

# Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"There may be Sermons in  
 Stones, but it depends how  
 well you throw 'em."

MAT KAVANAGH  
 (Liverpool, 1949)

## DON'T LOOK TO THE POLITICIANS

# WANTED: MEN OF COURAGE

ANARCHISM is a fairly well defined body of theory springing from the idea that it is desirable that men's actions should be determined by their own individual sense of responsibility. From this central conception follows the desirability of conditions permitting of free decisions, the idea of political and moral and intellectual freedom; and its negative corollary, hostility to constituted authority (of which the State and organised religion are the main expressions) whose effect—whether intended or incidental—is to take responsibility for his destiny off the shoulders of the individual.

**A PHILOSOPHY OF ANARCHISM**  
 Once this central conception of anarchism is grasped and accepted the general lines of anarchist propaganda and activity follow quite logically. In the light of it such diverse activities as organised class struggle with revolutionary objectives, the struggle against religion, experimentation in free education and free living, work for emancipation of women, for sexual freedom in all its various fields, and work directed towards the fostering of international human relationships, can be seen as parts of the whole. Many of these activities taken individually have their devoted adherents, but to see them all in a larger perspective of free and humane human activity requires the conscious acceptance of anarchist principles.

It is for this reason that we sometimes speak of anarchism

as a "philosophy". And it is for this reason that anarchist movements tend to remain small, seldom exhibiting the mass support which the political parties sometimes achieve. Nevertheless, anarchism has always been a dynamic force, its philosophy and ideas extending to many individuals outside its own ranks. *Freedom* has often had occasion to draw attention to trends in contemporary activity and thought which can be seen to be affected, if not by anarchist ideas directly, by the same natural phenomena on which anarchism itself is founded. Naturally, these examples tend to be more frequent in spheres of humanist activity such as education, art, medicine and psychology, than in the field of politics. There have, however, been occasions on which a philosophical attitude akin to that of anarchism

has expressed itself in the political field. Examples are the unrest of scientists at the trend towards secrecy in science, and towards the implications of the atomic bomb. In the last issue of *Freedom*, attention was drawn to Lewis Mumford's protest against the war methods envisaged by the U.S. government, and to the concern of agronomists for the destruction of soil fertility produced by the economic pattern of capitalism.

(Continued on page 4)

### "Surely it is Braver"

*"Where all your rights become  
 only an accumulated wrong; where  
 men must beg with bated breath  
 for leave to subsist in their own  
 land, to think their own thoughts,  
 to sing their own songs, to garner  
 the fruits of their own labours—  
 then surely it is braver, a saner and  
 a truer thing, to be a rebel in act  
 and deed against such circum-  
 stances as these than tamely to  
 accept it as the natural lot of men.*  
 —ROGER CASEMENT.

## WHITEWASH FOR THE DOCKS

ECHOES OF THE DOCK STRIKE

THE recent dock strike has obviously shaken up the authorities. Even more disturbing for them may be the news that the lock-out committee formed during the dispute is to be established on a permanent basis as a Port Workers' Defence Committee. There is more than a possibility, it seems, that more trouble is on the way in dockland.

In an effort to stem the tide of dissatisfaction, the Dock Labour Board have produced—and got the Minister of Labour's blessing for—a 5,000 word report on working conditions in the country's ports, and how they should be cleaned up.

Over 500,000 workers in 78 ports have spilled the beans on the sanitary—or rather, insanitary—facilities provided for the workers, on the canteens and health services. And from the findings of the report—not before time.

### The Cause of Disputes?

Many industrial correspondents and observers have remarked recently how the dock workers seem to be almost on the look-out for an excuse to flare up. Such correspondents, of course, do not take seriously the causes of strikes, which may have a very real importance for the workers involved. For

bourgeois journalists the victimisation of a handful of men is no reason for a few thousand downing tools, but workers know full well the constant necessity for defence of all their fellows and that solidarity is their first weapon.

It is now going to be thought, then, that the deplorable conditions in the docks, which have just been discovered by the authorities, has been the ever-present reason for the "chip-on-the-shoulder" attitude of the dockers, and that once these are remedied, all will be perpetual peace.

Undoubtedly, poor conditions have a lot to do with the creation of a persistent sense of grievance, but in all the recent docks disputes, not one has been concerned with conditions or money. They have been on matters of principle.

### Frustration

It is plain to see then that what concerns the dockers most is not the absence of facilities, but the absence among them of any responsibility for their work, through which they might feel genuine satisfaction. During every dispute much has been said about the decasualisation scheme which, we are led to believe, has done so much for the dockers. But, equally, much has been said by the dockers about the scheme to show that, although they appreciate its benefits well enough, they are more aware than the Dock Labour Board of its deficiencies.

This, we suppose, is always the case. A Board devises what it thinks is the ideal scheme for the workers, but the workers, in putting it into operation, find that it may be ideal from the Board's point of view, but not from theirs.

The main thing wrong with the Dock Labour scheme seems to be the lack of freedom it entails for the men.

Although it has given them a certain economic security, it has also secured them, in several irritating ways, so that some dockers can even look back with approval to the days before the scheme. And, of course, what the scheme could never do is to change the relationship between the workers and the employers.

### Equality a Goal, too

This is something officials and their journalistic spokesmen do not realise: that a relationship between men whereby some are masters and some slaves is neither satisfying for the underdog nor secure for the bosses. It is a relationship which can be stabilised in two ways—the establishment of an open tyranny, or the creation of a free condition of equality.

We can be fairly sure that our fellow-workers in the docks will not tolerate an open tyranny. It therefore follows that the only end to the continuous string of disputes is the creation of equality and freedom. This we believe is possible only through the establishment of free workers' control, and if the rank-and-file committee now made permanent has that as an aim, it can count on our support.

### DOCKERS' FUND

We thank those comrades who responded to our appeal for funds to help the dockers during the recent dispute. We were able to send them £5 5s. 0d.

J.H.

# Population Control

## REACTION RETAINS THE BLINKERS

THE problem of world hunger offers two prospects for its solution: to increase the available food supply, and/or to decrease the number of mouths demanding food. Both these solutions (the first was discussed in a previous article) entail problems of their own which have engrossed the attention of social thinkers ever since the Rev. T. R. Malthus sought to destroy Godwin's conception of social justice by proving that poverty was an inevitable accompaniment of human existence.

Malthus declared that food production can increase only in arithmetical progression, whereas human reproduction increases by geometrical progressions—were it not for the operation of certain factors, consisting in the main of war, famine and disease, which tend to limit the increase in human populations. Malthus' arguments make a strong appeal to conservatives, defenders of the *status quo*, and do-nothing types. It is significant that he termed these limiting factors "natural checks". To-day, disease has largely been destroyed as a natural check, while famine remains much the same. It is true we have improved the destructiveness of war beyond Malthus' dreams; but it is not nearly destructive enough, for even during the enormous slaughters of the recent war, the population of Europe actually increased, while the world now contains 150 million more people than it did in 1938. It continues to increase at the rate of 20 millions a year, or 54,000 a day.

### Birth Control

The Western nations have already partially discovered the remedy in Birth Control, and there are some social thinkers who believe that the solution to the problem of hunger lies in disseminating the knowledge and practice of birth control among the Asiatic millions. We cannot here enter into discussion of the formidable difficulties facing such a programme.

Birth control may be seen as a remedy by social thinkers and individual couples,

but it is not so regarded by governments. Among the civilised nations governments are not concerned to spread facilities for contraception, but rather to prevent its spread. The social problem is, as always, deformed by political considerations.

In Russia, birth control is theoretically approved by the Party (though they have long ago thrown overboard legal abortion). But it appears that there are, in fact no clinics. Meanwhile, medals and financial rewards are offered those heroic Soviet matrons who bear ten or more children.

In Germany to-day, the Nazi laws against birth control are still unrepealed—except in the Russian zone. I am informed, however, that Birth Control work is unimpeded in the Western Zones. It would be interesting to know if there are any clinics in the East.

Roman Catholic influence has made birth control illegal in the Latin countries; it is an offence against God. This also applies very forcibly in Ireland. In Italy, two of our comrades, Giovanna Berneri and Cesare Zaccaria, are at the present moment charged with disseminating a pamphlet on birth control. Ironically enough, they are charged under a Fascist law.

In France, contraception is illegal, propaganda in favour of it being rigorously punished, while the heaviest penalties are exacted for so-called criminal abortion. Contraception is theoretically illegal in America, though rubber sheaths are sold as protection against venereal infection. The mass distribution of contraceptive propaganda is still however a hazardous undertaking. Emma Goldman went to prison for it.

### Japan

The politics of birth control are seen in an interesting light in Japan—where the densest agricultural population in the world is to be found.

In 1934, the population of Japan was 66 millions. By the end of the war it was 72 millions, and at the end of last year reached 80 millions. In eight years' time, the population experts say, the population

will almost certainly be 90 million or over.

Dr. Warren S. Thompson, a leading American authority on population problems, after studying the question on behalf of General MacArthur, suggested that birth control was the only practicable long-term remedy. A storm immediately burst over his head—not from the Japanese but from the Roman Catholic missionaries in Japan.

The occupation authorities have kept carefully aloof. But when the Japanese Birth Control Society, a small select body which was suppressed by the army authorities during the war, sought to invite Margaret Sanger, the veteran American propagandist to Japan for propaganda purposes in 1946, General Crawford Sims, the American public health adviser, refused the visit. He explained that, from a medical point of view, he agreed with them; but political and religious considerations officially precluded a visit under the occupation!

### Royal Commissions' Recommendations

It will be seen that almost nowhere is the birth control solution to the problem of hunger permitted free discussion by populations at large. We may perhaps have a certain pride in the relative freedom in this country. We may certainly welcome the downright observations of the Royal Commission on Population, who not merely oppose any attempt to suppress the practice of birth control, but on the contrary advise that the National Health Service should give instruction in it.

"There is no prospect," their recently published report declares, "that men and women, having acquired control over the numbers of children they will have, will abandon it. Nor is it desirable that they should. The spread of contraceptive knowledge represents a big extension of man's control over his circumstances. As such it brings many problems with it. But it has been one of the conditions of the great social advances that have been made since the nineteenth century . . .

# ARE WE TOO ABSTRACT?

"YOU are too abstract!" This is an objection frequently raised against the anarchists by many people. They say that since we address ourselves to the workers we should make more fruitful propaganda if we took up less elevated subjects. But... it is the development of the ideas themselves which has drawn us into the treatment of questions not always within the scope of those whom we address; this is a fatality to which we submit and against which we can do nothing. To those who are just beginning to nibble at the social question, our writings may often appear dry; this we do not deny. But can we alter the fact that the questions which we treat and which must be treated, are dry in themselves? Can we prevent the principles which we defend, linked together as they are, identified with every branch of human knowledge, from leading those who wish to elucidate them to study things they did not before deem necessary? And moreover, has not all this preparatory work to which they would condemn us, been already performed by our predecessors, the Socialists? Do not the capitalistic classes themselves work for the demolition of their society? Are not all ambitious radicals, socialists more or less deeply dyed, bent upon demonstrating to the workers that the present society can do nothing for them; that it must be changed?

## Our Task

The anarchists therefore have only to analyse this enormous work, to co-ordinate it, to extract its essence. Their rôle is limited to proving that it is not by changing governors that the ills from which we suffer may be cured; that it is not by merely modifying the machinery of the social organism that we shall prevent it from producing those evil effects which the very bourgeoisie, desirous of getting into power, knows so well how to show up. But our task is complicated precisely because the ideas which we advocate are abstract. If, indeed, we were willing to content ourselves with declamations and assertions, the task would be rendered easy, both for us and for our readers. The more difficult the problems to be solved the more need is there to acquaint ourselves with arguments and logic. It is easy to say and write, "Comrades, the bosses rob us! The bourgeoisie are drunkards! Rulers are scoundrels! We must rebel, kill the capitalists, set fire to the factories!" Moreover, before any one wrote it, the exploited had sometimes killed their exploiters, the governed had revolted, the poor had rebelled against the rich; yet the situation was in nowise altered. They had changed rulers. Since it was written, the people have likewise revolted and nothing is altered. Hence it is not a question of saying or writing that the worker is exploited; it is necessary to explain to him above all how in changing masters he does not cease to be exploited, and how, were he to put himself in his master's place, he would in turn become an exploiter, leaving behind him the exploited who would then make against him the same complaints he now makes against those he would like to have

THE timely article below is taken from Jean Grave's book *La Société Mourante et l'Anarchie* (*Moribund Society and Anarchy*) which was published in 1894. Copies were seized by the authorities and the author sentenced to two years' imprisonment. A new edition was printed in London and exported to France and the translation from which our extract is taken was made by Voltairine de Cleyre, a beautiful and gifted American propagandist, and published in 1899 in Chicago. The criticisms which Grave answers are still being made to-day and we feel that his reply is as valid as ever.

dispossessed. It is necessary to make him understand further how the capitalistic classes have interested him in the existing society, persuaded him to defend the privileges of his exploiters while he believes himself defending his own interests in an organisation which, in fact, has nothing for him but promises never to be realised.

## Belief or Knowledge

Now, the workers have always made revolutions, but have forever allowed the benefits thereof to be juggled away, because they "did not know". The rôle of the propagandist then, is to teach the workers; and to teach them one must give demonstrations to them. Assertion makes believers, but no conscious ones. At the time when, even for the most advanced Socialists, authority was the basis of all organisation, there was nothing wrong in having mere believers. On the contrary, it facilitated the task of those who set themselves up as directors. One could go ahead with assertions, one was believed according to the degree of authority he had been clever enough to acquire; and as the directors did not exact of their proselytes a knowledge of why they were to act, but only to "believe" strongly enough to make them blindly obey orders, they had no need of killing themselves to furnish arguments. Believing in providential men who were to think and act for them, the mass of proselytes did not need to learn much. Had not the leaders a plan of social organisation already prepared in their heads, which they would hasten to execute once they were carried into power? To know how to fight and kill each other, that was all they asked the common herd to know and to do. The leaders once in power, the dear people had nothing to do but wait; everything would come to them at the proper time without their troubling themselves about it.

But anarchistic principles have come to overthrow all this. Denying the necessity of providential men, making war upon authority, and claiming for each individual the right and the duty to act under the pressure of his own impulses only, of submitting to no constraint or restriction of his autonomy; proclaiming individual initiative as the basis of all progress and of every truly libertarian association, anarchism cannot content itself with making believers; it must above all, aim to convince, that its converts may know what they believe, that the arguments with which they have been furnished may have struck home, that they may have weighed, discussed and considered the value of these for themselves. Hence a propaganda more difficult, more arduous, more abstract, but also more effective.

## Effective Action

From the moment the individual relies solely on his own initiative, he must be enabled to exercise it effectively. That such initiative may adapt itself freely to the action of other individuals, it must be conscious, reasoned, based upon the logic of the natural order of facts. Ah, it is no small thing to overthrow a society as we talk of doing, above all when it is desired that this social upheaval shall be as universal as we wish it to be! It is clear that the people who compose this society, however cruel it may be to them, are not going to see the necessity of its overthrow as we do, all in a moment, having been accustomed to look upon it as the palladium of their safety and the means of their well-being. They know very well that this society does not furnish

them what it has promised, but they cannot understand the necessity for its total destruction. Has not everyone his little reform to propose, which is to grease the wheels and make the machine run to the satisfaction of all? They want, therefore, to know whether this upheaval will be profitable or prejudicial to them, whence arise a mass of questions leading to the discussion of every branch of human knowledge, in order to know whether they will survive in the cataclysm we would provoke. And hence the perplexity of the worker who sees unfolding before him a multitude of questions which they took good care not to teach him at school, discussions which it is very hard for him to follow, subjects which for the most part he hears treated of for the first time—questions, however, which he must study to the bottom and solve if he desires to be able to profit by this autonomy which he demands, if he does not want to use his initiative to his own detriment, and, more than all, if he wishes to get on without providential men.

When a question, however abstract it may be, presents itself to the investigations of the anarchist propagandist, he cannot make it otherwise than abstract; nor can he pass it by in silence, under the pretext that those to whom he speaks have never heard of it. To explain it in plain, clear, precise, and concise language; to avoid "thousand-legged words", as one of our comrades puts it—that is words which are understood only by the initiated—to avoid burying one's thought in high-flown and redundant phraseology, or seeking after phrases and effects—this is all that can be done by those who have it at heart to propagate the principles, to spread them and make them understood among the masses. If it were necessary to evade every question which the majority of readers are not able to understand upon first enunciation, we should be condemned to return to declamation, to the art of stringing out meaningless phrases one after the other, and saying nothing. This rôle is too well played by the bourgeois rhetoricians for us to attempt to supersede them in it. If the workers want to emancipate themselves they must understand that this emancipation will not come of itself; that they must obtain it, and that self-education is one of the forms of social struggle. The possibility and the continuance of their exploitation by

the capitalistic class proceed from their ignorance. They must know how to free themselves intellectually if they wish to be able to free themselves materially. If they already recoil before the difficulties of mental emancipation, which depends solely upon their own willingness, what then, will it be before the difficulties of a more active struggle in which it will be necessary to expend an altogether incommensurate force of character and amount of will! Useless and injurious as it is, the bourgeoisie has nevertheless succeeded in concentrating in the brains of a few all the scientific knowledge necessary to the present development of humanity. If we do not want the revolution to be a step backward, the worker must be able intellectually to replace the bourgeoisie which he wishes to overthrow; his ignorance must not be an obstacle to the development of sciences already acquired. If he does not know them thoroughly he must be able to comprehend them when he finds himself in their presence.

## No Short Cut

To be sure we quite understand all this impatience; we can imagine that those who are hungry would like to see the dawning of the day when they will be able to appease their hunger; we are perfectly aware that those who submit to the yoke of authority only by suppressing their anger, are impatient to shake it off, desirous of listening to words in conformity with their condition of mind, reminding them of their hatreds, their desires, their aspirations, their thirst for justice. But, however great this impatience, however legitimate the demands and the need of realising them, the idea advances only by degrees, penetrates the mind and lodges there only when matured and elaborated.

The idea of free individual initiative once being established, people should be enabled (we cannot repeat it too often) to learn how to reason and to combine their initiative. If they have not the will to deliver themselves from their own ignorance, how will they be able to make others understand when they themselves have not been able to learn? Let us have no fear then, of discussing the most abstract questions; each solution obtained is a step forward on the pathway of emancipation. Leaders being discarded, the knowledge hitherto in their possession must be diffused among the masses; and there is but one means of bringing it within their reach, which is, that, while continuing to go forward we persuade them to interest themselves in questions which interest us.

—From *Moribund Society and Anarchy*, translated by  
VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

## TWO NEW FREEDOM PRESS PAMPHLETS

### ORGANISED VENGEANCE CALLED JUSTICE

Peter Kropotkin, 12 pages, 2d.

"While laying stress upon the hierarchical, centralised, Jacobin, anti-libertarian principles of the State," wrote Kropotkin in 1902, "we are, perhaps, apt to neglect our criticism of what has been called 'Justice'. This report has been written with the special desire to draw attention on the origin of this institution and to invite a discussion which would throw light upon that subject."

★

### ANARCHY

Errico Malatesta, 40 pages, 6d.

The continued demand for this Freedom Press classic has made it necessary for us to issue this Eighth edition. The translation has been revised and the pamphlet re-set in a new and attractive format. There is a biographical introduction.

## Book Reviews

# SEX EDUCATION

## THE JOURNAL OF SEX EDUCATION. Aug.-Sept. 2/-

THE August-September issue of the *Journal of Sex Education* contains a very interesting account of the work of René Guyon in the light of the Kinsey Report. Although Guyon's work was written between ten and twenty years ago, only two volumes—*Sex Life and Sex Ethics* and *Sexual Freedom*—are available in English translation. This study gives an outline of the scope of his nine volume work. There is a brief and inconclusive, but interesting, article on male prostitution, and the book reviews contain a curious defence of reactionary sexual legislation in the Soviet Union by a veteran Stalinist, Ivor Montagu. It is difficult to see why the editor has included the text of an address given by Bernard Shaw twenty years ago to the third congress of the World League for Sexual Reform; its four and a half pages are quite extraordinarily empty.

## EVERYDAY SEX PROBLEMS, by Norman Haire. (Frederick Muller. 10/6)

Norman Haire's book covers a considerable amount of ground, but it is marred by the form of answers to letters written to him when he contributed a column on sexual matters in an Australian newspaper. This method is not merely clumsy; it also has the disadvantage that the author had to consider the newspaper editor's blue pencil, and had to pull his punches considerably. This may be all very well in the original circumstances of publication, but when re-issuing the material in book form the writer has to

explain (in his preface) that his views on sex are "much less conservative than would appear from a perusal of these articles without a further explanation". The explanation is not enough, for one feels that it would have been better not

to have reprinted them at all. There is much to disagree with in Norman Haire's views but he is hardly fair to himself in this volume, which is scarcely more than a pot-boiler.

J.H.

## ... from our stock ...

THE ROMANTIC EXILES	E. H. Carr	2/6
SELECTIONS FROM POLITICAL JUSTICE (Bombay)	Godwin	1/-
LIBERTARIAN ANTHOLOGY (Bombay)		1/-
★		
BOOKS BY AND ABOUT		
P. J. PROUDHON	Sexual Freedom René Guyon	16/-
What is Property? P. J. Proudhon	Sex Life and Sex Ethics René Guyon	16/-
General Idea of Revolution in 19th Cent. P. J. Proudhon	Jealousy, A Psychological Study Boris Sokoloff	10/6
Proudhon, The Unmarxian Socialist H. de Lubac	The Wallace Case John Rowland	9/6
Proudhon (second-hand) D. W. Brogan	British Pamphleteers, Vol. I 16th—18th Century George Orwell and Reginald Reynolds	16/-
Journal of Sex Education, Aug.-Sept. 2/- Volonté, July 1949	The Paradox of Oscar Wilde George Woodcock	15/-
Etudes Anarchistes, No. 4 July 1949	The Child: An Adult's Problem A. M. Ludovici	10/6
★	A World to Win Upton Sinclair	15/-
Orders can still be taken for Norman Mailer's <i>The Naked and the Dead</i> , which has been delayed by publishing difficulties. Price 15/-, postage 9d.	Sleepless Spain Victor Alba	8/6
★	Sexual Life in Ancient Greece Hans Licht	21/-

## FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

27 RED LION STREET LONDON - W.C.1.

# Libertarian Books from India

LIBERTARIAN ANTHOLOGY  
Libertarian Book House,  
Bombay, 1/-

SELECTIONS FROM GODWIN'S POLITICAL JUSTICE  
Libertarian Book House,  
Bombay, 1/-

THE first of these books is a 64-page miscellany of libertarian writers. It includes some useful material from Kropotkin and Benjamin Tucker, some "aphorisms from great libertarians" and some quotations of rather dubious value.

The second book from India is a 40-page selections from William Godwin's great work, which partly overlaps, but supplements the Freedom Press pamphlet of the same title. There is a biographical sketch by George Woodcock and an epilogue from H. S. Salt's introduction to an old reprint of part of the original book.

E. H. Carr: *THE ROMANTIC EXILES*. Penguin Books, 2/6

THIS is a very welcome reprint of a fascinating book by the author of the English life of Bakunin. It is a "portrait-gallery of some 19th century refugees from Tsarist oppression," particularly the circle of Alexander Herzen and Nicholas Ogarev in London, Paris, Switzerland and Italy. Professor Carr tells stringently and with admirable documentation the tragi-comedy of these restless idealists, their pathetic personal lives and sordid quarrels. The serious fault in this book, as in Carr's biography of Bakunin is that while he has a detached and rueful sympathy with his characters in their personal lives, he is completely out of sympathy with, and sometimes lacking in understanding of, their political objectives. Half-way through the book, one realises with a start that Herzen when he was publishing *Kolokol* (*The Bell*) from his lodgings in Paddington, was one of the most influential men in the Russian Empire. And from the entertaining chit-chat in this book about Bakunin's blunder-

ings and scourgings, who would suspect that here was one of the great formative minds of the century, whose final rôle in history is yet to be played? (In fairness to Professor Carr, he does say in his preface: "I am well aware that I have not done justice in these pages to that amazing emergence of revolutionary anarchism—a figure at once subhuman and superhuman—Michael Bakunin. His meteoric orbit touches and intersects at irregular intervals the circle of *The Romantic Exiles*; and it is these points of contact and intersection which alone are dealt with here.")

Despite its faults, however, this is a book of absorbing interest, sometimes almost unbearable in its sadness, sometimes almost unbelievable in its absurdity. W.

## HANGING

The Royal Commission on capital punishment, and the public, have been treated to a Home Office memorandum giving all the revolting details of how in 1949 a civilised democracy disposes of its murderers.

On a free vote the House of Commons decided to abolish for an experimental period this grim survival of a barbarous past. Their noble Lordships insisted on its retention and were backed by a raging Press campaign.

Many people who have read these grim details will think that the House of Commons was right.

"Reynolds News" 7/8/49

★

## WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HANGING?

Charles Duff's *Handbook on Hanging* (Freedom Press, 2/-) will convince you and your friends.

GET SEVERAL COPIES NOW!



# U.A.G. Summer School

## Build Your Own House!

THERE must be many of us with the ambition, more or less secret, to build our own home—not to be able to get a builder to do it for us, but actually to do it ourselves. Those of us who make our own furniture find it far more satisfying than simply buying the cheap and often shoddy stuff most workers have to be content with. To be able to create the entire dwelling place, however, is something few of us will be able to do this side of the revolution.

And yet, is it impossible? In Birmingham, 50 workers in the Post Office factory are getting together to do just that—build their own houses. First to get the idea was the secretary of the factory's British Legion branch, the ex-service members of which were "browned-off" with living in rooms and with in-laws. So they got together, fixed up for someone to teach them how to lay bricks, got an architect to design a bungalow, which was promptly corrected by the men's wives, found a site, fixed mortgages with a building society, put up £1,000 between them for equipment, sorted themselves into gangs, elected their own foremen, and got to work.

They have worked out their own "points" system to establish the order of possession, and the first two couples will soon be moving into brand-new homes of lounge, kitchen, bathroom and three bedrooms, which will cost them £600 apiece.

The men themselves have drawn up their own rules, including disciplinary ones to prevent slackening-off after a majority get housed, and are working three evenings a week, and all day Saturdays and Sundays.

We have always maintained that the housing shortage is completely artificial and could be cured by the direct action of the community. These 50 telephone mechanics, clerks and storemen are showing what can be done with the necessary determination now. When all financial and other restrictions are swept away the problems of creating the things we need will be even more certain of solution.

THE Union of Anarchist Groups held its fourth annual Summer School in Liverpool over the Bank Holiday week-end. It was a very encouraging gathering, representative of a larger number of towns than at any of our previous schools, and the arrangements made by the Liverpool group for the accommodation of comrades proved most effective and welcome.

The conference itself took place at the Stork Hotel. On Saturday reports were given of all the groups represented there, and a sober picture of the position of the Anarchist movement in this country was given. The agenda of the forthcoming International Conference at Paris was also discussed.

Harold Sculthorpe opened the discussion on tactics and activities, which very largely revolved around the question of whether we should propagate our ideas inside or independent of the trade unions. The discussion proved to be lively, and as Mat Kavanagh observed in his winding-up speech on Monday, it was a useful trend to see many young people taking part in it and it lost nothing by not being carried on in cultured voices.

On Sunday, Tony Gibson gave a lecture on "The Meaning of Freedom", putting forward an exposition of libertarian philosophy in its relation to society.

In the afternoon, Albert Smith gave a lecture on the origins of the State. The importance which he attached to the influence of superstition on modern customs and recreations aroused a good deal of controversy amongst the audience.

Taking advantage of the many accomplished outdoor speakers present,

a meeting was held at Lewis's bomb site in the evening. The platform was introduced by Alf Pinkerton, and Frank Leech, Mat Kavanagh and Philip Sansom spoke, causing a stir amongst a typically Liverpoolian audience and ending in animated discussion. Only the future meetings to be held there will tell if it was caused by the idea itself or the novelty of its being presented at all!

On Monday, the school was reopened by Albert Meltzer speaking on "Anarchism in Practice in Three Revolutions". He traced the development and achievements of the "Land and Liberty" revolution in Mexico, the "Makhnowist" movement in the Russian Ukraine, and the Spanish Revolution of 1936, endeavouring to show that each made a distinct contribution to anarchist theory which answered the query, "Will it work?"

In the afternoon, David Pude spoke on "The New Anarchism", making his opening remarks deliberately provocative, calling on anarchists to revise their ideas to meet present-day situations, but in the ensuing discussion a large measure of agreement was reached on most issues, the question of activity within the unions being a point on which there remained more than one opinion.

Mat Kavanagh wound up with a very heartening speech ("I'm not young enough to be pessimistic"). It was generally agreed by those present that Mat was the man to represent the ideas of the U.A.G. at the forthcoming Paris Conference, as the oldest and best-known anarchist militant, who after 50 years of propaganda remained one of our most active and agile comrades.

INTERNATIONALIST.

# THE SPREAD OF ANARCHIST IDEAS EMPLOYMENT & WAR

(Continued from page 1)

Lord Boyd Orr has been prominent in the fight against human hunger, where he has expressed ideas very much more radical than those of most nutritionists. His study of the world economies of food production has now borne fruit in the shape of a clear realization of the vicious institutional rôle which war has come to occupy in our society. In his speech at Oxford on 6th August, he pointed out that if the great powers were not spending more than one-third of their national revenue in preparation for a third world war, unemployment would be far worse than it now is. "If by some miracle peace descended on the earth and the men were released from the armed forces and from making weapons," he declared, "the strain would be too great for our economic structure."

One is reminded here of those remarks made by industrialists and economists during the war about "the menace of peace", and Lord Orr's remarks are undoubtedly significant of the growing realization that war is not simply a question of different sides and who is going to win; it has come to be a necessity to keep the wheel of industry turning, to maintain profits and what is called "confidence", and to keep men and women in employment, off the dole.

## War and Interest for all Classes

The dreadful aspect of this institutional character of modern war and war preparation—for they must be considered as part of the same general pattern—is that from the day to day point of view all classes have an interest in keeping it going. Obviously, it is a necessity for the maintenance of profits, and one would therefore expect little reaction against institutional militarism from the Conservative Party, the representatives of property. But workers are also concerned about their wage packet, about full employment, about "prosperity", because they have to pay the rent, the insurances, the butcher's, the grocer's, and the milk bill. Inevitably, the party which de-

pends mainly on their votes, and the T.U.C. which depends on their dues, has to be more practical about capitalist economies than about socialist internationalist and anti-militarism. Hence the Labour Party and the T.U.C. are also debarred from making any decisive break with the social and economic pattern which finds war not simply a useful expedient now and then, but a godsend and necessity for its continued existence.

Lord Boyd Orr has also grasped that the eradication of war requires something more than political reforms. "We need not look to the politicians. They are obsessed with the day-to-day problems of keeping the world running. The great need of the world is men of intellectual courage and integrity, who are not afraid to speak what they believe to be the truth and who will get their ideas across to the people of the world who are thirsting for truth."

Lord Orr is not an anarchist, and there should be no surprise if he lends his support to the third world war, whose anatomy he clearly understands. But it is clear enough that he bases his speech on a world outlook emancipated from some at least of the nationalist fetters and political blinkers which brilliant men too often assume for their public utterances. And his insistence that the need is for men of intellectual courage and integrity, devoted to the truth, is a demand for men able to think and act for themselves, responsibly and freely—in short men not very different from those anarchism envisages.

The great need of men and women to-day is to escape from the rigidity of day to day routine which keeps going the pattern of war and poverty and the frustration of human impulses and human development. Since it is desirable that understanding should precede action, the utterance of Lord Orr is greatly to be welcomed. Nor is it foolish to see in it the remote results of the long and weary work of anarchist propaganda in the past. Anarchist ideas may still have few conscious adherents, but they retain their dynamic quality and their ability to permeate the best activities of society.

## TENANTS WITHHOLD RATES

ANOTHER example of direct action of rather a different kind comes from Coulsdon in Surrey, where tenants on the Clock House estate are threatening to refuse to pay their rates unless the council remove a nearby wasp-ridden rubbish dump. Children are being stung and tradesmen are refusing to call, so the tenants have decided to keep back the 9s. 7d. per week they each pay for rates, and will pay a contractor to remove the rubbish with the money so collected.

Complaints were first made to the council a year ago. The mere threat of losing income will probably get them moving!

## Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

OPEN AIR meetings are held in Hyde Park every Sunday.

Speakers, support for the platform and literature sellers will be equally welcome.

## HAMPSTEAD

Weekly discussion meetings are held every Wednesday at: 5, Villas-on-the-Heath, Vale of Health, Hampstead, N.W.3. Evenings at 7.30 All welcome

## GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

Outdoor Meetings MAXWELL STREET, every Sunday at 7 p.m., Frank Leech, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw.

## U.A.G. INTERNAL BULLETIN

It is hoped to commence publication of an internal bulletin for the use of the Union of Anarchist Groups, in September. Any comrade who is not in touch with his or her local U.A.G. Group and would like to receive copies of the bulletin should communicate with the following address:—

The Editors, U.A.G. Internal Bulletin, 72, Coldbath Road, Billesley, Birmingham, 14.

# Oh Don't Send that Screw to Prison!

EVERY now and again, a prison officer ("Screw" to you, tosh!) is hauled up before the courts and punished for smuggling tobacco into prison for a prisoner. Sometimes, such is the incorruptible honesty of these guardians of our delinquents, they are also charged with smuggling goods out of prison—sheets, blankets, handkerchiefs, food. At one time, just after the recent war, in one London prison, out of a complement of over 120 warders, only four were regarded as incorruptible!

Since then, Scotland Yard has been busy, and a succession of Screws have been "done". How the Yard gets its information is an interesting poser. Do our policemen get themselves convicted in the course of duty, and get inside as prisoners for a time? It seems hardly likely. It is one thing for them to get prison sentences passed on somebody else, but quite another to get banged-up themselves—even in the course of duty. Our real-life Dick Bartons are undoubtedly a fine, intrepid body of men, but a few weeks' diet of porridge, floating fat, cocoa and cob is a prospect to bore the bravest. It's much more exciting to run in a few prostitutes, play the nark at a night-club breaking the licensing laws or take notes at a meeting of striking dockers.

Or do the sleuths disguise themselves as warders, and work among and mingle with the men they are trying to catch? Do they then weedle their way into the confidence of prisoners by carrying tobacco themselves and then discover the names of officers doing the same thing? Or do they have stool pigeons among the prisoners who have been bribed by, say, some charges against them being dropped?

No, surely we can believe that our defenders of law and order would only act in a straight-forward, honest, legal manner! After all, warders' quarters are subjected to periodic searches by the police, as are the warders themselves on coming into and leaving the prison. Prison officers' quarters are Crown property, and perhaps it is not too much to say that warders themselves are Crown property, too. So they cannot expect to have any privacy, and that helps the police, doesn't it?

A Wandsworth Prison officer was recently charged with smuggling three ounces of tobacco into prison, and taking a parcel of 230 compact springs out. He did this for a prisoner, which was very nice of him, wasn't it? They are humane, kindly people, these screws, and we can have no doubt that their warm hearts melt right away at the sight of a prisoner gasping for a smoke and not knowing how to get a parcel of 230 compact springs passed to the outside. (This may account for the fact that some screws are thought to have no heart at all.)

But, sad to say, it was not mere humanitarianism that made prison officer

Sutton give his services to the prisoner. In fact, he did not give them at all, he sold them. Sordidly, as it now appears, this man, into whose kindly care the State had placed those of our fellow citizens who have fallen by the wayside, contracted to carry three ounces of tobacco to a prisoner in return for the sum of £1, a transaction which would show him a profit of only about 200 per cent.

The poor man, however, had his reasons. His wages, £4 13s. a week, were barely enough to keep his wife and three children. He had little or no pocket money left for himself after meeting the expenses any family man is proud to bear. And surely none of us would wish in any way to diminish the pleasure he got from the patter of tiny feet? (though the thought of three more little screws growing up is a bit sickening...)

This man had served his country well and nobly in the army during the war, with an excellent character—or at least, so his solicitor said. He was getting on in the Prison Service, too, being almost due for promotion. Every day he marched briskly in at the gate to take up his stern duty, performing it well and efficiently—with three ounces of baccy under his belt. We are very glad to be able to report that the magistrate tempered justice with mercy. He recognised the weight of temptation to which this servant of the State had succumbed. He fined Sutton £7, and said that, because of the circumstances, he would not send this prison officer to—prison. P.S.

\* It is interesting to note that in spite of the increase in the cost of living over the last four years, this rate of exchange has remained stable. Perhaps Cripps could learn something from that?

## THE CANADIAN SET-UP

(Continued from page 3)

should have suffered such a substantial loss throughout Canada. Here there is not such a strong traditional hatred of radicalism as in the States, and the atmosphere is generally more tolerant, so that the wave of red-baiting which has swept across the States raised only slight ripples here, and is regarded by very many people as just another example of American hysteria. In some provinces, such as Saskatchewan, the C.C.F. even gained a substantial following among the farmers. Their present loss of influence can be traced to two main causes; the first of these is the postponement of the economic crisis, and the second is the hostility towards socialism that has been aroused throughout Canada by the example of Crippsian austerity in England. Particularly in the less industrial areas, and outside Quebec, there is a quite im-

gradually be stifled; a sign of this is shown by the recent drop in the price of lumber, which has made it difficult for many small mills to carry on, and has thus played into the hands of the large combines. The Canadian type of individualism and anti-Governmentalism is therefore negative and rather blind. It finds expression in a swing against socialism, with its more obvious interferences with personal liberty and "freedom of enterprise", but fails to see the dangers of government as such, or to regard as anything but natural the graft with which politics is inevitably associated on the North American continent, and which is here less marked than in the States only because the opportunities are less considerable. GEORGE WOODCOCK.

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## ANGLO-COLONIAL CULTURAL COMMITTEE

This somewhat high-falutin' title is that of a joint committee of members of the Common Wealth Party and the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism.

## A CONCERT IN LONDON

They are hoping to "contribute a little towards destroying the common superstition that there are no cultures other than European" and as a kick-off are organising a concert with a fascinating bill including piano music and calypso and folk music singers from India, Africa and the West Indies.

Without knowing much about the aims of the committee, it sounds worthy of support. Tickets (2/6, 3/6, 5/-) for the concert, and further information are available from: The Anglo-Colonial Cultural Committee, 12, High Street, London, N.W.3. Telephone: HAMpstead 5879.

## Special Appeal

Aug. 2 to Aug. 12 :

London: P.H.S.\* 10/-; Liverpool: Summer School £2/2/3; London: T. & E.E.\* 5/-; London: L.G.W.\* 5/-; Gosport: F.G.\* 5/-; London: V.R.\* 5/-; London: F.E.D.\* 5/-; Sidmouth: J.S.\* 5/-; Cambridge: C.L.D.\* 5/-; Hounslow: W.M.E. 5/-; Cape Town: C.D.F. £2/2/0; Long Eaton: C.W.R.\* 2/-; Birmingham: S.E.P. 9d. Llanelly: L.W.\* 5/-; Stirling: R.A.B.\* 10/-; London: per J.H. 5/-; London: per J.H. 10/-; London: J.H. 1/6; Llanelly: L.W.\* 5/-; London: C.W.\* 5/-.

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

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