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Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"Treason doth never prosper; what's the reason? For if it prosper, none dare call it treason."

JOHN HARRINGTON.

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Threepence

Keep Your Eye on M.I.5

CIVIL LIBERTIES IN DANGER!

THE Fuchs' case raises many important considerations, many of which are discussed elsewhere in this issue. It has, however, important bearings upon questions of civil liberty which ought to be made clear to a society which takes responsibility for keeping men in prison for long periods of years.

CURTAILING SCIENTIFIC FREEDOM

That a man can be condemned to fourteen years' loss of liberty ought to give every humane person a jolt, and set him wondering whether there isn't some fault on the condemning side, too. And, of course, one does not have to look very far to be still further disturbed. The crime for which Dr. Fuchs was sentenced did not exist till a few years ago, for it is only with atomic research that scientific advances have not been regarded as international property. At the time when the Harwell researches were made subject to the Official Secrets Act, Freedom protested that the abrogation of scientific internationalism would have far-reaching results. The crime of throwing a man into prison for 14 years is a direct outcome of this reactionary step.

The restriction of scientific communication is completely wrong in principle. In practice it becomes ridiculous as well, as it seems that it isn't possible to carry it out effectively.

POLITICAL PRISONERS

Another important aspect of the case is that it practically establishes the principle of political imprisonment. Lord Goddard, in sentencing Fuchs, said that he was concerned to prevent him having further opportunities of passing on the

knowledge which he held in his head for the longest possible period of time. Surely we are not very far removed here from the Man in the Iron Mask. If men are to be sentenced for long

terms because they know too much and might in the future, pass on their information to others, then the next step is for the State, in self-defence, to increase the maximum sentence and silence the too knowledgeable man for indefinite periods. And is it fanciful to fear that the next step is to liquidate the "dangerous" man, rather than imprison him?

Finally, there is the undoubted

flip this case gives to the Special Branch, the Secret Police, the M.I.5 outfit and the rest of them. Security, they will urge, makes it necessary for them to have still wider powers. Telephone tapping, censorship of letters and interrogations of suspects and their neighbours, will all increase. And greater resort to informers and agents provocateurs is already being urged in the name of "security".

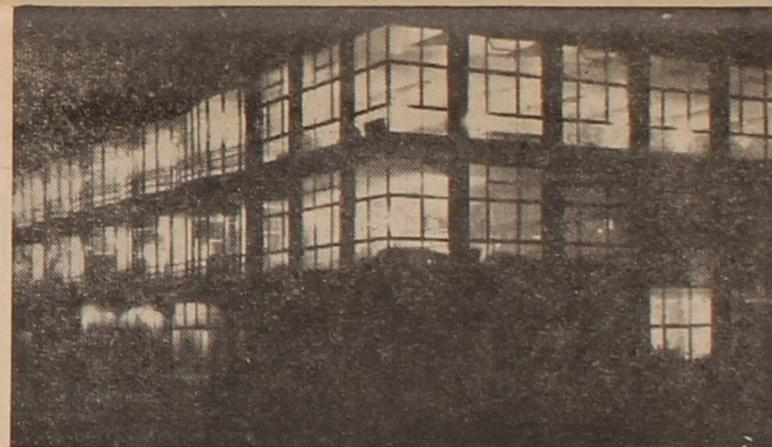
Vigilance in regard to civil liberties was never more needed than now. Once again, scientists should examine their consciences as to whether they are right to give up freedom of communication.

Must These Lights Go Out in Peckham?

DESPITE generous voluntary contributions and a weekly subscription of two shillings a week from the five-hundred-odd families who provide the membership and the "material", the Peckham Experiment has closed down for lack of funds. That it has continued on a voluntary basis for twenty-five years is an astonishing tribute to Dr. Scott Williamson and his associates and the member families.

The Peckham families are gallantly struggling to raise money to keep the Centre going, but it costs £25,000 a year and the annual deficit has been £12,000. Meanwhile negotiations are in progress between the promoters of the experiment, the L.C.C. and the Ministry of Health, to see if public funds can take over the running of the Centre without sacrificing the aims and work its founders set out to achieve.

The Pioneer Health Centre set out to try and define health, not in the sense of more freedom from obvious disease, but of using to the full human capacities. It achieved extraordinary results. Families achieved a poise and balance there which they had not known before. Husbands and wives, parents and children developed new, freer and more responsible attitudes towards each other. Accompanying this new harmony went increased zest for life and increased physical exuberance and efficiency. Pregnant women went swimming up till the day of their confinements, and returned home within a few days, a



Peckham Health Centre photographed at night. 1947

few hours almost. Children from infancy were able to have a social life among others of their own age, and had the advantage of learning from those slightly older than themselves. Leaving contented kids in the Centre's nursery, mothers and fathers were freed to develop their own interests and activities without the limitations which do so much to poison the pleasures of family life and destroy the affections of parents and children.

The Pioneer Health Centre was different

The newspapers have suggested that the L.C.C. should take over the Peckham Centre to serve as a model Health Centre under the National Health Service. Nothing could more completely misconceive the aims of Peckham. It did not treat diseases, did not seek to duplicate the work of the existing mechanism for treating illness, of which the proposed N.H.S. Health Centres would merely be a development. The N.H.S. Health Centres, admirable enough in conception, are intended to provide better accommodation for general practitioners, to provide them with pooled clerical assistance, better equipment, better laboratory services; and so to benefit the sick. Good in itself, this purpose has nothing in common with the aims of the Pioneer Health Centre. The proposed N.H.S. Centres would be more accurately, though unattractively, described as Ill-Health Centres, while the Pioneer Centre can claim to be the only research station into health itself.

The L.C.C. have a good record in the provision of a good (and, on the whole, a socially conscious) hospital system for London, as anyone who can remember the old infirmaries of the Board of Guardians will testify. But control from

County Hall has also usually meant bureaucratic strangulation, and individual initiative does not tend to thrive. The problem at Peckham will be to achieve the financial security of public control without the squeezing out of the original imaginative aims of the founders.

Official Recognition?

If this can be achieved, it may be that the closing of the centre as a voluntary institution and its re-opening with public ownership may represent an important landmark in its history. For it may mean that public recognition of the work achieved in the last twenty-five years has at last been accorded to Dr. Scott Williamson and his associates.

The Peckham Experiment has received sufficient attention from the advanced opinion of the world, that that opinion may aid the skill and experience of the founders to steer the centre through the undoubted perils of bureaucratic control.

Two considerations ought to be clearly in the minds of those who watch anxiously the future of the Centre. First, the aim of researching into positive health, to study human behaviour in conditions of freedom as Scott Williamson defines the task of Human Biology. And the second (which really stems from it), is that the member families shall be allowed to follow their own inclinations without organisers or masters of ceremonies or any other kind of busybodies. To refrain from interfering will be the most difficult task of the municipal do-gooders of the L.C.C., especially in the era of the Welfare State. Clear understanding of the original aims of the Health Centre will be the best protection in this respect. And the exercise of such understanding will be of incalculable value in municipal progress. J.H.

I. W. W. Anti-Franco Activity

THE I.W.W. Committee Opposing Franco reports from New York that opposition to Secretary of State Dean Acheson's proposal to restore full diplomatic recognition to General Francisco Franco's regime in Spain grows steadily in the United States. The aid given to that government by Hitler and Mussolini, and the spectacle of Franco following in their footsteps, are too recent for the American public to have forgotten.

Thousands of New Yorkers witnessed an impressive three-day anti-Franco demonstration in front of the Spanish Consulate there on February 8, 9 and 10. For two hours at noon-time each day the consular offices were picketed by members of the Industrial Workers of the World, the Libertarian Committee for Freedom in Spain, the Independent Socialist League, and the Libertarian Socialist League. The first two organisations named arranged the demonstration.

Vivid picket signs and countless leaflets in both English and Spanish, handed to passersby, demanded that no American aid of any kind be given to the Franco regime.

The leaflets given out charged that the Franco government had at least 100,000 political prisoners, with the number growing daily; that labour union members, Socialists, Anarchists, Syndicalists, and Anti-Fascists and liberals of every shade there had been tortured, imprisoned for long terms, and many of them executed. "When the Spanish people ask for bread," the committees sponsoring the demonstrations declared, "they get bullets. There is complete suppression of civil liberties. That is how Franco is 'saving' Spain."

Some of the signs carried by the pickets bore the following words: "Franco Must Be Stopped!" "No Loans to Butcher Franco!" "Get Rid of Franco!" "Mr. Acheson: American Labour Does Not Like Franco!" "There Will Be No Peace on Earth While Franco Rules Spain!" "Two Down, Mussolini and Hitler. Two to Go, Stalin and Franco!" "Solidarity With the Spanish Working Class!" "No American Aid for Franco Regime!" "Boycott All Spanish Products!" "Franco is Oppressing All Spanish Workers!"

Pro-Francoites failed in two attempts to have the picketing stopped.

The spokesman for the cause of free Spain contended that the sending of an Ambassador to Madrid, favoured by Secretary Acheson, despite his assertion that this "would not signify approval of the Franco regime," would give Franco moral support to which he has long since forfeited any possible claim because of his inhuman policies.

Readers of America's leading newspaper, the *New York Times*, were reminded in a full-column letter from the national executive secretary of "Americans for Democratic Action", that Secretary of State Acheson wrote differently about the Spanish situation on May 9, 1949, when he said in a public statement:

"The Franco Government was established with the active support, and only with the active support, of Hitler and Mussolini. A Government was established in Spain which was patterned on the regimes in Italy and Germany and was, and is, a Fascist Government and a dictatorship."

LAND OF PLENTY

IT was discovered on the 9th March that a colony of 100 poverty-stricken families has been starving to death in a desolate labour camp 12 miles from Phoenix, Arizona.

The *News Chronicle* reported that some of the children had not had a meal for ten days.

"The families are migratory workers, who come and go in broken-down cars, moving to wherever they think there is a change of work in citrus fruit or cotton or vegetable fields."

HOW TO WIN OVER UNION BOSSES

A RECENT issue of *Time* (U.S.A.), gives employers the following advice on how to win over Union bosses. Both in this country and America the workers know, to their cost, that it is a tactic that succeeds.

"If an employer wants to avoid labour trouble, he should invite the president of the local union to join his luncheon club. If he really hankers for industrial peace, he should get the union leader's daughter enrolled in a fashionable dancing school.

"Does that sound silly? It isn't, argues A. A. Imberman, a Chicago public-relations man, in the January issue of the *Harvard Business Review*. Imberman, who has had several unions as clients, maintains that labour leaders' more violent anti-company feelings are often prompted by the failure of their communities to accept them and their families socially.

"A powerful union leader, Imberman found, frequently expects that he will get the same social recognition generally accorded successful businessmen. 'It is a bleak moment for him,' says Imberman, 'when the labour leader has the first dim realisation that he has . . . no prestige in the eyes of his community.

"Those who want to fight [their social stigma] do it in the only way they know how—shaking down the employer in one of 500 different ways," e.g., work stoppages, slowdowns, shake-downs. Imberman tells of a Detroit union head who went through weeks of nerve-sapping contract negotiations with the sour knowledge that his daughter had just been forced out of her sorority because her father was a labour leader. Says Imberman: "The impotence of the father to deal with such a situation is not unrelated to the fury with which he pursues his strike ends."

"What to do about it? The businessman, says Imberman, should ask the labour leader over for a Saturday night's bridge game, nominate him for the local country club, invite him to work in the Red Cross and Community Chest drives. The employer's wife can help by shepherding the union man's wife into upper-crust women's clubs."

THE FEAR OF DEATH

The Anxiety of Our Time

HERBERT READ'S new book* is made up of two essays, the first of which gives its title to the volume. The second and longer one consists of a series of quotations and reflections on subjects relevant to anarchism. The first piece of writing was originally delivered as a lecture in London last winter; parts of the second, under the present title *Chains of Freedom*, have been published separately in magazines.

In the first essay, Read gives his interpretation of the main existentialist doctrines relating to essence, existence, freedom, engagement, and the feeling of *Angst*. He compares these doctrines with Marxism, and offers some suggestions regarding an anarchist attitude to each of the two philosophies. It should be made clear that though he deals with these matters in simple language, for the most part, his essay is neither detached nor comprehensive enough to be called an introduction to them. (A useful introduction is Paul Foulquie's *Existentialism*, published by Dobson; acquaintance with it is a help to consultation of Read.) The essay is Read's contribution to a wide-spread but rather obscure controversy. The everyday language he uses does give immediacy to what he says, but it is not always appropriate to the subtleties of the subject. For this reason his thought seems very uneven; like a succession of waves it rises sometimes into brilliance, throwing off aphoristic particles which

reflect even more than they contain, and it descends abruptly to dimmer regions, leaving the reader gravelled. The peaks of the argument concern freedom and the interweaving of essence and existence; it comes to shore, almost to shipwreck, on the issue of *Angst*, to which Read gives especial attention. The present review must be confined to this aspect of the essay.

Angst is a condition of anguished anxiety and dread, and something like it is obviously felt by many people at the present day, for differing reasons and in respect of different things. It has an important part in the existentialist attitude to the world, but it is not equally important for all existentialists (as Read suggests), for many of whom a condition of hope, and of faith in God, provide either a release from despair, or a basic attitude from which *Angst* is a departure. Read's dismissal of the various schools of religious existentialism is too easy to be satisfactory; but his concentration on the atheistic forms of this philosophy does have the advantage of giving breadth to his discussion of *Angst*, in the sense that he is able to speak of it not merely in relation to Sartre, but in relation to the numerous followers of that novelist whose main agreement with him is not in the field of philosophy but in the field of emotion. For though the dissemination of this particular dread is clearly due in part to the collapse of established economic and moral patterns, it is equally

due to the breakdown of religious beliefs. *Angst* and atheism go together; one might even say that the religious existentialists experience this anguish as part of doubt, as a lapse of faith, as an approach to atheism.

Read begins by describing the existentialist thus:

He is suddenly aware of his separate lonely individuality, and he contrasts this, not only with the rest of the human species, but with the whole goings-on of the universe, as they have been revealed by scientific investigation. There he is, a finite and insignificant speck of protoplasm pitched against the infinite extent of the universe . . . against the still more mysterious concept of *Nothingness* . . . So there we have the Little Man gaping into the abyss and feeling—for he still retains an infinite capacity for sensation—not only very small, but terrified. That feeling is the original *Angst* . . .

One can speak of an infinite capacity for sensation only in connection with a very young child, and by bringing this lost infant on the scene, Read is making quite a shrewd comment on modern man, if not on the existentialists. In such a situation, the Little Man might assume a posture of defiance, or he might invent a heavenly Father to take the place of his absent parents; but Read goes on to recommend a third way of dealing with nothingness:

He surveys the scene, the little speck of protoplasm which is man, the universe, finite or infinite, on which he finds himself, and, if he thinks of the universe as finite, the dreadful gulf of nothingness beyond. His feelings are feelings of profound interest, excitement, wonder. He sees Fire and Air, Earth and Water, elementary qualities giving birth to all sorts of contraries—hot-cold, dry-moist, heavy-light, hard-soft, viscous-brittle, rough-smooth, coarse-fine—and these combining and interacting and producing worlds and life upon these worlds, and he is lost in wonder. His greatest wonder is reserved for the fact that he, man, stands on the apex of this complex structure, its crown a perfection . . .

It seems to me that this is a striking example of Read's sensuous and spatial awareness of life, a characteristic of all his writing; but here it seems inadequate. For obviously he is no longer directing our attention to nothingness, but to Fire, Air, Earth and Water; it is just because these are so wonderful that nothingness is so dreadful, and to turn our backs on the enemy is not likely to decrease our fear. Again, the four elements he mentions are essences, which for the existentialist are subsequent to existence. But the main inadequacy, in my opinion, is that *Angst* is not felt in relation to space so much as in relation to time; it is not the feeling of a new-born child so much as the dread of a man about die.

One should not separate the spatial and the temporal in this absolute way, and the concept of nothingness does have an intimate connection with that of death, and with existentialism. But though the contemplation of astronomy may evoke awe, it does not give rise to the guilt which is often a component of *Angst*, and the nothingness of which the existentialists speak is not a spatial emptiness, as I understand them, but a moral emptiness, due to the fact that essences, and hence essential values, do not precede a man's existence, but are made by him as he asserts that existence. According to Sartre, a man makes himself; he chooses freely, but at the same time he is engaged with the whole human situation about him; therefore he is responsible for that situation and for the values created. Every action involves the world and a world of values; from consciousness of this fact arises *Angst*. If a God made a world out of nothing, not out of the possible; if he made the possible depend upon the existence of the world created; then he might certainly feel anxious, not about nothingness, but about his creation. The atheistic existentialist is in a position analogous to such a God. It could be said that he has taken the place of God, his being a Promethean responsibility and anguish; but he would deny having stolen the fire from heaven; he would say that when he lights a match heaven becomes possible. He might wonder about the flame, but he is also in dread of fire; again, the match might go out, leaving darkness. A man responsible for life carries death with him, all his life. It is extremely interesting that Camus, who was once an existentialist, has written a play about the terrorists who organised the assassination of the Grand Duke Serge in Moscow in 1905.

In the case of religious existentialism, *Angst* is more obviously associated with death, being bound up with the fear of damnation and the concept of original sin. One may die without grace, and life without an existential relation to God is life given over to death. As for that widespread *Angst* which is not connected specifically with existentialism at all, it

seems to me that it is a dread of nothingness in a temporal and personal sense: it is a dread of death, and its power in the world to-day is due to the abandonment of man's greatest psychological defence against the dark, his belief in personal immortality. (Belief in an immortal God could be considered as an impersonal mode of the former faith.) It is only in the last hundred years or so that the majority of people in Western Europe began to die; before that they had souls. For the rationalist, death is obviously of no importance to the dead, but it does concern the living in two ways: firstly, the living become responsible for the dead, i.e., tradition; the living become like God in that they have to give a socialised immortality to the dead; the hundredweight of the past comes down upon their backs, and in order to bear the burden they have to kill off the dead, narrow down tradition, and so suffer guilt or *Angst*: secondly, they have to meet the future, also in the present, and realise death in existence. For death is part of our expectation of the future, and thus it enters into life: this is what is meant by the phrase, "In the midst of life we are in death": in his novel *The Outsider*, Camus speaks convincingly of the dark breeze of the future flowing back towards us, from the grave. Thus the rationalist is open to *Angst* for two reasons and from two directions. He can deny the past and the future, and thereby his instincts; but to do this diminishes his life in the present, robbing it of value and issuing forth in an irresponsibility which in extreme cases resembles insanity; this escape is a popular one, and it leads to nationalism: i.e., a substitute religion lacking the enormous psychological advantages of the former faith. In view of these considerations, it seems to me that Read misses the point when he says that the anarchist "just doesn't feel that *Angst*, that dreadful shipwreck on the confines of the universe", and advises us to turn to the wonder and light of nature. Blake pointed out in a celebrated quatrain that the confines of the universe may be very close at hand. Read says that an animal at play is not conscious of *Angst*, and that "man is only an animal that has learnt to play more elaborately"—but this second statement is not true, while the first is a recognition of the fact that animals are not conscious of death lying before them. He reminds us of Aristotle's dictum that knowledge begins with wonder; but knowledge does not necessarily lead to the end of dread; it is supposed to have led to the Fall of Man. Read seems to put forward Faust as an ideal; but Faust led a life of illusion because he was not free.

Perhaps it is with the concept of freedom that we may find a solution to the problem. Freedom is not merely the recognition of necessity: that is liberty, as Read remarks, and it seems to me that increases in the quantity of liberty make little if any difference to the quality of freedom. Liberty is secured by widening the range of variable choices; in practice it often means no more than the raising of living-standards—more food, clothes, schools, more choices. But freedom, I suggest, is the process of choosing, it is an attribute of self-awareness, it is timeless and therefore not subject to necessity and the fear of death. Human life (as distinct from that of animals) takes place at the point where time is intersected by the timeless; that point is the core of personality, which latter extends into time and society and links the self with other selves. These statements will seem naive and mystical, but I think they could be discussed in psychological as well as metaphysical terms, though not in this review. Without some such idea of freedom and individuality, it seems to me, human life will appear to have no value not subject to time, necessity, death, and we might spend our days working for the Dumb Friends League instead of for human betterment—the object is much more easily achieved, and in what ultimate sense is a man more valuable than a dog, unless it be the sense just indicated? Read's comments on freedom and spontaneity (the latter being the biological precedent for the former) are particularly valuable from this point of view.

The second section of Read's book offers a vividly-stated distinction between freedom and liberty, and an equally brilliant commentary on equality, community, unity and similar matters. It is continuously stimulating, and I regret that I have space only to say that it is the best piece of writing he has done for Freedom Press, and that it deserves a wide circulation.

LOUIS ADEANE.

Information, Please

DEAR COMRADES,
I am attempting to write a pamphlet on the life and work of Ricardo Flores Magon. Unfortunately, there is a great dearth of material and information on this subject, so that I should be grateful for any help *Freedom* readers might be able to offer. Any literature loaned will be treated carefully and returned as soon as possible.

J. JACOBS,
c/o Freedom Press, 27, Red Lion St., London, W.C.1.

FILM REVIEW

Bitter Rice

"RISO AMARO" ("Bitter Rice") Italian film, with English sub-titles. London: Rialto Cinema.

THIS is an outstanding film, even among the exceptionally fine series of Italian films which have been shown here since the end of the war. It combines the simplicity and humanity of "To Live in Peace" and "Four Steps in the Clouds"; the insight into working-class life shown in "Bicycle Thieves" and "Angelina", and the warm understanding of social issues and "criminal" motivation of "Shoeshine". And as in these other films the humanity and sympathy for the men and women and children of to-day's Italy carries with it a contemptuous dislike for the inhuman intrusions of the bureaucratic and State machinery. "I am not a policeman," says an Army sergeant in "Riso Amaro", when he refuses to denounce a thief. And he adds that "prison was invented by a man who never went there—they don't do any good."

On the surface, the film has two themes. There is the life of the rice girls—a huge army recruited for a few weeks in the year to plant out the young rice plants in the flooded rice fields of Tuscany; and there is the crook who hides from the police in the rice barn while his girl friend joins the army of rice girls to conceal a stolen necklace. These two themes converge on the personality of one of the rice girls—played with extraordinary warmth and vitality by Silvana Mangano. The real plot lies in the impact of the imagined glamour of the struggle to escape from the misery of poverty, and with an imagination fed chiefly on books about the excitement of city life and the glitter of riches, the thief sees the answer to her wishes and desires, and not till too late does she see that the reality does not correspond to her desires. Instead, she replaces his former girl friend and accomplice as his stooge in a plan to steal the stores of rice.

Such a plot, baldly stated thus, sounds trivial enough. But it is in reality an everyday situation, and it enables the director to display the extraordinary com-

plexity of human motives in a sympathetic yet unsentimental way. As in other Italian films the class problems of the workers are made to play an integral part in the story. But there is a complete and welcome absence of propaganda. For example, the majority of the girls hold contracts from the labour exchange; but there is also a fair number of "outside girls" who hold no cards, and who are refused work. Desperate for food and rice these latter seek to secure employment by showing that they can work harder than the regulars. Inevitably they are treated as blacklegs and a struggle ensues in which an ugly situation develops. Ultimately, they all recognise that their interests coincide, and the regulars refuse to work unless the "outside girls" are taken on as well. But there are no heroics, no party stuff; one sees the motives of all concerned without ever losing touch with them as human beings.

As Silvana get involved in the plot to steal the entire rice store, she finds herself increasingly separated from the girls who admire her and make her their beauty queen, and increasingly driven away from the frankness and generosity of her own nature. The psychological conflict which develops seems to give an understanding of "criminal" impulses which make contemporary police and penal proceedings hopelessly inadequate and inhuman.

The insight and subtlety of the direction is enriched by the colour and depth of Silvana Mangano's performance, and by her youthfulness and beauty. But there are a thousand felicitous touches in the smaller parts, and behind it all the toil and squalor of the rice fields, and the hunger and poverty which make their work worthwhile to them. Without any kind of political dogmatizing, the clarity and humanity of outlook displayed make this film of revolutionary note. It has a true tragic intensity, for we see the destruction of Silvana by her own hopes and desires, themselves the product of her environment: an environment which operates on millions of workers all over the world. It exposes, with warmth and sympathy, the sickness of contemporary value.

J.H.

Socialist Malthusians—1

DR. Julian Huxley has recently given some publicity to the problem with which an increasing population presents our social organisation, and urged that governments concern themselves with the problem of contracting their populations; or as Prof. Huxley put it, concern themselves with the quality of their peoples instead of the mere quantity. Even if one disregards the fact that the population of the world is still rapidly increasing (the devastation of the last war was insufficient to reverse this trend, even temporarily, despite Malthus' idea that war provided a population "check"), anyone who uses his eyes and his imagination can see that every civilised country is uncomfortably overcrowded. Yet it is quite certain that the governments of the world will neglect Prof. Huxley's arguments, for they are all seeking to increase their numbers of subjects.

That Socialists to-day give little attention to this subject is due to several main causes. First, they are so committed to the idea of controlling government that their thought is entirely in nationalistic terms, and therefore consciously or unconsciously anxious to maintain supplies of cannon fodder. Then practical steps about population control obviously leads to the spread of birth control measures; but socialists are so much influenced by voting factors that they dare not antagonise the Catholic voter, nor their own substantial Catholic membership—and this is true also of every political grouping. However urgent the population problem may be, it is now integrally bound up with the need to extend the practice of effective contraception, and this seems to be absolutely repugnant to a sex-denying social organisation, against which socialists simply do not fight. Finally, the neo-Malthusians, supporters of "Eugenics" as they prefer to be called, mostly have a reactionary social outlook

which renders them unsympathetic to socialists. Even to-day, many of them become apologists of capitalist competition on pseudo-biological grounds. Thus Dr. C. V. Drysdale, in a debate with a socialist said that, "However great our sympathy for the poor and weak may be, and whatever measures we may take to relieve them, we must accept the view that those who are unable to support themselves and their children in a competitive state by their unaided exertions are biologically unfit, and that we should do all in our power to discourage their reproduction . . . All this is opposed to the doctrines and spirit of socialism, with its fostering of the 'have-nots', denial of the superiority of the rich and powerful, and denunciation of competition . . . Any idea that the poor on the average are biologically inferior is contrary to their most cherished ideals." (*Eugenics Review*, July, 1935, p. 110.)

It is my purpose, however, to point out that Malthusians have not always been so reactionary, nor socialists always so unconcerned with the population problem. The earliest advocates of birth control among the working-class were socialistic and very much concerned that workers should be in a position to improve their ability to carry on an effective struggle for better wages, better social conditions, and a fuller and happier life. The socialist movement of to-day, and more especially the anarchist movement cannot afford any longer to neglect this important world problem. Still less so since it is becoming increasingly clear that population control, through its necessary mechanism (when applied to individuals) of effective birth control, leads on to the whole question of misery and frustration. In due course I shall discuss the urgent relevance of this question to the revolutionary movement of to-day.

ANARCHIST

(To be continued)

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FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

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Reflections on the Fuchs Case

Who Are They to Judge?

FOR the benefit of readers who may be seeing *Freedom* for the first time, and to avoid misunderstandings which might be used to detract from the arguments we shall develop in this article on the Fuchs case, we wish to state very clearly that anarchists have been opposed to the political set-up in Russia from its very inception, and that anarchists in Russia were given no quarter by the Bolsheviks the day they felt secure in their power.

The persecution of the Russian anarchists has been set out at length in two volumes† to which the reader is referred in the event of any doubts existing in his mind as to the truth of our statement. But what must not be forgotten—and this is equally important for the new reader—is that though anarchists oppose the regime in Russia, it does not follow that they are in the other camp—on the side of the so-called “democracies”. Whether one regime or system is more or less authoritarian than another does not in any way affect the degree of our opposition to it.

There is a further reason for this preamble. For it is our opinion that cases such as that of Dr. Fuchs can only be discussed on the grounds of morality by conscious (or unconscious) anarchists.‡

† *The Guillotine at Work*, by P. G. Maximoff (Chicago, 1940), *Letter from Russian Prisons* (London, 1925).

‡ This statement may appear pretentious without a word of explanation. Belief in Government means an acceptance of diplomacy. Successful diplomacy involves withholding facts from other Powers and finding out their secrets. This in turn involves a Secret Service, and in Britain £14 million has been appropriated by the Government this year for the Secret Service; £20 million by U.S.A. and considerably more by Russia. Anarchists alone are opposed to all Governments. Governments' morality is that whoever spies against his country is a traitor; for it, a patriot! The Communists are a little more exacting, for they also demand silence from a patriot (*vide Daily Worker*, 2/3/50: “Yet all that Mr. Sanders and Dr. Fuchs did was to admit, in matter-of-fact terms, what they had done—a logical enough course for a spy who realises that he is cornered.” “Silence, and the acceptance of the full consequences, can be expected only of patriots and partisans of some great cause.”)

THROUGH THE PRESS

GOD ORDAINED

Christianity holds a high view of the State. As the temporal condition of the good life it is part of God's providential order. It exists to serve a moral end, and may therefore be said to be ordained of God and to have at least a conditional divine right.

—Bishop of Southwell in *Sunday Times*, 5/3/50.

NO BANGS BY ORDER?

The municipal council of Vaucluse in the south of France has adopted a by-law “forbidding the carriage and use of atomic bombs on the territory of the Commune of Vaucluse. The local policeman is made responsible for enforcement of this by-law.”

The Times, 6/3/50.

(2)

London's lively Anarchist Club is holding frequent meetings, but explosive utterings are out of order.

Reynolds News, 26/2/50.

RE-EDUCATION

Every Saturday, the Germans stolidly repairing the ravages of war, stop work for a minute to watch twenty-five British officers, resplendent in hunting pink, tearing across the countryside with eighteen hounds, searching for something to kill.

Unhappily, the Hussars have been snubbed in their efforts to interest local farmers in the Hunt. Although they have issued many invitations, only one has ever been accepted.

An officer ruefully explained: “They do not seem to understand this kind of sport and are not nearly so co-operative as people would be in the English countryside.”

Sunday Pictorial, 5/3/50.

MUTUAL AID

It seems to me that too much emphasis is placed on the concept of aggression and too little on the equally wide principle of mutual aid. It is natural to help up someone who has fallen, or to throw a bucket of water on a fire, even if the house on fire belongs to a neighbour for whom one feels little love or sympathy. I believe that this false emphasis is caused by present-day economic insecurity, and only the cessation of the constant threat of war will enable us to regain a balanced perspective.

—Janice Owens in *Radio Times*, 3/3/50.

Though I disagree entirely with Dr. Fuchs' former faith in the Russian State—and the fact that once disillusioned with Communism he turns to Capitalist democracy, clearly shows him to be woolly-headed so far as politics are concerned—his actions were honest, though it may be argued that his behaviour towards his fellow scientists was not honourable. We shall discuss this point later.

★

SIR Hartley Shawcross said of Fuchs that “it was a tragedy when a man of high intellectual attainment allows his mental processes to become so warped by devotion to Communism that, as he himself says, he became a kind of controlled schizophrenic—the dominant part of his mind allowing him to do things which the other parts of his mind recognised clearly were wrong.”§

But is it only “devotion to Communism” which warps the mental processes. Has Sir Hartley never heard the expression “My country right or wrong”, and is not the judge a partisan of this blind philosophy when by implication he expects every miserable refugee who lands on these shores to show their gratitude by abandoning their political views so as not “to bite the hand that feeds them”|| Why, the Capitalist system breeds the “controlled schizophrenic” and indeed, maintains its position by breeding them. And in any case, the blind Communist is no more blind than the blind Tory, but is obviously more willing to make sacrifices for his belief—and is that such a bad thing?

★

DR. Fuchs was not alone in holding the view that the results of atomic research should be made available to all countries. Rightly or wrongly, he thought that control of the atom bomb by the United States alone, constituted a threat to world peace, but that, shared with Russia, the power of the bomb as a war weapon was destroyed. As *Freedom* pointed out recently in an editorial comment, one cannot blind oneself to the fact that there is the same fear of America to the East of the Iron Curtain as there is of Russia on the West, and since both attitudes are false (for they each assume that one side is pacific, who can honestly say one side is right and the other wrong? The *Manchester Guardian* obviously recognises this fact when it states in its editorial (30/3/50):

§ By a clever piece of telescoping, the Attorney-General altered the whole sense of what Fuchs said. Fuchs did not admit that what he did was wrong, for at first he had “complete confidence in Russian policy and believed that the Western Allies deliberately allowed Germany and Russia to fight each other to the death.” It was only when he had lost faith in Russia's policy that he began to have misgivings.

|| In any case, as the *Manchester Guardian* points out: “If he bit the hand that fed him, it had at any rate fed him for a purpose.”

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

American Miners' Strike Ends

THE American coal strike which has just recently ended has won for the miners an extra 5/- a day in wages and an extra 4/7 in welfare benefits.

For the next two years they will receive a basic daily wage of £5 5s. 4½d., and the coal owners are to pay into their welfare fund 13s. 10d. a day in royalties on the coal they mine.

Those people who imagine that workers strike for the fun of it would do well to read the *News Chronicle's* Washington correspondent's account of the price the miners have had to pay for this struggle, in which they “have stood solidly together in the face of hunger and hardship, threats and court injunctions.” Apart from the fact that the average miner has sacrificed more than £650 in wages during “this grimmest nine months in their memory”, the struggle has meant tremendous sacrifices for their families as well. “For a long time”—writes the *News Chronicle* correspondent—“many miners' families, their credit at grocery stores exhausted, have lived on the borderline of starvation.”

Attendance at schools in the coal towns of West Virginia has fallen off, sometimes because the children had no shoes to wear, sometimes because they had been sent home with medical slips certifying that they were suffering from malnutrition.”

INEQUALITY IN THE FATHERLAND

FEW Communists nowadays attempt to prove that equality exists in the Soviet Fatherland, especially after the late Reg. Bishop's pamphlet on Soviet millionaires which was published during the war by the Russia To-day Society. But there are still many naive supporters outside the Party who think of Russia as the country of the equal and the free. The latest prizes awarded to Soviet

scientists and artists when related to an average worker's wages should therefore be an eye-opener to such people—if they are still able to face unpalatable truths.

Six scientists were awarded Stalin Prizes of 100,000 roubles each for theoretical and experimental investigations into the burning of hydrogen. A prize of 200,000 roubles went to Dr. Gregori Shain, director of the Crimean Astrophysical Observatory, for discovering the presence of “heavy hydrogen” in the atmosphere of several stars.

In all, 277 Stalin prizes for inventions or discoveries were announced. The prizes totalled 20,100,000 roubles.

In the arts, prominent artists received 5,500,000 roubles in prizes. Most of the literary prizes were awarded for works having anti-American and anti-Western themes.

Mr. Shostakovitch was awarded 100,000 roubles for his *Song of the Forest*, an oratorio which hailed the reforestation programme of Premier Josef V. Stalin, and his songs for the film, “Fall of Berlin.”

The award indicated that Mr. Shostakovitch had won his fight to get back into the good graces of the Communist party whose central committee castigated him and various other Soviet composers in February, 1948, for writing music that “strongly smells of the spirit of the current modernistic bourgeois music of Europe and America.”

Now for a Russian worker's wages, as given by Alexander Werth in the *Manchester Guardian* (6/3/50): “Wages in Moscow vary, in the case of unskilled workers, from 250 roubles to 500 roubles—that is, \$60 to \$125 a month, and those of skilled workers vary from 500 to 1,500 roubles (or \$125 to \$375) a month, with shock workers and Stakhanovites earning anything up to 3,000 roubles, or \$750.”

“Knowledge can impose a responsibility wider than any national loyalty, and in this case we failed to convince Fuchs that the two coincided. During the war it was hard to appreciate the sense of withholding information from the Russians, however surly and unco-operative they might be. Even to-day it is by no means impossible, or even the mark of a Communist, to doubt the ultimate purpose of our atomic work, and we do not always make clear the seriousness of our desire for atomic disarmament. These are hesitations which, unless the Western Governments can lay them, might disturb any man sharing the same unique and dangerous knowledge. And a whole succession of public pronouncements by scientific bodies, notably in America, has shown that this is in fact so—that the conscience of the atomic scientist is not at rest. For so long as they are swept up in the cold war, where science serves strategy and its findings have to be kept secret, scientific workers will often be uneasy.”

★

WE come now to a point which has obviously influenced adversely many people, who otherwise felt a certain sympathy for Dr. Fuchs. And it is that they consider Dr. Fuchs' attitude to his colleagues at Harwell an immoral one, in that he behaved as if he were their friend, thereby enjoying their full confidence, and then passed on to Russian agents all the information he obtained from them. The right thing to have done—goes the argument—was for Fuchs to resign and make a public statement to the effect that unless atomic research was shared with Russia, he could not take part in the work. Knowing beforehand what such action would mean—it is not the first time it has been tried, and the results are usually similar—for Dr. Fuchs to have done so, holding as he did the view that world peace depended on all powers sharing atomic information, would have been cowardice and irresponsibility for, to repeat the words of the *Manchester Guardian* “knowledge can impose a responsibility wider than any national loyalty”, and one should add: wider than any personal loyalty. This may be a terrible admission for me to make, since a fundamental tenet of anarchism is mutual trust between individuals and is one that anarchists seek to put into effect in their everyday relations. Few individuals—apart from the ruling-class who use moral arguments only to condemn their enemies—are in the position whereby their actions may have international repercussions. Dr. Fuchs was perhaps one such individual and I think that the burden of his responsibility was such as to morally justify “betraying” (though in such circumstances this is not the correct term) the confidence of those who were his friends.

It will be said that because the responsibilities were so great, no individual has the right to decide. But as things are to-day, the only alternative is to leave everything to the ruling-class. For my part, I have less confidence in their judgment and sense of responsibility than I have in Dr. Fuchs', and therefore from my point of view I am not influenced by this argument. For, though I can have no confidence in Dr. Fuchs' judgment in these matters (since he has not even now recognised that all governments are dishonest) yet I believe that what he did was done for honest motives, whereas a Government would have taken into account only one factor in arriving at a decision: strategy. And strategy is the antithesis of honesty and morality.

V.R.

In Brief:

300,000 Miners Strike in Japan for 72 Hours

Tokyo, March 8th.

The Associated Press reports that: “Three hundred thousand of Japan's organised coal miners struck to-day and will stay out for seventy-two hours.”

“The nation's labour crisis is mounting. Sixty-six thousand of Japan's 75,000 metal mine workers struck yesterday. Electrical workers are due to strike tomorrow. Wage increase demands are the cause of the walkouts.”

Incomes in U.S.A.

Nearly 10,000,000 United States families received incomes of less than \$2,000 in 1948, reports the Census Bureau.

Eight million families received incomes of \$5,000 or more during the year. Median income was \$3,200 or \$150 higher than in 1947.

Incomes of white families were about twice those of non-white families. In 1939 they were three times as high. The bureau said the greatest income gains from 1939 to 1948 were those of miners, whose median pay rose from \$1,000 to \$3,000 in nine years. Farmers' incomes rose from \$300 to \$800; workers in manufacturing industries: \$1,000 to \$2,500.

“In general,” the bureau said, “white collar industries such as public utilities, finance, professional services and government showed smaller increases than others.”

SOVIET PUPPET ADMITS FAILURES

A HIGH East German official has made the admission that mismanagement and incompetence are rife in the nationalised industry of the Soviet Zone of Germany.

Reporting to managers of the “people-owned” industries in convention at Leipzig, Minister of Industry Fritz Selbmann rebuked light industry for overdrawn its credit to the tune of £18 million. He criticized the Eastern automobile factories for trying to export shoddily-made cars.

In spite of his complaints, however, he optimistically asserted that production quotas of the two-year plan have been generally met, sometimes overfulfilled.

Worldover Press—Frankfurt.

C. Berneri: KROPOTKIN—HIS FEDERALIST IDEAS	2d.
Errico Malatesta: ANARCHY VOTE WHAT FOR?	6d.
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27, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

LIBERTARIAN.

Government and the Colour Bar

VERY few people with any interest in politics or insight into social affairs will have been much impressed by the government's denial that colour questions had no part in the Seretse decision. The facts of the case are not fully clear, but since the government refuses to publish the findings of the Court of Enquiry, they are mainly to blame for that; and it seems a reasonable inference from their refusal that they are hushing-up information which does not support them.

When Seretse Khama married an English girl, and returned to his tribe to justify his mixed marriage, his apparent success was a welcome advance in the struggle which progressive people have for years carried on against colour prejudice and mutual hostility between peoples of different colour. The colour issue has been in the forefront from the beginning.

A fortnight after the third meeting of the tribe which finally accepted Seretse and his English wife as rulers, Sir Evelyn Baring, the High Commissioner, according to Seretse's statement, sent his congratulations and said that he expected to receive confirmation of his recognition as chief from London. Significantly enough (again according to Seretse's statement) he added that he expected to receive protests from South Africa, but that the matter was a domestic one which did not concern the Union. Sir Evelyn Baring, in addition to being High Commissioner for the Bechuanaland

Protectorate, is also Ambassador to the Union of South Africa.

The Government's Bad Faith

The government however acted differently and have now exiled both Seretse and his uncle, the Regent Tshekedi Khama, who opposes mixed marriages, from Bechuanaland for five years—the situation to be reviewed after that time has elapsed.

The way in which this decision was reached suggests bad faith on the part of the government. Seretse and his wife were invited to London for talks. They obviously suspected that it was a device to get them out of the way and so present the tribe with a *fait accompli*, for they asked for assurances that they would be allowed to return. Seretse writes: "We received numerous official assurances that we were not being shanghaied, but all requests for a written undertaking that we should be allowed to return were turned down. Mr Fraenkel, my legal adviser, was given an emphatic assurance by Mr. Clarke, the Imperial Secretary, that there could be no question of my being barred from Bechuanaland in view of my birth there. But he would not give me this in writing. When a tribal delegation made the same request it was also rejected..."

The government's double-faced attitude seems confirmed by Seretse's impression that before the talks started the government had already reached a decision and that nothing he could say would make any difference. In other words, the talks were merely a formal blind.

The Tribe Were On His Side

The government states that it fears "repercussions" in the tribe. But the tribe's initial doubts appear to be adequately cleared up and Seretse's position, rather than Tshekedi's, accepted. Mr. Fraenkel told Mr. Gordon Walker that he was authorised by the other seven Bechuanaland tribes to say that they supported Seretse and his wife, and he produced a petition organised by one of them. A leader in *The Times* discussed the question of whether Seretse had the support of his tribe and regards the evidence that he had such support as beyond question. *The Times* goes on to say in so many words that the government's decision was based on consideration for the colour bar policy of Dr. Malan. In view of the importance of the question, and its source, *The Times'* remarks are quoted here at length:

"It is common knowledge, however, that the Nationalists now in power are

not only committed to the doctrine of the separation of races but dislike sharing their continent with other communities in which it is not applied. On this issue, moreover, the Opposition in the Union is by no means united against them. They have also a deferred claim to the transfer of Bechuanaland to Union sovereignty, which they may well be disposed to assert the more insistently if they see growing up there a society fundamentally at variance with their ideas. These grave considerations must be acutely perplexing to the British Government. But they do not touch the rights and wrongs of the case. No good can come of compromise, especially a compromise involving injustice to individuals, if its aim is to blur the outline of the truth. The truth is that British Africa is divided between one great independent State which believes in the colour bar and a number of smaller States in which the colour bar is repudiated. The conflict is tragic for the Commonwealth, but it cannot be for ever evaded."

Contemptible Actions Protect Business Interests

Now, on reflection, what attitude are we to take over all this? That the government have acted hypocritically and in bad faith seems unquestionable. It will not be the first time that the Labour Party has behaved contemptibly, and it is difficult not to feel bitter contempt for this sort of thing, especially as Seretse and his wife are clearly striking a blow against the colour bar which could have powerful reactions all over Africa.

But can one take a more charitable attitude towards the men in the government who have taken this despicable line? One can argue that they have to consider not merely the immediate issue, but its repercussions on imperial unity, on the United Kingdom's relations with the Union of South Africa (no doubt involving trading agreements, etc); in short that it has to be guided by practical questions as well as by principle. There can be no doubt that these are valid considerations for men in office, and they may go some way towards excusing the government as individuals.

On the other hand, this charitable interpretation is a serious indictment of the business of government itself, for it means that the considerations of office corrupt honest men and permit injustice to be done for the sake of placating reactionary, fascist, race attitudes. The Seretse decision only underlines what everybody knows about governments. It is time they were finally discredited. J.H.

ABC OF AUTHORITY

J is for Justice, which Kropotkin pointed out, is merely organised vengeance. He showed that so-called Justice and the State, "are related institutions—derived from one another, supporting one another, being historically one... both have a common origin in the same idea: Authority... Coming from an age of serfdom it helps to maintain serfdom in present society; through its police, prisons and the like, it is an open sore, throwing out a constant stream of purulence into society, a far greater evil than the one it is supposed to fight against."

D.R.

(To be continued)

Central London Meetings

THE meetings at the Trade Union Club near Leicester Square, have been well attended so far this year, with discussion being lively and partisan, where controversial issues have been raised.

Subjects dealt with ranged from a balanced comparison of Marxism and Anarchism by Allan Vaughan, and the nature of direct action, in a stimulating address by Sidney Parker, to a thorough examination of the impact of birth control on our lives by John Hewetson. Just before the general election, Albert Meltzer spoke on the futurity of elections, skilfully outlining the histories of the contending parties and the unlikelihood of any of them solving the problems of our time.

Workers' Control or War?

A feature of our programme this year has been the introduction of debates, and the two held on March 5th and 12th indicate that although debating can be stimulating, it does not necessarily provide the means of arriving at agreement.

On March 5th, Philip Sansom for the London Anarchist Group debated with Don Bannister of the London League for Workers' Control on the motion that "Workers' Control will be achieved by Industrial Action alone." Philip Sansom, the proposer, attacked the use of political parties as a means of achieving Workers' Control of industry, pointing out that the workers' strength lies at the point of production and not in Parliament or National Boards.

He illustrated the lessons to be learned from Russia, Spain and Britain (1926), when militant workers' action was side-tracked by political interference. Anarcho-syndicalism with workers organised in Industrial Unions, is the only method by which workers will gain full control of industry.

Don Bannister opposed the motion, stating that whilst he agreed all political parties had failed in the past they would not necessarily fail in the future, but that there was no way of avoiding the risks taken by political action. He maintained that the failure of political parties was due to their un-democratic structure, but that a democratic political group could bring about workers' control. In the discussion which

followed, agreement was divided on the belief that any political group would ever be likely to encourage workers to take over the control of industry.

On March 12th, Tony Gibson of the London Anarchist Group, proposed the motion that "Abolishing War Means Abolishing Government". He was opposed by Sybil Morrison of the Peace Pledge Union. Tony Gibson attacked Government as the root of war. He pointed to the sinister structure of the State and its rôle during war, when in the name of patriotism it committed crimes which if carried out by the individual would be regarded as the actions of a "raving lunatic". He traced the reasons for man's acquiescence to war to his religious and moral training, asserting that the inculcation of obedience, humility and unselfishness made man an easy prey for the powerful.

Sybil Morrison opposed the need for abolishing Government before abolishing War. She felt instead that if there were a sufficient number of individuals opposing war, the Government would be forced to abandon it. She stated that man could only be persuaded not to participate in war by appealing to his moral and unselfish instincts.

The discussion which followed, together with Tony Gibson's summing-up, magnified the flaws in the opposers' arguments. R.M.

★ Out and About ★ THE MUNICIPAL DOSS HOUSE

IN East London the other day, I visited Poplar Casual Ward, which was turned into a Fire Station when war broke out and has since been derelict. Facing the cobbled yard was a long row of little cells, each about five feet square. The windows were covered by a grating at the bottom of which was a sort of false sill of steel which on the outside was several inches above the actual window-sill of brick. This steel sill was perforated by two rows of round holes about the size of a small apple.

You may wonder what was the purpose of these curious arrangements. Well, after the down-and-outs had had their night's kip in the municipal doss-house, they were locked up in the cells with a heap of granite to break up into pieces small enough to be pushed through the holes into the yard outside. When they had emptied their cells, they were released to move on to the next Casual Ward or Common Lodging House, or wherever else they could get a sleep free from the vigilance of the police.

Poplar Casual Ward, incidentally, was not built in the age of Dickens; it was put up in the present century. However, the illicit and purposeful destructive instincts of the local children are rapidly pulling it down. C.

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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).

March 19th Speaker: Albert Meltzer "WHY DOES ANARCHISM PROGRESS SO SLOWLY?"

March 26th Speaker: F. A. Ridley "PRESENT POLITICAL PROSPECTS"

April 2nd Speaker: Michael Bass "RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY"

April 9th No Meeting

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

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

CENTRAL HALLS, 25 BATH STREET, GLASGOW.

Frank Leech, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw.

MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST GROUP

OPEN DISCUSSION MEETINGS held fortnightly

PLEASE NOTE: NEXT MEETING

Sunday, March 26th, at 3.0 p.m.

Meetings fortnightly thereafter.

Enquiries: Ring Royal 4669

COLNE & NELSON DISTRICT

Discussion Group to be held fortnightly.

Sunday, March 26th at 7.30 p.m.

at

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

HAMPSTEAD

Discussion Meetings are held every Tuesday at 8 p.m. prompt.

at

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

Series on Wilhelm Reich:

Thursday, March 23rd:

"THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF REICH'S WORK"

Discussion led by Jimmy Telfer

(Please note change of day—Thursday, not Tuesday, for above meeting only)

Tuesday, March 28th:

"REICH AND IDEOLOGIES"

Discussion led by Albert Benveniste

ANARCHIST SUMMER SCHOOL 1950

It has been suggested that the Summer School be held in London this year. Will Groups and individuals send "Freedom"

their views or alternative suggestions?

Remember that the School has to be planned a considerable time in advance.

PUBLIC MEETING

at

YOUTH HOUSE, 256 Camden Road

Camden Town, N.W.1

on MONDAY, MARCH 20th at 7.30.

ALBERT MELTZER

on

"ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM IN EUROPE"

WHEN FELLOW TRAVELLERS

CHANGE TRAINS

WE certainly do not object to people who were "Communists" changing their minds. What really surprises us is that many intelligent workers in the "Communist" ranks could fail to do so. But the new figure of "ex-Communist" to which we object is somebody quite different from the man or woman honest enough to admit he has seen through his illusions. This is the person who has for years been a Communist, or (lacking the courage of his convictions and wishing to continue making the best of both worlds) been a Communist "fellow-traveller", and who now changes because it is rather a convenient time to do so. Having thus tempered himself to the winds he proceeds to attack his former comrades using all the inside information to which he formerly had recourse.

The type is rather more common in the U.S.A. than here, but then the wind is somewhat fiercer. To shake clear of the Communist stigma, it is usually necessary to adopt some religious label, and the good old Catholic-Comintern has come in rather useful in that respect. The American Tories still howl after the blood of the ex-Communist, however; in the attempt to link up the Roosevelt administration with Communism (for political ends), they are digging back into the Popular-Frontist period when the Liberal professional class was mixed up with Stalinism, and the Un-American Committee has furnished some interesting examples of the depths to which the Tory business class can sink.

There would not be the need for such witch-hunting, going to the point of refusing people the right to work for their living because they once were pro-Stalinist when their persecutors were pro-Nazi, incidentally (but that seems more respectable to-day), if the U.S.A. had a Labour movement similar to that in Great Britain. There is no doubt whatever that the majority of the members of the British Government could never pass the scrutiny of an un-American Committee. There has always been a certain degree of more or less pro-Stalinism in the Labour movement as there has always been a certain degree of more or less pro-Fascism in the Conservative movement. Even the Labour leaders who were most bitterly against the British Communist Party were sympathetically inclined to the Soviet Union, and the present generation of Communist youth flatly

disbelieves that when the Anarchists first wished to make known the truth about the Bolshevik dictatorship when Lenin was still alive, the men who refused a hearing to such militants as Emma Goldman were not the present pseudo-"Lefters" who were then not heard of, but the Ernest Bevins who to-day pretend to have found the truth as if it were new. We are reminded of a similarity with one noble Tory peer who after having been enthusiastically pro-Hitler through all the massacres, stated a few weeks after the outbreak of war that one incident of ineffectual firing on fishermen had changed his views completely, indignation and convenience being very closely allied.

CHICKENS COME HOME TO ROOST.

The London Evening Standard has endeavoured to bring the American procedure here by an attack on John Strachey's appointment as Minister of War, which they linked up rather libellously with the Fuchs case. Strachey's denials that he was ever a member of the Communist Party, and the Herald's naive explanation that this was before the Politbureau era (it apparently overlooked the fact that this was then known as the Comintern), are pointless. There is no doubt that Strachey was the leading Communist intellectual in this country. Prof. Laski, of all people, tries to vouch that he was not a member of the party. Probably not; neither was Gollancz, neither was Laski. But the three, as directors of the Left Book Club, put over the "Popular Front" following closely and slavishly the Stalinist line; there was not a hair's breadth of difference between them until the war broke out, and what happened then was not that the L.B.C. changed, but the C.P. changed. Strachey's book *Betrayal of the Left* by its very title is an indication that they felt the C.P. had run away from their joint beliefs.

However, the L.B.C. had a very good run in the war exposing the pro-Fascist records of the Tories. They never went quite so far as to suggest any Ministers

might actually be spies because of their past, but they went pretty near suggesting they might be potential Quislings. Probably quite correctly, but they had their innings—Lord Beaverbrook hit back at Laski by making him the Bogyman of 1945 and has now hit back at Strachey (Gollancz is presumably next)—and how can they blame the Tories if they try the same thing on now that pro-Stalinism is to be the enemy?

Would it not be more in keeping with decency for the Ministers to admit an honest truth they know very well: namely that in spite of Sir Hartley Shawcross's blather at the Fuchs trial, it is not true that a Communist must necessarily be a spy.

Perhaps some people may be led by their convictions to supporting the opposing side in a war, as did some of the fascists. But we know that the majority of ex-Fascists and ex-pro-Fascist did in fact change their views, or at least their side, as did the ex-Communists and ex-Pro-Communists, as Mr. Strachey knows very well. Why, then, hound so many people from their jobs, as has already happened, and—as will probably happen should their be another war—impose another form of 18B that will this time take in the Stalinists, (and with them not the top-ranking leaders who will naturally repent in good time but the people who have nothing really to do with Stalinism and have only cooperated with them because of a woolly desire to do something to help their ideas?)

We need not speak from expediency. The dumbest secret policeman in Whitehall knows our record of opposition to Stalinism. But if there are Ministers who feel uncomfortable at the unwarranted and impertinent digging up of the past, let them not continue and intensify a drive against the muddly, vague, uninformed but often very well-intentioned amorphous mass that passes off as the "Left". They have one advantage over the Americans—they have come through the mill themselves and know very well that the Communists could not stop a fatigue party from the unarmed Pioneers going to the front if they really wanted to do so. It is not really necessary to be quite so hysterical as some would have: If Stalin won, very soon his police would find that all our present C.P.-ites were secret spies of Wall Street all along. A.M.