

# Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

## DISCIPLINE—OR RESPONSIBILITY? GOVERNMENT BY

### THE WHIP

CONSIDERABLE light is cast on the ethics of modern left wing politics by the dismissal of five parliamentary secretaries to cabinet ministers. Their dismissal was ordered by the Prime Minister himself, and their offence was to have "defied" the Government whips by voting against the government on the Ireland Bill. The whole incident serves to illustrate a fact which is not always recognised: that an individual member of parliament is expected to vote not as his conscience and his judgment direct him, but according to the party line.

Such a conception makes nonsense of the idea cherished by idealistic (but woolly) supporters of the democratic system, that a member is somehow responsible for translating the wishes of his electorate. Yet one supposes that the vast majority of those who think our political system "the best yet devised" imagine that it does provide for control of the government by the population at large and also does permit (unlike those pernicious continental systems) of members of the Commons acting according to conscience.

#### A Shady Business

The reality is quite otherwise. Every government operates the system of whips whose specific object is to see that party members vote according to the official policy instead of according to their own judgment and conscience. It is fair to say that every government allows for a certain recalcitrance in matters where conscience is clearly a strong element. Thus the whips are not prominent when the Labour Party turns round on its historic attitude towards military conscription, and are only used on occasions where questions of

tactics demand that the party speak with one voice. Yet even here the motivation is ignoble and materialistic. A party which reverses its basic dogmas cannot afford to enforce such desertion of cherished principles—for the obvious reason that it will simply drive its most conscientious and logical members out into the wilderness if it does. The very existence of a disciplinary machinery indicates a basic mistrust of persuasion and unanimity of purpose in a political party. We shall see that the disciplinary machinery itself relies on material self-interest as the power which enforces its decisions. It is these methods which make politics rightly seem such a shady business to the ordinary man; and it is the willing acceptance of these attitudes which dismantles the integrity of those who go in for politics.

#### Picking a Party

Party politics makes it necessary for the rival aspirants to power to seek their adherents wherever they can find them. Thus, a business man who sees that his business will be benefited if he goes into politics is less concerned about the aims of the parties, than about which party will provide a successful

(Continued on page 8)

## The Coming Crisis

ON two occasions recently, Sir Stafford Cripps has made public statements affirming his complete confidence in the continued stability of British economy. By this, dear reader, we mean that although your own private Budget may not balance, be you as British as any, nevertheless, the Ship of State maintains an even keel.

That it does this through your efforts and at the cost of your private economy is beside Sir Stafford's point. That the extra productivity industrial experts are screwing out of you and the taxation financial experts are soaking out of you, are responsible for our plain(?) sailing, are matters of which you should be proud—thinks Sir Stafford. So proud, in fact, that you should be prepared to continue and even increase the sacrifices you are making in the interests of the Ship of State and its even keel.

In Rome, at the beginning of May, Cripps vigorously denied that there was any possibility of a devaluation of the pound. In the House of Commons on May 18th, he gave a "challenging and definitely optimistic speech" in praise of Britain's magnificent effort and the Government's equally magnificent policy.

#### The Snags

Now, Sir Stafford has undoubtedly a very astute mind. More than any other person is he responsible for the fact that this country is not yet in the throes of economic crisis, and the members of the Labour Government

have a lot to be thankful for. Nevertheless, Cripps is no wizard. He has to play the financial game strictly according to financial limitations. He can juggle with figures for so long, but like the speculating cashier, feverishly cooking the books, he is bound, sooner or later, to come unstuck.

Britain's capitalism depends desperately upon the continued expansion of its export drive. It must be able to grab more and more markets abroad in the face of foreign competition and keep them. Easily said, but a recent inquiry by the Trinidad Chamber of Commerce showed that many British industrial products are exported at prices much higher than those of our competitors—in the case of electrical goods, for instance, as much as 100 per cent. above American or Canadian prices.

This is bad enough for our chances in sterling and soft currency areas, but in dollar countries it is obviously crippling. To maintain our competitive chances, prices must come down, and if the pound is not to be devalued (though we've only Cripps' word that it will not be) then production costs must come down at home. This can be done, capitalistically speaking, in four ways: increased productivity, longer hours of work, less profits, or less wages. And of these four, three are against the worker, one against the employer and investor.

#### "Cuts All Round"

Cripps' speech in the Commons appeared to be a vigorous defence of the existing standards of living of the workers against Tory demands for cuts in Government expenditure, and an attack on profits which were "so frightfully high". But the real key to his speech was his sentence: "If personal incomes have to come down, they must come down all round."

Which simply means this: Cripps and Co. will make a great show of attacking profits; they will order cuts to be made in profit levels which are now so high that the cuts will hardly affect shareholders but will only reduce establishment's profit taxation. When they have done this, they will have the justification for attacking workers' standards, and not only will the present demands for increases not be met, but wages will actually be cut.

Couple the problems facing the export drive with the possible reduction of Marshall Aid, add the increased waste of expenditure on defence and military preparation in general, and we have the ingredients of a first-class economic crisis—with the workers, as usual, at the receiving end.

#### Labour Closes The Ranks

The disciplinary action taken by the Government and the Labour Party against rebels and fellow-travellers within their ranks—discussed more fully elsewhere—may also be an indication that the Government is fully aware of the coming storm and is closing its ranks in preparation.

But the workers can only look on with apprehension. They have nowhere to hide. The full force of the storm when it breaks will inevitably break over their heads as it has always done in the past. In order to keep the Ship of State on an even keel—above water even—the navigators will throw overboard all unnecessary ballast, and the pool of unemployment will once again swell to the proportions which enable our masters to govern us by fear.

It is the same old Ship—only with new faces at the helm.

GASTON B.

P.S.

## THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE ITALIAN ANARCHISTS

(Livorno, April 1949)

ITALY is the only European country in which the end of the war was accompanied by a great social mass upheaval. Already with the fall of Mussolini in July, 1943, there were mass strikes in Northern Italy. From 1943 till the end of 1945 there was a strong illegal partisan and propaganda movement, in which the Italian Anarchists played their own active part.

Independently of the bourgeois-Stalinist Resistance Front, the Italian Anarchists formed their own cadres and propagated social revolution during the war. The Badoglio regime, which freed the democratic and Communist prisoners of Mussolini, kept the Anarchist prisoners in captivity and on the penal islands as long as possible. Our comrades had often to break out of jail with their own fists, before the popular upheaval of 1945-46 freed the last anti-Fascist prisoners.

In the wake of this movement in all places in Italy the F.A.I. (Italian Federation)\* was formed. The old proved strugglers, who had come back from ten to fifteen years' exile, gathered round them during the war numbers of revolutionary youth. Everywhere local Anarchist papers were springing up. In many places, the Anarchist movement predominated amongst the working-class.

For instance in Carrara (Middle Italy) amongst the marble workers. The workers threw out the capitalists and their accomplices and took the marble pits into their own possession. Such isolated attempts pointing the way to a libertarian and socialist production, but could not last when the revolutionary upsurge ebbed and bourgeois reaction triumphed—under a Republican guise.

Nevertheless we still find many signs of the revolutionary anarchist upsurge of the first post-war years. Carrara, a city of 80,000 inhabitants, is to-day still mostly anarchistic. The F.A.I. controls some of the most prominent and handsome buildings in the town—for instance, a former prince's castle, a former club for the nobility, etc., and these have been

\*Not to be confused with the F.A.I. of Spain (Iberian Anarchist Federation).

transformed into "people's houses". In many Italian cities, the F.A.I. possesses many rows of houses, cars, and locals, which are at the service of the movement.

The growth of the Anarchist movement is not only amongst the industrial workers and at the cost of the exceedingly strong Communist parties, but also in the country and amongst the Southern Italian and Sicilian landworkers.

The F.A.I. is without any doubt the strongest Anarchist movement in Europe to-day (other than the illegal Anarchist movements of Spain and Bulgaria, which are likewise mass movements). Their growth is more significant when one realises that it has been achieved without the slightest concession to the present trade union movement. One can positively affirm that the Italian Anarchists have completely rejected any reformist, conciliatory or even purely trade union policies, and stand for an intergal and revolutionary Anarchism.

After this glance at the resistance and growth of the F.A.I. since the last war we would now give a brief report of the course and atmosphere of the third Congress at Livorno.

#### The Atmosphere

200 Delegates from all parts of Italy, from Trieste to Sicily, gathered together for three days, of which one day was spent in the great hall of the Anarchist is known as "Errico Malatesta", in the working-class district of Livorno, and discussed all the ideological and organisational problems of the movement. The dominating element amongst the delegates was working-class, and the average age about 20 to 25 years, but one also could notice people from all classes and all ages.

300 to 400 Anarchist workers came from the local district, taking the opportunity of listening to the debates. There are in Livorno thousands of Anarchists and at least a thousand active militants. The exact number is not known, as since the experience of Fascism, the Italian Anarchists keep no membership cards or lists.

"Malatesta House" is only one of the three houses of the Livorno federation. Each of these houses has an assembly room and library as public amenities, which is good propaganda for the movement and of very material use.

The organisation of solidarity towards the delegates was exceedingly well organised. At the railway-station at Livorno the delegates were received and accompanied to the different inns. Even on the streets one could feel the sympathy of the people for the Anarchist movement.

Even the bourgeois and Stalinist daily press could not ignore the Congress. On the contrary, they published often on the front page fully detailed reports on the course of the Congress and it is interesting to note that not only the bourgeois Press flattered the Anarchists and endeavoured to play them off against the C.P. (as has also happened in other countries) but this time the C.P. Press also tried these backward manoeuvres. This is a further proof of the popularity and growth of the Italian Anarchist movement.

#### The Debates

This was no show-Congress! Already the different positions and resolutions had been debated for months in the different organs of the movement and had been discussed by the various groups. The prepared routine of the Congress was changed by the delegates: the reports of the local groups came before the report of the "national secretariat".\* For a whole day, the delegates reported from all towns of Italy on the position and their activities, and all reports were made into one pattern. There followed many aspects of criticisms, protests, approval.

Delegates from France and Switzerland were present. The movements from many other countries, as well as the C.R.I.A. (Committee for International Anarchist Relations and the I.W.M.A. (anarcho-syndicalist International) sent greetings. A Bulgarian delegate and a German-speaking delegate gave direct reports on the movements.

The two high-spots of the Congress were the discussions on the question of ideology and the labour question. One

\*The Italian comrades do not have an actual "national secretariat" but a number of "commissions" (anti-militarist, anti-clerical, correspondence, etc.) which are spread over a number of cities and maintain contact with one another.



**BOOK REVIEW**

**A TERRIFYING TRACT**

**APE AND ESSENCE** by Aldous Huxley. Chatto & Windus, 7/6.

If you are anxious for a good novel, interesting, formally polished, or merely relaxing, there is little for you in Huxley's new book. Indeed, it is hardly a novel at all, for the action is crude, the plot rudimentary, the characters mere types, and the technical devices by which the author gains the attention of the reader are as crude and Hollywoodish as they are arresting.

Thus much must be said in disparagement of this book considered as a novel. But if one considers it as a tract of the times, as an allegory of the modern world, then all the apparent absurdities and crudities begin to make sense.

And from this point of view, *Ape and Essence* is a book which cannot be ignored by the libertarian, for it is one of the most bitter and sincere satirical attacks on the modern state and its centralising tendencies that has been produced in recent years. There is a violence of feeling about it that cannot be gainsaid, and it is evident that Huxley has emerged from his mists of Hindu philosophy to a positive attitude of opposition to the actual ills of the modern world.

The tale, with its almost exagger-

ated simplicity, is of the world after a final atomic war, which has destroyed civilisation in every country except New Zealand and Central Africa. After many years have passed and allowed the effects of radiation to become dissipated, a New Zealand scientific expedition lands on the shores of California. One of the members is kidnapped by a race of survivors from the old America, and is taken to their stronghold in the ruins of Los Angeles, where he finds a sinister caricature of the modern world, in which a religion of the Devil, based on a negation of life, is practised by people on whom the action of the atomic rays has produced a series of distorting mutations of physical and mental character. It is only when he finds a person in whom the elements of ordinary human love remain, that he manages to escape from this terrifying people.

In one sense *Ape and Essence* is a frightening warning of what may happen to mankind if the state is allowed to continue, and if the wars which are its inevitable consequence are visited upon the earth. But the people of the ruined land are also ourselves, in so far as we, like they, have given in to evil, have come to accept hatred and conflict as inevitable. And the cause of that acceptance of evil which is growing like a

leprosy through the modern consciousness Huxley finds in fear, which "in the end, casts out even a man's humanity" and which "is the very basis and foundation of modern life". He reveals its various manifestations in a manner which is nothing if not libertarian:

"Fear of the much touted technology which, while it raises our standard of living, increases the probability of our violently dying. Fear of the science which takes away with one hand even more than what it so profusely gives with the other. Fear of the demonstrably fatal institutions for which, in our suicidal loyalty, we are ready to kill and die. Fear of the Great Men whom we have raised, by popular acclaim, to a power which they use, inevitably, to murder and enslave us. Fear of the war we don't want, and yet do everything we can to bring about."

And, although Huxley does not say so explicitly, there runs through this book the clear moral that we must cast out our fear and resolve to resist and have no part in the inhuman centralising forces which are driving mankind to destruction.

With all its faults, *Ape and Essence* is a book we must welcome, for it does represent a protest by an independent writer against all the things which the anarchists reject, and in these days we cannot afford to ignore a single ally in the "mental fight" against war, authority and the distorted values which they represent.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

**WHO IS B. TRAVEN ?**

DEAR COMRADES,

Regarding your review of "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre", the statements regarding B. Traven are pure fantasy. The identity of Traven has always been unknown. Traven himself, during the Spanish War, wrote a letter to *Solidaridad Obrera* in Barcelona, that he was a Norwegian brought up in the U.S.A. A Mexican journalist has recently stated that he is a Norwegian, in an attempted "exposure" of Traven, which has been generally declared to be a swindle. It has been believed for a long time that Traven is a German, about which many have spoken, but nothing is known about it.

That Traven is identical with the pub-

lisher of the *Tile Burner*, Ret Marut, is a theory, which was put forward by Mühsam and Rocker. Nothing is known regarding this theory.

In any case, Ret Marut played no part in the Council Republic of 1919, and was never condemned to death and consequently never escaped from Munich together with his history. Nobody knows anything about his identity or life.

Your references to Marut are therefore wrong, and it is unknown that Traven is Marut. Most people consider that Traven is a Norwegian with an intimate knowledge of Germany.

Greetings,

Sweden.

HELMUT RUDIGER.

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**CHILDHOOD AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION**

**I. The Nature of a Rebel.**

THE great fluctuations of the strength, or even the existence, of revolutionary activity in this country is a phenomenon which has been noted by many observers both in this century and the last. The average person of the reformist and the reactionary camps, likes to think of all revolutionary activity as an exotic growth. He likes to believe that the true Briton is not a revolutionist by nature. Point out to him an anarchist who is nevertheless a Briton by birth, culture and everything else, and he will explain the anomaly by referring to the anarchist as a 'crank', a person who have never grown up to take an adult view of the world. There is indeed a fairly plausible theory about anarchists which attributes their state of feeling and their beliefs to a condition of never having outgrown their childhood revolt against the authority of their parents.

It is alleged that the anarchist is merely a person who cannot face the realities of adult life, and projects his childhood rebellion against parents, schoolteachers and other adults in authority, on to the institution of the State, and like an overwrought child, he will sacrifice everything to his passion of revolt and destruction. In this view then, the whole of anarchist theory becomes merely a structure of justification to make childish revolt acceptable to adults, the libertarian society which anarchists envisage being a wishful fantasy of a world free of adult control, in which the childish ego reigns supreme. This theory also gives an explanation of the fact that men rather than women, tend to play a more prominent part in the anarchist movement, for it is that complex peculiar to male infants—the oedipus complex—which supplies the motive and the driving force of the adult male rebel.

I do not wholly discount this theory of the unconscious motivation of anarchists; there is a lot in it which we should consider quite seriously. I would observe in passing, however, that the ideologies of those revolutionary parties which seek to overthrow the present 'corrupt' authority and set up a new 'righteous' authority in its place, are more closely akin to childhood fantasies—since the child commonly envisages itself in positions of power and grandeur once it has overthrow the dragons of oppression.

While allowing that there is a certain amount of truth in this theory, I do not deduce from it that anarchists are neurotics and anarchism a sham. If indeed anarchists are carrying over childhood revolt into adult life, it behoves us to study the nature of childhood revolt rather closely.

**II. The Dispossessed.**

It is usual to consider the term 'childish' as implying something silly and unreasonable. A mass of adult prejudice has grown up against the real passions and aspirations of childhood, and, the adults having all the developed and coherent means of propaganda in their hands, the real nature of childhood is suppressed as an improper subject, and a fictitious model is held up as the Normal Child. Most children dimly realise that there is some sort of humbug about the Normal Child standard, but in their inexperience they are much influenced by it. Practically all the books they read or have read to them reinforce the humbug; it is rare that any author will write of children as they really are—such books as *Poil de Carotte* and *High Wind in Jamaica* which deal frankly with the reality of childhood, are so unusual that few people take them seriously.

Although the child has not the ability to formulate its ideas into any coherent ideology of revolt, revolt it certainly does against the whole adult imposture. This revolt may not be apparent to adults, for the child, with good reason, conceals it by many artifices; but I would stress that never was a revolt more justified than the spiritual revolt of children against adults.

In our society the adults as a class own everything both natural and manufactured, and children as a class have access to anything on sufferance. Adults blatantly and selfishly reserve many pleasures to themselves: they smoke, yet deny this to children; adults copulate, yet suppress all the sexual pleasures of children; adults indulge huge orgies of violence in war, yet suppress hooliganism in children; adults rob and cheat one another in their everyday dealings, yet sternly suppress minor pilfering among children; adults lie as matter of course whenever convenient, yet

*The ideas expressed in this article are not necessarily those of the Editors, but we print them because we think them stimulating, and invite comment from readers.*

demand that children shall tell the truth. All this may be argued away, but adult sophistry passes over the heads of children, and so these facts in their crude form are more or less plain to children; they know beyond all intellectual reasoning, that adults as a class are gross hypocrites and enemies of their freedom.

When the child is moved to anger it may literally desire to murder the cause of its frustration, but no such desire is permanent in the child. The child-revolutionist knows pretty well that it has no chance of overthrowing the tyranny of the adult class; it can only seek some degree of freedom by preserving within itself an independence of spirit. To the adult world it may present an outward front of truculence, of docility, of pretty coquetterie, of timid respect, of open frankness—all these quises are means of concealing its innermost self from the invading inquisitiveness of the adult class. The child's greatest protection is its slyness, its superb ability at acting a character part. Max Stirner saw the slyness of children in its true light. In *A Human Life*, he writes:

"... In childhood liberation takes the direction of trying to get to the bottom of things, to get at what is 'back of' things; therefore we spy out the weak points of everybody, for which, it is well known, children have a sure instinct... Back of everything we find our courage, our superiority; back of the sharp command of parents and authorities stands, after all, our courageous choice of our outwitting shrewdness. And the more we feel ourselves, the smaller appears that which before seemed invincible. And what is our trickery, shrewdness, courage, obduracy? What else but—Mind!" All this may seem very unjust to the well-meaning adult who may well say:

"But I love my children; I desire nothing by their present happiness and future well-being. What have I done to merit distrust and the revolt of my children against me?"

But children's attitudes are not wholly conditioned by the nature of any one adult, but rather by the attitude of the whole adult world towards them. A child may go around naked in its own home, but it is taught that it must not walk naked down the high street—adults as a class disapprove of its body. It may love and respect its mother, but can it tell her the dirty story which it told its classmates, with the same ripe glee? No, for mother belongs to the adult class which disapproves of children's traffic in smut. Indeed, the loving and unselfish adult may prove a real tyrant to children if, loving the false façade which children present, this adult resolutely sets out to foster this 'better side' of their natures, and thereby strangles their genuine modes of self-expression.

**III. Man and the Dragonfly.**

A great deal of adult mishandling of children comes from the traditional adult misunderstanding of the nature of childhood. Every adult has once been a child, yet so striking is the change in the individual on reaching maturity that he prefers to trust the traditional adult concepts about children than to draw on his own memories of childhood. This is reinforced by the psychological process which distorts most of our childhood memories, and renders our mental record of our earlier life most unreliable.

Adults tend to think of children as beings of their own species with mental and physical powers in a merely immature state. The process of 'bringing them up' is therefore interpreted as conditioning them to accept adult social values so that they will become adult beings well fitted to play their part in society. This is, I maintain, a colossal misunderstanding, and so drastically wrong that it largely accounts for the high percentage of basically normal children who grow up into neurotic adults—or perhaps I should say, the neurotic character of adult society to-day.

It is assumed that Man is the adult creature, an animal with social instincts and a mental consciousness of how to further his own interests through social channels. We can study him and describe him much as we can any other animal. The man-child is, as I have said, commonly regarded as merely the immature being.

Consider now an entirely different species, the Dragonfly. We can

think of it in two different way; first, as a winged creature living with a crowd of its fellows a short and brilliant life devoted almost entirely to lovemaking; second, as a solitary, slow-moving creature living for a year or more under water with no other interest in life than to hunt and eat. Which of these totally dissimilar creatures is to be considered as the essential Dragonfly—the long-lived crawling larva, or the ephemeral winged imago?

I could give a thousand instances of animals in which the individual differs in form and essential intinctual make-up during the earlier and latter parts of its life, but I mention this merely as an analogy to stress the fact that it is stupid to think of the species Man entirely as the adult animal: it would be equally correct to regard the species as properly represented by the child—the adult being dismissed as a degenerate modification in the latter part of life to reproduce and do necessary work.

Unlike the Dragonfly, the physical form of Man is pretty much the same all his life outside the womb—the change is chiefly in size. What we are by no means certain about, however, is in what way the basic instincts of the Man-child differ from those of the Man-adult. We spend all our energies on training the child so that when it has acquired adult instincts it will be a passable member of adult society, and thereby we make it impossible to study just what are the natural instincts of the child. The question of what these basic instincts are, is by no means of mere academic interest—it has a very practical importance as I shall discuss later on.

The old-fashioned moralist had a good inkling of what were the instincts of children; he called them 'evil', and set about with rod and hell-fire threats to beat down the natural instincts. The 'progressive' educator of our time deplors the brutality of these methods, yet nevertheless he wants the child to grow up into a peaceable and socially-minded adult, and so he tries reason, persuasion and propaganda-for-Utopia on the child. He may delude himself that the child is really unselfish, gentle and socially-cooperative by nature, and that its 'baser nature' may be over-ruled by argument. This is a thoroughly unscientific way of dealing with the problem, and often leads to a weary resentment in children because they are treated to so much tiresome preaching about self-discipline and co-operation.

The more scientific approach would be to study the instinctual make-up of children without any bias as to what it ought to be. This is admittedly very difficult as the proper conditions for such a survey are almost unobtainable under modern conditions. We have the inescapable legacy of the past beginning to influence the children from early infancy. All we can hope for is the accumulation of scraps of data from various sources to give us a clearer insight into that elusive and sly creature that we were once ourselves. My own experience with children co-ordinated with that of other observers, has led me to form the following rough hypothesis. The child is a gregarious but not a truly social animal; when in mental and physical health, it is aggressive to the point of ferocity, and capable of ruthlessness which normal adults do not possess. It is entirely self-centred, and its love for other persons is of an essentially different nature to the affection which an adult may feel for another person. Richard Hughes has likened the psyche of a child to that of an insane person; within certain well-defined limits this must be admitted as true—in that an adult with the psyche of a child would be not only 'simple' but insane by adult standards.

All these instinctual endowments of the child, would seem to have been necessary for the survival of the animal in its physically weak state, as an adjunct to parental care. Another instinctual endowment which makes it difficult to study the normal make-up of the child, is its supreme power of adaptation to environment (again a quality which makes for the survival of the weak). The child will easily become, to outward appearances, whatever its adult guardians expect it to be. It may have one personality in the home, another in the school, another when visiting grandparents—these various masks being effortlessly assumed and disregarded as the environment demands in order to protect the integrity of its own real personality from the onslaughts of the adult world, with its values which are so unnatural to the child.

(To be continued)



# Marie Louise BERNERI

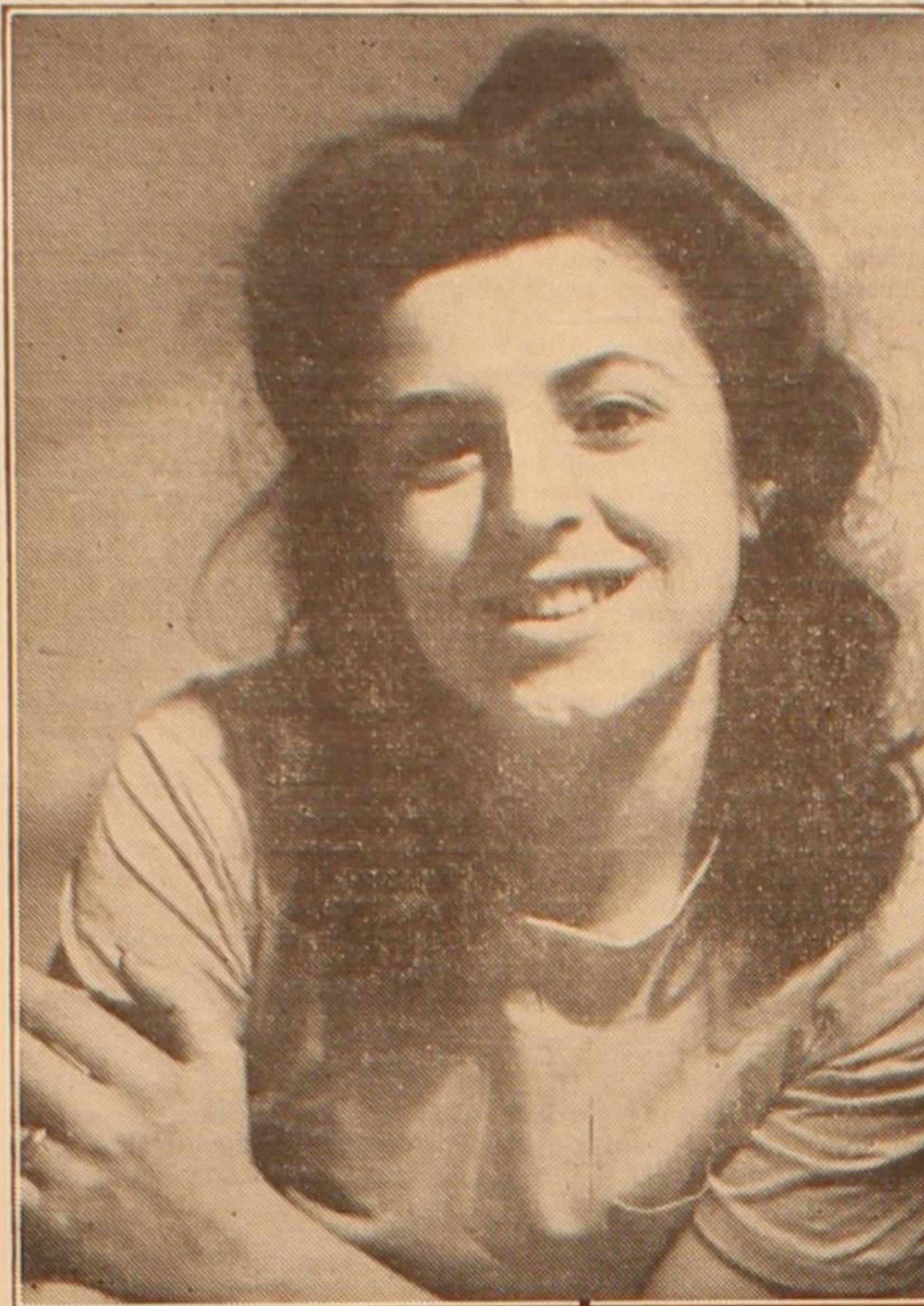
ANARCHISTS are not given to self-aggrandisement; on the contrary, as a reaction to the inevitable consequences of the boosting of leaders by political parties, anarchists have attempted to present their views and not their persons. And this was true of M.L.B.

But M.L.B. is no more and we now feel it a duty to present the comrade, much of whose work was done anonymously, some of which bore simply the initials M.L.B., and a very few articles the name M. L. Berneri, disguising even the fact that she was a woman. It is a duty of love, for we are proud that Marie-Louise Berneri was from the beginning a member of the present Freedom Press, and we think that the international movement should also know of Marie-Louise's work and her personality as we did.

We believe that M.L.B. was an exceptional person as well as a good anarchist, and in a world whose values are continuously threatened and where faith in the potentialities for good of mankind are continuously attacked by rulers who hold human nature in contempt, Marie Louise is a shining example and an inspiration to all of us, both inside our movement and also in those other organisations who look to a happier future for the world. Their tributes to the memory of our comrade are not only personal; they are also a tribute to the ultimate truth of the anarchist ideal.

This memorial supplement of *Freedom* cannot present the full story of Marie Louise's life and activity. That, we hope, will be accomplished later when all her articles, letters and notes have been collected together. But we feel that however inadequate it may be, this supplement will have presented a picture of a young woman who, in the twelve years that she devoted to furthering the ideas of Anarchism, endeared herself in the hearts of those who met her and earned the respect of those who followed her activity in the movement. The life of M.L.B. is an example of a person living out her ideas and succeeding in influencing all those with whom she came in contact, not always with her doctrines, but always by her example of practising her anarchist ideals in her relations with her fellows, by her incorruptibility and her modesty. This, we think, is the most important contribution M.L. was able to make, for how many people outside our movement who knew her will not, in the years to come, associate anarchism with Marie Louise instead of with the blood-thirsty image of bearded bomb-throwers that our detractors seek to foist on people? How many letters we have received from friends and comrades who have not seen M.L. for a number of years and who yet write of the vivid impact of her personality!

Though there have been many tributes to M.L.'s contributions to anarchist thought, we feel that she was now really beginning to assume her full stature intellectually. Her critical and original mind, coupled with an ever-increasing culture, promised great things for the future. The extract from her forthcoming book, *A Journey Through Utopia*, which we print in this supplement in an abridged form, gives some indication of this. The many months' intensive study which went into the production of this book, and which was the first time during all these years that she had—with the agreement of her comrades—snatched from her many activities for the Freedom Press, had fired her imagination with ideas for future work for the cause of freedom. Death has robbed not only the anarchist movement but also, as a French socialist put it, "the whole of the international working class", of one of its most devoted personalities. For the Freedom Press, and, as the tributes we have published show, for many other men and women, Marie Louise Berneri has left an indelible impression which time cannot erase.



1948

photo by V.R.

### IN MEMORY OF M.L.B.

*Into the silence of the sun  
Risen in dust the rose is gone,  
The blood that burned along the briar  
Branches invisibly on the air.  
Flame into flame's petal  
Her grief extends our grief,  
Over the ashy heat-ways  
A green glance from a leaf  
Shivers the settled trees.  
A child walks in her grace  
The light glows on his face,  
Where the great rose has burned away  
Within the terrible silence of the day.*

Louis Adeane.

With extreme regret I hear of the death of M.L.B. We can ill-afford the loss of such a talented comrade; and yet it is an inspiration to know that such a person ever lived and shared our hopes of a better life.  
Long Eaton. C. W. ROOKE.

It was only yesterday that we learned of the death of Marie Louise which shocked us more deeply than we can hope to express. In our simple way we had a real love for M.L. whom we came to love as a sister.  
Radstock. TOM CARLILE.

I am very sorry to hear of the death of Marie Louise. The political occasions on which we have co-operated have been limited to a few special causes, but I have greatly admired both her devotion and ability. To you the loss is greatest, and I should like you to know of the friendly sympathy which many of us feel. The whole cause of liberty has suffered loss by her going.  
London. FENNER BROCKWAY.

We were shocked and distressed this morning to read of the death of Marie Louise. Although I only managed to meet her once I realise from her writing what an important part she has played in the movement and how little she could be spared.  
K.R.

... It is a sad and bitter blow. We shall feel the absence of a comrade who was a fearless fighter for human emancipation and freedom, and a friend.

She served the cause of freedom with selfless devotion, she inspired us by her burning and passionate faith, and it is a tribute to her very great qualities that she was loved and admired by all who knew her.

In offering my condolences to her colleagues in the Anarchist Movement, and to those nearest and dearest to her, I share their grief at her passing. Her life was short, but it was full of achievement. She lived and died a valiant fighter for freedom.  
GEO. W. STONE.  
Editor, *Socialist Leader*.

I was with you all the time. I will always dwell on the happiness she brought into my life. Sweet and beautiful girl, for ever in my mind.  
London. Mrs. W. S.

We all were tied to her by a common cause and because we knew her moral and intellectual qualities.

I would like that something should be done to remember her. I haven't any clear ideas of what it should be, but it should be not marble or something cold, but a "living" initiative of her works.  
Woodford. S. CORIO.

I know there is nothing I can say to you now, except to tell you that I share your terrible grief.  
London. ALEX COMFORT.

... it has been like a blow of which one only gradually becomes conscious. She was a symbol of everything beautiful and vital, and all our lives will be darker and poorer.  
Beaconsfield. HERBERT READ.

I was shocked to read of the death of our dear and esteemed Marie Louise Berneri. I hasten to offer you my deepest sympathy, realising the great loss you have suffered. I remember Marie Louise when she arrived in this country, a beautiful girl with a most stimulating mind, and followed her development and steadfast loyalty to her political convictions, which had my warmest respect. She died as she lived, an honest, upright woman, worthy of the highest and finest traditions of Anarchism.

Marie Louise Berneri will always be remembered by all Colonial comrades who had the pleasure of knowing her as a sincere supporter in our struggles against imperialism. I feel humble before her and salute the contribution she has made to the cause for which she lived and gave of her best.  
London. GEORGE PADMORE.

My wife and I have been deeply shocked to hear of the death of Marie Louise Berneri. I can never be grateful enough to her for discovering Reich for me in an article in *Now* some years ago. Although we unfortunately never met her, we feel it as a painful personal loss.  
Coleman's Hatch. DAVID MARKHAM.

I can't say much either, but you will know I feel for you. She was always so much alive that it is difficult to believe it can have happened.  
Cranham. GEORGE ORWELL.

I was profoundly moved on reading of the passing of Marie Louise. Words fail to express the shock I felt. I am stunned... We shall miss her tremendously.

I feel sad and depressed in the consciousness of such a loss.  
Bristol. CHRIS LEWIS.

It is with great sadness that I read of the death of Marie Louise Berneri, so young, so beautiful and so good, and as I read the page of *Freedom* dedicated to her memory, I feel what a terrible loss it will be to the movement... I am glad you printed her picture which I have cut out to place her with the great Sacco, Vanzetti, Durruti.  
London. Mrs. C. F.

The comrades here in Liverpool wish to express their deepest sympathy with you and your London comrades in your recent loss.  
JOAN SCULTHORPE.

We should like, on behalf of the Libertarian group, to pay a tribute to the memory of Marie Louise Berneri. Her enthusiasm for and devotion to the cause of Anarchism, were at all times a source of inspiration to the Libertarian movement in this country.

We feel that her services to the Anarchist cause should be perpetuated in some form of memorial, with which we should be glad to associate ourselves.  
G. H. KINGSHOTT.  
K. LAMB.

We have just heard of your tragic loss and writing to say how grieved we are at the news. Unfortunately, one just can't put on paper—words seem so meaningless—all that one feels but trust that what I write conveys to you a little of our feelings. It is quite true we haven't seen much of you in the last few years—due to being sent to work in Peterboro—but I've never forgotten the days of our first meeting—Emma Goldman's flat in W. Kensington—followed by the Frith Street days.

You have both striven so hard to make a better world, then nature in one blow shatters the little world you have built for yourselves.  
Peterborough. ETTA AND ALEC WHYTE.

## A Spanish Refugee in London Remembers M.L.B.

WHAT I was reading seemed unbelievable. I re-read it many times to convince myself that it was true. In a few lines, full of suffering, her companion informed me of the sad news. The reading of the letter left me prostrate; what I had just read seemed unbelievable.

I knew Marie Louise Berneri in the year 1939, a year of sad memories for the Spanish revolutionaries and for libertarian ideas throughout the world, for in that year the torch had been dimmed that since 1936 had lighted up Spain. On April 4th, a group of 160 of us, mainly from the central zone of Spain, arrived in this country. We were morally and physically destroyed. To relate the vicissitudes of our journey would be long and out of place. Within a few days a comrade, whose name I forget, came to take us to the Freedom Press group's premises at 21, Frith Street, and it was there that I first saw Marie Louise who received us with unbounded happiness. She appeared even younger than her years (and she was very young) and to her one applied that eulogy made by Angel Samblacat many years ago in *España Nueva* of our great fighter, Libertad Rodenas, when he called her "The pale virgin of the red rite." That was apparent to us from the first moment at seeing with what devotion—for that is the word—most of the comrades there listened to her.

From the very beginning she was at our disposal, and moved heaven and earth so that those of us who were still at the Salvation Army hostel should leave that place, and in fact, a number of us went to live at Frith Street.

The group to which she and her companion belonged, edited the fortnightly paper *Spain and the World*, in the columns of which she defended our cause with enthusiasm. From the first day of our change of abode she became our interpreter and constant companion in our long walks through the streets of London. All her interest was centred on our explaining in detail the ins and outs of our struggle and why many of our problems were solved in a particular way which often she could not understand. She found it difficult, for instance, to comprehend the reasons for our acceptance of militarization, a measure which meant the acceptance of a discipline and a class differentiation which in the long run would corrupt the revolutionary feeling which our army had to maintain in order to achieve the realisation of our ideals. She wanted to learn in detail all about Collectivisation, which seemed to her to be our most revolutionary achievement. She also wanted a full explanation of all that happened so as to make deductions and draw conclusions. We tried to do all this and to convince her of the absolute necessity of accepting a number of measures. We were, however, hardly ever in agreement in our interpretation of events, but she was full of that tolerance which must be a basic principle for whoever calls himself an anarchist; she listened with a smile on her lips and tried to convince us of what she called our heresies against anarchist ideas. And all this she did without recourse to violent language.

There was an episode in our war about which she asked no questions, and about which all of us, without previous arrangement among ourselves, kept silent. I refer to the incidents in May, 1937, which were provoked by the communists and during which the lackeys of Moscow assassinated her father, the dear comrade Camillo Berneri. We knew how painful it would be for her to speak of this period and we always avoided it, and she appreciated our silence.

Though not completely sharing our point of view, she helped us within the limits of her strength and encouraged us in the campaign our group launched against our detractors in France. But all this was not enough for her, since she realised that this would in no way benefit our ideal, and she pressed us to do something more effective on behalf of those who had remained in Franco's jails, and something more positive, but to do this someone would have to go to Spain to make contact with the comrades. This was an undertaking full of risks, but Marie Louise, without hesitating one moment, offered herself to act as liaison with the comrades over there. We had a great struggle to dissuade her and to make her understand that both her name and that of her companion were too well known to the Italian police, and that she was bound to end up in prison, and that would be a useless sacrifice. She gave in only when she had been able to arrange with a close friend of hers, without political affiliations and therefore with more chances of success, to make the journey. And in fact this plan succeeded.

Meanwhile, the world war broke out and once more she put to the test her anarchist convictions; from the very beginning she declared herself against the war and she worked indefatigably in every way that might forward the ideals of anarchism and without considering the risks involved. We tried to convince her that though war was a bad thing it would have the positive value of destroying world fascism. She was indignant when she heard such reasoning and only excused it because of our position as exiles who thought that an allied victory would make it possible for us to return to our people.

It only remains for me to ask the comrades who shared with her those days of struggle, not to mourn for her, but to follow her example. For that will be the best memory we shall retain of Marie Louise Berneri, of our Mari-Luis.

London. MANUEL SALGADO.

SINCE last evening, when we heard the sad news, we have not been able to realise that your comrade Maria Luisa had died. Please accept as deeply sincere the expression of sympathy in your sorrow from all the militants of the National Confederation of Labour (C.N.T.) and of the Spanish Libertarian Movement (M.L.E.).

We are with you in being conscious of the fact that with Maria Luisa, international anarchism has lost one of its most enthusiastic propagandists.

For the Commission,  
London. J. DELSO, Secretary.



## M.L.B.'s Contribution to the Anarchist Movement

M.L.B.'s personality and spirit have infused every activity undertaken by Freedom Press since 1936. Her influence was ubiquitous, and her personality coloured all our work—and will continue to do so in the future. Rarely we can only try to assess her contribution in general terms.

Her work for the anarchist movement in Britain began before she came to live here. Before the first issue of *Spain and the World* came out in December, 1936, she had discussed every aspect of its launching with her companion and her father, had collected funds to cover the first five issues, and had made the necessary contacts among comrades able to send information and articles. After 1937, when she came to live in London, she took an active part in the production of each issue, even down to despatching and street selling. She always retained a delight in seeing the whole production through from start to finish, and in 1945, writes to her companion, then in prison: "I am writing from the Press as I am waiting for the second forme to go on the machine. I like being here, rushing up and down, seeing the paper take shape. I think this issue is good and more lively than the last one . . ."

As well as the editorial work for *Spain and the World*, there was the *Spain and the World* colony of orphan children at Llansa, in Gerona. For these 20 children, later increased to 40, she collected funds and clothing. Manuel Salgado speaks in another article of her work for the Spanish comrades who came to Britain after the collapse of Madrid in 1939, and reference has been made elsewhere of her work for the Spanish prisoners-of-war at Chorley in 1945.

When Spain was finally crushed by Franco's victory, disillusionment and the imminence of another world war reduced support for *Revolt!* (as *Spain and the World* had been renamed) and the paper ceased publication after June 3rd, 1939. Many comrades and former supporters seemed to disappear, but M.L.B. was always seeking ways and means to start a new paper, so a small group of comrades issued the first number of *War Commentary* in November of the same year.

It is not easy to recapture the spirit of those days of gloom and despondency. The complete destruction of the hopes raised in 1936 was enough to extinguish the enthusiasm of most of the comrades. M.L.B., however, was quite undaunted. It was not that her temperament was particularly optimistic, though she was buoyant enough; and, indeed, her emotional commitment to the cause of the Spanish revolution was of the deepest. Her resolute determination to continue to propagate the ideals of anarchism sprang from her *steadfastness*, and this quality in her was like a sheet-anchor for many of us in days of adversity.

The full command of language she achieved later also made it easy to forget that in those early days she possessed only an imperfect knowledge of English. Yet in the summer of 1940 she conducted the most exhaustive discussions with two English comrades on the history of the Spanish Revolution, and the fruits of this discussion were then embodied in a course of ten lectures given to a small study circle first

at Enfield and later in central London. Only a dozen or so sympathisers attended these lectures, yet she spared no pains in preparing the material. The anarchist movement had to be built up again and she just went to work wherever the smallest opening showed itself.

Later on, in 1941, when the shop in Red Lion Passage had been destroyed by fire, and the Freedom Press offices moved to 27, Belsize Road, she initiated the weekly lectures which have continued almost without interruption ever since. In the discussions which followed these lectures her contribution would always make sure that the specifically anarchist attitude to the subject was fully displayed, and she would unerringly put her finger on the fundamental questions.

She was never satisfied, nevertheless, with presenting a "party line", but always adopted an independent and critical attitude. This is well shown in an editorial article in *Revolt!* of 25th March, 1939, which was jointly signed by herself and V.R. It discussed the reports in the Spanish anarchist press of events in central Spain, including the elimination of the Communists at that late hour instead of during the Barcelona May Days of two years before. "Thus, viewed in this light, we cannot consider the final elimination of the Communists as a victory for our comrades. Rather must we admit that their whole attitude (the C.N.T. more than the F.A.I.) in refusing to make public in Spain and the world at large the nefarious work being carried on by the Communists and other counter-revolutionary elements in general, for fear of breaking up the anti-fascist front, was a serious tactical mistake, partly responsible for the tragic situation in Spain."

M.L. applied her critical intelligence not merely to events in which the international anarchist movement played a part, but also to the work of our own group and to herself as well. The following extract from a letter to a comrade (1941) is an example of her scrupulous fairness and objectivity, and also her views on the form propaganda should take:

"We are not going to build up a movement on obscure ideas. We shall have fewer ideas perhaps, but each of us will understand them perfectly and be able to explain them to others."

"In order to defend your position you take the example of Bakunin, Emma Goldman, Malatesta—all mystics according to you. But take the example of Malatesta . . . Have you ever read his *Talk Between Two Workers* or other dialogues? They are luminously clear. He explains anarchism without mixing it with 19th century philosophy, God, Faith or Knowledge. He knew that if he started introducing metaphysical discussions the workers would not have understood him. No doubt he desired some time to write about these problems, but he had the courage to mutilate his knowledge in order to be understood by the masses. The same applies to Kropotkin. He could have written books bigger than those of Marx around his theories but he had the courage to write penny pamphlets expressing his ideas in the most bare and simple form. He says himself somewhere that he needed a lot of courage to do that work, he envied the Marxist and bourgeois theoreticians who were not limited by those considerations in their work. But at least he succeeded in being understood by the most illiterate workers and peasants."

"You, comrade, want to put all your knowledge, all the ideas you have and all the original thoughts which come into your head in your speeches and articles. You have not learned the modesty, the spirit of sacrifice which must animate the propagandist. We must go to the people . . . but do you believe that the nihilists went to the people with the ideas they had just taken from the books of Hegel? You must go to the people with simple, clear ideas. You must leave behind the ideas which are perhaps the dearest to you because the most original, the ones which have cost you more efforts. You refuse to make that sacrifice, you think it would mutilate you, you do not see that it would make you stronger and more efficient."

Her spirit of mutual criticism combined with mutual respect helped to develop to the full both the individual qualities of each member of the group, and also the ability to work together in common with complete identification of the individual with the aims of the group. Glancing through the files of *War Commentary*, one is struck by the number of articles to which it is impossible to assign a particular authorship. They were produced after joint discussion, a comrade being delegated to prepare the final script. M.L.'s work extends far beyond the articles over her initials, for she provided an inexhaustible fund of ideas, enriching and fruitifying the writing of many comrades on the editorial board. Her hand is thus present in many an unsigned editorial or anarchist commentary. It says much for her influence that our group has developed

and worked with such complete harmony and integration.

Since 1936 it has been necessary to build up the anarchist movement in Britain almost from the beginning, and the method of building up has therefore borne the imprint of M.L.'s organisational ideas. She hoped eventually to see a numerically strong movement; but she also knew well that weakness is concealed in mere numbers without a clear grasp of anarchist conceptions or resolute character. For M.L.B. the term "comrade" did not simply mean one who shared the intellectual conceptions of anarchism: it meant someone who also commands respect as a man or woman, who is devoted not merely to the *ideas* but to the *cause* of anarchism, and expressed that devotion in *work* for the movement. For her, the term "comrade" was also a compliment and a mark of friendship.

It follows from such conceptions that a movement could only be built up by working in common, by the development of mutual respect and trust. Nothing distressed M.L. more than a failure to maintain this trustfulness between comrades in the movement, for she saw in mere mechanical relationships the seeds of dissension and future weakness which becomes manifest at just those critical moments when steadfastness and solidarity are most needed. Such a method of building a movement must inevitably be slow; but it would create a solid and enduring structure. It required laborious propaganda and unremitting work: and it must be able to survive innumerable disappointments, for many are tried in the balance and found wanting. But it derives solace from the good comrades who are gained for the cause of anarchism; and strength from the friendship and comradeship born of common struggle. This supplement bears abundant testimony to that.

M.L. provided for the rest of us (and indeed for all whose contact with her was more than superficial) the soundest foundation for the movement in her love for the anarchist ideal and philosophy. How moving are these lines about the Russian anarchist, Voline, who died a few months after they were written (24/5/45): "Last night when I came home I found a letter from Voline. He had been gravely ill and was writing from hospital. He described to me the work he had to do and the sufferings he had gone through and I felt sad after reading his letter, sad and ashamed too because during the day I felt a bit fed up and started thinking I should enjoy myself instead of working (you know the modd one gets into sometimes) and then I get Voline's letter and I see that, in spite of all the privations he has endured, his first thought is to get better and to go out to carry on with his good work."

Faced with the finality of death, it is natural that we should look for those aspects of M.L. and her work which, besides the image which her friends will always carry, will survive. Of her writings the most important is her unpublished study of Utopias. We are very fortunate in having this work, which George Woodcock writes of in this supplement, much of it written in the last year of her life, during the calm of her pregnancy, when the beauty of her character, and her face, seemed enhanced by her sense of biological fulfilment. (She did not regret those months even after their tragic sequel, and nor should we.) Her only other separate work of any size is the long pamphlet *Workers in Stalin's Russia*, published at a time when it was not yet a popular rôle to expose the Russian system, and which ran to two printings, totalling 10,000 copies. It is not a "political" book in the ordinary sense, but an attempt to sift out from the mass of conflicting, and often suspect, evidence, the truth about the situation of the Russian people, and to assess it from the standpoint of human values. As she said in her introduction:

"The destruction of a mirage is an unpopular task. The man in a desert who is trying to convince his exhausted companion that the coveted oasis he sees in the distance is only a dream is likely to be answered with curses . . ."

"But if the illusions about the happiness of the Russian people must be crushed, the belief in the need and the right to happiness and justice for mankind must remain."

The greater part of her written work is to be found in the innumerable articles, editorials and reviews, and in her articles in the foreign press and letters abroad. This work may have been hasty, or fragmentary, but was never superficial. Her knowledge and her integral conception of anarchism prevented that, and she brought the same qualities of generosity and sincerity, which gave her such charm as a

(Continued on next page)



1948

photo by V.R.

THE history of utopias in the 19th century is closely linked with the creation of the socialist movement, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between schemes which belong to the realm of utopian thought and those which come within the province of practical social reform. There is hardly a single work dealing with social problems, published during this period, which has not, at some time or other, been described as utopian. The word itself lost its original meaning, and came to mean the opposite of scientific; "utopian" became a term of abuse which self-styled scientific socialists were fond of hurling at their opponents. It is thanks to these Marxist judges that the list of 19th century utopias has assumed such enormous proportions.

In *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, Frederick Engels gave a Marxist definition of the word "utopian" which has come to be widely accepted. While until then an utopia was considered as an imaginary ideal commonwealth whose realisation was impossible or difficult, Engels gave it a much wider meaning and included all social schemes which did not recognise the division of society into classes, the inevitability of the class struggle and of the social revolution. He classified Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen among the utopians, for "not one of them appears as a representative of the interests of the proletariat, which historical development had, in the meantime, produced. Like the French philosophers, they do not claim to emancipate a particular class to begin with, but all humanity at once."

Engels furthermore, reproached "utopian" writers for not having understood that socialism would be possible only when the capitalist régime had achieved a certain degree of development. . . .

Engels' description of socialist utopias is substantially correct. Most of them want all the means of production and distribution to be held in common, but do not think that a revolution is necessary to bring this about. They assume that the State can take over the economic machinery of a country in a peaceful manner, when the majority of the population have agreed that it is the most sensible solution. They do not think that there is an irreducible antagonism between classes, and that the proletariat is the only class able to achieve a revolution. Again, in contradiction to Marxist theories, they assert that a new society can be created at any time or place, provided governments and peoples are decided to bring it into being; they see no relation between the development of capitalism and the possibility of creating a new society.

Engels was not, however, justified in assuming that the "utopian" schemes were less realistic than those of the "scientific" socialists. In the light of the history of the past century it would be a difficult task to decide which school of socialism deserves the adjective of "utopian". The high development of capitalism, far from bringing nearer the day of the revolution, has created a new class of technicians and managers, highly paid workers and trade union leaders whose interests are identified with those of the capitalist class. The only two European countries which have, during the past thirty years, attempted to carry out social revolutions, Russia and Spain, were countries where capitalism had not

yet reached a high degree of development. We have seen, furthermore, that state socialism has been partially realised in several countries, not by the militant action of the working class, but through the action of governments elected through Parliamentary means. More paradoxical still, from a Marxist viewpoint, fascist governments have been obliged to adopt measures of social reform similar to those advocated by socialists.

Socialism, as we know it to-day, is nearer to the conceptions of the "utopian" socialists than to those of Karl Marx, the founder of scientific socialism. It no longer recognises the inevitability of the class struggle, and aims at gradual social reforms which will eventually eliminate the economic differences between capitalists and workers. Even in a country like Russia, which claims to have carried out a Marxist revolution, the structure of society resembles more closely that described by some utopian writers than that foreseen by Marx or Lenin. It might be wiser, therefore, to leave aside what seems to-day an arbitrary division between utopian and scientific socialists, and to consider only the most representative of those works which remain in the utopian tradition by describing ideal commonwealths in some imaginary country or in an imaginary future. . . .

The influence of the "fathers of socialism" on the utopias of the 19th century was, of course, considerable. Owen, Fourier and Saint-Simon not only influenced utopias through their theoretical writings, but their concrete plans of social reform and of "villages of co-operation", parallelograms, or phalansteries have inspired many features of later utopias. In some respects, however, Owen and Fourier differ from the main trend of socialist thought of the 19th century, for they do not advocate a centralised government and an intensive industrialisation of the country but believe, on the contrary, in small autonomous agricultural communities. Owen gives the initiative of forming these small agricultural communes, not containing more than 3,000 inhabitants, to some enlightened government, but they must be self-supporting and run by autonomous administrations. . . .

Among the "fathers of socialism" we should also mention Saint-Simon, for he, and perhaps even more his followers, put forward ideas which are to be found in many utopias of the latter half of the 19th century. . . .

## "A Journey Through -

IN the Autumn of this year, Messrs Porcupine Press Ltd. are publishing Marie Louise Berneri's last work, "A Journey through Utopia". Limits on our space have obliged us to reproduce only a part of the section on "Utopias of the 19th

Century". As a result it has been difficult to do justice to this exhaustive and interesting chapter, yet in spite of the omissions and the disjointed effect caused by the "cuts", the extracts reproduced give an idea of the critical mind and thoroughness with which our comrade dealt with her subject.

The originality of Saint-Simon consists in giving to the best industrial leaders, scientists, bankers, etc., the task of administering the country. In other words, the old government of politicians will be replaced by a government of "managers". More than a hundred years before we began to talk of a managerial class or of a "managerial revolution", Saint-Simon had foreseen that the industrial revolution would give birth to a new ruling class. We shall see how Edward Bellamy echoes Saint-Simon while building his utopia on a socialistic basis. The idea that the governing of men must be replaced by the administration of things, and that all the problems of society resolve themselves into that of production, became current during the 19th century. . . .

The utopias of the 19th century which inspire themselves from the theories which we have briefly considered are on the whole depressingly uninspiring. They aim at setting up vast machineries which will ensure a perfect running of society and bring material well-being to everyone. But in these intricate mechanisms man's individuality is completely lost. The State becomes an all-wise, all-providing God which can never make any mistake—and if it did, no-one would have the power to correct them. Whether State Socialism is administered through universal suffrage, as in Cabet's *Voyage to Icaria*, or through an industrial hierarchy as in Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, the results are the same: man is unable to express his personality except through the channels provided by the State. He becomes an automaton, working the number of hours prescribed by law, fulfilling tasks which excessive industrialisation has rendered monotonous and impersonal. The produce of his labour is accumulated in gigantic storehouses, to be consumed by a community with which he has no real links, for it is too enormous and centralised to allow intimate relations. An attempt is sometimes made to create a sense of community by uniting all the people of the same district in communal restaurants, for example, but, like so many other institutions of the 19th century utopias, it is a purely artificial means of creating a community spirit. In utopias of the past, such as Andreae's *Christianopolis*, the unity of the community was a *functional* one. Workers engaged in the same craft met to discuss the problems related to their work, the whole community assembled to discuss the quantity of food, clothing, furniture, etc., which they needed, and production was regulated according to the needs of a community which, because of its small size they knew intimately. But



person, to her work as a revolutionary journalist. It is as impossible to conceive of her indulging in polemical exaggerations or substituting slogans for reasoning as it is to think of her displaying a lack of honesty in her personal relationship.

Her attributes as a writer are typified in two essays in the magazine *Now*. They take the form of reviews of Reich's *The Function of the Orgasm* and Brenan's *The Spanish Labyrinth*, but she contributed so much herself to her book reviews that they stand in their own right. Her long discussion of Reich's work, the earliest appreciation it received in this country, ends thus:

"... To the sophisticated, to the lover of psycho-analytic subtleties, his clarity, his common sense, his direct approach may appear too simple. To those who do not seek intellectual exercise, but means of saving mankind from the destruction it seems to be approaching, this book will be an individual source of help and encouragement. To anarchists the fundamental belief in human nature, in complete freedom from the authority of the family, the Church and the State will be familiar, but the scientific arguments put forward to back this belief will form an indispensable addition to their theoretical knowledge."

Around her examination of Brenan's book she wove a picture of the history and struggles of the Spanish people which is full of human feeling and understanding. She disagreed with the author's conclusions but she summed up his work in these words:

"Brenan, who lived so long in Spain, seems to have been influenced by its communal institutions, and has written his book in the spirit of the craftsman of the Middle Ages. Like them he has produced his *chef-d'œuvre* which is the test of his love for his art and his respect for his fellow men for whom the book is written. *The Spanish Labyrinth* has been created with that painstaking and disinterested love which characterises all lasting works."

Similar sentiments might be applied to the work of Marie-Louise herself.

The conflict between the desire to express one's own potentialities and the urge to play a part in effecting social change is neither so simply nor so inevitably concluded as is sometimes suggested. For the apathetic or for the narrowly fanatical it does not exist, but for those who, like Marie-Louise are so richly endowed by nature and by parentage, it may present a terrible dilemma. There are some who, while accepting much from our common heritage, offer so little to it, and some who, in their devotion to causes, have extinguished themselves. It may be argued either that he who develops his own attributes to the full, regardless of the world in which he lives, has by that very act enriched society, or on the other hand, that he "that loseth his life shall find it," but neither of these is wholly true. The ultimate dissatisfaction of the ruthless individualist and the frustration of the completely selfless propagandist spring from the same root—the inability to *balance* the needs of the person as such, and as a member of society. Marie-Louise was able to achieve this balance. Her serenity and repose were the outward signs of this inner poise. She was not unconscious of the struggle between the continual demands of the movement with which she was so closely associated, and the need for creative self-expression, a need that in a nature like hers must have been very strong, but her life was a witness to the success with which she resolved this conflict.

One of the quotations which she chose to preface her *Journey Through Utopia* epitomises perhaps what we may learn from her life and the manner in which she lived it:

"Not in Utopia—subterranean fields—  
Or on some secret island, Heaven knows where!  
But in this very world, which is the world  
Of all of us—the place where, in the end,  
We find our happiness, or not at all!"

FREEDOM PRESS GROUP

NOTE.—We have been able to print only a very few of the many tributes received. We apologise particularly to Mat Kavanagh, Albert Meltzer, Frank Leech and John Olday, whose articles have been omitted. We shall, however, include their contributions in the booklet which will be published at a later date, and which will also include the Press tributes which again space considerations have obliged us to omit from this supplement.—THE EDITORS.

## - Utopia "

in the utopias of the 19th century the amount of autonomy granted to factory committees or consumers' unions is mostly fictitious. There is little which the workers can discuss when everything is regulated by the State, thanks to its experts and bureaux of statistics. . . .

There are, fortunately, a few utopias where man comes into his own again, where he is not reduced to a machine which has to be fed, clothed and housed just like any piece of machinery that requires careful handling if it is to give the maximum output, where he is not moulded from his youth into a "good citizen", that is to say, a citizen perfectly obedient to the law and incapable of thinking for himself. Of these utopias of free socialism William Morris' *News from Nowhere* is the most attractive and has a permanent quality which allows it to be still widely read in this country as well as abroad. There are also a number of utopian romances, such as W. H. Hudson's *The Crystal Age* and W. H. Mallock's *The New Republic*, which make no pretension of giving a fool-proof plan for a perfect society but which describe the type of society in which the authors would like to live. . . .

There are few utopias of the 19th century which can be read to-day without a feeling of utter boredom, unless they succeed in amusing us by the obvious conceit of their authors in thinking themselves the saviours of mankind. The utopias of the Renaissance contained many unattractive features but they had a breadth of vision which commanded respect; those of the 17th century presented many extravagant ideas but they betrayed searching, dissatisfied minds with which one sympathised, but though we are in many ways familiar with the thought of the utopias of the 19th century they are nevertheless more foreign to us than those of a more distant past. In spite of the fact that these utopian writers were no doubt inspired by the highest motives one cannot help "feeling bitter about the 19th century" like the old man in *News from Nowhere*, bitter even about the love these utopian writers lavished on humanity for they seem like so many over-affectionate and over-anxious mothers who would kill their sons with attention and kindness rather than let them enjoy one moment of freedom.

The authoritarian utopias of the 19th century are chiefly responsible for the anti-utopian attitude prevalent among intellectuals to-day. But utopias have not always described regimented societies, centralised states and nations of robots. Diderot's *Tahiti* or Morris' *Nowhere* gave us utopias where men were free both from physical and moral compulsion, where they worked not out of necessity or a sense of duty, but because they found work a pleasurable activity, where love knew no laws and where every man was an artist. Utopias have been plans of societies functioning mechanically, dead structures conceived by economists, politicians and moralists, but they have also been the living dream of poets.

## A Tribute by Ethel Mannin

THAT I find it difficult to write about Marie-Louise is not because the tragedy does not touch me, but because it touches me so deeply; the tragedy of youth dead ere its prime is always intolerable. And Marie-Louise was not merely young, but beautiful, and not merely beautiful but brilliant, and not only a brilliant but a gracious and lovely person—vivid, gay, warm, spirited, and brimful of a fiery courage.

She had physical as well as intellectual brilliance. There was a kind of dark brilliance about her whole personality—in the flash of her fine dark eyes, in the flash of her curiously brilliant smile, which could be so mocking and ironic in the presence of political humbug and *chi-chi*. The daughter of the gallant Camillo Berneri, she was every inch her father's daughter. There was always about her the feeling that if it was necessary to die for her anarchist convictions she would die proudly, with her beautiful head lifted and her fine dark eyes flashing contempt, and a small, ironical smile curving her mocking mouth. Those who knew her personally will, I think, know what I mean. There was an essentially flame-like quality about her—and it is a very rare quality in the general run of poor stuff that is human nature. There are millions of people, and they have their virtues and their uses, but there are only a few who can be called Persons. Marie-Louise was a Person. And a lovely one at that.

I met her first early on in the Spanish Civil War; she was selling copies of *Spain and the World* at some public meeting—one of a number to make known the facts about the anarchist revolution behind the war—at which, if I remember rightly, Emma Goldman was speaking and I was presiding. I don't remember which meeting; there were a number of them in London and the provinces. I inquired who that lovely



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photo by P.D.

young creature was—she was in her teens then—and was told, as though it was surprising that I did not know it, "Oh, that's Marie-Louise!" I remember being enchanted that so lovely a girl had so lovely a name. I was a little shy of her because at that time she did not speak much English, though she spoke French fluently, and my French did not run to conversation.

It was inevitable I should come to know her well as time went on, for she was at all the meetings, and after the collapse of the Spanish war there was the refugee problem—funds to be raised, accommodation to be found for the fugitive anarchist comrades. Then we met at anarchist refugee gatherings at Frith Street, at the S.I.A. Offices, and later at the ramshackle old house at Chalk Farm which was finally secured for the Spanish comrades, and at which we forgathered and drank coffee and talked and talked. That is to say the Spaniards talked—violently, passionately, angrily, vehemently.

They came out to Oak Cottage on summer afternoons, in two's and three's and in batches, and very often Marie-Louise, and V.R., and John Hewetson, and others would come too.

How far away and long ago it all seems now! The last garden photograph of her in my album is dated 1939. The summer of 1939. The last time I saw her was at a committee at which was discussed the question as to whether the anarchists, of whom she was one, should be legally represented at their trial for sedition, and whether they should put in a defence; it was clear that it would be easy to get her acquitted on a purely legal point, but she was quite passionate in her opposition to this. It looked to her too much like sex discrimination; but she was so far from the falsities of heroics that when it was urged upon her that she would be more useful to the movement outside of prison, carrying on with the production of the paper, the purity of her devotion to the movement brought her out on the side of common-sense. It was typical of her that with all her brilliance she was never above doing the hum-drum unspectacular things which are essential in every movement, the street-selling of papers, the distribution of handbills, the addressing of envelopes. She could speak and she could write for the cause, but she would do humble things too. When I think of her in this way I recall what a young Irishman said to me once, *appropos* of the hot-heads who were always so vociferous about something they called 'marching on the North'. "Ah, he said, wearily, 'there are always people ready to die for Ireland, but what we need is people ready to scrub a floor for Ireland!' The uniqueness of Marie-Louise is that one felt of her that she was ready to do both for the movement should it prove necessary.

In the last few years we lost touch—not because I changed my views about anarchism, for on the contrary the years have merely deepened my conviction that only in a stateless society will suffering humanity find peace and physical well-being, that centralised government of any political domination is the social root of all evil, and this gospel I have continued to preach; we lost touch for various reasons which there is no point in going into here, but I never lost my admiration for her, and, as I began by saying, I find the news of the extinction of that flame-like spirit in the darkness and finality of death intolerable. How blessed are they who can believe in the survival of the human spirit after the death of the body! But I am unalterably of those who cannot—and in that lies resentment at the blind illogicality of life that gives and takes away so meaninglessly.

Yet, in another sense the spirit of Marie-Louise does still live. Not as the orthodox believers in any after-life would have it, but because the work to which she dedicated her life—as her father did—goes on, and in the memory of her vivid personality, her passionate devotion, her unflinching courage, there will be encouragement for those who mourn her and for whom the struggle must go on without her. In that sense at least the spirit of a fine and beautiful personality does survive death, inasmuch as she will be 'remembered forever' by those who knew and loved her she can be said to be still with us . . . though we miss her laugh, the flash of her eyes, the proud lift of her lovely head, and that elusive quality of *stillness* which was always somehow underlying all her vivacity.

Hail and farewell, Marie-Louise. These are my few poor laurels, and, as for Heine, I think there should be laid with them a sword, for remembrance of the fight for freedom which was yours to the last.

Who would not weep for Marie-Louise, who hath not left her peer, but ultimately who would not sing for her too, for in her unswerving anarchist faith she knew herself to sing . . .

### MARIE LOUISE BERNERI MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Many comrades and friends have suggested that there should be some permanent memorial to Marie-Louise Berneri, but all are unanimous in wanting something that will be "living" and in keeping with her ideas. We think the present is a fitting occasion for us, who were her friends and closest collaborators in the struggle, to put our views as to how best we can remember our comrade, in the earnest hope that we will have the support and approval of all who knew her.

\* \* \*

Our immediate task will be to collect her writings in volume form. Such a work would not only be a tribute to her ideas, but also an invaluable and lasting contribution to international anarchist thought.

But we would like not to limit our activities here. A fitting memorial to Marie-Louise should include the publication of some of the Anarchist writings of her father, Camillo Berneri, of Bakunin, Malatesta and Nettlau which so influenced her thought and which she often regretted were not available to the English-speaking movements. She had on many occasions discussed the possibility of herself carrying out this task, and, with George Woodcock, had, in fact already started selecting and translating Bakunin's works.

Only a few weeks before her death we had discussed the possibility—if the Cambridge University Press were not proposing to reprint the whole book—of issuing at least the two chapters from Gerald Brenan's "The Spanish Labyrinth" dealing with the history of Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism in Spain. Marie-Louise had a very high regard for this work which she expressed in an exhaustive article in Volume 3 of "NOW".

Finally, there was the large project of publishing the complete works of Kropotkin, a synopsis of which has long been ready in our files, but has remained among our many unrealisable projects.

\* \* \*

Our proposal is that the MARIE LOUISE BERNERI MEMORIAL COMMITTEE should be responsible for the publication of these works over a period of years, relying

on an initial capital of at least £1,000 to launch the first volumes, and then to maintain an independent and continued existence, not by continuous appeals for funds once the initial amount has been raised, but by recouping from sales of these first volumes the necessary funds to finance other works in project.

To simplify the administrative work and to limit our overhead expenses, these publications will be distributed by FREEDOM PRESS, but every volume issued by our Committee will bear the imprint:

Published for the  
Marie-Louise Berneri Memorial Committee  
by  
Freedom Press  
London.

In this way we shall perpetuate the name of our comrade who gave so much during the past 12 years to the revival of FREEDOM PRESS and the development of Anarchist thought in this country.

\* \* \*

At the end of a simple and moving tribute to Marie-Louise, Augustus John writes: "I am sending something in memory of a true woman". And the cheque for £100 which he enclosed is the first contribution to our Committee's funds.

We will refrain from making numerous appeals, for we feel that it must be a spontaneous expression of affection, of admiration and inspiration that Marie-Louise has left among those who were her friends and comrades, that moves them to make their contributions, large and small, for the realisation of this initiative which will perpetuate her name among all lovers of freedom.

\* \* \*

Contributions, enquiries and suggestions should be addressed to:

Freedom Press (M.L.B. Committee),  
27, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

FREEDOM PRESS GROUP.



**From George Woodcock**

LIKE all who knew her intimately, as a friend and a comrade, I was grieved beyond description to hear, in Canada and some weeks after the event, of the death of Marie Louise Berneri. I first met her in the old Freedom Bookshop in Red Lion Passage, in the early days of 1941. At the time I was a somewhat vague libertarian, with the flimsiest of anarchist ideas. I remember on this first occasion being much impressed by the intelligence with which Marie Louise discussed the general theoretical questions I raised. Later in the same year, on returning to London from the country, I re-established contact with her and with the Freedom Press Group. During the subsequent months of discussion and work together my ideas became clarified, and the direction of my development as a writer was determined in those days by the intellectual influence of Marie Louise more than that of any other individual. In so far as I have contributed anything of significance to anarchist thought and literature, it has been due mostly to her.

I know that in saying this I should incur her displeasure, for, despite or perhaps because of her intelligence and the rare honesty and directness of her thought, Marie Louise was a person of extreme modesty about her own qualities, and tended to underestimate the influence she wielded in giving form and strength to the ideas of many people who encountered her personally.

For more than six years I worked with her in close collaboration in connection with the work of Freedom Press and on other literary endeavours. I have never met elsewhere and I cannot hope to meet again a person with whom it was more easy or pleasant to work, for her intellectual clarity and her high sense of reality were invaluable in the tortuous and intellectually perilous work of editing a paper devoted to social propaganda. Nobody could assess more clearly the essential nature of a political situation or resolve more thoroughly and honestly one's intellectual doubts.

Marie Louise was never a facile writer; she thought deeply and could discuss matters with great coherence, but the work of setting her ideas down on paper was always laborious. This, it is true, was in part due to her dislike of anything slovenly or superficial, and when she did write her work was always distinguished with extreme thoroughness. I am proud to have been, in some sense, the initiator of her major book, a treatise on Utopias which will be published this year. When the work was mooted by the Porcupine Press, with whom I was then associated as a literary adviser, I suggested Marie Louise as a likely author. The result was far better than any of us expected, for, instead of producing a mere introductory volume to the subject, Marie Louise completed, less than six months before her death, an exhaustive study of some hundreds of Utopian sketches. To the best of my knowledge, it will be the most thorough work of the kind, and should certainly establish a reputation for her as an important sociological writer; it is a tragedy for the world of social thought that the rich promise shown in this book will never reach its full fruition.

In addition to the propagation of anarchist ideas which was the main purpose of her life, and to which she brought that vein of realism associated with the great Italian thinkers, Malatesta and her father, Camillo Berneri, Marie Louise was a

person of wide cultural and intellectual appreciation. Her interest in and knowledge of psychology were wide, and she had a deep appreciation of painting and literature. It was a regret she often expressed to me, that she found it impossible to write creatively, yet her influence was nevertheless creative, for she had a sound critical sense, and her praise of one's work was something to be treasured, for it was based on a fundamentally honest attitude that rejected all sham.

As a friend, Marie Louise is irreplaceable. She always tried, to the best of her ability, to understand the problems of those with whom she came into contact, and her nature had a warm generosity which made her always solicitous for the welfare of those for whom she felt respect or affection. The recurrent tragedies and anxieties of her life she bore with a serene fortitude which made her reluctant to allow them to impinge on the concern of others. For her vivid and lovable personality, Marie Louise will live to the end of their lives in the minds of those who knew her intimately, and for whom her death now seems to mark the end of an epoch.

Vancouver.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

**From Reg. Reynolds**

Ethel Mannin and I were among those pacifists who worked with Marie-Louise at the time of the Spanish Civil War and came to know her as a good comrade, of great vitality, courage and natural gaiety. Our contact at that time was chiefly concerned with relief work for Spanish refugees, and in later years we found occasional opportunities for co-operation in matters relating to the World War. The last time that I saw Marie-Louise was at the trial of four anarchists for sedition in 1945, when she was one of the accused. It was on a decision of our Defence Committee, and against her personal wishes, that the case was defended by Counsel on legal grounds. Her own preference, which I now think was a correct one, was for the prisoners conducting their own case. As things turned out she was the only one of the four to be acquitted, by what she regarded as a legal "quibble", and she took no satisfaction at all in this.

Marie-Louise was the daughter of Camillo Berneri, a distinguished and cultured Italian who was internationally known, especially among anarchists. Much of his life was spent as a refugee, and he died eventually in Barcelona, shot by a Communist during the fighting in May, 1937, when Communists and Anarchists were struggling for the control of Catalonia. Marie-Louise, then a girl of nineteen was already an experienced and able worker for the cause to which her whole family had devoted itself. Into twelve years that followed, from her father's death until her own, this heroic young woman packed so much work that most people would have been reasonably proud had they lived the normal span of years and achieved even half as much.

Every pacifist who knew Marie-Louise Berneri will, I am sure, remember her with gratitude, admiration and affection. Those who never knew her, will, I hope, feel some inspiration in thinking of a life so utterly devoted to the cause of liberty and justice.

(Peace News, 13/5/49.)

REGINALD REYNOLDS.



1945

photo by P.D.

**From a French Comrade**

IN those difficult pre-war and war-time days, Marie Louise appeared as an element of stability, a symbol of equilibrium. Revolutionary circles seem to contain bewildered individuals who seek contentment by way of feverish activity in the bosom of social movements through the prodigious expenditure of energies which are not given play in the economic circumstances of daily life. It is probable that the difficulties of propaganda work, are to be explained precisely in the mistrust of the average man who, though easily reached by arguments, is jarred by the modes of expression, and the representatives, of extreme schools of thought by reason of their pathological characteristics.

By contrast, Marie Louise, in her calm and serenity, seemed detached from purely personal problems and free from subconscious motives, leading her individual life without letting it interfere with her theoretical, propagandist or social activities.

She grew up in an environment of political exiles, an atmosphere both dramatic and sordid, heavy with individual and social problems, divided by polemics, struck by the lightning blows of deportation and arrest. Her father wandering from country to country and yet managing to work for the movement, her mother had her hands full bringing up the children. Studies, meetings, visits from comrades and family friends, the work of earning the daily bread, papers to be circulated, correspondence to be dealt with, bills to pay, accounts to make up, solidarity to be given to comrades, contact to be kept up with the outside world. In this hectic atmosphere, rich with all sorts of human experience, Marie Louise grew from infancy to womanhood. Her soft, childlike voice, which she always retained, contrasting with her gracious womanly demeanour, evoked her continual exploration of things and people, with no problems that could not be solved, no contradictions that could not be unravelled by study, analysis and comprehension.

Throughout her life she retained this facility, the result of continual though seemingly effortless labour, for understanding people and events without hate or passion, without excluding her own likes and aversions, but putting them into their objective place. It is not possible to divide her life into its individual, family, public or social aspects. Her's was an integral, total existence.

When the Spanish Revolution came, when the barriers were down and the word-mongers were swept away by the tide of inescapable and burning realities, Marie Louise kept her eyes open. Like her father, she distinguished, with no illusions, between propaganda and actual achievements, she kept a human contact with the grandiose or the pathetic efforts of a tortured people.

She joined a little group of French militants which published a short-lived review *Revision*, where systematically, even if with a certain lack of documentation, these young libertarians endeavoured to surmount the crisis in the movement caused by the "governmentalism" which had been awakened in certain romantic anarchists by the technical problems which they faced. From this group, puzzled, uncertain and fiddled with doubts, there emerged turncoats, romanticists, mystics, and some active revolutionaries. Marie Louise was in the latter category, linked with the militants of the working class syndicalist minority which was lucid but impotent and understood with only their little tracts and internationalist banners firmly held aloft to oppose it, that the prospects of war dominated the whole social horizon.

The War came, mobilising all the energies of those whom we sought to convince and frustrating all those whose activities were devoted to social progress, flinging them to the four winds of underground activity. Starting from scratch in England, Marie Louise, with her understanding strengthened by experience, attached herself to the reborn English anarchist movement.

Her first letters from London were not enthusiastic—the situation did not permit any enthusiasm. In the development of libertarian movements the aftermaths of old feuds are very often serious obstacles. But Marie-Louise's physical and intellectual health was to prove that recovery was possible and that mental vitality was an effective weapon.

Throughout those years of exile, in situations where any acceptable future seemed remote, where military communiques took the place of news from the forgotten social front, Marie Louise's letters, though even she was plunged into a dark battle against what the great majority of revolutionaries accepted as inevitable, these letters maintained one's spirit in the struggle. Not by a ridiculous and unreasoning faith nor a struggle which is only a pose, but through a sense of realities, of perspectives, of to-morrows which are in the making and of which we might be the builders, alone among those others who blindly or consciously prepared for a future of new wars and revived hatreds.

In Mexico as in Egypt, in Chile as in Australia, were people, isolated, driven to despair by men and events, who found a solid support in those short messages which—in spite of the censor's scissors and necessary precautions—led one to believe that the international anarchist movement was forcing its tiny roots into the hard soil of Britain. And Reuters despatches, interspersed with teleprinting errors and the regulation "stops" informed some of those who held fast, that the trial of the English anarchists for propaganda in the armed forces had begun and there were therefore still, as always, rebels and visionaries in the world.

Marie Louise, after her smiling and conscientious labours, her great compassion for those who suffer and who falter although everything is really so simple and logical, will, even in death remain for us a living example that the tragic farce of life is not overwhelming; that Man, with neither god nor master, returning to his origins of dust and ashes, can leave to his fellows a noble heritage so long as he has the calm determination to seek the truth . . . and the courage to act upon it.

Paris.

S. PARANE.

Texts of telegram from the 200 delegates at the Congress of the Italian Anarchist Federation at Leghorn, April 23rd:

ITALIAN COMRADES MEETING IN LEGHORN GRIEVE. EXPRESS THEIR AFFECTION.—TURRONI, ZACCARIA.

The death of Marie Louise is a great tragedy, for her dear ones as well as for all our movement. . . .  
Geneva. . . . CARLO FRIGERIO.

I had cherished a fraternal memory of Marie Louise from when I met her here in Brussels, in Paris, in Barcelona, and on my first visit to England when I was able to enjoy her delightful hospitality.

I wish I could find the words to help you to bear this cruel separation . . . May you find the strength to overcome your pain to continue the work to which she had devoted her life.  
Brussels. . . . HEM DAY.

Marie Louise: a human success, so exceptional that it was a lasting tonic to meet her. The news has caused us real stupor and a deep feeling of sorrow.  
Paris. . . . HENRI and MARIE.

To-day, a quiet, beautiful Sunday, reading *Le Libertaire*, I learned the atrocious news that Marie Louise had died. I was startled at the sight of this sad news and try to write you some lines and convey my deep feelings of sympathy and condolence for the great loss . . . The remembrance of her brave activity and the esteem and deep sympathy for her from all our friends, will help you perhaps to find the strength to endure all the sadness.

I am deeply moved.  
Haarlem, Holland. . . . ARTHUR BAKELS.

The international socialist militants here in Paris, who have known of the devotion of Marie Louise Berneri to the proletarian cause, have been upset on learning of her death.

I am instructed to express to you our feelings of sadness, for we feel that with the present dearth of internationalist groups in the working class movements, the disappearance of such a militant as Marie Louise Berneri affects not only your organisation or your paper; it is also an irreparable loss for the whole of the international working class movement.  
MARCEAU PIVERT,  
Secretary, Socialist Party  
(Seine Federation).

Marie Louise leaves a great emptiness in all of us by her goodness and by her faith in our ideal. . . .  
OSVALDO MARAVIGLIA.  
Newark, N. Jersey.

It was with a sense of great shock that I learned a few days ago of the death of Marie Louise. The comrades of *Resistance* join with me in offering you our deepest sympathy. . . .  
We did not know Marie Louise personally, but felt that we and the movement as a whole benefited greatly from her writing and the reflection of her activities. We shall all miss her voice. . . .  
DOROTHY ROGERS.

Sending you some little forest flowers which I have taken great pains to gather. Would have liked to send something better for you to take to the resting place of M.L. as a last greeting from us in Germany.  
Hamburg (British Zone). . . . A.S.

I shall never forget how M.L. turned up unexpectedly in Germany, after our very long years of being cut off and all our anxiety. And she gave us a lively report on all that had happened meanwhile, and answered a flood of questions. M.L. struck me as being an enthusiastic and sincere young fighter.

I still cannot believe that she is no more. But so long as I live I shall not forget the day she rained into our place and brought with her such a breeze of refreshing hope and courage.  
Frankfurt-am-Main (American Zone). . . . K.G.

Thank you for sending me a copy of your paper in which you announce the death of Maria Louisa Berneri. I had seen her only once, in the spring of 1948 when I met you both in the *Freedom* Office in Red Lion Street, but I have never forgotten her. The world has become much poorer and this year's spring has lost much of its charm now that she has gone.  
Geneva. . . . H.W.H.

Your news of M.L.'s death has moved me painfully. I cannot believe that this young flowering being should be no longer amongst you. My meeting with her was short, but the impression will remain for ever.  
Hamburg (British Zone). . . . K.C.

I have just received a copy of *Freedom* and I was shocked to read in it of the death of Marie Louise Berneri. I knew her, of course, only through the book she prepared for us, but that was enough to catch a glimpse of her lovely qualities and I share with her friends a deep sense of loss.

I am sure my colleagues who met her would wish me to send you these few inadequate lines. I think you would like to know now that the book which will be a fitting memorial to her will be published this year. We must strive to make its presentation worthy of the author.  
ARNOLD KNEBEL,  
Director, Porcupine Press Ltd.

Text of Telegram 23/4/49:  
RECEIVED LETTER ONLY THIS MORNING. I AM WITH YOU FOR OUR LOSS. I HAVE NO WORDS. I EMBRACE YOU, MY DEAR.—JANKEL (ADLER).

I cannot tell you how shocked I was . . . Indeed I still cannot believe it. It is a loss that leaves a gap so great that I cannot imagine how we shall get on.

I have been quite unable to write or telephone you. But I must tell you how very deeply she impressed me the very first time I saw her, at the end of August, 1946. She was to me a really superior being, whom I had looked forward so much to knowing better.  
London. . . . TONY WEAVER.



M.L.B. speaking at a Factory Gate meeting in Glasgow (1945)



**- The Man, by Gerald Brenan**

I FIRST got to know Jankel Adler during the war years. He used to come down to the Wiltshire village where I live to stay with a mutual friend, and whenever he did this he would come in to see me. Once I went to visit him in his studio in London, but apart from this I only saw him in the country.

My first impression of him is vivid. I saw a short, squat, dark man with the pronounced features of a Peruvian clay figure and a warm, humorous expression. He had the heavy, condensed look of a man who comes from an ancient stock, though not necessarily a Jewish one. He entered the room softly and sat down in a chair in the easy, yet expectant position in which a primitive statue holds itself, and folded his hands modestly on his lap. There he sat, perfectly quiet, turning his large, amused eye from one speaker to another.

This quality of stillness, of quietness, of complete mental and physical poise was one of the things that struck me most about him. His face and body were such a perfect expression of his nature that, looking at him sometimes, it almost seemed as if, by some mysterious feat of artistic generation, he had modelled himself. His painting was himself also, without any foreign dilution: he was all of a piece, within and without. Yet this quietness cannot have come to him easily. He had strong passions and feelings which he had sometimes to make great efforts to keep in bounds. His creative life was difficult and agitated, full of exaltations and depressions. And he was very sensitive. Where he differed from other people was that he seemed to lack all those clever, fidgety, apologetic traits which we English in particular turn outwards upon the world. He was like the leech-gatherer in Wordsworth's poem, who 'moveth all together, if he move at all.'

His conversation was peculiar. He talked with a thick guttural accent, pronouncing the words clearly but badly. He rarely stopped to search for the right expression, as other foreigners do. His vocabulary might be small, but he used it with assurance, stretching the words to give them the meaning he wanted. For example, though he used a great many adjectives, the stock he drew on was scarcely above half-a-dozen. But don't imagine that he talked badly. Just as a twelve-century sculptor who knew no anatomy could convey the grace or dignity of the human body in a way that no academic sculptor can do, so his conversation, helped out by eye or gesture, could be wonderfully expressive. Perhaps one of the reasons for his liking England so much was that he found that in speaking our language he could avoid the dangers of fluency.

Adler was a grave man who never made statements till he had turned them over in his mind and considered them carefully. He applied his moral and aesthetic judgments to everything that turned up. But he was never heavy. On the contrary, one of the things that made his company so delightful was his sense

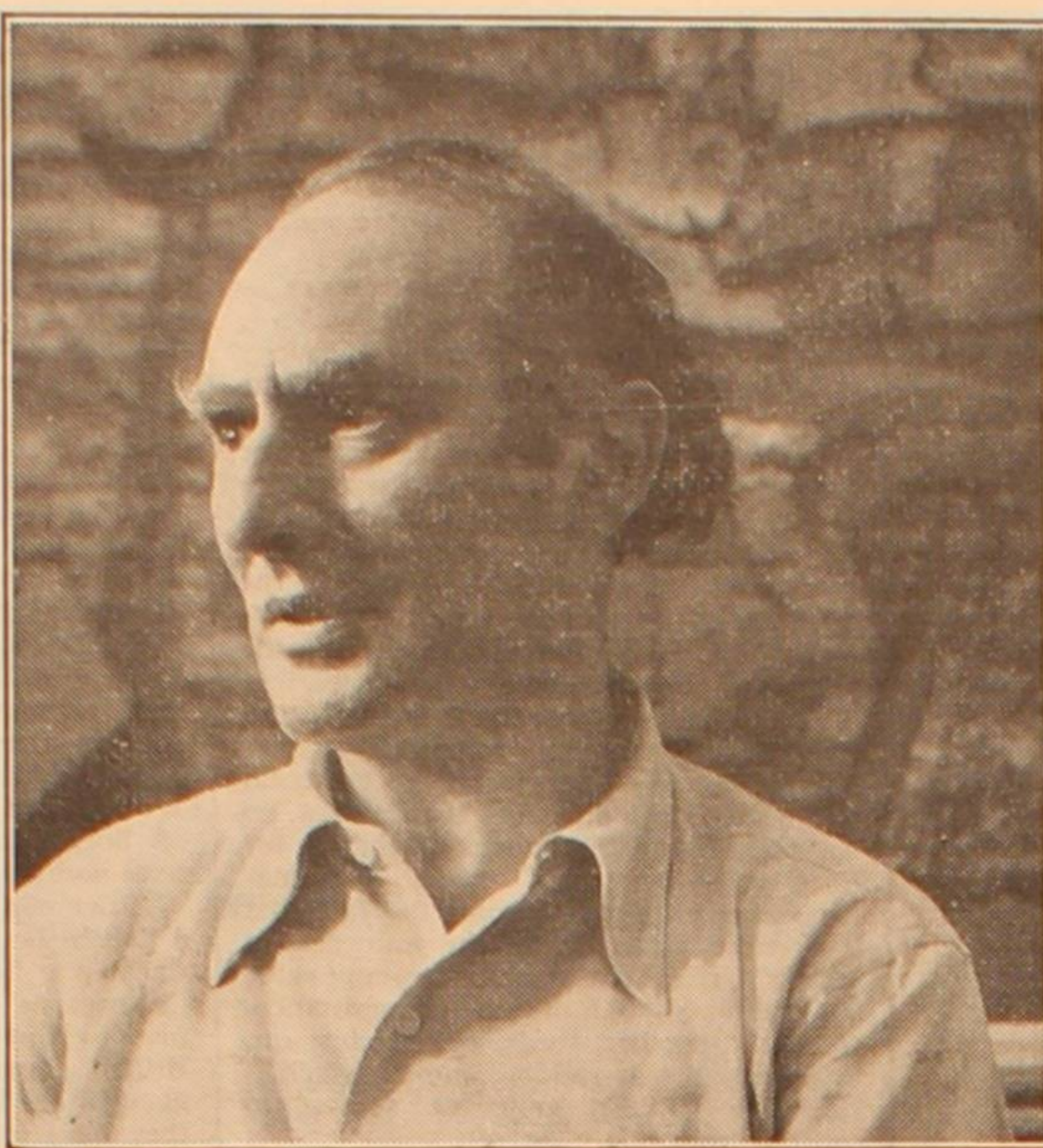


photo by V.R.

**JANKEL ADLER**

of fun and humour. I can see him now, with his large, hazel eyes gleaming with merriment under his shaggy eyebrows as he listened to someone talking, or gently teased one of his friends. His humour came from his shrewdness, which had the peasant quality of a man who has been brought up on folk tales and proverbs. That is to say, he saw through the little things in people's characters to the main things and was amused by their contradictions.

He was, as his painting shows, a man of deep religious feelings, but those feelings were not reducible to dogmas. What he meant by religion was rather a way of doing things and experiencing things, than a creed. He was drawn to Anarchism by the emphasis it lays on the value of human personality and on the consequent need that human beings have for freedom. As an artist this was of particular importance to him, for he believed, I think, that the justification for art lay in its being a work of liberation from the forces of custom and inertia. However, he retained a strong sympathy for Judaism, though he

rejected its tenets and practices. I have heard him read Isaiah in the Hebrew original with great feeling, and in conversation he quoted from the Talmud more often than from any other book. He never forgot he was a Jew.

Adler's devotion to his art was complete and total. He used to say that he had never married in order that his work should suffer no rival or impediment. He put the whole of himself into it, draining his nature to its depths. I imagine that this cost him a prodigious effort: he had much the same sort of things to say that Goya said in his *Caprichos*, but his temperament was heavier and more sluggish and the act of bringing them out must have put him on the rack. Then it distressed him to think that his work was not appreciated. The English are a people who have little power of digesting suffering—they prefer to escape from it—and in Adler's painting the suffering lies deep. Besides, he did not paint in the French idiom. Let us remember that, though Dostoevsky's novels were translated into English and French in the 1880's, scarcely anyone admired them till they came out in a second translation after 1911. The day of Adler's popularity is still to come.

Naturally, he often talked about art. His range of appreciation was wide and, unlike his critics, he was able to admire painters who belonged to schools that were totally different from his own. Unfortunately, when I try to remember some of the things that he said, my memory fails me. There is only one point that I recollect, because he used to make it so often. A picture, he declared, was an act of co-operation between the painter and the person who looked at it, and for that reason some place must be left where the imagination of that person could take root and grow. The artist of to-day ought therefore to allow for this and not paint his canvases too tightly. This was a social doctrine. He did not criticize the high degree of finish given to their work by earlier painters, but he maintained that the state of mind of the person who went to art galleries to-day had altered. He was more suggestible, more 'creative' in his attitude to art, and less of a connoisseur. The function of art in a community was no longer to impose a change on people from without, but to help them to change themselves and find their own vision.

The day before Jankel Adler died, I went round to see him. We sat in his little whitewashed cottage and he brought out some tea and biscuits. He talked of the death of Marie Louise Berneri, which had greatly upset him. Her beauty, her goodness, her youth . . . how could such a thing happen? Then he took me round his studio and garden. He had had many troubles and vexations during the past year which had interfered with his painting, but the peace and beauty of this place pleased him and he thought that he would work well here. We planned to go together to a nursery garden and buy some plants and shrubs. But on the next morning he had a heart attack and by one o'clock he was dead.

**- The Artist, by Herbert Read**

JANKEL Adler, who died suddenly in Aldbourne (Wilts) on April 25th, Europe has lost one of its leading artists and the libertarian movement one of its most devoted friends. A man of great personal charm, of profound mind, and of restless energy, his death at the height of his powers, and just when full recognition had at last been given to his genius, is a sad tragedy.

Adler was born on July 26th, 1895, at Lodz in Poland. He studied in Germany, and used to acknowledge, as the only master from whom he had learned anything useful, a certain Professor Wiethüchter. I must leave to others who knew him in Germany to place on record his movements in the years between the two wars. All I know is that in 1925 he was in Düsseldorf painting murals for the Planetarium. In 1931 he was invited to paint frescoes for the Bauausstellung (Building Exhibition) in Berlin, and during these years he painted murals in association with several modern architects. He was then best known as a mural painter, but canvases of his were acquired by several German museums (Berlin National Gallery, Essen, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Mannheim, Saarbrücken, Barmen and Cologne); others by his native city of Lodz, by Tel-Aviv and Moscow. He travelled considerably—to Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, Russia, Czechoslovakia and Roumania. The outbreak of the last war found him in France. On the collapse of France in 1940 he succeeded in escaping to Scotland and eventually found his way to London. No "master", during the past seven or eight years, has had such a profound influence on the younger generation of British painters. Colquhoun, Macbride, Le Brocq, Keith Vaughan, Craxton—most of these artists would, I assume, gladly acknowledge Adler's inspiring influence. These artists represent the most vital tendencies in contemporary British art, and Adler's coming to England will have to be reckoned, in any future history of British art, as a decisive event.

It was decisive in more than one sense—not only as a personal influence, but also as constituting a break with the influence of the School of Paris, which English painters for many years had slavishly followed. On this question I had some comments to make in a Preface I contributed to the catalogue of the first exhibition held by Jankel Adler in London (Redfern Gallery, June-July, 1943), and it may be of interest to repeat them here:

"Some historians of the future will surely point out, as one of the significant features of the inter-war period, the almost complete divorce which existed between the art of the countries east and west of the Rhine. If he is a superficial historian, he will probably see in this divorce some reflection of the ideological conflict which came to a head in the present war. But art is not so easy as politics. If we seek for the origins of Eastern European art, we shall find them in Scandinavia (Munch) and Russia (Malevich, Kandinsky, Gabo, Chagall) rather than in Germany itself; and those of Western European art in Spain (Picasso, Miro, Dalí) or Greece (Chirico) rather than in France itself. Again, the characteristically modern movement in Germany (Expressionism) was explicitly repudiated, and indeed exterminated, by the Nazi régime. At first it found no open welcome in the democratic countries. In fact, cultural trends during the past twenty-five years have shown a baffling independence of national, racial and economic factors, and we may extend our sympathy to the dialectical materialist who attempts to sort it all out in accordance with his theories.

Art, like women's clothes, is to a large extent controlled by the

most powerful of all dictators—fashion. In both spheres we in England used to take the lead from Paris, and Paris ignored everything east of the Rhine. As a result, a great artist like Paul Klee has only recently been given due recognition in this country, and other great artists, such as Emil Nolde, are still unknown here. It is thus possible for us, in the year 1943, to discover for the first time an artist born in 1895 in Poland and long since established in his own country and in Germany.

It will be readily admitted that these works are impressive: the quality which they, in common with Eastern European art in general, may be said to lack is something which we in the West would probably call intimacy. We have admitted Klee, alone of trans-Rhenish artists, because he is "intimate". That preference, or prejudice, is a cult with us: our sensibilities are conditioned to it by the whole of the Western tradition with its search for "quality", by which we mean the nuances and delicacies, the subtleties and privacies, of the Impressionist and Post-impressionist formulæ. The Eastern tradition, like the Byzantine tradition from which it ultimately derives, has other values. They are at once more metaphysical and more social. They are expressive of ideas rather than of personalities, and they are addressed to a congregation rather than to an individual. It is significant that Jankel Adler, for example, has painted many murals.

The scale and character of such paintings do not imply any corresponding coarseness of technique. We are at once struck by the virtuosity of these canvases: the immense range of effect which the medium is made to yield, the infinite resonance of the colour harmonic. The formal invention, again, is extremely rich: there is no tendency, as in so much modern art, to adopt a convention or cliché and endlessly repeat it.

As for the content of these pictures, it is obvious that they represent

**- The Friend, by Gamel Woolsey**

JANKEL came around to see us in the early evening of the day he got your letter . . . He was very relieved when he realised that I already knew what had happened. He said he could not bear to tell me, and waited for me to speak first about it.

He was very unhappy, and kept grieving that he had not seen Marie Louise for several months, and that he had not got your letter in time to be with you. He said he did not know what to do—should he go up to London—or try to get you to come here? He said that he felt so restless and could not settle down to anything; he had been wandering about all afternoon.

I told him that I felt restless too and had just come back from walking on the downs, but I had never seen the country look so dull and sad. And Jankel exclaimed: "Oh, yes. That is just what I felt. The country is so beautiful now in the spring; but to-day it looked almost ugly to me."

He told me again how he had first found out that Marie Louise was with child, and how wonderfully beautiful and radiant she had looked then, and how happy he had felt when she told him . . . Then he said: "Marie Louise had a lovely nature. It was lovely like her face. She was so fine and so natural and free."

He would not wait for Gerald to come. He said he was too restless to stay anywhere long but he might come back later in the evening. He kissed me very warmly when he said goodbye. And that was the last time I saw him.

something more than an organisation of abstract relationships. They have a metaphysical content—something less 'innocent' than the child-like vision of Klee, something not so sophisticated as the inventions of Picasso. It is not surprising to learn that Adler is a friend of the great Jewish mystic, Martin Buber. I do not suggest that it is possible to find a key to Adler's paintings in Buber's writings. The art is self-sufficient. But the painter and mystic belong to the same world of thought, and distinguish from things and events a realm of being where, in Buber's words, 'measure and comparison have disappeared: it lies with yourself how much of the immeasurable becomes reality for you.' And further: the intuition of such a world-order 'does not help to sustain you in life, it only helps you to glimpse eternity.'

I hope Adler has left some record of his philosophical ideas. I regret now that I did not see more of him, to entice him into those realms of thought with which he was so familiar. He was devoted to the great Chinese teachers—Lao-tse and Chuang-tse—and I think also to Meister Eckhart. In social theory he acknowledged Proudhon, Tolstoy and Kropotkin, but I do not know with what relative degree of enthusiasm. But he was proud to call himself an anarchist—he was convinced that anarchism is the only philosophy compatible with the creative spirit of the artist.

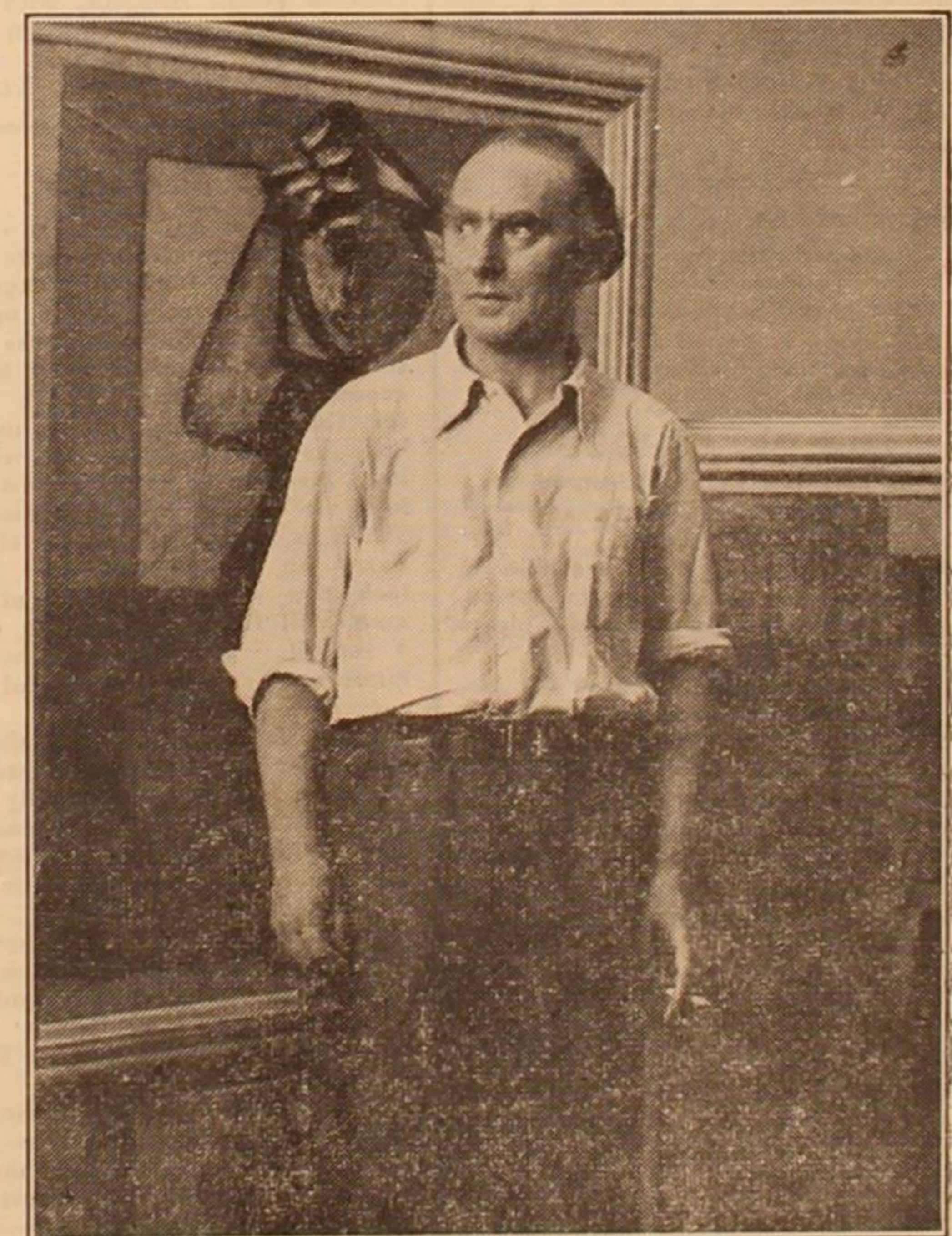


photo by M.L.B.



# CONDITIONS IN NEWFOUNDLAND

NEWFOUNDLAND in April is an inclement land, with snow still lying on the rocks that fringe the entrance to St. John's, the capital and principal harbour of the country. And ashore, one has the feeling that man has done his best to go one worse than nature. For it would be hard to imagine a less interesting or pleasant town, outside the classic horrors of English industrial districts.

Even in the main street the granite setts are uneven and potholed, while most of the side-streets are mere grit tracks. The old wooden houses of the centre are decrepit and untended, and, with their dingy curtains, garbage scattered around the steps, and grimy and unhealthy children playing on barren lots, make as depressing a slum picture as anything in England. Out of town, on the hills overlooking St. John's, are a few fairly pleasant bourgeois houses, but most of the people clearly live in the overcrowded hovels of the centre. There are a few well-stocked stores, but most of the shops are of the kind one always finds in towns where most of the people have little money—dingy, fly-blown stores where unappetising foods mingle with the cheapest and nastiest mass-produced toys and clothes.

Newfoundland has been suffering for many years from the condition of economic disorder produced by a concentration on a few cash industries. Most of the people have in the past lived by the fish industry or by logging and wood pulping; farming has always been neglected, and only now is a survey of the island's agricultural resources being prepared. This has shown that much wider market gardening and cattle raising could be carried out, but up to the present, except for fish, only a minute proportion of the food consumed is grown at home.

This has had two important consequences on the lives of the people. Employment and conditions of work have always been dependent on the overseas markets for exported fish and wood products, while the importation of almost all necessities has provided a middleman's market and greatly raised the cost of living.

The international slump of the 1930's, and the cutting off from European markets during the war, both affected the main Newfoundland industries adversely, and there is still much unemployment on the island, so that the workless man standing in the streets of the capital remind one of an English "distressed area" in the Depression before the war. Wages are generally low in comparison with most of North America; some workers in the fish curing industry get less than 30 cents (1/6) an hour, and most workers, except for a few specialised groups like the longshoremen, receive between 40 and 50 cents (2/- and 2/6). White collar workers, like teachers and government clerks are also often badly paid—many receive less than £250 a year.

On the other hand, prices are high in comparison with those in Canada and the United States. Butter is 79 cents a pound, against 60 cents in Canada, and meat ranges between 45 and 85 cents a pound, while all other consumption goods are correspondingly dearer than on the mainland. Only fish is really cheap. The consequence of this fact is that the people are badly fed and the standard of health is very low, particularly in the capital.

Until 1934, Newfoundland lived under a Dominion form of government which, being largely dominated by the industrial interests, completely failed to solve the island's economic troubles. Then the British Government put in the bailiffs, in the form of an appointed Commission to administer the island, and even the pretence of democracy was shelved. The Imperial administrators equally failed to make the Newfoundlanders any better off; discontent at home and pressure from Canada made the administrators decide to relax their hold, and after a referendum, it was decided that the island should join the Dominion as a new province.

The Newfoundlanders agreed to the confederation with mixed feelings. The Canadian authorities have gone out of their way to provide inducements; taxes will be reduced, family allowances will be introduced, reconstruction will be subsidised. These material bribes, had the feeling that all the other governmental solutions have failed, have been sufficient to make most Newfoundlanders accept the union with resignation, and to counter the separatism which is centred on St. John's.

At present, the Newfoundlanders find themselves courted by all sides in the Dominion election campaign for next June. The Liberal government relies on the temporary advantages which the islanders have gained from the union; the Progressive Conservative leader has made a personal tour of the island, and is trying to enlist the former separatist elements. The issue in Newfoundland swings between these two main parties, since there is almost no radical element. The trade unions, organised in the Newfoundland Federation of Labour, follow the reactionary lead of the American A.F. of L., and rigorously eschew any militant leanings, while even the mild Canadian socialist party, the C.C.F., has no footing.

In this situation, it is difficult to see how conditions on the island could be any better than they are, and while the present economic disequilibrium remains Newfoundland will almost inevitably remain under the complete political and economic domination of the larger countries of North America, with the usual consequences of centralisation and militarisation involved by such a situation.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

# THE VOW AND LIBERTY

"Because I was a fool yesterday, must I remain one all my life?"  
MAX STIRNER.

AN integral part of anarchist ideology has been its great emphasis upon the completest possible liberty for the individual—a liberty bounded only by the individual's willing regard for the freedom of his fellows. One aspect of this, however, has not been stressed so consistently as it might have been. It concerns the question of irrevocable vows. It is obvious that from the standpoint of the anarchist an irrevocable vow—that is, a promise binding upon the individual until his death—has as little compatibility with liberty as has submission to external authority. Not only has such a vow no cognisance of the human weakness for thinking an ephemeral impulse a permanent passion, but it ignores the fact that a promise given under the influence of certain circumstances may be impossible to fulfil should those circumstances change. In other words, an anarchist can only recognise as valid a contract which is revocable and is, moreover, subject to constant renewal.

This has particular significance with regard to the institution of marriage which, apart from its essentially economic basis, violates both of these conditions. Sexual unions must be free unions. A union freely entered into and having no truck with extrapersonal interference or sanction is the only union compatible with the anarchist concept of individual liberty. As Elisee Reclus put it: "The anarchist wishes to see free unions established, resting upon mutual affection and based upon a respect for oneself and for the dignity of others. And, in that sense, in their desire to show respect and affection for all the members of the association they are inimical to the family." The union of the sexes can only reach its fullest fruition when it is contracted in freedom. Legality, with its rigid framework of moralism and convention, tends always to pervert and commercialise a union which cannot be sanctified by the parson or the registrar, only by love itself.

To some the anarchist ideal of free unions may seem somewhat dull and prosaic when compared with the tinsel glamour of the church wedding or the secular self-righteousness of the registry

# THE EISLER CASE

THE action of the British Government in arresting Eisler has given rise to justifiable misgiving in liberal circles, for it clearly shows how political expediency overrides principles of civil liberty, and hence how insecurely those civil liberties are maintained.

That Eisler is a Communist is neither here nor there. Nor does it matter that the Communists, and even their stooges in the National Council for Civil Liberties, show no concern for the principles of civil liberty when it is a question of victimising their political opponents, e.g., Fascists or Trotskyists. Because Eisler and his associates are indifferent to such conceptions is no reason at all for denying them the advantages of an immunity from unwarranted police action. We are here concerned with the principles of liberty, and questions of expediency have nothing to do with such principles.

Eisler was escaping from the U.S.A. on a Polish ship, when British police boarded the ship at Southampton, and disregarding the protests of the captain removed their man by force. It is quite clear that the British government has acted at the request of the U.S. government, but whether they have any right to take a man off a ship belonging to another country is not at all clear. The whole episode is reminiscent of those cases where Nazi or Russian police have kidnapped a political refugee and brought him into their own territory for the purpose of exacting the revenge of a totalitarian government on its opponents. When Eisler appeared at Bow Street, Communists demonstrated outside with posters saying, "No American methods here—release Eisler." It would have been just as true to say, "No Soviet methods here" or "No Fascist methods here", but that does not in the least alter the case.

It seems that it is up to the Home Secretary to decide whether Eisler's alleged offence in America is "criminal" or "political", for if the latter an extradition order should not be granted. We

pass over the impertinence of such an enquiry, and will content ourselves with remarking that such a distinction is not supposed to be valid in this country, for "no one is penalised for his political opinions." This is definitely not true in America where anti-syndicalist laws are in force in several states, and anti-anarchist laws also.

In the past, the right of political asylum in this country has been extended to all political refugees, even those charged with assassinations if it is clear that such assassinations were of a political nature. This conception of political asylum was very strong in the nineteenth century, but has steadily weakened since, considerations of expediency gradually gaining more and more ground.

There remains one more aspect of the Eisler case. If he is committed, the circumstances of his arrest could well be held to be illegal, in which case a judge should dismiss the whole charge. On one occasion when the Home Secretary disregarded a writ issued by a judge, the judge committed him for contempt of court! So it is still open to the judiciary to make a stand for the principles of civil liberty.

## AMERICANS FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

IN the last issue of *Freedom*, there appeared an account of the opposition meeting in Paris to the Stalinist intellectuals' congress of the "Partisans of Peace". The same kind of counterblast was launched in New York by a group of radical intellectuals led by Dwight rent issue of *Politics* contains a full account of the proceedings, and it makes very interesting reading.

Briefly, what Macdonald and his associates set out to do was to organise a parallel congress of Americans for Intellectual Freedom. This achieved considerable success and stole the publicity thunder of the Stalinist outfit. But they were not content with that, for several of them obtained delegates' cards and attended the sessions of the fellow travellers', and especially of the Writing and Publishing Panel. The Stalinist platform steam-rollered attempts to get dissenting papers read, but considerable dissentient opinion was voiced (needless to say, amid hisses and boos) at the session of the Writing and Publishing Panel. They succeeded in spilling the unanimity, and, by their courage in carrying their ideas right into a hand-picked and otherwise unanimous camp, must have made at least the more well-meaning fellow travellers feel mean.

What provided a surprise was the speech of Norman Mailer, author of *The Naked and the Dead*. The party liners were continually demanding that he speak and when he got up he received the most applause of all. But they must have been thunderstruck by what he actually said: "I have come here as a Trojan horse . . . I don't believe in peace conferences. They don't do any good. So long as there is capitalism, there is going to be war . . . I am going to make myself even more unpopular. I am afraid that both the United States and the Soviet Union are moving towards state capitalism. There is no future in that . . ."

Which shows that hand-picking does not always work out right!

## Special Appeal

MAY 6th to May 19th:  
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## Meetings and Announcements

### UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

OPEN AIR meetings will be held in Hyde Park on alternate Sundays, coinciding with the publication fortnight of *FREEDOM*. From 3 p.m. to 6. Speakers, support for the platform and literature sellers will be equally welcome.

- Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.
- At 8, Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1.
- MAY 29th Tom Earley  
"Some Revolutionary Educationists"
- JUNE 5th No Meeting
- JUNE 12th Tony Weaver  
"Leo Tolstoy"
- JUNE 19th John Olday  
"Tales of German Revolutionaries"

### NORTH EAST LONDON

Next meeting of N LAG will be held at 7.30 p.m. on May 31 at 14 Gordon Rd., South Woodford [Bus route: 144, 145, Maybank Rd. sto.].

### HAMPSTEAD

From Wednesday, 1st June, the weekly discussion meetings will recommence at: 5, Villas-on-the-Heath, Vale of Health, Hampstead, N.W.3. Evenings at 7.30 All welcome

### GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

On and after April 24th: Outdoor Meetings MAXWELL STREET. every Sunday at 7 p.m., Frank Leech, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw.

### SUMMER SCHOOL

will be held this year in Liverpool on Sat. 30th, Sun. 31st July, and Mon. 1st August. Accommodation and meals available. Will readers who would like to attend, assuming the cost to be reasonable, please write to: Joan Sculthorpe, Flat C, 45, Catharine Street, Liverpool, 8.

Students sympathising with the U.A.G. are invited to contact the C.L.E. (Liberation Students' Circle) in Paris, who publish a well-presented bulletin (in French) and are interested in corresponding in various languages with comrades abroad.

Write to: Cercle Liberaire des Etudiants, Maison des Sociétés Savantes, 28 rue Serpente, Paris VIe, France.

### CENTRAL LONDON GROUP P.P.U.

8, Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1. June 10th, 7.30

HERMANN PESCHMANN: Poetry & Anarchism: Herbert Road, Alex Comfort, etc.

## There was no Rejoicing at this Child's Birth

"DITTE—CHILD OF MAN" Danish (English sub-titles), Director: Bjarne Henning-Jensen. Curzon Cinema, London.

THE Danish writer, Martin Andersen Nexö, from whose novel this film was made, tells us that "Ditte—Child of Man" is "an account of proletarian woman . . . the tale of her indefatigable care and her never-failing self-sacrifice."

There is no rejoicing at the birth of Ditte, an illegitimate child, but rather is she regarded as just another mouth to be fed. She knows poverty from her earliest days and while still a little child is driven to beg for food. Indeed, the acute poverty which she suffers brings all her other troubles in its wake, for it causes first the death of her grandfather, who has to continue working when his strength has failed; reduces her mother to a haridan who bullies her children and in a frenzy is driven to kill her own mother; compels Ditte, like her mother before her, to work as a servant for an inconsiderate and often cruel employer, where she soon learns the truth of her step-

father's words that "the poor have no rights."

Ditte and her step-brothers and sister are scorned by their schoolmates on account of their father's humble occupation as a herring and rag pedlar. And they see their home sold up to pay the rent while malicious neighbours mock the poverty of their few possessions.

But while there is a paucity of material things, Ditte is possessed of a richness of spirit which enables her to surmount these trials. She assumes the burden of motherhood while still a child herself and her hope and courage keep the family going.

This story of suffering is told with great sympathy and understanding and Nexö makes a point of commenting on the injustice of branding an innocent child as "illegitimate". He even tilts at conventional marriage, for Lars Peters, the stepfather, does not find wedlock necessary to make him a devoted companion and father. This is a film of great beauty both for its photography and for the quality of its individual acting. Tove Maës, in particular, brings a simplicity and sincerity to the part of Ditte which cannot fail to move us deeply. P.E.

## The Crack of the Whip

(Continued from page 1)  
political career for him. Often the aims of the parties are exactly opposite to his own views, for a business man may see that the Tories subservise his general economic interests; but he may also see that the Tories have no lack of business men, and that he will have a hard struggle to compete with his fellows in carving out a political career. When he turns his eyes to the Labour Party he immediately sees that they lack the same profusion of business men, will therefore be glad of him as a recruit, and there will be little to hinder a rapidly successful political career—which suits him and his business fine. What the Labour Party stands for scarcely comes into it, until the election, when he dutifully acquaints himself with the party line and plugs it. The gullible rank and file members of the Labour Party are not even aware of the deception.

Politics to-day is full of such people. And clearly, where conscience and independent judgment are quite absent, a disciplinary machinery becomes necessary to ensure that the Party gets its side of the bargain.

In the totalitarian parties abroad party members are kept in order by rather more severe means than appeals to their economic self-interest; liquidation and purging are the rewards of an independent and responsible attitude. The English system is not like that, it

is true, but ethically it is no great advance. To get into parliament, it is usually necessary to have the backing of one or other of the parties. Consequently, indiscipline may result in withdrawal of the party support at the next election with unemployment as the probable outcome. When a member was seen leaving the House during an important debate, and was taxed with it, he replied: "I'm not standing at the next election!" Envious position! for it puts him out of reach of the whips!

Even defiance of the whips may be actuated by material rather than conscientious motives. For a members' standing with his electorate may demand that he take a line different from the official line in order to keep in with his constituents, and be able to point out during the next election campaign that he did not vote in favour of such and such.

### Nearer the Totalitarian Party

To return to the immediate issue of the five sacked secretaries; there is a rather depressing aspect to it which has not yet been mentioned. It occurs just before the Labour Party Conference, and is given an official status by the fact that the Prime Minister himself ordered the dismissals. Political comment has universally declared that this evidence of a tightening-up of internal

discipline is welcomed by the Labour Party, and that even the five secretaries accept their castigation. That it represents a further step in the direction of substituting discipline for individual responsibility is disregarded; the times are held to demand a "strong" attitude.

When such a "strong" attitude is demanded by the rank and file, when unity is secured by cracking the whip—and is gladly accepted by a grateful membership, one feels that the atmosphere of the monolithic, totalitarian party is not far off.

Yet the existence of the myth of democracy securing that "the voice of the people is active in the councils of nation" shows that there is a notion of a better method of administration. If the existence of disciplinary machinery shows that political action requires the abandonment of conscience and responsibility, and condemns the representative system of government, the way is open to reconsider how best to secure that everyone shall have a responsible part in the administration of things. The decentralised organisation advocated by the anarchists will then be found to correspond much more nearly to what are universally regarded as the needs of men. And such a method of organisation ensures the greater dignity of men rather than the corruption of both party members and party leaders which characterises politics.