

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

## COAL: ANOTHER CRISIS

### The Failure of Centralisation

EVERYBODY in these islands, if they use any product of industry, from tin-tacks to transport, depend upon coal. And until alternative sources of power are developed, we are all very much concerned in the condition of the basic industry of coal-mining and the welfare of the men who work in it.

This realisation is behind all conceptions of public ownership. They all maintain the need for collective responsibility for, and common benefit from, the natural resources of the land on which we live, and to this extent, the centralisation schemes of the Labour Party have a sound ideological basis.

Unfortunately, faced with a situation in which the coal mines were owned and operated by private concerns for the benefit of those concerns, the Labour Party did not have the courage to assert the right of private interest to benefit from the community's resources since vesting day—January 1st.

When every coal mine in Britain employing over 150 workers was nationalised, the miners have been working, not only to produce coal, but also to secure compensation for the ex-owners.

It was not enough that for centuries private ownership a privileged class of owners and shareholders had reaped the hard labour of the miners; it was not justly enough. Even when the mines had passed into the hands of the State, these private ex-owners must continue to be paid out of the sweat and blood of the men in the pits. The miners—the people who actually get the coal out of the earth—must continue to face the dangers and hardships of their work for the benefit of those whose only claim to reward is that, somehow or other, they managed to acquire shares, stocks or bonds in colliery companies.

In spite of this, however, the patient miners greeted nationalisation with cheerful enthusiasm and high hopes. Six years ago we saw the mineworkers cheering as the blue flag of the National Coal Board was run up at the pitheads. For the first time the miners thought that at least they were somebody in the industry; they would be consulted and considered. Here was a more democratic arrangement. No longer would a pot-bellied boss point his flabby finger to decide the destinies of the hard, strong men in his employ. Now the miners were public servants; and their fellows, with whom they would co-operate, on the executive side, would ask the miners about things that concerned them.

And to show that new dignity and more leisure had been recognised for the miner, the five-day week was introduced.

Little by little, however, the illusions that nationalisation was going to radically alter the relations between workers and bosses, began to fade. In the first place, the mineworkers discovered that there were still bosses—often the same bosses—and that in fact the new boss—the State—was just the old boss writ large. They found that they were not consulted—nobody cared what they thought as long as they did what they were told—and that they had to fight for their grievances just the same as before.

There were some differences, however. The miners discovered that their trade union officials were no longer on their side when disputes with managements blew up. And they discovered that if they were forced into taking action to put pressure behind a demand or right a grievance, they could be liable to prosecution for breaking contracts and their new boss—the State—was plaintiff, prosecutor, judge and jailer, while their trade union officials repudiated them.

But still the miners worked. They worked on Saturday mornings, too, their union officials saw to that. And because there was huge demand for coal at any price, they earned good money and every demand was dealt with—sooner or later.

To-day, however, things are different in the field of international trade. Poland and Germany are once again appearing as competitors in foreign markets. Short-time working and unemployment are on the increase at home. All the coal that can be dug can still be sold—but at a price that demands cheaper production.

And so, once again, the miners are faced with threats to their standards of living. So far there is no suggestion of a repetition of the cuts in wages that they faced in 1925—seven years after World War I. But, seven years after World War II, increases in prices have already effectively cut the value of real wages. To cope with that miners have appealed for wage increases, but have been refused.

Last year more coal was dug out of British mines than ever before, but for the National Coal Board it was not enough. Wages must be pegged, but production must go up or—the NCB claims it is facing a crisis so bad that if the miners want to, they can destroy nationalisation.

What exactly is wrong? In the first place mining is at the mercy, like every other industry, of capitalist economics. This lunatic system of buying and selling and competition can only function with any semblance of sanity through expanding markets. These Britain no longer has. And the whole of our economy is clearly faced with a future of ever-recurring and violent crises.

Bound up with this is the compensation which I have mentioned earlier. This puts a burden upon the coal industry which should be cast off immediately. Not only is it a financial drag but it is also a psychological one—the miners know and resent the fact that part of their labour is used to keep the parasites.

order to operate, a centralised industry must become bureaucratic; it will multiply parasites and create a top-heavy officialdom above the productive workers.

This has happened in mining, and we know the attitude of the miners to the hordes of officers that sit upon them, but not only do these represent another burden for the industry, they actually interfere with production, itself—and ignore the miners whose knowledge of the work is not used to full advantage.

For instance, 4,000 miners at Horden, County Durham, at the biggest colliery in the country, have recently sharply criticized the Coal Board's methods. The *News Chronicle* (10/1/53) reported it thus:

"The miners, feeling that they were being blamed for reduced output and increased costs, replied that the Board had spent £250,000 on new machinery unsuitable for working the Horden seams.

"Two German-type coal ploughs and duckbill loaders had proved a dismal failure.

"A new system of longer wall places had cut fillers' output per manshift from 15 to seven or eight tons.

"The Coal Board had refused all requests by the miners for a thorough investigation into costs.

"The miners respectfully suggested that when innovations at the colliery are considered, the Board's production managers should bear in mind that miners can be expected to know something about mining."

This is the inevitable result of centralisation, with authority and power breeding a feeling of superiority among the officials and managers. The answer is not more production while maintaining armies of "passengers", it is decentralisation—right down to the men who do the work.

After all, "miners can be expected to know something about mining." P.S.

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## Colonial Development

### or 'How to Help Without Giving Anything Away,

IN our issue for January 3rd, we quoted from an article by Sir Richard Acland on the financial aspects of colonial development, and from the *Observer's* comment that the "richer members of the Sterling Club are living off the earnings of the poorer members."

Mr. Arthur Hazlewood, of the Institute of Colonial Studies, at Oxford, in a broadcast last week with the title "On Helping the Colonies," underlined Sir Richard Acland's conclusions. He began by saying, "Of the need for economic and social improvements there can be no doubt. A harrowing picture of conditions in the colonies can be obtained from official publications. A report on the Gambia scheme speaks of 'a vicious circle of poverty, malnutrition, infestation with parasites, and infections'. In Lagos, of every 1,000 children born, more than 100 die within a year; in this country the figure is less than thirty. In this country there are, on average, less than 1,000 people for every doctor, whereas in Nigeria there is only one doctor for every 70,000 of the population. Examples of this sort could be multiplied."

### FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Particularly newsworthy item at Strasbourg came last Saturday when Mr. Alfred Robens attacked M. Reynaud for suggesting that Britain was not playing its part in European Defence. The French delegate pointed out that Montgomery and Horrocks had both made statements which bore out his remarks. Mr. Robens snapped back that they had no right to do so.

"It is not the generals who make the decisions for Britain," he is reported as saying. "It is the politicians."

Congratulations to Mr. Robens for a forthright and at least honest statement. Most politicians pretend that it is the people.

"Our freedom, in the very movements by which it is affirmed, creates the growing habits that will stifle it if it fails to renew itself by a constant effort."

—HENRI BERGSON

But, after analysing the various methods of financing colonial development, he declared: "What the post-war increase in sterling balances means in relation to external aid for economic development is this. Help from abroad should enable the colonies to spend more on consumption and development than they could do if they had to rely solely on their own resources. This help, in real as distinct from money terms, would take the form of a supply of imports which would not have to be paid for with exports. But the colonies have not been getting enough imports. In reality, they have been spending on consumption and development less in total than even their own resources would have allowed them to do—their export surplus indicates this fact. The colonies have received a certain sum from gifts and loans and from the sale of their exports. Part of this total has been spent on imports. The remainder, which is greater than the total of the gifts and loans they have received, has been added to the balances held by the colonies in sterling. This is a form of involuntary saving which the colonies, in their undoubted poverty, can ill afford. The £1,000,000,000 of the sterling balances is a reproachful comment on development and welfare policy. It means that this country has, in reality, been borrowing from the colonies, not giving or lending to them.

"Aid to under-developed countries has been likened to the operation of a welfare state at an international level, in which there is a redistribution of income and capital in favour of the poorer countries. Personally, I do not feel very happy about this analogy. But taking it for what it is worth, I am afraid one must conclude that, in the case of Britain's colonies, this redistribution has not yet started to take place, in spite of many brave words, the voting of funds, the writing of plans, and the creation of institutions. There has, in fact, been redistribution in the opposite direction. Certainly, there have been new hospitals and schools provided in the colonies. Everyone will welcome these things: there is, indeed, great need for them. My point, however, is that the colonies have, in effect, paid for these things themselves. In short, it seems to me that help for the colonies since the war has been an exercise in *developmanship*, or *how to help without actually giving anything away.*"

manhood of Robert Tremelloni to survey unemployment in relation to the population problem. The unsatisfactory nature of emigration as a solution in terms of numbers has long been realised by demographers, but the sadness involved for the individual migrant is seen in the large numbers who are unhappy outside their homeland and go back, even to poverty.

Despite Fascist exhortations to breed and Catholic and Communist opposition to birth control the troubled Italian people are moving to the solution of their own difficulties. The crude birth rate has declined slightly but steadily from 1930 to 1945 (with a slight rise in 1946, until in 1950 it was 19.6, as compared with 20.4 for France. Even so, with the reduction in death rates, the population is increasing at well over 1,000 a day.

—Bulletin of International Planned Parenthood Committee.

## BIRTH CONTROL IN ITALY

Population 46,424,000. Density 399.6 per square mile.

"Birth control, we admit, cannot be put forward lightly in a Catholic country . . ." says the leading Italian newspaper *Corriere Della Sera* in a serious and outspoken article about Italy's overpopulation. "Yet the time has come," the article continues, "to eradicate a few prejudices: we must destroy the halo of heroic virility which is claimed by the procreator of too many children . . . and teach the people some rules of hygiene with the help of the priest and the panel doctor. And, finally, we must abolish all those laws which give privileges to large families. Otherwise, we do not see how Italy can avoid the danger of all-embracing misery within a few years."

A call for the repeal of "measures of the Fascist era" granting cash bonuses to families with many children was made in a front-page editorial in Italy's financial newspaper *24 Ore* which also urged that the country's anti-birth control laws be repealed.

"Many Italians are kept in the dark on sex problems," said Professor Vito Stefano Pesci, of Bari University, to the Bombay Planned Parenthood Conference. He criticised the Roman Catholic Church for its stand. He complained that Church officials recommended a particular method of population control because they claimed it avoided "mortal sin". The Italian Professor thought doctors should decide on the best method.

Some of the perplexity existing in Italy, and elsewhere in the Roman Catholic mind as to what is and is not allowed is revealed in an article by Barrett McGurn in the Paris Edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*. Accord-

ing to this the *Palestro del Clero*, the most authoritative review of Catholic ecclesiastical practices in Italy, says that confessors may well recommend the rhythm method as a "cure" for contraceptive birth control in cases where economic and social reasons advise against conception. Where eugenic reasons advise against conception, the priest in confession must take special care not to give the impression that the rhythm technique is "scientifically sure". Where health reasons are involved confessors may well send advise seekers to conscientious and competent physicians without even mentioning the rhythm technique." (Our italics.)

According to this same article, another Italian priests' magazine, *La Revista del Clero Italiano*, are so aware of the insecurities of the rhythm method that they are highly reluctant to give guidance on its use in cases where real certainty against conception is needed for health reasons. Mr. Barrett McGurn concludes by saying that the magazine's comments did not mean that approval for contraceptives may be forthcoming. The Pope's statement made clear that sexual abstinence rather than contraception was the alternative in cases where conception is not to be risked. He said that the co-editor of the *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper reiterated this stand, while at the same time making a plea for a Christian re-examination of the birth control problem.

Such discussion in ecclesiastical magazines shows that there is much serious thought being given to the solution of problems which not a little time ago were thought well left to Providence to decide.

The Italian government has shown the beginning of wisdom by establishing a non-party committee under the chair-

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

## ANARCHISTS AND TITLES

THAT an anarchist could accept a knighthood is a paradox that should not occur even in England. Read's main excuse for doing so is that, since he has lived in compromise with the present social system and accepted lesser honours from it in the past, there is nothing wrong in accepting the title of a knight, and consequently there is no reason for his "comrades" to protest about this "empty question". He goes on to imply that because in order to live in this society we are compelled to compromise with many of its activities, we cannot therefore disapprove of his actions.

The fallacy of his argument lies in his failure to distinguish between compromises which are a result of compulsion (income tax, wage slavery, ration books, etc.) and those compromises which are made voluntarily. Most of us are forced by the necessity of obtaining a living to sell our labour power to an employer and therefore to have a certain sum deducted without our consent from our wages. Our compromise arises from a compulsive situation. We are not, however, compelled to get married or accept knighthoods. We are not likely to be put in prison or to starve for refusing to do these things. And in cases which involve compromise with institutions fundamentally opposed to anarchist principles, such as assisting the police or becoming a soldier, we can, and most of us do, refuse to collaborate and risk the persecution which may follow. An anarchist who voluntarily accepts the protection of the state's armed forces would be a sorry spectacle indeed.

(Incidentally, on a point of law, one cannot "stand on a soap-box and shout insults at the Queen and her Government" without cost to oneself. "... the right of free speech may be defined as the right to say things which, however radical and controversial, are of a general nature and not in themselves directly harmful to an individual or the State." ["Public Order" by Arthur G. Keech, 1952.] Freedom of speech is limited by the laws of slander, blasphemy, and sedition.)

We are sorry that the reply appearing in the editorial column is so inadequate

and to a certain extent equivocal. The editorial cites the examples of Kropotkin and Malatesta in their rejection of titles and decorations. It rightly states that "it is not consistent to condemn the institutions of government on the one hand and accept honours from it on the other". It goes on, however, to contend that the inclusion of Read's name (we are not aware that he was "so prominent an exponent of anarchism" as such) in the Honours List makes it necessary to consider afresh the whole question of honours in our kind of society. Is the society in which we live fundamentally different from that in which Kropotkin and Malatesta lived? Is government less oppressive and economic exploitation fast disappearing? Even such reformists as G. B. Shaw and H. G. Wells refused titles because they were not monarchists. How can a person who professes anarchist ideas—which imply the rejection of all coercive authority—degrade himself by participating in the accolade? We do not think he can and therefore consider that no change is necessary, or possible, in the traditional anarchist attitude towards titles.

We cannot understand what the editorial means to convey by the last paragraph of the reply. How can a weakening of anarchist intransigence by accepting honours from the antithesis of anarchy—the state—result in a possible increase in the intransigence to be shown "in the face of accepted authoritarian concepts"? It seems to us that accepting honours from the figurehead of our enemy—the monarchy—helps to strengthen the belief in the necessity for such an institution rather than weaken the authoritarian conceptions that lie behind it.

To conclude (in the words of Frank Leech): "Individual resistance is a two-edged sword plunging into the heart of the present régime, one side the struggle for individual liberty, the other by example breaking down the morale of our enemy and uplifting of those who are searching for a way out." Compromise which results from the coercion of authority we can understand, if not always approve. Compromise which results from the voluntary action of the individual concerned is something which

in no way serves the cause of anarchy. Herbert Read's acceptance of a knighthood not only makes us suspect the genuineness of his professed adherence to anarchism, but also diminishes his stature as a man.

R. E. MURRAY EGHILL  
J. BISHOP  
ARTHUR W. ULOTH  
S. E. PARKER  
HAROLD H. SCULTHORPE.  
LILIAN WOLFE

London, Jan. 18.

IN his apology—for what else is it?—for his acceptance of a knighthood, Herbert Read raises points which we who are accused of them have a right to answer.

(1) Some of us, who are pacifists, do not "accept the protection of the State's armed forces".

(2) That we must perforce conform to the State in many respects is obvious; but is there no difference between conforming because, short of living on a desert island (lacking any anarchist society at present) we must, and conforming from choice? Was Herbert Read liable to imprisonment, or having his goods distrained—on—as is the case for refusal to pay income tax—if he declined to allow the State to "honour" him?

(3) Unless we are prepared to make a minor scene and a fuss, to our own and our friends' embarrassment, and the

spoiling of an evening out, which is supposed to be an occasion of pleasure, we cannot always avoid standing for the National Anthem; but many of us avoid the occasion of this concession to conformity by contriving to get seats which enable us to get out before the anthem is played, and we try to ascertain beforehand whether the anthem is played at the beginning of the performance. I do not think we any of us wish to "stand on soapboxes and shout insults at the Queen and Her Government". We do not wish to insult; we do what we can, through writing and speaking, according to our abilities, to let in a little light when and where we can.

(4) Gandhi disliked the title of Mahatma, but it was bestowed upon him by his followers; it was not given him by the State, or the head of the State, or any government. Mahatma simply means Master. Herbert Read's thought is here not clear. What had Gandhi's religious observances got to do with anything? He was a practising Hindu.

(5) Tolstoy did most certainly "advance his ideas" by his disowning of his title and his estate. Kropotkin renounced both his title and his aristocratic background at an early age. It is difficult to believe that a man of Herbert Read's intelligence does not perceive that a man increases his moral stature and his influence by such renunciations.

(6) What "force and authority", one is entitled to ask, does the acceptance of a title give to one's ideas? Bound up with a title is every kind of social snobbery and class-distinction, and all that is most rubbishy and trivial in our society. As Tolstoy knew, and Kropotkin, and an honourable few in our own time, John Galsworthy twice refused a knighthood and thereby acquired an honour greater

than any government or state could confer; the honour of his own integrity. There are those who will contend that this is "conceit" and "inverted snobbery". Though what there is snobbish or conceited about a man refusing to raise himself above his fellows in degree in the social order it is hard to see.

In his book, *Poetry and Anarchism*, Herbert Read says that only the very modest among men are not corrupted by power. He cites Lenin. It seems strange that in this connection he would omit Gandhi. But he does not claim for this incorruptibility any inverted snobbery or conceit. And modesty is the heart of the matter—the modesty which is an integral part of the equality we claim for all of us, in our common humanity.

Herbert Read will not, perhaps, be a less good person because he is now a knight; he may continue to believe, as he says, in anarchism—as a theory, but if, as he maintains, thought is one thing and living another, then we might as well all of us go all out and live such self-indulgent lives as the State allows, blandly saying, "Oh, of course, I don't really believe in this sort of thing, but thought is one thing and living another..." But there is such a thing as integrity; such a thing as example.

What does it feel like to be an anarchist (in theory) and bow the knee to the head of the State and hob-nob with people who all think royalty a jolly good show and our existing form of society right and proper? Poor Herbert Read! Poor broken reed. Only it's sad for us, who had felt honoured to have him in our ranks. Had he not honour enough in that?

London.

ETHEL MANNING

## COMMENT ON

## The Highlands and the Islands

WHAT amounts to a proposal for autonomy for the Scottish Highlands and Islands is advocated in the interim report of the executive committee of the Scottish council of the Labour Party.

"No area in the country has been the subject of so many reports and no part of the country has witnessed so meagre results from reports," says this—yet another report.

It suggests that a Development Corporation should be set up and run like a miniature parliament for the Western Isles, Inverness, Ross and Cromarty, Orkney, Zetland, Argyll, Caithness and Sutherland, where "centuries of neglect, decay and depopulation must be reversed and overcome and the natural resources and potentialities of the areas properly assessed and harnessed to build a new economy."

The report hints that the land should be taken over from private owners and proposes that crofters should combine in a form of voluntary "collective" or "crofting township committee" whose members would be elected. Grants, for development, it is suggested, could be made to the township as a whole, and the defaulting crofter could be dealt with by his fellows or helped if he were not at fault. Land, the report emphasises, should be made available to those best able to farm it, rather than to those with the largest amount of capital available.

But here, too, nature as well as man could be more helpful. "An effective bracken-killing hormone—which science is near finding—would do more than thousands of pounds in subsidies to maintain and improve the fertility of the soil."

Of the other proposals for the development of employment and industry in the Highlands and Islands, the report states that they must continue to be based on agriculture, fishing, tourism (which is closely linked with the progress of the hydro-electric schemes), forestry, and the domestic and ancillary industries connected with these basic industries.

Increased use of seaweed for the chemical industry, rationalisation of transport (with its own difficulties in this large and broken countryside), reorganisation of the fishing industry, and the development of native mineral resources are also included in the report, which will be considered at the annual conference of the Scottish council of the Labour Party.

The report indicates an interesting development in Labour Party thinking—in Scotland, at least. But, assuming that the recommendations are accepted by the Scottish council's conference, and even assuming that it is taken seriously

by the congress of the Labour Party as a whole, and even assuming that it is considered politic to include it in the Party's electoral programme, is there any likelihood that next time a Labour Government is returned that any anything will be done about it? Before 1945 the Labour Party supported a much less radical programme for Scottish "devolution", but we heard little of it in the following six years.

BUT leaving aside the question of politicians and their promises, the reason why the report sounds so attractive is, of course the appeal it makes to our sense of the value of creative ventures on a human scale and of the replacement of desolation by living communities.

On the radio last month, David Keir described his journey to "Our Own Far North." "On such a trip," he said, "one sees too many ghosts for complete serenity, too many ruined cottages where Highland crofters used to live, and too many schools which once taught twenty or thirty children, and now teach four or five. But these are only a few of many disturbing signs. During the past eighty years nearly 80,000 people have left the crofting counties."

Mr. Keir also saw signs of hope, and he paid tribute to the activities of some of the private landlords—the cattle-raising schemes of Lord Lovat and Captain Hobbs, for instance, and the enterprise of the Duke of Westminster in Sutherland, a county of more than 1,250,000 acres but only 14,000 people. The Duke says Mr. Keir, "saw that the Highland way of life thrives best when industries are complementary to each other; when, for example, a fisherman has a croft as well. So he started a forestry scheme, and allowed the foresters time off to look after their crofts. The result is that a number of men have already come back from the towns, and they have planted about 500 acres of trees. Sheep and cattle are also increasing, and he has installed an ice factory at the little fishing port of Kinlochbervie, so that the fish landed there can now be put into boxes packed with ice, and driven through the mountains by night to the big markets. New houses have been built, with more to come by the spring. A community centre is going up, and also a new school which the Duke intends to present to the community that his enterprise and their work are revitalising."

There is perhaps a sound of mediaeval patronage about this, and the problem of the Highlands and Islands cannot be solved just by the landowners atoning for the sins of their ancestors, but it is an indication of the all-round inter-

dependent development projects which these neglected counties need.

The Forestry Commission in Mr. Keir's view throws out most hope for the future in bringing back sinews to the Highlands.

"In some areas, forestry, which is congenial work, has already stemmed the 'ebb-tide'. In Argyll, for example, there is a new forestry settlement at a place called Dalavich. Two years ago Dalavich consisted of three or four crofts, a kirk, and a schoolroom for about six children. To-day it is full of new houses. The population has risen to several hundred. And all sorts of clubs have been formed to provide society and amusement in the winter-time.

"Another warming influence on the highland scene is hydro-electricity. At one time the imaginative plan to harness the endless waters of the Highlands was highly controversial. Since then its beneficial effect has become obvious. For not only is it supplying electricity, but it is helping to check depopulation. Take, as an example, the new Glen Affric scheme. A few years ago, the local school was attended by one child. Now there are a dozen. What for many years was a deserted village has now reinvigorated."

During the war I was travelling down through Caithness and Sutherland with a Norwegian sailor. "Does this make you think of home," I asked, for the sake of conversation. "No," he answered, indignantly, staring out of the train window. "Our valleys are alive!" In the days of expanding imperialism it didn't matter to the economy of Britain as a whole that the far north should be deliberately depopulated and laid waste for the benefit of aristocratic sportsmen, or just neglected for the sake of a top-heavy expansion of industry. The Highlands and Islands were just a place you had romantic feelings about while their inhabitants were left to rot or get out.

But to-day when, if only for survival, it is necessary to make a proper and sensible use of all our natural resources, it is mere folly not to follow the example of the Scandinavian countries which have made a far better use of regions much less favoured by climate—just because they had to. At the moment, Great Britain is involved in a sordid dispute with Iceland over fishing rights in the waters around that country. When you think of the resources at our disposal compared with Iceland's, it seems fantastic that this should be a matter for international litigation while we have empty acres of bracken covering soil with much greater potentialities than any in that bleak island. C.W.

## EDUCATION WITHHELD

TALKING to these boys, I learnt two things: that their education was farcically bad and ineffectual excepting in the most practical subjects, such as gardening and carpentry; and that if the success ethos, originated by the nineteenth-century English liberals and elaborated by the twentieth-century American middle-class until holiness and richness are identical terms, if this doctrine may, in certain conditions have a limited usefulness, as soon as it penetrates to the larger working-class it creates insoluble problems and is shown up for what it is: the ignoblest idea that any society has ever openly adopted.

As to the badness of the boys' education, it can have been only in the quality of the instruction, or in the methods, for the children themselves were sharp enough and interested enough in everything about

them to learn, quickly and easily, what seemed to them interesting. Apparently, therefore, their school work had not been made interesting, nor was this, as far as I could see, the fault of the few devoted teachers struggling to keep order in enormous classes. The truth appears to be very simple; not nearly enough public money is being spent on education. . . .

Not only had our young labourers acquired very few mere facts: they had not been given a trace of understanding; they could read, write and calculate after a fashion, but a very few sessions of mutual work accompanied by conversation, made it clear that of history they knew a few detached incidents, set in no context; of geography so little that they could not, with any certainty, name the capital of France. But it was not so much this ignorance of facts which seemed to us shameful, as their much more profound ignorance of the nature of the culture, of the civilisation which led up to themselves. In short, they had not been given that which education must give unless it is to be a waste of time and money, and to place them at the mercy of demagogues and newspaper proprietors: the power to orientate themselves in the world, the community, the social and political conditions, the epoch in which they find themselves.

The possession of this power by a majority is the first condition of a real democracy. Would it be too fantastically cynical to suggest that it is this very fact which has caused it to be withheld from them? An educated nation must be the nightmare of the politician, the businessman, the journalist and the soldier, and of the priest as well.

—EDWARD HYAMS: *From the Waste Land* (Turnstile Press).

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## WHAT IS HAPPENING IN RUSSIA?

THE meaning and exact significance of the bizarre and horrible propaganda trials that go on in the Soviet world remains an unsolved puzzle. It is not difficult to offer explanations—need for scapegoats, necessity to terrify oppositionist tendencies, and so on—but the explanations never provide anything like full comprehension of the underlying meaning.

It does, however, seem certain that these trials do represent something very important indeed to the Communist method of government. The Prague trials of mainly Jewish leaders did untold harm to the Communist Parties of the West. Now, before they have had time to recover from these shocks, comes the "doctors' plot" in the Soviet Union itself, with its further anti-Semitic flavour.

For years—even long before the war—the similarities between the Soviet and the Nazi government were obvious. Mussolini expressed indebtedness to Lenin; Hitler learned only from Mussolini, but also from Stalin. And Stalin himself is known to have been greatly impressed by the Nazi purge of June 1934 and to have used this vicarious experience in the purges that centred on the murder of Kirov in the same year. But even those who could swallow the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939, held on to the illusion that "at least" the Soviet Union opposed anti-Semitism. The damage to this view caused by the recent trials is serious indeed.

And it must be remembered that centuries of anti-semitism in Eastern Europe and the Russia of the pogroms, provide an enormous fund of latent hostility to the Jews which makes the Communist government attacks on Zionism and Jewish internationalism much more significant even than appears on the surface.

That the Soviet government loses so much support in the West shows clearly how important must be the issues behind these trials. Yet it is also well to remember that the Soviet Union and the Communist Parties have survived the Hitler-Soviet pact and the rape of Poland in 1939, and the anti-strike activity during the war. Communism thrives on a denial of all values. And it is clear that admiration for dictatorships, for authoritarian violence and denial of all justice, is rooted in deeper psychological processes than mere superficial reason. These processes are immune to logical contradictions. Support for Communism no less than support for Fascism arises from the mass neuroses of our time, and it is this fact which makes them so dangerous and deadly. In a sense, the more shameful and cruel and unprincipled the Communist leaders are, the more strongly—rather than less—do they appeal to these mass-neurotic cravings.

But even when full allowance has been made for such considerations, it seems reasonable to assume that the new wave of purges now beginning to get under way in Russia does testify to the inner stresses of the régime. There seems much ground for the view that the purges represent the resolution of long, drawn out battles over policy differences. But again one observes the extraordinary position of Stalin. The decisive moves which settle the victory of one or other faction seem still to rest with him, acting as a kind of all-powerful referee. But Stalin's own rise to power, and retention of it, displays also this

perpetual playing off of one faction against another, of divide and rule. That is one side. The other is the need to lay blame for unsatisfactory home conditions on some scapegoat, for the government as a whole to divert public wrath and discontent on to some scapegoat or other. Thus the government weakness is exposed in these trials, and also its internal divisions.

One is once again prompted to speculate on Stalin's pre-eminent position, and hence on the situation which will arise at his death, or deposition by other means. It does not seem entirely wishful to expect a vastly more serious crisis for the Russian government in that event. Such a cataclysm may well ensue that will once again shake the world.

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## Has Man a Chance?

Because war and the diplomacy that is war in another form are equally lacking logic in an atomic age, security must be sought on a more solid foundation than a rearmament crust spread across a Malthusian morass. The logistics of peace require a strength that comes from balance—not bluff. When men find work for their willing hands in a war against waste and want, peace will be more nearly deserved. When it is deserved as well as desired, peace is much more likely. There can be no better promise. A programme for peace, then, is simply a job of work to be done. The scale of the job can be set at a quadrupling of present productivity during the rest of this century. If food output can be doubled, and then doubled again, the world has a chance of entering the twenty-first century with man still the dominant species.

F. A. A. ROWSE, in an address on "World Economic Trends in Urban Development."

# THE COMMUNIST MENTALITY

IT is possible to limit the psychological study of Fascism to the territories it occupied, the time it existed and the causes for which it strove. Germany and Italy provided the main centres, the aftermath of the First World War and the morrow of the 1929 economic crisis were its breeding grounds, while the causes were identical on numerous points: the general effect of the war, dissatisfaction with the Versailles Treaty in Germany and Italy, the bad functioning of parliamentary democracy, unemployment, etc.

One cannot, however, study the psychology of Communism in the same way. Neither with regard to space because one must study it in very different surroundings: Russia, the Balkan countries, France, Italy, China, etc. Nor as regards to the time limit because it is not a matter of a dozen years as in the case of Nazism, but of half a century. Lenin wrote *What To Do* in 1902 and the foundation of the Bolshevik Party took place in London in 1903; we are thus approaching the fiftieth anniversary of its birth. Lastly, it is impossible to generalise on its causes, because they vary infinitely from one country to another.

In the past thirty years Communism has undergone an enormous evolution. If one compared a member of the *fascio combattimento* of 1919 with a fascist of 1943 one would be able to discern a great resemblance. They spoke the same language and probably had the same psychological and mental structure. But if one compared Communist leaders of 1920 and 1950 one would find an abyss between them. The evolution of Communism occurred on both its institutional as well as spiritual and psychological levels. To prove the first it is sufficient to examine the changing attitude of the Soviet State towards education, marriage and religion. For the second, the change of attitude towards the notion of the fatherland and in the interpretation of the past. Yet in all this evolution one basic factor remained unchanged. It is the Party with a capital "P" which has maintained itself from 1903 to 1952. The study of Communist psychology—the existence of which nobody disputes—must therefore begin with the study of the Communist Party.

## The Party

The phenomenon of Communism analysed simply from the point of view of rudimentary anti-Communism remains almost incomprehensible. There are so many glaring contradictions between what was promised in the past and what was achieved, between Communist words and deeds, that one can ask oneself how it is there are still Communists. It is sufficient to indicate these evident contradictions on the theoretical level. The Communists began by wanting to free man for the first time in history and ended by the most pervasive system of slavery mankind has ever known. Religion was condemned as the opium of the people and now they build up a faith whose leader has been deified as no-one ever before. From integral equality they ended on the Soviet system where the differences in income

are larger than in the U.S.A. and where social equality is condemned as a petty bourgeois prejudice. Born out of total rebellion, Communism has established the most perfect totalitarian discipline. In theory the State was to wither away under Socialism; in reality it is growing stronger and stronger. The dictatorship of the proletariat was to be provisional, in practice it became the most durable institution in the U.S.S.R. In everyday life, examples are not lacking either. Why is the U.S.S.R. the only country in the world which does not allow its citizens to travel abroad? (The world has seen many queer things in the past thirty years but has never met one phenomenon: a Soviet tourist in the West.) Also, in reply to accusations from the anti-Communist Press on the subject of concentration camps and forced labour (Kolyma, Karaganda, etc.), nothing would be easier than to allow commissions of enquiry to verify for themselves of their non-existence. One could multiply such examples, but they would not advance our knowledge of Communist mentality.

(a) Communist mentality is not like other mentalities because the Communist Party is not a party like the others. It is sufficient to compare it to Socialist parties. The C.P. took its place on the extreme Left held till then by the Socialists. But apart from this change another, a structural one, occurred: the Socialist parties, though on the extreme

Left, formed an entity with the other parties. The Communists broke into this tradition. The Socialists entered into the framework of the nation, in the historical sense of the word, the Communists left it. In spite of their numerous divergences with other parties, the Socialists spoke the same language as the others. It is sufficient to read again the oratorical duels between Jaurès and Clemenceau before 1914 to see to what an extent they were, above everything, Frenchmen. The Socialist Party was a party like the others, the C.P. no longer. (Even if the Communists use the same words, they empty them beforehand of their authentic meaning.)

(b) A simple glance inside a Communist Party—for example, that of Yugoslavia before 1941—shows clearly the basic elements which did not exist in the other parties of that country. The C.P.Y. applied in all its rigours the Bolshevik principle of organisation. To begin with, recruitment of members was submitted to a strict procedure; once in one became a militant with given tasks. The party possessed not only a discipline and precise organisation (the German Social Democracy had it, too, but this did not prevent it from capitulating without resistance in 1914 and 1933)—but the members of the C.P.Y. devoted themselves wholeheartedly to their organisation. The Party decided everything. It laid down the party line, or rather transmitted it to its members. It decided the tasks they had to accomplish. It decided their private life: in the course of the Fifth Party Conference in 1940 Tito declared: "Comrades usually think that their private lives are solely their own concern. This is a mistake. The Party must, on the contrary, pay attention to the private life of every single member."

(c) The C.P. is engaged in permanent warfare to achieve its aims. He who enters it becomes a soldier in this permanent war. Not only must he obey but he must also be ready to sacrifice his life. As in any other war, it is forbidden to leave the ranks and abandon the struggle. This is why there are no resignations among the Communists; only desertions. And one knows how deserters are treated in wartime. The Party and the Cause decide life and death. Both of the ordinary militant and leader. It is essential for the militant to want and know how to fight. For the leader to know how to lead revolutionary action. The old Socialist leaders wrote books on innumerable problems in the light of Marxism: the new leaders write badly, are not intellectuals in the proper meaning of the word, but know how to organise illegal and insurrectional activities. And this sort of "know-how" counts more in politics than academic knowledge.

These few characteristics give, partially at least, a picture of the C.P. of our days, but do not furnish a complete explanation. Thus, to understand properly the Communist phenomenon one must first go back into the past, and secondly, jettison the customary Marxist schema according to which the economic factor is predominant in human relations throughout history. According to the Marxist doctrine it is predominant in the "will" of man. It is the material existence which determines the conscience, and not vice versa. The economic factor is predominant in revolutions, too: they break out when the productive forces come into conflict with the juridical relations of production. It is a dominant factor in the exercise of power because the possessors of the means of production are at the same time the masters of political power.

Communist practice has, however, belied these axioms by giving priority to psychological, political and military factors. As regards the Communist mentality if existence was to determine conscience as Marxists claim, it would be difficult to explain the double phenomenon which consists on the one hand of the formation of the Bolshevik Old Guard before the 1917 Revolution and on the other, their liquidation under Stalin. If existence determines conscience then the Bolshevik intellectuals of bourgeois or aristocratic origin, should not become revolutionaries just as later these same men in the Soviet, i.e., revolutionary, milieu should not become revolutionaries, as they had according to Stalin and Vishinsky.

To understand both these phenomena, adherence to the revolution by those who formed the international Communist movement and then their liquidation one must take psychology and not economics as the point of departure.

## The Flogging Bill

In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* the Secretary of the Howard League for Penal Reform draws attention to the fact that: "... the Bill introduced by Wing-Commander Bullus, which is to have its second reading on February 13, would not only extend the use of corporal punishment to a whole range of offences which had not been subject to this sentence before its abolition in 1948, but it does not limit the number of strokes which may be inflicted, even on children. Ever since 1908 no child under fourteen could receive more than six strokes; and under the Garrotting Act of 1863 and the Larceny Act of 1916 there were also statutory limitations to the number of strokes which could be inflicted on young persons between fourteen and sixteen years, as well as on adults.

"It may be that the Bill, in spite of its brevity, was merely carelessly drafted. But if the omission is intentional, then we are not merely putting back the clock—we are literally putting it back with a vengeance."

## URGENT

We have sent out bills totalling more than £600 to readers who order literature and bundles of *Freedom* each week from us.

We urgently need this money to continue our work.

## Readers' Tributes to

### FRANK LEECH

I WAS momentarily stunned when I read of Frank Leech's death.

He was so bright and had a smart, upright bearing which seemed to me to be "good for years".

We who knew him personally realised that his breezy manner and sunny smile came from his generous heart, and were not assumed to cover any distasteful thoughts or actions.

Frank was a friend and comrade to me, and must have been to countless others.

The Anarchist Movement in general, and our Glasgow comrades in particular, will undoubtedly miss him.

Many times I have thought Lancashire would have known many more anarchists if Frank Leech had remained in his birthplace, Wigan. Lancashire's loss, Glasgow's gain.

The open houses we knew at Knightswood and Gare Loch may now have locked doors, but many of us know we are better persons for having been there, just as we know we are better comrades for having known Frank Leech.

Stockport.

FROD OGDEN.

Argyll.

HARRY T. BERRETT.

(To be concluded)

# Anarchists & Titles

THAT Herbert Read should have felt any need to make a statement at all suggests that there may be doubts in his mind about the consonance of his action with the principles he tells us he professes.

He tries to dismiss his acceptance of a knighthood by saying that the honour was given for services to literature, as if he were being given an honorary doctorate of letters. Titles are conferred for a variety of reasons, usually as a reward for services rendered to the state, and it is not so many years since they could be bought (perhaps they still are). Is Herbert Read really so naive as to suppose that the few honours given to one or two men of distinction in science and art are anything more than a sop thrown to those who attack privilege and power?

To Read's gibe that we accept the benefits of the National Health Service we might reply in the words of Errico Malatesta:

"Certainly it is a good thing, while we are awaiting the revolution—and it also serves to make it easier—that the workers should seek to earn more and work fewer hours in better conditions; it is a good thing that the unemployed should not die of hunger and that the sick and old should not be abandoned. But this, and other things, the workers can and should obtain by themselves, by direct struggle against the bosses, by means of their organisations, and by individual and collective action, developing in each individual the feeling of personal dignity and the consciousness of his rights.

"The gifts of the state, the gifts of the bosses are poisoned fruits that bring with them the seeds of slavery. We must reject them."

"Living," Read tells us, "is one activity, thought another. Never do they correspond." The practice of doing one thing while professing a contradictory belief is commonly known as hypocrisy; and as the English have a well-deserved reputation for this failing, no doubt there will be general agreement abroad that

IN the issue of FREEDOM dated 27 Sept., 1952, I wrote an article entitled "More Titles, Please." It was meant to be sarcastic. Having read Herbert Read's "apologia pro vita sua" and the editorial "Titles of Honour" in the current issue of FREEDOM, I hasten to make this apparent.

In the said article I put forward the original (but sardonic) claim that the Honours List was an excellent method in capitalist society in labelling the careerist from the militant, and while Brother Higginbottom, may get away with his nonsense, Sir Jerimiah Higginbottom, M.P., and Lord Higginbottom of Pentwhistle could be more easily identified. I see no reason to modify that opinion, and when Herbert Read tells us we should not "stand on a soap-box and shout insults at the Queen and her Government" I am extremely obliged to the latter for having made his position in society so readily noticeable. In a similar way, one can evaluate his claim that the world has had to "forgive" Tolstoy for his "selfishness" in endeavouring to rid himself of the moral burden of living upon the peasants, thus sacrificing his family's social position. Is Herbert Read's action quite on the same level? The knighthood he regards as an honour would have cost very little to sacrifice except perhaps in getting correspondingly less fees as a lecturer in republican America and disappointing any possible family ambitions.

As I say, one can take Herbert Read at the evaluation he has chosen for himself, but what is one to say of the editorial? When anyone begins to talk about something "that could only happen in England", the world's accusation of hypocrisy begins to ring a little true. The editorial is, alas, redolent of it. Why not, for instance, have taken so lenient an attitude to the knighted before? No such comment appeared in my article, for instance, but it appears that the editorial wishes to have the anarchist attitude to despising royal dishonours and yet have Herbert, too. What is paradoxical about Read's action? You might as well say it was paradoxical for trade union and labour leaders to accept "honours". There is nothing so paradoxical about it, nor so very "English" either—in the U.S.A. they usually give out jobs in the Post Office or Diplomatic Corps in a similar endeavour.

this paradox "could only occur in England."

In your editorial (which might appropriately have graced the pages of a conservative newspaper but seemed to me singularly out place in an anarchist publication) you state that "in any healthy society individuals will derive pleasure from the esteem of their fellows". You are not suggesting, I hope, that our present society is healthy? So one may ask: Which of their fellows? The sycophants? The social climbers? The nouveaux riches? The cynical manipulators of the machinery of exploitation? That, of course, will depend on your individual. If Herbert Read imagines that anyone else will esteem him because of his title he must be even simpler than Candide.

Not only your leader-writer but Read himself seems unwilling to make the distinction between "all" and "some" when he says of Socrates and others that "it did not follow from the fact that such men held such ideas and even attempted to live lives in conformity with their principles that they were not honoured by the people among whom they lived". Both Socrates and Christ could have saved their lives if they had compromised with the society they lived in by abandoning their teaching and practice and conforming to the conventions and habits of thought of their times.

As for Read's assertion that "to take a position in society that will give force and authority to one's faith is an elementary duty" I can only grasp. Perhaps our ideals would be better served if we all became avid seekers of magistracies, judgeships, bishoprics, cabinet ministries, and other positions that would give us the "force and authority" he regards as so necessary. Or would that be trespassing on the preserves of the Socialist Party of Gt. Britain?

Still, as Read says, his decision is a personal one, and if he can see nothing inconsistent in his action we can no doubt endure the embarrassment of an anarchist knight with the same fortitude that the Church of England displays in the case of the Red Dean.

London, Jan. 18. EDWIN PEEKE.

A knighthood does not mean "the esteem of one's fellows" but merely the approbation of the Government or ruling-class. What esteem does Oswald Mosley possess because of his hereditary baronetcy? Who honours the guinea-pig-director duke? What do their former fellows say of the knighted labour boss on the local Coal Board? It is absurd to separate literary men, musicians or writers from others so branded. Tennyson may have been made a peer but I do not think he is honoured as such. It is this absurd class snobbery embedded in the English middle-class that has allowed the theory to flourish that those plays could not have been written by a deer-thief, horse-holder and vagabond player like Will Shakespeare; as he can't be honoured posthumously they must have been done by Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, in his spare time.

I would add that I do not believe in attacking people solely because they happen to be somewhat near to one's ideas but not all the way. I do not believe in attacking Herbert Read more than any of the many mediocrities in the bunch. But if you are going to maintain in the editorial columns of FREEDOM that there must be "good reasons" not to refuse honours and that the acceptance might lead to "strengthening his hand in the pushing of certain ideas" (which is a Conservative claim even the Social Democrats do not pursue), and that this shoddy piece of work represents "public recognition of his merits", then it is certainly opportune for the Anarchist case to be put against both knights and daze.

London, Jan. 19. A. MELTZER.

WE must feel indebted to Mr. Herbert Read for making his position so clear to us, and not let ourselves be embarrassed by his frankness.

Obviously, between individuals there will be points of disagreement. As an instance, some may not agree that life and thought are unrelated. For myself, I deplore compulsory education and think a religious education to be specially harmful. Because I believe life and thought to be intimately associated I send my children to a progressive school, being the best I can do in the

circumstances. If I let thought and life become two different things I might even go so far as to send them to a Catholic public school—for one expedient reason or another.

Be this as it may, I do feel that Mr. Herbert's preaching was a little unnecessary—at least to the readers. We know very well that if the state appropriates the means of life, in buying them back we help to preserve the state's authority. Certainly it is easy to remain seated for the national anthem, or to write bold books: a democratic government is able to retain its kid-glove stranglehold by making these things easy.

Some of us may think that in buying our sustenance or in paying taxes solely in order to keep out of gaol, our support of the government is given under duress, and that by the act of living on this island we do not necessarily accept the "protection" of those armed forces in which many have refused to serve. Again speaking for myself, I should be perfectly ready to accept the consequences of total disarmament, alarming though they might be. A man locked in gaol can't get out, but he doesn't have to become a governor's stooge.

By the rather cunning device of reducing Jesus to a god, those who love authority have deprived him of his dignity as a man. The step down from a man to a knight is a somewhat shorter one, and perhaps a good man might not topple.

It is the responsibility of every indi-

J.H. writes . . .

The editorial "Titles of Honour" has aroused such criticism that I hasten to take full responsibility for it. Correspondents describe it as "redolent of hypocrisy," "inadequate and equivocal," "appropriate for a conservative journal," but on re-reading it these charges seem to me to throw more light on our correspondents than on the editorial, and make me wonder if some of them even read it clearly. What does that editorial do? It clearly lays out the general anarchist objections to titles, and it makes clear that a refusal of a knighthood would have been more acceptable to the anarchist movement. This seems orthodox enough. What seems to infuriate our correspondents is the suggestion that knighthoods do sometimes represent esteem for good qualities (A.M. roundly says they do not, Peeke that they are "usually" a recognition of State service). They seem to resent very bitterly the idea that when a man whose record provides cause for admiration (not always for complete agreement) does something unexpected one should wonder if perhaps he has some good reasons for it.

The alternative is to suppose that Herbert Read's knighthood completely erases his services to anarchism in the

## WASTE AND WANT

YOU should know better than to accredit the opinions of an Associated Press reporter on wheat ("Waste and Want," FREEDOM, 27 December), which writer has probably never been any nearer to same than his breakfast toast. The fact of the matter is that dumping wheat out of doors results in the loss of only a small fraction of the wheat, little more than is lost in transferring it from truck to elevator to railroad car. The first time that the pile of wheat is rained on, it forms a thin, hard crust on the outside which protects the rest of the wheat from damage for many months. Rather than snow adding to the damage, the cold weather insures protection against infestation. Wheat is not dumped on the ground to destroy it, but to save it until transportation and milling facilities can handle it.

As I have described in these columns before, the problem is one of too much wheat produced at the expense of the land and of the meat supply—due to government price support policy. This is particularly true of the Inland Empire area (eastern Washington and Oregon and northern Idaho) referred to, as I can testify from personal experience. Most flour mills in the western U.S. run at nearly full capacity (24 hours a day, seven days a week) year around in order to keep up this artificially-bloated grain supply. When there is a bumper harvest, as there was this year, they are just unable to work any faster. And every bumper harvest sets a new all-time record because every year more acres of sub-marginal land are put into cultivation in wheat in order to reap the government's lush bonuses. All this is done without thought of either increasing erosion and flood problems or of the dwindling meat production.

Chicago, Jan. 12. RICHARD J. DEHAAN.

vidual to decide for himself in what he shall obey, in what he shall play the toady—naturally hating the rôle, but accepting it as expedient—and in what he must disobey to save his soul. If Sir Herbert now confines his acts of disobedience to his thoughts he alone is in a position to say whether or not his integrity is still intact. The anarchists have no leaders, so there is no leader to be lost.

London, Jan. 17. ROBERT COPPING.

WE wish to point out that the editorial in FREEDOM on the subject of "Titles of Honour" in no way represents the opinion of this Group.

Knowing Herbert Read as a public figure as we do, we are not at all surprised that he has not refused the offer of a knighthood. We are not concerned to criticise Read's personal choice; we think that it will be an embarrassment to him and will expose him to ridicule, but that is his affair. What we are concerned about, however, is the apologia which he wrote in FREEDOM. We consider his strictures on anarchists impertinent, his reasoning ridiculous, and his need to write such a lame apology like that of a small boy caught stealing jam.

If Read wishes to make use of the snobbish values of our time for his own ends, let him do so, but we want to make it clear that we dissociate ourselves

past, or blocks the possibility of useful service in the future, and this is clearly what our correspondents hold. A.M. actually says that I wish to have the anarchist contempt for titles and Herbert Read, too, and that is just what I do want. Read has worked for anarchism too well in the past for anarchists to throw him to the wolves because they disagree with his recent decision.

Indeed, much as I disagree with Read's acceptance of a knighthood, I disagree even more strongly with an uncritical and fundamentalist anarchist orthodoxy, which comes very near to being a witch hunt. "We disagree with him: throw him out!" This is the tone of many of the above letters, most of them, especially the L.A.G.'s, more or less insulting.

Read has by his books brought the ideas of anarchism to a public who would otherwise never have heard it discussed. His critics might well read his articles written during the Spanish war in Spain and the World. They may care to remember his courageous speeches as chairman of the Freedom Press Defence Committee when some of our comrades (of whom the writer was one) were charged with sedition. His public eminence and known integrity were very useful to our movement then. Despite our comrades of the L.A.G., or S. E. Parker et al. who are "not aware that he was 'so prominent an exponent of anarchist ideas,'" I do not forget these facts. And I take them into account when I consider Read's present action. I very much dislike the tendency to forget past services when some present disagreements arise.

On the question of my last paragraph, I find it difficult to argue in the face of what seems to me a wilful misunderstanding of Read's contention that it is a duty to take a position in society that will give force and authority to one's faith. It seems plain to me that if one participates in social affairs one's minority views will have force in proportion to the respect in which one is held. Only those who never seek in a practical way to affect the conduct of organised social affairs, who have never sat on a committee, could twist Read's meaning so ungenerously. If I failed to convey my meaning adequately to the indignant trustees of anarchist orthodoxy, perhaps I am to blame. What I meant was that since Read is held in respect by his colleagues in his public work, and they have signalled it by recommending him for a knighthood, then that fact enables him to press his own views with that much more force. If the critics say that Read's anarchist views are unimportant in his public work, I can only register disagreement with them.

To sum up. Read's action does not alter the general anarchist position, but his past record entitles him to a sympathetic hearing. To register disagreement does not mean that one cannot hope that some good may come from Read's decision. However unfortunate one may feel that decision to be, the attitude of heresy-hunting and righteous moral condemnation on the part of our correspondents seems to me an even more serious danger to the progress of anarchism.

from his extraordinary perversion of anarchist ideas and from the equally extraordinary commentary which appeared in the editorial of FREEDOM.

THE LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP.

London, Jan. 19.

HERBERT READ's apologia in your recent issue of FREEDOM raises the age-old question of how far is compromise justifiable?

It is true that anarchists and their sympathisers compromise in order not to contract out of society altogether, but I fail to see that the acceptance of a title involves anything approaching this. One has a ration book in order to get certain food readily, one may even marry for expediency, one may do other things in order to save oneself from "the vengeance of the law or society," one may also consider whether a certain reactionary behaviour will prevent one's children from being heavily penalised. Many anarchists would also condemn this sort of compromise.

But in refusing to accept a title, I cannot see that either Herbert Read or his children would be penalised in any way unless they regard a title as a privilege.

As for saying that "a position in society . . . will give force and authority to one's faith", and suggesting that it is an "elementary duty" to take it up, does Herbert Read seriously believe that those who have refused titles in the past have neglected their duty? Is such authority really of value to an artist or to society?

Would it be possible, through your columns to ask Herbert Read if further titles would be acceptable, for a "Sun" may be the jumping off ground for hereditary titles. Could this be called even bourgeois? Surely it would mean a recognition of an upper class and a seat in the House of Lords.

London, Jan. 19. MARJORIE E. MITCHELL.

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting  
HYDE PARK  
Every Sunday at 4.30 p.m.

### INDOOR MEETINGS NOTICE

London Comrades are requested to note that the London Anarchist Group's Tuesday evening meetings will be held in future at:

GARIBALDI RESTAURANT,  
10 LAYSTALL STREET, E.C.1  
(3 mins. Holborn Hall)

The meetings will be held on TUESDAYS at 7.30 p.m.

JAN. 27—Philip Lewis on  
ANARCHISM AND POWER

### NORTH-EAST LONDON

DISCUSSION MEETINGS  
IN EAST HAM  
Alternate Wednesdays  
at 7.30 p.m.

JAN. 28—Frank Rowe on  
THE AFRICAN CRISIS

### LIVERPOOL

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

### GLASGOW

INDOOR MEETINGS  
at  
CENTRAL HALLS, 25 Bath Street  
Every Sunday at 7 p.m.  
With John Gaffney, Frank Carlin  
Jane Strachan, Eddie Shaw,

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