

Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"Yes, we will do almost anything for the poor man, except get off his back."
 TOLSTOY.

"Peaceful society has its atrocities no less than war."
 THURMAN ARNOLD.

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Threepence

SINKING SHIP

No Solution Within Capitalist System

WHATEVER may be the interpretation of the Economic Survey of 1948, published last week, in the minds of professional economists and government propagandists, it is difficult to see how any objective view of the matter can fail to perceive in it a most evident sign of the increasing bankruptcy of capitalism, whether of the private or State, Tory or Labour, variety in this country.

The plain fact behind the report is that, owing to the loss of securities and holdings abroad, the balance of imports over exports has been so switched that, without a vast increase in exports, it will be impossible, under the present system, to maintain the standard of living in this country at anything like its present level. This is a fact which cannot be blamed on to the inadequacies of the Labour Government itself; the Tories, if they were back in power would be faced with identically the same situation, and, since they too would cling to the old methods of production and distribution, would be equally unable to solve it.

Within the capitalist system, three alternatives face the government. Firstly, they can concentrate on the export drive. It is estimated that, in order to make any real progress towards "solvency", it will be necessary to increase the rate of exports from 112% of the 1938 level at the end of 1947, to 150% by the middle of 1948. In other words, this means a stepping up in six months by a third. How this is to be done remains a mystery. Plant is obsolete in many factories, particularly in the textile factories which are expected to provide a high proportion of the additional exports. Workers in general are already toiling to their full capacity after nine years of regimentation, war and privations, and the rate of "human wear-and-tear" increases as these conditions continue. The home market is already starved of goods, to such an extent that it would seem difficult to rob it any further. Raw materials, particularly steel, are in short supply and, quite apart from the credit situation, it is by no means certain that sufficient can be obtained immediately.

All these factors militate against increased production at home. In recent months the increased tempo of production has steadily slackened as plant and workers reach their saturation points, and it is difficult to see how the miners, to take one example, can increase their output by one-fifteenth when they are already producing to their full capacity.

But, even if it were possible under present conditions to produce enough exportable goods in this country by June 1948 to meet the demands of the White Paper, it remains to be seen whether there will be markets for them. Already, it has been admitted by the government representatives, some markets have been saturated, and for this reason the export target has been dropped. But there is no guarantee that further markets will not be saturated, and, indeed, with American prices falling, it looks as though there will be even more severe competition between the various capitalist States for the available markets, and that in this competition the inefficient British industrial machine will not stand up very well to that of American capitalism.

The second string in the bow of the British Government is the Marshall plan, now approved by Congress and likely to come into operation within the coming months. But the Marshall plan, unless exports are also raised, can only be a temporary expedient; when its aid is exhausted, there will be the question of how to carry on afterwards and how to pay off the debt. In any case, as has been pointed out from many quarters, the Marshall plan puts Britain and the other European countries at the mercy of American capitalism, which is not likely to provide them at all willingly with the kind of raw materials that will make them efficient export competitors.

The third alternative is that of accepting a lower standard of life at home, when, lacking raw materials, wide-scale unemployment will set in, and the workers will be more than ever

at the mercy of their rulers.

In fact, the result is likely to be an unpleasant combination of all three. In the effort to meet export demands, production of consumption goods for home use will be cut, and the workers will be deprived of such necessary amenities as housing. The export drive will fail to reach its full target, and the capitalist economy of Britain, through the Marshall plan and other means, will become merely an extension of American economy. The perpetual crisis of modern capitalism will have reached a further stage of social disintegration.

Already some symptoms of this result are becoming evident. In spite of the Government's talk about shortage of labour, unemployment has now risen to 450,000. The building programme has been radically cut, and the export programme, while making a vast drain on consumption goods here, has so far not kept up to its projected rate. Meanwhile, with gold reserves and dollar credit quickly vanishing, British capitalism becomes steadily more dependant on America.

The solutions to the situation are not easy, and we do not suggest that either

the Labour or the Conservative Party could put them into effect, since they would mean a complete disruption of the capitalist system and, indeed, could only be put into practice in a society that considered the needs of its own workers to be the primary object of its activities.

The first and basic point of a sound economic programme would be the reorganisation of agriculture, with the change of emphasis from extensive to intensive cultivation. It is significant that the government proposals for agriculture do not even contemplate the possibility of growing all our own food in England, although the experience of countries like Holland and Belgium and the opinions of agricultural experts here confirm that this would be possible, given the right methods of cultivation. But British capitalist economy is based on export of manufactured goods, which requires the import of food, and therefore it is likely to fight hard against this solution.

The shortage of power could partly be solved by the utilisation of tidal and other forms of energy, the shortage of raw materials for steel could be compensated by a turnover to the wider use of magnesium and aluminium, both of which can be obtained from common products almost inexhaustible in this country—clay and seawater. In almost every other field there lie the possibilities by which an unfettered technical ingenuity could solve our present situation, perhaps not in a few months, but certainly in a few years. Yet all these things are not done, precisely because they are against the interests of capitalists and therefore against the systems of political economy by which governments proceed. There is no real way out of the perpetual crisis of capitalism, except the liberation of society from the bonds of property and government which prevent the free growth of initiative and invention for the adequate production of the necessities of life.

Wallace's Surprise

THE success of Wallace's supporter, the American Labour Party candidate, in the Bronx Congressional by-election, must have come as something of a shock to the leaders of the regular parties, and it can probably be regarded as the sign for which Henry Agard was waiting before going into politics in a really big way, and running a party for Congress as well as himself contesting the Presidency.

However that may be, the result has some interesting points. Why did so many people vote for the Wallace candidate that he received a ten thousand majority over the Democrat and seventeen thousand over the Republican? Knowing the general political line-up in America, it would be ridiculous to suppose that more than a tiny fraction of these voters are Communists or pro-Russians in any sense. The real strength of Wallace's line, so far as electioneering is concerned, lies in the fact that a vast proportion of the Americans do not want war. These probably include most of the ex-G.I.'s, who don't fancy the idea of another dose of army life now they have settled down to making their own lives in a civilian environment. These people recognise that

the policy of the official parties will lead inevitably to war; Wallace's propaganda, on the other hand, is based on the avoidance of war, and up to the present there are very many people who really think he means it and are ready to grasp at any straw in order to keep out of another world conflict.

The vote for Wallace is a demonstration against a war policy in Europe and the East, against Universal Military Training, against American imperialism, against the political intolerance that is bursting out in another series of Red hunts. That Wallace cannot and will not provide what he promises is beside the point; these people believe he might, and that is the main reason why they are voting for him. That they should have become disillusioned with the old political machines is something; that they should be involved in the success of a demagogue like Wallace would be a tragedy, and it is to be hoped that they will soon begin to learn that the things they desire, and for which they have voted, are not to be given them on a plate by any glib-voiced gentleman with a political programme, but are only to be won by their own struggle against war and conscription.

CLEARING UP IN PRAGUE

EXACTLY a fortnight had passed between the beginning of the Czech crisis and the first meeting of the Communist dominated cabinet at which Mr. Gottwald, the Prime Minister, declared, rubbing his hands: "To-day we are sitting at a clean table in a ventilated room."

The "ventilation" has assumed the proportions of a tornado. Parliament is now safely in the hands of Communists. M.P.'s had been asked to sign the declaration of loyalty to the new Government before taking their seats; some had resigned and others were waiting the results of the investigation by their Party Parliamentary Committee.

Politicians had been arrested including Mr. Vladimir Krajna, secretary-general of the National Socialist Party, and Mr. Ota Hora and Mr. Alois Cizek, both National-Socialist Members of Parliament. A warrant of arrest was issued for Mr. Vaclav Majer, until recently the Social Democrat Minister for Food.

The cleaning up extended outside political circles. The rector of the University of Prague and a score of professors were dismissed, judges, editors and teachers are being purged and, Nejedly, the new Minister of Education, declared "Stalin's picture will return to the classrooms. This is not merely a matter of a picture, but a conception of national life". One could not agree more.

The Action Committees, now numbering 10,000, are carrying out the purge along the lines of General Svoboda's threatening directive: "Anyone who violates unity and refuses to co-operate is harmful to the nation and must be eliminated. It is necessary to destroy as quickly as possible and ruthlessly all elements of disruption and to finish what we have to finish."

Action Committees, the purging organs of the Communist Party, have sprung up everywhere: in factories, universities, Government offices, the radio and the Press. Even football players and Boy Scouts have their Action Committees. Their aim is to carry out the suppression of every dissident and a large campaign of denunciation is encouraged for this purpose. Secondary school children have been asked, over the radio, to name their fellow-pupils "hostile to the regime of a people's democracy, Socialism, and youth unity", as well as teachers "who are either unable or unwilling to teach".

What remained of a free press has been suppressed by withholding power and paper supplies from newspapers "opposing the people's democracy". The socialist paper *Svobodne Slovo* (meaning Free World) has appropriately changed its title to *Nová Politika* (New Politics). Foreign publications have, of course, been banned.

The only safe place, for the time being at least, seems to be inside the Communist

THE CONTROL OF LEISURE (1949) ACT

IT will be good news to all the Nosey Parkers and Leading Local Dignitaries that a resolution recognising their indisputable place in a Socialist society has been drafted for the Co-operative Party conference at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

The Surrey branch propose "the appointment of a Minister of Entertainment, with full powers to brighten the lives of people."

By all means nationalise our leisure time—we are in danger of becoming spives, drones, eels and butterflies in the few hours left us. Surely the Fabian Society can suggest further details. A register kept by the Ministry of Labour of the entire population and its hours off duty would enable the planners of society to organise compulsory attendance at State cinemas and theatres (programmes arranged by a joint council of State representatives, entertainment combine directors and the N.A.T.K.E.). Absentees who went off on their own would be dealt with by police-court proceedings.

What a chance for State Camps on the lines of Butlin's, too! Altogether the resolution is too good for Cripps to miss.

Party and members are reported to join at the rate of over 2,000 a day. The aim is still two million members and it will no doubt be reached, as refusal to fill in application forms often means losing one's job.

The "democracies" pretend to be greatly shocked by these events but they find nothing better, to answer them, than to emulate the Czech Communists in their repression of freedom.

In The Hague, the Minister of Justice announced that a new police force would be created to combat the activities of Right-wing and Left-wing elements. The Swiss National Assembly called for increased vigilance by the Government against Communists and demanded that it should "strengthen regulations for the protection of the State". In the Ruhr, the British Military Government suppressed the last Communist paper still in existence.

We are not suggesting that the "democracies" are carrying out a repression of the magnitude and ruthlessness of that carried out in Czechoslovakia. But one must remember that they are in power and that the opposition is extremely weak while the Czech Communists had to seize power in the face of considerable opposition.

If the democratic governments are showing such readiness to employ totalitarian measures when they are still in a comparatively secure position, as in the U.S.A. and in Canada in particular, will they not become as ruthless as the Czech Government if the opposition assumes greater proportions? Just as, in order to fight Nazis, the democracies resorted to methods similar to those employed by Hitler, now, in their struggle against Communism, they adopt totalitarian measures which Stalin would not disavow.

ARGENTINE PAPERS SUPPRESSED

PRESIDENT PERON is preparing for new congressional elections in Argentina. The poll, which will be held in March of this year, will be the first test to which the popularity of the Peronist regime has been subjected since the election of General Juan Domingo almost two years ago.

The recent closing of the anti-Peronist press, including the Socialist *La Vanguardia*, the leftist *Argentina Libre*, and the anarchist *Reconstruir* (the Communist *La Hora* continues to publish, incidentally), was not without connection with the coming elections. The Socialists, Anarchists and left-wing Radicals have been the staunchest opponents of the administration.

Nor is it likely that the recent "intervention" by the Federal Government in three of the northern provinces of the country—where elected governors were replaced by presidential appointees—is an isolated incident. These provincial administrations, though strongly Peronist, had shown more ability to quarrel over the division of the spoils than to govern, and they have been a constant source of embarrassment to President Peron.

In preparation for these elections, the various opposition parties have made their positions clear. Several months ago the Socialists issued an announcement that they intended to go into the elections alone, and wanted nothing to do with any alliance with the Communists. The latter, incidentally, have had a more than doubtful position since General Peron recognized the Soviet Union a year and a half ago. They are better Peronists than the General himself—though they still talk about the Socialists as "brothers".

The third important element in the 1946 Union Democratica coalition which campaigned against Peron, the Radical Party, has traditionally been opposed to collaboration with any other party in congressional elections.

The Call (U.S.A.)

THE PARIS COMMUNE

1. 1871 and To-day

BEFORE the war of 1914, March 18th never went by without a tremendous celebration. On the Anarchist platforms in Britain appeared many who had taken part in the Commune, among them Louise Michel and Elisee Reclus, to speak of the achievement and significance of the events of 1871.

To-day, it has become merely a tradition, an event in socialist history books, and one, moreover, which does not even receive regular commemoration as each succeeding March goes by. Perhaps it is worth while briefly to consider some of the reasons for the scant attention paid to the Commune by the Socialists of to-day.

Up to 30 years ago, it represented the most fully-developed revolutionary event occurring within the structure of modern capitalism. Capitalist economy has assuredly gone on apace since 1871; but 77 years after, in 1948, we are still nearer to the circumstances of the Commune than the Communards were to the revolutionary workers of 1789-82 years before them. For nearly 50 years the Commune remained the only major revolution of the urban working class, and this fact is alone enough to explain the pre-eminent position which it occupied in revolutionary thought up till 1917.

Neglect of Revolutionary Studies

But the Russian Revolution and the Spanish Revolution of 1936 have inevitably deprived the Commune of some of its eminence, because they have robbed it of its uniqueness. In many respects moreover, they represented a theoretical advance on 1871; the subsequent history of the Bolshevik dictatorship cannot obliterate the

significance of the Russian workers' and peasants' achievements in 1917, while the Anarchist workers in Spain immensely deepened and widened conceptions of revolutionary economy. All this makes the comparative neglect of the Commune understandable; but what is disturbing in the attitude of the movement of to-day is that it by no means devotes the same study to the events of 1917 and 1936 as its elders did to the Commune of Paris. This neglect is a very serious symptom—one which itself requires a study altogether more thorough than is possible in the scope of the present articles.

Disillusionment is common to-day. Disillusionment of a vague and general kind which throws its enervating influence on the whole study of contemporary events. It is true that there is plenty of reason for weariness and inertia. The English partisans of the Great French Revolution, men like Tom Paine and William Blake, became disheartened as the revolutionary initiative passed out of the hands of the workers into the counter-revolutionary power of the so-called "revolutionary" government. And in our time the sequence of events in Russia has turned the hopes and aspirations of 1917 to ashes in the Moscow trials and the "patriotic war" which covers the expansionist imperialism of contemporary Stalinism. The crushing of the Spanish revolution, the replacement of black Fascism in Central Europe by red, the triumphant resurgence of yet another war; these things indeed are bitter enough. They have decisively shattered the optimistic idea of inevitable progress to which the Marxist currents of socialist thought have contributed so many illusions. Retrogression and frank reaction without, suspicion and political place-hunting within the movements—these are the keynotes of the age in which

contemporary socialists have come to maturity.

Just the same, apathetic disillusionment is only a kind of running away. For practical solutions to-day we need more than ever before to examine closely the revolutionary defeats of the past. Only so can we face the events of the present and future armed with the theoretical equipment which is essential to effective action. Those who take revolutionary conceptions and social theories seriously are bound to subject revolutionary history to a searching analysis, for a practicable course of action demands the most thorough assimilation of the events of the past. There is no better way to honour the revolutionary dead than so to study the failures for which they paid with their lives, that revolutionary lives may be preserved in the future and the social revolution be achieved. If we do not do this our homage to the victims of revolutionary struggle becomes little else than hypocrisy—so much lip-service, like the martyrology of the Churches.

Character Of The Commune

What then is to be our approach to the Paris Commune in 1948? After all I have said about the need for study, I am painfully aware how little can be said in a couple of articles. Yet I feel it is of the greatest importance to make the plea, leaving the actual study itself to the comrades of to-day. Here I shall only seek to draw the broadest conclusions, and mention the theoretical conceptions which a study of the Commune relegates decisively to the waste paper basket.

The rising of the Paris workers during 1870 and 1871 represents the first of the great working-class insurrections in circumstances which are still relevant to the present day.

The general story is well known. How the greedy and incontinent bourgeoisie of the Second Empire fecklessly entered on the war with Germany in 1870: of the privations of the Siege of Paris: how the working-men of the capital proclaimed the Republic on Sept. 4th, and then on March 18th, 1871, overthrew the corrupt government of Thiers and proclaimed the Commune. Of the heroism of the second seige which lasted 71 days: and, finally, how the troops of the reconstituted bourgeois government of Versailles, assisted by their enemies of yesterday, the Prussians, re-entered Paris and initiated that gruesome revenge—without parallel before that date, but almost a commonplace to-day—that outburst of ruling-class vindictiveness in which 30,000 men and women Communards, and even children, were brutally done to death. And after the massacre began the slow death in the galleys, the penal islands, the prisons; the sorrows and privations of exile.

That is the general picture. The histories of the Commune—especially the admirable one of Lissagaray—must be left to fill in the details. Let us, then, consider the Commune in the light of revolutionary conceptions. How was it regarded by the leading theoreticians of the day, and how far were they right? Revolutionary events of such magnitude provide the practical tests for revolutionary theory, and we have no right to ignore them.

Ruling Class Betrayals

In 1870 the French ruling class led the population into a disastrous war. It is instructive to consider the kind of leadership they provided. In September they were content to sacrifice Louis Napoleon before the republican demand of the workers. They then sought to hand the workers

over to foreign oppression. At the very moment when the bourgeois politicians and the army chiefs were issuing rhetorical proclamations about defending Paris to the last street, never surrendering, and so on, their emissaries were treating with Louis Napoleon in London, and also with Bismarck.

While Trochu, the Minister of War, was telling the Paris workmen to defend the city to the end, he was telling his own staff that resistance was useless. The Spanish Government of Communists and right wing Socialists under Dr. Juan Negrin did exactly the same thing in 1939; for while Negrin was crying "Resist! Resist!" he and his cabinet were already preparing their own getaway—well covered by the resisting workers.

While Trochu was issuing his proclamations, the politicians warned General MacMahon at the front of the danger of revolution in Paris. For them the choice between the French workers and the Prussian military Command hardly existed: far better defeat than concede to the working-class. One is inevitably reminded of the France of 1940, where the same horrible comedy of selling the population to an occupying power while mouthing slogans of resistance was enacted. Did not General Weygand keep two divisions of the army in reserve even while the Germans were advancing on Paris, in case, he said, of revolution?

The work of defending Paris during the siege fell on the workers and their National Guard. The rôle of the Government was to do nothing themselves (except treacherously to sell out the workers), while seeking to frustrate the initiatives of the workers. Yet the workers seized the initiative none the less, and thereby created a revolutionary situation. It was made actual by the proclamation on March 18th of the Commune of Paris.

J.H.

(To be concluded.)

THE COMMUNE WILL LIVE

"The Commune of 1871 could be nothing but a first attempt. Beginning at the end of a great war, hemmed in between two armies ready to join hands and crush the people, it dared not unhesitatingly set forth the part of economic revolution. It neither boldly declared itself Socialist nor proceeded to the expropriation of capital or the organisation of labour. It did not even take stock of the general resources of the city.

Nor did it break with the tradition of the State, of representative government. It did not seek to effect WITHIN the Commune that very organisation from the simple to the complex which it inaugurated WITHOUT by proclaiming the independence and free federation of communes.

Yet it is certain that if the Commune of Paris had had a few months longer, it would have inevitably have been driven, by the very nature of things, towards both these revolutions. Let us not forget that the French middle-class spent altogether four years in revolutionary action before they changed the constitutional monarchy into a middle-class republic. We ought not to be astonished to see that the people of Paris did not cross with one bound the space dividing Anarchist Communism from the government of the Spoilers. But be assured that the next revolution, which in France and doubtless also in Spain and elsewhere, will be Communist, will take up the work of the Commune of Paris where it was interrupted by the massacres of Versailles.

Overthrown but not conquered, the Commune revives to-day. It is no longer a dream of the vanquished, caressing in imagination the lovely mirage of hope; No, the "Commune" to-day is becoming the visible and definite aim of the Revolution rumbling rumbling beneath our feet. The idea is sinking deep into the masses, it is giving them a rallying cry. We count on the present generation to bring about the social revolution WITHIN the Commune, to put an end to the ignoble system of middle-class exploitation, to rid the peoples of the tutelage of the State, to inaugurate a new era of liberty, equality, solidarity in the evolution of the human race."

—PETER KROPOTKIN
in "Freedom", March, 1890.

OBJECTIONS TO ANARCHISM

Puerile Sect?

"A student of anthropology, saying the Anarchists were 'the most puerile sect he knew', recently asked me how they could possibly hope to succeed by a Utopian cutting of the Gordian knot, when professional anthropologists, with years of training, were convinced that the roots of modern society were so firmly fixed as to make any such violent change merely an 'armchair' solution. How would you have answered him?"

MANY people seem to imagine that anarchists propose solutions to current problems which are suggested to them solely by their wishes and dreams. I take it this is what our student of anthropology means when he speaks of a "puerile sect". But I do not think that the actual study of anarchist literature confirms this view, which can be dismissed as a rather superficial opinion. Reference should be made to the writings of Elie and Elisee Reclus, and of Peter Kropotkin.

I do not think that all anthropologists, not even all professional ones, are in fact convinced that the roots of modern society are so very firmly fixed. In view of the notable instability of modern society one might well deduce the contrary suspicion that it is very poorly rooted indeed. If one takes it that "firmly rooted" means that society expresses with any fidelity the nature of man (this is basically the conservative viewpoint—"it always has been so, it always will be so"), a study of different social forms among primitive food-gatherers, matriarchal societies with communal property, patriarchal societies with inherited property and division into social classes or castes, will quickly dispose of the idea that modern society is the one form suited to the nature of man.

The pioneer anthropologists of the nineteenth century, Lewis Morgan, Bachofen, and others, came to very different conclusions from our "professional anthropologists with years of training." They found that the structure of primitive societies was based on equality, community of property, absence of government, and with the tribe or clan as the social unit rather than the family. (The

family had to await a patriarchal society, with the well-developed institutions of private property to give meaning to inheritance, for its emergence.) It is true that certain amateur anthropologists like H. G. Wells and Sigmund Freud, who had particular axes to grind, have popularised a conception of social life developing from the family, or primal horde as they call it. But these are obviously illusory ideas which spring from preconceived ideas about social strife derived from vulgar conceptions of the meaning of the Darwinian struggle for existence. They certainly do not follow from observations of primitive communities of today or yesterday, and even "professional anthropologists" reject Freud's fanciful book on the origin of the Oedipus complex, *Totem and Taboo*.

Anthropologists as a whole are far from accepting the views of the Diffusionist school of Elliot Smith and Perry, but they quarrel more with the idea of the diffusion of culture than with this school's views on the origins of certain social institutions which are not far removed from the views of anarchists. Nor have Morgan's and the other earlier workers' views been overthrown. The whole subject of the biological and anthropological basis of anarchist ideas on equalitarian and non-governmental societies is brilliantly discussed by Kropotkin in *Mutual Aid, a Factor of Evolution*. Some of the more controversial anthropological issues are examined in the Freedom Press Pamphlet *Mutual Aid and Social Evolution*, by John Hewetson.

Finally, it is just because of the rootlessness, the basic instability of a society torn by class antagonisms, that changes are in fact brought about by violence. "Violent change" is not an "armchair solution" proposed by puerile Utopians; it is a regrettable corollary to a social system in which inequality is maintained by force, that is, by the power of the State. Anarchists do not propose violent change; they look at society, and they look at history—and see no way to escape it.

Born Criminals

"If law were abolished, how would you deal with those people who

definitely had a mania for power? Your answer to J.R.H.'s question on malefactors took no account of what must be an inherent love of cruelty for its own sake in Man, for Nazi guards gained nothing 'practical' by their brutalities, and Hitler's training could have brought up seed only in soil already fertile. Also what about the interval just after Anarchism's taking over, while the adult population is still alive?"

To take the last part first, one ought to look into the springs of cruelty in human behaviour. I think every thinking person is aware that suppression of sexual impulses has something to do with it—to put it at its broadest. (Sadism is specifically sexual cruelty, but no one feels uncomfortable when concentration camp guards are termed sadists. The sexual suppression element is unconsciously recognised.) It follows that if the revolution fails to face the sexual question with very much more courage than is generally evinced to-day, then it will have these problems of cruelty to face without having any clear views as to their solution. See Wilhelm Reich: *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, and *The Sexual Revolution*.

Analytical Psychology is committed to a determinism which inevitably takes a pessimistic view of the future, and which is discernible in the phrasing of the present 'Objection'. According to them, our behaviour patterns are determined at our mothers' breast and are uninfluenced by subsequent happenings, revolutionary or otherwise. But this viewpoint is altogether too simple and disregards the pressures of society on an individual.

There are individuals who somehow seem to escape the deterministic course prescribed by Oepidus and Jocasta; they manage to behave in a social fashion and even to get outside existing society and view it analytically and objectively. Such individuals suggest that there is more to it than simple conditioning. Behaviour patterns not only require to be implanted; they also require suitable subsequent conditions to call them forth. Behaviour patterns imposed by the suppression of infantile sexuality are inevitably called out in later life in a society which is

basically sex-negative and seeks to suppress (sublimate) the sexual impulse at all ages. The same applies to other forms of conditioning. And in life one cannot help being struck by the way in which individuals 'open out' when brought into a social climate different from that of their upbringing. Of course, they also betray their upbringing, but they are by no means so deterministically committed to it as the study of the neuroses seem to lead psychologists to expect.

With this inadequate glance at behaviour conditioning, we may turn to the question of power-hungry individuals. They illustrate the interplay of external opportunity and "inherent" tendencies very well. In existing society these psychic cripples seek positions which will bring them power over others. They are ambitious, whether for money power like the nineteenth-century type of millionaire, or like the aspiring bureaucrat of to-day. It is difficult to see how such tendencies will be pernicious and threatening to the social structure of a free society, since there will not be the institutions and administrative posts which will give such people power over others, however much they may crave it. Such people may therefore be miserable in conditions of freedom, equality and responsibility for all; it will be among the positive tasks of the free society to advance their happiness through more rational outlets. But I do not think it will be one of the overwhelmingly pressing tasks unless the revolution fails to obliterate completely all institutional possibility of men having dominance over others. Such obliteration of power structures in society is the real solution to the problem of the Jacobin and Bolshevik types who have seized power and destroyed the revolutions of the past.

I think it will be clear that the writer believes the effect of the prevailing climate of opinion and opportunity to be a powerful factor in determining the behaviour of "the adult generation". But it is just these conditions that the revolution aims to abolish. Opinions no doubt influence the social climate; but they are also influenced by it. "Man is the creator of society; but he is also the creature of it."

(Continued on page 6)

THE BIGGLESWADE BEARD

HAVING become, over a period of years, more than a little attached to my own hairy appendage, it was with considerable interest that I followed the news of the strikes of brewery workers in Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, in defence of a lorry driver dismissed, it was alleged, for growing a beard.

My own experience of the attitude of lorry drivers and their mates to beards has led me to the conclusion that they are, on the whole somewhat scornful of the whiskery chin. I have probably received more cat-calls and imitations of bleating billy-goats from transport workers than from any other class of workers, with the possible exception of soldiers, who in any case one most often sees heeded into lorries themselves.

Whatever the pros and cons of beards, however, there is no doubt the workers at Wells and Winch's brewery have a pretty sense of solidarity with a victimised comrade.

Driver Alfred Cole made a bet with a fellow-worker that for two gallons of beer (price 14s. 6d.) to 10s. he would grow and wear a beard until Easter Sunday. Now, beard-growing is one of the easiest of activities, if you are an adult male. All you have to do is to stop shaving, and nature does the rest—with usually an admirable lack of production problems. But nature cannot anticipate touchy managing directors, and after only three weeks unfettered growth, driver Cole found himself with the sack, and the whole trouble started, with 40 fellow-drivers, mates and inside staff, out on strike.

But other things transpire. For one thing, Cole was a shop-steward and area representative for his union on the Brewery Advisory Committee in London. Another is that a secondary issue in the strike is for recognition of the union.

More Than Meets The Eye

Obviously then, there is more in this little flare-up than meets the eye at first glance. Especially taken in conjunction with another strike of brewery workers at Taylor Walker's, Limehouse, where 500 came out on strike over a dispute regarding the recognition of shop stewards.

In a word—and excuse the pun—is there trouble brewing?

Also, Cole was not dismissed immediately. He was first taken off his lorry because his boss said the beard "looked awful while it was growing", and put on inside work. This meant a reduction of 5s. a week on his wages, and it was following his protest that he was sacked.

The general principle in the Biggleswade incident is simple: Has a man the right to do what he likes with his own face, or not? Alfred Cole, in spite of his 6½ years in the Army, is a man of individuality and moral courage. He is obviously well liked by his fellow workers, and equally obviously, his boss is extremely conventional.

IMPERTINENCE OF THE LAW

Seven West Africans pleaded guilty at East Ham to-day to stowing away in the *S.S. Crossington Court*.

They alleged they had not been well treated, one stating he had slept on a hatch for two days without food and water.

Mr. A. A. Pereria, magistrate: "What did you expect? A prize? I expect you think you deserve medals. You will each go to prison for one month."

Star, 5/3/48.

No, Mr. Pereria, they didn't exactly expect medals, but having read about the over-publicised "labour shortage" in Britain, and recalling that when Britain was "short" of men during the war West Africans were welcomed to come and help (and even received medals for it), they perhaps thought their reception would have been a little different.

I have to admit to a warmer than usual feeling of solidarity with this victimised worker, and would like to say to him this: "When you have won your bet, Alf, stick to your beard! It will remain as a proud reminder of your mates' solidarity and a constant blow at the tyranny of the razor!"

PHILIP SANSOM.

Later . . .

Since the above was written a report has appeared in *Reynolds News* (14/3/48) which brutally attempts to cut out the human interest of this strike by asserting that it was not over the beard at all, but merely for a 2s. increase on the basic wage!

Now this is really sad, if it is true, for it drags the strike down to the mundane level of all such efforts for negligible increases, and takes from it the high cause of individual freedom which was alleged to be the real factor.

But stay! This report is of a meeting in Biggleswade held by Transport and General Workers' Union district officials from London, Cambridge and Luton. The strike is now union-backed. Can it be that these officials do not realise the importance of the beard issue, and want to get the struggle back on the grounds they do understand? Can it be that the stodgy officials are so lacking in imagination as to regard a beard as an insufficient reason for striking? As a merely flippant side issue? Does it mean that the Union want to present the case to the public in what they mistakenly think is a more sympathetic light?

However, I was right in thinking there was more to the case than met the eye, but I am sticking to my belief in the beard as the main issue, and indeed would like to quote from the same report in *Reynolds News* to prove that Cole's whiskers were the direct cause, if only the spark to dry tinder:

"The strike began 12 days ago when the management dismissed Mr. Cole for 'insolence'. Mr. Cole had begun growing a beard and a director asked him to take a job in the tun-room for less pay till his beard had grown fully. In an interview with the *Daily Herald*, Mr. Cole protested and said that, although he disliked a director smoking a pipe in the brewery, he could not complain about it. It was after this statement that Mr. Cole was sacked."

P.S.

2,000 STRIKE AGAINST A BOSS'S MAN

A CRANE-DRIVER who told the management that night-workers at the North-road railway works, Darlington, were taking too long for meals, received a just reward for a tale-bearer.

2,000 workers refused to work while he was still on the strength, and were signing-on for duty, but doing no work. The crane-man, Alfred E. Threadkell, who was also a shop-steward, was removed "for his own safety", in the words of the manager of the works. He added: "I refuse to have him here again."

It was probably not the first time Threadkell had carried tales, and in the past the manager may have listened to him. But there was no hesitation in getting rid of him when the rest of the workers kicked.

Once again a little direct action and solidarity proves of good effect against slyness and the blackleg mentality.

UNFORTUNATE REMARK

AT Grosvenor House on 2nd March, a private exhibition of British radio and television parts was opened by Mr. Jack Jones, M.P., of the Ministry of Supply. The progress made in radio and television is doubtless very wonderful, but Mr. Jones might not have been so tactless as to remark, "If our grandfathers came into this exhibition they would wonder what the devil it was all about." This remark reported in the Press must have caused many a formerly ardent Labour supporter to sigh over the reflection that he felt like that many a time at Labour Party and trade union meetings himself.

CONDITIONS IN THE BAKING TRADE

THE Baking Trade, I gather, is at least six thousand years old, and, judging from photographs of excavations in such places as Egypt, so far as the little corner-of-the-street bakery is concerned, very little has changed either in the basic structure of ovens or other tools.

During one period in Rome, bakers "were expressly forbidden from having any connection with comedians and gladiators, and from attending the exhibitions in the amphitheatre, so that they might not be contaminated with the vices of the ordinary populace." A prohibition not needed at the present time as most bread bakers in London are continuously on night work.

This is a trade into which men drift when hard pressed, and, speaking for London there are no apprentices, but there is a National Bakery School at the Borough Polytechnic Institute, which is looked on with contempt by the ordinary working baker.

The Union

There are some 70,000 workers, I understand, in bakehouses in England, some 27,000 of whom are on the books of the Bakers' Union. I must, however, emphasise that a very small proportion of these attend Union meetings and in fact the bulk are ticket-holders who show little or no interest. This is not surprising, as the trade union official keen on his job, as a job, is not slow to answer to any suggested improvement in the men's condition, "I am the guardian of the Union's finances."

Does it seem strange that I have been worked harder in a Co-op bakery than anywhere, and that, being true to type,

ROYAL WAGES

A kitchen porter employed at Buckingham Palace, Ray Gibson, aged 25, was at Bow-street to-day gaoled for a fortnight for stealing £3 from Arthur George Capewell, a fellow servant.

Gibson's pay was £3 5s. a week.

Gibson, married, with two children, said he was hard up and could not resist the temptation.

Evening Standard, 6/3/48.

the Executive of the Union wished to fine seven men £2 each for not turning in to work on Christmas Day, a piece of work that was in the end defented? Strange, too, that I was reported to the same Union for being an "absentee"!

The Union also has a most beautiful idea of the abolition of night work—no work to be done between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., any other idea being ruled out of order! This would mean in practice the master bakers starting the day's work at about 12 noon and finishing at 9 or 10 at night. Wouldn't the men make whoopee with the time they had left for social activities!

Working Conditions

Need I say more about the monotony of the work in the big plant bakeries? It is as bad as in any machine shop in any other trade. When a rota system has been suggested to the Union so that this could be altered somewhat, the reply from the Gods has been "We cannot interfere with the actual manner of running a bakery."

Night-workers in this trade work seven days a week, as they finish some during Saturday morning and re-start on Sunday evening, leaving them with only Bank-holiday Sundays free, plus at present a fortnight in the summer. Nightwork is indeed a horror!

Of late years dressing-room conditions in the factories have slightly improved, lockers being provided for clothing, but they are usually in some draughty corner where the cold is felt when coming from a hot bakehouse. But in the corner-shop things are much the same as they ever were, one's outdoor clothing being kept in a margarine box or something similar, and either no heating or very little.

With social life reduced to a very small minimum, it is no wonder that an attitude of fatalism is to be found throughout the trade. The working baker is tucked away in a hole and forgotten; he says: "My son will never be a baker!" But mention anarcho-syndicalism to him, and his grasp is so small that he thinks of his own "Bakers' Union" and turns away with contempt.

BERT SMITH.

Land Notes

TWO CIVILIZATIONS

IT has often occurred to me, and no doubt to others, how many thousands of acres of good rough-grazing are wasted on the grass verges bordering so many of the roads of this country. Before the age of motor transport these verges, or much of them in many parts, were in fact extensively grazed, especially in those districts where overstocked small-holdings predominated. And in countries that still have a peasant economy, such as Ireland, livestock of all sorts are, even if unofficially, turned out into the lanes to graze.

Now that this country is faced by a serious food shortage, these unused acres are once more claiming attention and, as reported in *The Daily Mirror* (10/2/48), some eight acres, about a mile in length, on the Barnet by-pass, just north of London, have been ploughed for barley, the work being undertaken by the makers of Trusty tractors, whose factory is nearby.

Looked at superficially, this might seem a sensible action, but the cultivation of a strip of land a mile long and comprising only eight acres is simply not an economic proposition, using the word "economic" in its strict sense. Moreover, any form of cross-cultivation, so necessary on newly-broken ground, is virtually impossible. The cultivation of pieces of ground of this nature only makes sense on the assumption that existing agricultural land is already being adequately and fully utilized—which, as it almost common knowledge by now, is by no means the case. The time, in men and machinery, required

for this little job is out of all proportion to the amount of food that will be obtained, even assuming that the crop, in its later stages of maturity, is not damaged by members of an ignorant, or wilfully careless, public. The scheme is in any case apparently expected to work at a loss.

For Those Who Pass By

On the other hand, if the unusual sight of corn growing alongside a large arterial road should awaken in a few of the passengers in the passing London buses a little interest in the agriculture of their homeland, and instil into them some sense of the urgency of the food situation, it will have been well worth while. It is to be hoped, though, that they won't think that the land of this country is producing to such full capacity that we are reduced to ploughing these verges if we wish for any further increase in production. If that should be the effect, then it can only be harmful and increase the almost terrifying complacency that already exists. For there is no doubt that the majority are quite unaware of, what is referred to in public speeches, as "the gravity of the situation". That they may, before so very long, experience actual hunger does not occur to them and their attitude to the farming countryside is still that of the tourist in search of escape from the frustration and sheer damned ugliness of urban life.

"Hey Nonny No!"

"To such people," says Allen Fraser, writing in *The Farmer's Weekly* (20/2/48), "home agriculture remains a museum, a picturesque anachronism, essential only in war, a matter of scenery and rural amenities, where office-workers wear shorts and birdies twitter, a picturesque paradise for the hey-nonny couple, collecting migrant butterflies or counting colonies of the bearded tit. To such people a rural roadway secure from

trespassing bulls is of more importance than the potential abundance of a field of wheat; the winning of our daily bread a mere question of landscape painting.

"For the fundamental task of winning that daily bread we have come, more and more, as a nation, to depend upon prisoner labour, European volunteer labour, Women's Land Army labour, child labour—any labour, in fact, except our own! Harvest time and harvest weather remain holiday time and holiday weather. Motor-coach summer trips are already booked to their capacity. Are our people praying for another record holiday summer—another disastrous drought?"

Allen Fraser then continues: "For almost a century the harvest of Britain meant nothing to the people of Britain. A disastrous drought meant a fine summer holiday. Beneficent rain ruined Ascot. For nearly a century, weather, harvest, the struggles and misfortunes of a dwindling minority of farmers meant little more to the people of Britain than that. Food was something behind the counters of the appropriate shops. Food of all kinds could be had—at a price."

That attitude of mind still prevails, even in a rationed world, and no good is done by pretending it doesn't.

Farmers Get Their Own Back

Neither, for that matter, is any good done by attempting to deny that the farming community as a whole, in its own way and for different reasons, is equally unconcerned or that farmers, and their men, are motivated by any other desire than that of making a living while the going is good, and it must be granted that the going, i.e., the chance of profit, is not at all bad at the moment. Moreover, farmers have, for several years now, been at last in a position to get their own back on the urban industrialism that trampled them underfoot in the hey-day of its power, deliberately putting home acres

out of production in the interests of imported food, and leaving the British farmer, and what few grossly under-paid workers he could afford to keep, to shift for themselves as best they could amidst fields tumbled down to grass and buildings fast becoming semi-derelict.

Now "the nation", as our governing class, somewhat impertinently, calls its own interests, is forced by circumstances to turn to the land that it betrayed and ask, and demand, more food. The men on the land, those who came through the 'twenties and 'thirties, cannot be blamed if they are rather sceptical of political promises and make the most of their now more favourable position. Furthermore, as they watch from the fields the motor-coaches rolling by with holiday-makers, they cannot but continue to feel antagonistic to our urban society that, even in what it calls its hour of crisis, continues to think in terms of shorter working hours while at the same time expecting the rural worker to work all hours to produce its food.

So it comes about that many a farmer would plough in a crop of cabbages for which there is no "market" rather than give away even a dozen. And I, for one, remembering the patronising air of the summer visitors in the pre-war years who, because they normally sat on their arse all day, considered themselves immeasurably superior to the men who laboured in the fields, frankly sympathize with, even if I do not condone, such an action.

Referring to this hostility between town and country which, at any rate until recently, it has been in the interests of our rulers to foster and maintain, Claud Morris, in *Tribune* (27/2/48), remarks:

"What separates the short-sleeve men in my parish from the cuff-link boys in Westminster is a difference of language, geography, and even race. The gulf is a gulf between two civilizations."

G.V.

France

PROSPERITY OR INFLATION?

FOR the twentieth time since the Liberation, the government has trumpeted its intention of struggling against the incessant rise in prices. Previous setbacks do not appear to have discouraged it, but a certain proportion of scepticism is betrayed in its proposals and projects. The practical measures taken to stabilise the cost of living are announced as being bound to produce concrete results, yet the leaders of the game dare not attach an excessive optimism to them. Too many experiences have followed each other in the last two years for the new attempt to be regarded with enthusiasm.

In general, the policy indicated by Minister Schuman follows that applied by Einaudi in Italy: "freeing" of gold and exchange, authorisation for holders of capital abroad to repatriate it in the form of goods, a premium to exporters by means of devaluation, mass purchase of primary necessities abroad to make prices fall internally, measures of repression against traders who increase their prices without valid justification.

It is not solely a question limited to the balancing of finances, or to the purging of the commercial cycle. Above the battle of prices, the whole future of France is being played for, and in particular its orientation in international politics.

Capitalist Hopes

In fact, the government, that is to say the possessing classes, the relics of the old capitalist liberal society and the partisans of western "civilisation", are banking on a return to prosperity—even on a relative scale—to eliminate or reduce sensibly the influence of the Communists over the population.

As the French bourgeoisie find themselves in decay, and cannot reasonably hope to recover their old splendour, without raw materials, modern plant and a sufficient field of expansion, they seek in so-called "European" formulae and in the support of the United States, a way out of their tragedy. They hope to find, in exchange for certain of their prerogatives and with the sole hope of keeping a reasonable rate of profit that will keep them alive, a solid position among those European middle-classes which are still in power and close to American imperialism.

Communist Tactics

On the other hand, the men of Russian Europe, and the Communist machine in the first place, have only one desire: to push to a climax the difficulties of European capitalism in decay, to accelerate inflation, to aggravate social decomposition in order to gain power through popular discontent, and, under the cover of apparently progressive organisations, to instal a government of the Polish or Czech type.

That is why the Communist party has backed and provoked movements of protest against the Mayer plan which hits the middle-classes, the peasants and the tradespeople. That is why it has inspired "defence committees" in non-working-class organisations, like those of professional men, shopkeepers and farmers, and even industrialists distrustful of North American collaboration.

The organ of the Cominform, *Pour Une Démocratie Nouvelle*, has just confirmed publicly the rôle of these committees in declaring: "These organisations, whose direction is recruited in the democratic way, have for their objective to defend the economic and political independence of France confronted by the invasive tendencies of Anglo-American imperialism."

And the CGT, entirely infiltrated, deprived even of the presence of a symbolic opposition, declared to the Economic Council that it would refuse to combine its efforts with those of the administration to struggle for the stabilisation and lowering of prices, insinuating on the contrary, a campaign for the raising of wages.

Thus are gathered together the determining elements of an extremely serious situation whose evolution governs the future of France and without doubt that of Western Europe.

The organisations that represent the great social interests, the French Confederation of Employers, the General Confederation of Agriculture, the various associations of tradesmen and middlemen, have not, properly speaking, any political cohesion. The manufacturers distribute propaganda funds without discrimination, and with a complete failure to understand the identification of national and international issues. After having backed the Republican Party of Liberty, scraped together from the politicians of the right, they now uphold the Popular French League of General de Gaulle, who showed himself powerless to impose his will during the strikes of November and December, 1947.

Proletarian Inactivity

What is striking is the apparently total absence of an independent workers' movement, capable of imposing solutions to a series of administrative problems, while escaping any imperialist obligations.

The power of the Communist machine and its capability for using all sources of discontent, can be explained in the last resort by the non-existence of proletarian organisations

and by the abandonment of revolutionary positions by the trade unions and parties which claim to be Socialist.

In these conditions, the struggle opened between East and West on the French social battleground becomes a question of technique, in which a vote in the American Congress or a wave of strikes let loose by the Stalinists can quickly modify the balance of forces.

The multiple attempts to create a third force on the parliamentary, democratic or intellectual model, have failed one by one, because of the lack among the organisers of a panoramic view of events.

In the struggle for the lowering of prices, the proletariat could, however, produce a solution at once practical and revolutionary: the establishment of a direct circuit between consumers and producers, the organisation of the distribution of food and of products of primary necessity bought by the unions, the development of co-operatives, involving the parallel liquidation of middlemen and tradesmen. The idea of this is upheld by a certain number of syndicates and working-class associations, notably by the Anarchist Federation, the CNT and the autonomous syndicates. But it conflicts with the political hold over the majority of co-operatives and retail organisations, where scandals break out almost daily.

In certain provincial towns, in some Parisian factories, experiments are being attempted. On their success and their multiplication depends to a great extent the reorientation of the working-class on an autonomous basis of immediate demands, and the rebirth of a revolutionary policy without Truman or Stalin.

S. PARANE.

Middle East Notes

CIVIL WAR

(By Our Correspondent)

The Palestine Scene

As previously indicated in these columns, civil war in Palestine is now opening up and the rival terrorists are meeting. How can one convey what it means? One can only see vague flashes. An isolated Jewish settlement in the middle of the hills from which Arabs come swooping down at night. A poverty-stricken Arab village which could be wiped out at one swoop by a nearby Jewish town and whose houses shiver at every mortar. The Eastern Jews—more Arab than Jewish—cooped up in the walled, narrow Old City of Jerusalem surrounded by hostile neighbours who once were friends. The mixed slum area between Arab Jaffa and Jewish Tel-Aviv which has become the "Flanders" of the war. The Westernised Arab men who have caused the biggest boom in the tarboosh industry by rushing to buy the red "fez" (tarboosh) with their Western clothes . . . and the Westernised Arab girls who are prepared to face death rather than go back to the feudal woman's dress which cannot be limited to head-gear alone. The isolated communities (Armenians, Copts, Greeks, etc.) who are neutral in a situation that forbids neutrality. And the forgotten British soldier, called-up on the pretext of an "emergency" arising from the defeat of Germany, who is sent to the warring country against his will and finds himself in the midst of a situation of which he knows nothing, and is court-martialled for negligence because somebody who is interested in what goes on there steals his rifle; or suffers as a "reprisal" because of the activities of a group of would-be Lawrences of Arabia who have retired from the police and Army and look forward to being Smith Beys or a Jones Pashas.

If there are any encouraging signs, it is only that, in spite of everything, there are one or two people with the moral and physical courage to swim against the stream. And "one or two" is literal. The fact that here and there some people of different nationalities still speak to each other is the only encouraging sign for the future.

Arab Reaction

The arrival of Fawzi Kawukji will give a tremendous impetus to the Arab reactionaries, as he represents the extreme Right in the Arab camp. The liberal trend is represented by Abdul Rahman

Azzam Pasha, secretary-general of the Arab League, but the fact that the Arab League has promised so much and done nothing but raise collections has lowered his stock considerably. It is significant that Kawukji's arrival strengthening the Arab Right comes at a time when the Haganah's united front with Irgun strengthens the Jewish Right. The inevitable result of civil war. Fawzi Kawukji will however increase the dissent among Arab leaders—King Abdullah of Transjordan distrusts him and King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia has sworn to behead him with his own uncalloused hands. The Mufti of Jerusalem, who shares with Fawzi bey Kawukji the leadership of Palestine Arabs, is now dominant in Arab counsels and is sending volunteers from Syria. (This is the only Arab country which has sent practical aid to the Palestine Arabs and it is said that it is partly motivated by a desire of the Christian Arab rulers of Syria to get rid of as many Moslem Arab Syrians as they can.)

Simultaneously comes a move by the Mufti (a Hussein) to settle his scores with the Hashashibi family, the only dominant family to dispute his leadership (the feud between them goes back years). It is said the Hashashibis would prefer the Jews to the Husseins, and similarly, that Ibn Saud would prefer the Jews to Fawzi Kawukji. Possibly a "Munich settlement" may come about at top level—who can tell?—but the Right Wing is against it and their influence is the most telling now. A grim joke said—*apropos* the fact that the Sternists tried to bump off the Jewish Mayor of Tel Aviv about the same time as Arab terrorists killed the Arab labour leader of Jaffa—that in view of the appeal for economy in transport, the rival gangs were exchanging blacklists and working street by street on a mutual basis. This, of course, is absurd as they both have entirely different reasons for doing the same thing . . .

★

ONE often feels tempted to think there might be something in the criticism of Anarchists that we are "tolerant of intolerance" and prepared to allow reactionary groups to carry on who will one day destroy us. But an interesting confirmation that "freedom is the best security" came my way recently.

(Continued on page 5)

Foreign Commentary

Anarchists and the Trade Unions

REPORTS of the convention of Italian anarchists held in the small town of Canosa in the South have appeared in the latest issue of *Umanità Nuova* (9/3/48) to reach us, and in more than one respect this meeting of some sixty delegates, representing 31 federations and groups covering the peninsula and the islands, was invaluable. There were nine items for discussion on the agenda, four of which were reports on the activities of the various Commissions which at the last Congress undertook certain specific tasks: the correspondence commission, the anti-religious, and anti-militarist commissions. The discussion on these reports was mainly on ways and means for more effective action. On the anti-religious activity some delegates felt that the commission, by concentrating its attack on the organised church and not on religion and its causes, was not fulfilling its original function. There were already many anti-clerical organisations in Italy; the anarchist had to do more than attack the Church and its representatives. But generally speaking the commission's work was approved.

ANARCHISTS AND THE TRADE UNIONS

But the most discussed subject of the convention was the Anarchists' rôle in the existing trade union organisations, a subject which anarchists in all countries have discussed ever since the trade union movements came into existence. One point on which delegates appeared unanimous was that the movement lacked comrades with practical experience on industrial organisation and this fault seriously handicapped the movement in its relations with the organised workers. The question that had to be decided was whether those comrades already working in the trade union movement had the official backing of the F.A.I. (Italian Anarchist Federation) or not. The Canosa Convention reaffirmed the decisions of the Bologna Congress of 1946 that the F.A.I. could not officially participate in the trade union organisations.

The different points of views expressed by the delegates ranged from complete abstention from the trade union organisations, limiting our activity to one of "persuasion among the rank and file" to that of recognising that action within the trade unions obliged one to accept reformism, but that this was inevitable and that if one had to participate in the workers' struggle one had to sacrifice some principles in the process. Other delegates were in favour of comrades accepting posts in the organizations so long as they were appointed by the rank and file workers whilst a delegate from Milan maintained that "anarchism has meaning only if translated in terms of workers' struggle. Otherwise it must remain a simple abstraction." Yet another delegate put forward the view that though he did not think the movement was ready to enter the workers' organisations as a movement, general principles for this work should be laid down so that the individual comrades' activities in industry should have some definite objective in common. Another delegate proposed that the movement should be responsible for a general "orientation" on activity in the workers' organisations and that it would then be left to the individual comrades to decide what action to take in any particular situation, and guided by their anarchist principles.

TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

The outcome of this lengthy discussion of which we have only been able to give the barest details, was that the convention reaffirmed that:

(1) The anarchists intend to actively participate in the organizations and agitations of the workers, including the trade unions, and

(2) Points to the necessity of finding means to give an anarchist character to this participation, thus exposing the absence of socialist and libertarian determination in the present trade union

activities of the political parties.

(3) The convention recognises that militants must even accept executive posts in the Syndicates, but only when they are freely asked to do so by the organised workers, but

(4) Maintains that militants should not boost the work of the Parties in the trade union movement by allowing themselves to be included in executive committees nominated by the Parties themselves.

And so after three days of intense discussion, the delegates left Canosa to report back to their federations and groups. One more step had been taken in the consolidation of our movement in Italy.

A JOURNALIST'S RE-ACTIONS

Our Italian comrades have no illusions about their ability to influence Italian affairs at present. But they have a weapon which the political parties have lost, and it is integrity. An Italian journalist was present at Canosa, reporting for the Milan daily *Corriere di Milano*. His article appeared under a four-column heading and it reveals the deep impression this integrity has had on him (perhaps a hard-boiled journalist who has attended many political conferences composed of yes-men, cliques and vote-catchers). His report covers nearly 40 column inches; he gives pen pictures of some of the delegates, he refers to the subjects of their discussions, and adds:

"At seeing them and listening to them, that which struck me most forcibly, was a disinterested fervour in which were intermingled the weight of painful experiences and the dreams of a future which none of them wants to think of as being near or distant; they know that such a future exists and for them that is sufficient. There were about sixty delegates and all of them, or almost, had fought in Spain or had returned from exile or had been freed after years of imprisonment and detention. In that miserable cinema hall they discussed

passionately, and there was nothing Utopian about them, nor were they divorced from the realities of present-day conditions. Every one of them spoke and it was clear that they did so without any mental reservation, and if the question under discussion was confused, it was sufficient for one of the delegates to suggest that it should be solved by anarchist principles for the others to find instinctively common ground. There existed an atmosphere of serenity in the hall, even if often words and interruptions dictated by passion seemed to drag the meeting into troubled waters . . ." And after dealing with the discussion on the anarchists and the workers' organisations, the *Corriere di Milano* continues: "They were workers, many were in a hurry because they had to return to their workshops and factories; and they spoke simply, without rhetoric. There is no voting, no compromises are accepted, they boost the work of no party. It was a meeting of men who felt themselves intimately free, courageous men without presumptions. More than one of them said: 'Sooner or later the workers will agree with us.' And the journalist concludes by referring to their decision to purchase a duplicator to print their internal bulletin: "The Italian anarchists are looking for a duplicator, the Americans and the Russians, the Right and what they ironically refer to as the 'so-called Left' are preparing atomic bombs. And yet . . . if with that duplicator the anarchists could gain a new comrade every day, they would beat the atomic bomb."

We have quoted at length from this article partly because we think it of interest to have the reactions of an independent journalist but also because we feel that this man's sympathy—and it is surely no overstatement to describe his article as being sympathetic—is symptomatic of a growing sympathy for integrity and disinterestedness which many must be feeling as a reaction to the intrigues, self-seeking and corruption, at all levels, throughout the world to-day.

LIBERTARIAN.

'OUR DEAR JAN'

Letter from **Germany**

FARTHER DOWNHILL

A BANKER who committed suicide during the inflation in Germany remarked before his death: "A single corpse can move public opinion but masses of corpses are merely statistics."

Because of this human idiosyncrasy the death of Jan Masaryk has succeeded in shaking the world, which had remained almost indifferent to the thousands of arrests and executions that have taken place in Central Europe during the past year. According to a newspaper correspondent, his death has achieved a unity in the American Press unknown since Pearl Harbour.

It is a bitter irony that the man who gave the example of collaboration with the Communists, who liked to think of himself as a "bridge" between the West and Russia, who jovially assured everyone that it was possible to compromise and yet retain one's freedom, should have fallen the victim of his collaboration and that his death should widen the gulf between East and West even more effectively than Mr. Gottwald's putsch.

It took the Czech Government six hours to think up an explanation for Masaryk's death and it showed a certain ingenuity; Masaryk was the victim of the democracies and in particular of his friends abroad who had failed to appreciate his patriotic stand and had deluged him with telegrams expressing their disapproval. With flowers, orations and tears, the Communist leaders expressed their sorrow at the death of a faithful friend.

But Masaryk's friends abroad refused to believe that he had committed suicide, and if one is to believe them, Mr. Gottwald's funeral oration assumes a sinister meaning: "I must accompany our dear Jan on his last trip" would mean that he had taken him for a ride. One does not need to be gifted with particular powers of detection to notice a few contradictions in the official explanation of his death. Mr. Gottwald claims that Masaryk from the first days of the crisis "fully and spontaneously agreed with the action programme of the new Government". From Masaryk's statements, prior to the crisis, the most that can be said is, in fact, that he was dragged along to support the new government.

CIVIL WAR

(Continued from page 4)

It might fairly be claimed that the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Sternists were preparing to take control of the Jewish State should this emerge victorious from a civil war. As the earliest Anarchist criticisms of Zionism said—a new nationalism could only create a State and this would become more reactionary, as witness the decline of Italian nationalism into fascism. This, however, is answered in Palestine by a fair query: How do you know the terrorists are fascists? The general impression among the Jewish community is that they are over-zealous Zionists; if they are condemned, it is not for their views, but for their violence. Haganah has at the moment of writing (10/3/48) made a pact with the Irgun with the sole proviso that it ceases its terrorist attacks on the British, but Haganah (largely social democratic) makes no proviso as to the views and policy of the Irgun and it is expressly understood that Irgun will be able to remain a separate entity so that after the war it can emerge as a political party with its own influence.

However, it can be clearly seen in England that the I.Z.L. and the Sternists are fascist in nature and aim, quite apart from the use of violence, which is based by all political groupings other than pacifists on one occasion or another. Accordingly there is little support or tolerance for them among the Jewish community. The reason for this is solely due to the difference in the British Government's policy; in Palestine the terrorists are illegal and cannot state their views openly, in England they can, and don't have to be exposed, because they expose themselves.

Their organ *The Legionaire* (Voice of the Hebrew Legion) gives their points of

The statement issued by the Czech Prime Minister's office is equally unconvincing. The first paragraph states: "Mr. Jan Masaryk, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, put an end to his life, devoted to the work of the nation and the country, as a result of his illness combined with insomnia. It is probable that in a moment of nervous disturbance he decided to end his life." But the second paragraph goes on to say: "Neither on the day before his tragic death nor yesterday evening did Mr. Masaryk show any signs of mental depression. On the contrary, he was full of life and of his usual optimism."

Those who favour the murder explanation believe that Masaryk had been prevented from expressing his disapproval of the new regime by the virtual imprisonment to which he had been subjected, but that he would have come out into the open when the Czech Parliament met for the first time since the crisis, on the day of his death. It was therefore necessary to eliminate him before he had a chance to speak.

A *Manchester Guardian* correspondent declares: "The possibility that it was not suicide cannot be dismissed; nor should one forget the comparison with the former Minister of Justice, Mr. Drtina, who was found injured in similar circumstances, but who, according to eye-witness accounts, was assaulted in the streets and then abandoned beneath the window of his flat."

The *Daily Worker*, on the other hand, shows a certain impatience towards those who claim that totalitarianism breeds death, suicides, assassinations, murders and executions. The *Daily Worker* is not in favour of making too much fuss over peoples' deaths and innocently remarks: "When John Winant, committed suicide last November, it was explained that he

was a man of deep conviction who suffered from overwork and bad health. There was no attempt politically to exploit his death." This is unimpeachable logic and it is quite true that the Communist Press never accused Mr. Truman of having hired a gunman to shoot Mr. Winant. Why can't a similar discretion be used in the case of Jan Masaryk?

Whether we shall ever know how Masaryk died we, at least, know already that the most shameful use is going to be made of his memory. Mr. Gottwald's tears for his "dear Jan" are hardly more hypocritical than those of British, American and French politicians, who try to represent him as an "apostle of liberty" forgetting that for months before the crisis occurred, when it cannot be said that he had no opportunity to make his voice heard, he remained silent when people were arrested whom he must have known to be innocent. They also forget that he retained his post as Foreign Minister in the present Government, thereby giving his consent, willingly or unwillingly, to it. His responsibility is all the greater because he (like Benes) had the reputation of being a real democrat. The Communist Party was able to make great play of their collaboration.

We do not intend to dispute Masaryk's corpse either with the Communists nor with democrats. He belonged to the line of "well-meaning" politicians who have always led peoples to disaster. It was men of his stamp who allowed Mussolini to seize power, it was they who in the Weimar Republic opened the way to Hitler, it was they who refused to arm the Spanish workers when Franco's troops attempted to seize power. "Well-meaning" politicians spell the doom of the peoples as surely as bare-faced dictators. Jan Masaryk is dead but the sufferings of the Czech people have just begun.

M.L.B.

More Terror in Yugoslavia

AS we have had ample opportunity to see in Russia during the past thirty years, terror did not come to an end once power had been secured by the Communist Party. Terror breeds terror. Russia's bulwark in the Balkans, Yugoslavia follows the lead given by Moscow. It was announced recently that a series of arrests involving high personalities in the Yugoslav Communist Party had been made in Slovenia by Tito's Government.

Reuters reports that the charges include pre-war "infiltration into the Slovene section of the party, allegedly as British intelligence agents, and the exploiting of

their post-war positions as high State officials for "economic" espionage.

The number of arrests was not disclosed, but it is believed to exceed 20.

The leading accused are all well-known as supporters of the Communist Central Committee's policies, and their arrest on such allegations caused a sensation among their colleagues.

Among them are a high official of the Slovene Control Commission (an economic organisation) and the Communist Party secretary of one of the most important Yugoslav industrial districts.

view. I quote from its issue of 13/2/48. From start to finish it preaches unadulterated racial hatred in a tone reminiscent more of the Rosenberg publications in English which the Nazis sent out from Munich before World War II than of half-baked editions of its local fascist counterparts. Although it deplores (inaccurately) that "this land is in the happy position of being the only one where it is legal to be anti-Semitic", it may be said that *The Legionaire* ought to be thankful for that fact because any laws against the propagation of racial hatred would knock it right on the head. Not only is it against the English and, of course, the Arabs ("Islam is the same murder religion wherever it appears" is its passing contribution to the Punjab question), but I cannot see how anyone can deny that *The Legionaire* is anti-Semitic. It makes strong attacks on a certain "thirty dumb Jews, the wonder of the world" not because they are Labour M.P.'s but because they are Jews also! "Unser socialist Jews have thin skins and tender consciences. Not about us, Hebrews." It appears that a new racial theory has been invented by them. "The difference between Hebrew and Jew grows clear every day." Accordingly they attack the Jews à la Hitler in defence of "the Hebrews"! This enables one to understand the fact of compliance with pogroms in Eastern Europe. Irgun itself (as quoted in the same issue) says "The Soviet Union is among the most important of our friends". Its general attitude is pro-Stalin. Certainly if an artificial division is made between the Jews suffering in Stalin-controlled territory, and "Hebrews" (i. e. Jewish nationalists not necessarily in Palestine, as far as one can tell from the paper in question), the Hebrew Legion and hence the Irgun and Sternists may be quite logical in their fascism. The persecution of Jews behind Stalin's Iron Curtain may lead to more "Hebrews" via Cyprus and the D.P. camps. They are certainly no more illogical than the Jewish proletarians in Mile End who kept out Mosley's marchers during Hitler's pogroms and elected Piratin to Westminster during Stalin's pogroms.

URGENT APPEALS

NO descriptions of ours can tell of the conditions of the German comrades better than their own letters, and we therefore reproduce a note just received from an anarchist writer who spent ten years in a concentration camp under the Nazi regime.

"Dear Comrade,
I can now tell you that I have received two parcels. They were in good condition and came at the right time, as I had almost nothing to eat. Comrade — also received a parcel, but he will probably write himself. If you could manage to get him a pair of

shoes he would be terribly happy, since he has none at all. Also his wife has only one pair, but they are so old and torn that they are past repairing. If possible, please help them. They are both magnificent people, and good, old comrades . . .

I myself would be grateful for an overcoat or rather raincoat, as I do not possess one at all. When I left the concentration camp I lost everything, and consequently have nothing left now. I only weigh 98 lbs. and am completely undernourished. As you know, any kind of nourishing foods like fat and sugar are completely lacking here. I thank you particularly for the tinned milk and chocolate; they are most valuable and nourishing. Your parcels are helping me over the greatest need. During the past months I have been in such a physical state that I could hardly work any more. And please remember that there are some comrades here who urgently require shoes and clothes.

X. (French zone)."

RESULT OF DE-RATIONING IN RUSSIA

IT is now nearly three months since the rationing system was abolished in Russia. Recent information reaching London suggests that many of the benefits have been offset by new hardships which the ending of rationing brought.

A wider range of goods is available, but on the whole they are of a lower quality. Prices in Moscow have been maintained at the level fixed on December 14th, but the open markets, where prices are considerably higher, still flourish. The consumer's freedom to buy all he wants is limited not only by his lack of cash but by bad distribution (too few and too crowded shops) and the unofficial limitation placed by the shopkeeper on the amount a customer can buy. This obviously hits the large family most.

In Moscow now to buy one kilo of butter (2.3 lb.) takes one-tenth of the monthly earnings of (700 roubles) of the average worker. One kilo of meat takes one-twentieth, of sugar one-fiftieth, of bread one two-hundred-and-thirtieth, and of potatoes one seven-hundredth. These figures are considerably higher than comparable percentages of the earnings of an English worker.

Manchester Guardian, 10/3/48.

Another comrade writes from the British zone, saying that she received our food parcel just in time, when they had been given no fat ration for over six weeks. There are three in her family, including a small boy of six. To feed them, this comrade writes, she was lucky enough to get a tin of vaseline one day, and managed to make some mock potatoes out of this with flour and water. Can any reader imagine what it is like to eat flour and vaseline?

Please send and continue to send whatever you can in the way of money, food and clothes to help these and other comrades in a similar position. In the past weeks the contributions have declined to a mere trickle, and, unless we receive more, we shall not only be unable to help other comrades, but will even find it impossible to continue sending to those we have started to aid with few but fairly regular parcels.

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entanglements, so that no-one can escape from this hell. Now and again we are honoured with some visitor from the other side of these barriers, who stares at us as if we were wild animals, and who let's us feel our hunger by feeding his dog with chocolate. In addition to this the visitors make speeches which can only cause mockery and ridicule. They recommend democracy to us. But why don't they give us democracy? Liberty of speech, of the press, of open meetings? Why are our letters still being censored, as they were under the Nazis? Why is there still political witch-hunting? Those are the things which the Gestapo did so well.

Germany will not settle down until everyone has enough to eat. For three years the majority have not had half the necessary minimum of food for a healthy existence. Propaganda for democracy goes hand-in-hand with this state of affairs. Here lies the cause of Neo-Nazism in Germany. A democracy has to prove that under it a people live better and more contentedly than under Fascism, otherwise it has lost its meaning. Now one hears generally the remark: "Under Hitler it was not good, but we had enough to eat."

Under the present conditions work has lost its meaning in Germany. Those who do work are certainly no better off, but usually worse off compared with those who do nothing.

The Black Market

The peasants and farmers have no interest in producing much. If a peasant sells grain or potatoes on the black market he receives fifty or a hundred times as much as when he sells on the regular market. What can he do with the money he receives? He has to be a large farmer to earn sufficient money with his harvest to buy a cow afterwards, unless he sells on the black market. Therefore he has little incentive to produce much. It suffices for him to grow enough for himself and a little more for the black market.

Yet the poor population have to rely on the foods which can be bought on the open market for their nourishment; they cannot afford to buy on the black market. The worker who sells a hundred cigarettes black earns just as much as he would with a whole month's work in a factory. Corruption is reaching a gigantic scale, and all the laws made against it are powerless. They are either circumvented or the people take the risk of being caught.

The conversation of people turns mainly on the most primitive necessities of food and clothing; art and science are luxuries, and slowly we go back to the conditions of the Stone age. All this can only be altered by increasing production to such an extent that there is sufficient food for all, as well as clothing and housing. This would break neo-Fascism and also the black market, and work would have some meaning once again.

A New Beginning

Production can be increased by the supply of fertilisers for agriculture. Through this an increase of 30 to 50 per cent. would take place in food; but if this does not happen we shall have bad harvests for several years to come. Germany has sufficient fertilisers, but they are mainly in the Russian zone, and from there they are not being exported to the Western zones. Then production of consumer goods has to be restarted, and for this the coal which is being sent abroad should stay here for the benefit of the German people.

Whoever is healthy should join in productive work, or there won't be any food. This would be the beginning of our convalescence. To maintain the progress of that convalescence would be our task.

W.F.

Is This The Free Society?

THE FREE SOCIETY by John Middleton Murry. (Dakers, 12/6.)

John Middleton Murry's latest book, *The Free Society*, shows what appears, at first sight to be an astonishing *volte face* on the opinions he has been putting forward with such vigour for many years. It represents, on the part of a former pacifist, not merely an excuse for war, but even an argument that in the present state of society, war, or the preparation or threat of war, is a moral necessity.

The Free Society is an extremely well-written book by a facile commentator on events, and therein lies its chief virtue and its main danger. For it is a book which contains little real argument; Murry's method is rather the somewhat dogmatic statement of opinions, backed by appeals to moral hypotheses which seem to him self-evident, but which are supported by no really logical framework and which often run directly counter to practical social experience.

The "free society" as Murry sees it, is related only in name to the free society of the Anarchists. By it he really means the governmental democratic society of Western Europe and America, based on the theory of majority rule and admitting all the old apparatus of governments with powers of coercion and conscription. Out of this, by a theory analogous to that of certain Marxists, he sees a voluntarist society evolving. As to how it will evolve he is somewhat vague, and in this part of the book his argument becomes least clear in a series of appeals to theologian concepts of God and Christian love.

The Collective Fallacy

The book falls into two main parts. In the first Murry develops the thesis that Communism, incarnated in Soviet Russia with its expansionist and imperialist

policy, is the main danger to world freedom, and that the Western democracies are its only possible guardians. Here Murry wholly ignores the fact that the evolution of the Western democracies during the last war and the years following it has been essentially a totalitarian one; the introduction of conscription, the increasing advance of state control by various means over the lives of individuals, are not symptoms of societies moving in the direction of freedom. But Murry, like so many other writers on social matters, can think only in political terms; man's needs, for this type of thinker, are not to be obtained by men themselves in their direct relationship to production, but by collective organisations, and salvation must lie, not in individual men, but in countries, nations, societies, struggling against each other.

Therefore, he naturally envisages the Communist menace being met by the "democratic countries", and, since nations have only one way of struggling against each other, this means war. He seems to have no conception of the struggles of peoples rather than nations, of peoples made of autonomous individuals who would unite across the frontiers in the struggle from below against all dictatorships. He envisages the old political struggle, this time of Russia against America and England, and from this proceeds naturally to advocate the use of the full means of total war in this struggle.

The democratic countries are to combine together in an association of "free societies", into which Russia is to be invited. If Russia refuses, then she is to be forced into it by war. He is as open as that, and one must at least commend his honesty in comparison with the attitude of the orthodox warmongers who try to represent their preparations for war as only defensive.

War a Moral Duty?

Murry, while recognising in theory at least the horrors of war, claims that war is not merely necessary for this purpose, but is also a moral duty. One can perhaps wonder at the kind of morality which sees it as right to plunge the peoples of both sides into another blood-bath in the search for that long-discredited will-

o'-the-wisp, the "war to end war" (Murry actually trots out this broken-down hack phrase in all seriousness). But the practical arguments are all the more severe against him. Firstly, the rise of neo-Fascism in Germany should have taught any man with social insight that the result of national victory is merely to sow the seeds of further wars, and that a military defeat of Russia would serve to give the Communists prestige and keep the spirit of Communism alive in the world.

But, perhaps the most formidable argument against him lies in the results of total war, not merely in the destruction of lives and material goods which it will inevitably involve, but in the fact that for the waging of modern warfare nothing less than the militarisation of the whole nation is needed. The result of the last war was not any increase in freedom; it was merely to implant the social structure and methods of the Nazis, in however attenuated a form, on the countries which claimed to have crushed Nazism. The results of an atomic war, even the preparation of an atomic war, must of necessity—even if the politicians wished anything different—involve a vastly increased centralisation of state power and an increasing repression of liberty.

Freedom and Compulsion

In fact, if not in theory, Murry recognises this, and the second part of his book recommends, among other things, that the "free society" cannot allow freedom for activities which are aimed against its existence. Tolerance is not to be extended to the intolerant, and Communist-tendencies are thus justified. Who will define the enemies of the free society is not stated. But perhaps the part of the book which most reveals the essentially totalitarian nature of Murry's "free society" is that in which he justifies the use of coercion against the workers. Owing to lack of space, I cannot quote as freely as I would like from this part of the book, but the following passage seems to show the nature of Murry's thought in a particularly vivid way.

"Again and again, members of the Labour government have urged, in defence of their supineness before exorbitant wage-demands, that you cannot, in a free society, compel workers to work. They have announced this as an obvious truism, against which no argument was possible. But the truth is that a free society may have to compel its workers to work, in order to remain a free society. The responsibility of choice lies with them. Either they will do, voluntarily, the work that is necessary in order that a free society may exist; or they must be compelled to do it. And the duty of the govern-

ment in a free society is to make them aware of the responsibility of their choice: to make it clear that, if they insist upon exorbitant and anti-social demands, they are compelling the government to compel them to work on just terms."

To talk of the Labour government being supine before the workers' demands and to refer to those demands as exorbitant shows just how far Murry is detached from social reality, and how essentially reactionary his attitude has become. To talk of the necessity of a "free society" imposing compulsion in order to survive is a sign of bad logic, since by imposing compulsion a society automatically ceases to be free. Murry's reasoning springs from a fallacious supposition that there can be a collective freedom which is not based on individual freedom. It is similar to the basic idea behind the Communist talk of "democracy" and the Nazi idea that the individual gained his freedom through the nation.

A further fallacy is the differentiation of the workers from society; if we take the workers away, only the bureaucrats and owners remain, and a tiny minority dictates to the majority. But the worst of Murry's errors seems to me that he ignores completely the fact that the discontent and disobedience of the workers is, if not the sole, certainly the most important active force for freedom. As Wilde remarked, "It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion." To crush out this necessary vital force may be desirable for the sham which people like Murry call a "free" society, but for the real free society based on individual liberty it is the very life-blood, and it remains the one force that, cutting across frontiers, stands any chance of bringing a real end to tyranny and war.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

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A XXth Century Odyssey

Journey Through Chaos, by
Victor Alexandrov. (Routledge, 15/-)

WHILE reading through the first two-thirds of this autobiography I enjoyed it immensely. By the time the book was finished, however, I experienced a mild sense of anti-climax. I do not think that my flagging interest was due to the length of the book—370 pages—but rather to the difference in content between the early part and the end.

For the greater part of the book Victor Alexandrov contents himself with telling us the story of his life in all its amazing vicissitudes. He first tells the story as he remembers it and even if, as one occasionally suspects, maybe unjustly, he has sometimes allowed his imagination to aid him in achieving dramatic effect, and the effect of co-incidence, it remains an absorbing story told quietly and with its horrors and sufferings frequently made the more vivid by the use of understatement and a short, curt, and sometimes ironic, style.

Born into the upper strata of pre-revolutionary Russian society, he seems to have been an obstinate rebel from early childhood. The Revolution, however, changed his childhood in a matter of about a year from the luxury of a rich home in St. Petersburg, where nevertheless he was desperately unhappy, to being a member of one of the many migrant gangs of hungry children that roamed the Ukraine, living like jackals, begging, thieving and robbing for food and fighting amongst themselves. There was certainly no mutual aid amongst these children, or amongst the adults, but a ruthless *chacun pour soi*.

This then, was the beginning of his life as an outcast, a person without a country, escaping from one country to another, always experiencing the hostility, sometimes the actual brutality of the officials of different States, knowing hunger for long periods on end and doing a fantastic variety of different jobs, too many to be listed here.

The Russian Myth Again

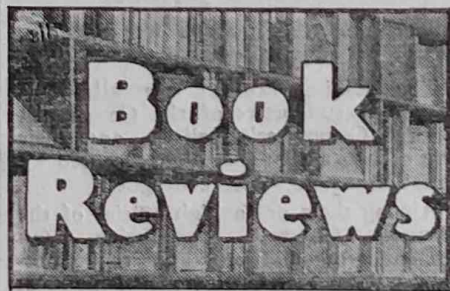
Finally, he managed to establish himself as a political journalist in Greece, and from then on he tends to dwell less on his personal life and more on the political scene, the Balkan scene in particular, as seen by one who both wrote about it and participated in it. Much of this is both interesting and illuminating, but his otherwise excellent reportage is somewhat marred by his adherence to the Russian myth, which leads him to draw sometimes quite illogical conclusions from his first-hand experiences and even to make actual misstatements of fact, as, when in Catalonia during the Civil War, he says:

"The syndicalists and anarchists could never bring order into their revolutionary action without the help of the Communist Party."

In view of the fact that the Communist Party was bitterly opposed to the syndicalists and anarchists, and did everything it could to sabotage their efforts and break up their militia and industrial organisations, this is indeed a surprising statement for an experienced journalist acting in a journalistic capacity in Barcelona at that time.

Facts and Inference

That he should be favourably inclined towards the U.S.S.R. is at least understandable in view of his great love for his homeland (his nationalism, such as it is, is of the best type), and also because it would require tremendous mental and spiritual strength for him to acknowledge that all the effort and heroism, as well as the sufferings and horrible savagery on both sides of the Russian Revolution had achieved only a worse tyranny than before. What is more difficult to understand is that, after devoting the greater part of the last third of his book to exposing the cynical machinations of the



Objections to Anarchism

(Continued from page 2)

Sex Crimes

"Two men love one woman, who chooses A. B in jealousy murders A. What happens? (Anarchism, a social system, will hardly alter individual temperaments). Similarly, what about the paedophiles, who may harm children even in a society with free sex-relations, for even if they die out, there is still the interim period to consider?"

We are now well into the field of minor problems, for clearly the above will not greatly affect the success or otherwise of the social revolution. Malatesta dealt with the question of jealousy in a brilliant article reprinted in *Freedom* some time ago (*Freedom*, 6/4/46). He pointed out the folly of expecting the revolution to solve all problems. Its field is social problems; individual ones are for the individuals concerned. But he also pointed out that our existing society, with its accent on property and its carry-over of chattel slavery ideas into the attitude of men towards women, does everything to

governments of several European countries, and the financial interests whose mere executives they were and still are, after describing all this from what is known as "inside information", he continues to believe in, and advocate, such things as "People's Governments" and federal unions as the only possible solution. One does not even have to be an anarchist, surely, to fail to see the logic of this sort of reasoning.

But do not be put off by this. The conclusions that the writer draws may be inconsistent with his own knowledge and intimate experience, but the account of those experiences is valuable and written with a sincere hatred of cruelty, injustice and oppression. As a human document, and as a bitter protest against man's appalling inhumanity to man, it is well worth reading.

GERALD VAUGHAN.

encourage jealousy as a desirable emotion ("guarding women's chastity" and so forth), and to some extent condones acts committed under its influence. It thus makes itself partly, at least, responsible for unsocial acts of the above kind.

I am always puzzled by the exaggerated fears of damage to children by paederasts. There seems to be a general inability to look at the problem without sentimentality and attitudinising. In our public schools small boys are daily seduced by older boys without appearing very much the worse for it. Observations on actual paederasts suggest that the children involved are seldom entirely inactive victims; they are often active providers of opportunity for the paederast, so that it is mere sentimentality to regard them as victims of outrage. Finally, common sense doctors who keep their eyes open have observed that far more harm is done to such children by legal proceedings and appearances in court—i.e., contact with all the hypocrisy of the public attitude towards sexual activities, especially in the moral thunders of judges who have been to public schools and cannot fail to know something about the seduction of little boys from their own school-days—than by the "crime" in question. Appeals to keep such cases out of the Courts—and so out of the sphere of penology—have been published by individual doctors in the medical press in recent years.

Everyone knows how widespread paederasty was among the Greeks. But no-one suggests that Aliciades was any the worse for being loved by Socrates. And when Socrates was put to death for corrupting the youth, it was not because he slept with them, but because he disseminated among them ideas held to be subversive of the social order.

The revolutionary problem seems to me to be much less concerned with protecting children from people who "seduce" them, than from those who want to prevent children from having any kind of sexual life at all. Don't let us make the former scapegoats for the damaging crimes of the latter.

ANARCHIST.

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"REGULATION ERA" AND THE RISE OF CRIME

A Comparison with America's 'Prohibition Era'

THE least observant reader of the Press, the most casual cinema-goer, knows exactly what a mistake was made by zealous Temperance advocates in the United States, after the 1914-18 war. Many doubtless sincere people joined in a campaign for Prohibition of the sale or consumption of alcohol. An amendment to the Constitution was passed making Prohibition law and Temperance received the worst set-back it could possibly have been given. Americans did not submit to legal interference with their right to drink alcohol or not to drink alcohol. Those who would not normally have drunk alcohol, drank in defiance of the law; those who did normally drink went to extremes to get hold of it. Since this could not be done legally, it was done illegally. Since the illegal vendors of drink could not rely on the protection of the law and were in constant danger of legal interference and rival competition in a violent manner, they organised their businesses on a semi-military fashion, and thus the era of gangsterdom began.

Rival gangs shot out their business differences for all the world as if they were heads of States. Liquor empires under such world-famous figures as Al Capone and Jack Diamond flourished. Soon the gangsters began taking other businesses under their protection.

Lucky Luciano and similar gang leaders took their domain to prostitution; soon all night-clubs and most places of entertainment were "protected" by gangsters. They began demanding "protection money" from shopkeepers; they began forcing their way into trade unions and compelling workers to become dues-paying members of dud unions (thus ousting more legitimate racketeers); American politics became an international by-word for violence and dishonesty;

soon few aspects of life were not under their sway. In a direct struggle with the American federal government, the Government managed to win—it was helped partly by repealing the Prohibition law, which struck at the original basis of the gangsters' fortunes, but mainly merely by the divisions among the gangsters. Owing to the fact that so many gangs' interests clashed, the Federal police were able to sit back and watch while rival gangs wiped each other out. The thoroughness of the gangs' jurisdiction is seen by the plain fact that known murderers, kidnapers and crime leaders were only convicted eventually on charges of not paying income tax on the proceeds of law-breaking.

Any far-sighted gang leader who could have united America's crime tsars could have taken power. He would have had control of political and industrial machinery to enable him to do so.

Will the Racketeers Rule?

The lesson is known so well here that Prohibition advocates in this country are derided, their influence is negligible, and no politician (not even Lady Astor's son!) would risk his seat by giving them a kind word.

But is the lesson so well known? Is beer the only thing for which the British people would embark on a way of life that would give power to the gangs? NO. We have begun on the same road as America—not with one minor non-essential, but with all our essentials and luxuries. Rationing has limited our entire goods and food; so far from peace-time bringing one iota of relief in this direction we are more severely rationed than even. This might be borne in a spirit of sacrifice if the people knew we were "short"; few people might then be prepared to demand more than their share. But where is all our produce going? It is being shipped abroad for the wealthy elsewhere. The Government's publicity departments and tame economists may explain all they wish, but it does not need a lot of knowledge to know that this is a policy of despair.

The black market is not only rampant in certain parts of London and other big cities. It has permeated our national life.

It is certainly our most widespread institution. This is partly because the term "black market" has come to denote practically every aspect of obtaining goods except with the sanction of the State. No more simple and time-honoured method of obtaining something to eat or wear could exist than exchange and barter; but everybody knows what happens to somebody who exchanges something with a farmer or poultry-keeper (if they get found out). Nothing more simple than doing a few repairs or some painting in your spare time, but everybody knows what happens if you haven't a licence (if you get found out). The innumerable restrictions and controls that clog us—in their effect more deadening and humiliating than a thousand Prohibition Laws—cannot be observed. They are not observed. Our prison population grows in number as our "criminals" grow in number. It is not surprising that gradually people tend to ignore the lot and turn to the "recognised" black market which was originally universally condemned. To such an extent that there are such things as a recognised price for clothing coupons; and that nobody with money need ever be short of anything, rationed or not. And they are not. Witness the rush of "our betters" to deal with Mr. Max Intrafor.

Crime Does Pay

The hangers-on of that easy world where one lives without working and uses one's wits to "fiddle" anything, have accordingly come into their own. The "wide boys" who in the days of unemployment were driven to picking up a few shillings at dog racing, and thus to living by punting, and thus to drifting into the race gangs of London and the many gangs of other towns, Liverpool and Glasgow in particular, are now the envy of the nation. The shortage of goods in supply and the ready market offered to the small-time crook, and even more particularly the large number of rackets which can be worked by exploiting the present situation, have given them a place of importance in society—for the first time in many of their drab lives.

The leaders of the Labour Party who have long ago dropped any sort of a crusade against the capitalists—to such an extent that an occasional slighting remark by Mr. Shinwell causes a national controversy, who no longer agitate against the wrongs committed by the State, for which they must now apologise, who

(Continued on page 8)

Letters to the Editors

Heart Cry From the Navy

DEAR COMRADES,

It is my misfortune to be in the Navy, and since my "call-up" I have become very interested in the philosophy of Anarchism. This interest is, I think, a direct outcome of my experience in the "Senior Service", a reaction against harsh discipline and a dislike of the constant curbing of personal freedom.

Before my conscription I was quite content to let other people worry about "the struggle for Freedom", I was far too full of my studies and in too comfortable a position to give such mundane things my attention, but now I have been brought up against this problem in no uncertain fashion. My faith in the society in which we exist has been severely shaken and I realise now that no amount of renovation to it can ever make it the ideal system; in fact, the only real solution I can see is a complete rebuilding on a new foundation, namely, Anarchism.

It was my misfortune to have found out these truths only after my "call-up"; had I been enlightened before, no doubt the Royal Navy would have lacked one member. The most I can now do is to talk and argue with my messmates and read all the anarchistic literature I can obtain.

I am writing to let you know that there is at least one person in Naval uniform who has an anarchistic outlook and to wish you every success in your struggle. I look forward eagerly to the time when I can come forward openly and declare my convictions.

[Name and address supplied, but instructions prominently displayed on H.M. ships warn that: "Other methods of seeking redress or ventilating a grievance than those provided for in the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions, such as writing to newspapers or other periodicals are forbidden."—Eds.]

Forgotten States

DEAR SIRS,

1918—was the year of Independence Declarations for three small democratic republics on the Baltic Sea. 16/2/1918—Lithuania, 24/2/1918—Estonia and 18/11/1918—Latvia. Great Britain, France and U.S.A. provided them with great material and moral support. The following twenty-two years showed the world that these small nations are ripe to govern themselves. Remarkable achievements in all branches of life lined them

into a significant place among other European nations.

1940—Soviet Russia occupied all three Baltic States by force. Since then occupants have changed twice, but prosecutions, deportations, slave labour and imprisonment have been and still are the fate of these freedom-loving nations.

The second World War was fought in the name of freedom and human rights. Now, after so many peace conferences, in none of which these Baltic States have been mentioned, one gets the feeling that freedom and human rights are only a prerogative of the great victorious nations.

Baltic people, who are suffering unceasingly under the despotic Communist rule, still hope that the rest of them will be saved. They still believe in Western Democracies, calling for their help desperately.

Ad. S.

[While we do not accept our correspondent's view of the Baltic States' achievements before the war, it stands out as a condemnation of the so-called "Western Democracies" (on whose help he and like thinkers call in vain) that the Soviet conquest of the Baltic countries is just one more of the problems that are pigeon-holed by international conferences and the fate of their peoples ignored. The remedy is not to be found in wistful reminders that the War was supposed to be fought for human rights, because that is not true. The fate of the Baltic countries will only be remembered when it comes in useful for war propaganda. The problem is bound up with the larger problem of world revolution.—Eds.]

Unemployment in Canada

FELLOW WORKERS,

I am not working now. There are about 350 men out of work here where I am. I saw in one of the papers here that there was about 500 men lined up for meals in Toronto (Ontario)—by the looks of things the soup line is here again. There are a lot of men and women out of work in Canada and I saw in the paper there was a man in Vancouver (B.C.) that went to the police to get put in jail so he could have a place to eat and sleep, and he got 30 days in jail.

Yours,

Kamloops, B.C.

J. B. McA.

[What a different tale from the national Press's story of the opportunities in Canada awaiting British emigrants!—Ed.]

A PUZZLE

I thought Conservative Central Office had learned the lesson of Gravesend. It hasn't.

It has brought out at North Croydon the old, fantastic bogey: "Labour fosters class warfare."

Yet Harold Nicolson, Labour's by-election candidate, is a peer's son. In the past 24 hours his supporting speakers have included—

Professor Joad (grandson of an agricultural labourer), George Strauss, Minister of Supply (heckled because he lives in "Millionaires' row"), George Lindgren, a railway clerk, now Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Tom Braddock, architect, Councillor Harry Banks, a retired postal official.

Puzzle: Which class does Labour fight for and which against?

Daily Herald, 2/3/48.

VALUABLE EXPERIENCE

During consideration of the Criminal Justice Bill in committee yesterday, Mr. Emrys Hughes exclaimed with exasperation:

"I wish sometimes that those lawyers who have been speaking so much in this committee had a little experience of prison themselves. I would dearly like to send the Attorney-General for six months to Wormwood Scrubs accompanied by other members."

Daily Telegraph, 23/2/48.

DIVINE RIGHT

The policeman is a representative of the law, a representative of the King, and also, in a sense, a representative of God—Speech reported in Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News, quoted in

New Statesman, 28/2/48.

LOGICAL

Valdimar Stefansson (37), of Reykjavik, detective and judge—"I don't think you have such a thing in your country"—has come to learn how to "pep up" the Iceland police force.

In the next five days Judge-Detective Stefansson will find out all he can about British crime detection and legal procedure at the police training college, Cannock, Staffs.

He told the Daily Mirror last night: "In Iceland we have only 100 policemen and we want to be very efficient. I am head of the police."

Daily Mirror, 9/3/48.

Through the Press

ANOTHER LABOUR GOVERNMENT

Queensland Government to-night declared a state of emergency, equal to martial law, to "preserve peace and public safety," and to break a strike by 23,000 railwaymen.

Daily Express, 28/2/48.

RACIAL HATRED

Mr. Arthur Calwell, Australian Immigration Minister, said to-day that Australian soldiers and civilians were forbidden to bring Japanese wives or any children of a union with Japanese women to Australia.

"An Australian marrying a Japanese can live with her in Japan and passport facilities can be granted," he said, "but it would be the grossest act of public indecency to permit any Japanese of either sex to pollute Australian shores while any relatives remain of Australian soldiers dead in Pacific battlefields."

"No Australian is permitted to outrage the feelings of widows and mothers by flaunting Japanese women before their eyes."

Evening Standard, 9/3/48.

WHY SO SCARED?

Mr. Harry Pollitt, general secretary of Britain's Communist Party, has been banned from landing in Canada, where he was to have made a lecture tour next month.

The Communist Party announced this last night.

Daily Mirror, 9/3/48.

In Britain Mr. Pollitt can lecture every day of the year if he feels inclined to do so and very few are willing to listen to him.

POLISH JUSTICE

Marmalade saboteur Mieczylaw Derwinski, head of the Polish State factory at Bydgoszcz, was sentenced to death by a military tribunal for "preventing the proper functioning of the works."

News Review, 11/3/48.

IDEOLOGICAL BALLET

Moscow's ballet and operetta mistress, Shakhovskaya, is campaigning for a "Soviet quadrille" to stamp out swing and boogie-woogie and the decadent bourgeois jazz.

News Review, 11/3/48.

GRAPES OF REAL-LIFE WRATH

A few miles outside Hollywood, they began filming "The Grapes of Wrath" again to-day.

The scene is America's greatest vineyard, Digiorgios Farm, where a tenth of the country's wine grapes grow.

The characters are the lean hungry fugitives from the Dustbowl who came to California with their families and possessions piled on old cars to earn a living and find a home.

But the new film version is not based on author John Steinbeck's bitter fiction. This one is real.

A trade union is making it to tell the public about a strike of which they have never heard—the longest farm strike in American history.

The 1,200 grape pickers working on Digiorgios Farm have been out since October. They went on strike because the farm bosses refused to negotiate on their request for more pay.

Daily Express, 25/2/48.

HOW TO BE AMERICAN

A booklet on how not to be mistaken for a Communist is Hollywood's best-seller to-day.

It is called Screen Guide for Americans and is published by the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals.

This Right-wing organisation was founded by, among others, Ginger Roger's mother.

The booklet lists these don'ts for film makers: Don't smear the free enterprise system; don't deify the common man; don't glorify failure; don't smear industrialists; don't permit any disparagement of personal success; don't give to your characters—as a sign of villainy—a desire to make money.

Daily Express, 24/2/48.

TROUBLE IN BOND ST.

Printing of the Czech Government-sponsored journal in London, Central European Observer, started a little early. Dr. Josef Kodicek, the editor, was printing something he knew his Embassy wouldn't like.

Apparently they didn't. And a new editor, with a letter from the Embassy, arrived at the office in Bond-street, W., yesterday to take over.

Then—Dr. Kodicek told the Daily Mirror last night—this is what happened. "He insisted that I turn over the whole office to him immediately. I told him I would be prepared to leave later."

"He became very nasty, and again insisted that I leave at once."

"I told him to get out. He refused—so I took him by the arms, twisted them behind his back, and threw him out of the door."

"It was my article attacking the Communists that started the trouble." For this is a sample of it:

"Do . . . the . . . Communist leaders intend to achieve a permanent unity by terror and propaganda . . . following the proven Fascist wisdom of the German proverb:

"Give me thy brotherly embrace, else I will smash thy bloody face!"

Daily Mirror, 5/3/48.

DENAZIFICATION

Germany's leading encyclopedia, Brockhaus, demonstrated last week that it was keeping pace with changing times.

Said the encyclopedia's 1937 edition: "Nazism is an attitude towards life . . . Nazism does not regard people as the sum of individual citizens but as a community bound by blood ties . . . The foremost principle of Nazism is the Führerprinzip. This means victory over the parliamentary system and over majority rule in all spheres of life and consolidation of existence of the Reich, in the definite belief in its historic mission and in the future of the German people."

Said the new Brockhaus (under Military Government licence): "Nazi—an endearing term for Ignaz, which in turn represents an abbreviation for Ignatius."

Time, 1/3/48.

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

In Kassel, Germany, Harvardman Henry Martyn Noel, Jr., 24, disclosed that he had renounced his U.S. citizenship and become a "citizen of the world". He was living over a pigsty, working as a bricklayer for a German construction company. Said he: "Now that I am no longer allied with [national interests] . . . I feel I can come closer to the true spirit of man."

Time, 1/3/48.

SECRET DIPLOMACY

Mr. Dalton, disclosing that for half-an-hour, when the present Government was being formed, he was Foreign Secretary and Mr. Bevin was Chancellor, said: "I had made up my mind I would get drunk with Molotov the first night—but I was not able to do it, and I am not hopeful that if we had we should have got on any better."

Daily Mail, 28/2/48.

TOO LATE

"The bomb blew to pieces the world of disinterested science. No longer can men of science work without consideration of the use to which their discoveries are put. Unless the world deals intelligently with the problem of war, which now means the misuse of science, secrecy and suspicion will surround for evermore all further attempts by men to understand how nature works."

—Professor M. L. E. Oliphant, F.R.S.

News Chronicle, 28/2/48.

FIGHTING THE HOUSING SHORTAGE

When Haydn Thomas (27), factory worker, of Pyle, near Bridgend, was demobbed last year he spent his £200 gratuity on a second-hand Nissen hut as a home for his wife and four-years-old daughter.

It took him five months to turn the hut into a snug home, as good, he claims, as any prefab.

Now he has been ordered by Penybont Council to pull it down within 12 months because it infringes the by-laws. Yet he went into it from a house with 10 occupants where some slept on the kitchen floor.

"I can't understand the council taking this action now as they went so far as to instal electricity in my hut," Mr. Thomas told me to-day.

News Chronicle, 28/2/48.

Anarchist Commentary

C.P. Waves Red Flag Again

THE most recent congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain represented the perfect example of the success of political conditioning.

the workers only when it could be used for their ends of party policy.

In fact, the recent congress has revealed once again that the real aim of the Communists is to act as the political fifth column of Russian imperialism in this country, and that the workers are being used merely as pawns in this game.

Army or Navy—a practice by which the courts enforced Conscription long before it became law.

The sentence of six months imposed for a mere eighteen-pence is one more instance of the class basis of our courts, which every day are letting off the big money racketeers because they happen to be "well connected".

"CLOTHES MAKYTH MAN"

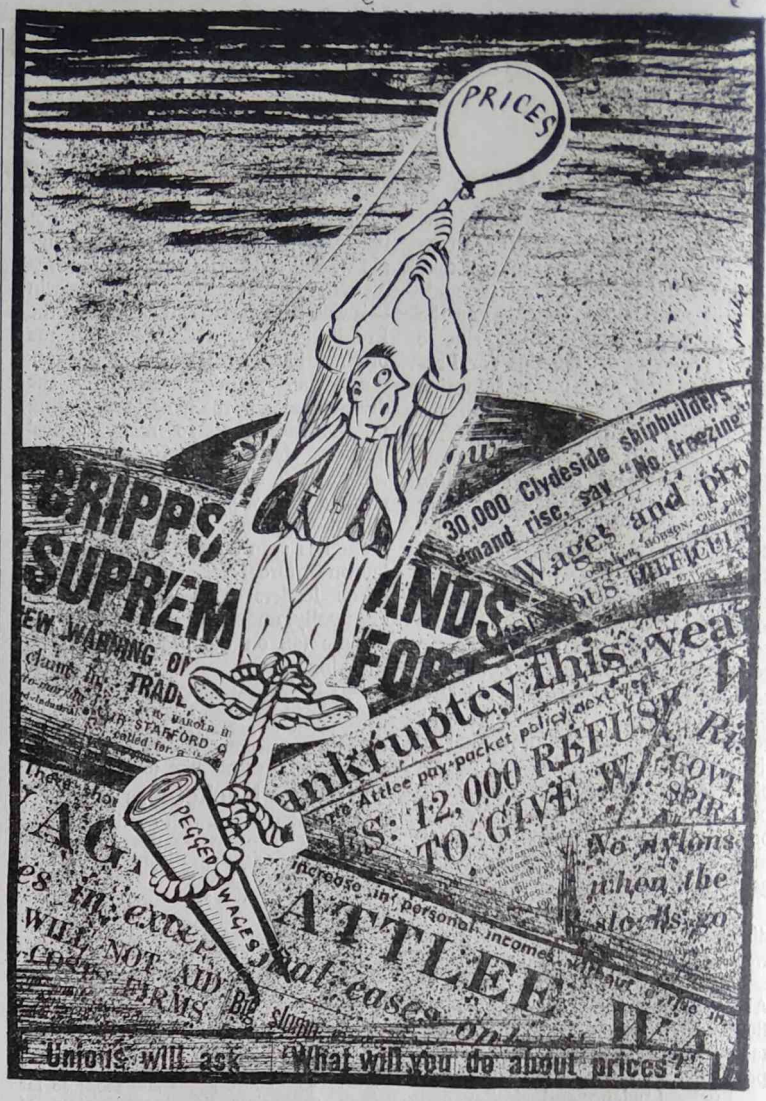
MR. E. P. SMITH, Conservative M.P. for Ashford, hit upon a very profound truth in a standing committee of the Commons the other day.

Naturally, Mr. Smith carried the day, because the M.P.'s knew that unless the judges and law courts were dressed up to look important they would be unable to pose as supermen looking down on the common mortals who clutter the Courts before them.

ARE PUBS LEGAL ?

"BECAUSE a young man refused to accept a condition of his recognisances that he should not enter a public house, he was sent to goal for six months at Carmarthen Assizes last night," states the Daily Mirror (3/3/48).

The impudence of the judges and magistrates in this country is astonishing; they use the bench as an excuse for airing their pet views and prejudices, free from retort.



"REGULATION ERA"

(Continued from page 7)

have to be careful in attacking iniquities abroad, angrily and loudly denounce these "spivs and drones", surely a symptom of our times.

In the meantime the growth of crime is blamed on to such absurd factors as desertion from the armed forces. The racketeers have exploited this situation as they have every other situation created artificially by the government, in particular by the supply of identity cards and ration documents.

To which we must add the glorification of violence during the war, and the tremendous impression the war-time propaganda of thuggery has had on the present generation of youth.

The answer does not lie in "bigger and better prisons", in more laws, in strengthening the police force or trying to introduce a modicum of honesty.

there are so few, considering the penalty of non-participation. For the crime of being honest, people are condemned to lives in slums and to forego all the privileges and pleasures of life; to be underfed and overworked, and looked on as mugs by a society which worships Money as its god, and regards work as a disgrace since the passport to honour is clean hands, tidy clothes and a leisured voice.

The problem of crime would be dwindling and decaying in a free society. The less free the society—that is to say the more laws it has—the more the problem assumes wider proportions.

But crimes will go on and people will still suffer—not so much from the standpoint of property which is the last thing to consider, but by material shortages and physical violence—so long as the State exists.

By the exploitation of the natural resources to hand, a free people would bring about abundance; by the abolition of laws, criminals would no longer be manufactured in the crime-factories known as prisons.

Recent Meetings in London

THE regular discussion lectures organised by the Central London Anarchist Group and held at Endsleigh Gardens every Sunday evenings, continue to present the Anarchist case on a variety of topics.

with the death penalty, and of how in politics, agitation for its abolition and excuses for its retention are purely matters of political expediency.

The Labour Party and its past and present attitudes to war and conscription were outlined by Jack Gibson, a disillusioned ex-party member, who had parted company with the so-called Socialists by the simple procedure of being expelled for adhering to his principles.

Bert Smith, our comrade in the baking trade, gave an admirable survey of that trade at a well-attended meeting. His talk has been condensed for the article on page three of this issue of "Freedom".

Tony Gibson saw the anarchist influence in the realm of social ideas among those of the present generation as something which would bear fruit in the future with the continuous decline of Britain as a prosperous imperial country.

Already this year several new speakers have been introduced at these meetings. In January, Tony Weaver gave his impressions as a teacher in France, a human and anecdotal talk.

In February, our comrade Ethel Hall returned with a lecture on Kropotkin, and our good friend, F. A. Ridley, the editor of the "Socialist Leader" prophesied on "the Conflict of Ideologies in 1948".

After Easter a new series of these meetings will begin, and it is hoped that a fairly regular feature will be surveys of various industries and trades as well as theoretical and controversial discussions on all aspects of anarchism.

Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

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

MARCH 21st Margery Mitchell The Position of Women in Society

MARCH 28th No Lecture

APRIL 4th "Objections to Anarchism" (Questions and Answers).

NORTH EAST LONDON

MARCH 23rd 7.30 p.m. "Discussion of NELAG Manifesto"

APRIL 6th 7.30 p.m. Alex Comfort

"Scientific Method in Political Thought" Comrades interested should ring WAN 2396.

HAMPSTEAD

PUBLIC MEETING. Brains Trust on "What is Anarchism?"

at Stanfield House (corner High St. and Prince Arthur Rd.) on Thursday, 25th March, at 7.30 p.m.

All enquiries to: R. MILTON, 79 Platt's Lane, N.W.3

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

Public Meetings at CENTRAL HALLS, BATH ST. will be held every Sunday evening.

Speakers: John Gaffney, Frank Leech, Eddie Shaw. Doors open 6.30 p.m.

MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST GROUP

Please note that the meeting advertised for Sunday, March 1st, will be held at David Lewis Buildings and NOT Coopers Hall.

OXFORD

Anyone interested in the formation of an Oxford Anarchist Group should get in touch with John Larkman, Ruskin College, Oxford.