

Freedom

ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"Politics is a dirty game, a dirty game! I'm thankful to say I have two sons doing very well in it."

LORD SALISBURY

"Government is conducted more or less like a game of chess. Success sanctifies its politics; failure spells its condemnation."

M. K. GANDHI

Only the people's direct action can solve the problems of our age!

1950: ELECTIONS SOLVE NOTHING

THE thought must be in many minds to-day that the half-century now ending must have seen more human misery than any other period in Man's history. It is not possible to say whether or not this is true. One would have to take into account the vast increase in the world's population during the last hundred years and the changing standards of human aspirations, they varying demands men make of their environment. And there is no yardstick with which to measure the sufferings and deprivations which have been their lot through the centuries when the overwhelming mass of men have lived in dumb animal misery. But to-day, we no longer have the fortitude and resignation which must have anaesthetised the afflictions of our ancestors. Nor have we, for the most part the compensations with which they made life tolerable; even religious people to-day have ceased to regard human suffering as ordained by providence; the sense of community does not soften the insecurity and isolation of the twentieth century individual; and the arts and skills of men have been parcelled out into the hands of specialists. We need not enumerate the milestones of this half-century, they are known too well, and the road they marked was to Dachau and Auschwitz.

But we know too that there is another aspect, both of human history and our own age. The humblest lives have moments of great happiness, and the legends and epics of the past record love and endeavour as well as of violence and sudden death. And we have only to look around us to see that it is not true that we have not made great material progress in our own day. What then is the terrible paradox of our social life. It is not so much that, as is so often said, our moral development has not kept pace with our scientific achievements, but that our social organisation based on power, our system of "the government of men instead of the administration of things", is a dangerous survival that as it increases in efficiency and scope renders the terrifying vision of "Nineteen-Eightyfour" less a nightmare than a prophesy. As persons we are probably gentler, kinder and more sensitive to suffering in our midst than our ancestors; but as citizens and subjects we are ready to resign our independence of judgment, conscience and action to the military and political psychopaths, who through our inertia and faith in political action, are able to control our destinies.

The Century of Fear

The events of the recent war have shown us innumerable examples of the nobility of men and women as individuals and of the depths to which they can sink as loyal members of society. And since, in the conduct of international affairs, the war has altered nothing but the geography of the balance of power, we know that the prospect of

AT the end of each year and the beginning of the next, all the people with policies, programmes and panaceas, seize the golden opportunity to foist them on to the sentimental good-resolutionaries.

Not slow off the mark was Sam Watson, chairman of the Labour Party and "miners' leader". Just which of his two functions claims his first loyalty, is not quite known, but in *Reynold's News* for January 1st, he opened up what is obviously going to be a continuous bombardment from the leaders of the Labour Party. For this New Year has special significance for our rulers, since within a very few months they have to face the uncertainty of a General Election with the possibility of losing their power.

peace is as remote as ever. Thus it is that our times are fairly called the Century of Fear. The fear is of the future, of the days when we are called upon to accept the rôles of victims or executioners. There is a third alternative of course—that of responsibility and resistance. One would suppose, since it is the industrial workers who provide the motive power of society and who would provide the victims, that they would exert their tremendous latent strength to shape a hopeful future for themselves, but as George Barrett wrote over thirty years ago, everywhere "there is the same sad, kind-hearted men willing to hear the new gospel, but alas! the same despair. This hopelessness on the faces of men who are all-powerful is the most exasperating and the most tragic thing in all human existence. 'Your strength lies no nearer and no further off than your own limbs. The world grows rich by your strength, no more surely than you grow poor by the same power. It were easier for you to make yourselves great than to make others so while you bring misery on yourselves.' Such is the message of the revolutionist, and the mute answer might be expressed in the tragic words of Goethe:—

*Hush! Leave us where we are, resigned,
Wake not ambitious longings in the mind,
Born of the night, akin with night alone,
Scarce to ourselves, and to none others known."*

Breaking the Spell

It seems that we are hypnotised by the forces which oppose us. What can we do in the face of indifference and apathy? The answer is that we must go on "trundling the little wheelbarrow around the world", destroying the foundation upon which the structure of power rests—the consent or acquiescence of the governed. By experiment and by example we must develop the techniques of resistance which are our only hope of escape from the dilemma of our century and from which we can build the forms of social organisation appropriate to civilised men—co-operation based on mutual respect and not the tyranny of fear which results from our willingness to wield authority and to submit to it.

New Year resolutions are nearly always smug and virtuous; that is why they invariably fail. New Year exhortations from politicians are nearly always sanctimonious and meaningless, if they are not actually dishonest.

These Important Principles

Sam Watson's were no exception. After stressing the importance of returning another Labour Government on the back for the lack of unemployment in the coal-fields, he goes on to tell us what should be the most important "developing principles of a developing society"—whatever that means from an advocate of State control!

His principles are:

1. Full employment at decent wages and conditions.
2. A decent education for the children.
3. A home in which to encourage family life and pride.
4. The opportunity to enjoy leisure and live a creative and fuller life.
5. Security against accident, sickness and old age.
6. The innate right to "feel" free and to exercise the privileges of liberty in speech, assembly, religion, literature and cultural life.

The Luck of the Game

The Labour Government has undoubtedly had to deal with great economic difficulties, and the fact it has failed to carry out some of its promises can be said to be due to those difficulties. Nevertheless, any party seeking power should be aware of the difficulties before taking on the job, and it is dishonest to claim the credit for apparently good circumstances which are beyond their control. They can't have it both ways, yet this is precisely what the Labour Party seeks and is quite dishonest in claiming.

Take their Chairman's first principle for a start. We can state quite categorically that is purely the luck of the game that has created the circumstances of full employment. In striving to keep capitalism going in Britain (as a "responsible" People's Government!) it has been necessary to launch the export drive and it is precisely this export drive which has created employment for the workers, and not any planning, good-will or black magic by the Labour Government. In other words, it is the circumstances of capitalism which should be getting the "credit" for giving us all work. We know that much of it is useless work and unnecessary—but Social Democrats and employers alike pretend it is a great blessing to be able to work for somebody else's profit, and it is fairly easy to make those who remember the agony of unemployment think on similar lines.

What about Leisure?

Contrast this, however, with the 4th principle—"the opportunity to enjoy leisure and live a creative and fuller life". 1949 was closing with the voices of Labour leaders ringing in our ears telling use of the necessity to work longer hours. The 5-day, the 40-hour week were being, if not actually threatened, regarded as merely the basis for a week lengthened

by overtime and Saturday work. Labourites as far apart in background as Jack Jones and Sir Hartley Shawcross, joined forces in wishing more work and less leisure to the workers.

The question of leisure is, of course, bound up with the principles 2 and 3. But what can the Labour Party say about education and housing, both of which have faced cuts in the recent economy measures taken by the Government? Only that they are less important than dollars and war preparation!

The money can apparently be found, from our own observation, to build new blocks of offices for commercial concerns and government departments—but the building of schools and of homes "in which to encourage family life and pride" seems to be impossible.

Freedom and Security

Of the fifth and sixth principles, little need be said. Security against accident, sickness and old age are supplied by the people themselves through their contributions stopped from their wages every week. If you don't pay, you don't get the benefit. The State doesn't give a penny not already taken from us, and again, the recent economy measures included putting a premium of one shilling on doctor's prescriptions. The Labour Party have given themselves nice jobs in organising this "security" and found security for themselves in nice salaries.

To talk of the right to "feel" free while at the same time supporting the Government and the T.U.C., is the height of hypocrisy, or the depth of ignorance of the meaning and range of freedom.

The Labour Government has maintained conscription, direction of labour and capital punishment; it has not touched the mass of stupid and petty laws which successive governments before them have piled up. It is still not legal to stand still on a pavement and our comrades can still be prosecuted for standing in the gutter selling this paper. Strict libel and obscenity laws still govern what can be said in public, and censorship still controls films, drama and literature—and for the first time in our memory, May Day processions in London were banned, by a Labour Home Secretary in 1949.

Reject Hypocrisy!

In the coming months, until after the blather of the General Election has died down we are going to be subjected to this sort of hypocrisy from Labour, Tory, Communist, Liberal, and all the little parties alike. They will all promise the earth, the moon, the stars, to get your vote.

But the earth will be ours only when we reject the hypocrisy and the deceit inseparable from politics and government—and take direct action to control the earth ourselves. We shall enjoy the moon and the stars when we don't allow ourselves to be employed by anybody, and when we educate our own children in freedom, build our own homes in community, organise our own leisure and are secure in the full, real freedom of an anarchist society.

The anarchist can promise you nothing and will not seek your vote. Your future lies in your hands, nobody else's, and the only resolution we offer you is: *Not to trust your lives to politicians, but to believe in yourselves.*

IN WHICH CORNER HORNER?

IN the contest between the leaders of the N.U.M. and the C.P., which is a running fight because neither side can get its policy to stand still, poor little Arthur Horner just doesn't know which corner he should have been in last week.

By what was described as a narrow majority, the leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers decided, after five hours' debate, what we could have told them before they started that they would decide. They agreed to accept the T.U.C.'s wage-freeze policy.

The dilemma for Horner is that he is a Communist, and so his line at the moment is against the wage-freeze, and it was he who, at the miners' annual conference, moved the resolution urging improvements for the lower-paid men. But he is also Secretary of the N.U.M., and was appointed to move the official resolution to the delegates' conference the next day.

However, there was no dilemma, really. Horner is not a Communist for nothing, and has developed the dual personality which all politicians need, so he had no difficulty in saying what, we may take it, he doesn't really believe. He was reported after the conference as having passed the resolution "superlatively well" and "skated like Sonia Henie on very thin ice". Anyway, the conference accepted the Executives' resolution, and so now the matter has to be referred to the rank and file for a ballot.

It is interesting to note the arguments which helped to sway the Executive in their decision to support the wage-freeze. It was thought that, as a General Election is approaching, the miners must not take any action which would jeopardise the chances of a Labour victory, and that the return of a Tory Government would be a threat to nationalisation.

The miners must be asking themselves just what are the benefits they are supposed to be receiving from nationalisation. It is absurd to imagine that the Tories would revoke State ownership even though the mines are beginning to show a profit, but even so, miners must be wondering what the choice really is between Governments. It is chilly consolation to have your wages frozen by a Labour Government instead of a Tory.

INVASIONS, wars of conquest, political revolutions, wars for the control of markets, and acts of spoliation carried through by governors or those under their protection—these constitute the titles to private property in land; titles sealed with blood and enslavement of humanity. Yet this monstrous origin of a right which is absurd, since it is based on crime, does not hinder the law from calling that right "sacred", inasmuch as those who have withheld the land are the very ones who have written the law.

RICARDO FLORES MAGON.

TITO AND HIS FRIENDS

WHILE most of us were still en-of living has been steadily falling since joying the last crumbs of the UNRRA supplies stopped and the Christmas pudding, His Majesty's power of Tito's State apparatus grew, Government and Marshal Tito, the trade agreement was yet another Secretary-General of the Yugoslav sign that their long years of suffering Communist Party were busy signing aware not over. They would still have trade agreement by which the Com-to work under very difficult conditions

minut dictator promised to send food-in the mines, they would have to stuffs, timber and minerals in ex-"volunteer" for tree-felling in honour change for machinery and oil. of Marshal Tito's next birthday and The journalists in both countries the peasants would still be deprived found, as usual, nothing but praise by the authorities of their grain and For them it was another step incattle which they raised with so strengthening the regime of a manmuch toil. In the years when the who was brave enough to defy Stalin, products of their labour were sent and in enabling Yugoslavia to "re-to Generalissimo Stalin's bloc of main a free country". But to the "Socialist" States, they went hungry peoples of Yugoslavia whose standard (Tito himself admits it), and there is

no reason to suppose that it will be otherwise now.

And few of the Yugoslav people will derive any consolation from an eventual B.B.C. announcement that as a result of the trade agreement, the prices of a few foodstuffs in this country have gone down a penny, or that the British metallurgical industry using Yugoslav ores, has captured or recaptured some far-away market. What they will all see is that in our society, a higher standard of living for some, or even for an entire community, is often bought at the price of a great deal of misery and deprivation among other sections of the world's population.

Magon and the Mexican Revolution

The article below, from a German reader who lived in Lower California at the time of the 'heroic period' of the I.W.W., and worked as a cotton-picker, a road-builder, a gold-washer and a fisherman, expands the account of the Mexican Revolution given in our recent article on Ricardo Flores Magon.

No Theory

This, then, was the background of the Mexican Revolution. This was no time to prepare a revolution by propaganda, or reading and study of voluminous books written by revolutionary theorists. The theory of a revolution must be implanted in a people years before the revolution is made; to start this during the fighting is bound to be in vain. The revolutionaries of Mexico never had a chance to do this during the long dictatorship. Their only chance was to go with the people. And the people took it as self-evident that revolution meant fighting for liberty. Words and printed matter only awoke its laughter. And, certainly it was not the fault of the people that anarchism was not implanted in their minds, for the theory of anarchism was known only to a few.

It is hard to give an idea of the enthusiasm, the devotion to the cause of liberty, which prevailed. *Arriba Muchachos! Por la Libertad!* These were the magic words for which the leaders of the different factions could make the people fight. But the people had only a nebulous conception of the liberty they desired so much. And so it was betrayed by its leaders with the exceptions of Magon and Zapata (in whose district a kind of primitive communism existed, without any government). It took later, all the forces of the Mexican Government with U.S. support, to subdue the movement of Zapata.

The existing conditions and sentiments in Mexico in those years explain all the actions of Magon, his "faith in force" was the only expedient he could use. The "daring idea" of Magon to seize Lower California was not "fanatical" at all, if we take into consideration the condition of the mainland of Mexico. On the contrary, it was good strategy; Lower California is a peninsula, but it has all the characteristics of an island.*

It is true that the ranks of the

* It is connected with the mainland only by a short strip of land, through which flows the Colorado River. There is no bridge, and on both sides are impassable swamps, bogs, and thickets of brushwood, and beyond, a waterless desert for hundreds of miles. So Magon was quite sure that nobody would bother him from the mainland. Lower California had been left alone since the overthrow of Diaz and was practically without central government.

Magonistas contained many opportunists, but they were not "filibusters"—this name was given to them by that lying tool of Wall Street, the American capitalist press, which in these years was making slanderous propaganda against Mexico and all things Mexican. The reason for this was that the Mexican people fought for its liberty and Wall Street had no more chance to exploit the rich Mexican mines and oilwells. "I advise you, don't go to Mexico! If you do the Mexicans will stick six inches of steel between your ribs, and kill and rob you!" This was the advice given to me before I went, by an American, who expressed the general opinion of the American people towards the Mexicans, with these words. When I made acquaintance with the people in Mexico, I found that this was the most rotten slander I ever have come across. The poor peons behaved towards a stranger with the utmost kindness.

The Imperial Valley

Magon and his adherent went from U.S. territory into Lower California and occupied Mexicali, a village in those days of a few hundred inhabitants, but an important place because it was the centre of the cotton-growing country around, known as Imperial Valley, Mexico, to distinguish it from Imperial Valley, U.S.A., which was across the border. The "Government Forces" consisted of a bunch of soldiers, who, during the rule of Diaz, belonged to an infantry battalion which had been garrisoning Lower California. This remnant of the battalion was commanded by a captain with the name of Estaban Cantu.

Cantu with his followers fled to the Pacific Coast after he was beaten, and the Magonistas were now occupying the richest part of Lower California, the Mexican part of Imperial Valley, which consisted of a few hundred thousand acres of the best land. But at the same time Magon had come into conflict with the capitalist interests of U.S. citizens who saw in Mexico and in the Mexican workers, merely an object of exploitation. Almost the whole of the Mexican part of Imperial Valley was settled by U.S. farmers, with the exception of a few Chinese and Japanese—not one Mexican amongst them. Magon had, in fact, occu-

piated an American colony. These ranchers leased farms of from 1,000 to 3,000 acres and life had been easy for them until Magon came in. They lived on the U.S. side of the border and every few days drove out to their farms in Mexico, to see after their business, and the only other thing they had to do, was to cash the cheques they got for their cotton, which was all shipped to the U.S.A. There were no houses on these farms, only shanties for the implements and for some of the workers—most of them had to sleep outside in the brushwood. The work was usually given out to them by contract, but they were only paid half the amount given for the same work over the border.

Magon did not keep quiet in the face of these conditions, and the workers were happy now they had found someone else who would help them against the farmers who were as bad as the *hacendados* on the mainland of Mexico. The farmers saw the source of their wealth in danger and they acted accordingly. The lying press went after the scalp of Magon and proclaimed that the "filibusters" intended to destroy the irrigation system of Imperial Valley to make it a desert. The U.S.A. set to work to find a Mexican who would do their dirty work and sell the interests of his people, and they found one in the Captain Estaban Cantu, who later became the *Caudillo* of Lower California.

Magon could not remain for ever in Imperial Valley. If he wanted to bring about libertarian socialism in Lower California, he was bound to move on. Some of his adherents went to the Pacific Coast, where conditions were quite different, both from the Imperial Valley, and from most of Mexico. The Coast was not "colonised" by U.S. citizens, and the country had not been owned by big landowners in the past. Up to about a hundred years ago, it had belonged to Catholic Priests to whom it had been given by the Spanish king. When Mexico freed itself from Spanish rule, the population drove out the priests, who, they said, were "worse than devils". The whole population of this area was about 5,000 people at the most, scattered over a country of 25,000 sq. miles. They had been relatively free from oppression since the priests had left—the country had been

too poor and the people too few, for governments to bother.

Defeat

The land was now government property, and the people lived on it by squatters-rights. During the time of Diaz they had paid a little tax; now, when there was no government to speak of, they paid hardly any. According to general opinion, Magon could bring little benefit to them, and their minds had been poisoned against him by Cantu, who had fled there, after being driven out of the Imperial Valley. Hardly any of the people knew what anarchism was, and they believed Magon and his adherents to be a gang of robbers, which was, of course, what Cantu had told them. Cantu started to enrol volunteers for his troops, and when the followers of Magon came into this part of Lower California, they stirred up a hornet's nest.

Without food and water—they tried the impossible—the only way left to them. They split up into groups of from two to five men and attempted to permeate the country. They did not succeed.

The Magonistas went down south along the Pacific Coast of Lower California, and came as far as El Rosario, a small village about 300 miles south of the U.S.A. border. That is, one small group of them came as far south, the others were scattered over the whole peninsula between the U.S.A. border and El Rosario. The different groups soon lost track of each other in the waterless and trackless mountains and deserts. Cantu and his troops went into action, it was child's play for them under these conditions to beat the Magonistas. Cantu's troops outnumbered by a hundred to one every group of the Magonistas, which were suffering from thirst and hunger, wandering in a wilderness which was absolutely unknown to them. The Cantuistas were well informed of the whereabouts of the different small groups of Magonistas, laid ambushes for them and shot them down. After the fight they killed the wounded and threw them into a nameless grave. The rest of them, who were lucky to escape these ambushes went across the border back into the U.S.A. That was the end of the movement of Magon.

When Wall Street found, years later, an even more reactionary ruler than Cantu, he too was overthrown. Meanwhile, Pancho Villa was shot by an American agent, and the near libertarian movement of Zapata was annihilated by Adolfo de la Huerta, the former president of Mexico, another tool of Wall Street.

WILLY FULANO.

A Fine Film

BICYCLE THIEVES, directed by Vittorio de Sica. (Curzon Cinema, London.)

THIS is a very good film indeed, made with skill and sympathy and understanding. The film is about poverty and its effects upon human relationships, but it is not depressing. It is ironical, humorous, never sentimental, and unusually honest.

An unemployed worker with a wife and two children, is the one lucky man in the queue outside a Labour exchange in Rome. He is offered a job as bill-poster, on condition he has a bicycle. His wife pawns the sheets so that his bicycle can be redeemed at the enormous pawn-shop where tier upon tier is filled with bed-linen. He sets out on his first job—slapping paste over Rita Hayworth—and while he is working, the bicycle is stolen. On the following day, he and his son and his friends who work on the dustcart, make an unsuccessful search of the second-hand bicycle market. The man and the child wander desperately in the rain, through the shabby side of the city, for the police have no time to find his bike—they are busy breaking up labour meetings. They catch sight of an old beggar talking to the supposed thief, and follow the old man to a church where free meals are given to down-and-outs, after they have sat through the service with the doors locked. The old man reluctantly tells them the neighbourhood where the

thief lives and catching sight of him, they chase him to a brothel where the girls are having lunch and out again into the street where the neighbours rally to the thief's defence. The young thief falls to the ground in a fit and his mother, displaying her squalid home, upbraids the workman. The neighbours are menacing. How can he charge the man? Where will he get witnesses? As they walk disconsolately away the distracted man slaps his child. The boy sulks, and his father, remorseful, buys him an expensive lunch he cannot afford. Their wanderings take them to the outside of a football stadium, and the father, telling his son to go home by tram, makes a clumsy attempt to steal a bicycle himself. He is chased and caught, but the sight of the child who comes running up snivelling, makes the owner unwilling to hand the man over to the police. He trudges distractedly home in the dusk and his son stumbles along beside him clasping his hand.

The film was made in the streets and bleak municipal tenements of Rome. There is only one professional actor—the old beggar. The man (Lamberto Magiorani) who took two months off to take part, is in reality a metal worker who knows what unemployment is like, and the boy (Enzo Staiola) is the child of refugees. It is reported that the film cost between £7,000 and £9,000 to make. An ordinary British film costs about £140,000 or £150,000. Perhaps the moaners and groaners of our own film industry might learn something from this.

ART AND LAUGHTER

INSIGHT AND OUTLOOK, by Arthur Koestler. (Macmillan, 25/-.)

AESTHETICS is a branch of philosophy, or perhaps rather of psychology, which up to the present has baffled the efforts of thinkers who have sought to give it a sound scientific basis. What are the aesthetic feelings? How are they aroused? Why does one poem or painting make a strong impression on us and another leave us cold? Why do some people like Picasso and others loathe him? Why do the works that thrilled the Victorians seem false and pretentious today? And what are the conscious or unconscious processes by which a work of great literature, or a brilliant scientific theory, emerges from the human mind?

Philosophers, critics and psychologists have discussed such questions since the ancient Greeks, but the problems are still as elusive as they ever were, and the suggestions of such modern thinkers as Freud and Jung remain as conjectural and as provisional as those of Aristotle.

The most recent attempt to solve the aesthetic enigma has been made by Arthur Koestler, in a book called *Insight and Outlook*. Koestler's approach is somewhat original, since he begins by considering a second problem which has exercised the minds of philosophers almost as much and as long as that of artistic creation. This is the problem of the comic, of why we laugh at certain jokes and situations, of why certain forms of literature are more moving than others.

Since Koestler regards his theory of the comic as the keystone for a more general theory which can be extended not only into the general field of aesthetics, but also into ethics and sociology, I shall discuss his contentions in some detail.

His arguments are based on three hypotheses. Firstly, that our thoughts normally work in what he calls operative fields, by which he means groups of associated images and reactions which have been formed by habit. Secondly, that on certain occasions, two separate operative fields are brought into contact, and that this process, which he christens bisociation, is the stimulus for original thought and for creative achievements in art and discovery, as well as for the more humble joke and funny story. Finally, he brings his theory of bisociation right into the centre of the human personality by suggesting that within man there are two natural tendencies, one towards self-

assertion, the other towards self-transcendence, and that the conflict between these tendencies becomes acute under conditions of stress. Koestler associates the comic and laughter in general with self-assertion, and the tragic and weeping with self-transcendence.

While he is discussing the comic, Koestler's theory does illuminate this problem, even if it does not explain it as completely as he would like to believe. Anyone who has thought of why we laugh at certain jokes or why certain types of writing are amusing, will have recognised the importance of incongruity, of the image which arises from the sudden juxtaposition of two dissimilar factors, and Koestler elaborates this theme very capably. But even here a criticism must be made. For it is not always the unexpected at which we laugh. Many jokes and pieces of comic writing in fact improve with familiarity, yet this very familiarity creates an association which makes us expect what will nevertheless amuse us. A further objection might also be raised against the identification of laughter with self-assertion and hostility to others, and of weeping with self-transcendence. Do we really laugh out of self-defence, or because we feel superior? Often we do, but laughter can also be an expression of sympathy and fellowship; we recognise a friend by his smile, while weeping, on the other hand, can as often spring from the aggressive ego as from any desire for union with others. In this connection one cannot overlook the fact that people who love laughter and the comic are usually more co-operative and social beings than the chronically melancholic.

When Koestler carries his hypothesis into wider fields, they seem even more tentative, and one often feels that, like many other thinkers with new ideas, he is trying to fit the facts to the theory rather than make the theory dependent on the facts. It is certainly possible to see in much great art, and particularly in literature, the presence of two conflicting mental forces, mirrored in the struggle between the protagonists. But it does not seem wholly plausible to relate this conflict to the meeting of incongruous elements which constitutes the basis of the joke. And as soon as we approach the plastic arts and music, where form, colour and sound predominate, it becomes even more difficult to apply Koestler's hypotheses. Great art, he tells us, arises at the intersection of the tragic and the trivial; but where can we find that intersection in, say, Mozart's 40th Symphony? Perhaps in the fact that the scraping of

cat gut can produce such beautiful sounds. But the practiced music lover will long have ceased to be concerned with such thoughts, and it seems as though, the more familiar a great work of art becomes, the more its connections with the trivial are atrophied until it stands wholly within the province of the tragic.

A further criticism of *Insight and Outlook* can be applied to Koestler's excursion into social ethics, when he attempts to assess the comparative value of self-assertion and self-transcendence. He seems to regard self-assertion as in itself an evil force, and contends that from it has sprung the tendency to form totalitarian societies. But it seems evident that every totalitarian system must contain a strong element of self-transcendence; doubtless the leaders are self-assertive, but the rank and file, the storm troopers and good party members without whom such a society can never exist, are often motivated by a desire to immerse themselves in some vast collectivity, like the German folk or the Soviet fatherland, which will wash away their personal problems and remove the need to live as responsible individuals. The boundaries between self-transcendence and self-submergence are, in social life at least, dangerously tenuous. Indeed, Koestler's own conception of an ideal society seems substantially similar to the totalitarian orders; he speaks in glowing admiration of the symbolic unity which exists in communities of ants and bees, and looks forward to a human society which would repeat these relationships on a higher evolutionary level. But surely this is not the way of growth, but rather a death of human potentialities by immersion in the great sea of mass feeling. Real self-transcendence is only reached through self-assertion, and it is surely to an intensification of certain individual characteristics that we owe the achievements of artists and scientists. If this is so, then we can only rise beyond our trivial natures by asserting ourselves in a creative way, and it is just such assertion that the kind of glorified art society which Koestler foresees would make impossible. Like Plato, he has fallen into the error of regarding society as an entity which exists as something other than the sum of human individuals.

Nevertheless, Koestler's book remains important, and, while he does not prove his theory to be as generally applicable as he would like, he makes many suggestions which may help towards an eventual elucidation of the problems he has discussed.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

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Importance of French Trade Unions

IN France are half a dozen Trade Union organisations. During the euphoric period of the Resistance, the C.G.T. already existed (and included the overwhelming majority of the working-class) as well as the C.F.T.C., of Christian inspiration. But since the unhappy, but inevitable experiences of the years, 1945-46-47, a number of secessions have taken place. The birth of the C.N.T. with its anarcho-syndicalist orientation, then the autonomous unions which later created a national Federation; then Force Ouvrière grouping together willy-nilly reformists and revolutionaries and deceived by a leadership composed of decrepits; of the Confederation of Independent trades unions in which the militants are more numerous than its supporters; and again of the Confédération Générale de Cadres, an organisation which includes technicians and engineers whose orientation is at the same time both anti-capitalist and non-socialist and gives a foretaste of a possible technocratic regime.

If the trade union organisations are numerous and the diverse doctrines and tactics complicated; if the political or imperialist influences at large twist the normal working of working-class democracy, yet practical problems that face the wage earners are unchanged.

Placed in an awkward situation, French bourgeoisie seeks to meet the cost of competition and the needs of the struggle for markets by increased production from the workers. The bourgeoisie feels, and is in fact, incapable of supplying the rejuvenating effort which would lift it out of its archaic tradition and methods.

The exhausting gymnastics of the C.G.T., always docile to instructions from the Cominform, the splitting of the workers and the manoeuvres by the parties of the "Left", have largely facilitated the return in strength of the industrial and financial groups.

But parallel with this, the workers feel the need to act, no longer on limited issues and within the corporative framework, but rather on the national plane, and for demands which emanate from the situation itself: freeing of wages, the preservation of those trade union advantages which have been gained, collective agreements, minimum wages, etc. . . .

It is by taking into account this

general pressure that the rival trade union organisations have attempted to exploit the workers' discontent to increase their own prestige.

The C.G.T. pursued a tactic of partial and local strikes, attempting to draw together the representatives of all tendencies in unity committee. These committees, obviously under Stalinist control, were masters of a docile apparatus and capable of progressively transforming a movement in a manoeuvre directed against the government . . . or the Marshall Plan.

But the past experiences by the workers resulted in this manoeuvre meeting with less and less success. Besides, the partial conflicts dragged on and on and often ended in defeats. At length, any industrial or departmental attempt of any magnitude met with the veto of the rival confederations.

The minority tendencies, C.N.T. and autonomous, without great means at their disposal, tried to maintain the working-class character of these struggles and they directed their efforts to foil the political calculations of the C.G.T. But it must be recognised that this delicate position could not be held except where active and informed militants were able to make their influences felt.

"Force Ouvrière, on the other hand, had limited its activity during the past two years to asking, begging or demanding from the government a cut in prices, maintaining that an increase in wages was illusory in a period of inflation, but this campaign failed by the very reason that it rested entirely on the hope of a "gesture" on the part of the ministers. It was only to the extent that some unions and local branches turned to account the slogan by themselves establishing consumers' co-operatives, that these months of useless propaganda were not entirely lost.

Protests from the ranks of the organisation led by Jouhaux, put an end to a waiting policy. The Union of Paris region soon demanded a movement for a "warning general strike" (grève générale d'avertissement). Later, the departmental unions of Maine et Loire, of the North, and of the federations of industry demanded action.

The collapse of the Queille cabinet and its replacement by one led by the Catholic, Bidault, favoured a more

effective tactic. Within the Socialist Party (and no one ignores the fact that Socialist influence counts in Force Ouvrière) two tendencies, for or against participation in the government, were face to face.

So much so that the National Confederation Committee of Force Ouvrière which met in October decided, after the vigorous intervention of Le Bourre, mouthpiece of the minority, to order a 24-hour general strike, leaving the National Bureau the task of fixing the date. This strike was to act as a warning to the government not to give effect to its policy of wage freezing and obligatory arbitration. It was in fact a question of placing squarely before them the demand for freeing wages and the preparation of collective agreements.

To save their faces, the reformists of the National Bureau finally decided to call the strike for November 25th, without enthusiasm and without much propaganda effort (though public opinion needed to be widely informed of its importance and the timid and hesitant elements carried forward by clear and precise watchwords).

The C.G.T. supported the action, at once instructing its sections to give the right aspects to the strike and the direct it.

The government multiplied its promises, called on the population not to follow the watchword, and took steps to intimidate the officials.

In spite of unfavourable circumstances, the general strike of Nov. 25th was a complete success in industry and transport and industry, a partial success amongst officials and employees.

Obligatory arbitration had to be abandoned. The Socialists hardened a little, fearing to lose their remaining working-class support. The working-class had not yet been defeated.

Nevertheless one should not cry victory, as the action was limited to a simple protest, without a to-morrow. The bosses of Force Ouvrière must be exhausted after such an effort. And back door politicians will take over once more from that of direct action.

The only favourable conclusion, apart from the temporary governmental retreat, is that of the possibilities that remain open to revolutionary elements, tied to the working-class and capable of transforming the muffled discontents into effective action.

S. PARANE.

MID-CENTURY BALANCE SHEET

SOME readers of Foreign Commentary must find it a depressing column. But then, the cynicism of politicians, the apathy of the man-in-the-street to injustices often perpetrated in his name, the general dulling of sensitiveness to mass suffering and violence are depressing subjects.

The material that goes into this Commentary is generally found in the least prominent columns of the world press. For, as in our National Press, the bold headlines are reserved for the sensational: speculations on the movements for politicians, individual crimes of violence (how true to-day is that sentence we read somewhere many years ago: "A single corpse can rouse pity, but a large number of corpses are nothing more than statistic") and for the manoeuvring of public opinion on controversial political issues of the day. The really human problems, the news that reflects the widespread misery and unhappiness in the world to-day are lost in this way; which suits the escapists among us who would like to think that things are improving everywhere.

This is so much more the case during the festive season, when people try to forget their own problems and unhappiness, and when one is met with the greeting and the hope that it will be a "Happy New Year". If one were not convinced of the sincerity of the greeting, it would sound like a mockery. How can it be a Happy New Year, when the whole world is darkened by a cloud of misery? If the individual could live in a vacuum, it might be realisable (we are aware that some people have succeeded in isolating themselves from the problems of their fellow beings) but this is contrary to man's nature.

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WHEREVER we turn in the world to-day there are material problems which affect the well-being of millions of people. There is widespread under-nourishment in vast areas of the globe; there is world-wide shortage of housing accommodation; there are millions of sick people who are slowly dying through lack of proper attention; there are millions of victims of the brutality of man to man. People have been dying every day in China in a war which started eighteen years ago, and which shows no signs of ending. In Greece more than 500,000 (of a population of 8 millions) have died during the past ten years from war and hunger, and more than 10 per cent. of the population remain homeless as the

New Year is ushered in. Will it be a Happy one for the families of the dead and for the homeless? Or perhaps in Israel, for the 700,000 Arabs who fled from their homes and who are "still huddled in squalid caves and tent towns along Israel's border, while Arab and Jewish negotiators are trying to settle their fate?" (Time, 1/1/50).

And what of the prisoners-of-war who, four years after the end of the hostilities, are still in Russian hands or have died in labour camps? The Russians promised that all German P.O.W.'s would be home by Christmas, the Berliner Zeitung estimating the number repatriated in 1949 at 350,000. But, as the N.Y. Herald Tribune's correspondent points out: "According to the Soviet Union's own statistics, nearly a million P.O.W.'s have been returned to Germany since the war. But, according to war-time communiqués of the Soviet Army, Germans taken prisoner totalled over 3,700,000."

What kind of New Year can the survivors hope for, or for that matter, the 376,000 missing Japanese prisoners-of-war reported to be in Russian hands—and about whom the Russian mission in Tokyo would give no information (M. Guardian, 29/12/49).

And what of the 1,900 refugees (including 500 children) from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Poland whose "home" is Dachau, once the notorious Nazi concentration camp?

And what must Italy's army of unemployed be thinking of their prospects of happiness in the New Year, or the miserable, starving peasants of Calabria, where—to quote from a New Statesman's correspondent—"men and woman and countless children scabble for a living on a pile of stones, or else rot idly in an idle countryside . . . where peasants walk or bicycle miles to work. Labourers are lucky to make in twelve months the equivalent of £35 in cash; they can count on employment only for 100—120 days a year. Many work all day for half-a-crown."

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THE list is unending. Add to the material privations the moral sickness of the world to-day. The daily humiliations of the poor; the indignities of racial segregation and influence in America. The arrogance and violence of the white-Herrenvolk in South Africa determined that the coloured majority shall be kept in subjection for all time or face the consequences which Dr. Malan, the Fascist Prime Minister described as "absorption into semi-barbarism through miscegenation and disintegration of the white race". The growing anti-semitism in Russia and the visible signs that it still exists in Germany (though the Jewish population in Germany has been reduced from 600,000 before the war to a mere 60,000) and is latent elsewhere.

Add to racialism the increasing contempt for the rights of the individual, political intolerance and an indifference for civil liberties. Do we need examples? Everywhere States are encroaching on individual liberties; there is conscription in every country of the world, and every man, woman and child is labelled and docketed. Political freedom is being attacked, to a lesser or greater degree on both sides of the Iron Curtain, in spite of fine-sounding Charters, and innumerable sub-committees of U.N.O. And civil liberties are being whittled down whether by hypocritical "model bye-laws" or by the less subtle *flic's* truncheon and the armoured car (depending on the degree of "civilisation" of the victims).

And the man-in-the-street, who does not yet feel himself to be a victim, shuts his eyes, and breezily wishes his neighbour "A Happy New Year"!

LIBERTARIAN.

THROUGH THE PRESS MILITARY YOUTH

Two thousand sandbags will enclose the Army stand at the Schoolboy's Own Exhibition.

For the first time boys will get a chance to handle the rifles there and take part in the same battle training as that given at the Small Arms Centre, Hythe. In groups of five they will fire at moving targets—on a model landscape.

Daily Herald, 29/11/49.

BUSTAMANTE & HIS DUPES

Busta has certainly not lost all his popularity. His public triumphs and personal extravagances are enjoyed by proxy; his followers see him as their champion and are proud that he drinks champagne in the homes of the wealthy. When he was publicly challenged on where he got £2,500 to buy a car, he told his supporters, "I got it from you, my faithful followers. And it wasn't £2,500—it was £3,500. Do you want your chief to go round in a hansom cab?" The crowd cheered him to the echo.

—Profile of the Jamaican Prime Minister in the Observer, 18/12/49.

GREECE—A PRISON STATE

"It's just like Christchurch or Eton College," said the well-dressed woman who helped accompany me round the largest concentration camp in Greece—the rockbound island of Makronessos, where 20,000 men are now held.

"We are converting them by love," she went on, as we watched dense crowds of men drawn up for inspection by the camp commander.

"After all, what can you do without love?"

The recipients of this loving treatment are of three kinds. There are young men called up for the Army, but sent, instead, to Makronessos from suspicion of possible sympathies for war time resistance or for Communists in later years.

Conditions looked good for these youngsters, but the day I was there they were singing songs of hate against the Bulgars and Albanians, calling for the return of Northern Epirus (South Albania) to Greece, and for union with "the Greek island of Cyprus."

The second kind are peasants whom the Army evacuated from guerrilla areas. They, too, are being taught a love of Greece best expressed in terms of militant nationalism.

Thirdly, there are the strictly political prisoners who are irreconcilable—the backbone of the opposition to the monarchist regime. They, unlike others, will not be released.

In Athens, I heard ugly stories of their treatment. Conditions were bad.

Altogether, I am told by sources friendly to the Government there may be over 50,000 people "inside" in Greece.

Sunday Pictorial, 18/12/49.

TWO NEW RECRUITS

THE workers of the world will be encouraged to know that their ranks are to be swelled by the addition of two adults who have hitherto not been conspicuous for their industry.

A recent Reuter press report quoted the Duke of Windsor as saying: "The Duchess and I are going to work. These days everybody has to work. The Duchess has received offers, but has so far accepted nothing," he said.

FRANCE FIRST

"We are going to work," he added, "but we shall want to work in Europe, in France if possible."

"I am working on my articles for Life magazine. I find it awfully hard." Asked how he felt about devaluation, the Duke said: "I never meddle with politics."

"Devaluation spared nobody. Our worry at the moment is to find a place to live near Paris when we return. We gave up our villa at Cannes."

"The Germans have spread slavery all over Europe, and as a memorial of this deluge German royal houses now sit on all European thrones—just as the remains of ossified sea monsters are found on the highest Alps after prehistoric inundations."

LUDWIG BORNE.

REWRITING HISTORY

Readers of George Orwell's novel 1984 will be particularly interested in a report from the Manchester Guardian's correspondent (20/11/49) to the effect that "The Czechoslovak Government has decided to call in all second-hand books in the Republic, and by an ordinance shops are not allowed to buy and sell them. All shops have been ordered to hand in lists of second-hand books in stock to a newly-formed office of the Ministry of Information. The ordinance also applies to music scores."

"The disappearance of second-hand books," writes the M.G.'s correspondent, "will make the writing of history much easier, as one important source of information dating from the pre-Communist era will be stopped up."

THE PICTURESQUE FRENCH C.I.D.

THE General Information Section of the Sûreté is most picturesque. Under the direction of 43-year-old Germain Vidal, it has the job of keeping track of almost every Frenchman and foreigner in France. Monsieur Vidal employs a squad of inspectors who make inquiries in specialised fields. The political Department closely follows the policies and personalities of all Parties. It draws up reports, dockets, tables, and files them away in the central archives. The President of the Republic himself has his "fiche" in the archives.

News Review, 15/12/49.

WHORES IN CONFLICT

HIS Holiness Pope Pius XII has designated 1950 as a Holy Year. This means that many thousands of pious pilgrims will be visiting Rome to the great financial benefit of many Italian commercial interests. Not least among the commercials who are looking forward to a boom year are the 4,000 registered whores (not to mention the countless free-lance ones) and their business such that the treasury rakes in 13 billion lira every year in entertainment tax from them.

But Pope Pius XII is determined on a monopolist policy. The R.C. Church, otherwise known as the Great Scarlet Whore, wants no outside competition in her trade. If pilgrims want to have their aspirations raised and stiffened, Mother Church must have the sole milking of their pockets.

The secular professionals of Italy are not taking this lying down! They have a long and strong tradition behind them, and many powerful friends in the Church. Was not Rome founded by the two sons of a lupinal? Such is their

solidarity that they have already raised 60 million lira as a fighting fund to oppose the bill which the Pope is trying to push through the Italian parliament. It is reported that in Milan any customer signing the anti-suppression petition is awarded one free visit.

The Italian Communist Party with their usual monopolist tendencies, are supporting the Pope. One can well understand how the commies must feel for him—just think what would happen if the many sorts of prostitutes who serve the Kremlin were faced with rebellious competition in Russia. How much better we do things here in Britain: all whores are free from control here—the bland Church of England can go ahead with its rebuilding programme with ample funds provided by the exorbitant rents gathered by the Ecclesiastical Commission from their many properties let out as knocking-shops in most poor districts, and the Great Scarlet Whore can ply her trade in healthy competition with the prostitutes of Fleet Street, Westminster, and the Trades Unions.

G.

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FREEDOM PRESS

27, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

Indonesian Independence BUT NOT FREEDOM

ON the day after Boxing Day, Queen Juliana of Holland, officially transferred sovereignty in Indonesia from the Dutch colonial office to the New Indonesian Republic, the United States of Indonesia. At the same time Indonesian independence was proclaimed in Batavia, amid cheering the singing of a nationalist hymn. The Labour Government of this country has recognised the new state and Mr. Attlee has sent appropriate messages. A new state has been born and its people have achieved independence. Despite the cheering and the sanctimony, the business is as flat and uninspiring as that.

Four years ago, the people of Indonesia were fighting to throw off the colonial yoke of Holland and their struggle was sympathetically watched by the workers of the Western world. Australian dockers, for example, refused to load materials for the Dutch armed forces operating against them. Only quite recently they called off the ban, and many may have wondered what it was all about, so remote does the situation now seem from the struggle and aspirations towards colonial freedom of four years ago.

Many an Indonesian worker or peasant may be wondering in similar terms, for though there will be much that is new in the new situation, yet it will be very different from the dreams and hopes of four years ago. The new administration is retaining Dutch civil servants and police officers, and it is marshalling its forces not now to fight the Dutch, but to control its own dissatisfied elements.

We have seen the same sort of thing happen in Ireland, in India; the same sense of disappointment, of emptiness is not new. Clearly we are witnessing the process whereby an initial struggle for freedom is gradually purged of meaning until it becomes a mere transfer of power, and often only a nominal transfer at that. Purged, that is, of human and living meaning, of the appeal which brings ordinary men and women out into the streets in openly demonstrated hostility to the old order. This is the process, also seen in more far-reaching revolutions, which brings disillusionment and the bitter destruction of hopes and visions of a better life, with better relations between men and women, between their work and their life. It is a process which all who aim at social change must seek to understand, for if we do not understand it we cannot master it and will become blind instruments of forces which defeat our aspirations and our endeavour.

The Nationalist Illusion

Great Britain and the other major powers achieved national sovereignty—we will not too closely enquire what this term means—achieved national sovereignty many centuries ago. Yet life for the peoples of the great powers does not seem to be substantially nearer satisfaction and fulfilment for that. All the same we witness the spectacle of men who devote their lives and energies to improving the condition of the workers here continually urging support for national aspirations in Ireland, in India, in Israel,

in Indonesia. Such national struggles are often the vehicles for the utmost heroism and devotion and self-sacrifice, and when they are successful the surviving partisans have to convince themselves (that they may convince others) that this success possess reality. Nevertheless, one does not in the beginning set out to achieve national independence as such, but freedom and a better, juster way of life through national independence. If in the end one achieves "national aspirations" but not freedom and happiness then something has happened on the way, and we have only the shadow and have missed the substance.

Illusions in the Revolutionary Struggle

Anarchists have said all this before in opposition to nationism (and have been called reactionary, turncoat, disrupters of unity, and so on). It is perhaps not necessary in view of Ireland, India, Israel, to insist on it all over again. Instead we may briefly consider some features of the process itself whereby the struggle for emancipation turns to ashes, for the same process is to be observed in the revolutionary struggles of the past, and may recur in the future.

The origin of the power of the Indonesian revolt was the uprising of the people. They had worked in the framework of the colonial economy, itself expressed through the political administration of the Dutch colonial officials, and their place in that framework was one akin to slavery which condemned them to poverty, and deprived them of control over their own lives, and hence of the achievement of their own personal and individual aspirations. Such an administration goes far to make life meaningless, and revolt against it is natural and right. What then has happened during the past four years to suck the meaning out of their struggle?

In his message to Dr. Drees, the Netherlands Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee paid tribute to the "great enterprise and efforts which the Netherlands have devoted to the development of Indonesia. He praised the "wise and patient statesmanship" which has achieved Indonesian independence. We may be forgiven for recalling that to prevent that independence the Dutch used many divisions of troops, and may suspect that their wise and patient statesmanship was directed towards saving what was left of the colonial wreckage. That they have largely succeeded seems almost certain, for they have turned over Indonesia to an administration which accepts the economic situation and whose economic interests are likely to be those of the Dutch. In that economic pattern the owners are administrators of the various Indonesian enterprises draw wealth from exploiting wage labour to work natural resources. The place of the labourer is basically the same as before.

Effect of Prolonged Struggle

This is achieved through prolonging the struggle. If the outcome can be deferred long enough the status quo can almost always be maintained. Thus the originally spontaneous revolt, unless infused with clear revolutionary conceptions, is "organised", which is to say that it is directed after a time by men accustomed to administrative work. Such men have their training and conceptions in the past. Their abilities and powers are based on economic and social patterns of the past, and inevitably they reproduce the past instead of breaking with it. Only such men are suitable for "negotiating" with the Dutch colonial statesmen, or with other interested imperial parties. In the event the revolt is submerged and the past triumphant.

Wherever the struggle is dragged out over years and months, one sees the same melancholy spectacle; the aims of the struggle gets lost in the conduct of it. Emancipation and individual freedom for the workers, whether colonial or "imperialist", demands radical economic changes and swift conclusion of the revolutionary change. Otherwise the old style administrator once more gets control and the workers' freedom is lost, leaving them with the sacrifices and the bitterness.

ANARCHIST.

A REVOLUTION BETRAYED

... one ounce of practice is better than tons of literature read, and example is better than precept. Our present-day ministers were all followers of Gandhiji, but they all have cast the Gandhian principles to the four winds. For a quarter of a century they gladly slept on hard stones in various jails of India, but now they require palatial buildings for them to live in with their families and brothers-in-law, who are generally given more prominence than brothers. They themselves hate to mix with the Indian masses from whom they like to take only garlands made to be given by their underlings, for show of affection. When asked, they say they have no time. Most of their time is spent on air and building castles there. They have forgotten how to walk a furlong. They have forgotten their austerity living in jails. Their sons, too, must have motor cars to drive. Gandhian principles are as dead as mutton and cannot be revived only by reading Gandhian literature."

—Hitavada (India).

To Our London Comrades:

LONDON, we know, is very large—too large, and its weather, we also know only too well, does not encourage one to go out of doors at this time of year more than is absolutely necessary.

Nevertheless, the handful of comrades who take the responsibility for running the Sunday evening discussion-lectures at the Trade Union Club, sincerely hope that the amount of support shown for their steady activity is not really indicative of the strength of anarchist ideas in London.

Is it too much to expect that convinced anarchists could support the only regular anarchist meetings held in London? During the winter the open-air platform at Hyde Park is not kept going, and the amount of selling of Freedom possible there is greatly reduced, although if we had some enthusiastic sellers, more could be done. But for the indoor meetings, the winter should be a boom period.

It is not, and it is seriously disappointing for those comrades who give time, thought and energy to be faced with indifference on the part of the rest of London anarchists. If attendances do not reach a certain level, the collections do not pay the rent—and that cannot happen very often before our scanty resources are used up. There is no-one in London, convinced anarchist or not, who has not something to learn from these meetings, and no convinced anarchist who has not something to contribute in the discussion.

The programme of lectures is drawn up in such a way as to balance as well as possible the diverse subjects on which anarchists have something valid to say, from syndicalism to sex. Don't you think they are worthy of your support? Is it too much to ask that you give two or three hours once a week to maintain the only public platform for anarchist ideas in London? If it is too much, then the meetings will cease, often continuing with but a few temporary breaks for nearly ten years. And if they do cease, it will be the responsibility, not of the few who did their best to maintain them, but of the many who stayed away, and hadn't the interest in anarchism to persuade their friends to attend them.

READERS WRITE:

This Patriotism

FROM time to time the editors of Freedom receive letters from well-wishers who point out that our anti-militarist and anti-war stand is unrealistic, that we don't take sufficient account of the war which the Russians are brewing up, that if Russian-type Communism is achieved here we shall be quickly liquidated. In fact that we'd better do our best to see that Britain and America are strong.

Now we aren't much affected by that sort of argumentation. And we are equally unmoved when the same stuff is served up from the other side, though such letters as the following from Cracow are certainly unusual enough to be printed in full:

Cracow, 9/12/49.

"I have read you Freedom during five years and regret to state that your politic line becomes from day to day more and more the same as the politic line of those, who have undertaken, after Hitler, the defense of capitalism which is condemned already to death.

"For us here, who are pushing down with success the politic reactive elements and capitalism from one position to another during the last five years and who are building out of ruins a new better life for the working class, sounds false and deceiving each political theory which in its results detains the working class from the fight with capitalism in its own country.

"Every attack in your press against Soviet Union and the Eastern Democracies means a support for capitalism and imperialism in your country, who sees its only rescue in a new war!

"All the Eastern Democracies as well as the Soviet Union need peace in order to build the work of Socialism. We are fighting for peace, as it guarantees the liberation of all workers and all nations from the imperialist exploitation.

"I must state quite openly that while reading your press I feel disgust and bitterness.

"I beg to ask you to stop sending me the Freedom and would be very glad if my letter would cause you to reflect for a while, how much harm you are doing to all revolutionaries who are fighting today in Spain and Greece, and that you are assisting those, who intend to turn away the attention of the English working class from the new war, which the English and American imperialism are preparing to-day."

Patriotism takes many forms, and examples of it passing under the banner and slogans of working-class internationalism, as in the above, are common enough to cause no surprise. To think in terms of national blocs, instead of firmly fixing one's eyes on the common interests of the workers, inevitably leads to jingoism whether Stalinist or Anglo-American (not to mention French, Dutch, Scandinavian and the rest). Nor is it relevant to consider that one bloc is 'certainly superior' to the other in this or that particular, and use such an argument for giving support, however carefully qualified, to one side, and therefore to the war of the future. Such an attitude is often adopted on so-called practical grounds; we have no use for practical propositions resulting in millions of dead, and even larger concentration camps and tyranny than before.

There is one lesson, just the same, that we can learn from our correspondent in Cracow. We are apt to think that those on the other side of the Iron Curtain are only waiting for a chance to overturn the totalitarians who govern them. If we accept the letter as genuine, however, it serves to show that workers are duped by propaganda as much in Eastern Europe as they are in the West. It is as well to remember these things.

LUNATICS AT LARGE

AS reported in Freedom for 10/19/49, Montgomery said at a luncheon in the National Press Club in Washington in November, that, "if anybody commits an act of aggression against the Nations of Western Europe from any direction, we will have a good party and kill a lot of people." The ferocity with which men in the prime of life, old men, militarists and politicians are gambling with the lives of youth, requires a new language in which to condemn it.

The organisers of the coming inferno are mad. They train our youth to pilot planes whose aim is not safety, but speed and destruction, they train them in parachute jumping, suffering an agony of apprehension which though only momentary, seems a life-time; they train them to enter narrow culverts and emerge choking with mud, they train them as "frog-men", to enter confined spaces from which, in war time there may be no possible chance of escape, for they will go up with the ships they destroy.

Men are sent to sea in order to find out how little food they can continue to live on, and how long they can suffer cold without dying—as if it were not enough that our fishermen should have to risk these privations in doing their normal work.

And as for the atomic bomb—if they do not intend to use it—why do they make it? It is made for a war the horrors of which cannot be assessed. Of course, our military leaders are mad. The point is that they will endeavour to make the unwar mad as well.

To claim unquestioning obedience from a man with normal brains is an insult. Kirby, Essex. CLARA COLE.

I.F.T.U. SWINDLE

THE setting-up of another International Trade Union Federation, without any consultation of the rank and file members, is to follow the time-honoured procedure of Trade Union affairs.

Delegates to meetings and conferences are aware, that, whatever their deliberations, millions of uncast votes will be used to support the continued exploitation of the workers. Any supposed opposition is negative and a sham, while if a real opposition should arise, it is expelled. The Trade Union Delegate is one of the most corrupt figures of the twentieth century. Huddersfield. A.L.

ARMY METHODS

A TWENTY-ONE years old paratrooper refused to make a jump and was sentenced to 112 days' detention (despite the fact that even during the war it was not the practise to court-martial men who refused to jump). The case was widely reported and on the 22nd of November the sentence was confirmed and promulgated. The same day, another twenty-one years old soldier complained of a headache before making a parachute jump. He made a good landing but died later. May it not have been that this unfortunate soldier would have been less anxious to jump if he had not known the attitude taken by the authorities to such a refusal?

Special Appeal

December 16 to December 31:

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Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

INDOOR Lecture-Discussions every Sunday at 7.30 p.m. at the

Trade Union Club, Great Newport St., W.C.2 (near Leicester Square Station).

January 8th Speaker: Philip Sansom "ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM AND TRADES-UNIONISM"

January 15th Speaker: Charles Duff "FRANCO'S BLUE PARADISE"

January 22nd Speaker: Alan Smith "WILLIAM GODWIN"

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

INDOOR MEETINGS every Sunday at 7 p.m. at the

CENTRAL HALLS, 25 BATH STREET, GLASGOW.

Frank Leach, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw.

MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST GROUP

OPEN DISCUSSION MEETINGS held fortnightly

PLEASE NOTE: NEXT MEETING Sunday, January 15th, at 7.30 p.m. Meetings fortnightly thereafter. Enquiries: Ring Royal 4669

COLNE & NELSON DISTRICT

Discussion Group to be held fortnightly.

Sunday, January 15th, at 3.0 p.m. at

Twisters and Drawers Club, Cambridge Street, Colne (Lancs.)

HAMPSTEAD

Discussion Meetings are held every Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m. prompt at

5, Villas-on-the-Heath, Vale of Health, Hampstead N.W.3

ABC OF AUTHORITY

A is for Authority. Authority is the power of people to control the actions of other people. This is the very foundation of most of contemporary society, and seems to many people to be inevitable in any highly developed community. But there is a growing minority, even now, which believes that Authority is not only unpleasant, but also unnecessary and avoidable.

B is for Bosses and Bondmen. Perhaps the easiest way to classify Authority is to list the Bosses (people who rule) and Bondmen (people who are ruled).

Type	Boss	Bondmen
Economic	Employer, Landlord, etc.	Employee, Tenant, etc.
Fantastic	Preacher	Preached-at
Governmental	State	Subject
Household	Parent	Child, Wife, Husband, etc.
Illegal	Bandit	Victim.

C is for Coercion. The coercive instrument with which people rule other people is the Threat. This is a warning of what the Boss will arrange to happen to the Bondmen in case of disobedience.

Type	Threat
Economic	Obey me, or go short
Fantastic	Obey me, or go to Hell
Governmental	Obey me, or go to jail
Household	Obey me, or be spanked
Illegal	Obey me, or be bumped-off

D is for Deceit. Each form of authority, except that of the Bandit (who is at least honest!) employs Deceit either as a subsidiary means of rule, or else in order to conceal the threat.

Type	Lie
Economic	I am the only incitement to work
Fantastic	I can send you to Heaven
Governmental	I protect you from evil elements
Household	I rule you for your own good

(To be continued)

D.R.