

WAR

For Anarchism

COMMENTARY

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NOVEMBER 1942.

TWOPENCE.

1917—A Symbol of Workers' Solidarity

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS of 1917 were the most important events of the twentieth century. All over the world anarchists and revolutionists rallied in support of the heroic actions of the Russian workers and peasants who overthrew the black reaction of Tsarism, and demanded an ending of the Great War. Despite the warnings of the anarchists however, the power which the workers had wrested from the Tsar and the landowners, was seized by the Bolshevik Party and was ruthlessly used by them to suppress all opposition on the part of the Russian workers to the new state.

In 1917 the future developments foretold by the Anarchists were not generally foreseen. After the heroism and self-sacrifice shown by the workers and peasants, it seemed inconceivable that after a few years under Bolshevik power they should be reduced to famine, the power of their Soviets broken, and that the voices of those who, like the Kronstadt sailors, demanded a return to the slogan "All power to the workers' and peasants' Soviets", should be silenced by massacre or imprisonment. These events were still in the future.

WHAT RUSSIA SYMBOLIZED IN 1917

In 1917 Russia was a symbol of fraternity among the workers of the warring nations. Inspired by the Soviets and by the fraternization between the German and Russian soldiers on the Eastern Front, mutinies broke out in both the Austro-German and the Allied armies, while strikes and demonstrations for peace occurred among factory workers. The Russian revolution stimulated and brought out the workers' natural hatred and disgust for the war between capitalist ruling groups.

WHAT RUSSIA STANDS FOR TO DAY

In 1942 Russia stands not for the overthrow of the corrupt ruling classes, with their secret commercial agreements, and mutual banking arrangements; not for the revolutionary solidarity of the oppressed classes everywhere, and the end of the Second World War; the Soviet Union, in alliance with those same corrupt ruling-groups, calls for the *intensification* of the fratricidal conflict, and is symbolized by the Second Front.

In 1917 the rulers of the Entente sought to stem the tide of international solidarity released by the Russian revolution, by means of atrocity stories from Russia, and insinuated that the famous "sealed train" in which Lenin was conveyed from Switzerland across Germany to Russia, showed that the revolution was really directed by the German government. But in 1942, Churchill and Stalin, bitter enemies in the 1919 to 1921 period, meet in amity and exchange jovial compliments. And all this in spite of the fact that Russia started the war in alliance with Germany, earning Churchill's most savage phrases and the most biting cartoons of Low and others.

WHENCE THIS CHANGE?

The October celebrations invite the query "Why has this transformation occurred?" The reason is not far to seek. The 1917 hostility of the ruling groups was directed against *Workers' power* in Russia. To-day the need for such hostility has disappeared—the workers no longer hold power, nor have they done so for many long years past. The ruling class of the Tsars, once reckoned the most ruthless in the world, has given place to a ruling clique more savage and cynical still—the Communist

Dictatorship. It is no surprise therefore that this regime should be extolled by the barons of capitalism like Joe Davis, Henry Ford, and Lord Beaverbrook. Such men, lukewarm critics until recently, of Hitler's regime, have nothing to criticize in Stalin's iron bureaucracy.

It is not the short-lived triumphs of the Revolution which are extolled by Stalin's allies. The Draconian decrees for enforcing discipline—the harshest in the world—in the Red Army; the increased power of the Army Chiefs obtained by the abolition of the political commissars; and extreme measures to control the population; these are the things the "Daily Worker" and the capitalist Press hold up for admiration. Refugees from German-occupied Ukrainian territory were denied admission to Kuibyshev by the simple bureaucratic expedient of refusing them food cards. Long prison sentences are inflicted on working class women, who have stolen a little food (Stalin had many-coursed banquets for Beaverbrook and Wendell Willkie). Mass transportations of German colonists resident for several generations in Russia, are carried out by the Soviet State. These are the 'triumphs' celebrated by Stalin and his allies.

REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALISM AND SOVIET JINGOISM

The Internationalist ideals of the revolution, have been replaced by a nationalist propaganda expressed in films about national heroes of Tsarist times such as Alexander Nevsky and General Suvorov. No notice is taken of the irony implicit in the fact that another "patriotic" film is shown of the peasant leader Pugachev, who was hunted out and hanged by this same General Suvorov. Despite propaganda-denials, the Stalinist leadership declared over a year ago, that the German workers are equally guilty with their Nazi rulers. Molotov fans the flames of race hatred with atrocity stories, and Ludmilla Pavlichenko, the Soviet glamour-girl touring America, boasts of the 309 German soldiers she has shot.

And now the Soviet leaders and their C.P. lackeys in this country have launched a "Hang Hess" campaign, despite the fact that at the time when Hess landed in this country, Stalin was still allied with Hitler! It is difficult to see what socialist triumph will be celebrated if Hess is hanged by a capitalist government!

Still demanding the support of the workers on the strength of the revolutionary triumphs of 1917 which it has obliterated, the Soviet State to-day stands for the most efficient and reactionary means of exploiting the workers. Communists in industry demand concessions to the bosses, urge increased production without increased pay, report absenteeism to the management, and provide blacklegs to break working-class solidarity in strikes. A more shame-

less and shameful betrayal of the ideals of the Revolutions of 1917 it would be hard to imagine.

Anarchism stands for international revolutionary solidarity between workers of all lands and of all races. We anarchists honour and salute the memory of the revolutionary workers and peasants in Russia of 1917. We declared then and we declare now, that the success of the social revolution will depend on the workers organizing society through their own institutions and *utterly destroying the state*, or else the state will once more establish the counter-revolution. Only through the social revolution, the uprising of the workers and their international working class solidarity across all nationalist barriers, can overthrow the reaction of class-society with its attending poverty, disease, misery and war, throughout the world.

Glasgow Meetings

EVERY SUNDAY

LECTURES ON ANARCHISM
CENTRAL HALL,
25, BATH STREET,

Doors Open at 6.30 p.m., Commence 7 p.m.

OPEN AIR MEETING, 3.30 P.M.
BRUNSWICK STREET,

DEBATE

SHOULD THE WORKERS SUPPORT
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF G.B.
or THE ANARCHIST FEDERATION.

For S.P.G.B. John Higgins.

For A.F. Jimmy Roeside.

CENTRAL HALL,
SUNDAY, 8th NOVEMBER, 7 p.m.,

SOCIAL & DANCE

IN AID OF
THE ANARCHIST PRISONERS' FUND.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4th 7.30 p.m.
CENTRAL HALL,

TICKETS FROM THE ANARCHIST BOOKSHOP,
127, GEORGE STREET.

What's the Difference?

A Comparison of Bolshevism and Nazism

"Clever Fascists revealed that the important thing in Russia was not the aim but the technique. Here finally was the weapon to produce and maintain a society with all the effective cohesion of the anthill, and direct it to any one aim one might choose."

Edgar Mowrer: "Germany puts the clock back."

THE PARTY AND THE LEADER.

IN GERMANY, as in Russia, we see a political party crushing all other parties, even allies, and developing from a party dictatorship into a personal dictatorship. Hitler crushed not only the Social Democratic Party, the K.P.D. and the Liberals, but also his ally, the Nationalist Party.

Under Lenin, the dictatorship of the Communist Party was supposed to be against the counter-revolutionaries. (Actually the farseeing counter-revolutionaries secured jobs in the dictatorship). Instead Lenin used his dictatorship to crush his ally the Left Social-Revolutionary Party and the Socialists and Anarchists.

Just as in Germany the party dictatorship led to the worship of Hitler, so in Russia the same principle has developed into the *real* worship of the divine Stalin. Russian "poetry" is mainly praise of the supernatural powers of Stalin. "Stalin gives us bread," "Stalin gives us tractors," "Stalin makes the corn to grow," "Stalin never sleeps."

THE STATE AND THE TRADE UNIONS.

The Russian trade unions are state institutions and have no relationship to free trade unions (see *War Comm.*, Dec. '41). They are used by the Russian state as a means of disciplining and further exploiting the workers. Nazi Germany quickly learned from Russia and created state trade unions. The German Labour Front under Dr. Ley is not different in principle to the Russian unions. In both countries the state unions are essential means of controlling the masses and maintaining the Party dictatorship.

"THE PARTY OF THE WORKING CLASS."

It would have been impossible for Hitler to have gained power by using an openly reactionary or conservative propaganda. To win the support of the German proletariat who were losing faith in their Communist and Socialist leaders, he had to make his party appear to be working class. To that end he took over much of the discarded propaganda of the Marxist parties as well as their signs and symbols.

The full title of Hitler's party is the National Socialist German Labour Party. The Nazi banner is the red flag (with, of course, a swastika on a white inset). The Party song cries: "Open the streets to the brown battalions, raising the red flag on high." The air of the Horst Wessel song, second anthem of Germany, was that of a familiar Communist song. (In turn the German Communists took it from the Salvation Army. Where the Salvationists found it I cannot tell, but it is impossible to believe that they came by it honestly.)

by

Tom Brown

May Day, long celebrated by Continental workers, was adopted by the Nazis as a fascist holiday, and when they gained power it became a state holiday. In Russia too May Day was transformed from an independent working-class holiday to a state institution celebrated, as in Germany, by a threatening military parade.

Lenin, as Hitler did later, gave his party a revolutionary sounding name in order to deceive the toiling masses. The Bolsheviks, until 1919 known as the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, adopted the name of Communist. Until then the name of Communist had been applied only to Anarchists. Indeed, many of the Bolshevik leaders opposed the new title because of this. Crafty old Lenin overcame their opposition and kidded the revolutionary workers and peasants with the "new party."

The work, the writings, the life of Lenin reveal a political Jekyll and Hyde. In public he spoke of his faith in the workers; for general consumption he wrote semi-anarchist works like *State and Revolution*. Within the Party he sneered at the workers and advocated a middle-class dictatorship.

SOCIALISM.

Hitler understands the value of Socialist names and slogans. While Russia has "Socialism in one country" or National Socialism, Germany has "National Socialism" or Socialism in one country. Some socialists will deny that Socialism exists in Germany (usually these persons are completely uninformed about Nazi Germany), but if we accept the State Socialists' idea of Socialism—that is state control of economy and the complete subjection of individualism to the state, then the name must be applied

to Germany. *We prefer to call it state capitalism, but that is also the name we give to the Socialism of the Marxist parties.*

Against the *state* control of Fascists and Socialists, the Anarchist movement sets the principle of the common ownership of the means of production, controlled by the *workers*.

THE SECRET POLITICAL POLICE.

One of the first acts of Lenin's regime was the organisation of a new political police force more efficient, and therefore more terroristic, than that of the Tsar. It was known as the Chrezvytchaynaya Komisia (Extraordinary Commission), or briefly, the Cheka. Its name was later changed to Gossudarstvennoye Politikcheskoye Upravlyeniye — the universally dreaded GPU. Allegedly formed for the purpose of crushing counter-revolution, the GPU was used to kill or imprison revolutionary rivals of the Bolsheviks, such as the Anarchists and Social-Revolutionaries. Later, and here it reached fruition, it became the weapon of Stalin's personal dictatorship against his rivals or critics within the Party—Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinovieff and most of the old Bolshevik leadership. Any head which stands above the rest must be lopped off.

Hitler learned much from Lenin. As soon as the Nazis took power they instituted a secret political police force in the same form as the GPU. Here again the new police force was to combat the enemies of the "revolution" and was quickly used against the members of the Nazi Party, Roehm and others, who rivalled Hitler. Working internationally as well as internally, the Gestapo (telegraphic language for the geheime Staatspolizei) became as dreadful as the GPU.

NATIONALISM.

The nationalism of the Nazi Party is so well-known and so much has been written of it that it would be superfluous to outline it here. But the extreme nationalism of Bolshevik Russia is not so well-known for the regime of Lenin was ushered in with shouts of internationalism. However, Stalin has been unable to maintain the fiction and has allowed "soviet patriotism" to become openly advertised.

Devotees of the Russian cinema must have noticed the dropping of subjects like "Potemkin" and "October" and their replacement by adulatory biographies of Czarist heroes, Nevsky, Peter the Great and Katharine. The creation of military medals in the name of Czarist generals is another sign. Here is the testimony of a pro-Stalinist journalist writing in the extremely pro-Stalinist Beaverbrook press:

"It is not Communism that is driving this nation to the limit of its endurance to defeat the Germans. It is patriotism.

They measure their conduct by the fact that millions have died and millions are suffering for the great privilege of being Russians.

The Government has gone deep back into Russian history to give the people this comfort. The most popular opera running to-day is built round Suworov, Catherine the Great's general.

In the last scene, after singing a warning that Napoleon will rise to menace holy Russia, he kneels to kiss the yellow silken flag on which is embroidered a double-headed black eagle of the Czars.

The most awesome figure I have seen on the stage here so far is Catherine herself. She is given the reverence our playwrights love to give to Queen Victoria. And always the best scene in a Soviet drama, opera or ballet, is the Court scene.

It seems to a foreigner that it is the real wish here to project on the stage characters in Russian history who were great rulers and great Russians."

"Daily Express", 5/8/42.

The revival of patriotism in Russia was not accidental; it was inevitable. Patriotism has nothing to do with the old Greek love of one's native city. It now means the state religion representing the interests of the ruling class. If we have a ruling-class we must have patriotism.

WHY DO THEY FIGHT?

In Germany and Russia essentially the same political system exists. There is no freedom of speech, press, organisation or person. The same propaganda technique and political methods are used. Hearing this, some naive persons say: "Then why do the two countries fight? If Hitler and Stalin have so much in common, why the present war?"

Even a brief examination of wars shows that nations do not war for ideological reasons but for economic ends. Not for religions and isms, but for gold mines, diamond fields, coal, land or strategic positions. Russia possesses all that Germany lacks, agricultural spaces, oil, timber and metals. That their ideas allowed them to unite was demonstrated by the Soviet-German Pact of 1939, but economics is stronger than ideology.

We are often asked which we would choose as the lesser of two evils, Nazism or Bolshevism. In a certain state of the U.S.A. it was once the custom to allow a condemned man to choose his form of execution—hanging or shooting. Confronted by the grim choice one young man said "Neither". We also reject both evils.

We also deny that life is made up of choosing the lesser evil. We can choose good if we *will*. Neither the state control of National Socialism or Bolshevism but Free Communism—that is the choice of Anarchists.

THE AHMEDABAD SOCIAL STRIKE

THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS to minimise the importance and magnitude of resistance in India since the beginning of August, and to represent such resistance as mere sporadic hooliganism, has been given the lie by a report in the *News Chronicle* of the 19th October, which describes the social strike now in progress at Ahmedabad.

Ahmedabad is the great centre of the textile industry of India, and its many mills employ somewhere in the neighbourhood of 100,000 workers. On the 9th August, when the leaders of the Congress movement were imprisoned, the workers of Ahmedabad came out on strike in the cause of Indian freedom. The strike was complete, and has continued unabated for two and a half months. To-day not a single mill is working, and there seems no sign of the strike being broken or the men returning to work in the near future.

This strike is of peculiar interest to revolutionaries because it is a social strike in the most complete sense of the term. As the press report says, "There are no economic grievances and no political demands have been formally drawn up." The sole object of the strike is to secure the release of the Indian leaders and gain freedom from English domination. The Government has attempted to bargain on the economic field by "authorising the mill-owners to make advances in pay to the strikers", but these overtures have met with no response from the workers.

In a number of important respects this strike, which the government has so far failed to break or even to weaken, bears out in practice the anarchist theories of the social strike, and there are two points in particular which should be stressed.

The first is the lack of any apparent leadership in the strike. "All known Congress leaders and agitators have been arrested", but this does not appear to have made any difference to the determination of the workers of Ahmedabad to maintain the strike to the bitter end. Nor has the imprisonment of the militants lessened the more active demonstrations of anti-government feeling. Each day 20,000 copies of a duplicated strike bulletin are distributed throughout the city. On one occasion a daylight curfew declared by the strikers was observed by the whole population of the city. It would appear, in fact, that the workers have developed a revolutionary feeling which places them ahead of the Congress militants and makes the loss of leaders an asset rather than a liability. Leaders,

like the leaders of the English General Strike, always become followers when the revolutionary instant arrives and any influence they exert inevitably holds back the workers from strong revolutionary action. At this moment the release of the Congress leaders in India might well have the effect of impeding the revolutionary tendency of Indian resistance, as an attempt would be made to turn the movement back into the channel desired by the bourgeois leaders of Congress. This, from a social point of view, would be a tragedy after the way in which the workers of Ahmedabad have shown their willingness and ability to take affairs into their own hands and challenge governments without reliance on any leaders or political party.

While, therefore, we condemn the Government's action in imprisoning the Congressmen as we condemn any policy of coercion, we consider that the workers of India should not be led by a feeling of loyalty for their bourgeois leaders into a line of reformism and compromise which would merely result in the substitution of an Indian ruling class for an English ruling class.

The second important fact concerning this strike is the extent of co-operation between the strikers within the city and the peasants without. Many of the workers are themselves of peasant extraction, and more than half the men on strike have gone into the villages, where they are assisting the farmers in the harvest, in return for food. This co-operation seems to be one of the reasons why the strike has so far succeeded. It is reasonably certain that these strikers have no funds like English trades unions to keep their men fed during the strike, but in the co-operation of the peasants they have something much better, for strike funds do not last for ever and in a situation of social strife bread is more reliable than money. Without food the strikers of Ahmedabad could not have continued to fight the government, and without the co-operation of the surrounding peasantry they would have had no food.

Out of these circumstances arise two important generalisations which we can extend from the Ahmedabad strike to our general revolutionary conceptions. Firstly, that the workers in this case had obviously maintained contact with the peasant life from which they sprang and had not yet developed a circumscribed urban mentality. This bears out the contention of anarchists that the messianic revolutionary role does not necessarily belong to industrial countries or to the industrial proletariat as

such, but that, on the contrary, revolutionary consciousness is frequently found to be more advanced in predominantly peasant countries where the village co-operative and communist tendencies influence the majority of the people. India is such a country, and for this reason the revolution in India, when it matures, is likely to follow a non-political and anti-authoritarian lines and to base itself on the tendencies already inherent in peasant life.

Secondly, that the assurance of an adequate supply of food for the people is a necessity for any kind of social struggle to succeed or even to be maintained for more than a short time. The importance of the factor of bread in the revolutions of this century should have made this fact abundantly clear. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that bread is the first necessity of a revolutionary strategy. Yet it has been the most neglected by professional revo-

lutionaries and politicians of the left. In a country like India it can be secured by gaining the support of the peasants for the revolutionary movement. In a country like England it would be necessary for the revolution to initiate some immediate and extensive improvement in farming methods which would ensure—as it could with ease—a sufficiency of food from the soil of England. Without food the best revolution will fail.

What the results of the Ahmedabad strike will be it is difficult to suggest, as the news in this country is deliberately curtailed and distorted. But even if it is and remains—as seems unlikely—an isolated incident, it will at least have provided us with an excellent example of the social strike in action and have emphasised many points with which the anarchists have long been concerned.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

THE CASE AGAINST LEGALISED ABORTION

"MEDICAL PRACTITIONER" WRITES:

I have read Mr. Hewetson's article "Abortion and the "State" in the Mid-October issue of *War Commentary* with interest as it expresses a viewpoint which I held in my early youth, but which I now find untenable.

I oppose Mr. Hewetson's view that individuals have the right "to make decisions regarding the affairs of their most private lives" when those decisions involve the sacrifice of a human life. I consider the foetus from the moment of conception to be a human being. People think, quite wrongly, that at the moment when the human being gives up its dependent existence in the womb where it is protected from changes in temperature, and is fed in one particular way, and then assumes another equally dependent existence outside the womb where, in order to survive it will need equally elaborate protection from changes in temperature and a slight modification in its method of feeding—that only at that moment are its rights as a human being established.

The oft-mentioned contention that the foetus is not a human being because it has no independent existence is false. The new born babe is incapable of independent existence; it is unable to feed itself and differs from the unborn babe of, let us say, eight months' gestation, only in its method of breathing.

I stress this point because of similarity between the unborn babe, to whose life Mr. Hewetson seems so indifferent, and the babe already born, because it is a point not sufficiently appreciated.

It follows that if legalized abortion is justifiable because the mother for economic or social reasons desires it, the legalized murder of her month-old or

year-old infant is justifiable for the same reasons. I am sure, however, that Mr. Hewetson's desire of freedom of decision on the part of the mother would not admit the right to have the life of her new-born babe taken.

I wholeheartedly support the policy of widespread dissemination of knowledge of Birth Control methods. However, in circumstances where owing to ignorance of these methods or failure in their successful application an unwanted pregnancy has occurred, adoption of the baby is the best and most humane solution.

The demand for babies to be adopted, far exceeds the supply. I myself have been waiting over a year to adopt another baby and I know personally scores of others whose names are on the waiting lists of the Adoption Societies.

JOHN HEWETSON REPLIES:

I would like to stress at the outset that I do not regard the legislation of abortion as a *remedy*. What I wished to make clear was that abortion is an extremely prevalent practice; that this prevalence is largely dependent on the miserable economic prospects of the working class; and that the action of the State in making the practice illegal, in no significant degree reduces the frequency of abortions, but does secure that the operation is performed in the most unfavourable conditions possible.

I agree with "Medical Practitioner" that the distinction between abortion and infanticide is somewhat tenuous (the distinction between abortion and some methods of birth control, such as the intra-uterine pessaries, is also rather a nice one), nor do I think abortion in itself a good thing: it suffers from the disadvantages of other forms of surgical interference, with the addition of considerable emotional

(continued on page 16.)

ESSENTIAL WORKS ORDER

A Weapon for the Bosses

WAR COMMENTARY has often analysed the true function of the Essential Works Order, declaring that it is a measure principally designed to keep wages down, and facilitate absolute control by the bosses over the workers. But we have seldom seen such a bald statement of its uses to the Boss Class as is provided by the circular reproduced below. It forms part of a circular issued to foremen employed by a firm working on Government contracts in work of National Importance, and explains how the EWO can be used to "control" the workers. We feel that further comment is superfluous.

Notice to all Foremen.

"THE ESSENTIAL WORKS ORDER is intended as a system by which men may be prevented from walking off and walking on a job when and how they choose, or from being sacked without a just cause. It also insures against the possibility of a job being left high and dry, in so far as a week's notice must be given by both parties. If a man wants to leave, he must inform the foreman, who must inform us.

"This office will then send the foreman a release form on which the man states his reasons for wanting to leave. This form is then sent back to us and we make our statement. The whole decision as to whether a man may leave or not, rests upon the National Service Officer in London, who undertakes to make a decision within 7 days.

"It must be clearly understood, therefore, that cases of men who are useful to you must be treated in this way. On the other hand, should the case arise of a man who is absolutely useless to you behaving in such a way as to impede the work and you definitely feel that he would be best disposed of, he can be sacked immediately, on the grounds of serious misconduct. 'Serious Misconduct' takes the form of refusing to obey reasonable orders, being late or absent from work without proper reason. If you feel, however, that this man could be useful to you by teaching him a lesson, he can be suspended from work, without pay, for a period of not more than three days at any one time. It must be clearly understood also, that during this period of suspension, he is not allowed to leave the district. Steps such as these, of course, must be taken only after careful consideration and after authorisation from the Area Foreman or this office. When a foreman wants to dispose immediately of any useless member of his gang, the case should be reported to this office and a statement made of his 'serious misconduct'.

"In other words, the Essential Works Order make it possible for you to control your gang in various ways: firstly, by being able to kill any ideas men may have, that they can leave when and how they choose, secondly, it

gives you an opportunity, after consulting the Area Foreman, of strict measures with individuals who do not take the job seriously. A point of interest is that, if a man is being deferred by us on the grounds that he is doing essential work of National Importance, and if that man is A.1. Grade on medical examination, he can be put into the Army within three days, if he breaks the rules of the Essential Works Order. We should like foremen to make these facts quite clear to all members of their gang, especially to those who are wayward and unreliable.

"The Essential Works Order states that only 60 hours per week should be worked. We have never enforced this, as we do not think that a 60-hour week would appeal to our employees. If questions are asked, therefore, an interesting answer is that you have had trouble with your plant, which is often the case, or the job has been held up owing to bad weather conditions. The question of a 60 hour week should not arise on sites where we are not working as sub-contractors. On jobs where we are sub-contractors, the greatest possible care should be taken to work according to the rules and regulations of the Main Contractors. For example, on certain sites, the Main Contractors will not allow us to work on Sundays. This may often be overcome, however, by speaking to the Clerk of Works, or the Resident Engineer, on the grounds of the urgency of the job and the fact that the management make no claim on the Ministry for working over 60 hours per week and you may ask his personal permission to work."

WAR MINISTRY POST-WAR DREAM.

"Work on a plan for demobilisation after the war has already reached an advanced stage.

This was revealed by Lord Croft, Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the War Ministry, in the House of Lords yesterday.

'It is my personal desire that the Navy, Army and Air Force should, after this war, be in a position to select the men that they want instead of having to take anyone that they can get,' said Lord Croft."

Daily Mirror 8/10/42

* * * *

POLICE METHODS.

"Mr. E. G. Hemmerde, K.C., the Liverpool Recorder, who yesterday adjourned a case at Liverpool to inquire into a 17-year-old labourer's allegation that after being arrested he was beaten for three hours by two policeman, said to-day:

'It is no use telling me that this beating-up of arrested men in the Bridewell Police Station does not go on. I am not saying that it did happen in this case. I am certain this sort of thing does happen to extract admission and something has got to be done about it.'"

Evening Standard 9/10/42

HAVE YOU READ

● MALATESTA'S VOTE — WHAT FOR?

16 pp. 2d.

This pamphlet is in the form of a dialogue between an Anarchist and a Socialist and the whole subject of parliamentarianism is discussed.

● TOM BROWN'S TRADE UNIONISM OR SYNDICALISM 24 pp. 3d.

War Commentary readers are already familiar with Tom Brown's clear, straightforward articles. This pamphlet deals with the present union organisation, and contrasts with it the syndicalist methods of workers' organisation.

● GEORGE WOODCOCK'S NEW LIFE TO THE LAND

32 pp. 6d.

You need not be a land worker or specialise in the land question to understand and be interested in this pamphlet, now in its second printing. The reviewer in the *Spectator* wrote that "the reader would be ill advised to ignore this pamphlet . . . for it contains many pertinent things plainly said". We need hardly add that our readers interested in Anarchism, would be ill advised to ignore a work in which the Anarchist point of view on such an important industry is so clearly argued.

—oOo—

And have you read the other FREEDOM PRESS publications still in constant demand? You will find them and all Freedom Press publications still in print in our 16 page PUBLICATIONS LIST, available on application.

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GRANGE ROAD (Back of G.P.O.)

NOV. 1st. BILL GAPE "This Charity Racket"

NOV. 8th. GEORGE EASTMAN
... "Origin of State Control"

NOV. 15th. 'AQUARIUS' "Russia under the Czar"

NOV. 22nd REV. MORETON STANLEY
"The Humanitarianism of Jesus"

TYNE STRIKERS' GRIEVANCES

War Commentary pointed out in the Mid-October issue that the causes of the Tyne Shipyard Strike must be found in "a long series of provocative actions by the employers . . . and in the harsh conditions of employment" In the House on the 22/10/42, Mr. Adams asked Mr. Bevin if he was "aware that there were deep-seated causes of grievance in the matter of wages which were not attended to for months?" The Yellow Press should note.

Through

WAR WIDOWS MAY NOT GET PENSIONS

"Mrs. V. M. Perry, the soldier's widow, who was refused a war widow's pension on the ground that her husband, Rifleman F. H. Perry, was off duty when killed in the Middle East, was to-day granted her pension.

A Ministry of Pensions official told "The Star" this afternoon:— "This case does not establish any new principle.

"It is not the usual rule to give a pension under similar circumstances but the Minister has used his discretion in this case.

"The accident occurred in the Middle East, where the rule of the road is to drive on the right-hand side.

"In dealing with cases, the question has to be considered whether a soldier may have contributed to an accident by his own fault, neglect or misbehaviour."

The Star 21/10/42

KEEPING POLITICAL INTRIGUES IN THE DARK

"The personal letter file of Mr. E. T. Clark covering the period of 1923-1933 was suddenly withdrawn from sale just before these 9,000 letters were due to be auctioned. The reason for this was given that they might fall into the hands of enemy agents and might provide them with useful information.

Here is the *Tribune* Postscript: Clark was private secretary to President Coolidge. According to the Sale Catalogue, Clark's correspondence was mostly with people of note. They sought legislation in favour of their businesses, appointments to office for friends of the Republican Party, requested information, or begged Clark to intercede for them or their friends in matters pending before the various officials or commissions.

We think the American authorities would go far in cleaning up politics if they insisted on the publication of these letters in spite of the sudden convenient appearance of hypothetical enemy agents! "

Tribune 23/10/42

STARVATION IN A WORLD OF PLENTY

"A famine which may prove to be one of China's most disastrous, is being suffered in the Honan province in the area south of the Yellow River.

This famine is 20,000 miles in extent and is affecting the lives and livelihood of 20,000,000 people.

More than a third of these have already reached the border line of starvation.

A mass exodus has begun. Those not strong enough to trek are existing on grass roots and leaves.

The suicide rate is alarming, while children are dying in great numbers, or are abandoned by weakened parents".

Evening Standard 20/10/42

The Press

VICEROY'S OBLIGATIONS

"I hear a good deal of speculation about who is to be the next Viceroy of India.

In normal times, it is customary to tell a Viceroy-designate of his appointment six months before he is due to take up the post. This is to give him time to clear up his affairs—the appointment is for five years—and to get together the tremendous wardrobe necessary."

Evening Standard 22/10/42

STATE'S GRATITUDE

The Pensions Department was strongly criticized in the House, recently.

"There were three main points of criticism running through the speeches. The first was that the disability and dependants' pensions were insufficient. Flight sergeants, Ellis Smith pointed out, who fly over Germany night after night risking their lives to defend their country receive £2 6s. 8d. if they are 100 per cent. disabled. The widow of such a man, if she is over forty, gets 40s. An interesting point he made was that for the loss of a thumb an officer receives £120 while one of the other ranks receives only £60. As the loss of a thumb is far more serious for a manual worker than for a non-manual worker, this discrepancy is quite unreasonable.

The second point was the refusal of the Ministry to pay pensions in respect of men who are injured when off duty. And the third, the provision whereby parents of sons who are killed, only receive pensions if they are in permanent financial need."

Tribune 23/10/42

CHRISTIAN BISHOP?

Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Barnes, told Birmingham Diocesan Conference yesterday: "It is Christian to forgive those who do wrong, to forget injuries, to release the prisoners from their chains, to overcome evil with good."

News Chronicle 21/10/42

WITHOUT COMMENT

"Factory workers who fought for places on buses to get home to-day saw over 20 cars and taxis in a car park as they passed through West Hendon.

They were vehicles which had taken notabilities, officials, and even an M.P. to the opening lunch at a new Hendon British Restaurant in Edgware Road. The Restaurant is on a route well served by buses and trolley buses."

Evening News 24/10/42

STRIKES GO ON

"Disputes in September caused a stoppage of an aggregate of 53,000 working days, states Mr. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour, in a written reply.

25,000 workers were involved.

Seventy-four disputes were on wages questions and 49 on working arrangements or conditions."

Press 22/10/42

REFUGE IN SIBERIA

"Under an agreement between the British and Soviet Governments, 10,000 Polish nationals (women, children and old men), who took refuge in Siberia when their country was invaded in 1939 will be allowed to live in Uganda for the rest of the war. Fifteen hundred have already arrived."

Daily Sketch 15/10/42

Fancy Poles taking refuge in the Invader's country and Siberia of all places! Even Goebbels has not tried yet to make us believe that French soldiers "had taken refuge" in Germany, when Hitler invaded France.

GREENWOOD ON POST WAR BRITAIN

"Mr. Arthur Greenwood, M.P., said at Birmingham yesterday that one of the best ways of heartening the people and winning the war would be for all concerned in the nation's affairs to declare that the old days of poverty and insecurity were gone for ever.

"I am going to make it my business, as far as I can do it, to see that people who make pledges weigh in and fulfil them" he added."

News Chronicle 19/10/42

In April 1940, Mr. Greenwood did not seem to think that the days of poverty had gone for ever. This is what he said in a speech reported by the *Manchester Guardian* 29/4/40

"Arguing that plans should be prepared now to meet the post-war situation, Mr. Greenwood said that unless we prepared that situation was going to be worse than anything this country had ever seen. The 'Hungry Forties' would be nothing to it. Unless it was thought out in advance there would be a scale of unemployment in this country, never known before; he envisaged an army of 7,000,000 unemployed" *Speech reported in Manchester Guardian 29/4/40*

LECTURES

EVERY FRIDAY EVENING

7.0 p.m.

OCT. 30th. GENERAL DISCUSSION.

"The Russian Revolution"

NOV. 6th JIM BARKER.

"Experiences in Russia in 1937"

NOV. 13th Lecture to be announced.

QUESTIONS DISCUSSION

FREEDOM PRESS ROOMS

27, BELSIZE ROAD, LONDON, N.W.6.

(Swiss Cottage tube: 31 'bus route)

TREASURE on EARTH

THE CRY OF THE masters of the masses is "fight for your country." The response of the masses should of course, be "we will defend our country," but the difficulty lies in deciding what part of the country belongs to the masses. Most workers have not sufficient land to fill a flower pot. Under capitalism the only part of the country the workers will get, whether they fight or not, will be a plot, six foot by three, set apart for their reception, purchased by them during their lifetimes by rates, and charged to their relatives when they are dead.

In the pamphlet *New Life to the Land* (George Woodcock), it has been demonstrated that land is the source of all wealth, whether it be machines, factories, food or tin kettles. That life could be made more abundant by a recognition of this fact seems to have escaped the notice of the struggling masses. Immersed in political juggling, with the assistance of school and church, the workers are kept entirely ignorant of their role in life, and the means by which they live.

In the House of Commons sit fifty-five Land-Lords (these parasites must not be confused with landlords) representing 4,182,970 acres, who speak and vote on behalf of the landless—those who have no land. As their able assistants there are 14,406 parsons controlling land to the tune of 2,032,086 acres (see *The Great Robbery* by Graham W. Peace). These people agitate and pray for "our" country, the "our" in this case meaning theirs, for they draw rent from farmers, smallholders and nurserymen, to say nothing of the land that is leased for factories, workers' houses and brothels.

"The earth is the Lord's and fullness thereof"—this quotation is from a book written by a ghost, and in reality it is true; the earth is the Land Lords' the House Lords' the Factory Lords' and the political party Lords'. The workers even in wartime, are compelled to "pay" for the right to cultivate land in order to satisfy their needs.

Under the Enclosures Act the Lords and the Church—which are but one—stole the land from the common people and have since charged them for the right to live in it (see Graham W. Peace). Without free access to the land, man is compelled to sell his power to labour either on the farm, factory or mine. "Fighting for one's country" is a clever ruling class slogan which has done service in the past, but today even the most illiterate recognise the stupid lie.

There are 2,087 Land Lords, holding between them 2,264 estates totalling 16,358,137 acres which are rented. For this they receive by way of rent no less than £30,160,575 per annum (see Graham W. Peace). Something for nothing!

The farmer pays rent, which he collects from the produce bought by the consumer, so that, in fact, whether the worker buys potatoes, cabbages, coal, bread or tin openers, the Land Lord get his rake off, having done nothing for it. Even if the Land Lord is not prepared to "fight" for his country, he is quite willing to exploit the workers in order to maintain his dictatorship.

By an Act of Parliament (51. Geo. III, 1811) the Right Reverend Father in God, John, by Divine permission Lord Bishop of London, together with six others, took by the Enclosure Act 1,300 acres in Finchley. The local church got 229 acres, and the workers were awarded 24 acres which they have since been deprived of. In 1913 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners asked £1,000 per acre for this stolen land.

We must not overlook the land held by those two founts of wisdom, Oxford and Cambridge Universities. All the best people go to these great seats of learning; our rulers and masters and the dignitaries of the church. Oxford owns 71,134 acres in 48 counties in England and Wales, while Cambridge has 28,835 acres in Cambridgeshire and 72,125 acres in 34 other counties (Graham Peace).

Unlike political parties, the Anarchists do not believe that by some miracle worked in the House of Commons the land grabbers will hand over their loot to the workers, convinced of their own injustice. We must seize it as the Land Lords seized it; then and then only shall we be able to say honestly that we are fighting for "our" country.

JIM BARKER.

TWO SONGS FOR THE ANARCHISTS

I.

Though we fail
We have known
That the tale
Is our own,
That the tale
Of the well
That the world
Must tell
Has no word for buy,
And none for sell;
We draw from the spring
And we sing
As we draw from the well.

II.

Our song
Is the song of the earth
And the wings
Of the earth
Are the song we sing.
Remember the song
That we sing,
The song of the wings
Of the earth
In their flight
To be free.

ANON.

Questions and Answers

ANARCHISM and the "LAZY" MAN

ON HEARING THE ANARCHIST'S IDEAS on freedom within society, where no coercion of any sort will exist, people almost immediately ask the question, "What will you do with the man who will not work?" Obviously, they are not speaking personally, of course; they generally have in mind some person other than themselves. However, let us analyse the question further.

The question has obviously assumed that man by nature is averse to working, and is thus anti-social in this respect. Now all social theories whether anarchist, socialist or communist *must* be based on the assumption that *men are social*, that is, they will live and work together naturally, because by so doing they can individually enjoy life better than if they existed in isolated and ever-warring groups. Therefore, all such difficulties which are really based on the supposition that men are not social, can be raised not only against Anarchism alone, but against any system of society that one chooses to suggest.

RESULT OF LAZINESS.

But assuming for the purpose of discussion, that man unless he is forced to work by some means, would refuse to labour in a free society, then if all members of the community will not work, society would rapidly fall into decay and starvation and disease would set in. Machinery would rust; the earth would not be tilled; no food, clothes or other necessities of life would be produced; means of communication, such as roads and railways would fall into ruin, and we are presented with the picture of millions of people stubbornly refusing to lift a finger to save themselves! Rather fantastic, I am sure my reader will agree. But we find that the instinct of man, as in all living beings, is to survive, to live, to reproduce, so that before such a state of affairs as described above had arrived, people would bestir themselves in order to go on living rather than dying. Bitter experience would show that laziness, or refusal to work is detrimental to the human race: that nature compels us to work, in order that we may live.

"Ah", says the questioner, "what I meant was, not that all people are lazy, but just *some* of them. People are different, you know." Supposing even this were true, that only *some* men are lazy; if all the rest are contented in their work, all their needs satisfied, I don't think the few idle folk would make any difference to the happiness of the rest of society. It would be making trouble for its own sake to take any notice of the few drones. If, according to this supposition, more than a few are lazy, then the labours of the industrious may not be sufficient to sustain all and everyone's needs, with the consequent result that the living conditions will depreciate.

Since this would affect the slackers as well as the workers, the former would be forced by natural necessity to lend a hand in the production of goods, etc.

BAD CONDITIONS AS A CAUSE.

Agreed that to-day under capitalist exploitation, there is every evidence of man's refusal to work, but is it be-

cause he is inherently lazy, or is it *due to the conditions under which he works?* Take for instance, the example of a man who works in one of the vast aircraft factories, or in a car factory of Mr. Henry Ford. His one job may consist of just one operation,—screwing up a nut, bending a piece of metal, shaping a tube,—all done with a machine. It goes on hour after hour, day in, and day out, week after week, month after month. Is it small wonder that extreme fatigue, both physical and mental, sets in, and an abhorrence of the work is created? It becomes uninteresting very quickly, then deadly monotonous to a point of nausea, and the worker will eventually seek every means available to relieve the strain on his mind and body. Thus such results as "lead-swinging" or "miking", absenteeism, constant sickness, are the common run of things under such a system. Those who saw Charlie Chaplin's film "Modern Times", saw in caricature, what does actually happen to millions of people.

All this would be altered under Anarchism. Workers would no longer be herded into factories, packed together in an unhealthy atmosphere, very often with bad ventilation and lighting. The places of work could be made much more open and healthy, with all the little amenities necessary for a clean condition of work. The attitude to work would also change, because, instead of regarding labour as a dully monotonous job, it would now give *pleasure* to expend one's energy in creating good for social use. Work would fulfill a different purpose in the lives of the people. The whole of man's activity would be vocational, that is, his work would be a means of expressing his creative ability, and for the first time it would be more than just utilitarian. Fredrick Lohr deals with this question of the importance of Vocation more fully in his book "Philosophy of Freedom". Even to-day, millions of workers, after a hard day's toil, busy themselves in what little leisure time they have, in their little hobbies etc. Gardening, painting, wood-carving and a hundred and one other ways are found as an outlet for the constructive energy of man. This principle would be extended to all industry and social activity of any kind.

THE DIRTY WORK.

A subsidiary question is often asked in connection with work under Anarchism, "who will do the dirty work?" But here again it is a question of the conditions under which one works. It is a fact that to-day, the dirtiest jobs like sewage and refuse disposal, coalmining, etc., are some of the lowest paid. And in this age, where the capitalist is for ever devising ways and means of replacing men by machines, it is the highly paid man who is the first to be replaced. In those branches where labour is very cheap, there is not the same incentive to supersede it by machines. In a free society on the other hand, it is clear that the disagreeable work will be one of the first things that machinery will be called upon to eliminate. It is quite fair to argue, therefore, that the disagreeable work will, to a large extent disappear under Anarchism.

Another interesting point about these two questions is that they are often asked by a socialist or communist.

PIERRE RAMUS

THE ONLY DOCUMENT still in my possession to remind me of Pierre Ramus, calls up a certain feeling of nostalgia. On the front it bears the words: "Rudolf Grossmann* editor, ling. phil. author and lecturer in literature and etymology, Klosterneuburg, nr. Vienna, Schiesstaettegraben 237, Upper Austria" and on the reverse: "warmly recommends his friend F. G. presenting this card", signed: "Rudolf Grossmann".

This card is an epitome of the man; explicit, sometimes prolix, but always warmhearted and unselfish. A good comrade. We had been neighbours; that is to say I had, when still a student, bought myself a small meadow with a cherry-tree in it. It was to have been the nucleus for a settlement. But when after the war, the Austrian Social-Democratic Party, guided by its leader and trick-tactician, Otto Bauer, liquidated the Red Guard, sabotaged the Worker's Councils and began to eliminate as rapidly as possible every influence of the revolution, I packed my bags and sought my fortune in Germany. The visiting card also made the journey, and has ever been treated as a carefully guarded talisman. Similarly a photo of Ramus with a large fluttering white tie, leaning over his garden hedge with a serious, but confident expression on his face, accompanied me on my various wanderings.

Politically our ways parted early on; but we continued to remain in touch all the same. The Chiliism of his attitude towards mankind as a whole embarrassed me. I mean: his confidence in the ability to speed on its way the millenary empire, then in its initiation, by personal *Grossmann used "Pierre Ramus" as a pen-name; it is by this name that he is generally known.

Behind it all, there is the implication that he who asks it has in his mind, some way of forcing men to work. Now the most obvious of all those who will not work is the man who is on strike, and if you have a method of dealing with the man who will not work it simply means that you are going to organise a system of society where the Government will be so all-powerful that the rebel and the striker will be completely crushed out. You will have a governing class dictating to a working class the conditions under which it must labour, which is what Socialists, Communists and Anarchists are supposed to be struggling against to-day.

Since to organise in society is really to work in society, it is the law of life which tends to make men work, whilst it is the artificial man-made laws of privilege which put some men in a position where they need not work, but remain parasitical on the labours of others.

We might perhaps, here quote John Stuart Mill's answer to this objection to Anarchism. In Political Economy Vol. I. p.251. he says: "The objection ordinarily made to a system of community of property, and equal distribution of produce—that each person would be incessantly occupied in evading his share of work—is, I think in general, considerably overstated . . . Neither in a rude, or in a civilised society has the supposed difficulty been experienced: In no community has idleness ever been a cause of failure."

T.W.B.

example. Where Laotse, Socrates, Jesus and Tolstoy failed I could not visualise the pioneers of our own day—Landauer, Muehsam, Rucker and Tucker—accomplishing their mission. He, however, quoted a saying of Lenin to refute me: "What sort of childishness is this to proffer one's own personal impatience as a revolutionary argument!" Our ways had parted but the comradeship held.

Rudolf Grossman was the editor and principal author of the periodical, (a weekly) "Prosperity for All", throughout the seven years of its existence, which was brought to a close by the world war of 1914. The translations of principal works of creative anarchism saw the light of day for the first time in its pages—Bakunin, Kropotkin, Nieuwenhuis, Nettlau, Malatesta, Proudhon and Tolstoy for example. If I am not mistaken it brought Ramus's own translation of Kropotkin's "Prosperity for All", its first German appearance, and also "Mutual Aid", translated by Gustav Landauer.

Pierre Ramus held firm throughout the first world war to his conviction as an anarchist and anti-militarist. At such times as he was not in "protective custody" he earned his living lecturing and giving poetry recitals. His friend Robert Bodanzky, who wrote revolutionary verse under the name of "Danton", supported him as well as he was able. The monthly "Perception and Liberation", which he published after the ban on the "Prosperity", must have been the most harrassed of the publications of that time.

A few years after the war he published his magnum opus: "The false doctrine of Marxism", containing a vast and most diligently collected assortment of material. But it astonished rather than convinced readers. It made as good as no impression on the main body of Social Democracy; as already long ago it was considered useless to conduct discussions with the unconvinced. The communists disregarded the book as "bourgeois", without however specifying their reasons.

But Pierre Ramus did not give up the fight. He knew that his ideas would find a more receptive soil in the Anglo-saxon and latin countries. Each journey to England and France gave him repeated proof of this. It would not have been difficult for him to have abandoned the stony ground of Kierling and settle with his family under a friendlier sky. But this man pledged to internationalism was born in Austria and could not be parted from his daily walks in his beloved Vienna woods.

At last the "goosestep of the brown battalions" forced him to seek refuge in flight. He too, got to know this "planet without a visa". The last years of this sixty year old fighter were sinister years of wandering, even years of suffering. Mexico, the country which had offered a home to so many true revolutionaries—from Trotzky, Traven and Silone to the heroes of Barcelona and Madrid, was also to have become his refuge. He died a speedy and beautiful death on the way there—on the high seas.

The date of his death is a symbol. It was on the 27th May, the day on which the greatest of rebels of France and Germany ended their days: Gracchus Baboeuf the leader of the revolt of the equalitarians and Muenzer, the leader of the wars of the peasants. To die in such a brotherhood is a great honour. Pierre Ramus well deserved this honour.

FRITZ GROSS

The Freedom of the Press

ONE OF THE FIRST TARGETS of any reactionary regime is the destruction of the workers means of expression—public meetings, distribution of handbills and the publication of pamphlets and journals. With the advent of Fascism itself, this is extended to cover even the non-conformist bourgeois press, so that only one line is put across to the public. The encroachments of the democratic bourgeoisie and the physical destruction by the Nazis and Fascists of the workers press calls forth loud protests by revolutionaries and progressives against what is described as an elementary right to “say what you think”. With this, anarchists agree, but the disagreement creeps in between us and the Marxists when we are confronted by the revolutionary situation. The attitude of the Marxists in this is determined by their attitude to the revolution itself, by their insistence upon the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Essentially, this means that the industrial proletariat is the most advanced section of the working class, and that the aim of the revolution is for the proletariat to seize the state power through “their” party (the I.L.P., C.P., Trotskyists, etc.), and through this party to institute the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which will build the socialist society, eliminate classes and thus the need for the state, which will then wither away.

Communists and Trotskyists, who are perhaps the most able defenders of this position, point out that the dictatorship must be carried out ruthlessly, the writings of Lenin and Trotsky contain metaphors likening the situation to a war, the need for military discipline is emphasised. Of course, the enemy to be defeated is the bourgeoisie, the White Guardist, the Fascist; it is on behalf of the workers that this discipline is to be maintained, that the workers’ state is to institute itself as censor of all that is published. It is well to examine at this point one particular case which will throw much light on the real attitude of Lenin to criticism, from wherever it comes, and let it be remembered that Lenin is universally honoured by revolutionary socialists, and is not subject to the controversies that divide the Trotskyists and Stalinists—all claim him as theirs.

LENIN AND MIASNIKOV.

G. Miasnikov was one of the first members of the party, a real worker unlike the bourgeois professionals, Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev and so on. He was the leader of the party organisation of Motovilikha, and began to be alarmed because he believed the party was departing from the principles and policy of 1917. By exposing these facts in 1920, he was “exiled to Petrograd, to mend his ways”. What he saw in Petrograd confirmed his fears, and so he sent a memorandum to the Central Committee, Lenin replied by letter and Miasnikov answered again, disagreeing. Lenin did not reply again, and so Miasnikov published this correspondence in pamphlet form, together with a statement of principle.

The story can best be told by quotations from Miasnikov himself, the following excerpts from “The Material of Discussion” November 1921, demonstrates the validity of his complaints and the way in which freedom of expression was dealt with.

“When I came to Petrograd, the city was in a festive mood; all the papers rejoiced that ‘the sleeper was awakening’ that Petrograd industry was beginning to breathe freely etc. But this was only Protomkin villages. Upon closer examination I began to see that, to my great amazement, all was not well in Petrograd. Mills and factories were frequently on strike, the Communist influence was lacking and the workers had no sense of participation in the government. It seemed far away and not their own. In order to get something from it, they had to exert pressure; without pressure, nothing could be got . . . The government threw the blame for the frequent strikes—the Italian strikes—upon the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionists, those pernicious agitators who were being arrested in order to save us from their seditious propaganda. But despite repressions, strikes did not stop.”

Page 4.

“Comrade Zinoviev told me in the presence of many comrades at the party conference of three districts: ‘You’d better stop talking or we shall have to expel you from the party. You are either a Social-Revolutionist or just a sick man’.”

“If one dares to express an opinion of his own, he is a self-seeker or worse—he is a counter-revolutionist, a Menshevik or a Social Revolutionist. Such was the case with Kronstadt, too. Everything was nice and quiet there. And suddenly, without a word, the wallops started. You ask ‘What is Kronstadt? A few hundred Communists fight against us. What does that mean?’ But whose fault is it that the higher ups in the party have no common language with either the non-partisan mass of people or with the rank and file Communists; that the misunderstanding is so great that it leads to violence? What is the significance of all this? This is the absolute limit . . .”

page 5—6.

“Freedom of opinion in the party is being suppressed by the foulest means”.

page 14.

“If one of the party rank and filers dares to have an opinion of his own, he is looked upon as a heretic and people scoff at him, saying, ‘Wouldn’t Ilyitch (Lenin) have come to this idea if it were timely now? So you are the only clever man around, eh, you want to be wiser than all? Ha, ha, ha! You want to be cleverer than Ilyitch!’ This is the typical argumentation of the honourable Communist fraternity.”

page 20.

“In Moscow, Petrograd, in the Ural region, in all factories, the workers now show keen distrust of the Communists. Non-partisan workers gather in groups, with the Mensheviks and S.R.’s leading the discussions; but no sooner does a Communist approach than the groups scatter or change the topic. What does this mean? In the Izhovsky plant, the workers expelled all the Communists from their meeting, including those actually working in the plant. On the very eve of what was virtually a general strike in Petrograd (prior to the Kronstadt revolt), we did not even know that this strike was about to come off although we had Communists in every department. We only knew it was being prepared and led. What does this mean? It means that the working class has fenced itself off from the Communists by an impenetrable wall and the party is no more aware of this than were the sleuths

of the Tzar's time. The workers dubbed the "comcell" (Communist cell) "comsleuth". Why did they do so? Will you tell me that they penalize the Communist Party for no reason at all? That freedom of the press was granted and is still granted to the working class? My answer must be in the negative. The working class penalizes the party because the methods which the party worked out in 1918-1920 to deal with the bourgeoisie are now (in 1921) being practised upon the working class. This cannot go on". page 24.

"We have freedom of speech in the markets, at the railway stations, in the trains, at the docks, but not in the factories and the villages. There the Che-Ka vigilantly watches over the good behavior of workers and peasants". page 25.

These somewhat lengthy quotations demonstrate authoritatively and far more ably than I could, that not only was there ample cause for grievance, but also that the mere expression of grievances met with the bitterest scorn, the attitude taken being that after all a worker could not possibly criticise the actions of the great Lenin, a repetition of the bourgeois argument that the workers are ignorant and their superiors must decide for them.

Miasnikov goes on openly to attack Lenin:—

"To break the jaws of international bourgeoisie is all very well, but the trouble is that you lift your hand against the bourgeoisie and you strike at the worker. Which class now supplies the greatest number of people arrested on charges of counter-revolution? Peasants and workers to be sure. There is no Communist working class. There is just a working class pure and simple" page 32. "I want freedom of the press for myself, a proletarian, who never had anything, a proletarian who has been in the party for fifteen years, who has been a party member in Russia and not abroad . . ." Page 15.

Miasnikov did not last long, he was expelled from the party by the Central Committee on February 22nd, 1922 (Pravda, March 3rd, 1922) imprisoned and exiled. From Constantinople, he wrote on November 27th 1927.

"From 1922 up to the present time I have never been free from kind attentions, sometimes of the G.P.U., at other times of the Intelligence Departments of various foreign governments."

THE BANNING OF THE BOOKS.

Let us turn from this rigorous persecution of the free expression of grievances and points of view on current affairs to a consideration of the setting up of the Soviet "Index Librorum Prohibitorum".

In 1923, Mrs. N. K. Oulianova (Krupskaya Lenin's wife), initiated a most thorough going censorship of culture, artistic, scientific and political books. She sent out a circular letter to all Politprosoviets, Party Committees, Regional Publishing Committees and sections of the G.P.U., which was entitled "The Instructions about examining the books in the possession of the libraries and the withdrawal of counter-revolutionary and art-destructive literature." According to this instruction the following books were to be withdrawn, in the field of philosophy, Descartes, Kant, Mach, Plato, Spencer, Schopenhauer; all theological works except Soviet anti-religious literature, the psychologists Vedensky, Hoeffding, James, Taine

and others were included in this withdrawal. In addition the works of Carlyle, Kropotkin, Maeterlinck, Nietzsche, Leo Tolstoi (except his novels) Bakunin, Vladimir Solov'yev Lossky (Russian philosopher), Grott, Lange, Lieskov, Octave Mirbeau, Victor Margueritte, Nemirovitch-Danchenko were also condemned to withdrawal.

As far as pamphlets are concerned, "the agitational pamphlets directed against the Communist movement, Bolsheviki and peace partisans" and also "the agitational literature of 1917 upholding the constitutional-democratic republic, civil liberties, the Constituent Assembly, universal suffrage, etc." were to be withdrawn.

Most interesting of all was the third paragraph, "small libraries ministering to the needs of the mass reader should be purged of absolute agitational and reference literature of the SOVIET organs of 1918, 1919, 1920 on questions which now find a different solution with the soviet government (the land question, the tax system, the question of free trade, food problem, etc.)"

This spectre of a party which is to usher in a brave new world being afraid of its own shadow would surely be ludicrous were it not so tragic. These two instances are not isolated but form part of the general pattern of life in Soviet Russia from the time of the establishment and consolidation of Soviet power down to the present day, this chaining of the mind supplements the political and economic shackles which are but the outcome of an inhuman and impersonal philosophy.

THE DEFENCE OF THE REVOLUTION.

We anarchists are humanists, and we maintain that the values of the revolution must be human values, we fight for the revolution, because we desire a world that shall express these values and not because we are motivated by blind economic processes or abstract ideas concerning the productive capacity of a machine age. We reject all forms of reformism and struggle for freedom wherever we are, we desire freedom for the Germans as well as the Russians, for the Italians as well as for the Indians, and we maintain that so long as anywhere in the world there exists tyranny and repression, we ourselves are not really free. We know and expect that Fascism will stamp out all forms of free discussion, and we know that the so-called freedom of the press in bourgeois democracy is only a liberty allowed upon sufferance, Mr. Morrison's attitude to the Socialist Appeal is sufficient indication of this. Our struggle for freedom is to put an end to all forms of repression and not to introduce the new Draconic forms which the Bolsheviki, and Lenin himself, imposed upon the Russian workers and peasants in order to maintain their state power.

So far as attacks and slanders by reactionary and counter-revolutionary elements are concerned, we maintain that this can never be achieved by state repression and legislation, since governmental forms create very likely authors for such attacks. Only the independent, class-conscious working class can prevent such outbursts, it is workers who produce the paper, who print the material and who distribute the finished journals, and by the old and tested method of strike, they can refuse to produce lying statements and reactionary propaganda. A free and enlightened working class in possession of the truth has nothing to fear from the reactionaries, and certainly does not require the presence of Lenin or Krupskaya for defence against the bourgeoisie.

JACK WADE.

Book Review

ANARCHISM—A PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM.

Fredrick Lohr.

2/-

Published by Fredrick Lohr, 48, Marchmont St., W.C.1.

ANARCHISM IS NOT a rigid ideological system, guarded in every detail against the deviationist and the heretic. It has a central theory of society and of social relationship, a revolutionary strategy and a vision of the world to be attained by the social revolution. But this inner structure is sufficiently strong to allow of variation in the approach to anarchism. For anarchism is based on the value of the independent human personality and within certain ideological limits, the anarchist can regard the problems of society from an individual viewpoint without incurring the furies of a heresy hunt. This is desirable because anarchism sees social thought as an evolutionary process. No social belief can cease to grow and still remain valuable. Anarchism, precisely because it is a living and growing creed, must admit variations in personal approach to the social objective in order that it may assimilate what is good in new thought and avoid ossification into a theoretical corpse.

Thus, many books concerning anarchism become, once they have stated the general anarchist position, testaments of personal attitude, and Fredrick Lohr's "*Anarchism—A Philosophy of Freedom*" falls into this category.

Many anarchists will emphasise their social belief in a manner different from Lohr's, and will find it difficult to accept some of his statements, but I think all will find value in certain of his contentions.

Comrade Lohr sets out to expound anarchism from a philosophical angle, as against the social-economic viewpoint adopted by the majority of exponents of anarchist theory. 'Anarchism considered as a philosophy,' he says, 'is an intellectual endeavour to justify a conception of Freedom as a primal and eternal existent, a cardinal and essential mystery which surrounds and permeates activity, which is causeless, timeless, absolute and indefinable.' In his book he aims at the exposition of this 'metaphysical speculation' in terms of social relationships and relates it to the general principles of life and to his view of social evolution.

The first section of the book gives a clear and sound exposition of anarchist social theory and deals capably with various misconceptions of and objections to anarchism. In the remaining sections, Comrade Lohr discusses the growth of social ideas and forms, and the nature of social and moral values, and here, in my opinion, he goes too far from concrete social realities into semi-metaphysical abstraction. For anarchism, while it must maintain a connection with life and the ambient universe, is essentially a social-economic theory, based on the concrete aspects of life, and its main concern should be with the immediate needs of men. Man certainly is not free by material security alone, but he cannot start to be free without it.

I also feel that, while dealing adequately with freedom, Comrade Lohr does not emphasize sufficiently the equally essential nature of the concept of justice, without which no society can be free.

These objections arise from a dissimilarity of outlook between author and reviewer and they do not prevent me from recognising the validity of much that Fredrick Lohr says or the value of the book in provoking thought on aspects of anarchism which have received insufficient attention.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

ALECK BOURNE: *Health of the Future.*

Penguin Special

... ..

9d.

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL: *Report of the Committee on Tuberculosis in Wartime.*

His Majesty's Stationery Office

... ..

9d.

IT IS A COMMONPLACE, especially among those who are anxious to believe in the inevitability of progress, that medical science and health in general have made great strides during the last century. Many diseases which formerly were major scourges have been eliminated or largely controlled. Various reforms in Public Health legislation have undeniably produced excellent results. All this provides legitimate cause for satisfaction of a kind, but the general level of health gives no grounds for complacency. In spite of progress in medical science, in spite of reforms, there is still a tremendous and crippling volume of ill health and preventable disease.

During the last ten years especially, evidence has been steadily accumulating to show that the bulk of this ill-health is due to social and economic conditions, and that advances in medicine unaccompanied by amelioration of these conditions will leave the main problems untouched. It is the chief merit of A. Bourne's Penguin that it outlines the extent of present-day ill-health and summarises its principle causes and varieties. He emphasises that a change in conditions is much more important than increased facilities for treatment.

"Whenever we probe deeply into the problems of health, we find ourselves confronted more, perhaps by the effects of environment than by lack of knowledge of curative treatment."

And he concludes from an analysis of present-day working conditions and evidence of widespread malnutrition put forward by such workers as Sir John or that:

"From every angle of approach, in the light of all the influences which affect health adversely, it is abundantly evident that poverty is the great underlying cause of ill-health, disease and premature death."

The war has done nothing to improve conditions of poverty: rather the reverse. Dr. Bourne remarks:

"It may almost be claimed that a nation's incidence of tuberculosis is an index of its social state. It thrives in conditions of malnutrition, bad housing, overcrowding, and ill-ventilated, dark surroundings."

This view of tuberculosis is shared by the Medical Research Council's Committee on Tuberculosis in Wartime. In the preface to their recent report they declare that:

"Apart from its intrinsic importance, tuberculosis is a sensitive index of the public health, and any increase in its incidence and fatality—and the inauguration of measures for dealing with it—are matters of urgent public concern"

The committee then go on to report a considerable increase in the deaths from tuberculosis since the outbreak of war. Of considerable interest is the comparison with the last war. The T.B. mortality in general, has been falling since 1918 just as it had been up to 1914. Both wars have produced a sharp reversal in this trend. Comparing the increased mortality in the two wars, the report states:

"The total deaths from tuberculosis in England and Wales in 1939 were much smaller than in 1914. In the interval between those years, the tuberculosis services had developed, so that one might have expected a more favourable position *vis-a-vis* tuberculosis at the commencement of this war. This makes more significant the comparative increases in the tuberculosis mortality, viz. 11 per cent. for males and 13 per cent. for females from 1939 to 1941, as against 5 per cent. for males and 7 per cent. for females from 1914 to 1917. In other words, *the retrogression in this war has been twice as severe*' (our italics).

These results go to support our contention that the real wages and the standard of living has gone down during the war, in spite of re-sorption of unemployment and apparent wage increases.

In spite of their recognition of the social basis of tuberculosis incidence the committee's recommendations are concerned only with greater provision of safe milk and early diagnosis by mass radiography. These are excellent things in themselves, but neither touches the principal determining factor—poverty with its attendant malnutrition and need for overworking.

The quotations given earlier on in this review show that Dr. Bourne also clearly recognises the *social* basis of ill-health. Indeed the whole evidence presented by the first half of his book makes it obvious that unless this social basis is attacked, no fundamental advance in public health can be made, yet in the second half of his book all he offers as a solution is improved facilities for diagnosis and treatment through a State Medical Service. Disease, ill-health and premature death, whose principal cause is *poverty*, are to be cured by rationalising the existing arrangements for treatment and diagnosis of established disease!

It is necessary to dwell a little on this absurdity because it provides an example that is fairly typical of most "progressive" expert opinion, an example of the same trend that is seen in demands for State Control of land, of mines, means of transport and so on.

Dr. Bourne exhibits, by implication, a pathetic faith in the good intentions of the State. "The goal of a fit people" he declares on p.14 "must be one of the major preoccupations of Statecraft". "In no concern for its

people is it more necessary for the State to grasp the place that housing plays in its own prosperity (p.17, our italics)

It is illusions such as these regarding the State which explain how two publications like the above—and there are many more similar ones—can recognise and describe the fundamental connection between ill-health and poverty, and yet can be content to recommend such superficial remedies. No amount of nationalised State Medical Service, mass-radiography, family allowances or improvement in curative facilities, will touch the central cause of ill-health. The State can never abolish poverty, because it exists to protect the privileges and power of the ruling class which depend on the maintenance of economic dependence in the working masses.

John Hewetson.

(continued on page 6)

disturbances. The point is, however, that thousands of abortions do take place in every 'civilized' country, under the worst possible conditions of secrecy. The Russian experience shows that certain advantages (reduced risk of complications, etc.) follow the placing of abortion on the same legal footing as other practice. I advocate this measure, because it is possible to discern theoretical advantages which would accrue from making abortion legal.

"Theoretical" however, because such a reform is most unlikely to materialize, owing to the totalitarian concern for current population trends. And if it did, its effects would be first hindered and then blocked altogether by the State, as has occurred in the Soviet Union.

Given complete freedom—economic and otherwise—however, it is impossible to say whether the "unwanted child" will continue to exist. Furthermore, if social conditions were such that a pregnancy brought with it no loss of freedom and independence for the mother, then much of the justification for destroying an unborn life would disappear. This, however, is purely speculative.

It is worth observing that primitive people, living in a society of simple communism, practice both abortion and infanticide in times of scarcity, since additions to the community may threaten to stretch its resources unduly at such periods. But they always resort to such measures with regret, and abandon them with a return of plenty. (see Elie Reclus: *Primitive Folk*)

In conclusion I would like to stress with greater emphasis than I expressed in the article in the Mid-October issue, that, by obliterating coercive authority and class divisions, the social revolution alone can provide the conditions under which a solution of the "unwanted children" problem could be achieved.

War Commentary

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