

Freedom

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

"Government is not reason, it is not eloquence—it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master."
 GEORGE WASHINGTON.

WHAT NEXT IN INDIA ?

"End of British Rule" does not mean Freedom for the Indian Masses

THE statement of the Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten, that full power is to be handed over to Indian authorities by August has come as something of a surprise to those who doubted if the British Government really meant to withdraw from India by June 1948. But it is a long jump to assume that British Imperialism has "had a change of heart". Government spokesmen have not tried to conceal their recognition that their political grip in India is slackening because it is no longer possible to maintain British control. One reserves one's opinion when virtue is so obviously made out of necessity.

But, in addition, there is no other sign that British Imperialism under the Labour Party has changed its spots. The Tories have been wont to describe India as the brightest jewel in the Imperial Crown; and when Mr. Eden, speaking on behalf of the Conservative Party, stresses his opinion that Labour Foreign policy differs in no particular from that of his party—who have, indeed, "loyally supported Mr. Bevin"—we see no reason for premature rejoicing at the alleged death throes of Imperialism.

The proposed partition of India, moreover, smacks so much of Ulster, and so obviously maintains the division which is a requisite for ruling (in the familiar imperialist formula), that common sense councils reserve before acclaiming the plan as a "socialist step of the first importance". Those who have supported the Nationalist struggle of the Indian National Congress, as well as more progressive viewpoints, have long regarded Mr. Jinnah as a "British Quisling", and Pakistan as an Indian Ulster. Is there any reason for going back on this view now?

Dominion Status

The question of whether the British Government is sincere or insincere is really irrelevant. No doubt many of the experts who have worked out the details of the present plan believe that they are doing the best possible in the circumstances. But it is more to the point to consider the new position—if it is new—as it affects the Indian people.

India is to have Dominion status, like Australia or Canada, and will be theoretically free to secede from the British Empire. Such a step, of course, does not signify the reversal of Imperialism, but rather its normal development. Australia and Canada were first useful to Britain as sources of raw materials and later as markets. But as more and more capital was invested in these former colonies and they became to some extent industrialized, the needs of their own production required that the colonial industrialists should themselves control the political administration of the country. So they were given dominion status and "self-government".

Former Nazi Generals Become Russian Propagandists

In a recent issue, we drew attention to the activities of the former Nazi generals Von Paulus and Von Seydlitz in helping to train the Red Army. The Seydlitz Corps was officially dissolved two years ago, but it still carries on.

Now it is reported that it is carrying on Russian propaganda activity outside the Russian zone, and even outside Germany itself. It is alleged that the Corps is financially supported by the Soviet sponsored "Socialist Unity Party".

The *News Chronicle* (13/5/47) states that "it has feelers as far afield as Mexico, and . . . a German named Paul Murker has been organizing since 1943 a recruiting agency for Germans abroad on lines which dismally resemble the work of Bohle, head of the *Ausslandische Deutscher* (Germans abroad) in Hitler

India's history has been similar but slower. Originally a market and source of raw materials, the British used all sorts of legislative means to destroy local production plants which competed with British factories. In this way Indian village industries were destroyed. But the development of British capitalism has caused enormous amounts of British capital to be invested in India, and in Indian industrial enterprises, so that now India is not only a market, but also an industrialized country on its own account competing with Britain. This industrializing process has been enormously accelerated by the war. Hence, the same conditions which brought on dominion status for Canada and Australia now apply in India also.

In the cases of Canada and Australia in the past the granting of dominion status was bewailed (or acclaimed) as the end of British Imperialism, but the Empire has still managed to carry on!

Investments

We have mentioned the export of British capital to India. This in itself provides an economic means whereby the "mother" country (to use the quaint terminology of the imperialists) can retain a powerful hold over the internal affairs of India. If the country passes out of the political control of Britain, it still remains within the British sphere of influence, i.e., within the bounds of British economy.

It is admitted, moreover, that Pakistan, as well as providing a division which puts Britain in the position of the rejoicing third who can bring pressure to bear on either section by favouring first one and then the other, also will need economic help from outside—that is, from Britain. For the Moslem State will be itself divided into two parts, one in the North-West, the other in the North-East, separated by a thousand miles of Hindu territory. Rich in agriculture and in the possibility of hydro-electric power, Pakistan will be lacking in coal, iron and oil.

Altogether, there are still plenty of means whereby the British can exercise a powerful say in the internal affairs of a "free and independent India".

What Of The Indian People?

But examination of the Pakistan idea itself suggests that there are much more satisfactory solutions available than this. The argument is that Hindus do not want to be ruled by Moslems while Moslems do not want to be ruled by Hindus. The British Cabinet's scheme

was for a strong central government to rule over a unified India. But since the Hindu and Moslem leaders will not accept that, say the British, partition is the only thing possible. Of course, partition does not mean that minorities will not be ruled over by "alien" religious administrators; it just irons out the grosser religious anomalies. But why is a central government (or two central governments) necessary at all? The Indian peasant never sees the government, only its ill-paid officials who come to extort the taxes or maintain by force the rights of usurers. That the government is Hindu or Moslem does not alter the tax exactions or the indebtedness of the peasants.

Obviously, the peasant wants to be relieved of taxes to maintain services from which he does not benefit, or of debts which condemn him to miserable and irredeemable poverty, and whose sanction lies solely in the rights of private property and the sanctity of interest. He wants to be relieved of Government itself.

The fact that British money is invested in India means that the Indian worker has to be exploited to pay the interest on that capital. He will still be exploited whatever the government is

in power. Although it is no wonder that the present political moves in India are spoken of solely in terms of the Viceroy and Nehru and Jinnah. The Indian workers and peasants are not mentioned for the good reason that they are not consulted; for Imperialism and Indian Nationalism alike, the

workers and the peasants exist only to be exploited. If he objects, why then both Imperialist and Nationalist have police to bring him to order. We may be sure the people of India will look with a lack-lustre eye at the much lauded "end of British rule". It will not bring him freedom.

Labour Conference

BEVIN'S VICTORY

Must not be the Last Word

At the Labour Party Conference the question of foreign policy was expected to provoke the strongest criticism of the leadership; but in the event the Labour "rebels"—Crossman of the "Keep Left" group and Zilliacus of the cryptos—got no support at all, while Bevin got an enthusiastic ovation. This walk-over for Bevin has been regarded as a clear mandate from the Labour Party rank-and-file backing the Government's foreign policy.

But the defeat of these "rebels" probably does not amount to that in reality. Bevin's oratory, though shallow enough, was more than equal to crushing these critics, despite the fact that there has been repeated evidence of uneasiness in rank-and-file quarters at the conduct of foreign affairs ever since Bevin publicly committed the Labour members of the Coalition cabinet to support of the Churchill policy in Greece at the end of 1944.

Even the social democrats have some teachings regarding socialism, and it is not surprising that they feel qualms at the spectacle of a Labour Government using

British armies to crush workers abroad. They do not feel comfortable when Labour leaders declare that there is no such thing as a socialist foreign policy because British foreign policy is continuous whether administered by Tory or Labour.

These were not the grounds advanced by Crossman and Zilliacus however. Had they developed some traditional socialist criticisms of imperialist scrambles abroad they might have shaken the leadership. But Zilliacus was content to be a Russian stooge, and Crossman's criticisms centered round saving the dollars.

The British workers have some glorious pages in their history; when they stopped intervention in Russia by strike action, for example. And though they also have allowed apathy and faith in leaders to supplant international working class solidarity during the Spanish war, they have not wholly lost a sense of working solidarity. It is not impossible that the victory for the Government in the Party Conference will not prove the end of criticism from the rank-and-file, even though the parliamentary "rebels" are such tame sheep.

French Railmen's Strike

IT is impossible to keep up with the progress of French strikes with a fortnightly paper. The strike of the Gas and Electricity workers (*Freedom*, 31/5/47) which threatened to paralyse French industry was averted at the eleventh hour, but in the meantime the Paris bakers decided to strike for shorter hours. Since they had themselves limited this protest to 48 hours the Government were saved the trouble of doing anything about bringing it to an end.

Now, the most serious strike taking place in France, that of the railwaymen, has resulted in complete chaos in the transport system, with the Government quite powerless in the matter. The position, as we go to press, is that the Government states that conversations can only be resumed if work is resumed, that the railways are a nationalised public service, and that the railwaymen have no right suddenly to abandon their duty. The railwaymen's union declares that it can do nothing with its members if the Government will not consent to negotiate.

Meanwhile, M. Moch, the Socialist Minister of Transport, has made a radio speech in which he drew attention to all he had done for the railway-workers during the past 20 years and added that the Government had already decided to increase the pay bill by 8,000,000 francs for the second half of the year and called upon the workers to return to duty.

He then praised them for their services before and after the liberation and in the same breath waved the big stick when he declared that he was resolved to use military road transport and drivers if the strike continued.

The *Manchester Guardian's* Paris correspondent commenting on this speech states that "what seems to have been missing is any personal touch between the Ministry and the men. M. Moch is a tall, lean, intellectual, a man of statistics, and the bitter complaint is now made from the railwaymen's side that they have been knocking vainly at his door for months. They are not likely to be softened by reminders of what they have received because their wage level is still substantially lower than in many industries and prices rose much faster in 1946 than did pay."

All the three trade union federations concerned declare that the strike came from the workshops and railway yards, not from the men's official leaders, and that it is beyond their control, not least because the workers do not any longer put hope in M. Moch."

Secretary & 27 Members of C.N.T. Arrested in Spain

Facing Death Penalty for "crime" of belonging to "illegal organisation"

WE have been informed by a Spanish correspondent that more arrests of comrades of the C.N.T. (the Anarcho-Syndicalist National Confederation of Labour) have taken place recently. The first to be arrested was the General Secretary of the C.N.T. in Spain and his arrest was followed by that of 27 other members of the organization. Our correspondent draws our attention to the fact that the arrested Secretary General is liable to the death penalty under a new law forbidding the acceptance of posts such as that of Secretary or President of any illegal organization.

The information we have received is confirmed by a report which appeared in last Sunday's *Observer*.

The carrying out of the death sentence on our comrades Amador Franco and Antonio Lopez (*Freedom*, 31/5/47) in spite of the publicity given in the Left Press to the case and the protests sent to the Spanish authorities clearly indicates that the lives of the 28 comrades now in Franco's clutches cannot be saved by protests from small militant groups. It is necessary to awaken an active interest amongst all sections of the community to the outrages being perpetrated by the Dictator Franco. Let the workers in the "democratic" countries show the same indignation for the "crimes against humanity" that are being daily committed in Spain as for those committed by the Nazis and for which they were prepared to justify the unleashing of a world war. We do not suggest that a war against Spain is the solution (nothing will justify war, in our view), but at the very least we do expect that a feeling of strong indignation should sweep the country, and that the trade union rank and file should feel a strong bond of solidarity with their suffering comrades in the hell that is Franco's Spain.

The Commune

THE anarchist movement between the wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45 tended to be dominated by syndicalist influences. The most powerful organisations in the libertarian movement were such syndicalist bodies as the C.N.T. and the powerful revolutionary syndicalist groups in Italy, France, Sweden and elsewhere. In America the example of the I.W.W. tended to give the revolutionary working class a similar bias towards industrial organisation, and the Spanish civil war, which placed the C.N.T. and its syndicalist ideas of organisation at the head of the libertarian struggle gave emphasis to this aspect of anarchism. The Spanish anarchists in particular developed their ideas on industrial organisation to such an extent that writers like Santillan produced blue prints of the "free society" which were almost as terrifyingly rigid as those of capitalist or communist state planners. I propose in another article to return in more detail to the danger implicit in this tendency to make too rigid plans for the society at which we aim. For the present, however, I am concerned with the emphasis which has been given to industrial organisation during a whole generation of anarchist and near-anarchist struggle. For thirty years anarchism was, for good or bad, predominantly syndicalist.

The end of this war, however, has brought a very profound change in the nature of the libertarian movements throughout the world. Anarchism has re-emerged from the war with a new vigour. In France and Italy there are large movements once again, and in the former country at least the movement is more vigorous than it was before the war. Small, but lively anarchist groups, with many young members, are operating in England, America, Switzerland and Holland. The Chinese movement has arisen again, and from the South American countries comes news that the movements there are once again taking up the struggle. Everywhere anarchist periodicals are appearing and increasing their circulation and influence. Even in Germany and Austria the anarchists are reassembling and contacting new and interested sections of the population.

It is, however, significant that this rebirth of the anarchist movement has not been accompanied by the kind of large-scale syndicalist movements that existed before the war. Sweden, where the continuity of the syndicalist movement has never been interrupted, and Spain where the underground libertarian movement still remains something of an unknown quantity, are the only exceptions of any consequence. The other large movement which has maintained a continuous existence during the past decades, that of Bulgaria, has never tended towards large-scale syndicalism, remaining always a movement of anarchist communism.

Elsewhere than in Spain and Sweden, the only syndicalist movements that have re-appeared are those of France and Italy. In neither countries have they reached anything like the same importance as the anarchist groups; attempts to form large-scale syndicalist organisations have failed, and the syndicalist groups remain more or less concentrated in particular factories and workshops, where they play an active part, as individual groups rather than as a wide movement. Elsewhere, while

the anarchist groups still talk in syndicalist terms, the fact remains that all activity is centred in the anarchist propaganda groups, and not in any syndicalist movement. The once powerful German and Dutch syndicalist federations show little sign of revival. In England there is no syndicalist activity at all. In America, I have the impression (though I stand to be corrected) that the I.W.W. consists of a few old-fashioned militants who put forward a centralist policy of "One Big Union" which makes little appeal to the workers and has precious little to do with anarchism.

This situation, with the revival of vital anarchist groups and the continued moribundity of syndicalism—at least of the old pre-war variety—makes it necessary to reconsider our attitude towards anarchist organisation, and I submit the suggestion that the kind of industrial organisation that has been advocated by many anarcho-syndicalists in the past has no real relation to modern social and technical developments, and that we should envisage a return to a purer form of anarchist communism as the basis for our new libertarian approach.

The anarcho-syndicalism which flourished between the two wars tended to relegate the commune to a minor place in its scheme. This form of syndicalism, and to an even greater extent I.W.W.ism, became so involved in the tactics of the industrial struggle that it came to regard man as little more than a worker, a producer, and to forget that the consumer and the plain human being also have their rights to attention. Therefore we had elaborate schemes for the organisation of production and distribution, and very little attention was paid to that rich communal organisation which is the aim of anarchist communism and without which productive organisation loses its value.

Moreover, the traditional syndicalists became so much involved with the struggle here and now against large-scale capitalism, that they began to be influenced by some of the general concepts of organisation which belonged to capitalist industry at the time. The capitalist trust was paralleled by the idea of the "One Big Union," of the organisation of industries on a national scale, of a society based on a few great syndicates which would dominate it in just the same way as the capitalist trusts attempted to do.

There was a certain lip-service paid to the consumer—the arrangements with other syndicates for the supply of necessary goods, etc., etc. What we forgot was that any monolithic organisation, whether it is a syndicate or an army, tends to set itself above the community of individuals, and that in all large bodies there are enormous dangers of centralism creeping in, if it is only through the ossification of bodies which may begin as co-ordinating councils, but which, if the organisation becomes rigid, may well turn into centres of power.

The large industrial syndicate, in which the loyalties of the workers are firstly to their own industry on a national scale, has as many disadvantages in its own way as the old craft unions. It brings unity on a large scale—but also produces division on a wider front. And it is based on the idea of industry remaining organised in large national networks,

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unity of syndicalism—makes it necessary to reconsider our attitude towards anarchist organisation, and I submit the suggestion that the kind of industrial organisation that has been advocated by many anarcho-syndicalists in the past has no real relation to modern social and technical developments, and that we should envisage a return to a purer form of anarchist communism as the basis for our new libertarian approach.

But anarchism is basically decentralist, founded on diffusion in every possible way, so that units of organisation are no larger or more widespread than is necessary for efficient work. And if efficiency were to depend on the creation of monolithic bodies of any kind—which experience proves it does not—then the true anarchist would willingly sacrifice efficiency.

But it is just in this sphere—of efficiency—that decentralist anarchist communism is most in accordance with modern developments in social science and industrial technique. Large-scale industry, centralised in great factories, is a phenomenon of the capitalist era which was produced by the need of the capitalist to concentrate his economic power, by the mere physical factors of the industrial revolution, which made it more economical to have large factories at or near the sources of coal rather than small workshops scattered over the country, and by the demands of imperialist trade, which required that much industry should be located where it had reasonable rail access to seaports. The factory system brought with it all the evils of overcrowded cities, detached from a healthy contact with the country, as well as the regimentation of workers into large masses of uniform thinkers and liveries.

It was in this situation that syndicalism and I.W.W.ism arose; except for a few far-sighted men, the supporters of these doctrines tended to accept the factory system as something permanent in society,

and to base their ideas of industrial organisation on this assumption.

To-day, however, the physical foundations of the factory system are disappearing. Coal is no longer the only source of power, and, except for certain heavy industries, there is no reason why work should not be carried on in shops or small factories where it has been impossible before. The capitalist's need for centralisation of economic power has no relation at all to the anarchist conception of society, since anarchism is concerned with breaking up any form of centralism, economic or otherwise, and should struggle to rebuild society on an organically regional basis.

The third reason for the existence of the factory system—the need for exports and overseas trade, is largely cancelled out by the fact that modern agricultural methods have made most areas potentially self-sufficient as regards food, while coun-

tries which were formerly in a position of colonial dependency regarding manufactured goods are rapidly developing a high potential power of industrial production. Most international trade is artificially induced by the needs of capitalists to give themselves a justification for existence, and these vested interests have had a great hand in hindering

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natural productive growth. A balanced regional development of agriculture and industry would reduce the need for imports and exports between regions to quite minor proportions, involving only such things as could not readily be produced in the country of consumption, such as exotic fruits, etc.

The possibility of breaking down economic centralism and substituting localised nuclei of industry and administration has been realised not only by anarchists, but also by a number of professional sociologists, particularly Lewis Mumford, whose *Culture of Cities* should be a part of every anarchist's reading. Centralisation has no longer any social, economic or technical justification, and social tendencies, in spite of political developments of a totalitarian nature, are moving towards decentralisation. The writings of Kropotkin on such matters begin suddenly to have a much more contemporary ring than they seemed to have ten or twenty years ago, and it is not surprising that sociologists are beginning

to list him in their bibliographies as an important social scientist.

Decentralisation is in fact the main issue before us to-day. If the great states are not broken up from within, they will bring disaster to humanity in a very short time. And for decentralist teaching to be effective we must have some sound practical concept that will offer an alternative to a centralised society. That concept will not be reached while we are talking in terms of monster industrial unions, and giving the organisation of powerful syndicates a disproportionate place in our minds.

I do not for a moment deny the necessity for a revolutionary fighting movement of the workers to precipitate the end of capitalism. But it is essential, firstly, that the workers should be careful not to imitate capitalist forms of organisation and set up unwieldy and ossified organisations, secondly, that we should not necessarily accept the syndicate as it is evolved in struggle against capitalism as a model for organisation in a free society, and, thirdly, that it should be realised that man considered only as a worker is a pretty lopsided individual. It is capitalism which makes men think of themselves as workers only—anarchism must make them strive to be whole men—and a whole man is a good deal more than a mere producer.

The one anarchist concept that gives the answer to our present problem is that of the commune. We have tended in the past twenty years to retire from the idea of anarchist communism put forward by

Kropotkin and Reclus. Among the large movements, only the Bulgarian retained its anarchist communist character.

But to-day, when social decentralisation, the destruction of the state, are vital questions, the commune is something which we can present to the people as a practical goal for which to struggle. It offers a world where there are no large power units of any kind, where the concentration of industry is ended by the achievement of regional self-sufficiency in food and factory products, and where, instead of life being dominated and sapped by the metropolitan cities, it will become reintegrated in many local centres of culture and social co-operation, which will lead to an enrichment of life such as existed in the free mediaeval cities of the past.

The pivotal unit of organisation in such a society would be the commune, the association of men and women living in a certain locality for the proper satisfaction of the social necessities of life. (Continued on page 4)

Objections to Anarchism

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Anarchists are often told that they have adopted a name that "prejudices" people. Frankly we would have no objection to jettisoning the name and adopting a comfortable alias if we thought the name "Anarchist" unreasonably hampered the growth of anarchist ideas, but we do not think this is so. It is perhaps true that the term "Anarchist" sends shivers down the backs of the timorous middle-class, but so do the ideas the term represents. Many of these ideas could be known under other names, but all these names have been adopted by tendencies of a far different nature. For instance, the term "Liberal" means someone who believes in liberty and is a word which has been used by revolutionary thinkers (even by Anarchists—the Mexican Anarchist pioneers using the name in the Revolution) but it has been adopted by one of the (formerly) great capitalist parties and is now unmistakably associated with that particular party or with Capitalist Democracy generally. The term "Libertarian" which has the same root but different associations, is better, but in so far as it does not explain what Liberty is, can be used by people* with all sorts of woolly ideas on Liberty, who avoid the plain fact that Liberty is No Government, not a modified form of Government. The term Anarchy means plainly and simply No Government and is the best "patent" label for our movement.

As regards the economic pattern of

Anarchism, "Communism" was a respected revolutionary term, and undoubtedly "Anarchist Communism" perfectly describes our theories. But Lenin borrowed the term Communism to describe Marxism, since "Socialism" was at the time identified with the right wing of the Social Democrats, to which party the Russian Bolsheviks belonged. "Communism" has since become identified in the public mind with Bolshevism. In the *A.B.C. of Anarchism* Alexander Berkman makes an explanation which at the time he was writing (1928) was quite logical:

"The Bolsheviks are Communists but they want their dictatorship, their government, to compel people to live in Communism. Anarchist Communism, on the contrary, means voluntary Communism. Communism from free choice."

However, it cannot be said, in my opinion, that this still holds good, because "Communism" is now unalterably identified in the public mind with Bolshevism and present-day Bolshevism—or Stalinism—has in the past ten years become not merely "authoritarian communism" but plainly authoritarianism. Anarchism is a libertarian idea of the communist experiment, but not a libertarian version of Russian State Capitalism which in its Stalinist phase is completely different and divorced even from authoritarian communism.

To describe the means of achieving what we can call anarchist communism but with a definite accent on the anarchism, "syndicalism" is a good

term but it has to be qualified. Syndicalism is revolutionary unionism and we use it to describe the method of organization whereby the workers get together at the place of work, and by organizing against the employing class, prepare for the day when they can take over each industry. Of course, this could be done with authoritarian ideas as to the dominance of particular industries, and to show that it must be imbued with the idea of communalism and freedom our qualifying way of saying the word has to be "Anarcho-syndicalism."

You see, the word anarchism is an essential to our movement. Anarchy means no government, and the only way any social advance can take place is in spite of and against government-alism. The method of syndicalist organisation and communist reconstruction are essentially bound up with the qualifying fact that this revolutionary process can only be anti-governmental, since the State acts as the grave-digger of any insurrection.

While some Anarchists believe in altering the word in the belief that this may dispel the prejudices which these who have been influenced by capitalist propaganda may have, I am of the opinion that more than ever to-day we need a slogan challenging the basis of State servility and capitalist greed, one incorporated into the name of our movement, and this, even more than the determination to stand by a name with such a glorious history, impels me to underline the following passage from Kropotkin:

"We are often reproached for using such a name as that of 'Anarchists'. 'As to your ideas,' we are told, 'they might do; I like them pretty well; but what of this unfortunate name! How will you become a powerful party whilst keeping that name which implies disorder, destruction and chaos? . . ."

"We prefer 'disorder' to that sort of 'order' which once 'reigned' at Warsaw, or the 'order' which was 're-established' at Paris by the slaughter of thirty thousand workers; that 'order', the triumph of which is proclaimed each time that the beginning of a revolution has been stifled in the blood of the working men. That order, which is always the same eternal oppression once more re-established, we do not want. We prefer a thousand times the disorder of the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century, of the revolutionists of 1793, of Garibaldi, of the Commune of 1871, and of so many others to whom the bourgeois dedicate the title—quite glorious in our eyes—of 'fomenters of disorder'."

"Moreover, we have often said that word 'Anarchy'—apart from its very precise literal signification of negation of the State—has already a glorious past. It dates, in fact, from the great French Revolution, when all true revolutionists who did not stop midway but went to the root of a system, doomed to fall, were called 'Anarchists'."

"As to all other names—'Libertarians', 'Acratists' (no demomination), 'anti-Statists', &c., which are sometimes used to evade the great persecutions—they have one common defect of not giving expression to our character of revolutionists—of men who adopt revolutionary means to accomplish fundamentally, essentially revolutionary changes."

A. M.

ANARCHISM —Interpretations

"The question put by Anarchism might be expressed in the following way: 'Which social forms best guarantee in such and such societies, and in humanity at large, the greatest sum of happiness, and therefore the greatest sum of vitality?' 'Which forms of society are most likely to allow the sum of happiness to increase and develop in quantity and quality—that is to say, will enable this happiness to become more complete and more varied?' (which, by the way, gives us the formula of progress).

The desire to help evolution in this direction determines the social, scientific, and artistic activity of the Anarchist. And this activity, in its turn, precisely on account of its falling in with the development of society in this direction, becomes a source of increased vitality, vigour, sense of oneness with mankind and its best vital forces.

It therefore becomes a source of increased vitality and happiness for the individual."

Peter KROPOTKIN.

*The term "libertarian socialist" now being used by the circles which used to prefer the name "revolutionary socialist".

THE WAGES TANGLE

To say that there have always been ridiculous discrepancies and inequalities within the wage system, if it can really be called a system, it to state the obvious. When a man who produces one of the basic necessities of our life (like food, or coal for example) is rewarded by as much in a year as another, who produces nothing for the common good, will receive in a week, it is fairly obvious that there is no real standard of values in operation.

WHEN IT WORKS

The main factors which have always governed wage and salary levels have been, first, the capitalist law of supply and demand and, second, opportunity. Under the first factor, commodities and human beings are governed by precisely similar circumstances. When goods are plentiful and demand small, prices will drop. When they are scarce and consequently demand high, prices will rise. Similarly, when workers are plentiful and jobs scarce, wages will drop; when jobs are plentiful and workers scarce, wages will rise. In other words, workers are a marketable commodity, being bought and sold according to current market values. And the social value of the work done, or the commodity produced, has nothing whatever to do with its money value.

The second factor, opportunity, has always operated in the salaried class much more than among the workers. The only way the worker has of "bettering" his position is by unremitting hard work and fierce economy (unless, of course, he elicits on the pools). But in the middle and upper classes, higher education usually paves the way for entry into the ranks of the black-coated workers at least, and money, privilege, the old school tie, pulling strings, and so on, can assure speedy promotion. In this sphere, the higher up the ladder the climber goes, the less work he does, and the fatter the cheque that is paid monthly into his bank account. If he is one of the lucky ones to be born into a title and money, as soon as he leaves college (with or without having learned anything) all he has to do is to sell his illustrious name to as many firms as will pay adequate sums to have it on their note-paper, he becomes a director, and is made for life. And once again we see no connection between the social value of the activity and the monetary reward.

WHEN IT DOES NOT WORK

Well, all this works very well as long as there is at the bottom of the scale, a large pool of unemployed. This makes all the wage earners only too eager to snatch whatever crumbs are flung at them, and is guaranteed to keep them quiet and in their proper place (the bottom). But when, as at the present time, there is a shortage of labour in some essential industries, then the capitalist apple cart is upset.

One of the first things the present government did was to vote themselves a large increase in pay. Then, having fixed £1,000 a year for themselves, they turn to the workers and tell them, with their £200 to £300 a year, that it is against the national interest to ask for higher wages. When the workers don't quite see it like that, however (they are very ignorant, you know), and come out on strike—then workers cease to be comrades, and become saboteurs.

At the same time, however, the bosses, being in the unfortunate position of needing the workers more than the workers need them, have to make some concessions. In order to get more workers into the basic industries, like mining, steel and textiles, the government are now suggesting industrial preference for those industries. That is, that these workers will get higher pay and better rations than others. Which is very nice for them, but not so nice for the others. So the position will be this: if industrial preference is not given to the undermanned industries, workers will not enter them and production will not rise; if it is, then workers in other industries will want improvements too and if they get them it will nullify the advantages in the undermanned industries as we shall be back where we started. If the other workers don't get the improvements there may well be a wave of industrial unrest and strikes which could send the Government tottering.

If these were all unofficial strikes they could lead to something really important, but it seems just possible that the unions might go so far as to call national strikes against industrial preference. Arthur Deakin, for instance, of the T. & G.W.U., representing a million workers, has served notice on the Government that his union is against it. That the official unions will lead the strikes in order to tame them goes with-

told that the Government approved of it "in principle" but that it was impracticable at the present time. At the Margate conference, however, the Labour Party rank and file voted overwhelmingly for equal pay for women, and the National Executive, on which sit six Cabinet Ministers, are compelled to implement Party policy.

Mr. Morrison, however, has said that "The Party must always remember the Cabinet are responsible for Government policy" and the Cabinet are against equal pay just now. So how they will get out of it is anybody's bet, but one thing is certain—the rank and file will be over-ruled.

THE SOLUTION

All these problems have but one solution—the abolition of the wages system altogether. To-day workers are earning considerably higher wages in most cases than before the war, but are

admittedly no better off. The race of prices and wages is one that prices will always win—and obviously so since profits must be made over and above wages.

The wage system is the means by which workers are robbed of the larger proportion of the value of their labour. The means by which workers are divided among themselves and compete one against the other. The means, in fact, by which the myth of capitalism is perpetuated.

There is no just means by which one man's work can be judged in value against another's, provided only that he is producing something useful either to himself or the community. "To each according to his needs, from each according to his ability" is the only just principle upon which men can give of their best and receive as their right all they need for a full life.

P. S.

out saying, but nevertheless its a ticklish problem for the Government.

EQUAL PAY DILEMMA

Side by side with all these headaches for the poor Government, there is another one. The women are now getting awkward. Believing that the politicians meant what they said when they were begging for votes, women have brought up the question of equal pay for equal work several times, only to be

VICTORY FOR OFFICIAL STRIKERS

Long & Hambly workers return after six weeks strike

The Union-supported strike at Long & Hambly's rubber works at High Wycombe (see last issue of *Freedom*), has ended in complete victory for the strikers.

Agreement was reached after the management approached the Ministry of Labour and conciliation machinery went into operation. The company agrees to recognize the union (the Transport and General) "to permit the union to set up internal representatives or shop stewards, and has agreed to the provision of notice boards and the development of union organisation in the factory by methods of peaceful persuasion." The six men whose dismissal caused the strike have been reinstated and it is stated there will be no victimisation.

This is an example of how, when its own interests or prestige are at stake, an official union will act with determination and with all the odds in its favour. The union supported the strike because the six men declared redundant were actually branch officials of the T. & G.W.U., and for the six weeks the strike continued all the workers received strike pay from the union plus contributions made in sympathy from union branches all over the country, following appeals from the High Wycombe branch. Apparently, the amount paid out equalled the basic wage for all the workers. But suppose the six men had not been branch officials, and had been sacked for some other reason which their fellow-workers considered unjust; would the union have supported them then?

That would have been most unlikely, and without strike pay the unofficial strikers—as they would then have been—would probably not have been able to stay out for six weeks to beat a stubborn and most reactionary management. Yet, the issue of basic solidarity would have been the same. So while congratulating the workers of Long & Hambly on winning their dispute, let us point out to them that the union was acting in its own interests; that the strike pay was but a drop from the swollen coffers of the Transport and General; and that the workers' interests lie not in battling for Deakin's huge and reactionary union (with its closed shop aim, etc.) but in the creation of their own revolutionary shop organisation with the aim of eventually taking over the factory under workers' control.

Agriculture and the Social Revolution—5

The Problem in this Country

THE time has come to sum up this series of articles, and to recapitulate the main points. Capitalist Britain used to derive two-thirds and still derives one-third, of its food from abroad. Since the social revolution in this country will involve a complete change in the social relations regarding property and in the mode of carrying on production and distribution, it is reasonable on historical grounds to expect some form of intervention from the governments of other countries. The object of such intervention will be to defeat the social and economic measures proposed by the revolution in favour of a maintenance of the reactionary *status quo*, involving a clear distinction between rulers and ruled and a class distinction (i.e., a wage system and a machinery for imposing the will of the rulers on the ruled—law, police, army, and a variety of propaganda outfits).

In the opening article we gave some reasons for expecting that any such reactionary intervention would take the form of a food blockade. In addition, the failure of revolutions of the past to solve the problem of bread has been a main cause of their defeats.

It is apparent therefore that the success of the social revolution in this country demands that (for a time at any rate) Britain should be able to become self-supporting in food. We have seen that there is no outstanding physical obstacle in the way of such an attempt, but the difficulties do not by any means end there. We saw that Russia, a food producing country, had her agriculture completely disorganised by such attempts to coerce the peasants as forced requisitioning of food, forced collectivizations, etc. In America, by contrast, failure arose from the adoption of a wasteful and soil destroying mode of extensive farming. This method had as its root cause the market system applied to a terrain where rents were low, and massive mechanization possible; while at the same time, the social system took no account of the economic disasters produced, let alone the social misery of floods and dust bowls, with enormous numbers of farmers driven off their land and compelled to enter into competitive and wage lowering struggles for too few jobs.

Alone upon the historical canvas, the example of Spanish voluntary collectivizations during the revolution of 1936 showed an increase in agricultural production.

The Lessons For Britain

What lessons can we learn from all this? On the economic side we can see that it is absolutely necessary to free

a revolutionary agriculture from any dependence on markets as the controlling element in production. The only revolutionary criterion of production is—is the product needed? If it is, then it must go into production. All ideas of equivalent exchange must be relegated to the capitalist past.

On the political side we can avoid the catastrophic lessons of the Russian revolution. The whole population depends on the farm workers; they are the producers of food. If they do not co-operate with the population as a whole the battle for bread will be lost from the beginning. Hence any attempt to dictate to them or impose force upon them will strangle the revolution (of course, the setting up of a coercive power, a government, would itself signify the transfer of revolutionary initiative from the workers to a governing minority, whether new men or the old rulers. It would signify, in short, the victory of the counter-revolution).

From Spain we can take the general principle that voluntary co-operation in a collectivized agriculture—with no attempt to coerce those who do not immediately accept such a principle—is the soundest social basis for revolutionary agriculture.

The Special Problems

These are general principles: free collectivization of land and tools, and abandonment of a market and exchange economy in favour of the principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." But there are vast differences between Spain and this country; and the conditions which obtain in America and Russia do not exist here in anything like the same form. What we have now to consider is the application of the general principles to the particular conditions of Britain.

The outstanding problem is that of manpower. The rural exodus drained skilled men away from the land in hundreds of thousands and they cannot be rapidly replaced. Then the depressed condition of capitalist farming has made agriculture a field of endeavour where broad initiative and planning is impossible because of the subservience of agricultural interests to those of export capital. The anarchists and anarchist syndicalists in Spain carried on the most thorough educative propaganda to the peasants for years before the revolutionary opportunity came. By 1936, there were men in almost every village who understood the problems of agriculture in its social setting, as well as the technical improvements necessary in order to increase production. But even if the anarchist movement in this country were very much larger, it would be a much more formidable problem to get its

agricultural proposals across to the workers in such a depressed industry. This problem will nevertheless have to be solved; if not before the revolution, then in its immediate early days.

The Allotments Movement

There is however a temporary expedient which might successfully be resorted to during the critical early days. I refer to the allotments movement. In both wars the problem of rapidly increasing food production has arisen, presenting the blockade problem in a less acute form. In both wars, urban workers have been encouraged to work allotments and so grow their own food. In 1913, there were 530,000 allotments; by 1918 the number had risen to 1,400,000.

It is clear that such a number is capable of producing immense amounts of food. Small patches of ground can be thoroughly manured, and receive a very large proportionate amount of work performed on them, so that the yield per acre is potentially very high. Furthermore, crops such as potatoes can be readily grown on allotments without much experience on the part of the grower, and potatoes allow of a very high caloric value per acre of land worked. At all events, it is from such local beginnings that the food problem of the revolution may well have to start. And such a movement might provide the training ground for rural workers to replace the million or more lost to the land through the rural exodus.

The Problem of Needs

I have treated of allotments in order to show that there is a means to hand whereby large amounts of food can be obtained without an undue delay, and so dispel (I hope) at the outset any despair at the magnitude of the problem. Having done so, we can go on to consider the question from another angle—that of the needs of the population as a whole as regards food.

The most rational way to approach such a problem is to work out how much of various food elements (proteins, fats, carbohydrates, minerals, vitamins and trace elements) is required to keep an individual in full health, and then multiply this by the numbers of the population as a whole (for simplicity's sake I leave out of account differences in amounts required by men as compared with women, or with children at various ages; and also variations in need according to the strenuousness of the work done, etc.). These factors can be worked out, and a total requirements figure arrived at. The problem then is to produce such amounts.

In a country like Britain, some districts

In Brief

KENT BUSMEN WIN STRIKE

400 drivers and conductors at Northfleet (North Kent) garage staged a lightning strike at midnight on 3rd June. They complained against new summer schedule which did not allow them sufficient break for meals and between journeys, and meant they would have to do several extra journeys.

The strike did not spread. The management soon climbed down and the men went back in a few days after the Board agreed to alter the schedule.

Busmen generally have been agitating for some time for a shorter hour week. At present they work 48 hours, but the LTPB have only offered to reduce those hours by knocking off travelling and signing-on time, and by reducing meal-times. This the men will not agree to, but, as most of them admit that striking is "the only way to get anything done" we can expect widespread bus strikes sooner or later on the issue.

THE WORKERS' REPLY

A prompt answer to Herbert Morrison's sloganeering speech at Margate was given by eight workers in the hotels there where some of the cabinet ministers were staying. The *London Evening Standard* (28/5/47) reported it thus: "Work—or you bust"—Mr. Morrison solemnly warned the Socialist conference to-day.

And as he said it, eight of the staff of the St. George and Florence hotels, where Mr. Attlee and other Cabinet members had been staying, walked out.

"Don't snatch at higher wages and lower hours," warned Mr. Morrison.

"We want more money," said the eight workers from the kitchens.

"Of the managers we are asking—a developing and deepening of their allegiance so that they think of themselves as servants of the community," said Mr. Morrison.

And in the kitchen at the Florence the manager rolled up his sleeves and wiped the dishes.

are more suited than others to the production of particular crops, or the raising of particular stock. I leave the technical aspects to the farmers themselves. But it is clear that a small amount of organization would allow of the maximum propensities of particular localities being utilized so as to achieve the desired total.

"Revolutionary Austerity"

At the present moment, very large numbers (in 1936, more than 50 per cent.) of the population do not consume a diet adequate for full health. Hence the revolutionary objectives would be much higher than the present consumption levels, and it is obviously doubtful if they could be realized quickly enough to make them a feasible immediate target. Since the immediate problem will be to feed the population during the critical period of blockade, probably a much lower figure would be aimed at. Fortunately, there is a considerable gap between an optimum diet and a diet on which people can subsist without serious loss of working capacity for many years—long enough, at all events, to establish the revolution in a non-agricultural country like Britain. "Revolutionary Austerity" may be an unavoidable necessity, but it has its exemplars. In Spain, for example, the peasants had a very small sugar ration; but in many cases they went without it altogether in order to release sugar for the local manufacturer of explosive materials. A degree of luxury should be the aim of the revolution, but in the moment of struggle revolutionary workers have not in the past insisted on any immediate achievement of such an aim.

A Programme Of Research

It will be recognized that the problems have been treated in the most cursory manner. I hope, none the less, that the general scope of the questions involved has been outlined. In treating even more cursorily the suggested solutions, I hope to have sketched a programme of research which could be carried out only by those with technical knowledge and farming experience. The working out of the problems in detail would be a labour of immense value; for on it may well rest the success of the social revolution in this country. History teaches us only too well the price of yet another failure, in deaths from counter-revolutionary violence and revenge. The problem of bread is the key not only to the avoidance of such a tragic outcome, but also to the realization of those revolutionary vistas which a rational economy and a humane social order open up to men and women of revolutionary imagination.

J. H.

Letter from **France**

THE STRIKE AS AN IMPERIALIST WEAPON

During the past few weeks we have seen in France an outburst of that popular feeling which, as many people hope, may still be able to upset the petty scheming of the politicians and the machinations of the diplomats.

Though one must be careful not to over-simplify a situation determined by ever-changing factors it is nevertheless possible to find out why the workers revolt outside their legal organisations.

The incoherence of bureaucratic planning which shows itself very pendantic in the smallest operations of distribution but completely ineffectual in the control of production, has aroused a profound discontent in the majority of the population. Bread is strictly rationed and is composed of various cereals with only 50% and even 30% of wheat. Wine is practically impossible to obtain with a ration card but is plentiful in cafes. The distribution of meat at reasonable prices has failed and it is costing more every day. Fats are very scarce. Colonial products such as rice, coffee, chocolate, are hardly ever bought by working class families. Speculation and black marketeering give the discontent plenty to grumble about.

Two-sided Agitation

The agitation which has taken place all over France: strikes, meetings, demonstrations, ransacking of town halls, is two-sided.

On one side it is the result of a large

and perfectly organised campaign for the abolition of controls and of planning, and for the suppression of economic control.

At Dijon administrative records were burnt, in other places Treasury employees and inspectors for economic control were molested, beaten up or . . . put into cages.

The other demonstrations are of a purely working class character. They started with the strike at the Renault factories which was followed by protests in many other industries. Street demonstrations and public meetings asked for better food. At Lyon, the Mayor having decided to suppress the bread card because of the great number of false ones in circulation, a spontaneously organised demonstration went to the town hall, seized the Mayor, and obliged him to retract his order at the microphone of the radio station.

Government Action

Deprived of its Communist wing,—which left it with the pretext of supporting working class demands but in reality to protest against the pro-American orientation of Foreign minister Bidault at the Moscow conference—the Ramadier Government tries to show a strong hand.

In a speech in which he tried to be "tough" Monsieur Ramadier put the population on guard against the activities of "trotskyists, anarchists and Cagoulards (hooded men)". He announced that the fomenters of disorder would be punished and declared that those who hoped for a new 6th February (an illusion to the riots which took place in 1934, when the followers of Colonel de la Roque and the Royalists caused the left-wing government to resign) would be disappointed. In conclusion he asked French people to mistrust "the great sorcerer (de Gaulle) and the smaller sorcerers (the revolutionaries)".

In practice the measures taken consisted merely in a decree requisitioning the industries on strike: flour-mills first, gas and electricity later. No solution was found for the vital problem of food. But promises were made to increase very low wages and exempt people earning less than 84,000 francs (£175 per annum) from income tax. Vigilance towards extreme-left elements was increased, and the demonstration organised by the anarchists, in Paris, for the anniversary of the Commune was forbidden. Thousands of militants who had gathered themselves together in spite of the prohibition were charged upon and beaten by the police, first at the spot where they had met and secondly in front of the cemetery where the demonstration was to take place.

The Role of the Communists

Now that they have passed to the opposition the Communists like to show their teeth but have no intention to use them seriously. They merely want to show the present government that it is impossible to govern without them.

Jacques Duclos, the party "theoretician" has several times stressed the fact "that the working class will not fall into the trap of the general strike". On the other hand, he has declared that the communist party remained "a governing party". And finally, "that the battle of production remained a constant preoccupation for his party".

These declarations are intended to reassure the anti-communist majority and prepare a possible return to the Government.

Furthermore, the Party has modified its tactics regarding planning and attacks the "abuses of bureaucracy". It considers that the demands of the small shopkeepers and industrialists are "reasonable".

As far as the workers are concerned, thanks to the hold it has on the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), the Communist Party is able to turn the tap

of revolt on and off as it suits its interests.

The strike of the flour mills workers finished by a compromise. That of the Gas and Electricity finishes with a new agreement after the threat of strike and the threat of requisitioning.

It is a fight with kid gloves on.

There was not a word of criticism against the Communists in Ramadier's speech.

The Parties Game

The explanation of this vast comedy can only be found in the game of the parties and in the control which the Great Powers have on those same parties.

The Gaullist movement, which is rapidly spreading in most provinces, exploits the general discontent and the popular disgust for political parties. For business men and producers it represents a return to the "good old days", when those who had financial power could sell at the highest prices. For colonial exploiters it means the return to the limitless exploitation of the natives. For all of them it is the return to order and authority.

This danger frightens the important parties who enjoy their own power: the socialists and the christian democrats of the MRP. Many of them would accept the General's policy (still very vague) but fear he will fill government posts and jobs with young people.

The communists oppose de Gaulle because he represents American interests.

The game consists, therefore, in the first place, to carry out the policy of de Gaulle without de Gaulle (this is the case in particular of Bidault); and in the second, to create again a coalition government of three parties, playing on the solidarity of the "resistance" parties and trying to put a break on the slide towards Western Powers.

The communists merely accept

strikes, which they have condemned one after the other during these last two years, as an imperialist weapon.

The Issues

The approaching financial strike will probably precipitate events. The experiment of decreasing prices has failed. Exports are going down as the price of French products cannot compete on foreign markets. Producers of export goods loudly demand a devaluation which will have as a result reducing still further the buying power of the working class.

We are heading straight towards an investment of American capital in France and its control over the economic and social life of the country. If Moscow decides to fight the battle then the communists will enter body and soul in the struggle. But it is probable that Stalin will prefer to give in and maintain the Communists in the government or in "His Majesty's opposition", in order to preserve its strength intact.

The working class though having no control over its political or syndicalist organisations, has recently shown that it remains the decisive factor.

The moral split in the CGT will create a great number of minority movements, autonomous syndicates and federations, and the strengthening of the young revolutionary organisation, the CNT.

Simultaneously, we shall see the left wing of the socialist party gain in influence under the impetus of Marceau Pivert and a growth of the trotskyist and anarchist groups.

The working class is in the process of liberating itself from the Communists. But only the class struggle can constitute the ground on which Stalinism can be beaten without falling in with the anti-communism of right wing parties and American finance.

S. PARANE.

Communes and a Free Society

(Continued from page 2)

Each factory and workshop would, of course, be organised as producers, each street and small centre of population as consumers, and there would be innumerable associations of men and women gathered together to promote various interests, such as sport, arts and sciences. The commune would be formed from the co-operation of all these various collections of people, representing different aspects of life, and the task of its delegates would be to co-ordinate and secure the efficient running of all public services and to give expression to the wishes and needs of the people. A commune council would, in fact, be something like a genuine soviet of representatives of all kinds of human interests; it would have no governing power, but would merely exist to secure the co-operation of men in a certain district.

Beyond the commune, the basic unit of social organisation, would grow up the regional and international federations of communes, the federations of various forms of profession and industry on a wide scale, etc. But always it should be emphasised that the only sound foundation for international solidarity is a rich communal life, and that the commune is the unit of organisation which must be established before the rest of anarchist society can be secure.

The return to an emphasis on anarchist communism, instead of the now out-dated "Big Unionism" of the 1920's, necessitates a change in practical approach. Large-scale unity of workers in each industry is still necessary—but it is even more necessary to gain an intensive organisation in each place of work, and also the local association of workers of all trades. This was, in fact, a concept of early French syndicalism, the idea of local *Bourses de Travail*, which was later rather submerged in ideas of monolithic syndicalist organisation. It seems to me that such local organisation of all kinds of producers and consumers may be more effective even now as a means of struggle than big industrial unions. If all the dockers in the country come out in support of the dockers at one port, it is no doubt a good thing. But if all the workers of all industries in their area come out, and if a communal organisation existed to supply the needs of the workers while refusing service to the state, then the revolutionary movement would be in an even stronger position.

Anarchism cannot succeed as a negative doctrine of industrial struggle, nor with a syndicalist idea of organisation which is influenced by capitalist ideas of monolithic centralism. It must bring forward a dynamic concept of social organisation and, to my mind, that exists in the commune, the basic unit of organic social growth, and the only form of organisation in which the individual will be guaranteed not merely his freedom, but also the richest possibilities of personal development. Modern industrial potentialities and social science give the greatest support to the anarchist communist ideas of decentralism and federalism, and should give a great impetus towards building the commune as the organ of social balance and liberty which we must oppose to the unbalance and tyranny of the modern total state.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

Foreign Commentary

IN February of this year some 28,000 of the 31,000 Italians in the town of Pola, now ceded to Yugoslavia, had to pack their belongings and leave their homes for ever (*Freedom*, 1/2/47). Now, according to the Trieste correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* some 25,000 have already left, and since only 2,000 Italians (employed by public utilities or by the Military Government) are to remain in the city until the last moment shortly before the ratification of the treaty, it means that there are still some Italians in Pola who should not be there.

The method now being used following three days' rioting to force the unwanted Italians to leave is to cut them off from their food supply. After meetings ostensibly staged in protest against the high cost of living, women demonstrated, attacked several Italian food stores, and are picketing the rest, forcing the owners to keep their shops closed. Only the co-operative food stores remain open, but these are accessible solely to the pro-Yugoslav section of the population.

This last move on the part of the Communist and pro-Yugoslav elements in the city had been preceded by continuous demands that the administration of the now almost empty town should be entrusted to the Communist committee, in anticipation of the ratification of the peace treaty and the actual handing over of Pola to Yugoslavia.

The trials of Vichyites and pro-Nazis in France continues. Perhaps one day, before the next war, the head-hunting will come to an end. Meanwhile, thousands are kicking their heels in the overcrowded French prisons, and hundreds, perhaps thousands have fallen before the firing squads. No detailed figures of the number of people thus liquidated has been published. But *Combat*, recently gave details of progress so far made in the trials of the Vichy ministers, which started in March, 1945, and still continues! The Court has so far awarded fifteen death sentences. Of these four have been carried out (Darnand, Laval, De Brinon and Admiral Laborde). Eight ministers have been sentenced to death by default and the other three (Petain, General Dentz, Dayras) were reprieved and given life sentences (General Dentz has since died in Fresnes prison). The remaining 20 ministers found guilty have been awarded varying sentences from life imprisonment to so many years "National Indignity".

The composition of the jury trying these men is interesting. At the outset, it was composed of 12 members of parlia-

Man-made Misery

ment and 12 members of the resistance movement. Now it has been modified, the resistance members having been removed and instead 24 M.P.s chosen by ballot make up the jury.

WHERE ARE RUSSIA'S P.O.W.s ?

We have already referred to the unsatisfactory position concerning German and Italian P.O.W.s in Russian hands (*Freedom*, 31/5/47). The Venice correspondent of the *Corriere della Sera* (29/5/47) reports that 200 women with relatives in Russia assembled outside the Soviet Consulate. One of the women was received by the Consulate who informed her that there were no more prisoners in Russia. That he was lying is proved by the fact that a group of 14 P.O.W.s recently arrived in Padua after escaping from a concentration camp in the Odessa district. And now the latest arrival is a former corporal, 34-year-old Raimondo Simonetti, of Mestre. He stated that there are still many Italian P.O.W.s in Russia, of whom a number had given him messages for their families. He gave the names of a number of prisoners in camp 149/13 in Karkov, as well as in the camp at Oranki, near Gorky. He added that in Karaganda, Kasachistan (in Siberia) 850 prisoners are employed in the coal mines while a further thousand at least are dispersed in camps.

These facts should be widely known and every effort made to obtain the immediate repatriation of these men.

When, if ever, the balance sheet is drawn up of Stalin's victims, both among his own people and in the conquered territories, those who have kidded themselves that there is a difference between Red Fascism and the Hitler or Mussolini

Correction.

Some readers of this column must have been puzzled as a result of the transposition of two lines in the Police Brutality article published in the last issue. The third line in the second column "policemen were French policemen (or)" and the 14th line from the bottom of the same column "for three days. For ten days he was" should be interchanged. Then, it will be found the article makes sense. Our apologies for an error . . . beyond the writer's control!

variety will be coming in for a mighty big shock.

RESISTANCE IN PORTUGAL

We are often being reminded by the politicians of the bonds of friendship between this country and Portugal. The fact that there has been a Fascist dictatorship in that country for years doesn't affect the 400 year old military alliance between the two countries. The fact that all workers' organisations in Portugal have been ruthlessly suppressed; that revolutionary workers have been shot and imprisoned for their ideas does not make a scrap of difference to these "bonds of friendship." We never thought it would, yet so many people swallowed the wartime propaganda that the war was "a crusade against the dark forces of Fascism." Have they, we wonder, learnt the lesson for when the same propaganda is directed at them next time? It is 21 years since democratic government in Portugal was overthrown by a military coup. Yet Salazar has not succeeded in stifling the voice of the people completely. We have recently received four issues of an underground printed sheet *A Batalha (The Battle)* published monthly by our anarcho-syndicalist comrades of the General Federation of Labour which is affiliated to the I.W.M.A. (International Working Men's Association). The Libertarian Youth in Portugal have also sent us copies of an 8-page duplicated Bulletin which is issued monthly. Its title is *O Despertar (The Awakening)*.

In the March issue of *A Batalha* a call is made to "Save Our Prisoners" who have for years been bearing the brunt of the most fierce prison repression. In Cachias, Peniche, Aljube do Porio and Lisbon, the Penitentiaries of Lisbon and Coimbra, are to be found our comrades "whose crime was that they struggled against a fascist Dictatorship which for the past twenty years has been decimating us! . . . Enough of this repression against a people that cannot endure much more suffering. On the grounds of humanity . . . we must do all we can for those who have sacrificed all for us. Comrades, anti-fascists: Let us save our prisoners."

Can we here do anything for the workers of Portugal? Or for that matter, of Spain? Can we do anything for the German and Italian P.O.W.s in Russia or the unfortunate men and women and children being driven from their homes in Pola? Can we?

LIBERTARIAN.

SPANISH ANARCHISTS EXECUTED

In a recent issue, we reported the arrest of two Spanish anarchists, Amador Franco and Antonio Lopez, by frontier guards in Spain. They were condemned to death and have now been executed. The anarchist paper in Esperanto gives the following further details:

"Two young libertarians, full of enthusiasm, entered Spain in order to contact the anarchist movement there, which has never ceased struggling against the fascist regime. They were attacked by Falangists and police but resisted for several hours, until their ammunition was exhausted. Arrested and imprisoned, they were then tortured and beaten in an attempt to get information about other anti-fascist militants, but neither torture nor flogging could get a word from them, for they knew that only their silence could save hundreds of men and women from death.

"Amador Franco and Antonio Lopez suffered stoically for many days, and then learnt that they had been condemned to death.

"On April 21st, they were taken to Pasajeas, where no executions had taken place for a long time. They were shot at dawn and both died crying 'Long live Anarchy!'

"The squad originally detailed to carry out the execution had refused to fire, and were eventually replaced by eight volunteers. Five of them have paid for their crime with their lives. The others will follow."

More In The Gaols Than Ever—Nearly 17,000

The recent report that Dartmoor is to be closed leaves us sceptical—we've heard that one before. Perhaps there will come a time when it will be abandoned (but kept standing in case of "emergencies" of course); but it seems hardly likely at a time when the prison population is steadily rising. Here are the figures for the numbers of men in gaols, given by the Prison Officers' Association. Before the war the average number in prisons and Borstals was between 10,000 and 11,000. "In 1945 it was over 14,000, in 1946 over 15,000, and now it exceeded 16,700."

Russia Abolishes Death Penalty

And very good for Russian propaganda, too. Unfortunately, it is not much of a safeguard in a country where a secret police is above the law and not bound by such legal gesticulation. Even if the judges do not pronounce the death penalty, it is very unlikely indeed that the shooting in the back of the neck in a GPU cellar will cease.

But presumably those who would have been sentenced to death for capital crimes other than opposition to the rule of the Communist Party, will now go to swell the ranks of the labour gangs for 25 years. When labour is scarce it is better to have a slave for 25 years than a strangled corpse.

U.S.—Russian Interventionist Rivalry in Europe

European politics are being increasingly confused by the intervention of the great imperialist powers in smaller states. In Hungary, for example, the Russian government is employing its usual "plot-and-concession" technique in order to destroy the electoral majority of the Small-Holders' Party. They have not scrupled to summon members of this party to Russia and then imprison them on vague treason charges which they refuse to divulge—presumably because the evidence is still being manufactured.

A member of the Hungarian Repatriation Committee named Laky recently disappeared in Budapest, and was later reported to have been picked up by car in the Russian zone in Vienna and taken into Hungary.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government has "replied" by cancelling its loan to Hungary, and depriving the country of an UNRRA allocation.

At the same time the American government has plans to "help France to combat Communism", and has granted a loan of £62,000,000 which will probably be used in such a way that the influence of the French Stalinists is diminished.

But such imperialist intervention only confuses the issue and renders the ordinary man thoroughly apathetic—induces a state of mind very favourable to the introduction of one form of totalitarianism or other.

And in fact the American economic aid of reactionary groups against the Communists provides the latter with very good arguments based on "patriotic" grounds. Inevitably, they will derive some sympathy from those workers who are not sufficiently advanced politically to cry "a plague on both your houses!"

The Australian Aborigines

British colonial expansion exterminated the Tasmanian race about 100 years ago, and the anthropologists have never ceased to lament the loss on scientific grounds (not to mention humanitarian ones). For years now the Australian Aborigines, officially protected in Reservations, have been drawn into the poorest paid jobs, where they pick up all the worst vices of a slum civilization, and die like flies from tuberculosis.

Government trusteeship has now shown another example of the worthlessness of its pretensions. Seeking a range for rocket projectiles, the Australian government have taken over the Central Aboriginal Reservation for this purpose and are proposing to move all the natives out whether they like it or not.

This was too much for at least one member of the Government Aborigines Protection Board, Dr. Charles Duguid, who has resigned from the Board in protest. He has denounced a government which claims to be "protecting" the aborigines, and then turns them out as soon as it suits them to make secret researches for the world's destruction.

Police Run Paris Brothels

In his pamphlet *Anarchy*, Malatesta describes how the men appointed to kill off the wolves in France were careful to look after the animals' breeding grounds for fear that they should die out, and so deprive the wolf-catchers of their jobs. A similar farce is being enacted in Paris following the closing of the brothels a year ago. According to the *Sunday Pictorial's* reporter, the brothels are now being run by the police who exact a rake-off from every house that they protect

from the law. No doubt some of the lurid reports of the *Sunday Pictorial* will be treated with some scepticism, but it is interesting to note that the extent of the police control of the now illegal brothels was corroborated for the reporter by Mme. Marthe Richard who was mainly responsible for the illegalizing of the brothels.

It is just one more example of the inability of reformist measures to stamp out an industry in which there is a great deal of money to be made.

Middle East Notes

"Playing with Fire"

The perversion of idealist aspirations into imperialist intrigues is nothing new in the Middle East and was losing its novelty at the time of the Crusades. Not so long ago, the moral indignation over the squabbles between rival Christian factions in the "Holy" Land, under the Turks, served as a pretext for the great powers—Russia, France, Britain—to intervene; later the British introduced a new convenient crop of complications by the Jewish settlement and consequent Arab-Jewish conflict, which has served as well as anything to concentrate troops on the vital junction of East and West and might have been a clever move had not the other powers stepped in to make things a bit more difficult—America by overt support of the Jewish terrorists, Russia by support of Zionism (if not of the Jews) through introducing the Nazi-style pogroms in her occupied countries and thus accelerating immigration, and now France.

France is using a weapon that in other hands managed to shoot her out of the Middle East: Arab nationalism, by which Britain first ousted the Turks and used with success in getting France out of the Levant after the latest war for ideals. Some very striking coincidences have taken place within the last few months. France, always insistent on locking-up anti-imperial prisoners, has been granting amnesties to the lesser fry. Certain better-known prisoners she could not, however, release without a major diplomatic squabble. For instance, Jamal el Husseini, ex-Mufti of Jerusalem. (Whom, by the way, Russian-dominated Yugoslavia listed as a war criminal that Britain wouldn't turn over to her—to please the Palestine Jews—and whom she didn't try very hard to get herself—not to offend the Palestine Arabs!)

The British did not want to try the Mufti, though he was "wanted" for (as well as the pre-war Palestine rising) the pro-Nazi revolt in Iraq under Rashid Ali; the reason being his religious office, as since the Sultan of Turkey lost his throne every Christian power has wanted to assume the role of Protector of Islam! They thought the French had him safely. However, one morning he "escaped", walked on a plane and flew to Cairo, where he signed his name in the visitor's book at Farouk's Abdin Palace, and is reported to be waiting the day to fly to independent Lebanon, where the Palestine Arab terrorist army (set up after the Arab League conference at Bloudan last year) is being trained in the mountains by Nebih el Azmeah and Fawzy el Kawukji, with its battle headquarters close to the border, ready for the civil war, the imminence of which Palestinians avoid discussing.

And now, Abdel Krim, imprisoned by the French for over twenty years in Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean, following the Riff rebellion against Spain in Morocco, has "escaped". (It may be noted the French so-called Popular Front saw to it that he was still safely interned during the Franco rising). After all these years, Abdel Krim was given permission to move his restricted domicile to—the

French Riviera! The ship "Katouma" took him and his entourage up the Suez Canal and—would you believe it?—they all stepped off the ship at Port Said and wouldn't come back, but went to Cairo and signed King Farouk's visitor's book instead, while M. Bidault wrote a diplomatic "protest" and the Albanian King of Egypt politely explained "traditional Arab hospitality".

Abdel Krim is now reported to have contacted the Maghreb (Arab nationalist office for Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria), and a new impetus to a rising—somewhere—is given by the arrival of the intrepid rebel against European domination. Somewhere—but where? France is obviously not willing to forego her hold

India A Problem we Leave Behind

THE war left many problems in its train not the least being the age-old problem of the girls left behind by soldiers, and there are many nations in the world where disillusioned maidens are realising that the fond dreams of London and New York vanished with the outgoing drafts. This problem has been most acute in India, where several generations of occupation by expatriated soldiers have naturally led to extra-marital relations that have created a new "race", the Anglo-Indians.

The Anglo-Indians (as they are known in India—or Eurasians as they are known in England where the term "Anglo-Indian" implies what is called in India "domiciled Englishmen") have yielded very strongly to the ever-present Indian

temptation of forming a new caste, and abjured the idea of India being their nation and looked on themselves as a superior race second only to the Anglo-"Herrenvolk", and the daughters of "Anglo-India" have been most anxious to fulfil the desires of the "European" (a term which, in Asia, includes Americans and Australians!) soldiers in the hope of becoming more "European" in the course of generations. Politically, the Anglo-Indians have been "more English than the English", adopting wholesale the prejudices and narrow nationalism of the "pukka sahib" which are merely ridiculous to the majority of his countrymen. More than any other Indians, except the Princes, view with regret and dismay any departure of the British.

It is not unnatural that Indian nationalists should look askance at the Anglo-Indians and condemn them as "aping British customs", as being "neither flesh nor fowl and nothing but a memorial to British adulteration" and the like, and in one Indian magazine I read to my surprise a statement by a Congress supporter that as "only those who fight will be entitled to share the fruits of freedom" the Anglo-Indians should know this fact and "if they do not want to be treated in India in the way Hitler treated the Jews in Nazi Germany they should immediately join the Indian National Congress and thus help India in her fight for freedom."

While this violent and disturbing language would not be owned by the majority of Congress and least of all by Gandhi and his followers, it is the sort of tone that is frightening Anglo-Indians many of whom are contemplating leaving India for England and some of whom have already done so. But what a rude awakening awaits any who can afford the trip. They will not be "acceptable" so readily and there are in store for them many unpleasant shocks in being snubbed by ignorant and colour-conscious people here in the same way, perhaps, that Anglo-Indians themselves offended in their heyday those Indians who are now reacting to past insults.

We have got to abolish wholesale and completely the lunatic modern idea of shifting populations from this part of the world to that part of the world, and trying to divide mankind into ethnological compartments as if they were breeding chickens, which reached such a pinnacle of absurdity under the Nazi regime that everybody else in the world managed to do the same thing under cover of the greater stupidity. Instead of making domicile fit Nationalist convenience we must make the world our nation and domicile.

There is a very great problem that is going to face a Free World (we will never get in even theoretical distance of it in a capitalist or State-run world) and that is the problem of reconciling and uniting East and West and all the great continents. In the solution of this problem, one which divides the world into "colours" and races, the nations which cannot settle in the present chaos of nationalism because of their position on the border-line, will have the greatest part to play in bringing the nations together for their coalescence into the anarchy of non-nationalism. Any "solution" under the present system of shifting nations or trying to reconcile them in countries where the preservation of the system requires caste division, is worthless, and the only temporary solution that can be of use is for those who believe in Freedom to endeavour to dispel the illusions and prejudices on the subject that clog our minds like ghosts from a discreditable past.

THE ARCTIC IS THE LIMIT

Recent talks of disarmament were greeted by this paper with what some people think is a systematic cynicism. The last United States military budget seems to show, however, that it was not altogether unjustified.

President Truman has asked for \$1,429,197,800 for the U.S. Army's military budget. The House of Representatives Appropriations Committee has made a cut of 8.3 per cent. If Congress upholds the Committee's action the Army will receive a mere \$1,310,245,000 for the year starting on July 1st. This will not include foreign relief and other civil funtions of the Army which will be financed by another Bill.

Reasons for a peace budget three times the size of the total federal budget before the war? General Spaaz (of razing Germany to the ground repute) declared that the United States forces must be on the "Arctic Frontier" and the War Department requested funds to finance large scale manoeuvres in the Arctic and to develop missiles that would travel at 3,000 miles an hour.

Congress will not be asked to vote a single dollar however to overthrow Franco or General Peron.

DAMMIT, SIR!

Mr. Dunne frowned curiously on the bench. "He wanted to join the Army, did he?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," said the constable. "An odd business."

"Yes, sir," agreed the Constable. "He seems to be rather feeble-minded, sir."

Evening News, 27/5/47

on French North Africa, but any embarrassment to Spanish, British or other imperial interests would be only too welcome. It is playing with fire in the hope that the others get burnt; possibly Abdel Krim has some secret commitments with them in exchange for his "escape" which he may or may not keep. The next scene in the play we obviously cannot prophesy exactly; but we do see the way the plot is tending. The big powers are going to struggle for the Italian colonies, for one thing, and all are bidding for the support of the Tripolitanian Arabs in the hope of appearing their protectors.

In the same way Britain has appeared as the champions of Sudanese independence against—the Anglo-Egyptian condominium! Egypt insists on the Sudan becoming solely Egyptian; Britain insists on its being independent of both, Arab independence being a card Britain plays much better than Egypt, the queen of the Arab League!

Meanwhile America forges ahead with her commercial penetration of the Arab countries; Russia trains her political agents; and France enters the arena! Let us hope nobody thinks this is just a game of naked imperialist power politics, and anybody with a second-hand ideal or two to spare should send them along to the Right Honourable Ernest Bevin at Carlton House Gardens, where they will be gratefully received.

A. M.

THE NEW HERRENVOLK

I have just returned to India after a spell in Germany. Never in all my life have I been so ashamed of being English.

The situation in Germany is appalling. Men, women and children are dying in the streets, while fat, bloated, snobbish wives of Colonial Commission officers sit back in the house of some evicted family whose underfed daughter is a slave for a meagre wage.

I have seen silly little typists, their heads swollen by the treatment they have received, walk about with their noses in the air as if they owned the country, more often than not ignoring the polite salutations of the Germans.

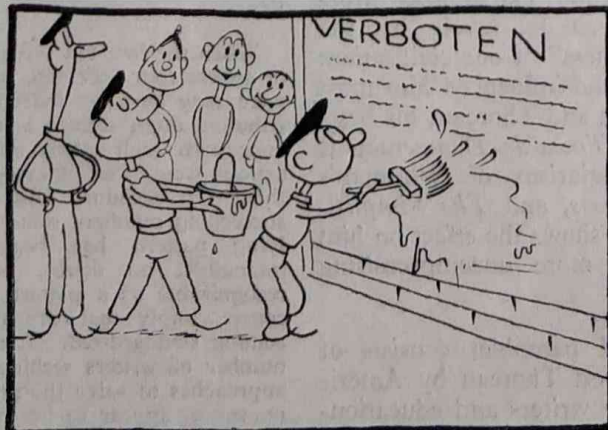
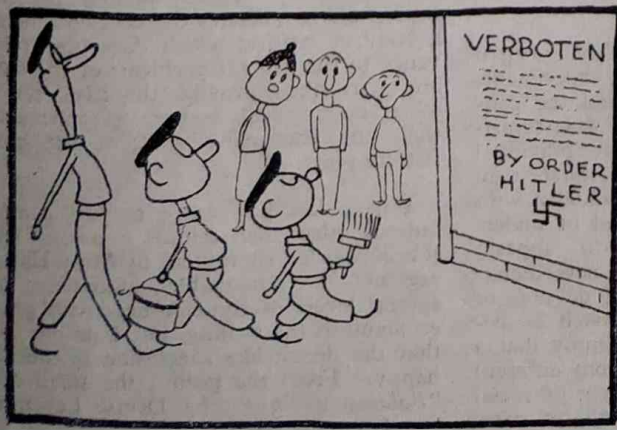
I have fought against the Germans. My brother and father were both killed in the war. Yet I bear no personal grudge. Must we kick a man when he's down? It is British?—Captain D. E. H., D.S.O., G.H.G. (I) India Command.

Letter in *Daily Mirror*. But we thought it was something inherent in Prussian arrogance that made the Nazis act that way, when they were top-dogs.

THE THREE MUSKETEERS—9.

THE LIBERATORS

By JOHN OLDAY



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A New Monthly Feature by George Woodcock—

WHEN one studies the history of contemporary European literature, it is interesting to see how many of the really significant writers, the revolutionary writers in an artistic sense, have not only reproduced in their work ideas which they hold in common with anarchism, but have actually been directly interested in the anarchist movement itself. In Gorman's biography of James Joyce, for instance, there is a note on the social writers who interested the author of *Ulysses*. Almost all the names in this list are those of anarchists or near-anarchists; they include Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta and Elisée Reclus. At the same time, while Joyce enjoyed reading anarchist writers, and no doubt found that their ideas had much in common with his own revolutionary theories of writing, he could not stand Marx. It is said that he read only a few pages of *Das Kapital*, and then abandoned it as too pompous to be readable.

Kafka and Anarchism.

A similar interest in anarchist writings was shown by Franz Kafka, according to the recently published biography by Max Brod (*Franz Kafka*, Secker & Warburg, 12/6). It has been for some time the habit of literary obscurantists to try and find in Kafka's work merely the evidence of a search for God. But it has always struck anarchists how well those magnificent novels, *The Castle*, *The Trial* and *America*, could be taken as an allegory satirising the structure and activities of the State. Nothing could illustrate more aptly than *The Trial* the nightmare quality of "justice" as it is practiced in capitalist or socialist states, while the useless efforts of K. to gain from the authorities in *The Castle* the right to live a full life are very reminiscent of those of the modern individual who is set at odds with the State. The very working of justice and bureaucracy in Kafka's novels is so fantastically reproduced in the world to-day that his social insight seems almost uncanny.

Brod's biography now throws some quite important light on this subject. Kafka worked for many years in an insurance office, dealing with his workmen's compensation claims, and it was there that he gained the mater-

LITERARY NOTES

ial for his fantasies by observing the strange and quite inhuman way in which capitalist society dealt with its victims. He was also however, positively interested in anarchist ideas. Before 1914 he was a frequent attendant of an anarchist circle in Prague, to which Hasek, author of *The Good Soldier Schweik*, also went, and during the 1914-18 war he spent a great deal of time studying anarchist writings; in fact, of a list given by Brod of six authors who interested Kafka most during that five years, two are Kropotkin and Herzen. It is very likely that Kropotkin's descriptions of his prison experiences played a part in shaping Kafka's novel, *The Trial*.

Brod, of course, is one of those writers who like to stress the religious element in Kafka's work, and no doubt that element did exist, but to my mind it was not nearly so strong as the anarchist consciousness of the way in which modern society treats those individuals who try to stand out and attain freedom and happiness.

Melville's Billy Budd.

In a recent issue of *Freedom* I devoted an article to another writer who has very strong anarchist characteristics, Herman Melville. There has now been published a short novel, *Billy Budd* (John Lehman, 5/-), which has never before appeared in an unlimited English edition, and which has an even stronger anarchist flavour than Melville's other books. It is an allegory illustrating the difference between real justice and artificial codes of law. Superficially, it is another sea story, but the whole intention centres round the conflict in the minds of a number of naval officers called on to try a sailor who had struck and accidentally killed a superior officer. According to every natural concept of justice the man on trial is morally innocent and the dead man deserved what he got. But the officers have to judge according to a naval code based on the maintenance of discipline, and so they condemn the man to death. The story takes place just before the Mutiny of the Nore, and should be read, both as an excellent piece of writing, and as an apt and almost timely comment on the inhumanity of military law, courts martial, and law in general.

Here again, obscurantist critics find God lurking, but personally, I found not the slightest trace of the deity in this very straightforward allegory. I think we should always be very wary of the contemporary tendency to read religious meanings into various writers. If we take too much notice of it, we may tend to neglect many good writers and abandon them to the claims of philosophies and creeds with which they may have had little in common.

Harper's Magazine attacks American Anarchist Writers.

American anarchist writers have come in recently for somewhat doubtful publicity in *Harper's*, one of the American society magazines, which contains an article entitled *Sex and Anarchy*, dealing with the group of anarchist writers in California who are much influenced by the work of Wilhelm Reich. The article is full of inaccuracies, sensationalism and distortions, but it is a sign of the importance which anarchist ideas are now attaining among some of the younger American writers.

Among well-known American writers active in the anarchist movement are Kenneth Rexroth, the poet and American correspondent of *NOW*, Paul Goodman, whose book of stories *The Facts of Life* has recently been published in England (Nicholson & Watson, 8/6), Philip Lamantia, Robert Duncan, etc. Other "lone" writers with strong anarchist sympathies are Kenneth Patchen, William Everson and, of course, Henry Miller, who regards his meeting with Emma Goldman as a major turning point in his life and continues to fulminate against American civilisation.

Some of these writers are associated with *WHY*, the New York anarchist review, which is shortly to change its name to *Resistance*. Others in California have just brought out the first issue of a large anarchist literary magazine called *The Ark*, while for some years Holley Cantine has published a live occasional anarchist review, *Retort*, from Bearsville, New York.

(Copies of American editions of Rexroth's book, *The Phoenix and the Tortoise* (10/6) and William Everson's *War Elegies* (2/6) are obtainable from Freedom Press.)

Fellow Travellers' Difficulties.

An example of the difficulty which literary fellow travellers of the Communist party experience in facing up to brute facts regarding Russia was shown in a recent issue of *Penguin New Writing*, edited by John Lehmann, in which a translation of a poem by Boris Pasternak was inserted, with the note that Pasternak is the "leading Soviet lyric poet". Since the word *Soviet* has, somewhat misleadingly, passed into common usage as meaning the official government of Russia, readers would be forgiven for assuming that this paragraph was meant to convey that Pasternak is officially approved in Russia. This, although Mr. Lehmann says nothing about it, is very far from the

case; for many years Pasternak has been denounced and persecuted just because he has persistently refused to become an official party songster. Incidentally, there is one very significant verse in the poem translated in *Penguin New Writing*. Pasternak begins by writing a very innocent-sounding poem about thrushes; then he says, quite abruptly:

Such is the thrush's shady bower.
They dwell in woods spared by the
rake,
As artists should, tuned to this power.
Their's is the way I also take.

I do not think it requires any great ingenuity to interpret this verse as an indication of Pasternak's annoyance at the restrictions to which Soviet writers are subjected and his desire to get away from regimentation.

Chinese Edition of Kropotkin.

I have recently heard from a comrade in China who tells me that a collected edition of Kropotkin's works is being prepared in a Chinese translation, of which three volumes have appeared and the fourth is being prepared. That, surely, should be an incentive to the English comrades to make it possible for our own collected edition to appear as quickly as possible, which can only be done by some pretty substantial contributions to the Press Fund.

anniversary of Thoreau's retirement to the hut he built for himself on the shores of Walden Pond where he lived for two years growing his own food and observing his surroundings, an experience he afterwards described in one of the best of naturalist books, and one of the best expositions of individualist philosophy, *Walden, or Life in the Woods*. While most of the essays in the pamphlet are very interesting, and the quotations admirably illustrate both Thoreau's philosophy and his terse and epigrammatic style, they do not entirely avoid a certain degree of repetition, or a rather uncritical adulation of a man who despised any sort of veneration of "the great".

However, Thoreau is certainly not to be minimised, as a writer or as a man. He went to prison rather than pay the tax for the imperialist war with Mexico; he was, as Havelock Ellis said, *the one man* in the whole of America who publicly declared



CARPENTER & THOREAU

"EDWARD CARPENTER, The English Tolstoi", by T. H. Bell. (Los Angeles: The Libertarian Group.)

"THOREAU, The Cosmic Yankee". Centennial Appreciations. (Los Angeles: Rocker Publications Committee.)

Thomas Bell, the author of the first of these pamphlets, was one of the pioneers of anarchism in Scotland and an early friend of Kropotkin on his arrival in this country. (It was Bell who, when Tsar Nicholas II arrived at Leigh on his visit to Queen Victoria, broke through three ranks of soldiers and police and shouted in the Tsar's face, "Down with the Russian tyrant! To hell with all the Empires", which so shook the Tsar, that he cut short his visit and returned to his yacht from a little fishing village). Bell has written a fair and not over-fulsome appreciation of Edward Carpenter who, like Cunningham-Graham or H. W. Nevinson, was an example of the highly-cultured and "well-born" Englishman who devoted himself to all sorts of unpopular and revolutionary causes. They are largely forgotten to-day because so much of what they fought for is now taken for granted, though little of it is yet actually achieved.

Carpenter challenged the Victorian view of our civilisation—that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds—he attacked the view of women as a household ornament, the dogmatism of the 19th century science and of Marxian socialism, he pleaded for a reasonable attitude towards homosexuality, and his *Prisons, Police, and Punishment*, is a classical statement of the anarchist attitude to crime. Carpenter, like William Morris, was driven to revolt by the "damned ugliness" of our civilisation. The writers who influenced him most were Whitman and Thoreau; his best-known book *Towards Democracy* is almost a plagiarism of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and *The Simplification of Life* shows the effect on him of Thoreau's more uncompromising stoicism.

The second pamphlet consists of eleven essays on Thoreau by American libertarian writers and education-

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himself on the side of John Brown, who took up arms against the state on behalf of the runaway Negro slaves; and, through its influence on Gandhi, his essay "On the duty of Civil Disobedience", has altered the history of an empire.

These pamphlets are obtainable from Freedom Press at 1/- each.

A New Issue of NOW

NOW (No. 8, May-June issue): Edited by GEORGE WOODCOCK.

It is good to see the eighth issue of *Now* following so closely on the seventh. After an initial set-back due to the power cuts of the spring, it is to be hoped that this magazine will be able to settle down as a regular bi-monthly.

For many years there has been the need for a magazine animated by a recognition of the social issues of our time, but not sterilized by a doctrinaire adherence to some political nostrum or other. The slavish acceptance of Marxist dogmas reduced the politico-literary reviews of the thirties to the most unenlivening aridity, and showed quite clearly that a "socially conscious" literature (to use an unattractive phrase) must base itself on something altogether wider than political formulae. But their failure by no means showed a positive way to relate writing to the social questions. Clearly it would be to court the same kind of failure to rub out the Marxist slogans, and mechanically apply anarchist generalizations in their place. Instead, experiment was required, a tentative exploration to seek deeper relations between writing and contemporary life.

When the first few issues of *Now* began to appear four years ago such experiments were very tentative indeed, and the contributors often seemed at the widest variance with each other, though individual articles were often of first-rate interest on their own account. But gradually with succeeding numbers some kind of underlying pattern has begun to appear; intangible, no doubt, but nevertheless recognizable as a pattern. I do not, of course, imply that the approach is becoming standardized. It is simply that a number of writers seeking from different approaches to solve the problem of social relevance, appear to be in sight of common ground.

This feeling is especially noticeable in the present issue. Derek Stanford on "Rights of the Imagination", Edward Rawston on "Science and the Novel", and Herbert Read's fugitive notes on the distinction between liberty and freedom, all show a common ground of values, a general feeling for basic human needs. And the presence of this common ground can be felt even though it is never explicitly defined.

Something of the same feeling is to be found in the other articles, though it is less obvious because the subject matter is less general: Alex Comfort on "Censorship and Pornography"—a companion essay to his discussion of sadism in contemporary literature in the seventh issue of *Now*—and Roy Fuller on Matthew Arnold's Poetic object. There are also articles on French literature to-day, and the first part of a long review by Paul Mattick of Trotsky's biography of Stalin.

The articles in the present issue show some unevenness in quality, and none of them reaches the standard of the best in the last few issues. But the emerging coherence in approach and attitude provides an exceedingly hopeful pointer for the future, for it indicates the development of a body of writing which does bear relevance to the general problems of the day, and may thus provide the basis for a social literature altogether less ephemeral than the doctrinaire stuff of the past fifteen years.

I have left little space for the contributions other than critical essays. "The Warehouse", a short story by Mary Harris presents a remarkable awareness on several levels of consciousness with great economy in the writing, but I do not feel that the dream-like conclusion is entirely happy. From the poems, the small one "Folding a Shirt", by Denise Levertov, stands out by itself.

J. H.

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LONDON - W.C.1

Letters to the Editors

ANARCHISM—PAST AND PRESENT

DEAR COMRADES,

I think it does credit to Herbert Read for bringing up the question of non-violence in his recent lecture to the London Group.

I think that non-violence merits the earnest consideration of all workers, particularly of anarchists as propagators of revolutionary thought and action, though from experience I have found some to scoff at the idea. To me non-violence is the most powerful weapon that workers could adopt in their fight against oppressive measures and war, and only if treated as a weapon for action can I see any hope of ever impressing the workers as to its efficacy.

And why should anarchists consider non-violence solely as a "churchy-pacifist" attitude (as one once put it to me)? Surely anarchists haven't forgotten their (Berkman) A.B.C. or have they? Berkman on page 74 deals with this question, and the editors would do well to quote him in future issues of *Freedom*. Max Stirner who did not adhere to absolute non-violence, recognised that the greatest powers of the workers lay in their withdrawing their labour powers from the ruling powers.

One could go on quoting from other anarchist sources but enough has been said. As I have said, if our studied aim is libertarian socialism it makes nonsense of the fact if we advocate violent means. Violence implies compulsion, there is no escaping that, and where does the Anarchism come in?

Emma Goldman stated it well when she said that "The most pernicious idea was that the end justified the means, eventually the means became the end and the real end continued to recede." And Trotsky, when he wrote "who aims at the end cannot reject the means."

Fraternally,
STEPHEN MARLETTA.

★

DEAR COMRADES,

Herbert Read in his analysis of Anarchist policy past and future, abandons Revolution, and in its place substitutes Education.

The futility of attempting such a tremendous task, when we contemplate the mighty educational machine operating at the disposal of Capitalist society, ought to convince the meanest intellect of the

absurdity of such proposals.

To me, the idea of a 'humane' revolution is nonsense and is contrary to all the known laws of nature. The transformation of our present mental and emotional attitudes after millions of years of evolutionary process into loftier and more brotherly relationship, would probably take millions of more years, and in this Atomic age, Time marches with the speed of youth!

Herbert Read, like many more intellectuals has lost touch with realities. Does he, for instance, consider that if the vast majority of human beings should by some miracle be converted to Anarchism overnight that the whole edifice of Capitalism would disintegrate and completely collapse by the following morning?

The present structure of society cannot be changed by our mental attitude towards it. All the wishful-thinking in the world will not make any difference to the lot of the common people, except it is supported by physical action. To assume that our rulers will meekly surrender power because of some new-found 'education' is retrograde in conception, and incompatible with reason.

Passive resistance as a weapon against tyranny means subjection, submission and the perpetuation of slavery. All past concessions torn from the Boss were only accomplished through physical, energetic and resolute militant action, in fields, factories and workshops.

In this critical stage of human history, when all humanity is threatened at any moment with extinction, to talk of educating millions of illiterate people in 'ethics' and 'morality' is simply a waste of time. If this generation is to survive, the policy of education as envisaged by Herbert Read, although admirable, must be cast aside and a new strategy evolved, which will speedily end the present structure of society and save the world and all mankind from destruction.

Clydebank, Glasgow. J.Mc.D.

WHO SAID AUSTERITY?

DEAR COMRADES,

I used to assist occasionally in taking a disabled boy to school. The 'special school' was a dingy little building, glum and dreary outside and equally dismal within. Those were the halcyon days of peace and plenty when unemployed carpenters and painters were as cheap as

supplies of wood and paint. Coming back recently, I saw some boys going in what used to be the school, which was brightly and freshly renovated. I looked inside to see an oak-panelled waiting room, an air of modern efficiency. Such a smart place for a special school in these austere times! I thought . . . but I found it wasn't a special school any more, it was yet another department of the Ministry of Labour, the Juvenile Labour Exchange.

I find that some people don't know how to find places to live in London, yet only around the corner from the rather dilapidated and bombstruck street that *Freedom* is published from, I saw a block of luxury flats facing a spacious square, with no residents that I could gather—needless to say, it was a department of the Ministry of Labour like so many blocks of luxury flats in so many London squares . . . And wherever you go the M. of L. note is Modernity and Comfort.

Who said the country was facing austerity when a perfectly useless organization like the Ministry of Labour can multiply like this? Britain Can Take It! (If anything's left over).

Yours fraternally,
LONDONER.

SUGGESTION— FILM REVIEWS

DEAR COMRADES,

It has occurred to me that it might be advantageous to occasionally include reviews of the half-dozen or so Continental films that are currently screened in London.

The social value of these films is considerable. For example, "Monsieur La Souris" now at Studio 1, entertainingly illustrates the helplessness of a down-and-out, who after actively assisting the police, is thrown out when a case of murder is solved. "Panique" at the Rialto graphically demonstrates mob hysteria against a recluse. "La Cage des Rossignols" is a delightful picture of the inside of a reform school. The surprising point of this picture is the amazement that these young children should be classified as criminals. I mention only a few, but a competent reviewer could probably quote further examples of these intensely human pictures.

Apart from the artistic influence Continental films exercise on the British cinema, a not inconsiderable factor is the resistance against the highly advertised Hollywood concoctions of stereotyped plots and dialogues.

A. CLARKE.

[We agree with our correspondent's suggestion. When the new format for *Freedom* was originally discussed by the Ed. Board it was decided that the book page should include a film review section. We hope to introduce this feature soon.—Eds.]

MORE BLOOD-MONEY!

DEAR COMRADES,

Many of us must have read with appreciation the gesture of the comrade who recently gave his entire gratuity of £50 to *Freedom* rather than accept blood-money. Since this payment has now been extended to those still in the Services, I have received mine, which I enclose herewith. Unfortunately—in spite of Field Marshal Sir Cyril Deverell's accompanying advice 'not to fritter it away' and 'not to touch it until you require it for some really important purpose which can benefit your whole life'—the amount he calls a 'well-earned nest-egg' only amounts to £1 6s. 1d., thanks to absence, detention, etc. However, in spite of this, I hope it will add to the resources of the Press Fund.

H.M.F. SOLDIER.

CRITICISM— THREE MUSKETEERS, CHILDISH?

Bearing in mind that it might be suggested that it must be producing some good effect for me to notice it, may I say that "The Three Musketeers" are extremely naive and childish . . . and pointless. What for instance was the point of Number 4? Again all officers are not as portrayed in these cartoons—very far I should say. Those officers to whom I have shown them have either only grinned or remarked "How silly" . . . Among the officers—who it seems, don't matter anyway—they have no effect and, if anything, prejudices them against the remainder of the paper.

Your letters and articles on deserters are very interesting. They are very true . . . The treatment doled-out to "Deserter" (in your 22nd March issue) is normal as regards accommodation and food (except for the dirty blankets) . . .

Re your article "The Man who Defies the Colour Bar", how very true! The *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus* both published sympathetic portraits—without comment—of Scott. The Press here is very fair on the whole—rather of the *Manchester Guardian* type—but the people are distressingly, bewilderingly, almost frighteningly childish in their emotions and politics.

W. H.

[Our artist's knowledge of Service life has been gained in the Army, Detention Barracks and Prison in approximately equal doses! Perhaps our correspondent has so far failed to notice that playing at soldiers is childish, that the ordering about of men by youths young enough to be their sons is not only childish but ridiculous (Cartoon No. 4 dealt with this aspect of Army life).

At any rate for what it's worth, the attention and interest shown in *The Three Musketeers* by Inspector Whitehead and

his Merry Men of the Special Branch during their investigations into *Freedom's*—then, War Commentary—Army record two years ago is significant.

What do our Service and ex-Service readers think of our correspondent's criticism?—EDITORS.]

MORE CRITICISM— PARTY-LINE TONE?

DEAR FRIENDS,

I find great value in many of the articles you print (especially Herbert Read's speeches) and in the "inside news" of reasons for strikes which are always misrepresented in the rest of the press.

But I offer as a general criticism, and am sure that I am by no means alone among your correspondents in so doing, the opinion that much of your subject matter is spoiled by the intrusion of catch-phrases and the "party-line" tone which have no place in a truly anarchist publication. All parties have taught that all the world's trouble are caused by this or that dragon, but that by following this or that programme a sort of stilted Utopia must logically follow. The distinctive feature of Anarchism has always been (to my mind), not that the dragons, the plans and the Utopia are of a different nature, but its insistence on freedom as a cardinal principle—including, as Herbert Read says, freedom from obsessions. Emancipation takes place within individuals; we have to do more than work for "a society of free communes" or some such pseudo-panacea.

Fraternally

L. H.

Reading.

[We publish L.H.'s letter though unable to accept his criticism because in our opinion it is not based on fact. *Freedom* has no "party-line", but in order to comment on events from an Anarchist viewpoint one must start off with certain basic principles and an "insistence on freedom" of the individual is the dominant theme in the pages of our paper. Since this is not the first occasion this criticism has been made by our correspondent, may we suggest that perhaps he himself is not "free from obsessions" so far as *Freedom* is concerned?—EDITORS.]

FREEDOM IN GERMANY

DEAR SIR,

I am writing in acknowledgement of the receipt of *Freedom*. Three issues have reached me up to now. Thanks for your kindness. Somehow I hope I will be able to recompensate sometimes. At any rate I am making good use of the same and take pleasure in translating the same to friends or pass it on to those who understand. We are here very poor for good reading and am therefore double indebted to you.

Yours sincerely,

H. B.

Oberhausen, Germany.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Sex relations are being regarded more and more by young people as unconnected with the sanctities of married life, declares a committee of the Church of Scotland.

"What is called 'being in love' is often considered as in itself a sufficient justification for marriage, divorce, or premarital relationships, according to circumstances or inclination," says a report issued to the General Assembly by the Committee on Church and Nation.

This is due, suggests the report, partly to a feeling of a lack of meaning in existence, produced by the monotony of industrialism and the tragedy of war, and partly to the influence of certain films and books.

"The devastating effects of this way of thinking on the stability of marriage is obvious, and that a decline in sex morality is accompanied by a decline in honesty and other virtues is not to be wondered at."

"Steadying influences" proposed by the committee—

An increase of young people's clubs.

An attractive gift brochure, setting out the Church's teaching on marriage, to be given to young couples marrying.

Daily Herald.

That being so, the committee would probably consider the following case an ideal marriage:—

In the Divorce Court here to-day Judge Tucker cited these examples of what he said the slightly built 53-year-old woman had in two years done to her 51-year-old husband:

Hit him with a fire shovel and a frying pan.

Threatened him with a carving knife.

Struck at him with a knobby stick in the street and called him abusive names.

Followed him upstairs, pulled his hat off, threw it through the window, then pulled his hair and struck him.

One night in the summer of 1941—he was then L/Cpl. Plaskett, of the Home Guard—he found 10 rounds of ammunition on the fire.

"These might have killed me," he told her.

She denied throwing ammunition on the fire.

"But I am quite sure," said the judge, "that she did say: 'It is no more than you deserve,' for that is quite consistent with other expressions she used."

Later, when he asked if he had to go

on duty without breakfast, she said: "Yes," and that she hoped he would get a bullet through his head.

"Because of her conduct he chose the discomfort of a chair in the kitchen rather than his own bed and for two years he slept downstairs," said the judge.

News Chronicle, 4/6/47.

COMMUNAL SERVICE

Hot water laid on and central heating from the main is planned for a whole suburb now being built at Luton, Beds, to house 7,000 to 8,000 people.

The scheme, estimated to cost £322,000, has been submitted by the town council to the Ministry of Health as likely to save thousands of tons of coal each year.

Without needing a fire, 1,800 houses, shops, a cinema, a public house and a church will have 55 degs. of warmth and hot water night and day if the plan is approved, Councillor G. L. Hay, housing committee chairman, explained yesterday, but each house will have a 'topping-up' fireplace.

Radiators will be built in and the weekly cost to each tenant will be 8s. 6d. added to the rent.

Use of very cheap coal, impossible to burn in an ordinary furnace, is the basis of the scheme.

The new town's roads, beneath which the hot water mains are to run, are now being laid out: Luton expects to begin the first houses in a few days.

Daily Herald, 29/5/47.

KIDDING HIMSELF

Mr. L. A. C. Herbert, general secretary of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants, told the London conference of the institution to-day:

"It is necessary for the public mind to be disabused of the idea that the civil service is a non-productive profession.

"We claim that the vast majority of Civil Servants, and particularly those in membership of our Institution, are as creative, as productive and as socially useful as any other section of the community and a good deal more so than some sections."

The Star, 28/5/47.

OUR BETTERS

When a brains trust, organised at Windsor last night by the National Association for Mental Health, were asked for their opinion on corporal punishment in schools, Mr. R. Wetherall, an Eton college master, said at Eton boys were

Through the Press

beaten by each other.

He said, "Six months ago in one house some of the little boys had been rude to big boys, so the big boys beat 32 of them and wore six canes out."

Evening Standard, 29/5/47.

REWARD FOR SERVICE (II)

When Alfred A. Powell (62), in the G.W.R. service 24 years, was bound over by the local Bench last week for stealing sixpenny-worth of the company's coal, they expressed the hope that he would not lose his job.

The chairman said the case was "one of the human tragedies which came before the Bench."

But after leaving the Court Powell received notice of dismissal from the company.

To-day, he wrote to the manager of the company, Sir James Milne, asking for an interview. He has the support of his union and the letter carried the N.U.R. seal.

There is talk of a protest meeting if his appeal fails. He has also written to the Ministry of Labour.

For his job of sweeping up coal which fell from engine tenders Powell was paid £4 5s. a week.

His youngest son, Fred (he has eight children), is 21. Fred lost both legs in an accident a year ago.

News Chronicle, 14/5/47.

REWARD FOR SERVICE (II)

For 31 years George Thomas Lawler, 45, storeman, worked for British Drug Houses, Graham-street, Finsbury, and his father has only just retired after 54 years with the same firm.

To-day Lawler, junior, stood in the dock at Old-street and admitted stealing from his firm a bottle of nut oil value 2s. 2d., 13 bandages, two pieces of lint, and other articles, total value £1 13s. 6d.

The magistrate, Mr. Geoffrey G. Raphael, said: "The fact that you have been in the employment of this firm 31 years is an aggravated circumstance because you were a trusted servant."

Lawler, who lives at Matilda House, St. Catherine's-way, Wapping, was sent to prison for three months.

Evening Standard, 9/5/47.

THE EXPERT

Thrillers are also to be found in Stalin's library, usually only half-read. He explains: "I always guess who the murderer is before the end."

News Review, 15/5/47.

RUSSIAN INVENTIONS . . .

There are few major inventions which the Soviets do not hold to have first been thought out in Russia. Last night Moscow radio started a broadcast with: "When Alexander Popov, the great Russian scientist, invented the radio . . ."

Writing in "Voks", the Scientific Secretary of the History of Engineering Committee of the Soviet Academy of Sciences states flatly: "The helicopter is a Russian invention, evolved from the theoretical and experimental investigations of the famous Russian scientist, N. E. Zhukovsky, and his school."

Television?—Russian.

Discovery of electronic radiation?—Russian.

Synthesising of protein?—Russian.

The list includes the steam engine, electricity and the phonograph.

Western scientists remain unperturbed. "Britain's claim to inventing the sandwich still stands unchallenged," one said.

News Chronicle, 9/5/47.

We can think of a few major inventions Russians could rightly claim as their own, i.e., concentration camps, spontaneous confessions, summer-saults.

OUR AESTHETIC LEADERS

Replying to a debate on the government plan to build a new power station at Bankside, Mr. Lewis Silkin, Minister of Town and Country Planning, said in parliament this afternoon:

"I have reconsidered the matter in the light of the public discussions and, having reviewed all the objections, I am bound to state that the Government feel obliged

to adhere to their decision.

In that decision he had the support of his colleagues in the Government.

The arguments against the plan had been merely that a power station was inappropriate and objectionable. He asked why.

Mr. Brendan Bracken: Would you put a goal there?

Mr. Silkin: Yes, if it was an attractive goal.

The Star, 23/5/47.

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF!

"Cardinal Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster, described the profit-motive as 'anti-social'. This opinion is hardly likely to be shared by the more responsible members of the community . . ."

The Journal of Commerce.

On the contrary, we quite agree!

DEMOCRACY

The conference passed the equal pay resolution by an overwhelming majority of five to one, and there will be many Labour M.P.s prepared to press for the concession. Ministers are well aware of the strength of the opposition, but they also feel that they cannot accept a position where they become the slavish flunkies of the rank and file. They agree that the Party conference has the right to lay down the broad outline of policy, but the Cabinet must, they argue, have the final word and be left free to judge every issue in the light of the general situation.

Observer, 1/6/47.

What price "representation"?

WHO IS STUPID?

Because the Mayor of Slough, Bucks. (Alderman John Taylor), handed cups of tea to German prisoners at a film show and called them "Our friends from the camp", some townfolk are very annoyed.

A woman who lost her only son in the war has written to a local paper suggesting that to-day should be a day of protest against what she calls stupidity of our leading citizen."

Sunday Pictorial, 1/6/47.

Deserters and Crime

THE PROBLEM OF THE GUNMAN

(From a Forces Correspondent)

At the Lambeth conference of the Prison Officers' Association the Chairman, Mr. Beisty, came out with one of the remarks we might expect from that organisation whose existence is so ironic to those who believe in the fundamental reasons for union association.

"Anyone carrying a gun for an unlawful purpose should be subject to the death penalty . . ."

"It would be interesting to know what steps the critics of our penal system would take with some of the armed thugs who have been waging war on society in recent months," he said.

"I know it would not be opposed to my belief that these persons should be subject to the death penalty, whether murder is the result or not.

"The passing of such an act would, in my submission, be the greatest single measure devised to suppress the activities of the increasing band of potential murderers."

Star, 28/5/47.

As critics, and indeed abolitionists, of the penal system, we join issue with Mr. Beisty's would-be drastic methods, which are not exactly original, since the death penalty for carrying guns has been tried by States and has failed for the simple reason that it encourages the gunmen to fight to the death instead of surrendering. Many countries have armed and militarised the police force and the only result is that gangs fight the police like two small armies, as we have seen in America in our generation, and in certain countries elsewhere in the world at the present day. There is only one way to stop criminals carrying guns and that is to strike at the causes of crime, but the short-sighted "public lifers" can only see "deterrents" and punishments that cannot

possible overcome the great incentive to a life of crime that present-day society offers.

What Causes Crime?

As Kropotkin points out in "In Russian and French Prisons", "Law and Authority", etc., the real surprise in present society is that so few people turn to crime. On the one hand there are the sordid conditions of the workers, drab surroundings and inferior position allotted to them by the absurdity of a society which regards toilworn hands as a sign of degradation rather than pride; on the other hand the social "ideal" where the man of superior position is the man who does not work, dresses well and lives well, uses his ability to exploit others or directs the work of murder on the battlefield. How the newspapers manage to reconcile their readers to their present war on the "spivs" with their adoration of the Society idlers, is possible only by our deliberate moral conditioning by the propaganda agencies of Church, State, Press and Radio.

Why do they moralise indignantly on the black market racketeers? What is it but the "free initiative" we have heard so much talk about? Is their cornering of rationed goods any different to the time-honoured methods of capitalist speculation? In fact, in spite of the denunciations of the Black Market when this is a capitalist affair outside of the State; on certain occasions, as in Russia and France, the Government has nationalised certain Black Market institutions and sold unrationed goods at high prices, while in Norway it was considered patriotic to trade in the black market rather than the (Nazi) State market.

We condemn the black market as any other institution for robbing the masses, but we quite see where lies its attraction for those tempted by the shoddy joys of capitalism; and how those not astute enough to become the No. 1 "spivs" who drive to Buckingham Palace and are presented at Royal Tea Parties, hanker for the position of No. 2 "spivs" as abound in Soho and Brighton.

The Crime Wave

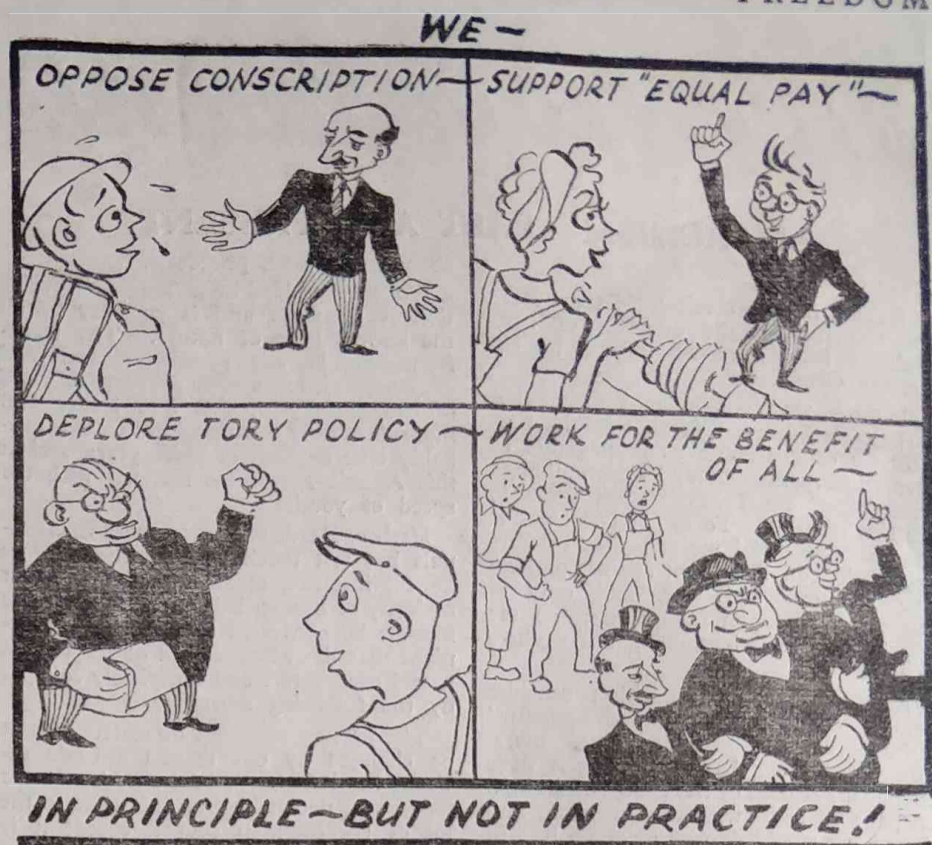
The "No. 2 spivs" are growing rich on the post-war outbreak of armed robbery. This is often blamed on to "deserters" and the "life of crime" they are obliged to lead. I am not in agreement on this point with some fellow-contributors to Freedom. Certainly as there are as many type of deserters as there are of soldiers, there are some forced by desertion into crime, but in these cases it is more often the reverse (i.e., forced by crime, and the

possibilities of apprehension, into desertion), and it is a fact that not all deserters are "in hiding"—the police aren't as efficient as that, except in political cases—and have not even needed to go in for crime. Nor have they had sufficient training to be "trained in the use of arms". I think this belief casts a slur on men whose stand has been much more effective in anti-militarism than standing aloof from the war machine could be. (By its recognition of conscientious objection after careful sifting by tribunals, the Government wanted to avoid trouble in the forces such as in the last war and wanted to get conscientious objectors aside from the forces and not people who "voted with their feet".)

The use of the gun by the "No. 2 spivs" is part of their whole make-up. Swaggering about with a gun is a pastime made popular by the Army—I have seen plenty of young officers bolstering up their conceit in the self-same way—and, (in spite of this last statement hurting many people's feelings) one cannot escape from the plain fact that it assuages an inferiority complex in the same way as a row of ribbons. Most of our "gunmen" don't intend to use their gun—as is shown when some shop assistant gets vigilant for the boss's property—that is why Mr. Beisty's statement is so pernicious. It is far better to show them another way of life where inferiority complexes manifested in flash clothes or lazy living or carrying a gun are sublimated.

But how is present society going to show such a life? The "No. 1 spivs" are only the de luxe editions of the "wide boys" (as a matter of fact, the Intractor case has shown how narrow is the gap that separates them). What about the mass of society? Are their conditions anything to get excited about? Aren't the "spivs" right in despising us for spending our lives in toiling hopelessly for the benefit of people who not only despise us but whose whole philosophy of life is bound up with making things easy for themselves at the expense of everyone else?

It almost looks as if Mr. Beisty is right in thinking there is no hope except his belief in wholesale (legalised) massacre of every damfool kid who goes round swanking with a looted Luger, but fortunately there is an alternative: the libertarian reconstruction of society WITHOUT GOVERNMENT and with a communal basis that would eliminate the needs of crime whether for motives of enrichment or power or self-glorification: an Anarchist Society, in fact.



IN PRINCIPLE—BUT NOT IN PRACTICE!

L.A.G. Sunday Meetings

"Should We Revise Anarchism?"

Marie Louise Berneri pointed out that the recent war had revealed considerable differences between anarchists, and that the issue of the anti-Franco struggle in Spain had raised the question of whether it was justifiable to collaborate with governments or would-be governments. But in considering whether anarchism was in need of revision M. L. Berneri stressed the need to confine one's attention to those theoretical questions on which all anarchists were agreed; and she pointed out that this limited the field to the question of opposition to the state. Revision meant modifying the traditional attitude of complete hostility to the State (which the lecturer was careful to define and separate from the idea of society).

Reviewing the arguments brought forward in favour of such a revision in the light of recent history, and especially the history of the civil war in Spain, these arguments were seen to be fallacious. On the contrary, recent history only confirmed the essential truth of the anarchist hostility to the State.

Despite the clarity with which the lecturer defined the question at issue, discussion covered mostly points on which

anarchists do not necessarily agree, and which cannot strictly be said to be susceptible of a specifically anarchist interpretation.

The Social Experiment at Coventry

Dr. Kenneth Barlow spoke recently at 8, Endsleigh Gardens on the extension of the ideas on which the Peckham Health Centre is based to a Housing Society in Coventry. Some 600 families have joined together to provide themselves with a Health Centre (with all the free recreational facilities of Peckham), with a nutritional farm to provide the families with the basic material in the shape of healthy food on which to found their health; and to form a Housing Association so that they can build the kind of houses and the kind of estate that they want. We hope that Dr. Barlow will contribute an article on Coventry to Freedom in the near future, and set out the projects and their theoretical background in more detail. Discussion was very animated and interested, as with previous speakers about the Peckham experiment.

The Futility of Modern Trade Unions

This was the subject that our old comrade Mat Kavanagh treated in an admirable manner at Endsleigh Gardens on Sunday, the first of June. As he has had a long and varied experience of the trade union movement, and the personalities connected with it, Mat was well equipped for the fray.

He opened his lecture by stating that the drift of the present stage of the development of society is towards some form of totalitarianism, and that the trade union movement is an expression of that drift.

During the course of the lecture, Mat Kavanagh gave some very interesting information about the early days of the Union movement, giving a graphic account of the burning and blowing up of factories, and the attacks on blacklegs by the enraged workers. Then, after sketching out the gradual development, and the conversion of the movement from a workers' "expression" to a workers' "oppression", he tackled the question of what is to be done?

The unions have passed through the period of development, and are no longer of value as a workers' weapon against exploitation . . . that the workers will find their only true weapon in Anarcho-Syndicalism.

It was rather regrettable that so few comrades were able to drag themselves away from the sunshine to attend the talk. However, it is to be hoped that Mat will be able to spare the time in the near future to give us another of these excellent lectures.

Press Fund

May 25th — June 6th.

Abercorn: G.B. 4/-; Ipswich: W.D. 5/-; H.M.F.: "Soldier" 1/6/1; New Earswick: H.A.A. 10/-; London: F.C. 2/-; London: R.H. 2/6; Brighton: A.S. 4/-; Brede: C.S. £2/0/0; Birdham: F.W.R. 4/-; High Wycombe: J.E.R. 1/-; London: G.G. 2/-; Port Townsend: E.D.C. 6/6; Glasgow: S.M. 5/-; Wragby: A.L. 1/2.

Previously acknowledged	£206 18 11
1947 TOTAL TO DATE	£212 12 2

What Miners Work For

Heavy spenders in the property market are the Coal Board. I find they have now spent £245,000 on big houses. Latest purchase is a £5,000 house in Cardiff for one of their officials.

Sixteen properties have been bought, and one rented. Among them are: Himley Hall, Staffs, £45,000; Sherwood Lodge, Nottingham, £18,000; St. George's Nursing Home, Doncaster, £20,000; Benwell Tower, Newcastle-on-Tyne, £17,000; Stoke Mining Industry Office, £35,000; and the Doncaster YMCA, £28,000.

Among them is Craig-y-Parc, at Pentyrch, Glamorgan, for which the

Board paid £15,000, to be used as a residence for Mr. T. S. Charlton, director of productions in the division.

Formerly the property of Mr. Thomas Evans, one-time chairman of South Wales Coalowners and the managing director of the Ocean Coal Combine, it has 20 rooms.

A Coal Board spokesman in London yesterday said: "In the case of Craig-y-Parc the Board are acting the part of good employer to Mr. Charlton.

"He was transferred from Yorkshire, where his colliery company provided him with a house. Under nationalisation it is the policy that on one should be worse

off working for the Board than for their old Companies."

News Chronicle, 2/6/47.

—AND FIGHT FOR

A Nottinghamshire miner who was seriously wounded at Arnhem, is now paralysed and 100 per cent. disabled. He received from the local colliery company weekly coal and a rent allowance.

Notice to Quit

He has received a letter from the Coal Board saying: "Our instructions are that coal and rent allowance to persons similarly placed to yourself cannot be continued. We trust that you will understand the position."

The second concerns the chief cashier of a colliery who died two months ago after 46 years' service. His widow has been given a month's notice to leave her house, which was owned by the company and now belongs to the State.

Evening Standard, 3/6/47.

[The Board are acting the part of good employers.—EDS.]

BOYS AND GIRLS FOR ATOM PLANT

In order that Britain shall not lag behind the rest of the progressive world, it is necessary for the government's new atomic energy plant at Springfields, near Preston, to have a staff of at least 400 chemists.

So far only 100 have been obtained, and to help make up the number of the Ministry of Supply is to open a training school for boys and girls of 15 years and over. Those who have studied chemistry at school will be given a three months' training and if satisfactory will start at £140 a year to do their bit for the brave new world.

Chemists don't seem to be rushing after the government's offered salaries of £350—£700 a year, which, apparently, are low compared with those paid commercially. But surely its worth an extra hundred or so to be on the right side of the atom bomb?

Carlisle Squatters Evicted

The following is taken from the Carlisle Journal of May 16th:

"Four families were still squatting in the Rydal Street property when the Carlisle Corporation's order for possession came into effect on Monday.

"They were moved with their belongings into the street, where most of their furniture remained for the next day or two at the mercy of the inclement weather.

"The evicted included one mother with a baby in arms, and another expectant mother.

"Unable to find shelter on Monday night, the women and children obtained emergency accommodation at Fusehill Hospital, while the menfolk stayed by their belongings on the street!"

"Fusehill Hospital" is, in fact, the workhouse. The irresponsibility of the local administration which permits people to be forcibly evicted (and indeed orders the eviction), without providing them with adequate alternative lodging, has provoked local indignation. A woman wrote to the Carlisle Journal appealing for private help for the evicted families, and described their situation:

"Sir—As a citizen of Carlisle, I have been horrified at the scenes in Rydal Street this week after the squatters' eviction.

"There are ex-Servicemen who fought for us in Burma and on the Continent, and the furniture they paid for with their gratuity money has been standing outside in the rain since they were turned out.

"They have been from door to door trying to find accommodation, and all in vain.

"A mother with her baby and another expectant mother had to spend one night in Fusehill, and then they had nowhere to go.

"It seems there is no one who will take them in, and they have actually had to sleep on the street.

"As a private person, I interviewed the Mayor, and my own Councillor, but they all said that nothing could be done unless some private person could come forward and offer to shelter these people."

This is the level of municipal responsibility.

Meetings and Announcements

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.

at 8 Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1

JUNE 15th Albert Meltzer "Palestine"

JUNE 22nd Bill Mansbridge Catering Workers' Struggle

JUNE 29th Dinah Stock Colonial Workers' Freedom Front Admission Free. Questions invited

N.E. LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Regular Fortnightly Discussions

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

Tuesday, June 17th, at 7.30 p.m. on "England and Germany"

GLASGOW Anarchist Group

Open Air MEETINGS

at MAXWELL STREET (Argyll St.)

on SUNDAYS at 7 p.m.

Speakers:

Eddie Shaw Frank Leech Preston Clements

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