDEOLOGICAL WARFARE

In 20 minutes of sharp-shooting from a small, slow plane flying low, a Russian hunter wiped out a wolf pack on the Tartar steppes. Aircraft aid was requested when wolves attacked cattle of collective farms near village of Kibiri.

Kibiri slogan: "Down with the Fascist wolves!"

News Chronicle, 27/3/47.

Anarchist Commentary

# There is no Atom Secret

Much of the diplomacy and political wrangling over the past two years has centred round the question of the so-called "secret" of the atomic bomb. The British and American politicians have made great play of the need for preserving this "secret" until some kind of "responsible" international authority can be entrusted with it. The Russians have made equally great play of it, by pretending that the possession of such a "secret" by one nation is a danger to all others, and have used it as a means to keep alive internal sentiments of nationalism by reviving the old story of encirclement in order to give them an excuse to keep the

Russian people in a warlike state of mind. It has now, however, been revealed by one of the leading authorities on atomic fission that the production of an atomic bomb in fact holds no secrets. This is Professor Joliot-Curie, who is the French High Commissioner for Atomic Energy, and claims that with the present level of atomic knowledge among scientists of all nations it would not be difficult for an atomic bomb to be made anywhere, without access to the so-called "secrets" held by the American High Command.

The implications of this statement are clear. Firstly, the monopoly of atom-bomb making which has been used so much in public diplomacy in fact does not exist. Every nation with atomic scientists can make atomic bombs; therefore, the Americans have no security in keeping their open secret, and the Russians no doubt already have the formula for the bomb, perhaps are manufacturing it even now.

Secondly, and perhaps more important, the atomic bomb scare is being deliberately worked up by governments of various countries; their purpose is clear. They wish to maintain nationalistic sentiments among their peoples, in order to have an excuse to keep them on a war footing and make them amenable to military discipline. In fact, all the talk of atomic "secrets" is a great hoax, and the sooner the peoples of the world realise it the better. There is no security from an atomic war but the direct action of the people themselves, in refusing to partake in the preparation of atomic weapons. In this action the scientist and the workers of other kinds must act together. Only in this kind of solidarity does there rest any hope of avoiding a catastrophic war in the comparatively near future.

subject of a verbatim report." Attlee, who signed the declaration at Potsdam, cannot any more easily escape his share of responsibility for the secret agreements.

One ironical point is that the secret agreements should centre so much round Russia. It will be remembered that after the Bolshevik seizure of power, the then Communist government made great political capital out of publishing the secret treaties entered into between Czarist Russia and the capitalist powers and denouncing the whole system of secret diplomacy. Just how hypocritical and opportunist their pretensions were is shown by the fact that the Russian Communists now find secret agreements so absolutely necessary for their conduct of foreign policy.

All this unsavoury business should show once and for all in what a sinister way men's lives are bartered and pledged in this filthy diplomatic game where the fates of millions are decided and the causes of war are generated without the knowledge of the ordinary men and women of the nations concerned.

**"Liberty, Morality, real human dignity consists in this, that man should do what is good, not because he is told to do it, but simply because he thinks that it really is the best that he can ever wish or desire."**

BAKUNIN.

## Death of John Humphrey

The death of our old comrade J. J. Humphrey, at the age of 73, removes another of the "little known anarchists"—little known, at least, to the present generation of our movement. To those of us who were of his time, and shared with him the struggle to keep *Freedom* alive nearly a score of years ago, it comes as a personal loss.

When the *Freedom* group of that day decided to let the paper lapse, as they found the financial loss too much for them, John Humphrey volunteered to print the paper without any pay, only asking the comrades, as far as they were able, to help him with the work of setting up the type by hand. He was a Londoner by birth, an electrician by trade. Early in life he became interested in social and scientific questions, and decided in his quiet, thorough way to devote his energy to the movement. To this end he spent his spare time in learning printing, for which he bought a printing press, and soon mastered the craft. His aim was to give the bottom dog a chance to air his views—in the words of William Morris, "to voice his unlearned discontent". He wrote numerous pamphlets on Anarchy, but after the inception of *Spain and the World* he saw that there was not room for two Anarchist papers, so he started a paper, *Community Life*, devoted to building up communities.

All his work was done without pay. He worked all day in the Underground at his trade, and gave his spare time to printing and lecturing. He was always eager to teach any comrade how to print, for he believed that the printed word would travel further than the spoken word. Whenever a suppressed paper (Indian or Irish) reappeared, the police would visit his printery, but fortunately these visits were always fruitless. During the stormy days of the Irish struggle his work was invaluable, and very few knew of his efforts.

The older generation will miss him, and feel that a gap is left in the ranks of the pioneers. To the younger generation, his life should be an inspiration to urge them to greater efforts. Humphrey never waited for others to make the initiative; he knew that causes are won by those who feel that they must act now, and not wait until a movement is popular. He was of those who toil in the night, when everything seems dark and hopeless, so that others should see the light.

MAT KAVANAGH.

## But There Are Secret Agreements

While, however, there is no atomic "secrecy", there is still our old friend, secret diplomacy. Over the past few months there have been revealed a whole series of arrangements which were made secretly at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, and which were never published until they became accomplished facts.

There was the secret protocol on reparations from Germany, the agreement on voting procedure at the Security Council, the agreement that the Ukraine and White Russia should be recognised as independent member states of the United Nations, and the agreement that the Kuriles and Sakhalin should be ceded to Russia. All these have leaked out during the past few months, and now it is revealed that there is also a secret agreement about Austrian reparations. If no less than five agreements on important questions have actually emerged into the light of day, it is more than likely that there are many more which are still concealed in the various foreign offices of the world, and may continue to do their evil work in darkness without ever being revealed.

In no way is the duplicity of our politicians revealed so much as in the existence of these agreements. Churchill stated in the House of Commons, with regard to both Yalta and Teheran, that: "... there were no secret engagements, but the conversations, of course, proceeded in a very intimate manner, and I am not prepared to say that everything discussed at Yalta could be made the

## PROTEST BY BUILDING WORKERS AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Building workers at Buckingham Palace have protested—though so far only through their union—against having to carry out repairs there at the present time.

At a meeting of 150 workers engaged at the Palace, a resolution passed stated that the men are "disgusted at being employed on such a site as Buckingham Palace when the sufferings of the working class owing to inadequate housing are deplorable." They also asked the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives to get them moved to "more essential work, such as housing".

The Ministry of Works, however, think it more economical and sensible to go on with the work rather than wait until the Palace falls into ever worse repair, and states that the work consists of modernisation of old and uneconomical heating facilities and improvements to the servants' quarters. (Not the teeniest touch of paint to the Queen's boudoir while she's away?)

We hope a similar protest will come from the building workers at the Houses of Parliament. At the moment, 110 are working there, and the number will soon be increased to 500—men who can ill be spared from the necessary work of housing.

At the Palace, the men's union have, of course, accepted the Ministry's ruling, but we hope the workers themselves will not let it rest at that.



"HEY! Are YOU doing useful work?"

## Meetings and Announcements

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.

at 8 Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1

APRIL 13th. Ethel Hall

Mechanism and Civilization

APRIL 20th. Herbert Read

Anarchism, Past and Future

APRIL 27th. M. L. Berneri

Should We Revise Anarchism?

Admission Free. Questions invited

### NOTICE.

Owing to the Easter Holiday, there will be no lecture at Endsleigh Gardens on Sunday, April 6th, as announced.

The lecture on Reich, by Gerald Vaughan, will be given at a later date, and the L.A.G. apologise to comrades for inconvenience caused by the short notice of this cancellation.

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS (Lancashire)

### PUBLIC LECTURES

in CHORLEY

at the ODDFELLOWS ROOMS, 9 Cunliffe Street, Chorley, at 7-0 p.m.

Sunday, March 30. Albert Smith, B.A.

Science—Basis of a New Philosophy

Sunday, April 13th. Albert Smith.

What We Learn From Biology

Sunday, April 27th. Albert Smith

Science and Social Planning

Sunday, May 11th. Mat Kavanagh.

The Futility of Trade Unionism

Descriptive leaflets from:—

U.A.G., 11 Ribblesdale Place, Chorley.

NORTH EAST LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

A GROUP MEETING

TUESDAY, 15th APRIL at 7.30 p.m.

at 43 NEW WANSTEAD (Near Whipps X) E.17

DISCUSSION led by H.G. HANMER

on

"What Do You Understand by Anarchism?"

All Enquiries to:—

The Secretary, c/o Freedom Press.

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## L.A.G. Sunday Meetings

### PSYCHOLOGY OF SWEARING

On February 16th, the lecture meeting organized by the London Anarchist Group was to have been addressed by Geoffrey Pittock-Buss, on the subject of "The Drama as a Social Force". The fuel crisis, however, prevented the lecturer from being present, so Tony Gibson at short notice spoke on the social psychology of cursing and swearing. He pointed out that swearing took its origin in oaths on religious themes, and that a religious content was still to be found in countries such as Italy, Spain and Ireland, where the power of the church was still considerable. In this country during the last fifty years or more swearing has acquired an almost exclusively sexual or excretory content, and certain expletives appear as qualifying almost every noun in a sentence in the conversation of workers when at work. Tony Gibson pointed out that at home for the most part, workers' language became expurgated as far as the commoner "swearwords" are concerned. He attributed swearing to frustration, and the form it took indicated the chief force maintaining that frustration.

Tony Gibson stressed that such matters were by no means as trivial as some may think. The analysis of irrational behaviour could yield valuable indications as to the kind of factors which hold workers in bonds. The audience received his lecture with considerable enthusiasm, and discussion was very animated.

### The Sexual Delinquent

On 23rd February Dr. Alex. Comfort spoke on "Contemporary Attitudes to

Sexual Delinquency". He described the operation of the law against homosexuals and against those compulsion-neurotics who engage in what is called "indecency". Despite the fact that the structure of contemporary repression of normal sexual activity inevitably encourages the growth of abnormal forms, the attitude of the Bench is seemingly devoid of even the most elementary psychological insight. As at other lectures in which the speaker goes directly to the heart of the matter without mincing words or evading the main issues, the whole discussion was freed from that sense of uneasiness and restraint. The audience was clearly glad to have these matters treated in a direct and open manner, for they obviously felt that the subject is an important one, particularly in the light it sheds on the nature of our society, and the shams and cruelties it covers.

### Paul Potts on Ignazio Silone

In discussing the significance of Silone's work, Paul Potts stressed the ethical side of socialism. He regarded the relegation of ethical standards under specious theories of "ends justifying means"—that is, justifying ignoble and base acts—to a position secondary to "economic" socialism as the most serious betrayal of socialist and revolutionary ideas. Silone has devoted himself to emphasizing the human and ethical content of socialism. A good deal of the discussion was devoted to Silone's present position in the Italian Socialist Party, and extremely vigorous opinions were expressed—not least by the lecturer who received an enthusiastic ovation at the close of the discussion.

## THANKS AMERICA!

WE do not often mention our American comrades in these columns though we have for many years been conscious of the extent to which FREEDOM PRESS has benefited by their solidarity. But during the past two years we have refrained from making any direct appeals to our comrades in America because, besides having to maintain their own Press, they have shouldered many other responsibilities which we realised were of more immediate urgency than the needs of Freedom Press. They have been largely responsible for setting the Italian Anarchist movement on its feet, from a financial point of view, and have also sent large quantities of anarchist literature to bridge the gap whilst the Italian comrades set to work after more than twenty years enforced silence. The American comrades have also been responsible for thousands of food and clothing parcels to "liberated Europe", and still their work goes on.

But in spite of all this activity they do not altogether forget FREEDOM! In a recent issue of "L'Adunata dei Refrattari" we notice among the announcements that a Los Angeles Youth group held a social evening to raise funds for the Anarchist Press, and that as a result "Freedom's"

share is 50 dollars. In the same issue the Refrattari group of Detroit announce that a social evening is to be held to raise funds for "Freedom", and the announcement asks comrades and friends "to show their solidarity" by attending.

These unsolicited examples of solidarity are a real source of encouragement to those comrades responsible for the Freedom Press, and at the same time a very real contribution to our continued activity. We take this opportunity to thank all our comrades in America (many of whom have been in contact with us many years and with whom a strong bond of comradeship exists) for this generous support, and to assure them that our aim is always to increase our activities for the ideals we share in common.

### Press Fund

March 14th—March 28th:

Upper Beeding: R.G. 3/-; Denham: E.L. 9/-; Ashton-under-Lyne: J.P. 13/9; London: Anon £2/0/0; Sidmouth: J.S. 2/-; Sheffield: V.C. 3/6; New Earswick: H.A.A. 10/-; Birmingham: L.E.D. 5/-; London: R.R. 5/-; Bristol: T.C. 2/6; York: H.A. 10/2.

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1947 TOTAL TO DATE ... £121 7 0

1947 TOTAL TO DATE ... £126 10 11