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Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"By education most have been misled
 We so believe, because we so were bred."
 DRYDEN

DEFEND YOUR FREEDOM!

Secret Police at Work

Home Secretary Reveals unlimited power of Special Branch

IT was obvious, after Attlee had addressed the Foreign Press Association at the beginning of the month that many difficulties would be put in the way for holding the "Peace" Congress in Sheffield. Not that the Congress would be banned; that would be a too blatant attack on our much vaunted freedom of speech. But instead, by the much more hypocritical method of denying entry into this country to the most prominent members—by "separating the sheep from the wolves"—the Congress would be reduced to a farce and would either misfire or be abandoned. The tactic was successful, but most independent observers agree that the laugh is on Warsaw, East of the Iron Curtain!

This method of suppression is in the best traditions of this country. When, in 1945, *Freedom's* predecessor, *War Commentary* apparently threw MI5 into a state of confusion over the publication of a series of historical articles on Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, no attempt was made by the authorities to close down *Freedom Press*, though they had the power to do this. Instead, they arrested the paper's most active workers and charged them under a Defence Regulation which, in the event of a conviction, could put them out of the way for a maximum period of 14 years. In this way they hoped *War Commentary* would disappear without being officially suppressed, and the principle of the freedom of the press respected. But the manoeuvre was too obvious for it not to be exposed by workers and intellectuals throughout the country. *War Commentary* continued to appear and, as a result of the publicity, gained many new readers. Similarly, to-day the Government's action has given wider publicity to the "Peace" Congress than its organisers could have ever hoped for and will also result in new sympathisers for the Communists.

MANY recent *Freedom* editorials have been warnings of the alarming trend to totalitarianism in those countries whose alleged aims are the defence of freedom against the totalitarian menace as represented by Russia and her satellites. (Note: the Fascist states are at present on the side of the defenders of freedom.)

In this country we have reached a position where Freedom of Speech is to be limited to only what the Government considers fit for our ears. We must leave it to Mr. Attlee to separate the sheep from the wolves for we are apparently so gullible that we cannot be trusted to resist those who would come here "to subvert our institutions, to seduce our fellow-citizens from their natural allegiance and their daily duties."

And to save us from ourselves, all foreigners wanting to land on our shores would be subjected to a test as to whether "they were so closely in touch with those who desire to prevent the democracies from making the necessary steps to resist aggression that it was known that their contributions to a discussion in this country would be of a nature which would hinder the objects the democracies have in view."

In Russia, for many years now, all who might hinder the objects of Stalin's regime have been permanently silenced, or exiled to the Siberian wastes. This has rightly been condemned (if only since 1945) by our politicians, but in this age of "doublethink" they seem incapable of seeing the analogy with their own policy.

IT is true that the Home Secretary is at present only protecting us from the poison of foreigners. "I would have

no intention," he told the House (Nov. 14th), "of attempting to deny to British citizens the right to meet and discuss these matters. While Communism is not illegal in this country they are perfectly entitled to do that . . ." Perhaps most people are not shocked by the words, we have italicized. To us they have a most sinister ring. They make it clear that the word 'freedom', like peace, can no longer be used by politicians except between inverted commas.

Freedom of Speech and of the press, do not exist when they are controlled by the Government and by legislation. That we are moving towards such a situation there can be no denying. The utterances of the politicians clearly indicate that in the event of certain ideas influencing the people to an extent that the status quo is threatened, such ideas will be declared illegal. And let it not be forgotten that there are more than just the Democratic and Stalinist ideologies in the world. Indeed, we reject the growing view that the only alternative to Democracy is Stalinism and vice versa. The ideas which we put forward are equally hated by Attlee and Stalin. In Russia, the Anarchists were eliminated in Lenin's day because what they advocated conflicted with the authoritarian Bolsheviks' policy. In the democratic countries their voice is still heard, but only because it is a small voice which can be drowned by the wolves of "democracy". When the Anarchist—or libertarian—voice becomes too strong, attempts will be made to suppress it: by legislation or by the hypocritical tactics applied to the Sheffield Congress in 1950 and to *War Commentary* in 1945. Militant Anarchism would be a much greater menace to "democracy" than Stalinism. For whereas the latter aims at a change of masters (Mr. Attlee calls them shepherds), Anarchism aims at the abolition of all masters and the building up of a society not of more wolves, sheep and shepherds, but of free men and women.

THE questions put to the Home Secretary about the methods used for allowing or refusing entry to foreign delegates who wished to attend the "Peace" Congress in Sheffield have aroused strong feelings and revealed the sinister rôle played by MI5 and the Special Branch. For it is quite clear, as we shall attempt to show, that these organisations are a law to themselves: they need give no explanation for their actions, either to their victims or to any government department answerable to the public.

In a letter to the Secretary of the organising committee of the "Peace" Congress, the Home Office gave a list of 43 people who "were likely to be refused leave to land" if they came to the congress. But the Home Office added that "those whose names are not on the list can still not be sure that they will be allowed to land. It will be for the immigration officers to decide."

The *Manchester Guardian* (11/11/50) points out that the "immigration officers act under general instructions from the Home Office with, in these cases, presumably, detailed information from MI5." But in fact their powers transcend any instructions from government departments. For instance, Mr. Ede stated in the House (Nov. 14th) that of 82 foreigners to whom visas had been granted, and who presented themselves at the ports, 75 were given leave to land. Thus, 7 were turned back by our Secret Police against the instructions of the government department which granted them visas. And no explanations are given. So that if the immigration officers or the Home Secretary have been given false information about a person, there is no redress. And what is the Minister's sources of information? That is also a mystery. When he was asked how he could assess the individual merits of various Soviet delegates, Mr. Ede replied: "You would be surprised how much I know about them and about other people of alien origin." On another occasion,

when asked where he obtained his information, his reply was "from various sources. I would not like to be too precise because it might hinder us from getting information on another occasion."

A further example of procedure was given to the House by Sir Richard Acland (17/11/50) when referring to the experiences of members of the American delegation. They were not allowed to get in touch with him by phone from the airport and later, in a letter from Paris, their treatment is described:

"We were severely grilled. I came through the questioning easily. I told of my previous visit and my connection with the National Religion and Labour Foundation. We all thought in the long interval of waiting that the British authorities were in touch with our State Department, and that the long finger of America was in the pie. We were kept waiting for more than five hours under strict surveillance and the American delegation was ordered to leave for Paris immediately, and not to return. Although asked for, no reason was given for this drastic and tragic action."

In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* Victor Gollancz sums-up the position very frankly: "Any refusal of free assembly is deplorable, but what is really fatal is that we, in the present state of the world, should have taken even half a step on the road to a secret police. When, to use your own words, 'minor Foreign Office clerks or immigration officers whose speciality is smugglers and criminals' are given the job of investigating just how dangerous it might be to allow A to express his opinions, just how influential B is in the Cominform, and just how much contamination C might spread during a few days in this country, this is not yet, not nearly, the G.P.U., or the Gestapo, or whatever body it was that looked out for 'dangerous thoughts' in Japan. But a faint stench begins to arise, nevertheless, from these drains, and to pollute our air. For God's sake do not let us allow it."

We would, however, add that the "faint stench" to which Gollancz refers has long been in our nostrils, for the

Sheffield scandal has only brought to the public's notice a scandal which has existed for a long time.

We recall that two years ago, the *Freedom Defence Committee* issued a four-teen foolscap page document dealing with the treatment of aliens landing and embarking at ports, and making a number of recommendations for safeguarding the rights of travellers. It includes the correspondence that passed between the Committee and the Home Office which reveals in black and white the unlimited powers conferred on immigration officials. It also reveals the way port officials can abuse their powers as a result of travellers' ignorance of their rights—very much in the same way as the police obtain statements from people, or enter houses without search warrants, simply because their victims are ignorant of the law.

As a first step, Mr. Gollancz might publish a pamphlet telling the man in the street what rights he still has. And then might it not be possible for socially conscious men and women, above party politics, to come together to publicly agitate for an awakening of the people in defence of freedom, before all human values are thrown overboard in the name of "freedom"? V.R.

TWO NEW BOOKS BY ANARCHIST WRITERS

TWO books of great importance to readers of *Freedom* have just appeared. The first is Marie Louise Berneri's study of Utopias, *A Journey Through Utopia*, which Routledge are issuing next week (price 16/-).

There will be a special edition for *Freedom* readers. This differs from the public edition only in price—which will be 10/6 (U.S.A. \$1.75) post free. Orders should be sent to the Freedom Bookshop, 27 Red Lion Street, W.C.1.

For details of special edition for *Freedom* readers please turn to page 21. Messrs. Boardman have now issued George Woodcock's and Ivan Avakoumovic's biography of Kropotkin (*The Anarchist Prince*, 21/-). This, the first full-scale biography of Kropotkin in English contains a wealth of material, mostly unknown to English readers, since Kropotkin's autobiography published in 1899 is very reticent about his work since he finally settled in England in 1886. A full review will appear in the next issue of *Freedom*.

AN OFFICIAL STRIKE—BUT WHY?

A STRIKE which has now been in progress since October 19th at the Hendon works of Duple Motor Bodies Ltd., has now become that rare phenomenon—an official strike.

From information—from inside sources—we gather, however, that the supposed reason for the strike—redundancy—is not the whole story.

The trouble started when about 20 men were declared redundant by the firm and were sacked. No protest from the union. Coach building always has a seasonal slack period just now, anyway.

The next list of redundants to be posted up however, included practically all the works union committee. This, the union were prepared to contest, but the employers refused to see the T.U. representatives. That, and not the redundancy itself, is the reason for the entire complement of 1,000 workers being called out, and union support being given.

The unions may not act to prevent the sacking of "redundant" workers—but they'll defend their own position!

Foreign Commentary

Franco Back in the Fold

BY 38 votes to 10 with 12 abstentions, the United Nations Assembly have agreed to the removal of the ban on ambassadors to Spain. For many months the Press has reported the visits of prominent Americans to Franco's Spain, and it was clear that their favourable statements about Franco plus pressure from American Catholic circles would result in the first step being taken to accept Franco in the anti-Russian front.

On the other hand, some governments are hesitating before taking the actual step of appointing ambassadors to Spain (the U.N. vote was to lift the ban on diplomatic representation of U.N. member nations in Spain and not a vote obliging members to appoint ambassadors). Though the United States were the instigators of the U.N. vote, and American banks have promised Franco a £20 million loan, Mr. Truman told newspapermen that it would be "a long, long time" before there would be an American Ambassador, while the British Government have suggested some delay as they have still to find "the suitable man for the job" (which to us sounds a very feeble excuse, hiding other tactical considerations). France on the other hand will not for the time being appoint an ambassador. This may be accounted for by the fact that the National Council of the French Socialist Party passed a strongly worded resolution in which they declared that the will of the mass of the people was that "no French Ambassador should appear to encourage by his mere presence the tyranny over the Spanish people of the accomplice of Mussolini and Hitler." And since the Government needs the Socialists as a buffer to Communist pressure they may give way on this

issue.

It is encouraging that after eleven years in power Franco has not yet succeeded in making his regime acceptable to the world. The more so when one recalls how both Mussolini's and Hitler's regimes were soon accepted; that political apathy in the post-war world has been so widespread; and in the anti-Russian campaign all opponents of Russia seem to be welcome in the democratic fold.

That this hostile attitude to Franco is the result of intensive anti-Franco propaganda by the large number of Spanish refugees in Europe and America is one explanation. We would like to think that it is also the result of a strong popular sympathy for those Spanish workers who at the daily risk to their lives are continuing the struggle against Franco and his corrupt regime.

THE AMERICAN ELECTIONS

INsofar as any elections (and particularly in America) can indicate the political mood or trend of a country, the recent American poll would point to a move to the Right. It is significant, for instance, that the Red baiters have been returned

with substantial majorities and those candidates who had been accused by their opponents of soft peddling the Communist menace have been thrown out.

In Israel too, the results of the municipal elections show a clear swing to the Right, the General Zionists heading the poll with 31 per cent. of the votes, against 22 per cent. for the Mapai (moderate Labour) party of the Prime Minister, Mr. Ben-Gurion. The General Zionists stood as the champions of free enterprise against the Government's policy of controls and austerity.

In the general election of 1949 the Mapai had 34 per cent. of the votes in Tel-Aviv and the General Zionists only 4 per cent. Observers regard the emergence of a powerful Right-wing party as the most important feature of the elections.

In fact, would it not be correct to say that the immediate post-war Left trend throughout the world has come to an end and that there will be a period in which the swing will be to the Right? This can, of course, be explained by a successful propaganda in creating fear of "Red Russia", and suspicion that at bottom the Labour parties are pro-Communist. But it is also the reflection of dissatisfaction with governments. When will the people understand that no governments—Left or Right—will ever represent their interests; that, to mix up one of Mr. Attlee's naive metaphors—all politicians are wolves in shepherds' clothing? LIBERTARIAN.

THE SOCIAL PSYCHIATRY OF COMMUNISM

I It is some time now since Marie-Louise Berneri published her *Workers in Stalin's Russia*. Since the early conflict between Anarchists and Bolsheviks before and after the October Revolution, reflected in Stalin's own polemic against Anarchist opponents, the primary conflict in revolutionary thought has been between the libertarian and the absolutist conceptions of the revolutionary objective—it is still the main problem of our time, though its form has changed with the progress of social science. During that time, libertarian revolutionaries, who, apart from a very brief experiment in Spain, have never found themselves in a position to influence history except by precept, have been developing their theoretical position—often, like ourselves, within a social democracy where theoretical activities at least were tolerated. The absolutist opposition, on the other hand, has secured a practical control of over a sixth of the earth's population, and looks like acquiring more. The Soviet Union, in particular, has become a fact whose extent we tend to overlook.¹

In this article, Alex Comfort raises a most important question—the scientific, sociological study of Russian Communism as a potentially stable, potentially expanding culture pattern. From the revolutionary standpoint the phenomenon of Russia urgently requires understanding—if one understands the term in the sense of correct assessment rather than of the suspension of moral judgment so beloved of sentimentalists and weak-heads. The editors of *Freedom* differ from Comfort on many points; rather than defer the expression of these views till a later issue, they have been introduced as footnotes. We firmly believe in the value of open discussion as a means to approach the truth, and hope that further views will be forthcoming from informed readers.

culture patterns. Marxism-Leninism has modified its theories, if at all, by experience and expediency: has been highly unresponsive to "bourgeois" social sciences, but it is social psychiatry and comparative anthropology which now provide the main ground for our position. We have recently spent much time in discussing how these sciences bear on delinquency and on power: in general we have emphasised the need for understanding the mechanism of these forces by straightforward experimental and observational analysis, and treating them by scientific psychiatry. We have not, I think, made any such attempt to deal with the problems presented by modern Communist societies. Communism is no longer an academic theory, but a culture-pattern, covering millions of individuals of different racial backgrounds, but apparently almost as uniform as the over-all culture pattern of the British peoples or the U.S.A.

Non-Communist political movements at the moment, having no cause whatever to love the Communists, tend to be content with the statement "Stalin is a tyrant: life in Russia is hell for all concerned", leaving the matter at that, apart from the selection of examples of Communist duplicity. This bare expression of disapproval takes one no further in the direction of modifying, or even co-existing with, the largest single over-all culture-pattern of the present day—yet modifying culture-patterns by minority action is the activity which we understand by "revolution", or by social psychiatry, and to which I think we are committed. We are hardly likely to modify a culture-pattern of this extent by romanticised disapproval—the days when it was possible to argue that one could alter Russia by assassinating the Czar have been permanently ended by the experimental study of society. There remains only the psychiatric approach, and treatment, as in limited problems of individual adjustment, involves far more comprehensive hard work than we have yet put in.

Does Neurosis Exist in Russia?

It was a note in *Freedom* to the effect that someone had commented on the lack of neurosis in the Soviet Union which set me thinking on these lines. I went into the literature on this subject for my own information: it seems very likely that the statement is true. There is nothing sociologically unlikely about that—stable culture-patterns which contain a sufficient number of social integrative factors do in fact tend to reduce individual neurosis even if they are coercive.² This observa-

tion is highly important as an index of what we are up against. Where a society and an ideology co-exist, it is the society which matters from the viewpoint of stability. At the present moment for a great many Anarchists, together with the more frightened European statesmen, "Red Fascism" has become a slogan. It is one which needs examining a good deal further. We must at all costs be accurate observers of societies. If Fascism is anything more tangible than a name for systems we dislike, it is bad sociology to apply it indiscriminately to all cultures in which coercive elements and State centralisation exist—one might as well suggest that Aztec and Hindu cultures are identical on the ground that both practised polytheism.³ Fascism had a clear-cut meaning as applied to the social pattern of Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany. Both of these were classical power-centered societies, deriving their whole and only driving force from the projection of individual aggression. Its main public stereotypes were racialism, aggressive war, the Divine Leader identified with the prohibitive and hated, but

also feared and revered, father, the depreciation of women, and the use of realised sadistic fantasies, including castration, against unbelievers. To the sociologist this is a coherent pattern, but it is also one quite unlike the pattern presented by Soviet Russia as a culture. Fascism is a term which should be limited to cultures showing most or all of these attributes, where the orientation is almost wholly towards death, and where as in Hitler's Germany, there is no inherent dynamic apart from individual aggression. On this one could base two important inferences—that Fascism could absorb stable societies only by force, and that it was bound ultimately to disintegrate, however much mischief it might do meanwhile.

If one tabulates the chief drives and stereotypes in Russian culture, as opposed to Communist theory, or even the main drives and stereotypes of Communist theory itself, the picture is entirely different. Modern Russia is a centralised political system which has incorporated several local cultures, ranging from Orthodox urban through feudal to Moslem nomadic. It is based on a strongly absolutist State and a narrow but actively proselytising ideology. Its main stereotypes are civic duty, production, defence of the ideology, and extension of human control over environment. It has also had strong feminist and anti-racialist tone, but has tended to replace cultural or genetic racialism by a species of class-racialism, which projected aggression against Kulaks instead of Jews. Anarchist thought has often shown a similar tendency. Its sexual orientation was at one time liberal and experimental, but has become considerably more similar to that of English Puritanism, which it now very closely parallels in many other particulars. (The analogy between the Marxist and Cromwellian revolutions is highly instructive, and is almost the only valid social parallel in existence.) Whereas Fascism followed a classical pattern, Soviet society is far more unusual combining absolutist political organisation with the types of stereotypes which usually exist in "productive" cultures, i.e., those whose main concern is with the food supply, and whose severest disapproval falls on those who endanger it.

Communism and Fascism

For reasons made clear by Freud, the single or collective "father-figure" is an important index in most cultures. The father-figure which exists in Russian culture differs entirely from the father-figure of Hitler. His existence is partly political, where he has comparable attributes of omniscience, but here he is chiefly a carry-over from a longstanding Russian and Christian tradition. Father-stereotypy dies so hard in most societies that the father-figure of a successful English communist culture on this model would be likely to occupy the place of the King rather than that of the Czar. If one tabulates the attributes of this figure in the literature of Nazism and of Soviet Russia, the difference becomes obvious. Hitler is "leader, warrior, avenger, superman, Jew-slayer", protector of the mother against rape. Stalin is leader, philosopher, prophet, scientist, victor in the Patriotic War, father of the people, patron of the arts. Although there are propagandist-points, like all propaganda they are culturally-determined. While still the father, he is emphatically closer to the defender and giver of gifts and instruction than to the punisher and sexual rival of childhood. The Christian god has alternated throughout history between these two patterns. Nazism and Soviet Russia have stabilised very different aspects.

G.W.

(To be continued)

BOOK - BARGAINS

We have just purchased the publishers' stocks of three books which we are offering to our readers at very low prices. The fact that two are by George Woodcock is in itself we think a recommendation as to their value to all students of social problems.

1.

WILLIAM GODWIN, a Biographical Study by George Woodcock.

266 pages. 5/- (U.S. \$1) (reduced from 12/6)

This fine biography of "the father of English anarchism" has done much to arouse the new interest in Godwin and his writings. H. N. Brailsford writes: "To a friendly portrait of a rather puzzling character, Mr. Woodcock has added an understanding exposition of Godwin's doctrines, which is all the more successful because his own view of life and society is not far removed from Godwin's."

2.

THE WRITER & POLITICS, and other essays by George Woodcock.

248 pages. 3/6 (U.S. 75c.) (reduced from 10/6)

A glance at the titles of the essays in this volume is an indication of why we think you will be anxious to have it. They include *The Functions of the Political Myth, Proudhon and his Mutualist Theories, Alexander Herzen, The Scientific Contribution of Peter Kropotkin, George Orwell, Graham Greene, Ignazio Silone, Arthur Koestler, Kafka and Rex Warner, Henry Bates on the Amazon*. The volume also contains Woodcock's brilliant study of the English Hymn, and a devastating note on the missionary John G. Paton.

3.

NO GOLD ON MY SHOVEL, an Autobiography by Ifan Edwards.

224 pages. 2/6 (U.S. 50c.) (reduced from 7/6)

Reviewing this book in *Freedom*, we warmly recommended it both for its own merits as a book, as well as for the fact that it deals with a branch of industry which has hitherto been ignored.

[Postage: Please add 6d. per volume for postage, maximum 1/- U.S. prices include postage.]

To readers ordering the three books we offer a further reduction: 30/- worth of books for 10/- post free (U.S. \$2.00).

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP
27 Red Lion St., London, W.C.1

- REVIEWS

GANDHI AS A SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARY by Wilfred Wellock. (Housman's Bookshop, 1/-)

THE opinions of Wilfred Wellock on social questions will be familiar to many readers of *Freedom*. To a radical form of pacifism he has added a fervent belief in the necessity of social decentralisation, and in the establishment of a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach to man's life as an individual and in society. Although he has gone a long way towards the rejection of government and the state, he has never admitted that this is the logical end of his line of reasoning, and his hesitancy, as this reviewer has contended on other occasions, has led him into unreasonable situations, where he has expected governments to act in manners which were contrary to their essential nature as instruments of centralised violence. For this reason much that Wellock writes is cogent and convincing. But it is almost invariably vitiated by the indecision with which he faces the issue of the individual versus the state.

This weakness is nowhere more evident than in the present pamphlet on Gandhi. This was written as a result of Wellock's participation in the World Pacifist Meeting, which took place in India during December, 1949, and it takes the shape of Wellock's recollections and impressions of this gathering.

Wellock concentrates on those aspects of Gandhi's teaching which correspond to his own ideas—decentralisation, village industries, etc. And there is no doubt that on these questions Gandhi had a great deal of value to say. As Professor Gangulee told me on several occasions, Gandhi had a great admiration for Kropotkin's works, and particularly for *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, and it is not difficult to see, right to the end of Gandhi's career, the influence of anarchist thought on this aspect of his teaching. But, curiously like his present interpreter, Gandhi failed to make the final step of rejecting political and authoritarian methods completely. And it is unfortunate, but also significant, that in stressing the positive aspects of the Indian leader's work, Wellock should have ignored the compromises with politicians and with governments which negated all Gandhi's great achievements in the field of civil disobedience, and which cannot be ignored as a contributory factor to the present situation in India, where all the idealism which built up the movement of revolt against the British rulers has gone

down the drain in a carnival of power-seeking and revived militarism.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

THE STRUGGLE FOR GERMANY by Drew Middleton. (Wingate, 12/6)

DREW Middleton is a *New York Times* correspondent who has been connected with political events in and around Germany for the past five years, and the book under review is an analysis of events during this period which is written with the avowed intention of proving the importance of Germany to the interests of America and the countries associated with it in the cold war against Russia.

It is a book from which, whether or not one agrees with the author's opinions and intentions, a great deal can be gained in the way of information on the sequence of events in the political and diplomatic manoeuvres which took place over the question of Germany from the end of the war—or even from the Yalta conference—down to the middle of 1949. For this reason, it is the kind of book which the student of foreign affairs might usefully keep on his shelf.

It is the interpretation of these events, and the attitude which underlies the author's approach to them that are most subject to objection. Drew Middleton adopts the attitude that the Germans are really a crowd of villains towards whom we cannot be expected to feel any sympathy. He follows the old familiar line that the German people were in fact responsible for the Nazi atrocities. But he contends that Germany lies at the centre of world political problems to-day, and that it is only by getting Germany on the side of the "democratic" powers (understood in the American and not in the Russian sense of "democracy") that the Western governments will succeed in holding Europe safe from the Russian menace.

It is an argument which is shot through with dubious assumptions. For instance, he claims that a right-wing authoritarian movement in Germany would veer towards Russia, whereas present trends would seem to indicate that such a movement is just as likely to turn towards America—the truth being that German nationalists will run with any party that might help them in their return to power. But the main objection to this book, an objection which really dominates and includes all the lesser objections, lies in the fact that the Ger-

GANDHI—SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARY?

JOURNEY THROUGH UTOPIA



This is the book that Marie Louise Berneri wrote in the last year of her life and which has now been published by Messrs. Routledge and Kegan Paul at 16/-. We have arranged with them for our Committee to publish a special edition for our subscribers and for readers of "Freedom". The volume which is of 330 pages, cloth-bound, is a critical survey of utopian thought from classical Greece to the present day. It will be valuable, not only for its grasp of the history of human ideas and aspirations, but, to those who knew and admired its author, and those who have been influenced by her, as a testimony to her own deeply-felt convictions which she expressed with such humanity and clarity.

Our special edition of "Journey Through Utopia" costs 10/6 post free (in America \$1.75), and is available from the Committee or from Freedom Press.

Readers who have not been told of the purpose and aims of the Committee or who have not seen our volume "Marie Louise Berneri, 1918-1949,—A Tribute" (5/3 post free; in America \$1.00) are invited to write for particulars.

Marie Louise Berneri Memorial Committee, 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1

Through the Press

SURELY...

In Chicago, the 5,300 employees of the Department of Public Works have been asked to give loyalty pledges. Public Works Commissioner Oscar Hewitt has sent copies of the pledge to all bureau chiefs telling them, "Signing of this obligation is not mandatory. However, I desire that each bureau head personally check the forms returned to him and give me the names of any employees who do not elect to sign and their reason for not doing so."

Public Opinion, 3/11/50.

IT'S DIFFERENT...

A Serb, Ljubish Jovic (26), was in a forced labour camp in Germany during the war. Now, he is so nervous, it was said at Ipswich yesterday, he will never approach nearer than three yards to anyone or let anyone approach within three yards of him.

He was gaoled for a month for failing to notify his movements as an alien.

... IN THE WEST

It is said that if we did not vote a gang of unscrupulous men would get control of the reins of government and chaos would result. Well, what have we now?

Analysis (U.S.A.), Oct., 1950.

POLITE JUDAS...

The dogma of the bodily assumption of the Virgin Mary was described by the Rev. C. Moore, Vicar of St. Augustine's, Highbury Park, London, last night as "a daring masterpiece of deception".

"The Virgin Mary is now to be exalted by a trick of Rome's imagination and lifted up to the level of the Trinity, and worshipped as a goddess. Rome carries out this daring masterpiece of deception in a more glaring outrage than Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane when he betrayed his Master with kiss. Judas had at least the courtesy to say 'Hail Master'. All that Rome can say is 'Hail Mary'."

"Rome has offered up many false sacrifices, but when she made this proclamation of the Assumption she would offer up in public sacrifice the truth of God on the altar of paganism."

Manchester Guardian, 31/10/50.

LIBERATION IS ALWAYS SOMEWHERE ELSE

AN interesting sidelight on the processes of liberation comes from an address to a recent Fellowship of Reconciliation conference at Denver by Milton Mayer.

He told how a Korean wrote to the Los Angeles Times that he had been unable to get a house in the town "because he couldn't find anybody who would rent or sell a decent dwelling to a Korean." He wanted to be liberated by the Americans. But, said the speaker, he would have to go back to Korea for that.

Peace News.

MARIE LOUISE BERNERI MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Second List of Contributions

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China—Economics & Politics

THE Chinese Government's intervention in North Korea contributes nothing new to the international scene. The ultimate sanction in relations between the Powers is force, and it was not to be expected that the Chinese Government would refrain from using whatever power it possessed. Like any other government, expediency, not ethical or moral considerations, decide its actions.

The situation now resembles that in Greece before Yugoslavia split from the Cominform. Once again American troops are finding themselves fighting more or less irregular troops supplied from over the frontier by a power with whom neither the American Government nor the United Nations is at war. Such a situation constitutes what has been called a "haemorrhage of American strength". It also means a continual drain of Chinese and Korean lives in a sterile war of attrition. The Korean people still find their country a battleground for rival great powers, now more obviously so than before.

It would be wearisome to denounce once again this familiar situation; wearisome to point out that in this as in all wars, valuable and progressive emotions are mixed with (or, one could say, used by) considerations of a much more materialist and immoral character which arise from rival imperialist ambitions. No doubt there are pros and cons, and no doubt to many people these will seem of great, even paramount, importance. But there is also the broader view, which sees this recurrent pattern of armed undeclared war as productive of very little gain in the sphere of international relations (the Greek question is 'settled', is it not?); which is infinitely productive, however, of death and misery, or revenge and hatred of new problems left over at the end. And the great powers know only the same way of dealing with such residual problems. The Korea of the 38th parallel was only a residual problem after the Russo-U.S. "liberation" of Korea from the Japanese. The misery and destruction in Korea will indirectly bear fruit only if it persuades men that it is hopeless and futile to continue to allow relations between peoples all over the world to be conducted by governments.

The Greater Chinese Problem

But the general position of Communist dominated China involves much more important questions than actions in Korea which are, after all, only the stock-in-trade of all governments. Focusing attention on that distracts attention from the much broader struggle between Chinese traditional ways of life and customs, and the centralising tendency of Bolshevik and Marxist theory. The tendency in this country is to assume that "China" has fallen into the Russian pattern of governmental and

social organisation. The reality, however, must be very different.

Despite centuries of bureaucratic Tsarist rule, the Bolsheviks under Lenin found it an impossible task to fasten the centralising Marxist concept of socialism upon the Russian people. A halt had to be called and even a reversal of the centralising process during the five years of the N.E.P. (New Economic Policy). When Stalin returned to the attack with the first five-year plan in 1928-9, the resistance of the peasants to the collectivisation of agriculture was such that again a halt had to be called. Only after almost 20 years of

bitter and brutal struggle was the centralisation of Russian agricultural economy achieved. Even now it is probably not a smooth and acceptable pattern to Russian peasants.

Consider then the problem in China, where the people have been for years accustomed to a decentralised social system ruled by a corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy. To secure the Bolshevik centralism on the 500 million Chinese will present an even more formidable problem than it did in Russia. Furthermore, the traditional suspicion of foreigners will not be escaped by the Russian sponsored Chinese Communists, who will not even have the moral force of the revolution to give strength and enthusiasm to their ideas.

They will however have two assets, though neither will be immediately operative. The first is the destruction of landlordism and the bringing of all available land under the culture of the land-hungry peasants. At present it does not seem as if the Chinese Communists are yet able to carry out a fully radical agrarian reform in this direction, but no doubt they will aim at it.

The second asset will be the bringing of agricultural machinery to ease the very primitive methods of the

poor peasants. Such industrialisation of agriculture will provide a market for Russian industry, though presumably, for many years at least, on credit. This will mean that the advantage in increased output will be in part offset by payments due on capital development. More likely, the potential advantages will be swallowed up in increased exploitation.

Nevertheless, these are two real assets as propaganda. Whether they, together with what repressive force the government can muster will be sufficient to overcome the traditional decentralisation of the vast country is an open problem.

To state the problem this way is also to indicate how vastly greater would be the moral and material appeal of revolutionary endeavour, which would provide both of these two assets without their disabling accompaniments.

For the meantime, however, it is enough to have indicated how immense is the economic problem presented by China to the Russian social pattern. Merely political speculations about possible "Chinese Titoism" are insignificant indeed beside them.

ANARCHIST.

Who wants to Work?

ONE of the worst features of the development of our industrial system is that it has debauched creative work into useless toil. As he punches the time-clock and hurries in to the assembly line, there to stand for the prescribed shift of monotony, or as she walks to her office desk and wastes her life in unnecessary scribbling, how can the worker generate any feeling but distaste for work?

Small wonder if the vast majority dream only of escape, religiously filling in the football coupons, following the horses or the dogs, or even turn to spivvory, black-market or "crime" to avoid the drudgery of the daily grind. The wonder is that anyone enjoys his labours at all.

And yet, such is the resilience of the human spirit, so deep-rooted is the human faculty for creation, that many, many workers find activity which gives them satisfaction simply in the doing, and find irksome only the irresponsibility of their position, the fact that they have to do as they are told by others, and have no say in the organising of that activity in which their skill is the most precious

component.

How many workers to-day feel that it is an insult to their manhood to be employed by others on the basis of a weekly wage? Very few, I fancy, for it is a subtle insult, to be kept alive for a week in return for a week's work. There is the feeling of a mutual contract about it, a sense of having made a bargain, an honourable agreement to give a "fair day's work for a fair day's wage". And yet in fact we have made a bargain with a pistol at our heads—and what is more, at the heads of our wives and children—for the position is: work or starve. And however much a man may enjoy working at his trade, the knowledge nagging at the back of his mind that he is compelled to do it sours the original sweetness of his skill.

For, providing the activity involved is useful, or calls for skill or imagination, for human qualities and not mechanical, it is not the work itself which irks a free-thinking man, but the knowledge of being exploited, of being a sucker, the injustice of it all, which makes work something to be avoided.

These thoughts came into my mind while turning over exactly how to comment on two incidents lately, where people have been penalised for working too hard, or not in conformity with union agreements.

During the war it was not unusual to hear of workers being fined—even imprisoned for being late for work. To-day, the position is reversed. A London milkman was recently taken to task by his union for delivering his milk too early in the morning. He did this under no compulsion from his boss; he simply preferred to start work early and finish early. The dairy had agreed with the union not to insist on early morning deliveries since the majority of milkmen were against it, so milkmen now start work at 7 a.m. instead of 5 a.m. as in pre-war days, and do only one round instead of two.

The milk is presumably at the depot just as early as it used to be. If one roundsman prefers to start work at 6, and get home an hour earlier after his round is finished, it is difficult to see how anyone else is affected.

The village blacksmith of Staverton, near Daventry, was prepared to work any hours any day of the week to get farmers' with breakdowns out of trouble. When

YET I think that to all living things there is a pleasure in the exercise of their energies, and that even beasts rejoice in being lithe and swift and strong. But a man at work, making something which he feels will exist because he is working at it and wills it, is exercising the energies of his hand and soul as well as of his body. Memory and imagination help him as he works. Not only his own thoughts, but the thoughts of the men of past ages guide his hands; and, as a part of the human race, he creates. If we work thus we shall be men, and our days will be happy and eventful.

Thus worthy work carries with it the hope of pleasure in rest, the hope of our pleasure in our using what it makes, and the hope of pleasure in our daily creative skill.

All other work but this is worthless; it is slaves work—mere toiling to live, that we may live to toil.

WILLIAM MORRIS
("Useless Work versus Useless Toil, 1885")

he recently made his periodic application for renewal of his licence (one cannot be a village blacksmith in Merrie England without a licence from the Minister of Town and Country Planning), he was informed that he could only work certain hours as laid down by the Ministry. The hours seem long enough to me—7.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. in winter, to 8.30 p.m. in summer (no Sundays)—but to blacksmith Sydney Moss it seemed an unwarranted restriction on his right to please himself when he worked.

Now, during my wartime experience as a tractor-driver, I many times had to visit the local blacksmith for repairs. And many fascinated hours I spent watching him fashion the hot metal to his liking. The swing of his arms, the rhythm of his blows, the sureness of all his movements showed only too clearly how that man loved his work. It cannot be different with the blacksmith of Staverton to-day, for no craftsman under present conditions need work unduly long hours if he doesn't want to—and blacksmiths are in particularly short supply and can get their own price for their services.

(Continued on page 4)

COAL SHORTAGE— BUT STILL EXPORTED

AFTER boasting about the high figures for the export of coal, "grave concern" is now being felt in high places in the industry about a growing shortage in coal stocks here at home. "I dread the possibility of another winter like 1946-7," said Lord Hyndley.

But has he stopped the export of coal? Not on your life! In the 44 weeks ending November 4th, nearly 12 million tons were exported. We may again have to face the misery and cold of January and February 1947, but foreign currency must still be earned by sending away the coal we may need ourselves!

As we go to Press, the Minister of Fuel has announced that we shall in fact have to import a few million tons of coal—from America! Planned economy, maybe, but for what?

When Good Intentions Go Astray

And a Good Example of Initiative and Cooperation

WELL-MEANING people, anxious to improve social conditions, spend their lives pushing laws through Parliament and by-laws through Councils to house the people and to preserve the amenities of their physical surroundings. They conscientiously compile statistics of the number of houses required and the number which can be built in a year, and feel that, not in vain are they devoting themselves to public service and good works. But the requirements of the export industry, of government office building, and of war production, make

nonsense of their careful calculations, their statistics are bandied about by vote-catching politicians, and the number of houses built falls further and further behind the increasing demand. And the legislation which they fostered with such patience becomes, not an instrument for making life pleasanter, but a plaything for the neat and tidy, barren and empty minds of municipal bureaucrats.

Mr. Edward Hooper, a small-holder of Morden, Dorset, has been ordered by the Wareham magistrates to demolish the two bedrooms of his five-room bungalow because they contravened local town planning requirements when they were added to the house fourteen years ago. A solicitor assured the court that the rooms are well-built, large, light, airy, and properly ventilated. But the history of the case is this:

"The bungalow was built by Mr. Hooper's parents in 1931, and the original building was not subject to planning control. But in 1936 two bedrooms were added. The Council say no plans were submitted.

"The Council objected, but found they had no power to order the structure to be pulled down until, in 1948, the Town and Country Planning Act became law.

"This Act gave them retrospective powers, and although Mr. Hooper had been in peaceful occupation of the smallholding for many years, tending his cows and pigs and living in the bungalow with his son, the Council served a notice peremptorily requiring him to demolish the whole building by the end of this year."

Was this what the people who framed the Town and Country Planning Act envisaged? The main purposes of this Act were to give powers to enable local authorities to prevent sporadic and anti-social building of the type of the speculative ribbon developers of the inter-war years, and to prevent speculation in land values whereby land-owners could sit back while other people's labour pushed up the value of their sites, and then sell for enormous sums. The way in which this is to be stopped is by making a "Development Charge" whenever the value of land is increased. (Incidentally, it is characteristic of the reformists that having decided that speculation in land values is anti-social and therefore immoral, they proceed not to abolish it but to nationalise it.) Now, while Mr. Hooper's bedrooms are to be demolished (I wonder how many houses his local council has built?) there is a glaring example of how, on a much bigger scale, the T. & C.P. Act has failed to do anything effective, within a few hundred yards of *Freedom's* office in central London. The Holborn Borough Council has built some blocks of family flats, very well designed by architects Anthony Chitty and Robert Hening. Their questionable feature is their great height, which was made necessary by the price that had to be paid for the land—evidently that part of the Act was not made retrospective.

Now this height and the population density which results from it (much higher than that recommended in the County of London Plan), demands plenty of open space around the flats. But two huge, high and monumentally ugly blocks of government offices have been erected immediately in front of the flats, on the south (i.e., sunny) side, with the full blessing of the Town and Country Planning Act.

It is not inappropriate to draw attention to two recent examples of the absurdity of municipal dictatorship. Council tenants at Freckenham, Suffolk, have been told not to hang out their washing on Sundays "because it annoys churchgoers", and Mr. James Mulhall who painted his house cream while every other house on the estate has been painted red, has been given three weeks' notice to leave unless he obeys an order by Warrington Rural District Council to repaint the house its original colour. No doubt the Council was motivated by the most praiseworthy of motives—the desire to keep the estate as a whole attractive—perhaps red houses really are more desirable than cream ones. But how refreshing after this story is an illustrated account in the August issue of the *Architectural Review* of a "curious and significant" experiment in a new housing estate in Sweden. "The architects—two brothers, Erik and Tore Ahlsén have desired the whole community to take an interest and pride in their new communal buildings to such an extent

that they have permitted and encouraged anyone who wishes to lend a hand in decorating the façades in their own fashion with brightly coloured distemper." The *Review* calls this a "charmingly naive" idea, but it's a better idea than that of the Warrington Rural District Council.

And how much more refreshing, too, is a report in *Reynolds News* (12/11/50) of a scheme in which hundreds of families, not content to wait for politicians to fulfil their astronomical promises, are building their own houses in their spare time.

It all started at a meeting of the British Legion Branch at Birmingham Post Office factory. In a discussion on the problem of members living in furnished rooms, Mr. Lavender said jokingly: "We shall have to build houses for them."

Then he found it really could be done and soon 50 men were at work in their spare time building their own homes.

The houses are being built by groups of families. In each group there is an expert bricklayer, carpenter, plumber and so on. The men without any special skill act as general labourers. Where there is a shortage of experts, scores of men are going to evening classes to learn building trades ready for the day when they will start building their own homes.

The first 12 houses are now occupied. Owned communally, they cost £800 each, are allocated on a points scheme, and are rented at 25s. a week. C.W.

SHADES OF "1984"?

Let the Traffic Flow!

IT has been announced that an official Commission is to enquire into the condition of London's traffic and to make the usual recommendations for solving the problems of travel in the world's greatest city.

For in dealing with traffic control in London several characteristics of the British genius for organisation, the genius for "muddling through", the genius for compromise and the genius for improvisation. That all these undoubtedly worthy geni result in chaos is unfortunate, but it does at least give an opportunity for the good old British remedy of "too little and too late" also to get a look in.

Recently, the sprightly *London Evening Standard* has been featuring the views of its readers and their suggestions for eliminating the causes of the fact that, for example, it may take 30 mins. to travel a mile through Central London. Some of these suggestions are pretty wild, and since it is obvious that what really matters is not the happiness of the denizens of London, but simply that the vehicles in the streets keep moving, I feel moved to make the following suggestions to whoever may be reading and/or caring:

1. The fault lies not in the number of vehicles on the roads, but in the fact that so many of them have to stop now and

again. This could be remedied by speeding up the schedules of buses, trams and trolley-buses (this may result in strikes of transport workers, but there are plenty of conscripts in the Forces to replace them) and by running passenger vehicles direct from starting point to destination without stopping to pick up passengers. This latter is a potent cause of delay, and it is quite unrealistic and old-fashioned to imagine the carrying of passengers as of more importance than running to schedule.

2. All pedestrians should be medically examined, and only the physically fit should be allowed within 6 miles of Piccadilly Circus. This is because all pedestrians in that area should proceed everywhere "at the double". (Ex-inmates of detention barracks will obviously be at an advantage here, but the remainder can attend training classes on the nights when they are not brushing-up their Civil Defence. They will soon get used to it.)

3. All cyclists must fit "mini-motors" to their cycles. The cost of this will be met by deductions from the pay-packets at the rate of not more than £5 per week.

To restrict private travel to those important enough to be able to afford it, the price of petrol shall be increased to 10/- per gallon.

4. The Traffic Controller for the Metropolis will work out "norms" for times of travel from point to point. Socialist competition will be inaugurated and all who better the Controller's "norm" (it'll take some doing!) will be given medals and titles ranging from *Street Sparrow*, *Second Class to Efficient Eagle of Travel in the Metropolis*, *Gold Star*.

5. To deal with the unpatriotic slackers who sabotage the efficient flow of traffic by stopping after hitting a pedestrian in a motor vehicle, by walking—or even standing still (!)—if a pedestrian, or by failing to keep within the norm three days running, a force of plain-clothes officers with "walkie-talkie" apparatus in their hats will race continuously through the streets on roller skates. These officers will have the power to (a) call up a Flying Squad car to carry off the offender, or (b) deal with him on the spot by shooting him and stuffing him down a drain out of the way of the traffic, according to the enormity of his offence.

6. If, by any fantastic combination of unforeseen accidents, a traffic jam does occur, a special squad of Shock Workers with high-speed bulldozers and steam-hammers can be called out who will immediately clear a path through the stationary vehicles, pile them up at the side of the road and flatten them into scrap, then cast it off to be used in the construction of helicopters from which uniformed traffic police keep observation on all travellers and, of course, on their own "walkie-talkie" officers.

These suggestions should be regarded as only a beginning, but if, to the more libertarian of our readers, all this seems rather ruthless, [we] must ask those readers to remember that next year we shall be entertaining many visitors from the dollar countries and it is absolutely imperative that we impress them with our efficiency and go-ahead, Western methods.

After all, the only other real alternative is decentralisation, and that can only lead to chaos—or even anarchy!

HUMMING-BIRD.

WHO WANTS TO WORK?

(Continued from page 3)

No, this blacksmith works because he loves his work, because his work is useful and is an essential part of agriculture—the production of our food—and because he finds pleasure in "exercising the energies of his mind and soul as well as of his body". But Mr. Prodnoze from the Ministry seeks to confine human creativity within the bounds of his red tape.

The milkman, too, seeks to please himself—within pretty narrow limits, after all—when he shall serve the community. He wants to serve the community better; he wants to get up earlier than he needs, but a union bureaucrat is fearful lest it create a precedent and the employers want all their roundsmen to do the same and so the union official might have a dispute on his hands.

But haven't the other roundsmen the strength and the guts to refuse to start earlier if they don't want to? Or have they only the courage to dictate to their fellow workers and not to their boss? It is just as bad for a minority to be restricted by a majority as the other way round, and we all know there is enough stupidity inseparable from the worker-boss set-up without the unions thinking some up, too.

If workers' control and the dignity of labour are ever to be realities, we who struggle for them to-day must never forget that just as important as the individual's responsibility to society is society's responsibility to the individual. By all means let us reject useless toil, but let us realise that our contribution to the wealth of our community comes only through our healthy satisfaction with our work. We must hold our own freedom in our own creative hands.

P.S.

Meetings and Announcements

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Lecture-Discussion Meetings are held Every Sunday at 7.30 at THE TRADE UNION CLUB, Great Newport Street W.C.1 (near Leicester Square Station)

NOV. 26th Open Discussion "FUTURE ORGANISATION OF MEETINGS"

(All interested are welcome)

DEC. 3rd DEBATE "THAT THE CRUSADE FOR WORLD GOVERNMENT OFFERS NO SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF WORLD PEACE"

Proposer: Philip Sansom (London Anarchist Group) Opposer: Harold Bidmead (Crusade for World Government)

DEC. 10th FILM SHOW "CIVILISATION ON TRIAL IN SOUTH AFRICA"

Michael Scott's famous film, with a speaker from S. Africa ALL WELCOME ADMISSION FREE FULL DISCUSSION

OPEN-AIR MEETINGS

Every Sunday at 3.30 Hyde Park

Speakers: S. E. Parker, Jack Rubin, Philip Sansom

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

INDOOR MEETINGS

EVERY SUNDAY AT 7 p.m.

at the CENTRAL HALLS, 25 Bath Street.

with Frank Leech, John Geffney, Eddie Shaw, J. Raeside

COLNE & NELSON DISTRICT

Sunday, November 26th at 2.30 p.m.

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

"The State and The Individual"

NORTH-EAST LONDON GROUP

Discussion Meetings Fortnightly

7.30 p.m.

Enquiries c/o Freedom Press

NOV. 28th "SUPERSTITION, MAN'S HERITAGE"

DEC. 12th Bob Linden

"1984: THE SOCIAL SATIRE"

A Successful Debate in Lancs.

LOCAL newspapers are not always impartial in their acceptance of letters to the editor, but the local papers in this district seem to offer an open forum for the expression of opinion on almost any subject.

Following a newspaper controversy with the local Communist boss, we were challenged to a debate and this took place on Sunday, 12th November, before an audience of 150 people, most of whom were not partisans of either side but readers whose interest had been aroused by the "Letters to the Editor".

David Pude, speaking on our behalf, proposed the motion "The Communist Party of Great Britain has omitted to state any policy other than that which has brought disaster in Russia." David Pude, who supported all his statements with quotations from Communist sources, denied that the policies of communism were based upon the interests of the community, and pointed out that the leaders had forced the rank and file to accept communism with the enthusiasm of a religious order, picked out Lenin as the "godhead".

He attacked Stakhanovism, which he described as the old capitalist tactic of raising the norm of work resurrected under a new name. Far from making history, he claimed that the Communist Party in Russia had been jockeyed into the position they occupy, and that the British Communist Party would not be able to avoid a similar disaster.

Hubert Smith did not reply to David Pude's accusations about the methods employed in Russia, and said that whatever price the Russian people had had to pay for the benefits they received from the present regime had been worth while. He compared conditions existing in Russia in pre-revolution days with conditions to-day, but he failed to give the whole story. For instance, he omitted the fact that the Soviet high schools are

closed to the children of the working-class because of the high fees charged—he omitted to state that the workers' convalescent homes in Odessa are reserved for Stakhanovites and Communist party officials. He was enthusiastic about the legality of trade unions in Russia, and compared the single list elections in Russia, with elections in certain districts of South Wales, where the Labour candidates are returned unopposed by either Liberals or Conservatives, but he did not mention the freedom of all parties, including the Welsh Nationalists, and occasional Communists, etc., to put up candidates if they wish to do so.

A lively discussion followed this glowing description of the workers' "paradise" and Hubert Smith caused amusement when he attempted to explain the difference between capitalist profit and soviet surplus. He was forced to admit that the Communists believe it is necessary to have a managerial class in society, and during the discussion, the bourgeois nature of the Communist party became increasingly apparent.

Colne

K.R.

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Gosport: F.G.* 5/-; London: F.E.D.* 5/-; York: H.A.A. 7/-; Wooler: J.R.* 2/6; Northwood: E.H. 6/3; Anon.* 2/6; London: W.E.D.* 8/-; Sheffield: H.W. 4/-; London: C.W. 5/-.

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*After initials indicates contributors to the 5/- a month scheme proposed by a London reader.

Letters

AMELIORATION AND REFORM

I MUST confess that when I, an anarchist, have joined in in any action to obtain shorter working hours or more pay, it was the extra leisure or the extra cash I was after. For when the "effects of capitalism" hit me in the midriff, I take what steps I can to "ameliorate" them; and I am sure that your correspondent "Germinal" is not such a mug as to neglect any "amelioration" that he can manage in his own standard of living, although both he and I wish to go the whole hog of social revolution if we can. I have noticed that all the other people who have joined with me in such actions, whatever their blether about achieving socialism, etc., acted from precisely the same motives as myself. On this basis we tried to act in solidarity, but to achieve an understood aim, not out of reverence for an ideal of Solidarity.

"Germinal" seems to misunderstand people's real motives for reformist action. These motives are entirely short-term; to censure them is to invite ridicule—for do not all of us use reformism when it suits us personally? We know perfectly well that forcing a 2/6d. rise on the pay-packet will probably be accompanied by a 3/- rise in the cost of living, but if we neglect to force the pay rise we will still have to meet the extra 3/- on living costs, as other blokes are struggling for as great a whack as they can manage to get. So we all join in bread-and-butter reformism—but haggling with the management for the extra half-crown in no way prejudices our claim to expropriate the whole works! For such a claim will be implemented not by our ethical right, but by our actual might.

The day-to-day reformist haggling that we all engage in is not to be confused with the reformism of those who make a career out of it. I think that no ardent young anarchist need fear for his revolutionary chastity being unconsciously contaminated by reformist practices—in fact he will have to work quite hard if he is to muscle in on the reformist racket, as competition is quite stiff.

"Germinal" warns us that unless we hearken to the brave words of "Mother Earth" 1909, and pull our socks up, we may deserve the epithets of our opponents. I would like to ask—which particular epithets? Most of the abusive epithets hurled at anarchists—coming from the opponents as we know them—are really priceless compliments.

Fraternally,
WEEK-END REVOLUTIONARY.

* See "We Must Not Compromise", *Freedom*, 30/9/50.

SIR,

I think that "Week-end Revolutionary" does not understand my article correctly. My intention was simply to re-affirm the uncompromising nature of revolutionary anarchism. I cannot remember having stated that workers should refrain from getting as much as they can out of the Capitalist and I can assure your correspondent that if my fellow-workers went on strike for an increase in pay I should not hesitate to join them. Indeed, I should be damned silly if I didn't.

"Week-end Revolutionary's" mistake lies in his misunderstanding of the fundamental theme of my article, which was that anarchists should not blind themselves that reformist activities are in any way revolutionary or potentially revolutionary acts. Also, that they should not go before the workers with programmes of immediate demands and claim that the achievement of such would be a step on the way to revolution. Demands for improvements in the status quo are not revolutionary, but simply acts of survival similar to jumping out of the way of a motor car.

It is of little use entering into an argument over whether one participates in reformist strikes from solidaric or selfish motives. The egoist versus altruist controversy is as old as that between the organisers and non-organisers. In any case truth is probably a synthesis of the two attitudes.

GERMINAL.

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