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Freedom

ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"Neither your country, nor humanity, neither you nor your class—the workers—gain anything by war. It is only the big financiers and capitalists who profit by it."
ALEXANDER BERKMAN.

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Twopence

FUTILITY IN FRANCE

Anarchists reject Molotov Strikes but advocate Workers' Control

DURING the past two weeks the Foreign Ministers in London have devoted a few hours a day to discussing the share of their respective countries in the spoils of the second world war. Little interest has been taken in this meeting, partly because it was considered as being doomed to failure, partly because the limelight was stolen by the activities of the Communists in France and to a lesser extent, in Italy.

The impression created was that the fate of Europe was not being decided round the conference table but in the factories and streets of France. It was Moscow's way of showing that, if it was in the minority at the conference, it was strong enough to make trouble in countries supposedly in the sphere of influence of the other great Powers.

The sensationalist Press described the agitation as a revolutionary struggle (a much abused expression these days) and as an attempt by the Communists to seize power. After several weeks of struggle against the Government, the Communists have not seized power and, at the moment of writing, they seem to have lost considerable ground.

There is no evidence, however, that the Communist Party intended to carry out a full-fledged insurrection. It is more likely that the agitation was considered a suitable back-cloth for the negotiations carried out in London.

True, the Communists staged a stay-in strike in the French Assembly, but they behaved more like naughty school-children determined to give their master a bad time, than dangerous revolutionaries. It is reckoned that, during one session, the Marseillaise was sung eight times, the Internationale twelve times and an old song calling to soldiers not to fire on strikers twenty-two times. The President of the Assembly used air-raid sirens to quell the uproar. While this rag went on, strikers and demonstrators were being bludgeoned by the police, fired upon by the troops and put in jail.

Outside Parliament the agitation was organised with that disregard for human sufferings and lives which characterises the Party.

Acts of sabotage (some may have been the work of agents provocateurs as the C.P. asserts), and the use of arms and explosives, might have had their justification if they had been the prelude to revolution. As it was, they

appear as senseless manifestations which merely served to strengthen the hand of reaction.

Anarchists, at least most of them, are not opposed to violence when it is made necessary by the revolutionary struggle. But when violence is used by a political party to refurbish its tarnished prestige, they condemn it as bringing unnecessary suffering to the people.

French and Italian workers have sufficient reasons to revolt without having to fight Stalin's battles. If they struck to defend their own interests their sacrifices would not be in vain. They would not march on orders received from Moscow and merely go as far as their leaders allow them to go.

Anarchists believe that strikes must prepare the workers for the ultimate expropriation of the capitalist class. That is why they advocate the occupation of

the factories, the direct exchange of goods between the countryside and the towns, the running of all means of communication for the benefit of the community, i.e., without collecting fares. This would be a truly revolutionary agitation which would give workers confidence in their power to run production, distribution and transport, through their own independent organisations. It would receive the support of the whole population (except for the small privileged minority), who resent strikes which depress the already low level of production, which disorganise the transport of food and make transport difficult and even dangerous.

In opposition to the "Molotov strikes", the French Anarchist movement advocates strikes for workers' management of industry. These are the strikes which will deal the heaviest blow to capitalism and political parties by putting power into the hands of the working-class.

Government Defends Hanging

THE Criminal Justice Bill, the general object of which "is to improve the methods of dealing with persons found guilty of offences, including adolescent offenders and persons who commit repeated crimes", was given a second reading in the House of Commons recently. Two questions, of flogging and the suspension of the death penalty, undoubtedly received most attention, particularly in the Press. Actually, only the abolition of flogging is included in the proposed Bill. The Government takes the view that the present is not the right time for abolishing the death penalty. The arguments advanced by the Home Secretary were based on the statistics

for 1938 and 1946 which show that the number of murders committed in those years were 97 and 138 and the "crimes of felonious wounding and malicious wounding" 1990 and 3,009 respectively. Cases of robbery with violence rose from 287 in 1938 to 921 in 1946, cases of rape from 99 to 251.

In the debate that followed Mr. Sydney Silverman clearly summed-up the Home Secretary's inconsistency in the matter. He drew attention to the small increase in the number of murders committed as compared with the very appreciable increase in violent crime. "Corporal punishment is inflicted in the main for violent crime. The only thing that has happened between 1938 and 1947 has been an increase in violent crime. What deduction does the Home Secretary draw?" asked Mr. Silverman. "He wishes to abolish corporal punishment and not capital punishment." From a reading of the relevant issues of Hansard, it would appear that when a vote is taken at the Bill's third reading in the Spring, there will at any rate be a larger number in favour of abolishing this "last relic of a barbarous penal code"—as one Member put it—than in 1938. Meanwhile, every effort must be made to influence public opinion, because if public pressure does not succeed next year it will be many years before the disgusting practice is even discussed again.

We have only briefly discussed the Criminal Justice Bill because it is our intention, between now and next Spring, to deal at considerable length with the whole question of Crime and Punishment. This will include the anarchist position so far as the problem of "crime" is concerned as well as a detailed discussion of the existing methods and the significance of the proposed Bill.

Meanwhile, as food for thought these are some of the figures quoted by the Home Secretary. In 1938, 78,000 people were found guilty of indictable offences. In 1945, the corresponding figure was 115,000. In 1938, the prison and Borstal population was 11,086. In 1947, that number has risen to 18,426.

One final point without comment. In 1938, when abolition of Capital punishment was proposed, Mr. Ede, the present Home Secretary, was one of the M.P.'s who voted in favour and Sir Samuel Hoare, Home Secretary at the time, was opposed. To-day, their votes are reversed. Sir Samuel Hoare, now Viscount Templewood, writing in the *Observer* (9/11/47) regretted the Government's hesitation in not giving a lead "upon so grave an issue". "In 1938, I doubted the wisdom of including the abolition of Capital Punishment in the Bill. Since then, the savage executions that have disgraced Europe have convinced me that the time has come for us to give a conspicuous example of our detestation of brutal punishments and to abolish a sentence that cannot reform and does not seem on the available evidence to deter."

THE COMMUNIST ADVENTURE

By Our French Correspondent

AFTER a week of strikes which have tended to become general, it is not always possible to determine exactly what are the ends which the Communist organisations are following on behalf of Soviet imperialism.

In a movement that is at once complex and changing, we must be cautious of any schematic explanation, but it is evident that the direction of the movement of strikes lies in the hands of the Stalinist machine.

In fact, the first incidents which marked the beginning of the wave of strikes which we see to-day, took place at Marseilles, on the morrow of the municipal elections which indicated the rapid advance of the Union of French People, the party of General de Gaulle.

Following the increase in tramway fares, the CGT called a protest strike. During the demonstration the police proceeded to make arrests. At the police court, the detained militants were liberated by the working class crowd. In the afternoon, a second demonstration took place, this time directed against the new mayor and municipal council, with a Gaullist majority.

We thus see, right from the beginning, the dual character of the movement, on one side that of claims backed up by the majority of the workers, on the other a political one animated by the Communist Party. (The increase in tramway fares had been accepted by the outgoing Communist mayor, Christofol. But the same Christofol took the lead in the demonstration against the new Gaullist mayor, to protest against the increase.)

When the successive strikes, at first local, then regional, limited to a few factories, then extending to the whole of the union, leaping from one industry to another, had begun to move, under political slogans—against the Ramadier government, against the "American" party, against Yankee imperialism—they became transformed gradually, as they reached a new strata of workers, and became strictly economic, claiming 25% increase in wages, a quarterly revision of wage rates, better food, etc. In the course of the struggle, new demands were added so as to form an endless list, sufficient to satisfy all tendencies, all hopes, all categories.

Initial Distrust

The conflicts opened out with difficulty because of the initial political character. The workers at first believed that it was all a gesture of ill-temper by the Communists after their setback in the elections, or they were suspicious that it was an instruction which had resulted from the creation of the Cominform, or they were astonished at these slogans of struggle after having for two years listened to appeals for peace and work.

But the Stalinists showed that they possessed an extremely strong position in the heart of the C.G.T. Most of the councils, of the federations, of the departmental unions, were in their hands. On

the other hand they knew the extreme difficulty of working-class life, the continued increase in the cost of living and the ridiculous scale of wages.

They therefore abandoned all their political phraseology in the meetings and conferences of workers and spoke entirely of claims. In most of the unions, no discussion took place. Votes were taken after a speech by the secretary or the representative of the Federation, always a Communist. In doubtful cases, the vote was taken by a show of hands, to exert pressure on the timid, but it was taken by secret ballot where they were sure of a majority; the strikes were started in services or workshops with Communist majorities, if the vote was unfavourable in the whole of the enterprise or office.

Reformist Minority

To resist this new line, and to furnish the workers with some understanding of the situation, the various unions made efforts which were often difficult.

According to their pro-governmental leanings, their trade union or political aims, these minorities showed themselves in various ways. The best-known and most publicised, is the "Workers' Strength" tendency, led by Jouhaux, the secretary-general of the C.G.T., by Botherau, Capocci and Neumeyer, all old leaders of the C.G.T. before 1936, at the time when trade union unity was not yet realised.

"Workers' Strength" represents in general the reformist tendency. It is composed on the one hand of trade officials, and on the other hand of a working-class basis, mostly in the provinces, and much more to the "left". The close contact between the leaders of this movement and the government Socialists provokes in this minority which too often supports a reactionary ministry.

But the feeling of hatred against the Communists sometimes carries them away, and some rank-and-file militants do not hesitate to take up a position against a strike which they regard and denounce as political.

On the other hand, lack of programme and combativeness of the "Workers' Strength" tendency makes its partisans less effective than the old Stalinist foxes, used to political gymnastics and broken into all the tricks of moving crowds.

(Continued on page 5)

NATIONALISATION OF THE RAILWAYS

ON the 1st January, the four main line railways will cease to be capitalist concerns in the nominal sense of the word, and will be merged under a Railway Executive responsible to the new Transport Commission. The same pattern is to be followed as for the nationalisation of the mines. The shareholders will be compensated by guaranteed bonds, with a fixed rate of interest which will safeguard them from the vicissitudes of varying dividends; the old managers will keep their positions; the workers will find themselves saddled with the same bosses, and the trade unions will sit pretty and betray their members in the same way as before.

To anyone who, like the writer of this note, knows the railway bureaucracy from a few years of too-close experience, it is evident that this change will mean very little difference. Already, in the early 1930's, the administration of the railways had developed into a typical managerial organisation. The annual shareholders' meeting was a nominal affair, dominated

by the executive managers and the high financiers who formed the board of directors, while the directors themselves merely rubber-stamped the recommendations of the general manager and his assistants.

The Transport Commission announce that no changes in personnel are likely to take place for a long time, and, moreover, it retains only the power of making major policy decisions, so that all the matters of working detail, which affect the railwaymen directly, will still be decided by the old bureaucrats. And any long experience of railway working teaches one that the average railway boss knows less about the practical problems of railway working than the ordinary passenger guard or goods checker. In almost no other industry is there so wide a gulf between the managers and the actual practical work. The new order evidently means to keep this situation, which merely results in continued inefficiency and waste, and perpetuates low wages, bad working conditions, and atrocious favouritism in appointments.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

While Molotov accuses the United States of preparing a war against the U.S.S.R., and Mr. Harold Stassen, who is seeking nomination as the Republican candidate for the Presidency next year, wants the United States to stop America from exporting materials which could aid Russia's military preparations, trade between the two countries is improving. Imports to the United States from Russia have rapidly increased in the past few months and roughly balance the exports to that country.

The imports from Russia include large amounts of essential strategic metals which the United States needs for its own military programme. Trade knows no ideological frontiers!

SOVIET GENETICS AND THE WORLD RETREAT FROM SCIENCE

IT is a strange paradox that apparently obscure issues often generate more repercussions than ones which seem much more important. A cause is often successfully defended by the most trivial irrelevancies—as when General Franco's courtesies towards the Gibraltar fox hunters did more to win him support among British upper social circles than all the propaganda of his official apologists; but it can also be very severely damaged by evidence which at first sight might appear of very slender weight. The implications of the new "Soviet Genetics" bids fair to be an example of the latter kind.

Knowledge of what is going on in Russian genetic circles is chiefly owing to two articles by Cyril Darlington, F.R.S., a geneticist of the first order in this country, and Sir Daniel Hall's successor as Director of the John Innes Horticultural Institute. The same facts are treated by Eric Ashby, a scientist who spent a considerable time in Russia and enjoyed exceptional observational facilities there, in a Penguin entitled *Scientist in Russia*. What immediately underlines the importance of Darlington's articles is the response they have evoked in Soviet circles. After the publication of the first, "A Revolution in Soviet Science", in *Discovery* in February last, he has been attacked in *Pravda* (Sept. 2nd); a series of articles on Soviet Genetics have appeared in the Stalinist *Modern Quarterly* (9th October); and Professor J. B. S. Haldane, himself an eminent geneticist and a member of the Communist Party, has introduced a veiled but cautious defence of the official Soviet geneticist T. D. Lysenko in a talk on the Third Programme. It looks, therefore, as if Darlington's criticisms are being taken seriously enough in Soviet quarters.

Destruction of Vavilov's School

During the first years after the Russian Revolution, research in genetics was directed by Nicolai Ivanovitch Vavilov, a scientist who achieved world-wide distinction. At the International Genetics Congress at Edinburgh in 1939, he was

elected President of the Congress, and in 1942 was elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Society. This international acclaim was a factor in his undoing. For several years the views on genetics which he shared with most of the distinguished geneticists of the West were the object of attack and covert slander of a political nature directed by T. D. Lysenko (who succeeded him as President of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences) and his pupil, Prezent. In 1940, Vavilov was arrested in Rumania whither he had been sent by the Russian government, and was dismissed from his executive posts. He was condemned to death on the charge of espionage for Great Britain. According to Darlington, in a second article in the *Nineteenth Century* for October, "on July 31st, 1941, he was taken out of one of the solitary condemned cells in the Butyrki prison and put in a larger cell with nineteen other political prisoners, whether on account of lack of space, or with a view to exile in Siberia is unknown. When the Moscow prisons were evacuated in December, 1941, he was removed in distressing conditions to a concentration camp near Saratov. There he died."

Darlington summarizes the campaign against other Russian geneticists as follows:

"The first victims were in 1932 when G. A. Levitzky the cytologist and his pupil N. P. Avdoulov, were sent to labour camps. Vavilov asked Stalin for their release, a request which was temporarily and grudgingly granted. At the

same time B. S. Chetverikov, the pioneer of population genetics, and W. P. Efroimson were sent to Siberia and nothing was heard of them for fifteen years. In 1935 the first two geneticists I. J. Agol and L. P. Ferry were put to death. In 1937 the head of the great institute for medical genetic research in Moscow, S. G. Levit, was put to death and at the same time probably Avdoulov. In 1939, N. A. Iljin, an outstanding animal breeder, disappeared, leaving a posthumous paper to appear in the *Journal of Genetics*. In 1942, not only Vavilov, but also his closest cytological colleague, G. D. Karpechenko died ('in the fighting' so it was said). At about this time J. J. Kerkis, the *Drosophila* geneticist, disappeared following a party cell intrigue and Levitzky was finally sent back to a labour camp where he died. At about this time also N. K. Koltzov, the cytologist and doyen of Russian biology, died and his widow committed suicide.

"In a word, after thirteen years of persecution, the great fellowship of Russian biological research, formed in the revolution, had been crushed and broken."

Official Support of Lysenko

Vavilov's crime was that he worked along the familiar lines of science. Lysenko owes his eminent position in the Russian hierarchy (he is a Hero of Socialist Labour and a Vice-President of the Supreme Soviet) to the fact that he has made himself a propagandist for dialectical materialism as the exclusive philosophy of Soviet Science. His views were officially supported by the State Dept. of Agriculture. When other scientists have been unable to repeat his experiments he accuses them of malicious faking, of subservience to "bourgeois science". His results will not withstand statistical analysis, so his retort is that "we biologists do not want to submit to blind chance . . . we maintain that biological irregularities do not resemble

mathematical laws." He denounces the work of Mendel, the founder of all modern genetics, because Mendel was a monk (he becomes a "clerical reactionary"), while that of the great American geneticist Morgan is "fascistic", and tarred with the brush of Nazi race theory. Lysenko silences all critics by a slavish appeal to authority—Marx, Darwin, Michurin (a Russian plant breeder of no theoretical standing) and Timiryazev. How deeply the authoritarianism has bitten is shown by the remark of a prominent animal physiologist to Ashby: "I reject Vavilov's views because Vavilov believed in Bateson, and Timiryazev condemned Bateson."

The Whitewashers

Darlington's articles and the philosophical implications of the facts they are based on was the subject of an editorial article in the *British Medical Journal* of October 18th. This brought forth a storm of indignant letters denouncing it as "scurrilous fables", "mischievous rumours" and the usual armoury of Stalinist invective. The freedom of the scientist in Russia was triumphantly inferred from the opposition to Lysenko's views expressed by an eminent Russian biologist, Zhebrak. Unfortunately, Zhebrak's opposition is about as convincing evidence of scientific freedom in Russia as Matteotti's outspoken criticisms of Fascism were of political freedom in the Italy of 1924. For he is already under fire, and an article in *Pravda* (quoted in the *Manchester Guardian* of September 26th) states: "Zhebrak as a Soviet scientist should have unmasked the class meaning of the struggle which is taking place around questions of genetics. But, blinded by bourgeois prejudices, by detestable fawning on bourgeois science, he has adopted the attitude of the enemy's camp . . . It turns out there is a so-called pure science for Zhebrak . . . It appears that there is no progressive Soviet

biological science; there is no reactionary biology in the world . . . How unsightly is the role of Zhebrak!"

To J. B. S. Haldane has fallen the awkward rôle of countering his fellow geneticist Darlington's exposure and the defence of Lysenko in this country. This he proceeded indirectly to do in a talk on Nature and Nurture on the B.B.C. Third Programme on 30th November. Cautiously dissociating himself from the more absurd of Lysenko's theories, he lent judicious support to some general propositions which are hardly in dispute. Darlington, of course, was not mentioned.

Significance Of This Controversy

Darlington obviously thought very highly of Vavilov—as did geneticists generally when they elected him President of the Edinburgh Congress, and the Royal Society when it honoured him in 1942. Darlington is clearly motivated by the entirely admirable feeling of solidarity with a persecuted colleague. Whether Lysenko's theories are valid is not important here. That these men should have been killed for heresy is far the most significant fact of the whole proceedings. And despite the English Stalinist chorus, *Pravda* does not attempt to deny that these men have been killed. Darlington's opponents rely simply on abuse, and reference to an account by Hudson and Richens of the theoretical questions in the "new genetics" which, of course, does not deal with the political aspects, and therefore doesn't mention them.

But the significance goes deeper than sympathy and indignation. Soviet scientists are being isolated from the West and increasing nationalist stress is being placed on Soviet scientific work, just as it was in Nazi Germany. There is a definite retreat from the internationalism of science. *Pravda* in the above quoted extract refers to "progressive Soviet biological science", and the business is carried to absurd lengths—as when Ermoliva is referred to as the discoverer of "Soviet" Penicillin, though it is admitted that Fleming discovered it too (but not the fact that his discovery was made some dozen or more years earlier). The same line was taken by Professor Palladin and the Russian delegation to the recent Physiological Congress held in Oxford. They refused to speak in any other language than Russian, because to have done so "would have been an insult to the Soviet Union". "This episode showed," said Professor Palladin in an article published in Russia, "how great is the responsibility of Soviet scientists towards their people . . . and how important it is never for a moment to yield on points affecting our national honour and dignity; nor must we ever tolerate any kind of toadying to the West."

In this rejection of the scientific results achieved in the West and retreat into nationalism, one is reminded of Stalin's remark as he embraced the Japanese Foreign Secretary, Matsouka, in 1940, "After all, we are both Orientals!"

Unfortunately, the destruction of Soviet genetics will be eagerly used by the propagandists of future war with Russia, and it is as well to remember that the subjection of science to the State has gone on apace in the West also. For that is what the secrecy surrounding penicillin during the war amounts to; what the secrecy surrounding the atomic bomb signifies in the post-war epoch. Darlington's exposure provides a rallying point for an international affirmation of the internationalism of knowledge; but with the West suffering from incipient scientific nationalism, there is not much hope of a cure for the advanced disease manifested by the Soviet Union coming from that quarter.

J.H.

MICHAEL BAKUNIN

UNLIKE Proudhon or Marx, the two other great radical figures of his time, Michael Bakunin, characterised by none other than Peter Kropotkin as the founder of modern anarchism, never bequeathed to his followers a more or less systematic body of ideas; indeed, it was Kropotkin himself who, drawing on his extensive reading and scientific training, established the principles of the anarchist movement of to-day. However, what Bakunin did was of no trifling nature: fragments of theory, inspired orations and letters of gargantuan length helped spread anarchism throughout Europe. Even more important perhaps was the example of his life, a life which, in the words of Otto Rühle, the biographer of Marx, marked him as "one of the most brilliant, heroic and fascinating of revolutionists the world has ever known."

As a child Bakunin received a liberal education from his father and tutors, who were guided by the precepts of Rousseau's *Emile*, but in 1852, after the death of Alexander I, the Decembrist uprising took place in Petersburg, and the elderly landowner, frightened at the reaction which followed, sought to dispel dangerous ideas from his son's mind by enrolling him in the Tsar's Artillery School. Young Michael finally gained a commission though he had shown little interest for military studies and had spent most of the time writing long letters home trying to counteract parental authority over his brothers and sisters. At this time, soon after he had found a way to abandon his military career, he became initiated into the young intellectual circles of Moscow and fell under the spell of Fichte and Hegel, the reigning German gods of Russian romanticism. Bakunin, in this stage of his development, has been described by a friend, Vissarion Belinsky, later the conservative critic, in adjectives which were always to fit: "Strength, undisciplined power, unquiet, excitable, deep-seated spiritual unrest, incessant striving for some distant goal, dissatisfaction with the present . . ." Such a person could not but find it impossible to breathe freely in the stagnating atmosphere of Russian feudalism, so, in 1840, with the consent of his father who had finally given up all hope of his son settling down to a respectable oblivion, Bakunin departed for Berlin to court the Hegelian system at its source.

First Essay

Under the spell still of orthodox Hegelianism, flying the banner of philosophical reaction: "That which is rational is real, and that which is real is rational" Bakunin had not yet changed intellectually from being anything but a loyal subject of the Tsar. In his subconscious, though, he had broken with his traditions, and the breach was furthered consciously by the materialist thought of the Left Hegelians. It was under the influence of Strauss and Feuerbach that Bakunin wrote his first important essay, *Reaction in Germany*, with its uncompromising view of reality: "The Left say 'Two and two are four'; the Right say 'Two and two are six'; and the just milieu says 'Two and two are five'." This essay also contained the famous phrase, "The urge for destruction is also a creative urge", which was later seized on by his enemies and misinterpreted to slander him as a creature with a sadistic urge for mere destruction. By the phrase Bakunin meant that the old corrupt society must first be done away with before we can achieve the new. The so-called Apostle of Destruction added on more than one occasion, as George Woodcock has pointed out, "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."

In 1843 his intellectual flight into radicalism became physically pressing, and he left Germany for Switzerland where he made the acquaintance of Wilhelm Weitling, an authoritarian communist, who had somewhat inconsistently written in his book *Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom*, this harbinger of Bakunin's future view: "The perfect society has no government, but only an administration, no laws, but only obligations, no punishments, but means of correction". This association was short-lived, however, for Weitling was arrested for stepping on the religious beliefs of the Swiss burghers, and when Bakunin's name was found among the prisoner's papers, the Russian scarcely had time to elude the police. But they had contacted the authorities in Russia, and when Bakunin refused to obey a call to return home, he was condemned in absence to a loss of his inheritance and exile to Siberia, a sentence which Tsar Nicholas would carry out, with a vengeance, some ten years later.

Meets Marx and Proudhon

Paris was Bakunin's next restless resting-place, and there he brought his worldly possessions of a single trunk, a folding bed and a zinc wash-basin, relying for funds on teaching, translations from the German and like many revolutionists of his time and some of ours, on liberal loans from grumbling friends. In Paris Bakunin's anarchist ideas began fermenting as he came in contact with George Sand, Pierre Leroux. Considerand, the leader of the Fourierists, and attended meetings of French working-men. But it was two others he met whose influence was to be more decisive—Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Karl Marx. Marx, the resolute centralist, and Bakunin, already a believer in direct action, clashed immediately. "He called me a sentimental idealist," said Bakunin later, "and he was right; I called him gloomy, unreliable and vain, and I was right too." And elsewhere Bakunin had said: "Marx is carrying on the same sort of futile activities as of old, corrupting the workers by making them argumentative." However, this dislike for the tactics and character of Marx, whose domineering attitude was in time to be instrumental in wrecking the

forces of socialism, did not blind Bakunin to his merits: "At that time I understood nothing of political economy, and my socialism was purely instinctive. He, though he was younger than I, was an atheist, an instructed materialist, and a conscious socialist." His meetings with Proudhon were more congenial and resulted in a mutual influence with Bakunin introducing the French master to Hegel and others. "Yet despite these substantial obligations," writes E. H. Carr in his generally barren biography of Bakunin, "Bakunin in later years always spoke of his debt to Proudhon, never of Proudhon's debt to him."

Direct Action

1848 was a year of decision for Bakunin just as it was in the life of Europe. In February a revolution had broken out in France against Louis-Philippe, and soon Bakunin was in the thick of it and in the hair of the new authorities. This was the first actual contact the veteran of revolution had made with an uprising, and, as he wrote, never had he found anywhere "such noble self-sacrifice, such a touching sense of honour, so much natural delicacy of behaviour, so much friendly gaiety combined with so much heroism, as among these simple uneducated people." He left no account of his own activities, but Caussidiere, the revolutionary Prefect of Police, is said to have exclaimed: "What a man! In the first day of a revolution he is a perfect treasure; on the second, he ought to be shot." And Flocon said: "If there were three hundred Bakunins, it would be impossible to govern France." It is not surprising that the French authorities gave Bakunin permission to leave the country when, seeing that the Europe established by the Congress of Vienna was tottering, he sought to spread the message of revolution elsewhere. The next year found him aiding the Polish insurrection, fighting on the barricades with Czech students and participating in the Dresden uprising where he met Richard Wagner, then a revolutionist, who later, according to Bernard Shaw, used Bakunin as the model for the Siegfried of his music dramas.

MICHAEL GRIEG.

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(To be continued.)

ANARCHISM —Interpretations

"The State is force; nay, it is the silly parading of force. It does not propose to win love or make converts; if it puts its finger into anything, it does so only on an unfriendly way; for its essence consists not in persuasion, but in command and compulsion. However much pains it may take, it cannot conceal the fact that it is the legal maimer of our will, the constant negation of our liberty. Even when it commands the good, it makes it valueless by commanding it; for every command slaps liberty in the face; as soon as the good is commanded, it is transformed into the evil in the eyes of the true (that is, human, by no means divine) morality, of the dignity of man, of liberty; for man's liberty, morality and dignity consists precisely in doing the good not because it is commanded but because he recognises it, wills it and loves it."

MICHAEL BAKUNIN.

The Principles of Anarcho-Syndicalism

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM is a theory of workers' organisation which differs from Trade Unionism in several vitally important ways. The first and most important difference is that the final aim of Syndicalism is the consciously revolutionary one of placing the control of industry—all industry—into the hands of the workers in each industry. The Trade Unions have never pretended to be more than defensive organisations, maintained by the support (compulsory support in some cases) of the workers, for the defence of standards of living and working conditions within capitalist society.

Syndicalism, on the other hand, is not content with fighting for better conditions within capitalist society, although it does offer the most effective means of so doing. But syndicalists realise that as long as capitalist society exists, so long with the worker be exploited for the sake of profit. As long as the worker is content to be a wage-earner, so long will he be robbed of the greater part of the value of his products. As long as industry is controlled from above, either by private owners or by the State, so long will the worker be a pawn in a game played by others.

Anarcho-syndicalism, therefore, aims at the abolition of capitalist society, all that supports it and all that it entails. It aims at the abolition of the State. It aims at the creation instead of a society of a decentralised character based only upon the two fields of activity—economic and industrial. Combining with local communes—organisations for the administration of local amenities and affairs—syndicalism lays down the structure for the organisation of production and distribution, not for the profit of employer or State, but to satisfy freely all the needs of the community.

INDUSTRIAL UNITY

As opposed to the craft basis of the Trade Union, syndicalism demands industrial unionism. The many anomalies of craft organisation, whereby workers in the same factory do not necessarily belong to the same union, and do not necessarily support each other in strikes, for example, are only equalled by the "mixed bag" aspect of the huge general unions like the Transport and General, or the Municipal and General, Workers' Unions.

The principle adhered to by the syndicates would be "organisation at the point of production" which concentrates the workers' strength where it is most effective. After all, if the aim of the workers is to be the seizure of the means of production, it is absolutely fruitless to organise according to where one may live! The effective organisation will be that created on the job, finding its expression through shop committees

MINERS' PAY—ADVERTISEMENT & FACT

PROBABLY nobody is more heartily sick of the series of advertisements the Coal Board is issuing than the miner himself. The adverts are of a recruiting nature and carry the usual set of half-truths which go with such endeavours. Happy-looking workers wearing miners' helmets grin out of the columns assuring us that they can "honestly recommend any young man to come into the mines—he'll be doing a man-size job for his country and himself."

These advertisements always give the name of the miner and his colliery, so presumably they are genuine expressions of his point of view, but one notices that they are frequently men from pits with a "good" reputation. The Kentish miners, for instance, and the Fifeshire pits have produced their stooges.

The half-truths referred to are such as these: "face workers average £6 to £8 a week, often much more." Some adverts have spoken of £11 to £12 a week. Now it may be true that certain individual miners have earned high wages—some may do it regularly, but the advertisement do not point out that it may take a very long time for the recruit to mining to work himself up to the higher-paid jobs, for which there is always a waiting list. And that before he reaches the jobs where he can earn big money by piece work he may have long years as an "on-cost" worker earning only the minimum.

An Example

We have before us as we write a miner's pay sheet which tells us a different story from this £6 to £8 a week dream. Out of the basic wage of £5, in this instance no less than 14 shillings have been stopped for the various insurances and income tax. On the form are spaces for other "offtakes" to be recorded, such as for Tool Sharpening, Lamps, Explosives, Materials, and so forth, so that one can

To Our Comrades in Industry

THE reformists who pin their faith to a gradual transformation of society, step by dragging step, through the careful use of the constitution, are still listened to by the workers with more attention than their exploded arguments deserve. For it must be admitted that the reformist idea that things get better as time goes on, that progress is inevitable, really is looking a little moth-eaten now-a-days. And nowhere does reformism look more threadbare than in the Trade Unions, which, with the advent of the Labour Party to power, found themselves completing the logical development of a trend that really began with the split in the First International.

It is because the nature of Trade Unionism is being more clearly shown to-day than at any time since the general strike of 1926, that disillusionment with the unions is spreading at a rate which would alarm the T.U.C. if it had sufficient contact with the rank and file to see it. The opportunity, therefore, to introduce workers to ideas for new and different organisations to take the place of the effete unions is a good one, and one anarchists should not neglect. Without pretending that the ideas themselves are new, unfortunately we know them to be new to too many workers, and so we make no apology for presenting a brief statement on the basic principles of Anarcho-Syndicalism, although they may be familiar to the majority of our readers.

The time may be ripe for the beginning of the creation of militant workers' organisations. To save further disappointments—perhaps, indeed, to save humanity—let them be syndicates with the conscious revolutionary aim of Workers' Control!

and revolutionary cells which, able to rely upon the support of all the workers in the factory, workshops or mine, irrespective of their trades, is able to swing into action at any time with every chance of success. Through these committees, work-places can be linked up to form industrial, federated syndicates.

OFFICIALS

There is no need for the full-time paid official in a syndicate. One of the evils of Trade Unionism is its creation of a class of bureaucrats ostensibly working for the benefit of the rank and file but in actual fact, because of inflated salaries, out of touch and out of the class of the rank and file. Such people have a stake in present-day society. The unions to whom they are attached have their funds invested in government stock. Their salaries depend on the security of that stock—how can they be expected to desire a change in a society in which they have such sinecures? And since the unions to-day are recognised as part of the State, the union official is more of a civil servant than a representative of the workers.

For the waging of the class struggle through syndicates, no bureaucracy is needed. When the efficient organisation of action calls for full-time activity, a temporary delegate can be chosen, either to present the workers' case, make contact with other workers or any other necessary function, but his re-

imagine a miner working a short week and finishing up owing the Coal Board something!

This miner then, from the Scottish Lady Helen Pit, who has a wife and two children, finished his week with the magnificent sum of £4 6s. He has served 4½ years in the army, and must by now be looking with rather a jaundiced eye at the advertisement which says "The work's varied and interesting, and you get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work."

A Rise

Meanwhile, at the moment of writing, the final decision on a demand for more pay for miners does not seem to have been made. The union is asking for £1 a week more, and the NCB has offered 10s., but knowing the NUM it seems likely to settle at the Board's figure and think itself very smart.

May we just add here that although we note with interest these wage bargaining, and approve the miner getting as big a slice of the profits as possible, the whole idea of permanent gain is a false one. The advantage from wage increases is a purely transient one which does nothing more than bring wages for a short time a little nearer the cost of living before that again moves out of reach, as it is perpetually doing.

The wages system is the means by which the producer is robbed of the larger part of his produce with the appearance of getting a fair return. It is as much part and parcel of capitalism as war or the dole queue and should not be regarded by the worker as any more desirable. The only just economy is one of free exchange, with each worker freely producing for the common pool and taking from it just as freely that which is provided by other workers in other industries. When that comes, all the indignity of wage bargaining and the slimy trick of wage slavery will disappear.

muneration for such activity should not exceed his pay on the bench.

This unalterable principle would discourage job-seekers or climbers. Election by the workers would almost inevitably ensure the most capable man for any job being chosen, the rate for the job would eliminate the bait of material advantage and the job would be done for its own sake.

Land Notes

WOMEN AT WORK

FOR a couple of decades or more now, much has been written from time to time on the rural exodus to the cities and numerous reasons, in differing orders of priority, have been advanced to explain it and often plans have been proposed to try and check it. Among the explanations offered have been poor wages, bad housing, absence of opportunities for advancement, the glamour appeal for young people of the so-called gay city; all of which have played their part and their combined influence has been considerable.

On aspect, however, which has not been given much prominence, but which has undoubtedly played a big part in deciding countrymen to migrate to the towns, has been the quiet but persistent influence of their womenfolk who for the most part have longed to escape from the loneliness of the countryside and who, as girls, have often made it a condition of their marrying that their men should not remain in the country but should move to town, often any town, at the first possible opportunity.

The reasons for this attitude on the part of young countrywomen have been numerous. Firstly, as far as any generalization can be valid, it is true to say that the distractions of titivations of town life, the opportunity to wear nice clothes and try and attract attention to oneself, to go to cinemas and dances, to stare at shopwindow displays, exert a far stronger attraction for women than for men. Not that men are entirely uninterested in such things by any means. But the fact remains that while many townsmen express a vague sympathy for, and interest in, rural life, even though usually displaying at the same time a complete ignorance of it, and while some, almost invariably single men, do break away from the cities and find jobs on the land, it is rare ever to hear a townswoman express a desire and preference for the country. The mere fact that she might sometimes get her shoes muddy is usually enough to cause a shuddering aversion to such a primitive existence.

The Trivial Round

But there are other, and more substantial, reasons for the average woman's dislike of being a country housewife. To begin with, she is apt to feel that, in such a life under existing social conditions, nearly all the advantages are with the man. Few jobs offer such variety as does farm work. The work to be done changes week by week according to the seasons and is even conditioned from day to day by the state of the weather, so that unlike his urban counterpart, no man knows for certain when he arrives for work in the morning exactly how he will spend his working hours. In fact, speculation as to what job he will be doing next, together with comments on the job he is doing at the moment and suggestions as to how, apart from the boss's obtuseness, it could be done differently and better, occupies a large part of his casual conversation with his fellow-workers.

By contrast the work of such a man's wife is comparatively unaffected by the time of the year or the state of the weather. Even if it is raining cats and dogs and blowing a gale, the week's washing will still be done on Monday—for such is the routine. Her life is one unending round of domestic drudgery made physically more tiring, and this is the important point, by the lack of those "mod. cons." which help to lighten the work of the urban working-class woman. Water may have to be carried from some dis-

Another proof is that these delegates should have no power to make decisions on behalf of their fellows. They are delegates, not representatives, and must report back any offers or moves so that a decision can be taken by all the workers involved.

ANTI-MILITARISM

Syndicates recognise the reactionary nature of nationalism. They do not recognise the validity of political and national boundaries. Syndicalism is international in design and aspirations. It is a form of organisation which, not being directed by any political thought, is free to embrace workers of any country, colour or creed and by uniting them under the banner of Freedom, unite them for common action against their common enemy—the international ruling class.

It follows logically that Anti-Militarism is a principle of Anarcho-Syndicalist theory and practice, since it is in the military caste that nationalism and patriotism find their greatest expression. Not only that, but the armed forces do not exist only for international attack or defence, but are most important counter-revolutionary weapons in the hands of the State. If anti-militarist propaganda can have full effect before the revolution, the task of the revolutionaries is greatly simplified.

Syndicalists oppose war as being the clash of ruling classes, never fought in the interests of the working class, who only fight and die for the preservation of capitalism under one form or another.

METHODS

What are the methods of Anarcho-Syndicalism? They can be summed up briefly under the words "Direct Action".

Since syndicates do not seek control of the State or any part of the political machine, it would be illogical to take part in political activity. Since the society at which they aim is a society without government it would be futile to struggle for power in government. Political activity can only divert the energies and strength of the producers away from the direct path to freedom, and in the labyrinth of political opportunism and intrigue the final aim is inevitably lost and forgotten.

Direct action means making the full use of such weapons as the strike, with all its variations (lightning, work-to-rule, stay-in, etc.), boycott and sabotage, finding their full expression in the Social General Strike wherein the workers lock out the bosses and commence to work the means of production for the benefit of all. The most important action now, however, is the task of education and enlightenment, to make the worker realise his own strength and responsibility and to inspire him to prepare now for the final struggle.

BASIS FOR THE FUTURE

These then, however brief, are the main principles of Anarcho-Syndicalism. At a later date we shall deal with each aspect more fully, to show how the Syndicates are not merely weapons for struggle to-day, but the foundation of the free society we can make for ourselves if we not only accept these principles but begin to put them into action NOW. The Trade Unions, seemingly so strong, are rotten at the roots. Let us be ready with the revolutionary alternative!

PHILIP SANSOM.

is, apart from her family, almost solitary confinement. While needing social intercourse and relaxation more than her man, who has the former, and sometimes unofficially even the latter, during his working hours, she is less able to obtain either.

When the children come of school-age, the daily work is in one way made easier by the fact that the children are out of of the way till tea-time. But often they have far to go to school, on bicycle or on foot to the nearest bus stop, and sometimes in wild and wet weather it is not possible for them to go at all. Furthermore, if the parents are at all concerned about the quality of their children's education, that also will be a big incentive for them to move to the towns because the standard of education in rural schools is, as a rule, inferior to that provided by the State in urban areas, mainly because no young and interested teacher wants to get landed at some out-of-the-way village school but naturally prefers a job in a larger and better equipped town school that offers him or her more scope and also more likelihood of promotion.

The Lure of the Town

So it often comes about that even if the man is more or less contented to stay where he is, the woman, unless she has given up all hope and ceased to care, is not, and persistently urges her husband for her sake and for the sake of the children, as she would say, to escape from this isolation and drudgery and move to town. And if he does do so, it is more likely because of his wife's pleadings than because of his own inclinations.

Not every country housewife's lot is, of course, as bad as perhaps I have implied. It is true that with a garden and poultry and a bit of bacon from so-and-so and plenty of milk from the farm and the old man bringing home a rabbit or two on Saturday afternoons, it is easier for her to feed her family than for most townswomen, even though she cannot supplement the rations with meals out. Still, if she is much further from the shops she does not depend on them to the same extent.

But to some such women these things are mere mitigations of an otherwise hard and often lonely existence. Above all, the prevailing ideology of an urban industrialism, which comes to her over the wireless, through the daily paper and by the cinema, has largely destroyed the old traditional, communal life of the countryside and conditioned her into accepting the standards of megapolitan culture. Having imbibed these values she naturally judges her own life by them and, when civilization is measured by the distance of the nearest cinema, she considers herself badly off. And indeed, it is true that, in an ultra-centralized society such as ours, life on the perimeter tends to be merely a poor and tinsel imitation of life at the centre which draws all things to itself.

G.V.

THE MARSHALL PLAN ANALYSED

The American mimeographed bulletin *New Views* (20/11/47) published an analysis of the Marshall plan, extracts of which we reproduce below. This article was written in answer to the question of a French worker who asked if it were true, as "French Communist publications have been writing, that the aim of the Marshall Plan is to displace French manufactured articles with American commodities in France and thus stifle French industry, and turn France into a colonial market for American production."

This question is on the minds of the people, not merely in France, but in most European countries, and it therefore important to understand the motives behind America's plan, as it is

not enough to condemn it outright without trying to understand its implications.

New Views is anti-capitalist and though the analysis it gives of the Marshall Plan disagrees in some respects with the Communist description of the Plan it is in no way an apology for it. We condemn the Marshall Plan for the same anti-capitalist motives. We believe that the salvation of Europe will not come from America but can only be the work of the Europeans workers themselves. We have no illusions as to American liberation; economic control will be followed by political control. But to turn to Moscow instead of Washington is equally dangerous.

EDS.

★ ★ ★

THE Marshall Plan is not a sale of goods but a credit arrangement enabling favoured European nations to get from the United States and Canada (and probably other countries) goods they do not now have on hand. Through its "European Reconstruction Corporation", the United States Government will offer loans and grants of dollars to public and private economic enterprises in the "right" nations. These loans and grants will be made without the usual banking requirement that borrowers prove that their use of such credit is financially sound—that is, profitable. Since the loans and grants will be made without the usual banking guarantees, they will probably never be repaid. The entire scheme can therefore be described as non-commercial.

What goods will in this way be moved from the United States to Europe? Mainly two kinds: food and material means of production. The Plan will thus provide European industries with capital in its two categories: labour power and capital in the shape of raw and secondary materials and equipment.

Here is a list of commodities that will probably go to Europe under the

Marshall Plan: (1) Food—mostly wheat and other grains. (2) Materials—coal, steel and iron, scrap iron and steel, industrial chemicals, fertilizers; machinery and electrical equipment. These "crisis" imports are meant to give the European worker the power to labour productively: food for him to buy with his wages. They are meant to figure for public and private European enterprises as material means of production which can be employed by the worker at his labour to produce articles of utility. The Plan does not propose to finance the movement to Europe of consumption goods other than food.

Let us now consider the charge that the influence of such a loan on the industries of France and other European nations will turn them into colonial markets of American industry.

A market is fundamentally an exchange of goods and not just a sale of goods for money.

Differs from Colonialism

An early mark of colonialism was the sheer robbery and expropriation of wealth

which was practiced by the dynamic imperialist power in the colony country. This was the method of acquiring wealth used by the English in India at the close of the 18th and in the first half of the 19th centuries. (A general description of this phenomenon of "primitive accumulation" is found in Marx's *Capital*.) Similar "primitive accumulation" was practiced by the National Socialist State when it conquered Central and Western Europe. The same method of putting its hands on wealth has been tried by the Soviet State within the boundaries of its European and Asiatic security zones—Manchuria, Rumania, Austria, East Germany, Poland, etc.

Normally, the products offered by colony countries in exchange with the powerful industrial capitalist nations are: raw material, unprocessed foodstuffs, and cheap labour in the production of such commodities or in the building of roads, canals, and other means of communication.

Exchanging for these products, the industrial capitalist finds in colonial countries a market for the following commodities: manufactured consumption goods, as clothing and shoes, washing machines, radios, refrigerators, cars, and processed food articles like coca cola, cigarettes, chewing gum, canned meats, post toasts, etc.

The Marshall Plan will move from the United States to Europe not manufactured consumption goods, but the wherewithal of industrial production: (1) bread for the workers, (2) raw material and plant equipment. It will also move to the favoured European countries American credit, or even gold, to make secure their instruments of domestic payments. The purpose here can only be that of reconstituting industrial production.

The Marshall Plan is a scheme to put on its feet the Western European market, which before the war was America's biggest foreign customer. To have a market in Western Europe, the United States

must enable that region to manufacture again on a large scale.

Fear of Communism

But this motive is less important than the second purpose of the Marshall Plan (You know, people hold that the United States could do without its European market, as its total export market accounts for less than a tenth of American production. We are not so sure on this point. Our prosperity will probably depend more than ever before on this tenth.) The obvious great purpose of the Marshall Plan is to save Western Europe from falling under the domination of Communist governments. When the industry of a country is paralyzed and people cannot make a living, it is easier than otherwise for a Communist or Fascist party to become the government of that country.

Besides this immediate angle, and close joined to it, is the fear (by the United States' government) that if entire Europe falls under the domination of one business corporation (the Soviet State), the position of U.S. economy on the world market will be endangered. For the very same reason, the United States government did not like the idea of having the whole of Europe become one business organisation run under the management of the Nazis. United States economy has reached the point where it must have the entire world as a "free" market.

This is not written in apology for the Marshall Plan. It is our explanation of the aims and "intentions" of the Plan. The "intentions" which our correspondent states are alleged by French Communist publications do not conform to the possibilities of the given situation. A "colonial" market in France and other West European countries will not be of much use to U.S. industry.

Will the European nations so aided become satellites of the United States?

In a way they are that now. But, of course, not in the same sense as Poland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria—that is, their governments—are satellites of the U.S.S.R. No legal opposition to the government and to the Soviet State is possible in the Soviet satellite countries. In France, Italy, and the rest of Western Europe, governments lean on the United States for economic support. They are otherwise independent, and their Communist oppositions are free to denounce the United States as a neo-fascist menace. Similar arraignment of the Soviet State in a country like Bulgaria or Yugoslavia is punished with shooting or hanging.

Political Domination

Inasmuch as the desire to keep France, Italy, and the rest of Western Europe from being taken in charge by Communist governments, is an important motivation of the Marshall Plan, it may be described as a plan to dominate Western Europe politically.

It can be said that the present "subservience" of Western Europe to the United States is such as would be assumed by countries to a banking power that provides them with means of economic recovery. The governments of those countries look up to the United States because American munificence and promise of further aid save such Governments from being overthrown by hungry, jobless mobs directed by the wildest of politicians. On the other hand, Soviet influence in its sphere consists of military and police domination, either applied directly by Russian army and police units or by armed pro-Soviet political minorities who form governments under Russian protection.

The Marshall Plan promises to provide Western Europe with the same commodities that industrialized nations usually get from colonial regions: food and raw materials—besides industrial equipment and finances. This means that the Plan does not aim to "colonize" its European wards. On the contrary, the Plan aims to rebuild France, Italy, Britain, as industrial powers. When European industries revive, they will compete with American production in the world market. Is, therefore, the Marshall Plan a sort of idealistic contradiction? No. While certain American enterprises will feel the competition of rebuilt European industries, the renovation of Western European economy will do United States' production a great deal of good. As was said above, the important thing is to have a European market. And even more important is not to have the continent fall under the domination of one power, which is not only a political entity of a highly centralized structure, but is in business as a State monopoly.

Regarding the Motives of the Marshall Plan

We have already referred to the Communist charge that the Marshall Plan is a plan for the military and economic domination of Western Europe by the United States. The evident fact is that the United States Government suspects that if West Europe is not helped now,

the United State will be the loser (and it will be a very costly loss) economically and politically. The Marshall Plan will give the United States government a large degree of control over the way European governments spend their own money in their own countries. One half of the item of \$6½ billions to be used during the first 15 months of the Plan will have the status of outright gifts. This will apply to food, fuel, fertilizer, etc. Now the U.S. Government will probably insist that the proceeds of the sales of these commodities to the population of the given countries, be applied only to productive purposes, so as to avoid inflation. Also the proceeds of sales of such goods as farm machinery, cotton and other raw materials, bought through credit arrangements dispensed by the national banks, would be spent only with the permission of the U.S. Government. In a way, the agents of the American government would act as over-all receivers of the economies of the countries taking advantage of the Marshall Plan. A provision for taking advantage of the benefits of the Plan may be participation in a kind of customs union of West European countries. That aids the U.S., which wants freedom in the world market. It hurts the U.S.S.R., which want to deal with individual countries, preferably in barter bargain deals, the technique of which was perfected by Hitler's economic staff.

U.S. Economic Crisis

Is the Marshall Plan an "attempt to stave off the looming economic crisis in the United States"?

The words are those of Eugene Varga, who has been translating Communist wish-thinking into terms of Marxist economics for the last twenty-five years. In 1923, Varga, as an economic expert, collaborated with Leon Trotsky, a political expert, to prove in print that World War II was going to be fought between Great Britain and the United States. The learned Varga also provided material to prove that the depression which broke in 1929 was absolutely the final "general crisis" of capitalist society, and there was no remedy at all. On Varga's horoscope, the Communist International and Stalin built their concept of the "Third Period", which was featured by the smashing of Social Democratic faces in the streets of Berlin and terms of opprobrium like "Social Fascist". It was in that period of the world's history that the Communists in the United States branded F. D. Roosevelt as a Fascist. None of this disproves Varga's contention that an economic crisis is approaching in America. The most correct, "capitalist" economic forecasters in this wild land suggest that a "recession" by 1948 is not out of question. At present, U.S. business is in a boom. The execution, and right now mere promise, of the Marshall Plan makes for more inflation and more of boom. The Plan means the living-up of lagging exports and inventory building by domestic business in response to the fear of shortages caused by the Marshall Plan export programme. The same influence (large exports, financed largely by loans granted by the U.S. Government), plus the famous "pent-up" demand by the domestic manufacturer and consumer, kept effective demand at a high level in the United States from the end of the war until to-day. Varga argues that the additional annual export of American-made goods to the value of five or six billion dollars, as promised by the Marshall Plan, cannot avert a crisis in the U.S. American production fell 40 per cent. in 1929 and 36 per cent. in 1937. Since gross annual production in the United States amount to-day of \$200 billion, the \$6 billion export programme of the Marshall Plan won't help much. Depressions are a "natural" phenomenon in capitalist economy. However, capitalism is a kind of sphinx. It is hard to read it. It has not yet been proved that U.S. prosperity depends on its export trade. It probably works the other way. At any rate, Varga is expressing a wish.

'The State must be abolished! In that revolution I will take part! Undermine the idea of the State, make willingness and spiritual kinship the only essentials in the case of a union—and you have the beginning of a liberty that is of some value. The changing of form of government is mere toying with degrees—a little more or a little less—folly the whole of it.'

HENRIK IBSEN.

Foreign Commentary

An Anarchist International?

THE Spanish Libertarian Movement's Congress at Toulouse, reported in these columns (*Freedom*, 29/11/47) was followed by the 3rd Congress of the French Anarchist Federation at Angers on the 9th, 10th and 11th of November.

In our opinion, this Congress was even more important from the International movement's point of view than that of our Spanish comrades at Toulouse. It is clear that the French comrades have succeeded in the short period of three years in building up a homogeneous movement; they have a weekly newspaper which has steadily improved and is now undoubtedly the best anarchist paper published on the Continent; their public meetings are well attended and the groups are growing in strength both in Paris and in the Provinces. Though one must not exaggerate the strength and significance of the Anarchist movement in France to-day—and the French comrades are the first to advise against over-optimism—we feel that the movement must continue to expand because it is based on solid foundations. And the resolutions which come under the headings of (1) New forms of the Authoritarian Society, (2) Immediate Prospects, (3) Tasks, leave no doubt as to the theoretical soundness of the movement. A similar soundness was noted in the resolutions of the Spanish Libertarians at Toulouse, and this is of especial importance in movements that aim at obtaining mass support in the immediate future. The history of the Communist Party in aiming at mass support has been one of compromise, and the watering down of all revolutionary slogans. The French Anarchists instead "propose as in the past to struggle against the different forms of exploitation which survive or are created: Capitalism, States, Churches, Jurisdictions, Militarisms, Imperialisms, Colonisations, etc. They struggle for the society without castes".

International Relations

One of the important questions discussed on the last day of the Congress was International Relations, a question which is of great importance to all Anarchists in every part of the world. Though no International organization exists at present it does not mean that anarchist movements and groups operate in a vacuum. Since the ending of the war contacts have been made in the case of *Freedom Press* and the *Union of Anarchist Groups* with comrades in all parts of the world. And the same applies, of course, with all the other groups and movements dispersed throughout the world. So, in actual fact, a loose form of organisation already exists, largely

for the exchange of ideas and literature but in some cases it exists in the shape of solidarity (mainly from the American continent to Europe) and actual economic subsidy for the building up of movements shattered by years of suppression (such as in Italy where the movement would not have succeeded in getting onto its feet as quickly as it has without the economic solidarity of Italian comrades resident in U.S.A.).

But the French anarchists propose that an International Anarchist Congress should be held to which should be invited "all organisations (even if many organisations exist in the same country) all movements and groups claiming to be anarchist and rejecting all governmental collaboration". At this Congress the French Anarchist Federation would propose the Constitution of an International Federation: "In the event of this proposal being considered impossible, the F.A.F. would support the founding of a bureau for International Relations. But in this case, the F.A.F. would establish contact with organisations accepting the foundation of a real International Federation to constitute the embryo for such an organisation." Obviously this is a suggestion which must be discussed by the Union of Anarchist Groups and decisions taken.

An Individual View

To the writer—and he is now expressing a personal view which it is hoped will stimulate comrades to send their comments and viewpoints to the Editors—the French comrades are over-stressing the importance of an International Anarchist Federation in its effect both on the Anarchist movement and the world at large. An A.I.F. can never, if it is to really be anarchist, assume the role of a Comintern. The different countries in the Comintern belonged to it in order to receive instructions from Moscow. An A.I.F. can be at the most a Federation of national federations which subscribe to common principles. And, since, unlike the Communists, we are as much concerned with the means as with the ends, our tactics will be strictly limited and will be the concern of each federation and not of an International Federation as a whole. An International Congress of such an A.I.F. at which delegates will be present will be simply a reaffirmation of the principles to which the various national federations subscribe, yet from the movement's point of view it cannot be considered very useful, and certainly an expensive economic proposition. An Anarchist Congress which attempted a

serious discussion of anarchist theory and practice, which attempted a clarification of our ideas would, in the writer's opinion, be of greater value. Obviously, such a Congress should be composed not of delegates but of individuals materially supported by the movements in their respective countries, not for their ability to express faithfully the viewpoint of their sponsors, but for their potential value in contributing to a debate in which the fundamental concepts of anarchism are examined. However much one may feel irritated by those young enthusiasts who dismiss the Kropotkins and Malatestas as being outdated, one can still consider them mistaken, yet consider it necessary to examine Anarchism in the new surroundings of the atomic age. And the International movement has undoubtedly suffered because there has been no "spring clean" of Anarchist theory on an International scale for many years. Indeed, we think it true to say that the last occasion was at the Anarchist Congress of Amsterdam in 1907. The Editors in summing-up the discussion on Herbert Read's lecture "Anarchism—Past and Future", wrote that we must "subject the ideas of our movement to perpetual self-criticism, always in the light of changing conditions and advances in thought. Unless a movement undertakes this stock-taking in the field of theory, its ideas will become stereotyped and hardened."

The proposals of the French anarchists to "establish contact with organisations accepting the formation of a real International Federation in order to constitute the embryo of such an organisation", is obviously a matter for them to decide, but since it would be undertaken with a view to strengthening the international movement, they should first consider whether such action might not in actual fact weaken our movement by splitting it into two bodies: the one inside the International organisation, the other outside; a split which might even take place within a national Federation itself.

The proposal of a Bureau for International Relations is, on the other hand, of vital and immediate importance for the Movement as a whole, and one has only to study the International anarchist Press to fully appreciate this. The suggested composition of this Bureau and its tasks must be the subject of a separate article, since it will be necessary in the first place to make a general survey of the existing international Anarchist Press, and the composition of the movements. Only then can one estimate the economic backing for such a bureau and from that its effectiveness and the diversity of tasks that it can undertake.

LIBERTARIAN.

Religion and Progress

RELIGIOUS sects of all kinds abound in this small island inhabited by one of the most interesting populations in the world—a population consisting mainly of African and African-white mixtures in which English, Scottish and German strains predominate, with a considerable minority of East Indian, Chinese and Assyrian extraction. All these minorities are, of course, found largely in mixtures of the various racial types and seldom in a pure strain.

The number of religious sects found among this strange and fascinating community is astounding, ranging from the all-powerful Roman Catholic church and the Church of England to religious sects often enshrouded in great secrecy and sometimes relating closely to African rituals and remnants of pagan meetings cultures. Often the ritual meetings sponsored by these cults lead up to conditions of mass hysteria and trance, resulting sometimes in a state of frenzy or partial paralysis lasting for several days. Some victims, especially women, do even become mental cases from time to time—usually those who are more intelligent and educated and whose minds cannot stand the strain.

Apart from the violent and particularly dangerous cults, such as Pocomania, with all the obvious physical and mental harm they can cause to their adherents, there is the less openly destructive drug of concentrated belief in the power of the "Almighty" and the great goodness of his plans for mankind, etc., the willingness to accept miserable physical conditions and a degrading social structure through a process of self-conviction that one's "sins" are responsible for one's condition and there is no remedy but prayer. This is a form of illusion we meet elsewhere in the world, but a community like Jamaica shows up this virulent process particularly clearly. Here is an example:

Coming from the Public Hospital in Kingston one day, I saw a woman squatting on the pavement at the street corner, her back against the wall. This is not an unusual sight in Kingston, but this woman's shoulders drooped and her face was hidden in her hands. She looked undernourished, like most poor Jamaicans; her rickety knees stuck out in great knobs above her thin, bony legs.—She might just be starving and weak, or possibly ill. There was an old woman standing by her, shouting: "Get down on your knees and pray, pray for forgiveness from your wicked sins, God won't help you in your wickedness." The young woman (27 or

28 perhaps) wept silently. I spoke to her: "What's the matter, my love?" and she turned a face of dull despair up at me whilst the old woman muttered words about God at my elbow. "Me can't walk, me fall down," she sobbed. "Have you been to the hospital?" I asked, "it's just here, you know; have you seen a doctor?"

Well, it seemed she had a swelling on her leg, she had seen a doctor at the hospital and had had some treatment. I asked her if she had kept it up—I don't think she had really—but before she could answer the old woman broke in angrily: "Doctor him no good for the wicked, you get down on your knees and pray, the Lord will make you well if he choose." I was very angry and told her to go away and leave the poor girl alone; then I said she mustn't listen to the foolish old woman but go back to the hospital right away and get more treatment, do what the doctors told her and not stop or give up. I hope I made a convert and the old woman lost one!

Unfortunately, so many of the cases which come into the hospital and to the country doctors are simply cases of gross malnutrition. But the British administration makes little effort to provide the social and medical services necessary to combat malnutrition. The cost of living is prohibitively high in the towns, and such commodities as butter, milk and bread are luxuries out of reach of a great proportion of the population.

Even so, some advance could be made by the administration in the task of advising the consumption of basic foodstuffs having an adequate nutritional value by the poorest sections of the community. Instead, the collective idiocies of rival religious cults are allowed to thrive and priests are more numerous than teachers, doctors or social workers.

Social conditions in Jamaica are crying out for radical improvement, which in turn depends upon a thorough process of education among the people and the determination to take the solving of their problems into their own hands.

But there is that awful dulling creed which goes on drearily telling the people that their lives are shaped by God's will, they should be content with their lot, and so on *ad nauseam*. There is a feeling of revolt growing, but it has to fight against heavy odds in the people themselves and it may be long before they realize that they must first eliminate this one supremely retarding influence before they can be free to shape their lives anew.

SONIA WATSON TAYLOR.

AMERICAN C.O.'s STILL IMPRISONED

WHILE the American purges against "Communists" and leftists generally are mounting into a large-scale heresy hunt, the victims of the last outburst of minority persecution are still being subjected to governmental oppression.

These are the wartime conscientious objectors, of whom some seven hundred are still held in prison. These men have been the subject of a vast nation-wide campaign for an amnesty; the appeals have been supported by hundreds of important writers, scientists, churchmen and politicians, both the large trade union organisations, C.I.O. and A.F. of L., as well as almost every Christian organisation. Still the Government chooses to bow to the reactionaries of the American Legion and the political groups, and, although a "President's amnesty board" has been studying the question for many months now, no real decision has been reached.

A report has, however, been circulated in one group of newspapers that the "amnesty board" is likely to recommend that C.O.'s and draft dodgers who have been in prison shall not only serve any sentences remaining to them, but shall also be deprived of civil rights on their release.

If civil rights consist of such things as the ability to vote, it may be said,

that no-one is any worse off for the lack of them. But this is not the question; every man who wants to vote should have the right to do it, and to take it away from him is a monstrous infringement of liberty of action in a society which pretends to be based on democratic institutions but which denies participation in those institutions to people who happen to hold an unpopular attitude on a particular subject.

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Controversy

We have received the following letter criticising the articles which appeared in *Freedom* on the 15th November, 1947.

A Reader Accuses

"I am surprised and disgusted at the blatant and virulent anti-Russian war propaganda, published in your articles on 'Repression in Eastern Europe'.

"Such propaganda makes it very difficult for those of us who are trying to save civilization from atomic destruction. One of your articles says that Russian domination in any country will bring poverty and famine and preparation for a new war. This is very unfair since the acute famine in some countries of Eastern Europe is due to the fact that a major world war has been fought over their territory, also due to the fact that their 'national independence' of pre-war years consisted of very reactionary governments, who kept these countries in a backward state.

"Elsewhere you say: 'Russia does not care about the millions of dead in the war. It has enabled her to become the greatest power in the world, second to the U.S.A.' Have you forgotten that many of the dead were Russians and that the Russian people suffered quite as much and more in the world war, as the countries of Eastern Europe? The fact is, of course, that Russian Imperialism treats the countries of Eastern Europe as colonial subjects, in exactly the same fashion that Great Britain treats her overseas territories. What about the colour bar in South Africa? The pestilential conditions in the West Indies? What about the brutal capitalism and the terrible racial discrimination that poisons American life and also the threatened enslavement of America to militarist and nationalist principles? There are very few articles in your paper, I notice, about those things, especially about conditions in the British Empire.

"Capitalist principles are doing enough to drag America, ourselves and the whole world towards war, without your paper printing capitalist propaganda and making it easy for the war-mongers of the world.

"Imperialists there are indeed in Russia, but we also have plenty nearer home. We can do nothing about Eastern Europe's trials, only the people of Eastern Europe and Russia can do that, but we can do something about the tension between the nations and about conditions in the British Empire and in the U.S.A.

"I do not agree with any Imperialism whatever and I certainly don't think that Russia is any better than any other country, in fact, her foreign policy gets nearer to that of the Romanoffs every day. I, however, have no wish to see San Francisco, Sydney, Moscow, Edinburgh or any other great city of the world go the same way as Hiroshima did, and so will not make any effort to take sides in a conflict which is the direct result of the Vansittart—Ehrenburg policy which led to Potsdam.

"Nationalist wars never produce any good thing. The next one may produce a crop of dictators if it does not destroy us all first."

Bath.

M.V.G.

Our Reply

OUR correspondent would be absolutely right in denouncing us for war-mongering, if we attacked Russian imperialism while at the same time defending Britain and America. By taking a quotation out of its context she misrepresents our intention. The article from which she quotes, after stating that: "Russian domination is the end of every freedom; it brings poverty and famine, it is the prelude to another war", immediately goes on to say: "This conviction does not lead us to seek refuge in the arms of British or American Imperialism. We realize, on the contrary, that Russia's strength lies in the fact that her only opponents are as corrupted and ruthless as she is herself. As long as Socialist and other parties will fight Communism hiding behind America's skirts, they are bound to be defeated."

In other words, we denounce the very attitude which our correspondent accuses us of taking.

She further misquotes us when she makes us say: "Russia does not care about the millions of dead in the war"; we said, in fact: "Zhdanov may have reasons to be satisfied by the results of the war..." By Zhdanov we meant the rulers of Russia whom he represents on the Cominform. We are the last to forget the sufferings of the Russian people and that is why we charge the Russian Government with having sacrificed millions of Russian lives to their imperialist aspirations.

We would not waste space to point out to a reader that she has misread our

articles if the misunderstanding did not arise from an attitude which is fairly widespread in Left-wing circles and which makes many people, who have no sympathy for Stalin's regime, extremely sensitive to any attack on that regime.

Their attitude is very similar to that of many socialists and pacifists who, in pre-war years, looked with disapproval upon violent denunciations of Hitler's regime because they saw in it a furthering of war. This fear of war led them to support non-intervention in Spain and the Munich pact.

We now have the appeasers of Russia. They are so hypnotised by the vision of atomic war that they are prepared to turn a blind eye on crimes committed under their very noses.

We wholly disagree with this attitude. We do not think that war can be avoided by a policy which entails the suppression of facts. We hold this view for ethical reasons, but also for practical ones. Ethical: because we do not believe in suppressing truth to suit a certain policy. This would be propaganda in the pejorative sense which our correspondent gives to that word. We are not interested in "propaganda". We denounced the Russian regime during the war at a time when everybody was praising Stalin, from Mr. Churchill downwards. If we were concerned in furthering "capitalist propaganda" we would not have chosen to say unpopular truths for years.

We cannot alter our views about Russia because, for imperialist reasons, American and British spokesmen now denounce Russian totalitarianism. We know that their indignation is hypocritical and that they may become friendly to Russia again if it suits their interests. But for all that, are we to stifle our own indignation?

The practical reasons are equally important. We do not believe that a policy of appeasement towards Stalin will prevent war any more than the policy of appeasement towards Hitler stopped the

ARE WE WAR MONGERS?

last war. The only way to prevent wars is to abolish the causes of war. Wars are inherent in totalitarian regimes, and therefore we denounce totalitarianism wherever we find it. We have denounced it in America, in India, in Greece and Palestine. We have always advocated complete independence for British colonies, we have demanded the abolition of the armed forces; we have fought for the defence of civil liberties with all the strength in our power.

Our correspondent challenges our statement that Russian domination will bring poverty and famine to Eastern Europe. We based our statement on two main observations: (a) that Russia has, before the war, experienced several famines due to forced collectivisations and bureaucratic blunders, and (b) that, though war is partly responsible for the critical situation in Eastern Europe, Russia's policy of appropriating to herself industrial equipment and raw materials from the countries under her domination prevents economic recovery. By isolating the Eastern countries from the rise of Europe she is further preventing the normal exchange of goods between East and West.

We also refuse to accept the statement that the trials which are now taking place in Europe should not concern us. It may be true that our protests will not change the course of events, but we must voice them nevertheless. Workers all over the world who rallied to the defence of Sacco and Vanzetti were not able to save them from the electric chair, yet who can say that their protests were useless?

We shall denounce political trials, whether they are held in Washington or in Warsaw. When a government puts a man in jail for his political opinions, we do not ask the nationality of that government, we are on the side of the victim of State tyranny.

We hate war and have consistently fought against it and that is why we fight State oppression wherever it takes place.

Eds.

The Communist Adventure

(Continued from page 1)

The rise to power of Schumann, the bankers' man, provoked a stiffening of the whole of the working-class movement.

Syndicalist Movements

Nearer to working-class realities, more closely linked to the daily struggles and maintaining its influence in numerous trades and factories, are the "Circles of Syndicalist Studies", whose federation has gradually established contact between all the minorities who support the class struggle and all the free unions which have left the C.G.T. in order to resist both the Stalinist plague and the reformist inaction.

They have solid positions among the Paris metal-workers, they influence the Syndicalist Federation of Postal Workers, advise the free unions of Parisian transport workers and the Committees of Syndicalist Action among the railway workers, etc.

Decided to struggle on two fronts and to reconstruct a really working-class force, without interference in political, governmental or imperialist fights, they reject the myth of "working-class unity" and work for independence.

There is, lastly, the C.N.T. which continues to develop and which, in the course of this strike, has been able, in spite of the lively opposition of the Communist trade union machines, to take its place on numerous strike committees selected by the personnel of factories and services.

Between these last two movements certain contacts are possible, and a committee of alliance has been constituted, notably between the C.N.T. Federation of Railway Workers and the railwaymen's Committee of Syndicalist Action of the C.G.T.

Comparison with 1936

No comparison is possible between the spontaneous and popular movement of 1936, and that of November, 1947. In the first case it was a general explosion, in the second a scanty volley which partly misfired.

In 1936 the proletariat gained a complete victory, not only because they won important advantages, but also because they rallied in their enthusiasm all the "petty bourgeois" section of the proletariat, namely the foremen, the technicians and the clerks.

In 1947, on the contrary, the white-collar workers are hostile to the movement, not because they do not wish to

make demands or even to struggle for them, but because they realise that there is an exploitation of these claims by a political clique. Thus, there has been an extremely serious split right from the beginning.

In addition, important groups of genuine trade unionists declared themselves against the present strike, because they did not wish to play the Stalinist game. For example, the syndicalist postmen, who in 1946 carried on a difficult strike against the government (which included Communist ministers), against the Postal Workers' Federation of the C.G.T. itself, also directed by the Communists, and which after the Stalinist sabotage constituted the Syndicalist Federation of Postal Workers, openly rejected participation in the strike and caused it to miscarry. Their slogan was "Against the political strike, for the defence of our demands."

Thus we find among the adversaries of this general strike (i.e., the general strike as it is meant to-day by the Communists) not only the reactionary section, timorous and undecided on the working-class struggle, but also the sections who have always defended the "class struggle" tradition.

The work of "unity" of the Communists has resulted in this feat!

Balance Sheet

There is no real enthusiasm, and it is certain that the present conflict will result, except for a few scanty working-class successes in the sphere of wages, in a probable disintegration of the C.G.T.

The French middle-class is frightened, and this bourgeois fear can easily turn into a repressive frenzy, as soon as the means are at hand.

If the Gaullists, whose electoral success has not, however, prevented them from practically disappearing from the social scene since the combat has been placed on the level of class struggle, come to power they will have behind them all the cowards of to-day, and, a more serious thing, the support or complicity of an important faction of the working-class, disappointed by the weakness of the organised working-class movement, tired with the struggle of parties.

Thus, the way to Fascism is open. Once again, the Communist party will have cleared the road for it, justifying its name of organiser of defeats, as in Germany, in China, and in Spain.

S. PARANE.

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Literary Notes

FICTION & PROPAGANDA

VERY little fiction in which the propaganda element preponderates seems to have much value or even general interest after the limited period with which it is concerned. This is partly because the propagandist is usually driven by the demands of his creed into some form of naturalism in writing—"realism" as it has somewhat inaccurately been termed by its advocates—while the development of a social argument demands simplifications and generalisations that interfere with the so-called realism and make the story sound too stiff and unnatural to belong to the real life of ordinary people. So he falls between two stools, and usually fails to produce anything of artistic, or, for that matter, even propagandist value. Who was ever converted to Communism by the dreary novels about the Five-Year Plan which came tumbling out of Russia in the 'thirties? Of course, there have been exceptions. One propaganda novel of the realist school that still makes a powerful appeal is Zola's *Germinal*; another, on a different level, is *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*.

But these represent a minority, and the most successful propaganda fiction has usually been on the plane of allegory and fantasy. *Gulliver's Travels*, *Candide*, *Erewhon*—these have a permanent value because they rise above immediate objectives and state their social arguments in an idiom that is as near timeless as one can expect in a temporal world.

A FEW issues back I reviewed Maurice Pearlman's important book on the Palestine collectives, *Adventure in the Sun*. Now there has appeared a new addition to the scanty record of community experiments, in the shape of Henrik F. Infield's *Co-operative Communities at Work* (Kegan Paul, 15/-). Infield's book is by no means the comprehensive record of community experiments which would be of such value as a hand-book of an important aspect of social experiment. He restricts his studies to the consideration of a number of types of community, including those based on religious beliefs, on political dogmas, on governmental decrees, and those, like the Palestine collectives, which set out to achieve an immediate practical aim allied to an ultimate social ideal. His method of approach is somewhat academic, and is perhaps concerned too much with cost-accounting and economic matters generally, but his conclusions are interesting since he comes to the final decision that both the old-fashioned Utopian communities and the "co-operative" ventures initiated and sponsored by governmental agencies have great disadvantages in comparison with the wholly autonomous and co-operative commune, of which the Palestine collectives provide the outstanding examples in the contemporary world. His studies lead him to the conclusion that a system of co-operation on all levels is much superior to one that combines

co-operation with remnants of individual enterprise and property rights. Here again he indicates the advantage of the Palestine collectives, and, in discussing the possibility of founding communities for the resettlement of the homeless refugees of Europe, he remarks:

"In view of all the evidence, therefore, it looks as if the resettlement co-operative would fare best by emulating the extreme degree of comprehensive co-operation practiced in the Kvutza (Palestine collective). Yet it would be well to remember that the Kvutza did not spring into being from a blueprint; it is rather the result of organic growth. It started, as we have noted, like other modern co-operatives, with profit-sharing and wage advances. These features were abandoned only because they were found to create more conflict than satisfaction. Similarly, every other individualistic practice was step by step eliminated, in the interest of simplification and of economic advantages. The Kvutza of to-day is the result of a long and steady revolution—the outcome of decisions made in the face of daily problems by minds not above the average, but who, working together, have reached solutions which no planning genius could improve upon."

In this conclusion, as in many other parts of his book, Infield says much that the anarchist will find interesting as a practical vindication of libertarian theories of organisation.

Among those rare writers in our own day, who have managed to find a satisfactory realist idiom to express social rebellion, is Alex Comfort. Significantly, Comfort is very much in the Zola tradition. His most considerable novel, *The Power House*, is the direct literary descendent of *Germinal*, and at least one story in his new collection, *Letters from an Outpost* (Routledge, 7/6), strikes one as being very much the kind of thing the Zola of *La Débâcle* would have written had he been dealing with the French rout of 1941.

I must confess that I was a little overpowered by the massed detail of *The Power House*, much as I appreciated the remorseless consistency with which Comfort unfolded his basic theme of the continual war of the individual against the State. In *Letters from an Outpost* the same theme is elaborated in a number of vivid stories, some grim and others satirical. To my mind, these are the best things Comfort has done in prose; their effect is much more direct than that of *The Power House*, and stories like *The Martyrdom of the House* and *Two Enemies of Society* are little masterpieces of realistic fiction which really succeed in transmitting a social meaning, while *A Citizen with Thirty-Nine Vertebrae* and *The Lemmings* are feats of satirical virtuosity, the one hilarious, the other sardonic, which are among the best jests at collective stupidity that I have yet read.

THE "American Way of Life" is something we are likely to be asked to die for one of these days. What it looks like in the raw is the main subject of the latest of Henry Miller's books to be published in England, *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* (Secker and Warburg, 15/-). Henry Miller is one of the most outspoken American rebels, and he makes no bones about his dislike for American civilisation and what it has made of human life within its ambit of influence. Miller went on a tour of America, and *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* is a series of essays on incidents during that trip. It is a mixed bag, and by no means as good as some of his other books, such as *The Colossus of Maroussi*, or that virtually unobtainable masterpiece in shocking, *The Tropic of Capricorn*. Too many of the essays in the present volume are supremely un-critical blurbs on ephemeral artists or writers, and there is a good deal of badly digested theosophy. But where Miller starts out on his really torrential invective against American capitalist civilisation, as in the essay, "Good News, God is Love", it really exhilarates to read him.

Palestine, and in one of the concentration camps on Cyprus (*Our Goal was Palestine* by Claire Niekind—Gollancz, 6d.). This brief report takes the lid right off the Nazi way in which the British authorities have treated Jews who tried to get to Palestine failed. It is worth sixpence of anybody's money who wants to get a first-hand view of this particularly sordid aspect of the Palestine quarrel.

A NEW issue of the American anarchist magazine, *Retort*, has just arrived. To me it seems about the best issue so far of this review. There is a sound article on Bakunin by Michael Grieg, a study of the function of art by Holley Cantine, and some further notes on resistance in Russia. *Retort* seems on the whole to become more lively, with the introduction of a number of new anarchist writers who have something to say.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

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Edwards writes: "... no one will ever see his like with a shovel again. He was its master: it was part of him. He could use it with equal and tireless facility on either 'hand', an accomplishment seldom met within the ranks of the manual labourers... he slung the blade of the shovel towards the heap until it touched the edge, then followed up with both knees driving hard against the back of his hands to supply the power. A quick downward jerk of the wrist loaded the shovel, it was withdrawn slightly, swung backwards as the body straightened, then delivered over the shoulder into the skip with a graceful sway and twist of the trunk, so that the whole body handled the weight with the utmost economy of effort..."

No Gold on my Shovel is worth reading both for its own merits as a book as well as for the fact that it deals with a branch of industry which has hitherto been ignored. But I doubt whether it will succeed in joining *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* as a classic in "proletarian" writing, because it is in the main the account of a man's struggle to master the different jobs he undertakes, whereas *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* is mainly the account of a man's struggle for the social emancipation both of himself and his comrades "on the job".

THE BLEAK AGE by J. L. & Barbara Hammond. (Pelican, 1/-)

THIS is a revised and shortened version of a previous book of the Hammonds, *The Age of Chartism*. The authors, who are among the really indispensable social historians of England and whose classic books on the Town Labourer and the Village Labourer are among the best records of the life of the poor during the industrial revolution, have drawn a gloomy but extremely interesting picture of the Hungry Forties of last century—there seem to be Hungry Forties in every century! Besides being a well-constructed and pleasantly written book, this is a source work which those who are interested in the early days of the labour movement should certainly include among their main reference books.

THE THIRD WAY by Wilfred Wellock. (1/-)

WILFRED WELLOCK'S latest pamphlet is an examination of the world political situation, and a plea for a number of very sound things, such as a renunciation of British pretensions to being a great power, the initiation of a programme of industrial and agricultural decentralisation, and, connected with this,

a new attitude towards work and material comforts which will enable men to find real satisfaction in their work and so have no need for the opiate of betting and other pointless pleasures. So far so good; all these things would be excellent, but Mr. Wellock does not tell us how we can attain them. He still has some faith that the right government might calmly take charge in this solemn breaking-up of the empire into tiny subsistence communities. We are more than sceptical, and consider that, while the things Mr. Wellock wants to see are worth while, they can only be attained by the struggle of the people themselves.

CANDIDE by Voltaire, translated by John Butt. (Penguin, 1/-)

CANDIDE is the work of savage yet extremely amusing social satire which served the same purpose for pre-revolutionary France as *Gulliver's Travels* for England. Voltaire was not so thorough in his satirical malice as Swift, but a good deal more light-hearted, and such delightful tales as that of the waiting-woman with only one buttock, are drawn from a really Rabelaisian sense of humour. The new translation is in tune with the humour of the original, and is in general very successful.

F. H. C. REVIEW

FROM Coventry comes the first issue of the review of the Family Health Club, whose members plan to continue and extend the work of the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham. [See: *Peckham's Health Experiment* (Freedom, 4/1/47) and Kenneth Barlow: *The Coventry Experiment* (Freedom, 28/6/47).]

The review contains a note on the aims and present activities of the Club by Dr. Barlow, a letter and news from Peckham, and a report on the Brandon Woods Farms whose 330 acres have been acquired "to supply to members of the Society first-quality general farm produce, in particular T.T. milk and other protective foods for pregnant mothers and young children."

The F.H.C. Review is obtainable from The Editor, at 16, Regent Street, Coventry, at 3/6 for 6 issues (twelve months).

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HERBERT READ:

"It is impossible to give an adequate review of a book so dense with facts. I can only state that where I have special knowledge as in the history of art, I have invariably found these facts correct. Their interpretation is another matter. I do not say that this 'Weltanschauung' is destined to supersede all others. There is a grain of truth—even a vein of truth—in Spengler, in Pareto and in Marx. It is the obsession with this one aspect of truth that vitiates their systems. I find Rocker more tolerant, more modest, more aware of the essential values in culture. In one word I find him infinitely more sympathetic."

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Book Reviews

NO GOLD ON MY SHOVEL—
An Autobiography, by Ifan Edwards. (Porcupine Press, 224 pp., 7/6)

THIS book covers a short period (seven years) in the life of the author when he earned his living as a labourer. They were difficult years and have obviously remained vividly impressed on his mind. When in 1926 he abandoned the shovel to take up the pen as a clerk in the Ministry of Health, these were the thoughts that flashed through his mind: "No more dole; no more queues and hunger and short-time; this surely marked the end of the long catalogue of troubles which had been my lot for the past seven years. A regular job, a regular wage and a prospect of promotion. What more could I want?" Yet, from the the detailed descriptions of the jobs he did during those seven years—working in a concrete mixing gang, a brickyard, a dry dock, a fertiliser factory and finally, in a steel works which turned out steel rails for railways—one cannot but feel that he derived much satisfaction at mastering the jobs he undertook, for it is not sufficiently appreciated that wielding a shovel is a skilled job when done properly. To-day, with the growing use of mechanical excavators of all descriptions, small mobile cranes, etc., much of the skilled work formerly done by labourers is a thing of the past. Indeed, most of the operations carried out by the author over 20 years ago are to-day being done by machines. It is not surprising therefore that "skilled" labourers are to be found mostly among the older generation. And I agree with the author that it gives one a thrill to watch these men using a shovel. Of one of his workmates, Mr.

Letters to the Editors

VEGETARIANISM DEFENDED

DEAR COMRADES,

While finding myself to a large degree in agreement with the notes on the land by your contributor G.V., I would like to make a few remarks. I agree with him on the inconsistencies of vegetarians: many have supported the inhuman slaughter that has just ended. But the inconsistencies of vegetarians are no refutation of the validity of vegetarianism. To me, and I believe to most sensitive human beings unless conditioned, the slaughter of animals and human beings is an abhorrent feature of our present existence, tolerated because most people rely on others to do the dirty work. Dietetically flesh from animals bred for slaughter is a very inferior food. Any animal that has been fattened and whose tissues are clogged with the results of overfeeding and little exercise is diseased to some degree. Indeed most of the ills of man to-day medically are largely due to emphasis on quantity and not on quality and balance.

Colchester.

★

I have just read your "Land Notes" in the current issue of *Freedom*. In the article you declare that it is illogical for vegetarians to consume milk, butter and cheese and to wear leather shoes. I suggest that our partial vegetarianism is not illogical but a step in the right direction.

Being born into a world of nature we cannot help being dependent to a large extent on Nature's "set-up". But I contend that the speed of Man's emergence into Ethical Man is in direct proportion to the speed with which he conquers and acquires independence of Nature. I have no doubt that satisfactory vegetarian substitutes will eventually be found for

leather, milk, butter and cheese. So even if partial vegetarianism is only a ritual it is valuable in creating a social pressure and hastens the day when genuine vegetarianism becomes possible. . . . I confidently predict that if Britain does not adopt partial vegetarianism within the next ten years, she will adopt full-blooded Fascism, because Fascism is the true philosophy of the carnivore, the philosophy of Nature.

Byfield, Rugby.

T.A.Y.

DEAR SIR,

My approach to vegetarianism is humanitarian primarily, but it has common sense as a basis as well.

Not all humanitarian vegetarians are as inconsistent and illogical as G.V. would have us believe. My wife and I and our three children avoid in our diet not only meat, fish and poultry, but milk, butter, cheese, eggs and honey as well and find our diet ample to enable us to fulfil our arduous round of activities even these days. . . .

The argument that the farm animal, given tolerable freedom, leads a happier existence than its untamed counterpart, is identical with the argument used by the Negro slave owner in the U.S. for justifying slavery before the Civil War, an untrue and immoral argument. . . .

The "sentimental vegetarians" who still use dairy products and have not yet taken the next step towards humanising their diet should be encouraged and not censured or ridiculed.

Cheam, Surrey.

Dr. G.E.K.

[For space reasons the above letters have been edited without, we hope, destroying the arguments advanced.—Eds.]

"G.V." writes:—

"It is difficult to reply to three letters at once but to deal with each letter in its turn would take too long."

"The first point that arises in my mind is that Vegetarianism is advocated for reasons of health as well as on humanitarian grounds. I mentioned in the article that I was not referring to vegetarianism based on dietetical grounds. Indeed, I think a strong case can be made for the contention that the consumption of flesh is harmful to the body, especially to those people who do not live a physically active life.

"But I am not concerned with that, and in any case lack the necessary specialist knowledge to express a worthwhile opinion on the subject. My remarks would not apply to Dr. G.E.K. who, unlike the majority, follows his beliefs to their logical conclusion, an action for which I have every respect. However, fond as I have always been of animals from childhood, I cannot accept the argument that places animals on the same level as human beings. To compare the keeping of domestic animals with the keeping of Negroes as slaves is absurd and an example of that lack of a sense of proportion to which I originally referred. As to making Fascism a necessary corollary of having bacon for breakfast (if only once a fortnight), well, that seems to be going a bit haywire to me!

"Finally, I just don't agree that 'the speed of Man's emergence into Ethical Man (whoever he may be) is in direct proportion to the speed with which he conquers and acquires independence of Nature.' On the contrary, the progress of man, in health, in ethics and in most else, is in direct proportion to the speed with which he learns to live in harmony with Nature, and her fundamental biological laws, to integrate his life on the same base but on a higher cycle, or spiral, of development, and not to the extent that he tries to 'conquer Nature'. This hangover from 19th century capitalist ideology, for that is what it is, is one of the dangerous illusions on which our present civilisation is foundering.

"As to whether it is right or wrong, justifiable or not, to rear animals for slaughter, that must, I suppose, in the last resort remain a matter of opinion and I have already expressed mine."

Readers on FREEDOM

[The letters printed below are a representative selection of the many we have received, and are still receiving from our readers. In many cases we have only been able to acknowledge these letters with a printed card, but we are sure that our comrades and friends who have sent us their practical expressions of support and encouragement, realise that the Editors and members of the Freedom Press Group deeply appreciate this general approval of their small contribution to the building up of a better world.—Eds.]

● The New Price

The new price for the paper is fair enough. In fact, when one looks at the rubbish which crowds the bookstalls and sells at all sorts of prices, it is amazing. In any case we cannot measure *Freedom* in terms of money. Even if we did, it remains good value.

Glasgow, S.I.

A.McD.

I am one of those who read your paper but do not fully accept your views. Nevertheless, I think that it is important, indeed vital, that your paper should be kept going. As regards the price I think you should double it.

Llanelly.

E.G.R.

Reading the current issue of *Freedom*, I notice that the yearly subscription rate has now been increased to 8/6. Having recently sent you a yearly subscription at the old rate, enclosed please find 2/6 for the difference between the old rate and the new.

Kidderminster.

J.W.H.

● The Press Fund

I can send only a trifle, mere token of what I would wish to do, for I believe in the Cause.

Headley Down.

E.W.

I enclose a P.O. for 2/6 as my first contribution to the Press Fund. I will do my best to send a similar contribution each week.

Stockport.

R.F.

● The Circular Letter to Subscribers

Thanks for what you called a circular letter. To me it was as it should be—personal. I am sure most recipients will think the same. I enclose a P.O. for 8/6 even though I paid my sub. a few weeks ago. Will you please date this as from January, 1948, which will help a little to keep our *Freedom*.

Crewe.

F.O.

I should like to express my appreciation of the circular letter received. I will certainly make a point in future of ordering all books from you, and will approach the local public libraries about getting a copy of *Nationalism & Culture*.

Stirling.

R.A.B.

I have received your circular letter and publications list. May I say what a valuable contact a letter like this is. I realize the limits but echo your feelings that they may be more frequent in the future.

London, S.W.15.

D.S.B.

● The Paper

I don't agree with everything in *Freedom*, nevertheless it is worthy of my support so long as you print the truth and give us facts that the daily press does not give us, and are against war-mongering. As I have learned a lot in reading your paper I shall do all I can to help. One pound subscription to the Press Fund is enclosed.

Colwyn Bay.

W.D.R.

Cheque for a guinea herewith—every little helps as the old lady said. And you folks do deserve help in the fine fight you're putting up for sanity as a guiding principle to public opinion. Maybe some day you'll be understood as the only folks with sound ideas for the better outlook and conduct of society in general. In the meantime, carry on with the good work!

Liverpool, 4.

H.H.J.

● From an old Comrade

Our *Freedom* is splendid to-day; better than it has been for some years and certainly deserves a much bigger circulation which I hope and sincerely wish will come in time. Surely present-day conditions ought to awake people and convince them that Ballot Box socialism is only a dope and not a cure, and if they wish an ideal life to the coming generations and themselves, it is in their hands to do so by boycotting the above and joining those who are working for and advocating a real individual *Freedom* without political bosses.

Bristol, 8.

J.S.R.

● From an American Student

As a student of sociology in a California college I have found *Freedom* invaluable. Too many of our vicious social and economic practices are glossed over and made to appear innocuous by American educators. *Freedom Press* gives me assurance that my reason will not slide into a similar degenerative rut.

Waterman, Calif.

G.W.K.

● From American Workers

We have been receiving your paper for quite some time and enjoy it very much. Please excuse us for not having made a small donation sooner. Hoping that this little bit will help you to carry on the good work you have been doing, we remain yours for a World of Workers really free.

Spokane.

CARL MADSEN,
for Joint Branch, I.W.W.

Through the Press

OUR JUSTICE

A 60-year-old woman was sent to gaol for two months by Bath magistrates to-day for stealing an apple valued at 4d. She is Mrs. Fanny Amelia Smith, of Barton Street, Bath, and had been remanded in custody for a week to decide whether she wished to be tried by the magistrates or at Quarter Sessions.

News Chronicle, 27/11/47.

WHEN RESPECT IS DUE

The Russian authorities have fined the editor of the Soviet-licensed German women's weekly, *Fuer Dich*, for printing offensively sarcastic articles about Princess Elizabeth's wedding.

A month ago the Russian-controlled daily newspaper, *Berlin am Mittag*, was punished for a similar offence.

Evening Standard, 29/11/47.

LOGIC

The Government has announced in the House of Commons that it is not in favour of pardoning deserters, because it would not be fair to those who have been punished already.

Does this mean that when the abolition of the death penalty is proposed the Government will vote against it because it would not be fair to those who have been hanged already?

Letter in the Daily Worker, 15/11/47.

EXECUTIONERS MUST LIVE

M. Desfourneaux, France's executioner, went on strike to-day and refused to guillotine eight men.

He demanded a salary increase and a bonus for every execution.

Daily Express, 28/11/47.

INITIATIVE

Before being sentenced at Birmingham to three years' penal servitude for burglary, 20-year-old Roy Christopher Hunt heard a police officer say he had "initiative".

An hour later Hunt, a London soldier, formerly stationed at Warwick, burst open the back door of a Black Maria as it drew up outside the prison gates and slipped away in the dark; police were still searching late last night.

Daily Herald, 29/11/47.

COSTLY JUSTICE

The whole Tarran case has been extraordinary in several respects. The case has been in the courts 78 days, which is getting on for a record. Tarran's own defence cost him well over £10,000, and Hull Corporation will have to foot a bill estimated to equal a 4d. rate to meet the cost of the Special Assize.

News Chronicle, 4/12/47.

KING STREET AND KINGS

Walter Holmes, feature columnist of the *Daily Worker*, is one of the leaders of the Communists in this country, and he is, therefore, most careful to keep strictly to the party line.

On Wednesday, 19th November, he devoted most of his column to an outburst against the assemblage of royal personages in London. Listing them, he concluded his screed with the words "these parasites still enjoy such wealth as to come here and sojourn in luxury. . . ."

So far, so good! But Walter Holmes made one interesting, though not unexpected, omission. He failed to mention King Michael of Rumania! This efficiency on the part of Walter Holmes may, of course, prove to be intensely embarrassing. Some readers of the *Daily Worker* might want to know just how far the Communist-controlled Government of Rumania are using King Michael in enlisting support for Russian foreign policy.

We have not forgotten that on July 19th, 1945, Marshal Tolbukhin personally invested King Michael with the Order of Victory, the highest Soviet decoration, at a ceremony in Bucharest.

Socialist Leader, 29/11/47.

WASTE

Seven Shropshire farmers whose land has become a "graveyard" for 2,000 redundant aircraft have offered to grow crops between runways and Spitfires to help fight the battle for food.

Six years ago these farmers sacrificed more than a square mile of some of Britain's best arable land to make room for High Erroll aerodrome—important war-time night-fighter base.

But now, led by Farmer Bradley Stevens, of Wellington, they are protesting because they have been told that the Ministry of Supply is taking over the area next January.

Some of them have asked the Air Ministry for permission to farm sections of the land which appear to be unused.

Sunday Dispatch, 23/11/47.

SEEING RED

Have you heard this one, my latest from New York?

In Central Park, a keen-eyed policeman saw a shabby, seedy-looking individual shuffling across the path.

"Get out," he said gruffly, swinging his baton; "we want no Communists here."

Seedy one timidly: "But I'm an anti-Communist."

Policeman: "I don't care what kind of a Communist you are: get the hell out of this."

News Chronicle, 25/11/47.

GALLANTRY

The first awards to officers and ratings who took part in boarding illegal Jewish immigrant ships were announced in the London Gazette last night. They include a bar to the D.S.C., two D.S.C.'s six D.S.M.'s and 22 mentions in despatches.

Daily Telegraph, 26/11/47.

PSYCHOLOGY OF POLITICS

When Hoare (now Lord Templewood) was Home Secretary, he said, he had felt unable to take the risk of abolishing hanging. Then it was Chuter Ede who advocated abolition.

Now their positions are reversed. Ede has the responsibility, Templewood the freedom. Ede it is who finds the risk too great—while Templewood has changed his mind, and now urges the course that he resisted when Ede urged it.

A psychologist might find a moral in this.

Reynold's News, 30/11/47.

WHOSE CHOICE?

We've chosen to entrust our economic welfare to a system of mechanised factories and big centralised organisations controlled by syndicates, boards, committees and other remote huddles you can't reach with a brick.

So it's going to be a long time before we cease to be pushed around by somebody. But while we've got votes we can still exercise some choice of pusher.

"Yaffle" in Reynold's News, 30/11/47.

PORTRAIT OF A MANAGER

Lewis Douglas (U.S. Ambassador to Britain) is one of the most typical products of the managerial revolution. In his adult life he has managed: (1) the U.S. budget, (2) a large industrial concern (American Cynamid), (3) a university (Montreal's McGill University), (4) a huge insurance company (Mutual Life of New York), and (5) an important arm of a wartime government (Deputy War Shipping Administrator). He is a practical economist rather than a theoretician; he has more than an amateur's interest in history, but is no intellectual. He likes to keep things moving, his desk clean, his thoughts clear. He is not afraid to make a decision, or to state his convictions. He can delegate power. He is no real expert on any one thing, but he knows something about a lot of things, especially what makes capitalism work.

Time (U.S.A.), 1/12/47.

THEIR PROBLEMS

Lord Mountbatten has lost the tenant of his 22-room house in Chester Street. Mr. Lewis Clarke, of the U.S. Embassy, who had taken it furnished, has been transferred to China.

Letting such a large house is not easy. Rent is more than £100 a month. And tenants must give an assurance that the pictures, carpets and costly furniture will be cared for.

Evening Standard, 4/12/47.

THE NEW MAQUIS

Concentration camps in Holland from which Nazis have been repatriated now hold Dutch conscientious objectors to the war in Indonesia. Many of the objectors have been termed "deserters", and have been court-martialed and sentenced to two or three years. But it is estimated that 2,250 "deserters" are still in hiding and the military police are unable to find them. Some have crossed the border into Belgium.

Resistance (U.S.A.), Oct.-Nov., 1947.

COAL TO NEWCASTLE

"Householders in Glamorgan welcome the news that 500 tons of house-slates from Italy are to arrive within the next few days," reports *Reynold's News* (2/11/47).

What a triumph for internationalism! Wales, producer of the finest roofing slates in the world, roofs her houses with Italian imports while her quarries stagnate and her quarrymen emigrate to England. Surely an economic achievement which our socialists may be proud of—almost as notable as the import of American coal in Glamorgan.

After all, why produce anything at home when you can import it and export your own population?

The Welsh Nationalist, Nov. 1947.

WHAT ONE MINER THINKS

A coal miner got more terrifyingly close to the heart of Britain's problem, which is that her people won't get more of the things they want until they produce more, and won't produce more until they get more of the things they want. He was one of the absentees whom the Government eloquently exhorts to stay on the job. Asked why Britain's pre-war coal production of 230 million tons had fallen below 200 million, the miner said:

"It's absenteeism. This warm weather decided me to take another holiday and get a bit of sun while I can."

"What about the coal you could be digging?"

"Any bloke who complains can dig it himself," he answered. "Those Government bastards talk a lot—but I notice they don't come near the bloody pit face. Scared maybe."

"We need more food and more pay—and more to buy with the pay—before we'll dig more coal. Even with what you can earn, there's little to buy in the shops, that's worth buying, that is. Everything good goes for export. Well, they'd better send some of it to mine towns, if they want us to send coal to them. That's the export drive I want to see."

"Time", 10/11/47.

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Are you helping to introduce new readers to *FREEDOM*? Have you asked your newsagent to stock the paper?

Can you sell a few copies among your friends? We can supply you with copies of the current issue (6 copies 1/-, 12 copies 2/- post free).

Anarchist Commentary

The Partition of Palestine

THE clashing of Jewish and Arab Nationalisms, fanned and provoked by the intervention of English and American interests, has finally resulted, not in what would have been the only sound solution, the fraternisation of Jew and Arab in an attempt to gain joint independence of their imperialist masters, but in the creation of two petty nationalistic States, which will merely add to the conflicts of the world and, through acquiring political systems and miniature armies of their own, merely become the puppets of big powers operating in the Middle East.

Already the signs of this are evident. The British are not going to complete the withdrawal of their troops until the 1st August next. Clearly the withdrawal of 70,000 troops need not take eight months; it could be done with comfort in a month. The real reason seems to be that the British, with the connivance of the U.N.O. and also of the Arab and Jewish politicians, intend to stay there long enough to prevent any real popular uprising before the Jewish and Arab administrations are set up.

Afterwards, what is likely to happen? The new Jewish State, which will rapidly become overcrowded, will be forced to rely on the big powers to protect it from the hostility of the surrounding Arab States. Meanwhile, the Arab States will undoubtedly be encouraged by the British so as to keep going the continual atmosphere of strife which will maintain in power the puppet politicians who guard Anglo-Saxon oil interests in the Middle East.

Significantly enough, when the British leave the Arab State, it is proposed that it should be administered by the Arab Legion from Transjordan. The commander-in-chief of this unit is a British Officer, Brigadier Glubb, and 40 British soldiers hold responsible commanding posts. Moreover, the Legion is actually subsidised by the British government with some £2,000,000 a year!

Meanwhile, on the Jewish side, the Arab riots have been used as an excuse for the Haganah, the Jewish "illegal" army, to come out and help British troops to keep order, by keeping the Jews and the Arabs apart, and preventing Jewish demonstrations from taking place.

Nominally, the British may withdraw, but this will certainly not be the end of British influence in the Middle East. Oil is too precious to be left unprotected.

The Antwerp Conference

NOTHING could have shown more clearly than the Antwerp Conference of European Socialist Parties the complete elimination of the old internationalism which at one time inspired the social-democratic parties. Even beforehand, this internationalism was such a weak motive that it collapsed completely under the stress of war, both in 1914 and 1939. But at least an effort was made to foster it during times of peace. Now even that is all at an end, and the conference showed the impossibility of creating a Socialist International, because almost every party represented was concerned primarily with nationalist aims.

The Polish Socialist Party, acting as a puppet of the Polish Government, demanded common action with the Communists; the British socialists sat on the fence and tried to curry favour with everybody, but resolutely refused to consider the idea of an international that would create any body of socialist ideals transcending merely nationalist interests. The Socialist parties of the Slav countries carried their chauvinism so far as to oppose the presence of the German socialists. And so on—a whole tawdry pattern of intrigues and low rivalry over issues which no-one with any knowledge of the old ideals of the labour movement would imagine to be the concern of socialists. The Antwerp conference was not an attempt at international working-class co-operation; it was merely one more arena for nationalist diplomacy to operate in the conduct of its disruptionist ends.

Waste of the Land

A RECENT conference of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and the Town and Country Planning Association brought forward evidence which revealed once again the vast areas of this country which are appropriated to the completely unproductive uses of the services departments. Altogether, at the end of 1946, they had laid claim to no less than 850,000 acres (about 1,300

square miles), and, although by agitation they have been forced to give up their demands for a few small areas, their present grasp must be almost as large as it was then.

Much, though by no means all, of this land could be turned over to agricultural production and help materially to increase the productivity of British farming. The rest is almost entirely composed of areas of considerable scenic beauty which should form national parks for the holiday enjoyment of the people as a whole. Dartmoor, Cannock Chase and considerable parts of the Yorkshire Moors are among the latter class. Another example is Dovedale which is to be turned into a shooting range and from which the public will be barred during the weekends, just at the time when most walkers will be able to take their trips to this place.

This is just one other example of the way in which war and its preparations waste the land and keep the people from countryside that rightly belongs to them alone.

Homosexuality and the Law

When Lieut. Lord Colwyn pleaded guilty at a Chelsea court-martial last week to five charges under Section 41 of the Army Act, the first alleging that he had committed a gross indecency and that he did attempt to procure the commission of an act of indecency with another male person, Dr. Ellis Stungo, Hatley Street specialist in psychiatry, said that he had examined Lord Colwyn since his return from Italy.

Asked what would be the likely effect on Lord Colwyn if he were sent to prison, the doctor said: "It would remove all incentive for him to aim at a normal, happy sort of life."

Whether it was due to this statement or the plea for mercy of his K.C., Lord Colwyn was not sent to jail, but was sentenced to be cashiered.

The statement by the psychiatrist in this case applies equally to cases of homosexuality being tried every day in British courts, yet judges seldom take a lenient view, and invert get incredibly high prison sentences. These are often accompanied by the comment that in prison the invert will receive proper medical care, while, in fact, not only is this medical treatment non-existent or completely ineffectual, but the conditions of prison life can only aggravate a tendency which present law chooses to regard as criminal. In addition to this, many psychologists regard homosexuality as an incurable psychological condition, and some even consider it as not being pathological.

The Criminal Justice Bill ignores this question, and most of the protests which have been voiced condemn the harshness of the sentences or the lack of treatment in prison. These ignore the main point that homosexuality among adults should not be regarded as a crime. The fact that in France it is not considered an offence, that the law against it was abolished till 1934 in Russia, and only comparatively recently introduced in England should be sufficient to make people realise the dubious foundations of such a law.

Conscription in Egypt

The following quotation from a Cairo newspaper suggests that the Government will not have it all its own way in enforcing the new military conscription laws.

"The Egyptian Ministry of the Interior has issued strict instructions to Governorates and Provinces to enforce the new conscription law. These instructions were given following receipt by the Ministry of a note from the Defence Ministry in which it stresses that so far 79,841 young men have failed to appear at the recruiting centres."

Egyptian Mail, 12/11/47.

The note criticises "vigilance by the authorities concerned" but since the new conscription laws provide—for the first time—for the calling-up of Bedouins, hitherto exempt, it can be imagined what a job the authorities concerned have in searching the deserts for the ten thousand Mohammed Sayed Mohammed who failed to answer his call-up papers.

This may be yet one more unenforceable law, which can be defeated by non-co-operation. Particularly if Egypt's youth in the cities devoted its time to demonstrations against militarism and nationalism, as well as foreign imperialism, instead of useless and futile displays of childishness against foreigners, university rectors and temporarily unpopular Ministers of State.



Thou Shalt Not Kill
— UNLESS IT'S DONE LEGALLY!

'We don't need kind words but food ...'

"Who to-day cares about us, who have been in prisons and concentration camps for many years? We are being ignored, we are being sabotaged, and silence envelopes us and everything libertarian. Beautiful, cheap speeches are made, which do not oblige anybody to do anything, while we die of starvation. The Nazi criminals in their camps receive far better food than we."

"Since 1918 I have stood in the front line as an anti-militarist and free socialist, was imprisoned several times between 1922 and 1933, had my house searched time and again. From 1934 to 1936 I was in prison and concentration camp. In 1939 I was imprisoned again because of illegal activities and refusal of military service, followed by transfer to Dachau, where I was liberated only in 1945. ...

"To-day, I sit in a freezing

room without any fuel, without food, and starve even more than during the concentration camp years. My nerves are finished.

"Comrade S— who was in a concentration camp for 12 years has cancer of the stomach, and can eat hardly anything that gets allocated in his ration and practically starves to death.

"Don't be angry about this begging letter, but you wanted facts. I cannot lie. We see how Nazis receive parcels as if on a moving belt, while we have been forgotten. We don't need kind words, but food to keep alive. We have no socks and our shoes are falling apart."

S.F., Frieberg, Germany.

The above letter is typical of many we receive from comrades in Germany. It says more than we could do in the most eloquent appeal. Help us by sending food and money for posting parcels, to Freedom Press, where comrades will make up parcels for German anarchists. We send all we can, but there are so many like the writer of the above letter that we need every scrap of rationed food you can send even to supply the most needy cases among our German comrades.

Please send your food, cash, old clothes, to Freedom Press, 27, Red Lion Street, W.C.1.

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Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS:

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

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

Please Note:

In view of the holidays there will be no lecture on the 21st and 28th December.

DEC. 14th. Bert Smith
"Religion and Anarchism"

N.E. LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

At Flat 3, 43, New Wanstead
(Nr. Green Man, E.11)

DEC. 16th. Bill Mansbridge
"The Problem of Trieste."

MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST GROUP

The lecture by J. H. H. Moorhouse announced for Nov. 30th was cancelled owing to fog. New date as follows:

Sunday, 7 p.m.
DEC. 14th J. H. Moorhouse
"Anarchism and Health."

Coopers Hall, Shaw Street, Liverpool.
7.30 p.m.

ALL ARE WELCOME.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

Public Meetings at
CENTRAL HALLS, BATH ST.

will be held every Sunday evening.
Speakers:

Preston Clements, John Gaffney, Frank Leach, Eddie Shaw.
Doors open 6.30 p.m.

Comrades interested in the formation of a Discussion Group in the Addlestone area should write to:

Constance Stork,
55, Byron Road, Addlestone, Surrey.

LEEDS AREA

Those interested in the formation of a Discussion Group should contact:

Anthony Earnshaw,
18, Ellers Road, Haro Hills, Leeds, 8.

HAVE YOU?

During the past fortnight we have sent out postcards to more than 300 readers whose subscriptions either fall due this month or expired some months ago. We urge those of our readers who have not yet sent their renewal to do so without delay—and at the same time, if they have anything to spare, not to forget the Press Fund. Are we being too optimistic in hoping that the £350 mark will be reached by the end of the year? Meanwhile, our thanks to those comrades and friends whose initials appear below!

Press Fund

November 21st—December 3rd

Merritt: M.W. 3/-; Yarmouth: L.F.B. 8/-; Bordon: E.W. 5/-; Glasgow: S.M. 3/-; Anon 5/-; Hornschurch: P.W. 10/-; Denver: R.B. 8/-; Ashington: C.W.D. 10/-; Liverpool: G.I. 10/-; Leicester: A.M.S. -/6; Los Angeles: "Man" Group (per J.S.) £5/0/0; Newmarket: T.E. 1/6; Fulham: W.E.D. 6/-; Bishops Stortford: M.J.S. 10/-; Truro: J.J. 4/6; Aberdeen: W.M.R. 3/-; Ilford: W.G. 10/-; Glasgow: A.McD. 3/-; London: R.M. 1/6; Bristol: J.S.R. 2/6; Esher: R.T. 1/6; Sheffield: H.H. 3/-.

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