Anarchist Commentary

Apathy at German Elections

Observers report that the German workers showed less interest in the elections of April 2nd, than they did in the municipal elections of last autumn. One writes that 'what has left the German careless of politics is the feeling of unreality in voting for 'Parliaments' that have responsibility without power over their own fate. The failure of Moscow has also added to this feeling."

Doubtless the German workers have as good, and better, reason to distrust political action as workers everywhere else; but it would be rash to attribute this apathy mainly to political enlightenment. Party politics inevitably pale into insignificance in the face of famine.

"Lack of food," writes the *Manchester Guardian's* correspondent, "is a universal obsession and the desperate food outlook for the next few months a universal worry."

The Communists use the food shortage as political propaganda, arguing that a political clear-out will mean twice as much to eat. The workers are probably sceptical about that one however—have they not heard similar promises before, but not after, every election of their lives? Just the same, the C.P. may increase their 8% poll of last autumn's elections through this propaganda.

German Bread Ration Cut

It has been announced that the bread ration will be cut from five pounds a week to three. Since the poorest section of the population has been living almost solely on bread, this is a very serious cut indeed. Potatoes are very short, and also contribute to reduce the nominal 1,550 calories ration. Fat is rationed at 7 ozs. for four weeks, but this is only met to the extent of 2 or 3 ozs. Milk and butter are so short that even priority milk rations to children are not being met. The meat ration is also a defaulter. In the North Rhine-Westphalia area supplies are supposed to come from Bavaria; but last month only 335 tons of the quota of 2,330 arrived. The 400 grammes ration (slightly less than 2 lb.) for 4 weeks is therefore patched up with fish or sugar, while jam is substituted for sugar in many districts.

The bread is made from maize, and so badly processed that it is very heavy and indigestible—a serious matter for old people. All told, the *Manchester Guardian's* correspondent estimates that half of the 1,550 calorie ration is not being met. "The German harvest is now nearly exhausted and Western Germany must live for the next five months almost wholly on imports. Last year this was the most dangerous part of the year from a nutritional point of view; it is clearly going to be the most dangerous part of this year, too."

The Budget And The Dollars

Much has been written about the "fag-end budget". Here we shall only comment on a few aspects which seem to have been generally overlooked. If the government's aim is to reduce expenditure on dollars, the budget is rational. Even their critics concede that. And if "patriotic duty"—in Dalton's latter-day socialist phrase—succeeds in reducing the amount of tobacco smoked, a saving in dollars will be effected. Now the government has agreed to make concessions to old age pensioners and other old folks who would be most severely hit by the rise in price, so that a great many critics have been satisfied.

But what does this urgent desire to conserve currency portend? Do we not remember similar trends in certain countries before the war—the Fascist countries? They also sought the same kind of thing, and used every inducement to make foreigners spend their money in tourist trade there. The British government has recently issued large numbers of photographic posters of English, Welsh and Scottish beauty spots for distribution abroad for the purpose of bulding up a tourist trade. Shall we soon see "tourist pounds" sold to foreigners coming to Britain at specially favourable rates, analogous to the tourist marks and tourist lira available for Germany and Italy before the war? And perhaps even British typewriters and motor cars sold abroad below cost in order to attract foreign currency? Is not what we are seeing the business of 'autarky' developed by Dr. Schacht, the national economic self-sufficiency as an ideal to be aimed at? It is not much further to the 'expand or burst' slogans justifying expansionist adventures and leading to war.

Smokes Out Of Food Money

Suppose, however, that the smoking public becomes inured to the high prices and buys much the same amounts as before. The government secures an immense revenue from the increased tax. But meanwhile the extra money for smokes will have come out of the income left after income tax, rent, insurances, coal, etc., have been paid. It will come, in fact, out of the money available for food. Inevitably therefore a certain amount of malnutrition will accrue from this enhanced taxation. Tobacco, by the way, though expenditures of £1 weekly in a family are by no means uncommon, is not an item considered by the cost of living index. Tobacco is treated as a luxury, in fact. But the most superficial glance at the facts of tobacco consumption, and at smokers, shows that it treated as a necessity by them. However regrettable to moralists and puritans, that is the reality.

If the tax does not deter the smokers, increases in malnutrition are inevitable.

Murder or "Suicide"

The police may be paid to uncover murder when it is committed; but the government is above the police, and it sometimes suits it to cover such business up. Here are some facts on a fishy affair in Paris, as they appear in *Reuter* reports for succeeding days:

"CZECH CONSUL MURDERED IN PARIS.

PARIS, APRIL 6.

"Mr. Gejza Racgejac, the Czechoslovak Consul in Paris, was found murdered in a side street in the west end of Paris early to-day. His gold watch had stopped at 45 minutes past midnight and his wallet containing 58,000 francs (about £120) lay near his body. Mr. Jindrich Nosek, the Czechoslovak Ambassador, said he was sure the murder had no political significance.

"The police stated that the torn state of the Consul's clothing indicated that he had fought his assailants and the scars on his left leg suggested that he had been dragged from the scene of the murder.—Reuter."

"CZECH CONSUL'S SUICIDE.

PARIS, APRIL 7.

"The French judiciary police to-day over-ruled the findings of a post mortem and returned a verdict of suicide on Mr. Gejza Racgejac, Czechoslovak Consul in Paris, whose body was found early yesterday in an alley in Paris. A preliminary examination had led the police to believe that Mr. Racgejac might have been murdered.—Reuter."

It seems that "political crimes" are only committed by undesirables who do not enjoy government protection. Where there is something to cover up, the obliging victim becomes capable of committing "suicide" after tearing his clothes in fighting with his assailants (himself), and dragging himself through the streets from the scene of his murder (suicide).

Meetings and Announcements

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP
SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES
Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.
at 8 Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1
MAY 4th Tony Gibson
"Anarchism and Human Nature"
MAY 11th Dr. Kenneth Barlow
"The Coventry Experiment"
MAY 18th Philip Sansom
The Means of Revolution
Admission Free. Questions invited

NOTICE

PUBLIC MEETING
in MANCHESTER
MAT KAVANAGH
will Speak on
ANARCHISM—the way to Freedom
on Tuesday, 13th May

Details Time and Place from:
S. L. FLACKETT, 28 Braemar Avenue,
Stretford, Manchester

GLASGOW
Anarchist Group
Open Air
MEETINGS
at
MAXWELL STREET
(Argyll St.)
on
SUNDAYS at 7 p.m.
Speakers:
Eddie Shaw Frank Leech
Preston Clements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS
(Lancashire)
PUBLIC LECTURES
in CHORLEY
at the ODDFELLOWS ROOMS,
9 Cunliffe Street, Chorley,
at 7-0 p.m.
Sunday, May 11th. Mat Kavanagh.
The Futility of Trade Unionism

Descriptive leaflets from:—
U.A.G., 11 Ribbesdale Place, Chorley.

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"LOOK OUT — HERE COMES CIVILISATION!"

Latest:—

MARKET STRIKE—1,000 Now Out

The Billingsgate Market strike, as reported on page 3, has brought out 1,000 City of London Corporation workers after all. By far the biggest effect of this has been the closing to road traffic of Tower Bridge (a drawbridge across the Thames, left "up" by the strikers). The result is chaos among City traffic. London Bridge, for instance, has to bear twice its normal traffic, and it now takes at least 25 minutes to cross in 6-feet jerks.

The streets of the City are unswept; dustbins, full and overflowing, are uncollected; public lavatories are closed. Several funerals due to take place at the City of London's cemetery have had to be postponed. Cleaners at all the City markets are on strike.

This strike, though relatively small, shows the power of a handful of workers if they are in key positions. Thousands of city workers, on their way to sit in their offices and clatter at typewriters, quote the latest city prices, add up columns of figures, count money, answer the telephone, make tea and be nice to the boss, have had brought home to them the fact that the *useful* work is done by just a few workers to whom solidarity is more important than all the aforesaid activities—and rightly so.

Opposition to Conscription

Up to the present the opposition to conscription has taken a weak and fundamentally ineffective form. There has been the parliamentary opposition to the new conscription acts, but the Members of Parliament concerned are clearly by no means all really opposed to conscription in principle. Indeed, far from this being the case, it looks as though many of them will be willing to accept the government's "concession" offer to reduce the term of conscription from eighteen to twelve months. This offer, of course, means little in practice and less in principle. To the man who is conscripted it is no doubt better to serve twelve than eighteen months, but this is nothing to the fact of being conscripted itself, which is a gross interference with freedom, and which does not mean the end of his troubles, since he will be liable to remain in the reserves where he can be called up immediately for a long period after his actual service has ended.

The so-called opponents of conscription who accepted this compromise are really betraying the cause they pretend to support, since conscription can only be opposed completely and in principle. Once it has been granted to be allowable under any circumstances the government is left free to create the excuses to impose any kind of extension they may desire. They can well concede six months to tide over the present little storm of opposition, and add it again when the next managed crisis gives them an excuse.

Among the groups who have shown their ineptitude over this affair are the ILP, whose membership in parliament are now reported to be ready to support the new twelve-months' conscription proposal, under the impression that this is a great improvement, when in fact it means next to nothing.

For these reasons it is all the more encouraging to learn that at least one other movement is joining the Anarchists in advocating an unconditional opposition to the new conscription. At its recent Annual General Meeting, the Peace Pledge Union passed the following resolution:

> "This Annual General Meeting of the Peace Pledge Union asks its National Council to take a lead in destroying completely the National Service Acts rather than obtaining exemption provisions for objectors, and to urge all who are opposed to peace-time military conscription to ignore the Acts and to refuse to obey or accept them in any detail."

In view of the weak policy which the P.P.U. adopted during the war on this matter, this represents a welcome resumption of responsibility, and a triumph for the socially conscious elements within that organisation. It may mean the beginning of a realistic policy of resistance to war, and we hope to see the P.P.U. implementing this resolution by an active opposition to the new laws, and a realisation of the fundamental social causes of war.

Catholic Bishop Denounces Franco

Dr. Francis McMahon, a Catholic who went to Spain as correspondent of the liberal *New York Evening Post,* said on his return to America: "I feel I have just come out of one of the largest prisons in the world." His press credentials had been withdrawn by Franco. Dr. McMahon now publishes the text of a pastoral letter written last September by the Catholic Bishop of the Canary Islands, which was suppressed by the Spanish government.

The Bishop describes the people of Spain as victims of "Famine, malnutrition and an exhaustion at once economic, psychological and pathological". He accuses the officials of the regime of corruption and black-marketeering: they live like princes at the expense of the hunger and anguish of the majority of Spaniards—perhaps the best Spaniards", and the Franco state has turned itself into "the pitiless executioner of those subjects whose rights it is supposed to protect—above all, of its most needy subjects."

Tuberculosis, he says, is rife and the death rate "frightening". The Canary Islands face disaster "with multitudes, in an active state of disease, wandering through the streets without a bed in the hospital, without access to a sanatorium, even homeless or living in hovels devoid of every convenience."

The Bishop fears that the outcome of all this will be that the workers will "become so desperate that, having nothing to lose, they will resort to violent social upheaval in an attempt to recover all."

This conclusion is especially significant coming from such a source as a Catholic Bishop. But there are also remoter considerations not less interesting, and from the workers' point of view, disturbing.

This exposure of the Franco regime comes from the Roman Catholic Church which actively assisted Franco to gain power. Not only did they not obstruct the Fascist excesses during the Civil War, they blessed the soldiers and the instruments which inflicted them. If they now turn round—and it must be remembered that the Vatican has turned a cold front to Franco's monarchist offer—it is because they now regard Franco as a losing bet. That they should denounce the regime they fully backed indicates that they wish to secure favour with the masses they have so bitterly wronged. The danger is that the workers, in their generosity and simplicity, will accept these protestations and repose some confidence in the Church. The Bishop is obviously running some serious risks, and that argues a sincerity on his part; but one, or even a handful, of sincere and humane bishops cannot wipe out the evil of the Church in Spain, nor can they deflect the policy of the Vatican from its aims of reviving its mediaeval control of the world.

Decorated By Franco

Generalissimo Francisco Franco of Spain has bestowed high decorations on a number of leading Argentine on a number of leading Argentine functionaries of the Peron regime. Among them are the Governor of Buenos Aires Province, the president of the Central Bank, and the Under Secretary for Commerce and Industry. (WP)

N.E. LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Next Meeting
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Tuesday, 13th May, at 7.30 p.m.
at
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(Nr. Green Man)

Discussion on the Aims and Principles of the Union of Anarchist Groups.

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Printed by Express Printers, London, E.1, and published by Freedom Press, London, W.C.1

14294

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Freedom
ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"Like Socialism in general, and like all other social movements, Anarchism originated among the people, and it will preserve its vitality and creative force so long only as it remains a movement of the people."
KROPOTKIN.

Vol. 8 No. 9 3rd May, 1947 Twopence

BEWARE! WAR BREWING

ANTARCTIC TRIALS SIGNIFICANT

IT is not difficult to show that modern capitalist economy has reached the stage where it can only exist on a war footing. And for years it has been observable that there has been in all countries an accelerating trend towards totalitarianism; a State control which has always been seen to flourish on war and war preparations. These things are obvious enough.

But in certain circumstances one does not care to see the obvious. When men have just come through the bloodiest conflict in history, it is not surprising if overwhelming war-weariness makes them unwilling to recognize the drive towards yet another war. Of course, people see the signs easily enough; but they refuse to take them seriously. Determined to avoid contemplating the prospect of yet a third world conflict, they prefer to dally with the transparent smoke-screens put up by the governments in the shape of UNO, treaties to "outlaw war" and all the rest of the tomfoolery that fools no one, but which uneasily lulls a war weary world into an illusion of security which it so desperately desires.

Illusions Are Dangerous

But one must not delude oneself with false comforts. Not only is another war necessary to capitalism; the governments of the great powers are already taking up strategic positions and putting their armed forces through the necessary exercises. It is not useful to make hysterical prophecies that another war "will mean the end of the human race". It will not; but it will mean a surfeit of suffering which past experience shows cannot be justified by any sophistry.

Preparations for another war. What do we mean in factual terms? The evidence we shall adduce mainly concerns the preparations of the United States and Russia.

The American newsletter, *Worldover Press,* recently remarked the United States' strategic interest in the Panama canal zone. "Uncle Sam is either planning a new canal, or using talk of one to pry concessions out of Panama. *Everybody knows that Washington strategists want air bases a thousand miles both north and south of the canal, but not everybody knows that we are trying to get the right to build new bases outside the zone but near it . . .*" . . .

The Russian government, on the other hand, has suggested that the canal zone be placed under international control.

The U.S. also tried to sell a large consignment of its surplus war material to Costa Rica. This deal was strongly opposed by the Costa Rica section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, who gained so much publicity on the matter that the arms which had actually been ordered were cancelled.

Arctic Battleground

But the clearest evidence comes from the Arctic. During the war, U.S. troops occupied Iceland. These are now withdrawn; but the U.S. has secured concessions in the shape of a civilian air base there. The negotiations for such a base were principally opposed by the Iceland Communist Party . . .

Meanwhile, the Russian government been treating with Norway for a base on Spitzbergen, nominally basing their claim on Russian owned coal mines on the island; such a base would provide a strategic point 1,700 miles west of Moscow, and that much nearer to Iceland and the Bermudas.

Danish government spokesmen have referred to the possibility of negotiations with America for air bases on Greenland—mainly by denying that any concessions are contemplated. But no one is taken in by that. America is building bases in Alaska, Russia in Siberia. The Norwegian aviator, Bernt Balchen, has declared: "Any war of the future will depend entirely on planes traversing the North Polar region, as that is the shortest route between the areas vitally concerned." He could scarcely have been more explicit.

Minerals In Antarctic ?

Under the pretext of staking claims in mineral deposits, the U.S. navy has been on manoeuvres in the Antarctic for many months. The real reasons lie northwards. "Tests are going forward in the Antarctic," (writes WP), "that affect ship handling, radio and radar, food preparation and preservation, the use of certain military equipment, and above all, polar flying. These are being studied, not in relation to the South Pole, but to the North. If the present tests had been made on such a sizeable scale directly in the Arctic, the Moscow conference might be jeopardized . . ." Meanwhile, experts declare that the ice blanket in the Antarctic is too thick to allow of minerals to be brought to the surface in appreciable amounts.

The Truman Policy

The Russians have slightingly dismissed the ideas of the German military theorist of a century ago, Von Clausewitz, in a recent official article. But they might do well to ponder his most quoted aphorism: "War is the continuation of policy by other means." This, at all events, is the interpretation put upon Truman's proposed loans to Greece and Turkey in Greece itself, in Turkey and in Franco Spain. All comment favourably upon it, and significantly relate it to Churchill's speech at Fulton, Missouri, which was so unfavourably received at the time. Thus, the Greek national radio on March 7th declared: "Against the expansion of Communist influence the American President made a display of force. This is what Churchill had asked for long ago . . . Churchill, although he mentioned Soviet Russia by name—the American President did not—made statements about friendship with Russia, stressing the necessity of having a general understanding on foreign policy. Truman made not mention whatsoever of any rapprochement with the Soviet Union or of any direct effort to have understanding between America and Russia. Churchill had taken good care to fit his plan within UNO's framework, but Truman decided to follow an independent policy . . . *He places at the disposal of every endangered State colossal material, and, if necessary, the military might of America.*"

Franco's press praised Truman's policy for its "realism"—ominous word! But the most outspoken comment comes from the Swiss paper *La Suisse,* which quotes a Turkish diplomat as saying: "The borders of the United States are now at the Dardanelles and on the plateau of Kars. The dollar has gone into action in order to counteract the Russian pressure. *Behind the dollar, however, looms the spectre of the atom bomb, which should make even the boldest think twice.*"

The Reality And The Eyewash

Of course, there is the usual eyewash. A U.S. senator unctuously declares: "It is my belief that the proposed U.S. programme of assistance to Greece and Turkey, together with effective action by the Security Council in the case of the northern Greek frontiers, would materially advance the cause of peace." The realities, however, were pithily expressed by the Salonika radio, reported by *Worldover Press* as telling its listeners that "*the United States is determined, if necessary even through war, to establish order throughout the world.*"

Now is no time for illusions.

Nazi Generals to Train Red Army

Former Nazi Generals are now helping to train the Red Army in Russia. Mostly captured high ranking officers who joined the "Free German Committee" set up in Russia during the war, they are said (by the *News Chronicle's* Berlin correspondent) to number as many as 80 former Generals.

Chief of these are General Von Paulus, Commander-in-Chief of the Nazi Sixth Army, and the unsuccessful attacker of Stalingrad; and Von Seydlitz. Von Paulus received the Knight's Cross from Hitler for his work.

Another Nazi decorated with the Knight's Cross is Col. Paul Markgraf. A few weeks after the Russian entry into Berlin, he was appointed Police President, and, according to the *News Chronicle's* correspondent, is now frequently to be seen in the company of Oto Grotewohl, one of the chiefs of the Russian sponsored "Socialist Unity Party".

Thus, the Russian government is pursuing the same policy as the other victorious powers—"purging" minor Nazi figures, while employing high rank Nazi executives to continue similar work in the occupation administration. At the same time they are repeating the Bolshevik policy after the 1918 war, when they also employed German Wehrmacht officers to train the Red Army. At that time, they permitted German armament factories to be erected on Russian soil in order to dodge the terms of the Versailles treaty. They have repeated this manoeuvre this time too by transferring heavy industrial plant—that is, war potential—from Germany to Russia.

May Day 1947

This issue of *Freedom* will be on sale on May Day—a festival of international working class solidarity which is closely associated with the Anarchist movement. The conception of one day in the year on which no class conscious worker would work for the boss, but would devote to demonstrations of international working class brotherhood is a noble one. And if carried out would be of incalculable propaganda value for the workers' movement.

In Chicago, in 1886, the Anarchists timed the strikes to demand the 8-hour day to start on May 1st. It was during this struggle that the Haymarket frame-up was arranged, whereby the police arrested the Anarchist militants and charged them with throwing a bomb which they could have had no hand in whatsoever. Five were condemned to be hanged, and four went to the gallows: August Spies, Albert Parsons, Engel and Fischer. The fifth, Louis Lingg, the youngest of them all, had cheated the noose by suicide the night before the executions.

These were the Chicago anarchists, the Chicago martyrs as they are known, whose conviction and trial were proved to have been a frame-up by Governor Altgeld some years later, when he pardoned Fielden, Schwob and Neebe, the three who had been sentenced to long years of imprisonment. To them is due much of the vision which lies behind May Day: a vision of a society freed from oppression and misery, in which freedom and fellowship flourish.

May Day is no longer a festival of labour solidarity and internationalism. It has ben corrupted by the mass labour movements into a mere farce, not even held on May 1st, but instead on the first *Sunday* in May—to spare the employers from the embarrassment of having no workers around on May Day. And May Days celebrated during the war, and in the present international rivalries, can scarcely be said to celebrate any internationalist ideals.

Let the old conception of May Day, the conception of Spies and Parsons and Lingg and their comrades, be ours also, and May Day revived as a festival of a militant, a revolutionary working class.

Dockers' Strike

AT last, after allowing Glasgow's dockers to fight alone for six weeks in their struggle against redundancy, London dockers decided on Monday, 28th April, to come out in support. Six days before this, Thames watermen had come out in sympathy with Glasgow.

It was about time. As reported in the last issue of *Freedom,* the dockers had taken a decision to come out nearly a fortnight ago, only to reverse the vote the next day. Now the Londoners, claiming that sacking for redundancy had begun at Tilbury, realised the identity of their interests with Glasgow's.

The strike has not been solid in London even now, however, owing to there being various unions involved. The *Lightermen's Union* workers are all out, the *Stevedore and Dockers* (the small "blue" union) all out, but dockers in the Transport and General Workers Union (the big "white" union) are divided, some striking, some going back in accordance with their leaders' orders.

At the moment of writing (Thursday, 1st May), 10,000 are out altogether.

Meanwhile, in Glasgow, the authorities have offered to reinstate 296 of the "redundant" 500, taking back the other 204 without guarantee pending further enquiries. The dockers have refused to compromise, demanding the unconditional return of them all. The fact that the authorities have made this offer shows that it was not necessary in the first place to sack 500 men.

So far the government are not using troops although Minister of Labour Isaacs has promised "any necessary steps to safeguard food supplies". Many daily papers are moaning about "anarchy". We wish it were true.

Anarchists Active in Spain

Despite the recent tightening up of the police in Franco Spain, the underground activities of the CNT continue. The CNT is the anarchist syndicalist union which has always been the most important factor in the Spanish workers' struggle. It comes as no surprise that it is still active; for since its formation in 1911 it has been compelled to lead an underground life for more than half the time, and no organization therefore is better fitted by experience for the special problems of such activity.

Here is a dispatch from the *New York Times*:

Madrid, March 21.

"Eleven members of the clandestine national committee of the Anarchist National Confederation of Labour (CNT) were tried for military rebellion to-day at the village of Alcala de Henares, outside Madrid. Their conviction, although not yet announced, is a foregone conclusion.

"The prosecutor did not ask for any death sentences but demanded thirty years each for seven of the defendants, and twenty years each for the remaining four, including one woman.

"The defendants include Cesar Broto, stated to be the national secretary-general of the labour organization . . .

"The actual offence on which the trial was based was participation in a meeting of the national committee of the supposedly defunct CNT (National Confederation of Labour) held at Carabana outside Madrid in July, 1945.

"According to Leftist sources, although the Anarchist CNT and the Socialist UGT (General Labour Union) have been officially wiped out they are still receiving dues from more than 500,000 workers in the Barcelona area alone. For this reason importance was attached to the meeting although there was no evidence of any form of 'military rebellion' other than the mere holding of the forbidden meeting."

And a more recent report in the press states that Amador Franco and Antonio Lopez, two militants of the CNT who were captured after having returned illegally to Spain have been sentenced to be executed on 30th April. Of two other CNT militants who were with them, one succeeded in getting back to France, the other was killed by frontier guards.

Crowds Demonstrate In Madrid

The Franco press has reacted strongly against the rejection of Franco's monarchist offer to Don Juan, but some indication of the division inside Spain is revealed by the reactions of the monarchist leaders. The Duke of Alba has written to Don Juan pledging the support of the Spanish nobility. But the Carlist ("Traditionalists") leader, Count Rodezno, who supports a different claimant to the Spanish throne, has taken a surprising step. He visited Franco in order to protest against the proposed succession law (discussed in the last issue of *Freedom*), and declared that his party would transfer its allegiance to Don Juan!

Meanwhile restlessness has shown itself in other quarters also. When Falangists made a demonstration on April 18th, culminating in a mock burial of Don Juan, they were attacked by the crowd and the police had to intervene and stop the demonstration. This incident may perhaps be interpreted as being more an anti-Franco demonstration than a pro-Don Juan one. At all events it shows that the State has not quite the iron hold that it seemed to possess.

THE ROLE OF THE SPANISH ANARCHISTS

THE ARTICLE by Gaston Leval published in *Freedom* (22nd March) presents the problem of the future organisation of Spain in a practical way. The correct approach is certainly to leave aside polemics on old texts or congress resolutions which do not shed any light on the urgent problems set by the anti-franquist struggle and the reconstruction of Spain after the fall of the Caudillo.

Having been isolated from the social struggle—partly against itself, partly voluntarily—the anarchist movement has become sterile in certain countries. In other countries its incapacity to adapt itself to the surroundings and to local conditions, has gradually transformed the movement into a sect, similar to those protestant chapels which have remained unchanged for centuries in the face of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Spanish libertarian movement has not fallen a victim to this illness because the original doctrine corresponded exactly to a situation which has undergone little change in the Iberian peninsula. Not only were the anarchist federations and the anarcho-syndicalist unions powerful but the political and syndicalist movements which did not adhere to anarchist principles were, nevertheless, imbued with a spirit of federalism, autonomy and anti-statism. The Spanish State was the prototype of a useless and costly apparatus of oppression, instrument of domination of an exhausted and backward ruling class, a symbol of centralised impotence.

But no country can remain isolated from the great events which shake the world. The succession of Spanish feudalism has been vacant for about fifty years but no candidate has been able to take it and keep it. Each attempt has partly modified the structure of Spain but none has succeeded in transforming it completely. The industrial bourgeoisie and the proletariat have allied themselevs to destroy the feudal State but have immediately come in conflict with one another for the conquest of total hegemony, an example of the exactitude of the laws which govern the relationship amongst classes. The return of the old masters who have taken advantage of an international situation favourable to them, presents us with a problem similar to the one which existed in 1931 or in 1936.

To try to solve this problem in two movements like the "temporary collaborators" seems to me absurd. A social movement, a social ideal, a social willpower, can't be manoeuvred like an army. The policy of the "collaborationists" which consists in attempting to use British, American or Russian imperialism against Franco while allying themselves with the parties belonging to the republican government in exile, shows dangerous illusions on the motives which determine the actions of imperialist powers.

Tools of Imperialism

The "collaborationists" have an inflated idea of their own importance and don't realise that far from being able to use the imperialist powers they may be merely their tools. They will either cut themselves away from the working class basis of their movement and become incorporated in the new State apparatus like mere officials or they will become rank and file militants again after having lost their time and much of their prestige. If they feel too weak to act alone against Franco's regime they could resort to some alliances. There are alliances which the libertarian movement has always accepted, alliances on a definite plan of action and under the control of the organisations and not on the governmental and imperialist plan, that is to say, without a definite programme, and without influence from the rank-and-file.

Those collaborationists who envisage a permanent participation in the government can no longer be called anarchists or anarcho-syndicalists. Their methods, which consist in using the myth, the name and the tradition of the CNT and of the anarchist movement in order to create a Labour Party or a State syndicalist movement, are childishly machiavellian. But when they declare that it is time to re-examine the tactics and the doctrines of anarchism, their arguments are worth considering.

They claim that the programme of anarchism is out-of-date and that its doctrines need to be revised. It is no longer a question of tactics it is a question of basic principles.

They have an easy time in denouncing the uselessness of philosophical formulae in the face of practical problems. Truly it is not by shouting "Long Live Anarchism" that railways can be organised; but it is not also by "becoming a working class force inside the new State" that the organisation of railways will be managed in a socialist, libertarian spirit, in the interests of the workers.

This experiment has been carried out so often already that we—who are completely opposed to collaboration—can denounce the revisionists as being retrograde.

The tragedy of the years 1936 and 1937 was precisely to see many anarchist militants—and not only Spanish ones—being taken in by the game of the democratic nations and that of the alliances with the government.

One of its results was to put a break on revolutionary aspirations which were later crushed by imperialist intrigues and by the rebirth of a counter-revolutionary State.

The Problem Of Reconstruction

The Giral government formed in exile was composed of ministers at the service of various powers who were using the resistance movement and those in exile to serve their own ends.

About a year ago the French Radio invited the Republican ministers to expound the policy of their government. All of them refused having no programme to put forward. But this Government was extremely busy compiling lists of its supporters indicating the posts they had filled in the past and those they wished to fill in the future.

On the other hand the Spanish Libertarian Movement in France was reorgansing, in exile, its industrial federations and was carefully studying agricultural and industrial plans.

Here are two policies which can be equally called anti-franquist but which are fundamentally different and even opposed.

The first consists in preparing the structure of a State which would replace the decomposed government of Franco; the second aims at building the backbone of a working class organisation which could take over the adminitsration of the country.

We have here the philosophical dilemma; authority or liberty. in the most definite form.

We do not believe that the old policy of insurrection is bankrupt. It has given proofs of its worth in July 1936. We don't believe either in the failure of active minorities, they also proved their strength at the beginning of the revolt.

Undoubtedly, we are faced with new tasks. It is equally true that the schemes of 1880 have been modified and that social reality has been heavily complicated. It is obvious, for example, that an appeal to civil war in the present situation in Spain would not meet the needs of the situation.

But is it a sufficient reason for saying that Spanish anarchists are wrong when they declare that only the workers can get rid of Franco and set up a free society? Which left wing organisation has seriously tried to help the Spanish workers to overthrow the dictatorship? Have the British Labour Party, the American democrats, Italian or Swedish socialists, effectively helped the underground struggle? Have the powerful World Federation of Trade Unions organised the boycott of goods going to Spain?

It is however, with these same ministers, leaders and organisations that the partisans of collaboration invite us to have complete confidence.

The revolutionary movement is everywhere beating a retreat and working class internationalism has practically disappeared. The circumstantial and passing internationalism of certain powers must not mislead us as to the real forces fighting for freedom.

Gaston Leval points to a real danger when he foresees an agrarian reform carried out by Republicans and Socialists and which would have as a result to detach a great number of peasants from the anarchists. He rightly appeals to the CNT for the realisation of an agrarian reform controlled by peasant associations and based on co-operatives of producers and consumers.

But who tells us that this reform will come from the United States who are at present investing enormous funds in Spain and could—in exchange for their support of a dictatorial regime, with or without Franco—proceed to the exploitation of the nation and the carrying out of the industrial revolution which Spain has been bearing for the last century?

This is not an hypothesis put forward for the vain satisfaction of complicating the problem. It is a possible issue which the anarchist movement must consider in cold blood and in the face of which it must take up its position.

Practical Questions

Anarchist declarations must not be merely cries of revolt or assertions of faith; they must also correspond to precise situations and answer the profound aspirations not merely of anarchists but of the great exploited masses.

That is why the alliance between the CNT and the UGT on a precise programme met with such a response in 1936. That is why in agricultural communities, and in the factories, workers, peasants and technicians of different tendencies worked together.

The anti-collaborationists have learned a great deal during these years of exile. They have learned to judge the bourgeois democracies, not to be fooled with the hypocrisy of Russian imperialism, to look with scepticism on the exploitation of revolutionary feelings by government propaganda.

Spaniards are divided in two camps at home. It does not do to deceive oneself about the differences in their aims by attaching one label to them. But one can be patient, ally oneself with sincere elements for some precise work, accept defeat with courage and learn to run a factory or an industry.

One must not forget that there is no democratic or totalitarian state able to secure freedom and well-being for the working class. One must not forget that national proletariats can only have as allies the international proletariat. One must not forget that the world is thirsty for freedom. One must not forget that after the cesspool of the democracies and the whip of the dictators the world waits for a new faith, for a rebirth of the socialist and libertarian ideal.

The rest is work, organisation, lucidity.

S. PARANE.

ANARCHISM
— Interpretations

"Revolution and insurrection must not be looked upon as synonymous. The former consists in an overturning of conditions, of the established condition or STATUS, the State or society, and is accordingly a POLITICAL or SOCIAL act; the latter has indeed for its unavoidable consequence a transformation of circumstances, yet it does not start from it but from men's discontent with themselves, is not an armed rising, but a rising of individuals, a getting up, without regard to the arrangements that spring from it. The Revolution aimed at new ARRANGEMENTS; insurrection leads us no longer to LET ourselves be arranged, but sets no glittering hopes on "institutions".

"The revolution commands one to make ARRANGEMENTS, the insurrection demands that one RISE OR EXALT ONESELF. What CONSTITUTION was to be chosen, this question busied the revolutionary heads, and the whole political period foams with constitutional fights and constitutional questions, as the social talents too were uncommonly inventive in societary arrangements (phalanteries and the like). The insurgent strives to become constitutionless".

MAX STIRNER.

L.A.G. SUNDAY EVENING MEETINGS

Mechanics and Civilization

One of the most interesting lectures in our series, was that of Ethel Hall on April 13th. The speaker kept closely to her subject, and dealt with the influence of mechanized production on the human basis of society since the Industrial Revolution. She quoted widely from the findings of industrial psychologists who, working with the sole object of increasing production, had nevertheless established the nature of the real needs and natural desires of the workers.

The speaker described how it was found that men and women needed to be conscious of some apparent value in the work they do, and that there was a basic desire to have individual control over their process of production. She gave illustrations of the fact that the neurotic character of contemporary society was in part due to the gross denial of these elementary human needs in industry as it is run to-day.

In the ensuing discussion, Ethel Hall agreed that the role of industrial psychologists was reactionary in character, since their place in industry was simply to find palliatives to lull the frustrated human instincts which demanded creative work, and to find the means of harmlessly negating the workers' natural urge to gain actual control over their industries.

Pioneers of Anarchism in Britain
GEORGE BARRETT

THIS brief sketch is a slight tribute to the memory of a young comrade who died at the early age of 33 after a long and hard struggle with consumption. It can safely be said that George Barrett was one of the clearest thinkers and one of the most brilliant speakers of his day. He had every asset a speaker needs; tall and of good appearance, a ready wit and an exceptionally good flow of cultured English. Either as a speaker or writer he went straight to the root of things, pushing all superfluous matters on one side. It was his grasp of scientific and economic truths that enabled him to see the necessity for revolutionary thought and action. He knew that nothing short of a complete revolutionary change in the basis of society would be of any social value. He would never compromise with his ideas, and his integrity was always apparent and above suspiscion. One is tempted to look back and wonder what he would have written and said of some of his erstwhile active and good comrades: one, a Cabinet Minister now—Jim Griffiths; the other a reactionary jingo leader of the Miners' Federation—Will Lawther!

The first stage of Barrett's activities was in the Bristol Socialist Society. His straightforward revolutionary views and outspoken denunciation of the parliamentarians made it impossible for him to remain a member of the society, however, and soon after he left he came out as an open anarchist. Shortly afterwards he came to London, and started to work at Waltham Abbey as a draughtsman. He at once joined the Waltamstow Anarchist Group, then a virile group of working men who did good work locally.

Barrett's energy was tremendous. He spoke almost every night in the week, and would often cycle 20 miles each way to address a meeting, and that after a day's work. After a propaganda visit to Glasgow he was keen on settling there, for he saw the latent possibilities of a strong movement. He succeeded in getting work in Glasgow, and with the financial assistance of George Davidson, he was able to start a weekly paper *The Anarchist*, of which 34 issues appeared. He threw himself heart and soul into the work, doing his editorial work after his day in the office. But he also addressed evening and dinner-hour meetings, and at one such meeting of strikers he led an attack on one of the wharves where blacklegs were working. The police arrested him, but later decided that it was better to leave the strikers alone and so dropped the charge. Nevertheless, the incident cost him his job, and because of it he changed his name from Ballard to Barrett, the name by which he is chiefly known.

Both before and during his editorship of *The Anarchist* he had most successful lecturing tours through England and Scotland, often touching towns where the message of revolt was heard for the first time. On these tours he formed groups which remained active until World War I scattered them, and now not even a trace of them seems to remain.

Some of the work done in those days by the Glasgow group is still secret history, but one incident to their credit should now be made public. When Jim Connolly's paper *The Harp*, was suppressed and their machinery dismantled by the Dublin police, Barrett at once got into touch with Connolly, and the paper was printed at *The Anarchist's* printery and successfully smuggled into Ireland. The police raided *Freedom* in London, and every other likely place, but never the right one. The Glasgow comrades acted in the traditions of Anarchism, that every invasion of human rights should be resisted.

The first number of *The Anarchist* came out on May Day, 1913. Barrett made his last speech at a demonstration at Edinburgh. At this meeting he caught a chill and consumption rapidly developed. After a terrific struggle he died at Torquay in January, 1917.

He lived to see much of his work undone by the war. Yet his ardour and his faith never faltered, even when he was badly smitten. In his magnificent pamphlet *The Last War*, he showed that the workers are fighting to settle their masters' quarrels, and that the real war is fought to take over the mines, railways, factories, and fields. This pamphlet was condemned by the government—but not before 10,000 copies had been sold. Later on Freedom Press published two other pamphlets by him, *The Anarchist Revolution* and *Objections to Anarchism*. The collected essays of George Barrett would make a fitting memorial to his brilliant abilities.

MAT KAVANAGH.

CAN BRITAIN FEED HERSELF ?

(Continued from page 3)

Since 1939, 6,500,000 more acres of land were ploughed up. Yet even at the height of the production drive derelict fields could be found in every district. The new acreage under the plough represents just over one-third of the neglected or derelict land described by Sir George Stapldon as "capable of radical improvement". Yet the increased production from this land is very significant, as the following table shows:

Increased Production in Wartime
Average (tons)

	1934-38	1943-44	Increase %
Wheat	1,651,000	3,449,000	109
Barley	765,000	1,641,000	115
Oats	1,940,000	3,059,000	58
Potatoes	4,873,000	9,822,000	102
Sugar Beet	2,741,000	3,760,000	37
Vegetables	2,384,000	3,197,000	34
Fruit	455,000	705,000	55

(from *Statistics Relating to the War Effort of the United Kingdom*, H.M.S.O., November, 1944.)

This really striking increase was achieved in spite of the fact that conscription deprived the land of 98,000 skilled men, who were replaced by 117,000 unskilled women.

Potential Increase Greater Still

The significance of these figures is even greater, for they had to be achieved within the framework of the capitalist system of production for sale, for a market, and within the "needs" of a war economy. It is clear enough that if the problem were simply to increase production in order to satisfy needs, and without regard to the restrictions of economy, much larger increases would have been possible. With more labour available, the other 10 millions odd acres referred to by Sir George Stapledon could have been brought into cultivation. A revolutionary economy faced with an absolute blockade would be able to devote its energies to this problem far more effectively and wholeheartedly than a capitalist one, even though it would have to do without the small trickle of cattle feed, etc., which was allowed in during the war.

And all this ignored the advances in farming technique which have been developed in the agricultural research stations but have never been applied because of the decaying nature of British agriculture over the past 70 or 80 years. Forty years ago, Kropotkin demonstrated what an increase was possible using the then existing methods. Technical advances have immensely increased the latent potential of British land since then. For a fuller statement of the possibilities, the reader is referred to George Woodcock's *Freedom Press* pamphlet, *New Life to the Land*.

Thus, although Britain is very vulnerable to blockade, the very decay of farming has provided a large reserve or leeway which can be made up. From this point of view, this country is more favourably placed than those countries which already extract the last ounce out of their soil, and so have less possibility of increase.

In the next articles some political aspects of revolutions in agriculture will be discussed—in Russia and Spain.

J. H.

THESE "SACK-THE-BOSS" STRIKES

It has only recently dawned on some of the powers that be that workers are inclined to give more in return for their wages if they are not regarded as mere paid servants, but have some responsibility for their work. But so far the idea of workers' responsibility has only been in the direction of increased output. Why, men straight from the workshop bench have sat at tables with the management and even with union officials on Joint Production Committees trying to work out how output per head could be bumped up!

But when it comes to other matters affecting the dignity of the workers' position, relative to foremen, management, etc., then the boss will think very differently about the right of the worker to have a say in the running of his place of work.

During the last fortnight, we have witnessed no less than four strikes against appointments of men to positions of authority when they had not the confidence of the workers who would be under them, and two strikes against the dismissal of workers on grounds which their comrades could not accept as just. These strikes have been promptly labelled by the daily press "Sack-the-Boss" strikes, and attacked as anarchic and leading to chaos, etc., etc.

BISHOPSGATE

By far the biggest of these strikes was at Bishopsgate goods station, London, and spread within a week until at one time, just before it finished, 5,000 men were either out or about to come out. The issue here was that a man was appointed to the position of chief cartage clerk who, in the opinion of the cartage workers, had no experience of the work, had been promoted over the heads of experienced men, and who seemed to them undesirable in a position of authority.

They said:—

> "We feel that as this is one of the largest goods stations in London, the men at the head of the department should have a knowledge of the work and the conditions of service under which the staff work.
>
> "The company were warned six weeks ago, prior to Mr. Ash's appointment, that the men would not work under him. Those warnings have been totally ignored."

The company said that the appointment of clerical staffs—including the chief cartage clerk—is a matter for the management, and ignored the strikers' offer to resume work immediately, providing Mr. Ash was removed from Bishopsgate pending negotiations.

The men showed determination, however. On the third morning of the strike hundreds of strikers lined up shoulder to shoulder in front of the station to keep the new clerk out. He made several attempts to pierce the human barricade, but without success, and finally found his way in by a side way. At that time only 700 men were involved, but by the time 5,000 were affected, J. Benstead, general secretary of the N.U.R. thought it time to intervene, and the men went back to work on the understanding that Bishopsgate goods representatives would meet the Divisional Manager to state their objections to the new clerk.

These included, besides his inexperience of the work, the fact that Mr. Ash had been prominent during the 1926 General Strike in the employers' attempt to break the strike, and had since, we gather, been employed in the railway police. In other words, has shown himself consistently to have been a "boss's man". One of the strike committee is reported to have said "We have had our eyes on Mr. Ash for a long time now."

THE USUAL TRICKERY

The negotiations, however, went the way of most negotiations. At the end of a three-hour meeting the Divisional General Manager ruled ". . . That no additional evidence had been offered which justified any interference in regard to the appointment of Mr. Ash." The men disagreed, saying: "We consider that the company's mind was made up before we got here. We feel we have been tricked."

But this was not the last of the matter. At a two-hour meeting during work-time, 1,450 workers at Bishopsgate decided on a policy of non-cooperation with Mr. Ash. A boycott, in fact. All business is being done only through the goods agent, who now has to take on the work which should be done by Mr. Ash, and workers are refusing to have any contact with Ash at all. And the strikers have announced: "If any attempt is made to 'discipline' any member of the staff because of this resolution our representatives will call an immediate meeting of the whole of the station staff."

Apart from allowing themselves to be tricked into returning to work pending negotiations (through the intervention of the union leader) the men seem to have handled the situation well, and with good solidarity, and the difference both in function and character between the official union leader and the rank and file committee has not, we may be sure, been lost on the railmen.

WHO GIVES THE ORDERS ?

But a fundamental issue lies behind what may seem to be a fuss about nothing. Have men, or have they not, the right to choose who shall give the orders? Under the existing circumstances, that right is denied them and always will be while there is an authority above the workers. This strike, however, and the others like it, show that workers are not prepared in all cases to put up with unpopular or inefficient bosses, and truly it is misery to work under such a one.

So that now the workers are showing themselves prepared to take more responsibility than the bosses (or the unions) are prepared to give them. So far, so good. Now we shall perhaps see the beginning of a rank-and-file industrial movement with syndicalist characteristics and the avowed aim of achieving workers' control. When *that* is achieved there will be no bosses, unpopular or otherwise, and such co-ordinating work as may be necessary can be carried out by elected delegates from the ranks, responsible to their fellows, recallable at a minute's notice and with no privileges above the right of all—freedom and equality in the dignity of labour.

P. S.

Industrial News in Brief

Death of "Flivver King"

Few workers need heave a sigh of regret at the passing of Henry Ford. Perhaps more than any other single individual, he could be said to be responsible for modern, mechanised slavery, which, through its fantastic production figures, has made possible modern mechanised war.

Few men have done better for themselves at the expense of the workers. His personal fortune was in the region of £20,000,000, his family fortune more than double that. Developer of the Taylor system of "scientific management", his over-weening ambition has made the cheap and nasty a feature of 20th century life, the acceptance of the third-rate and uniform a feature of the mentality of our time.

How many workers have been done to death, or ruined physically or mentally by the tempo of work on the production belt, it is perhaps impossible to say. But we do know how the methods Ford developed were welcomed by the early masters of the first Socialist State.

From *Time*, 21/4/47, we quote:—

> "In the '20's, Ford was one of the Soviet Union's first-string heroes. He was considered the great revolutionist in production methods and a drive was on to 'Fordize' Russian plants. Workers were exhorted to 'Do it the Ford way, it is the best way.' His name was better known than Stalin's at the time. Villages held festivals in honour of the Fordson tractor. Wrote Leon Trotsky: 'The most popular word among our forward-looking peasantry is Fordson. The peasant speaks of the *Fordzonishko* (dear little Fordson) gently and lovingly . . .'
>
> "Since then, Stalin has become somewhat better known. Last week, all that *Pravda* and *Izvestia* printed on the end of *Fordzonishko's* father was: 'A correspondent of Reuters Agency reports from Detroit the death of the well-known owner of automobile plants, Henry Ford'."

MARKET POLICE STRIKE

Another "Sack-the-Boss" strike occurred at Billingsgate, chief London fishmarket, when 10 private police-constables objected to the promotion of P.C. Turner to sergeant. Apparently, the constables thought that one sergeant was eonugh, and during the strike the two sergeants (the old and the new) had to cover 24 hours duty a day betwen them.

The strikers gained a lot of sympathy. First, all the cleaners at Billingsgatae and Leadenhall market were out and then strike action was decided on by 1,000 members of the City of London Corporation branch of the General and Municipal Workers' Union. These included all the staff of Tower Bridge, which would have been left raised, closing road traffic across it; sewer men, sweepers and dustmen; and gravediggers and all labourers at the City of London Cemetery at Ilford. Such is the heterogeneous collection of workers in one branch of one trade union!

All these did not come out, however. The police and cleaners returned to work pending negotiations. *(See page 8)*

ULTIMATUM TO CO-OP RUNNING OUT

On April 8th, at a T.P. Conference at Blackpool, the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers voted for "drastic action to obtain Class A conditions for all C.W.S. employees, believing that there is no room in a democratic State for class distinction." An ultimatum was sent to the directors of the C.W.S. giving them 28 days to arrive at a "satisfactory decision". So far nothing has been heard in reply, and the 28 days is up on May 6th.

Class A conditions now apply mainly to clerical staffs, and give better working hours and holidays than Class B which applies to most C.W.S. employees.

A "national charter" for laundry workers, asking for adult minimum rates for men and women of £5 for a 40-hour week of 5 days, with overtime on a daily basis, not weekly, was also passed.

It is amusing to note that the Co-ops, for all their professions of democratic control and principle, etc., have to be forced, like any other employers, to give conditions to their workers.

"DON'T SACK THEM" STRIKES

Two strikes against the dismissal of workers are worthy of note. Forty boilermakers at Tilbury came out because one of their workmates had been charged and fined at a police court and then dismissed. The strikers claimed he had been punished by law, and should not again be punished by sacking. They demanded his reinstatement.

200 workers at Richard Lloyds' tobacco factory, Clerkenwell, struck against the sacking of their shop steward, Mr. S. Cahn. He was a leaf worker, and said "Since I have been a shop steward I have been given a number of pin-pricking jobs to do. Being told to clean up tobacco grease when there were cleaners around was about the last straw."

Obviously, this is an instance of provocation by the management to get rid of a shop steward popular among the workers.

MINERS STRIKE

Now that the mines are nationalised the miners, as part owners (sic) seem to think they have the right to approve or disapprove of the officials placed over them by the NCB. The NCB think different.

At Penaltta Colliery, Glam., 1,800 miners are out against the re-employment as overman of William Denver, whose removal last February was agreed to by the Coal Board. He returned a fortnight ago, but the men aren't having him, and say they will stay out until he is removed. The Coal Board will not negotiate until the men go back. Deadlock.

At Thornley Colliery, Durham, 1,300 miners struck demanding the sacking of the manager, whom they blame for bad working conditions, and a public apology from a Coal Board Official, whom, they claim, criticised the strike in a broadcast.

At Caeran Colliery, Glam., 600 men gave notice that they would strike on May 4th "because of general dissatisfaction with the manager."

JOE BAKSI TOURING BRITISH MINES

Joe Baksi, who recently half-killed Bruce Woodcock to prove he had the right to be half-killed by Joe Louis, was once a miner in Pennsylvania, U.S., and, on his return from a visit to the old folks in Czecho-Slovakia, is going to assist British miners in a production drive.

But don't get it wrong. Joe won't be working an eight-hour shift with the rest of the Bevin boys, although a man of his muscle should be able to make even Stakhanov look a bit of a slacker, if he really wanted to. No, Joe will just be touring British mines as a guest of the Government, with his wife and Mr. Shinwell. We should be delighted to hear of Joe and Shinny putting up an exhibition bout, with Joe putting across the old one-two. Quite in error, of course . . .

AGRICULTURE AND THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION—2

CAN BRITAIN FEED HERSELF?

IN the last article the revolutions of the past were reviewed, and the necessity of facing the problem of a food blockade of revolutionary Britain stressed. And since the success of the revolution demands success in feeding the population, it is necessary to consider this most important problem very closely.

In 1939, the last year of "peace", this country imported two-thirds of its food supplies, and grew only one-third at home. It is consquently assumed very often that this low proportion reflects the agricultural potential of this country; that Britain cannot produce enough food to serve the needs of its people

But this assumption will not bear examination. Anyone who knows a country like Italy, has seen the extent to which the land can be cultivated. The Italian peasant plants his crop in every patch of soil he can find, from the steepest slopes of the mountains to the cliff faces right down to the sea-shore. No such determined effort to get the last ounce out of the soil is seen in England. Kent is fairly well cultivated; but a railway journey through the country generally, even at the height of the wartime "Dig for Victory" campaign, showed an observant person whole tracts of derelict land abandoned to thistles. The extent of such patches shows quite clearly that the agricultural potential of this country is not being anything like fully employed As has been often demonstrated in the "Land Notes" which this series is temporarily replacing, the cause of this land neglect is to be found in the needs of the dominant interests of the industrial exporters. British economy depends (under capitalism, of course) on exporting industrial goods to under-industrialised countries. These, necessarily, base *their* economy on agricultural exports. Hence, if British exports are to be paid for, Britain must import agricultural goods from her industrial customers. Because costs are low (especially rents, and, in some countries, wages, etc.) in such agricultural countries, such food imports are able to undercut the market of the indigenous British farmer, despite the cost of transport from abroad.

In short, the present condition of British agriculture reflects not the ability of the soil to produce food, but the nature of capitalist economy. This conclusion finds ample support from a brief examination of the recent history of British farming.

Decline Of British Agriculture

Up till about 1800, the amount of food imported into Britain was negligible, such imports being mainly spices, tea, etc., and not staple articles of diet. (During the 17th century, British agriculture was an exporting industry.) But during the nineteenth century all that was changed. The development of industry expanded the exports of industrial markets to an enormous degree, and hence necessitated an equivalent return in food from abroad. The rapid increase in the population to some extent kept alive a market for the British farmer for a time; but by the latter half of the century, food imports were beginning to undercut his market. As an inevitable result arable land was turned over to grassland, while pasturages became rough grazings or were allowed to become derelict. The following table shows this quite clearly.

	1866	1901
Arable Land	18,000,000	15,600,000
Permanent Grass		16,850,000
Rough Grazing		

	1910	1938
Arable Land	14,650,000	8,780,000
Perm. Grass	17,470,000	15,830,000
Rough Grazing		5,615,000

(*Figures in acres*)

Thus, by 1938, the arable acreage had fallen to less than half its 1866 area.

During the seven years 1853—1860, three-quarters of the wheat consumed in this country was home grown. Twenty-five years later, in 1879—1886, only one-third of the total consumption was grown at home. (J. B. Lawes: quoted by Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories, and Workshops.*) Put in another way, this decline of arable farming meant that whereas, in 1870, the land fed 26,000,000 people, by 1914, it only fed 16,000,000. (Lord Ernle: *The Land and its People*. Ernle was Minister of Agriculture during the 1914 war.)

In 1850, agricultural science hardly existed, modern plant genetics being undreamed of. Yet is is clear that if the land could support 26 millions then, it could do so now also, even on the farming methods of a century ago. With the aid of the crop yields made possible by scientific advances, a much larger population could be fed from British soil.

The Rural Exodus

Meanwhile, the expansion of industry during the nineteenth century created a shortage of labour in the towns, and a consequent rise in urban wages. The agricultural depression, on the other hand, caused a glut of labour on the farms, with a fall in agricultural wages and a rise in rural unemployment. The inevitable result was a migration of workers from the country districts to the towns. This rural depopulation was the so-called "Rural Exodus". Between 1861 and 1884 agriculture lost 717,000 men—a loss of 34 per cent. By 1901, the loss had reached 45 per cent.

Agricultural Population

	numbers of workers
1861	2,100,000
1884	1,383,000
1891	1,311,000
1901	1,152,500

The total population was rapidly increasing during this time, so that the *percentage* of the population employed in agriculture fell even more sharply than the absolute numbers so employed. Thus, agricutural workers numbered 7 per cent. of the total population in 1861, 3 per cent. in 1901, and 2.6 per cent. in 1931.

Between The Wars

Between the wars the general trend continued, farming becoming more and more a depressed industry. Some crops such as sugar beet, were kept on an economic basis by means of government subsidies; but the drift from arable production was maintained, specialist farming—dairy and poultry farming, and stock-raising replacing the old mixed farming to which the terrain of Britain is peculiarly suited. Even stock raisers, however, found it cheaper to buy imported cattle food rather than grow their food on the fields at home. (Hence the cutting off of imported cattle food during the war disorganised their economy.) Between the wars, another million acres of agricultural land went out of production and became derelict. That the farming of to-day does not represent anything like the full posibilities of English agriculture (leaving aside the question of technical advances for the moment) is clearly indicated by this enormous acreage of unused, derelict land. In July, 1936, Sir George Stapledon, one of the foremost agriculturists of the day, declared "that in round numbers we have 16¼ million acres of land in a more or less neglected condition ,and much of it absolutely derelict: and . . . every single acre of this enormous area (no less than 43 per cent. of the land surface of England and Wales) is capable of radical improvement." Sir George Stapledon expressed this opinion as a result of the great grasslands survey which he directed: but the same opinion is held by almost all agricultural experts.

War Needs Increase Production

That British food production can be increased is shown by the experience of wartime. In the 1914 war production of wheat, oats, barley, rye, mixed corn, peas, beans and potatoes fell during the first two years of the war, but with the necessity imposed by the submarine blockade rose markedly during the last two years:

1914	14,017,000 tons.
1916	11,611,000 tons.
1918	18,007,000 tons.

The increase was considerably greater in the war of 1939. Home production increased so that two-thirds of the total food consumed was grown on Britain's soil. The entire domestic sugar ration was grown from home-grown sugar beet (*Land at War*, 1945, H.M.S.O.). Between 1939 and 1944 milking cows increased by 500,000; other cattle by 400,000. On the other hand there were 6,300,000 less sheep, 2,500,000 less pigs, and 19,200,000 less poultry.

(Continued on page 2)

Middle East Notes

Racism in Palestine

I had the opportunity of being present at a meeting held in Alexandria by certain members of the Greek community, to discuss the present situation in Greece. The Greek of liberal views faces a major dilemma: to support the reactionary right-wing Government or to line up with the totalitarian communist-dominated Left. Most liberal Greeks were against the Athens set-up, but in proportion to the aid it has received from Britain and America, so has the opposition received aid from Russia—aid whose sole effect has been to purge it of non-Communist elements. The Centre-Left has been split asunder on the crisis, seing itself facing the choice between the two evils that has become the major obsession of our time: but in this case *which* is the lesser? The argument was hammered out and no conclusion was reached because—in my view—the only conclusion was the revolutionary struggle against all political parties that is the traditional policy of Anarchism.

So far as one can see, the position in Greece would apply equally in Spain. If the Fascist terror there is replaced either by an Ogpu terror or a Monarchist headed coalition and a right terror, what alternative will be left, not only for the anarchists, but for all who believe, however vaguely, in free association and progress. I put the dilemma of our Greek liberal friends as a matter for thought on the Spanish situation as raised by Gaston Leval in the issue of March 22nd.

Rich and Poor

A conservative Pasha—there are still a few left—said that the delegates of the inter-Parliamentary conference would undoubtedly ask why there were so many poor people in Egypt and comment on the distressed condition of the fellaheen. The answer was, of course, he explained, British imperialism: the Egyptian government had been unable to devote its attention to social problems.

Fair enough as far as it goes, but suppose they ask why there were, in a concentrated minority, so many rich? And on the affluent condition of the Pashas? Would the answer still be British imperialism, or has the Egytian government a hand in it too?

Fine Day For The Race

Those who imagine that racial laws are exclusively something German or South African have yet to come across the most peculiar racial laws of "our" mandate, Palestine. Identity cards require the race of the holder as distinct from his nationality. Jewish inhabitants of Palestine are "Jewish" irrespective of their nationality, unless they change their religion when their "race' automatically also changes! It comes as a surprise to—for instance—British and American Jews to find themselves in a different classification from fellow-citizens at home when entering Palestine, and it leads to quite an absurdity as regards British and American non-Jews. An American could not say "Race—Irish" or "Race—Swedish", etc., his "Race" could either be Jewish or American! Whoever heard of the "American Race" outside of the Palestine government? (If there were one would not the Jews be an important part of it?) And yet—believe it or not—I even came across a non-Jewish refugee whose identity card actually read "Race—Christian". As regards "Race—Anarchist", we do not believe in Identity Cards, but if ever I had one I would want it to be "Race—Human".

Religion

Narrow squeak in the Holy Land this Easter: (of course, the troops were out on patrol.) The Christian, Moslem and Jewish festivals all coincided, and so did most of the Christian Easters, but it passed off, we are assured, "without incident". No, not even the Christian sects fought each other over precedence in the Holy Sepulchre, which must have shaken the Moslem door-keepers who act as impartial umpires at the Christian sanctuary. There's no doubt religion is waning when they don't take the doctrines of peace seriously enough to fight over them.

Did you know the "original" Tree of Knowledge, in Mesopotamia, on the site of the Garden of Eden, died a few months ago? They hurriedly built a new one for the benefit of tourists. Of course, all other Biblical relics are quite authentic.

A. M.

Foreign Commentary

Death Sentence Abolished in Italy

ONE often hears discontent with conditions in this country expressed in such terms as "Look what a state the country's in, and to think *we* won the war" followed by parrotlike repetition of statements by people like Churchill to the effect that whilst this country is going to the dogs the rest of Europe is effecting a rapid recovery, and that the scars of war are almost healed. These are just political cliches, and half-truths: admittedly on the French Riviera there is luxury for those who can afford it, or who have a cheque book and contact with Mr. Intrator. In Italy you can eat the most luxurious foods and drink all the traditional wines if you have the money. But what is the picture taken as a whole? Let us take the case of France as an example. Mr. Andre Philip, Minister of National Economy (who presumably knows more about France's Economic situation than does Mr. Churchill) speaking at Toulouse (*Combat*, 20/4/47) stressed the gravity of the economic situation in France, and foresaw a "difficult period lasting some 2 to 3 years during which we should have to impose on ourselves further restrictions in all directions." Mr. Philip referred to the need for increased exports in order to import the essentials . . . In a word France's problems are the same as this country's. Far be it from being the writer's intention to put in a kind word for the Labour Government. We mention Mr. Philip in order to expose the Conservative's propaganda and to counteract these fantastic stories of "plenty" regarding other countries which can only foster silly nationalistic antagonisms.

PENAL QUESTIONS

It is because we are opposed to the penal system that we take an active interest in it, and not because we hope to reform it. A number of interesting items on the subject have appeared in the past few weeks. Two give the general public an opportunity of acquainting themselves with what prison means: the first is in London where the play "Now Barabbas" is being given to full houses at the Vaudeville Theatre (see *Freedom*, April 5th) the second is in the form of a series of articles published in the Paris paper *Combat* (April 6th to 12th inclusive). The title of this series is "I have been prison warder for a week", and is written by a journalist who was a former French POW and who wanted to see whether French prisons had changed after the departure of the Nazis from France. Obviously it is impossible to summarise his experiences in a few lines, but we mention it here for students because it is in our opinion an important document. These are a few of Roger Stephane's conclusions (*a*) the prison system is the cause of recidivism (*b*) anyone who thinks that system can be perfected is kidding himself. With the existing personnel, nothing can be tried out (*c*) the system of special privileges for good conduct, etc., is nothing to be proud of, for in fact it is an additional weapon of coercion in the hands of the prison warders.

From Italy comes the news that the Constituent Assembly was unanimous in supporting Article 21 which reads: "Sentences must have as their aim the re-education of the condemned and cannot consist of treatment contrary to the sentiments of humanity. The death sentence is not admissible. Exception can only be made for military laws in time of war." Actually, the death sentence had been abolished in Italy in 1889 thanks largely to the forceful writings of a Milanese criminologist Cesare Beccaria, whose book *On Crimes and Punishments* had important repercussions throughout Europe. It was Mussolini who in 1926 reintroduced the death penalty for political "crimes" and had it extended to common criminals in 1930. We welcome this unanimous repudiation of Mussolini's act of 1926. How long will it take the enlightened British legislators to follow suit?

One final item comes from Sydney, Australia, where seven boys were found guilty of criminally assaulting a 27 year-old barmaid. One boy, aged 19, was sentenced to death, and the other six boys, whose ages range from 14-16 were given life sentences in prison. The boys in question were not sub-normal; indeed "a prison chaplain told the judge that the boys were really 'good types', and, if given the chance, should make good. He had found during interviews that they had no proper sex knowledge."

To add to the irony of the case "at the request of the counsel for the boys the judge amended the sentence of life imprisonment with light labour to imprisonment with hard labour. This would give the boys better rations, more exercise and fresh air."

This is once more a case of the Law being an ass, as the Judge pointed out that he was *obliged by law* to impose life imprisonment in an ordinary gaol.

THE VATICAN'S NEW ALLY

Readers will recall that the Italian Communists voted with the Christian Democrats and neo-Fascists to include the Lateran Treaty in the new Italian Constitution (*Freedom*, 19th April), and it was suggested that this was a tactical move, to coincide with the launching of a Communist propaganda campaign in the South of Italy where the religious question is all important. This has been confirmed by the electoral campaign in Sicily where the Communists have plastered the countryside with posters written in dialect misquoting a local poem and which reads:

"PEOPLE'S BLOC; GOD'S BLOC:
JESUS WILL DESCEND TO SCARE
ALL TYRANTS, WITH JOY IN
HIS HEART AND HIS FIST
CLENCHED."

According to the *Manchester Guardian's* Rome Correspondent (22/4/47): "After the Communist deputies' vote recently here in favour of inclusion of the Lateran pact in the Italian constitution and these Sicilian posters, one Roman wit has prophesied that Signor Togliatti is aiming at being called 'the man sent by providence' just as Pope Pius XI called Mussolini. There is actually more in this than the joke and dogmatic Communists are certainly among the staunchest allies of the Vatican in this country to-day though not necessarily to-morrow."

AFTER 91 MONTHS' SILENCE

This is the title of the leading article in *La Revolution Proletarienne*, of which the first issue after "the silence" has just reached us. We welcome this "Revolutionary Syndicalist Review" and if it maintains its pre-war high standard of article, it will be a valuable source of information on the workers' struggle in France as well as of articles of general interest. In the issue before us, there is the first part of an article on the French Printers' Strike (*Freedom*, April 5th) which is of particular interest because it is a detailed study from the "inside" (before the war many members of the publishing group of this review were in the printers' Syndicate, and we presume, still are). Other contributors to this issue include Victor Serge on the Assassination of Trotsky, Henry Babert on Indochina, Robert Louzon's Political and Economic Notes, etc. The objectives of the Syndicalist League are to give the spirit of Class predominence over the spirit of tendency, of sect or party in order to achieve maximum action against the boss class and against the State.

To participate in the work of syndical education by proceeding to the examination of the practical and theoretical problems with which the working class movement is faced, and in encouraging the formation of syndicalist study circles.

To keep alive the precept of the First International, according to which the 'emancipation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves.

(Copies of *La Revolution Proletarienne* may be ordered from *Freedom Bookshop*, price 1/3 post free.)

TAILPIECE

Some readers may feel that this column has been more depressing than usual. We regret we cannot do anything about it, but with their permission will end on a lighter note with one or two short pieces to suit the different tastes of our readers.

1

From the April issue of an American magazine *Pageant* we learn that "for the payment of one pig per annum, a Vermont farmer contracted for dental care for his entire family".

2

Eva von Blomberg, wife of the late Field Marshal, has recently been undergoing "denazification", and it was just the occasion for the photograph of this merry widow to be published in an American magazine. As a result she has received an enormous fan-mail and many offers of marriage. *Combat* quotes one American suitor: "Since seeing your photo I have fallen in love with you. I know that you could not have been mixed up with the Hitler clique and the Nazis". Another writer informs her that he will pray for her every night so long as he lives, whilst yet another offers to to marry her within three days of her landing in America, and thus give her citizenship.

3

In Naples the police are having to be used to control the crowds that have gathered to catch a glimpse of a little girl known locally as "the little Saint" who for the past week, according to the *Gazetta del Popolo* (20/4/47) has been transfixed in ecstasy and she interrupts her attitude only in order to pray to the Virgin. By her side is a priest and only to him does she occasionally say a word and from him takes a little food, just enough to keep her alive. And this morning, whilst outside the crowds were pressing to reach her, she spoke once more and said: "To-morrow I will die at nine o'clock!" Then absorbed in contemplation, she murmured "I will die with my hands crossed as the Madonna wishes, and before I die I will reveal what she told me. Only then will I make the revelations." Did she die? Did she reveal? . . . Look out for our next breath-taking instalment in the story of the Girl Who Will Die To-morrow at 9 a.m.!

LIBERTARIAN.

SOVIET SCIENTIST
Refuses Atom Job

Almost as revolutionary as the atomic bomb itself is the gradually developing sense of responsibility which some scientists are adopting toward the work they undertake. While a number of British and American physicists lose themselves in the maze of talk about impossible international controls, others take the forthright action of refusing work dedicated to war. Action of this latter type has even occurred in Stalin's Russia.

Le Libertaire, 13/2/47, reports that Kapitsa, the only Soviet scientist who has specialized in atomic questions, is now "in disgrace" with the Stalin regime. "The unhappy fellow," says the French anarchist weekly, "had adopted bad habits toward foreigners. A resident of England since 1921 (Gorki had intervened for him to leave Russia after his wife and child died from privations), he was one of Professor Rutherford's collaborators, and became a highly respected scientist in Great Britain. As a member of most of the great scientific associations in the Anglo-Saxon world, Director of a special laboratory at Cambridge, he returned to the USSR in 1931 to attend a scientific congress.

"Despite formal promises made before his arrival, Kapitsa could not obtain authorization to leave the country. After a year's struggle, after direct entreaties with high party functionaries and Stalin himself, he accepted a position with the Institute of Physical Sciences, of which he became the only director.

"But, after Hiroshima, Stalin and the Departments of National Defence appealed to him to orientate his research toward atomic disintegration, to determine the process for the manufacture of the atomic bomb. Kapitsa refused and continued his work on gases and low temperatures.

Since last October he has not appeared at the Institute and all that the Government will admit is that 'he has been advised not to appear in public'."

Of course, the exact reasons for Kapitsa's refusal are known. It may be due to an honest objection to war, or because of his English friendships, or simply because he got more pleasure from continuing his own work. Whatever the reason, Kapitsa's example should be pondered by all those who are following along the march to death. Refusal to fight or work on any war implements is the only practicable step we can take now. If the governments of the world won't disarm, we must.

[*The above is taken from the New York Anarchist paper "Why?" We would stress the importance of Kapitsa's stand—if it is substantiated. It is simply a matter of taking a stand on independent opinion and conscience for English or American scientists to refuse atomic work. At the most they lose the prospect of future advancement. But in the USSR, such refusal may well be an action which will bring liquidation as its reward. If Kapitsa is indeed making a stand against the atomic bomb, he will not only be putting English and American scientists to shame, but he will be taking a singularly heroic action.*—EDS.]

Suicide Rate Up In Japan

Six times as many Japanese, most of them because of bad economic circumstances, have tried to commit suicide by hurling themselves in front of trains during during the last year, as in any year prior to 1943, according to a survey made by the newspaper Nihon Keizai. Figures of the Transport Ministry show that in the 10 months ending in mid-February, 1947, 970 such suicide attempts out of 1,241 were successful.—(W.P.)

American Empire

The Truman plan regarding Greece is only one instance of a decisive abandonment of the policy of abstention from imperialist activity which use to be the insincere boast of the American governments before the war. America no longer pays lip service to a "Monroe Doctrine" prescribing aloofness from the affairs of other nations; U.S. government now intervenes as definitely as the British governments have done for centuries.

This change is nowhere more apparent than in the new American acquisitions in the Pacific. As a result of the war they have acquired 829 square miles in 623 islands in an area of 3,000,000 square miles of ocean. These comprise the Marshalls, Carolines, and Marianas formerly mandated by the League of Nations to Japan as their reward for being on the winning side in the war of 1914.

On April 2nd, UNO voted these "possessions" to the United States—but not as outright owner, but only as a trustee (Query: are the native inhabitants of these islands represented at UNO? Of course not, don't be absurd!). Now, however, only a few weeks afterwards, the Washington publication *United States News* declares that the UNO vote made these territories into the "sole and *permanent trusteeship*" of the USA. UNO's opinion on "legality" is not worth anything, of course, but the American attitude is significant and symptomatic. Despite all the smug avowals of the past, and the denunciation of other imperialisms, Americans now talk of the "American Empire".

These islands provide the US navy with a string of bases across the Pacific. They also have bases on the British Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Since Japan, the great naval power of the Pacific is now out, whom are these bases expected to protect American trade interests against?

Russia, of course, is the "obvious" answer if one looks no further than the surface of things.

But Russia has no navy worth speaking of. And Russian trade does not seriously conflict with American trade on the world market, that abstract whose contraction is the cause of wars.

On the other hand, the British Empire depends on the British navy and has bases even more widely spread than the rising American imperialism. Moreover, British trade is in serious competition with U.S. trade. The clear inference, even if it isn't "obvious", is that the new American Empire is looking out for protection against the old firm of British Imperialism which still dominates 25 per cent. of the land surface of the globe, and keeps in subjection 25 per cent. of the world's population. It need hardly be remarked that a war between these rivals for the purpose of bringing the two Empires under the exclusive domination of one of them will not commend itself to any thinking worker now suffering under either of them.

NEW FORMS OF RESISTANCE IN RUSSIA

For the past ten years or more, radicals have been so concerned with exposing the non-revolutionary nature of the Stalinist regime in Russia, that they have tended to create a picture of absolute terror and unrelieved oppression. In renouncing the premise that Russia was a workers' state, they went to the other extreme: in their zeal they have neglected to recognize that the workers play ANY active role whatever. They have not been able to separate the State from society. They formerly regarded Russia as a workers' state; now they see it as a bureaucratic state, with the workers figuring only as passive victims. Both are monolithic concepts, and have more in common with each other than with the true state of affairs.

The State not "the People"

It is important to remember that the failure to distinguish between the Nazi State and the German people greatly contributed to the potency of the war propaganda before and during the second World War. From 1932 on, radical writing about Germany concerned itself almost exclusively with depicting the horrors of the regime, with the result that it proved highly useful to the war propagandists. Those radicals who remained faithful to their principles and opposed the war, somewhat belatedly realized the damage they had done, and attempted to rectify matters by placing greater emphasis on internal dissension and popular resistance in Germany, but this came too late to have much effect. Of the less principled ex-radicals, their support of the war followed easily from this monolithic creation in which the German people and State were one.

To-day the developing sentiment for war with Russia is making use of the radicals' own revelations of the nature of the Stalinist regime, and many near-radicals are assuming a position that will lead to "critical" support of the next war on the grounds that a Russian victory would end all possibility of struggling for socialism. It is, therefore, particularly important that radicals should be distinguishing between the Stalinist regime and the Russian people.

Without doubt, the Stalinist bureaucracy has perfected techniques of repression that are more effective than any previously developed, and has been successful in eliminating the possibility of the usual forms of political and economic struggle against it. One looks in vain for an underground press, trade union activity or any form of intellectual or cultural opposition.

Changing Forms of Resistance

The bureaucracy received its own early training in such underground activity under the Czar and is therefore all too familiar with its techniques. But it has not been successful in destroying all forms of resistance. Radicals who have come to this conclusion have been looking at the situation from the top down, looking for opposition as Stalinist bureaucrats themselves might. Since they have not found the forms of opposition with which they are familiar, they have concluded that there are none. They would have learned more by identifying themselves with the workers who had to seek new techniques of resistance when the old ones became too hazardous.

From this it follows that the revelations of disaffected Russian bureaucrats like Kravchenko give a far from adequate account, inasmuch as their official position made it impossible for them to become aware of the actual forces of resistance. These new forms of opposition occur in an area that wouldn't be discernable to a bureaucrat.

Not only does the police terror make written propaganda and political organization impossible, but the state of mind of the Russian worker renders him peculiarly unsusceptible to this form of opposition. Under any totalitarian regime the workers eventually become impervious to the written word:

> "Has no newspaper that says the opposite of what *The News of Rome* says ever come this way?" the priest asked. "I mean a newspaper that was against the government?"
>
> "Maybe," said Magascia. "Maybe. But you can't pay attention to every bit of paper that's given you. Once upon a time paper was a rare and precious thing . . . In those times, in our part of the world, nobody, speaking with respect, would have dared use a piece of paper to wipe himself . . . But now we've gone to the other extreme, and so much free and lying paper is handed out that it actually makes you shudder to touch your own body with it."
>
> (Silone, *Bread and Wine*).

This is also true of the radio, the broadcasts are of course completely controlled; no short wave sets are allowed, although we doubt the efficacy of foreign propaganda, were the Russians allowed to hear any. The mere fact that in a country of such great material privations it is possible for any worker to obtain a radio is sufficient reason for their mistrusting it.

The whole idea of a mass revolutionary overthrow of the regime can have no attraction for a working class who carried out one such revolution only to be saddled with a worse tyranny than before. It is not because of apathy that the Russian workers have rejected the idea of revolution: in this sense they are the most saphisticated workers in the world; they have had thirty years for evolving techniques of *undermining* the regime rather than wasting their energies in vain attempts to repeat the mistakes of 1917.

Not only is struggle on the political arena meaningless, but a considerable part of the traditional economic struggle of the working class has been rendered impossible by the nature of the regime. Since there is no unemployment, the fight for jobs has no relevence; rather the problem of the Russian worker is to get out of working.

New Forms Developing

This they have done in two ways: by a systematic slowdown, and by establishing a free market. Both these things, in effect, create a dual economy; this is one instance of *undermining* rather than *directly opposing* the regime.

Trade union activity in the traditional sense has been ruled out by the fact that the trade unions have become part of the state apparatus, and the workers, though "organised", have no real representatives. Therefore, instead of trying to ameliorate their working conditions, wages, and hours on the job, they have simply endeavoured to divorce themselves from the job itself, by working as little as possible, and by engaging in their main economic activity after "work".

> "Side by side with the official commerce carried on by the State, there exists now in Soviet Russia a kind of free commerce. It acquired considerable importance during the war. It is becoming more and more of a factor in Soviet life.
>
> This commerce does not take place in stores, but on the street. Each city and town has its market place . . . you can find on this market—commonly referred to as the *bazaar*—almost everything . . .
>
> The bazaar is . . . the centre of town life . . . the centre of most of the preoccupations of the population. The word "bazaar" constantly crops up in all conversation. On his free day, the worker, man or woman, takes a trip to the town bazaar. This event takes on such importance that they talk about it during the entire week . . .
>
> The attraction that the free market exercises on the Soviet individual is of great significance. In it he finds himself face to face with a different world, one that obeys the law of economic liberty. In the bazaar one can sell and buy freely anything he wants. *And everybody has something to sell.* (Our italics.—D.R., H.C.). On his after-work patch of soil, a worker grows a bit of tobacco. His wife sells the tobacco in the bazaar. He economizes, buys himself a goat . . . or a cow . . . and sells his milk curd. By the dint of shrewd merchandising, one of my fellow workers who grew and sold tobacco was enabled to buy himself a cow for 27,000 roubles. Another acquired some bees . . .
>
> In principle, the bazaar is a free market, but now and then the NKVD . . . swoops down. The street market is then less free . . .
>
> It is incorrect to speak of an atmosphere of terror in the USSR. Inside the kind of prison where the Soviet worker finds himself, one is free to grumble and especially free to do as little work as possible. *Upon the rise of the street market, Stakhanovism lost much of its importance.* (Our italics.—D.R., H.C.). Instead of tiring himself in an effort to get a better living by increasing his output, the Soviet worker prefers to make money doing "business" in his after work hours."
>
> (*New Views*, p.19; The Moral and Economic Conditions of the Lower Classes in Contemporary Soviet Russia . . . This is an eye-witness report by a Frenchman who after the war worked in the Soviet coal mines until the end of 1946).

The slow-down, which exists side by side with the bazaar, and which provides the Russian worker with the energy required to carry on this other form of work, is one of the oldest forms of opposition that exists. It was probably used by the slaves of ancient Rome. And it was widely employed by workers of Nazi occupied Europe in the late war. Used alone, it constitutes no more than an annoyance to the masters, but in conjunction with a free market as in Russia, it could become a formidable weapon against the regime. When the whole population engages in it, police terror is helpless against it.

Problem for the Repression

Not only is it impossible for the regime to imprison everyone, but terror which invariably after a period of time works for its own destruction, is now actually facilitating the slow-down in Russia!

> "On the first day of my work in the lamp room my immediate overseer . . . Victor S. told me: 'Listen, you, you've got to look busy when the natchalnik is around. It doesn't matter what you do, but look busy. As soon as he leaves, drop everything and take it easy. Mustn't kill yourself. Slow and easy does it, that's our law!'
>
> Victor S. lived up to this law with remarkable fidelity. At eight in the morning he stole out of the lamp room and went home. He did not return until about ten so that he could be around when the morning shift was relieved. Away from the job, he attended to his bees and trading . . . Now and then the natchalnik noticed his truancy and made a scene. But that did not worry Victor S. He knew too much. He said the natchalnik had once stolen kerosene and was concerned in the disappearance of a 200 litre can of benzine. So Victor S. used to say: 'If that son of a —— doesn't stop annoying me, I'll denounce him!'" (*op. cit.*)

While Victor S. was fortunate in having an immediate superior who didn't dare turn him in because he, too, was at odds with the State, the penalty for staying away from work or even for being tardy can be as high as six years in prison.

We do not want to create the impression that we are over optimistic, merely because we point out the potentialities of this resistance. The objective material at our disposal is scanty and we can do no more than interpret its implication. Nor do we wish to minimize the brutality of the regime and its ruthlessness in dealing with those dissident elements who are not sufficiently circumspect in their behaviour, and who thereby become known to them.

We cannot pretend that this resistance is either unified or universal. There are millions of petty officials who benefit sufficiently from the regime to support it. Most of the resistance itself is on an extremely opportunistic basis. However, even banditry, which is the least political of all forms of opposition, serves in effect, to sabotage and disorganize the regime.

In view of the intensity and duration of the repression, it is not surprising that there exists no conscious ideological resistance. The very nature of the opposition precludes direct propaganda or organization; in fact, it depends on its being unknown, unorganized, subversive.

However, if and when the resistance gains sufficient momentum to threaten the *status quo*, the movement will doubtless acquire a more positive character, an ideology and more idealism. Idealism has been conspicuously absent in the resistance up to now. When material considerations are of such magnitude, that one is faced with the prospect of starving, it is extremely unlikely that an individual will be concerned with larger human issues. Where personal survival is the only concern, and all group values are absent, societal change is highly improbable—at least this is true for the immediate present.

However, it is not inconceivable that the power of the regime may be worn down by the free market and sabotage to a point where immediate material needs are fulfilled, and then, the more significant aspects of freedom will be fought for.

Need for Historical Perspective

Only when we stop thinking of societal change in terms of "proletarian revolution", will the situation in Russia appear less hopeless to us. Actually, the regime appears less permanent if we view it from historical perspective. In the past, totalitarian bureaucracies always existed in a static economy; they existed, in fact, to support the *status quo*. As soon as the economy started expanding, it burst through the bureaucratic bondage. The Bolshevik bureaucracy has existed for thirty years—which is no time, historically—and as the tempo of both internal and external expansion continues accelerating, the contradiction between the transitional nature of the Soviet society (particularly of its altering economy) and the conservative demands of a bureaucratic State may clash violently. At this moment all elements of internal resistance may have a spectacular opportunity.

It is impossible to say just when and how the two economies in Russia will come into open conflict. Nor by what means the state may be destroyed. But it is important to recognize that a struggle *is* going on, and that the Russian workers, far from being the passive instruments of the regime that radicals have represented them as being, are employing techniques of opposition which are heartening to us, and from which we shall have to learn.

DACHINE RAINER & HOLLEY CANTINE.

Postscript.—In connection with the comments above we cannot help pointing out the great menace of the "It's our neck or Theirs" position may are taking in regard to Russia—particularly ex-bolsheviks—the line on its most sophisticated level runs that we must defend our declining capitalist system or our few democratic privileges against the threat of totalitarianism. James Burnham's new book *The Struggle for the World* is the most recent (reviewed in *N.Y. Times*, March 16), and most comprehensive exponent of this position which will be the minority, "critical support" of the *Third* World War! The ex-communists will be to the third world war what the Jewish intellectuals were to the second—"the-lesser-of-two-evils" ideologists! Burnham is finally old hat—he is lagging one war behind!

D.R. & H.C.
March 16, '47.

PLANNED MISERY

(From a Comrade)

AFTER the fourth Five Year Plan in Russia, the Two Year Plan in Holland, the several-year plans in Poland, Bulgaria, etc., a Five Year economic plan is initiated by the British Labour Government. Cause is the capitalist system of production and—since every social machinery has a tendency to extend its function to become an end in itself—its power apparatus, the State.

Planning by maintaining the productive system within the "unbridled" laws of the world market is primarily a military measure and has nothing whatever to do with a better way of life. In this country a detailed plan for the increase of production by means of rigorous exploitation of workers is put into operation, whilst the cuts in food and clothing are followed by the cuts in fuel for domestic consumption: measures which the Government would like to avoid. No wonder that it is desirous of raising the standard of living for a certain group of the workers, but this is possible only at the expense of all the other sections of the toiling mass. And, whilst trade union leaders assisted by bankrupt capitalists are haggling about methods of introducing piece-work, the so-called Gallup Poll gives a "lift" by asking a number of men and women in Great Britain: "Do you agree or disagree that production must go up before wages can be increased?" And, of course, 69 per cent. of the "people" under the suggestive influence of the interviewer "agree". Another question put in this poll was: "Do you agree or disagree that piece-work is likely to increase production?" 66 per cent. said "agree". A final question was then asked: "Do you approve or disapprove of piece-work?" To this 50 per cent. said "approve".

It is not the modern method employed by the aforesaid research organisation; it is the ignorance and submissiveness of the masses (herded in their trade unions), which strikes at the forward struggling minorities. Events such as the recent sacking of "communistically-minded" employees in the civil service by order of M.I.5, the military branch of a world spy organisation, illuminates the home policy of the Labour Government very clearly. What has happened in the civil service is sure to happen in other places of work. It goes without saying that the newly developing oligarchy has strengthened, and is still strengthening, its security precautions. To this, the daily newspapers are "doing their bit".

If the press campaign for more manpower—in the face of crowded offices of the Labour Ministry—has any meaning, it may mean that under the cloak of "manpower-shortage", a large labour surplus is expected. The fuss made about the "nationalisation" of the coal mines (State ownership is just a measure of profit economy, it does not alter the essential social relations of the producer and consumer) is another expression of the unrestrained demagogy of the Labour leaders, and that way provides for the creation of a new parasitical bureaucratic caste.

The second world war has not appeased the "peace-loving" united nations, but has brought forward a considerable intensification of the national, economic and political antagonisms. In such a situation Conscription becomes the first supposition of all for capitalist "recovery".

Whilst the living standard of the masses is growing worse, production may increase, and the surplus value extracted from sweating labour will be turned to further production of armaments. The aggravation of international antagonisms, however, lead to trade conflicts which deepen the internal economic crisis. Exports, which have to a certain extent been increased, will decline, and the expanded production of marketable commodities will be shifted to armaments. The "Planning Board", or, more precisely, the internal front of government, trade unions and big business, is planning, in effect, more misery. Naturally—for there is no other capitalistic outlet. The slave state, which the planners may pretend to avoid, is growing and is full of buds.

The workers have lost the great chance they had some years ago. They stuck, and still stick, to the reactionary ideologies of their deadly enemy, instead of the revolutionary idea of the working class. Unless this is changed very soon, and gives way to the rise of an entirely new working class movement, the chance lost during the war means—at the least—the loss of a century.

Relief Parcels as Propaganda

Relief parcels from America to Italy have hitherto been distributed by Papal Relief Societies, and it now appears that these parcels have been used as political propaganda. Two delegates of the American Federal Council of Protestant Churches are investigating the matter.

It appears that distribution of the parcels was made in every parish just before the June plebiscite and just before the municipal elections.

Bad faith in the distribution of relief parcels can only damage those in need of relief, and it is revolting that their plight should be used to further political ends. Perhaps one should not be surprised that the Vatican outfits act thus; but the upshot is inevitable. Since 80 per cent. of relief parcels are derived from American Protestants, the delegates are threatening to refuse further parcels if distribution remains in Catholic hands. Such a refusal would merely mean the loss of a political weapon to the Vatican: but it means loss of the means of life for some Italian families who might otherwise have been the recipients of parcels withheld.

THE AVALANCHE

By CLARA COLE

In this article Clara Cole urges the necessity of considering the imminence of another war. She herself opposed both the war of 1914-18 and that of 1939-45 and was active in the workers' struggle between the wars.

A conscripted, servile state is a potential danger, for it makes for war and the totalitarian state. Mass inertia follows until war is declared—a war that might have been prevented if efforts for nylons and football pools had been diverted to vigorous protests against preparations for war and the wasteful treadmill of industrial and military conscription. The last war, and all wars, were paid for by labour. Why should labour continue paying what it does not owe? It is the future war we are paying for now, mortgaging future labour. The seemingly motionless avalanche *does* fall, and the unexpected avalanche of unheeded wrongs is heading for the final plunge that no government can withstand.

Military preparatory education of the young is sapping initiative, and newspapers have greater power than members of parliament or workers when the stampede of war is ready to supersede industrial unrest. Then, money speaks. In syndicalism, plans will be made public, and not as now obtains, where each party strives to oppose the other party and ignores the benefits or otherwise of a bill. Have you realized that a strike—of any worker—when the next war comes, may be called mutiny, and treated as such? Here is a specimen of preparatory military training: "Train them to think what are the correctives." . . . "Throughout the course the instructors impress upon the pupils the need to build up so healthy a mental attitude that the army can stand firm against any disintegration of civilian beliefs"! (*News Chronicle*, 18/8/43). So long as we have men and women who seek adventure through war, so long shall we have misadventure; all they seek, and seldom find, could be obtained—and much more—without war.

War Thrives On Lies

The powers that say they are out to prevent war, and at the same time advertise and give the plums of the best paid jobs to the admiralty and the army, *lie*. War thrives on lies. A man said on the wireless that he had never killed a man before he went into the army. No, it took a government to force him to commit murder. We die by strife; we can only live by uniting, giving and receiving mutual help, organized from the workshops of the world.

Bombs, like curses, come back to roost. Let the sinless man cast the first bomb and none will be thrown. Beware the spurious cry "Don't let the army down"; it really means, send more men out to be killed, and thus keep the war going. Now is the time to protest against war and conscription—*before* the international hell starts.

Conscription is the negation of defence, for armed peace presupposes war and is *offensive*. Hear Combined Ops: "This war taught this country two fundamental lessons though neither of them was new. The first is that in any future conflict we cannot afford to rely on our island fortress in the old sense of the word; the second is that attack is the best form of defence." Who is the enemy? Combined Ops are their own and our enemies.

Of America one of the most powerful members, according to the *News Chronicle* (25/5/46), says: "Germ spray may be secret weapon". This follows the headline, "a method of spreading disease may be the new weapon". "Far more deadly than the atomic bomb which is in U.S., possession of scientific factors which place us in an enviable position . . . The navy has developed to a point where it can now be used a weapon *that can wipe out all forms of life in a large city* . . . the germs are highly contagious." (Italics mine.) Surely what has been done in Germany and Japan is enough to satiate the most rapacious greed for trade, world domination and revenge.

We must act now by repudiating and refusing military entanglements. Submission is moral death, neutrality nonexistent. You will not be alone, and you will have a divine flame within you that will warn you and atone for all else. You have shown bravery in abundance; transfer it—or beware of a world stampeding, made mad by military training.

Be Fearless Now

Fear will not be the best guide to better things. *Be fearless now* while it is possible to wage war against war and conscription. Think *why* they want more babies, yet are unable to feed the present generation. Why they brought those Germans over here—"Nine German rocket experts, men who formerly worked on research on German rockets which hit London, arrived in England yesterday. They are to work on guided projectiles. More German scientists and technicians will go to Westcott later and it is expected that others will join the 26 already at R.A.F. experimental establishment at Farnborough. At present 40 Top Projectile scientists are working in this country." (*News Chronicle*, 8/11/46.)

The above is what they plan openly, so what must be the horrors planned behind closed doors! Germans are to work in England at war work for which they would suffer the death penalty in Germany.

News Chronicle for 17/7/45 reported "Press banned from area of conference . . . where the Big Three are to meet to decide the destinies of Europe for years to come." And 6/2/47: "UNO's Military Staff Committee . . . which operates in the highest secrecy." Force, not justice has placed us in these self-elected (?) men's hands. The post of Secretary General has a salary of £9,000.

If at this moment all the gold and notes of exchange were destroyed we should be no worse off; but if commodities were destroyed it would spell death. Money alone makes profits possible, money is a means of exploitation and makes nothing but trouble. "My banker will only lend me a loan if I can prove I don't need it!" says Hector in the *News Chronicle* . . . But if you need a loan, be sure you won't get it.

War Cannot Be Waged Without Workers

"French to train for Atomic Warfare." But wake up and cheer up, tired workers! You are the millions and war cannot be waged without you even if more and more power is being relegated to fewer and fewer men. Men and women who callously say they have had the time of their lives in wartime could have had it and much more without war's ghastly tragedies.

One Sunday morning the B.B.C. perpetrated the biggest piece of sarcasm ever (intended or otherwise); when reporting that Truman said peace was practically certain, the item following described at length America's wonderful new bomb for war!

In the War Crime Trial, the B.B.C. on the 1st October, 1946, declared: "A disgrace to the honourable profession of arms." If sticking a bayonet into a man's stomach and twisting it is honourable, it is indeed "Honour in dishonour deeply rooted". If this world state of dope and gory ends in Adam and Eve's conditions, be sure to begin without stock exchanges and governments, and have a brotherly co-op. founded on a free exchange of mutual interests. There are *many* books that will explain how it may be done—Alexander Berkman's *A.B.C. of Anarchism* and others—and men and women anxious and waiting to make these commonsense plans into realities.

So long as we keep standing armies we shall be poor—especially now, since, in order to keep the army docile, it is promised expensive amenities. But the conscript has nothing to give us in return, his business is to destroy. When U.N.O. gets military power organized, instead of one boss for each surviving country, there will be a world combine against any aspirations of the workers.

Book Reviews

A Book of Poems

THE SIGNAL TO ENGAGE by Alex Comfort. (Routledge, 5/-.)

Most of the poems in this book are dedicated to the four anarchists who were imprisoned in 1945 for criticising the burden set on the people by the victorious State. This book, which displays a similar sympathy with the vanquished, will have a particular interest therefore for readers of *FREEDOM*.

"From the quarrel with others we make rhetoric; from the quarrel with ourselves, poetry," said Yeats, and it is sometimes a little too evident that Comfort's quarrel is of the former kind; most of the pieces in this collection are rhetorical rather than poetic. Outstanding in the book is the *Song of Lazarus*, which is really a collection of short poems strung on a single theme. These poems are of unequal value and range from a pleasant lyricism to the quiet conversational bitterness of *Notes for my Son*, an admirable piece of exhortation almost equalled by the similar *Song for the Heroes* elsewhere in the volume. By including also the almost Shelleyan *Song for the Women of Every City* and the slighter but agreeable *Song for John Hewetson*, the book demonstrates Comfort's unusually wide range of expression. Throughout the book are scattered those hard convincing images—*all the portholes trail their oars of light; the grave's white tangled dancers*—that readers of Comfort have come to expect and which are as fresh and vivid as stones uncovered by water to the sun.

Comfort's faults as a poet are equally apparent. Too often one feels that his images have only a superficial association, failing to reveal to the reader any constant underlying significance. The bright images do not float on a stream and indicate the direction of its current. Small and concrete, jostling against rather yeasty abstractions like History, Freedom, Obedience, Time, they resemble too frequently the raisins in an uncooked cake. *And we have come now to the edge of Time./ This is the quiet, moving scarf of night/ touching the leaves, under whose pool we sit,/ and one by one the garden flowers go out/ following each other like children who go home/ and every new year is like a well, a hollow/ full of a quiet water, without light/ a rising plain of glass, and under it/ the shadow of History falling. Once before it came/ the shadow of a great hill . . .* and so on with valleys, slopes, stones, heat, sheep, a confused and contradictory collection of images dominated by the brilliant *and one by one the garden flowers go out* which like lightning blinds the reader to the rest of the passage. There seems to be here a lack of strong intellectual control, an inability to judge the relative emotive intensities of words, that vitiates much of the work in this volume.

Yet few readers coming to poems like *None but my Foe to be my Friend* and the *Song of Lazarus* could fail to be stirred and refreshed. Further, there is here as in all Comfort's work an alert awareness of the world around us that helps us to choose not merely our form of death but our way of life.

Louis Adeane.

Controversy

Anarchism & Property

A Viewpoint

I think there can be few critics of Anarchism who have not called attention to the divided voice of the movement on the property question. Debaters can be relied upon to confound communist anarchists with quotations from Stirner, Proudhon and Tucker. And throughout their careers, Tucker and Mackay, to mention no others, vigorously denied that persons advocating a communist economy could be any sort of anarchists. Yet it is a fact that in (and beyond) the "anarchist sects" there is common ground of ideas that must be the basis of our educational work to-day, and underlie the free society of to-morrow.

Views of Kropotkin and Malatesta

Kropotkin and Malatesta are probably the teachers whose influence is most felt by present-day British anarchists, but neither of these sought to limit the anarcist movement to those of the communist persuasion. It was Kropotkin who hailed the mutualist Proudhon as "the Father of Anarchy"; and Malatesta, in his essay "Anarchism and the Labour Movement" insists that anarchism is not to be blindly identified with syndicalism or the labour struggle, but that it has a distinctive character that cannot be fully expressed through this channel, though most anarchists conceive the labour field to be the one most proper for their attentions.

This brings us to the crux of the matter under discussion. Is there a distinctive anarchist approach to this property question, as opposed to the distinctively socialist or capitalist approaches; and also, as opposed to those communist, mutualist or distributist hypotheses about the proper character of a free society which various thinkers have developed from the general principles of anarchism? It is these principles we want to get at, because they are the proper material for anarchist propaganda and education. The details are for discussion (largely) among those already convinced of the basic soundness of anarchism. Cardinal Manning once wrote, "We do not try to teach the rosary to a man who doesn't believe in God", and that, I think, is the point at issue here.

. . . .

Basis in the Individual

The essence and foundation of all anarchist thought is—individualism egoism; the belief that each and every one of us has the right to free life and free development, in accordance with our own desires and potentialities, this liberty being logically halted at the point where it encroaches upon the equal liberty of others. This is the foundation of anarchism, and has been classically vindicated by Max Stirner. The sociological defence of this doctrine is found in our belief about the social nature of man—that he has an inborn propensity for co-operation without compulsion from above, and the accumulation of evidence relative to this is the principal contribution that Kropotkin made to the movement. The two doctrines are complementary. They are essential to each other and cannot logically be separated without rendering the anarchist position untenable.

If man, the individual, is to be free and responsible, it follows that he must have personal control of life's necessities—as of right, and not by purchase or on sufferance. This means that the free man will be a *possessor of property*. I can see no logically anarchist alternative to this. How can we say that the individual has a right to free movement, free thought, free love, and not a right to property? How can anarchists argue that property must belong to some collective? Yet this view is commonly put forward.

Confusion About Capitalism

The confusion arises from a misunderstanding of the nature of capitalism, and so, by inference, of the proper nature of a free society. The error made is to suppose that capitalism means the individual's right to property, and that that right is somehow bound up with capitalism. The writers of the Catholic 'Distributist' school make a very useful distinction between "Private property" (the right of individuals to control goods and small productive units) and capitalism (the right of individuals to control large units of producers' goods with a view to taxing the non-possessors who have need of these units to live).

Despite Conservative propaganda, Capitalism does not involve the *general* right to private property. Rather it is based on the denial of property to the mass of the people. Capitalism is a structure of monopolies: private property one of 'distributism". Capital should be owned and controlled by individuals, families or fraternal groups, both as a practical guarantee of freedom and to satisfy man's desire for responsible creative work. The goods produced must be the absolute property of the producers who will administer them in accordance with the needs of the participants who have contributed according to their ability. Any argument that producers or consumers goods belong by right to any collective (commune, union, region, state or nation) is socialist and not anarchist. Once again, our belief in letting the individual have goods to control is backed by our anarchist faith in the co-operative and truly charitable nature of man.

The State and the Individual

Capitalism is the economic aspect of the State system of society. It represents monopoly and restriction for the benefit of a privileged class, just as the State monopolises in other spheres. The State attempts to monopolise violence and to be the sole authority capable of taking moral or philosophical decisions. In the face of this situation, what must anarchists advocate? There can be only one answer. In the economic field, as in all others, they must press for the freedom of the individual and the end of monopoly. They must, in this case, demand property for the individual. All restrictice practices in production must be ended. Every man who desires to work as a craftsman must be free to do so. Everyone will be able to take a responsible role in production—as a man, and not as a unit. These are the fundamentals of an anarchist economy, and this is the message anarchists must bring to the people so long deprived of wealth, land and property by the capitalists and the State. This redemption of the people's plundered wealth will be the revolutionary act.

In their propaganda, anarchists need not take the matter any further. It is not wise to draw up detailed blue-prints for "the day after the revolution". It is disastrous to thrust one's own vision forward and attempt to impose it as a dogma. This is the root of the conflict between the individual and communist anarchists. Communists assume (and Spanish experience would seem to justify the assumption) that the revolutionary seizure will be followed by voluntary collectivisation. But other thinkers have made other assumptions. Tucker and Proudhon saw production in the hands of individuals rather than collectives. We all have our own opinions as to what is probable and what is desirable, but all we should (in the first instance) teach as anarchists is the freeing of property from monopoly, and the establishment of use as the sole title to possession. Such will be the economic fundamentals of anarchy. It may well be that after the revolution different regimes or communes will have differing systems of property administration, and there is no reason why several parallel social forms should not arise on the one anarchist basis.

Anarchism not "Extreme Socialism"

The prevalent heretical belief that anarchism is "true socialism" ar "extreme socialism" is largely due to the dogmatic writings of anarchists who happen to be communists. If we were to concentrate all our endeavours on attacking capitalism because it is restrictive, and incompatible with the idea of personal rights and property, and because it puts profit before use, we should be doing more than returning to 'primitive' anarchism; we should be making it quite clear that anarchism is opposed to both Statist "communism" and "liberal" capitalism. For until both of these (and the accompanying either/or dilemma) are discredited, anarchism will never fire the imagination or strengthen the arms of the people.

JANUS.

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Letters to the Editors

Revising Lenin

Dear Comrade,

The latest number of the *Socialist Appeal* has an interesting leader on "'Super Planners', Captains of Industry". I'm in sympathy with what they say there. But if they are going to take that line, I wish they would say outright that Leninism wants overhauling. Because the Labour Government could answer out of Lenin's speeches on "The Immediate Tasks of Soviet Government" and on "'Left Wing' Childishness and Petty Bourgeois Mentality" (published in *Selected Work*, Volume 7). So, for instance, l.c. page 374, "The workers know very well that ninety-nine per cent. of the organisers and first-class technicians of really large-scale and giant enterprises, trusts and other establishments, belong to the capitalist class. But it is precisely these people whom we, the proletarian party, must appoint to direct the labour process and organization of production, for there are no other people who have practical experience in this business . . . The workers are not petty bourgeois. They are not afraid of large-scale 'state capitalism', they prize it as their proletarian weapon which *their* government, the *Soviet* government, will use against small-proprietor disintegration and disorganization."

Of course, the Labour Party is not in the position that the Bolsheviki were. They haven't produced anything like the legislation against private ownership. That is one thing. But the main line of the Leninist reply would be likely to concentrate on the *control* by the "proletarian party" and finally by the proletariat as a class. Lenin was certainly worried by the question of how this control by the workers would be realized and developed. But he does not seem to have worked that out. It is not clear how the workers ever *could* control the state capitalism which Lenin advocated and introduced—any more than they can control the sort of nationalization which the Labour Party is setting up.

The Labour Party is in a much weaker position, since it is trying to achieve . . . whatever it is . . . through the voluntary co-operation of the capitalists. This goes together with their whole appeasement policy, which makes them look so sick. But as regards this special point—as regards the distrust of the initiative of the workers themselves in the factories and mines and railways, and demanding that "thousands subordinate their will to the will of one" and that one a born and bred capitalist—I don't see why there is anything for a Leninist to object to. Lenin certainly did *not* hold that "elected committees of workers' representatives" should have "full control over the national economy". I don't object if somebody advocates that now—though it certainly needs filling in. But it seems to me a falsification of history to call that Leninism.

(I say " I don't object"; but probably I'm looking too much at the words alone. For the Leninists would demand a form and degree of centralization which I think would be incompatible with any sort of workers' control.)

R. R.

Alsations and Lorrainians in Russia

A comrade in Germany writes:

Dear Friends,

Allow me to call your attention to an article you published in the paper you have sent me, on page 4, about the Alsatians and Lorrainians.

The writer of this article alluded to a problem which has a scope very much larger than he speaks of. I work on this matter, and investigated it already for more than a year, yet my investigations refer not to the above-mentioned people but to other nations.

The number of men the writer speaks about, I could multiply by forty; there is no mistake in my calculations, and I have read the article very carefully. According to what I have been told by reliable witnesses, and what I have seen and heard myself, there is no more a doubt that at least a part of them have died (and I fear not a small part) by exposure, starvation, and hard-labour.

These fascists were no better than the Nazis. That is the result of every dictatorship, if she makes not horrible beasts out of men, she will make them her victims.

Please take the number of the persons into consideration, and their families who worry about them, and who have not a chance in the world to bring their case before the public. Therefore, I ask you for the sake of justice and humanity to help me to bring light into this dark story! I shall inform you of more as soon as possible.

With fraternal greetings,

Willi.

[*The article referred to appeared in the 8th March issue of* Freedom.—Eds.]

Hollywood Film Strike

Dear Comrades,

A member of the striking Conference of Studio Unions tells us the strike, which was engineered by the producers' association in order to break up the CSU, was touched off by labour spies at a time to correspond with the pre-arranged calling up of hundreds of deputy police and the importing into the state of thousands of strike-breaking workers, so that the pickets which were subsequently called out en masse were immediately arrested en masse (amid some of the most murderous bludgeoning seen in these parts, a little of which I personally witnessed at the time), and as you probably know finally tried en masse in the style of an active front court-martial. In spite of all this the producers' objective was not attained; the CSU is not broken up, and my friend informs us that the majority of the strikers will not go back under any other label.

[*See the account by Jules Scarceriaux of the Film Workers' Strike in Hollywood, published in our last issue.*—Eds.]

The Value of 'Freedom'

Dear Comrades,

I think that the issues that have been raised recently in these columns regarding the proposed raising of the price of *"Freedom"* are issues that confront most revolutionary journals at some point in their career. The *Daily Worker*, for instance, avoided the problem largely by accepting highly paid adverts from capitalist organisations. However, such methods of keeping a newspaper running under present economic conditions can hardly appeal to us. They inevitably end in a grave loss of critical faculties.

At the same time, however, the facile attitude of those enthusiastic correspondents who jump straight away at the increased price method of solution is to be guarded against. One correspondent, for example, contends that he would be quite willing to pay 4d. or 6d. a copy provided that he had a paper produced to his "taste". Under this reasoning, I suppose that we should all be quite willing ot pay 2/6 for a cauliflower because it is to our "taste". Another correspondent claims that 2d. is not an "economic" price to-day and furthers his argument by referring to the average worker's expenditure on the football pools every week.

However, have not anarchists condemned these institutions and the foolhardiness of the worker who spends his hard-earned money on them? To use this argument therefore, in favour of an increased price is, I think, merely to take advantage of the present-day worker's already unhappy position. Further, with the rising cost of living in relation to real wages I think that 2d. is becoming more and more an economic price.

As to the comrade who thinks that *Freedom* is worth 6d. a copy purely on merit, I think that years ago G. B. Shaw utterly destroyed the idea of Payment by Merit. For instance, taking the "merit value" of *Freedom* as 6d., would comrade readers please give the exact value of the following publications: *Holy Bible, Football Post, Das Capital, Alice in Wonderland, Peg's Paper, War and Peace, The Wizard, Destry Rides Again.* An impossible task, I think you'll agree. This idea of payment by merit or ability cannot be refuted strongly enough. Michelangelo's paintings, Shakespeare's plays, Scott's novels, Bach's music or any other work for that matter, cannot be judged in terms of little pieces of silver or rolls of banknotes. There is absolutely no relationship between them apart from bastardised relationship imposed on them by an entirely mad social and economic system. The old Marxian principle of actual production value, incomplete as it is to-day, is preferable to this rigmarole about merits. I mean that the processes involved in putting black words on white paper entail just as much human energy whether the words contain the "Wisdom of Solomon" or merely to-day's "Racing Tips."

However, these problems are inherent in the monetary system and if that system died tomorrow our problems would die with it. Unfortunately, these visions of the future are not yet so, and in case I am accused of not being alive to pressing problems of to-day let me make my own position clear. I am fully aware of the sacrifice, hard work and financial worries that the Editors and staff of *Freedom* take upon themselves in producing the paper. Let readers take upon themselves a greater responsibility for the production of the paper. To put the price of *Freedom* above the heads of the lowest paid workers in the land is to deny its own object. Those of us who evidently have a little extra money to spare could do worse than send it to the Press Fund. So let's try to increase our circulation and journalistic and financial contributions to *Freedom*.

Finally, an appeal and hope that an increased price will only be a very necessary, unavoidable last step.

Yours,

A. B.

WANTED: 2,000 New Readers! Are you helping to introduce new readers to *FREEDOM*? Have you asked your newsagent to stock the paper?

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

Through the Press

WORLD'S LONGEST STRIKE

Here's a story of the longest strike on record—one which has lasted 93 years. It was recounted to the Nanaimo Pioneers' Society by Henry Castillou, a Vancouver lawyer.

Back in 1853, Indian miners on Vancouver Island, who were hired to dig coal for the British ship Cormorant, went on strike for more pay. They were receiving only 80 cents a day, plus presents for their chiefs. They quit, demanding fair treatment.

There has never been a settlement of this dispute, and no Indian has been willing to work in the mines there since.

The Socialist Leader, 5/4/47.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED

After a prayer meeting at Patna, Bihar Province, Gandhi warned his audience that he may start another "fast unto death" if reports of a recurrence of communal trouble in East Bengal prove true.

Evening Standard, 15/4/47.

HARD TIMES

The 39-year-old Maharajah of Indore and his American wife arrived at the Savoy Hotel yesterday with their staff in two big cars. Their luggage—57 pieces of it—arrived soon after in a plain red van and was stacked on the pavement.

When he was here a month ago, the maharajah had 140 pieces of luggage.

Sunday Express, 20/4/47.

GOD AND THE STATE

The deeply religious miner is the steadiest and most regular workman, said Sir Richard Redmayne, formerly chief inspector of mines, in a message to the Annual Council of Toc H, in London yesterday.

Sunday Express, 20/4/47.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

Frank Sinatra received in New York the congratulations of authoress Margaret Halsey and James Waterman Wise for his work in promoting democracy.

The Star, 22/4/47.

BANNED

A resolution banning chickens from the churchyard was passed at the parochial church meeting at Tarrington St. Clement's, Norfolk.

Evening Standard, 22/7/47.

DECADENCE

In the last 50 years the British character has altered and, in world boxing, has lost something vital—an element of primitive animal ferocity.

To be a world beater there must be a fixed idea, when meeting an opponent, to hurt mercilessly with a tigerish ferocity.

Our boys are "too nice" to be world beaters

Letter in *Sunday Express*, 20/4/47.

A SERIOUS CHALLENGE

In these disputes they struck for no other reason than an objection to the man put in charge of their work, promoted, though he may have been, from among them.

Such interference is a really serious challenge. Since Ministers are themselves becoming ever larger employers of labour, it must, before long, prove intolerable to them.

Here is, in concrete fact, syndicalism, or "workers' control". It may provide us with one of the biggest of all political issues.

Daily Mail, 24/4/47.

We hope it does.

FOR THIS RELIEF

Strawberries flown from Spain will be in London shops to-day at £1 a pound.

Daily Mail, 24/4/47.

THE TRIVIAL ROUND

A very well-written novel dealing with an American subject exploited by Eugene O'Neill in "All God's Cillun Got Wings". A negress in this book writes about her son: "You're afraid that if he's shining shoes at eight, he will be cleaning windows at 16 and running an elevator at 21 and go on doing that for the rest of his life."

And why not, in the name of heaven, if that's all his mental equipment fits him for? Why this sentimental hankering after something a man isn't fit for?

Half the world's evil comes from people who aspire to do something out of their class and capacity, instead of doing their job in that class and capacity with maximum efficiency.

Daily Express, 18/4/47.

PEOPLE IN TROUBLE—I

In Augusta, Me., millionaire Textile Manufacturer Allen I. Goldfine recoiled sadly from his wife, his lesser relatives and their charge that his "drinking and debauchery" and "unreasonable charitable contributions" had made him unfit to run his mills. After explaining that he had been a "drinking man since I was 13," he told the court: 'We have so much money we don't know what to do with it—that's the trouble with the Goldfines."

Time (U.S.A.), 21/4/47.

PEOPLE IN TROUBLE—II

Worst case of overcrowding brought to the notice of Wood Green's Housing Committee was of a family of nine sleeping on the kitchen floor. They have now been rehoused.

Evening Standard, 19/4/47.

ISLAND OF THE BLESSED

Bermuda, island of the blessed in the Atlantic blue, rich man's paradise and millionaire's playground, is being nudged into democracy.

Just before the war the island's hotel association was able to boast:

> Bermuda is not a democracy. Taxation is negligible. There is no income tax, no death duties, no personal property tax, no nuisance taxes.

It did not add that there was no health or unemployment insurance, no workman's compensation, no social security.

And, for more than 80 per cent. of the adult population, no vote.

Daily Mirror, 23/4/47.

ESSENTIAL WORK DEPT.

Some high-salaried civil servants spent hours and even days in Government offices killing time by solving crossword puzzles, Colonel Frank Byers, chief Liberal Whip, told a Liberal meeting at Luton, Beds, last night.

He quoted a letter sent to him by an architect in a Government office who recently resigned "in disgust".

The letter—said Colonel Byers—gave these reasons for the resignation:—

1. Men, some of them earning high salaries, spent hours and even days of working time in reading the daily papers, solving crossword puzzles therein, and doing private work.
2. Home-made, or rather, office-made anagrams and puzzle pictures were passed round for further periods of time-killing.
3. Men habitually arrived half-an-hour late, left half-an-hour early, and took an hour and three-quarters for lunch. Such things became an accepted right.
4. Work was not harmed because there was seldom work to do.
5. The staff was kept at such a large figure that, in spite of slow working, a change in general policy resulted in months of several men's work being wasted.
6. I was engaged at a high salary for work which did not show signs of materialising. I was retained, however, and did work which should have commanded a lower salary.
7. I realised I was becoming incapable of working normally and, though highly paid, left.

Daily Express, 19/4/47.

SOULS IN DANGER

Though gambling is not a sin, says the Rev. G. Clayton in his Plymstock (Devon) parish magazine, organised gambling is "dangerous to the souls of bookmakers, pool promoters and the like."

Sunday Pictorial, 20/4/47.

LITERARY ACROBATICS

WRITING . . . his way back into favour, after "realising his mistakes": Soviet satirist Mikhail Zoshchenko. who was expelled last year from the Soviet Writers' Union. "If the book is a good one," foreign journalists in Moscow were told, "he will regain the trust of the people and re-enter the family of Soviet writers."

Before his expulsion, Zoshchenko was described by the Communist Party's Central Committee as "a bounder and dreg of literature" preaching "a putrescent vacuum of ideas, cheap taste, and a non-political approach, slanderously caricaturing and mocking the Soviet people."

Pravda called him "that vicious hooligan Zoshchenko." Novelist Konstantin Simonov explained: "No translation can indicate the—the *vulgarity* of the style of these stories. They were written in a peculiarly vulgar slang, and all the time they were sneering at the 'little man'."

World Review, 17/4/47.

Good luck to Zoshchenko! To rise from a putrescent vacuum to the family of Soviet writers can't be an easy task, but fear has achieved greater miracles.

GOOD SHOW, WHAT?

The Duke of Windsor helped to put out a fire in the suite of Baron Egmont Vanzuylen, at the Warldorf Astoria Hotel, New York.

The Duke helped to stretch hose lines,

Star, 16/4/47.

EASY SACRIFICE

People have been asking me whether Chancellor Hugh Dalton is going to practice what he has preached about smoking.

I would not be surprised to see him cut any form of smoking out completely, for he says he has no craving for tobacco now.

Star, 16/4/47.

AMERICANA

To Actress Jinx Falkenberg, from some 50,000 admiring beauticians in convention in Manhattan, went the title, America's No.1 Brunette. Actress Rita Hayworth (who used to be a redhead, and before that a brunette) was chosen No. 1 Blonde, and Actress Evelyn Keyes (who used to be a blonde) No. 1 Redhead.

Time, 21/4/47.

SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY

This is the wardrobe of Mrs. Diana Barnato-Walker at St. Moritz: 7 evening gowns, 7 evening bags, 7 pairs of evening shoes, 2 pairs of day shoes, 1 pair of ski-boot, 1 pair of walking shoes, 1 pair of evening slippers, 1 pair of fur moccasins, 1 blue mink coat, 1 fox fur jacket, 1 tailored suit, 2 waistcoats, 2 fur waistcoats, 3 ski jackets, 1 Swiss peasant blouse as apres-ski blouse, 9 woollen sweaters of all colours from rose to black, 20 shawls, 7 pairs of ski socks, 4 pairs of nylons, 12 shirts, underclothes, handkerchiefs, 6 pairs of slacks, 3 nightgowns, 1 red woollen ski-ing cap, 3 pairs of ski pants, belts, handbags, 1 pair of snow-boots, 1 beauty box, 5 lipsticks and corresponding nail polish, one flacon eyelash oil, Max Factor summertan powder, 1 lb. cold cream, 1 perfume Patou, 1 hand lotion Coral of Robert Douglas, 1 eau-de-Cologne Coty, Cordon-Rouge, 2 lait de beaute de Mme. Reine, 1 pink satin ski lotion de Mme. Reine, 1 mouthwash, 1 soapless shampoo. Jewellery: golden diamond, set of earrings, set of clips, finger ring, double string of pearls, 2 diamond bracelets, 1 big amethyst ring, massive gold bracelet, gold necklace.

Leader Magazine, 26/4/47.

SURPRISED

Mr. Kuznetsov and his fellow-travellers (for once the phrase may be used without malice) have visited Parliament and talked with Ministers. They have been to factories and football matches. They have dined with journalists and mayors. They have even, if rumour is correct, shaken hands with the Fascist Beast (Mr. Churchill) in his own lair. Yet it is plain that they are not within a thousand miles of understanding the British way of life. In a press conference which he gave before he left Mr. Kuznetsov expressed his surprise at the fuss which is being made about the Russian wives of British Service men who are not being allowed to join their husbands in this country. It was clear that he thought it a very trival matter which was being used by nameless "reactionaries" to stir up anti-Russian feeling. He could hardly be more mistaken. The truth is that to the great majority of Englishmen this seems a much simpler test of the virtues and vices of the Soviet system than all the Five-year Plans and statistics which have come out of Russia.

Manchester Guardian, 11/4/47.

RED TAPE

An English angler returning from a fishing holiday in Eire had three salmon he caught confiscated by the Customs.

The reason—under an Anglo-Eire deal Britain's Ministry of Food get all Eire's salmon exports.

The angler is now claiming the market value of the salmon from the Customs.

Evening Standard, 14/4/47.