

Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"Whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together."
JONATHAN SWIFT

Threepence

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THEY HAVE MADE A DESERT AND CALL IT PEACE ... AFTER TEN YEARS

IT is ten years since the war began, and we are as far from peace as ever. The whole course of the war and the post-war years has brought to fulfilment all the gloomy, but completely justified prognostications of the anarchist press, and as we survey the world of to-day, how can we avoid asking: "What else could you expect?"

Not one of the objects for which the war was supposedly fought, has been achieved; not one of the sacrifices of life, comfort, or material happiness has been made fruitful. In the words used by Herbert Read at the end of the war: "Our statesmen have made a chaos and call it victory. Millions of men are dead, and their silence is called peace."

GERMANY

Has the war succeeded in destroying German nationalism? Last week's elections give the answer. The victorious right-wing, campaigning under the flag of Imperial Germany, with brass bands, and a pastoral letter giving the support of the Catholic Church, will open the path for neo-Nazi groups like the German Right Party and the Economic

Reconstruction Association of Loritz, the "Blond Hitler". An even more sinister prospect, reminding us of the secret alliance of the 1920s, between Moscow and the Junkers, the industrialists and the High Command, is given in the report that Herr Nadolny, formerly German Ambassador to Moscow has summoned his Right-wing circle to meet at Bad Godesberg. Among those invited are a number of prominent politicians from the satellite parties of the Soviet zone.

Meanwhile, the printer of the pornographic Jew-baiting paper *Der Stuermer* is to begin a new paper in Nuremberg, and the editor of the *Neuer Kurier*, published by a group of large industrialists, states that "My newspaper will show the German

people what they lost in Hitler."

Who are responsible for this rebirth of reaction? In the words of a German correspondent of *Freedom*, "The new nationalist development has been furthered by the victorious and occupation powers not only indirectly by their brutal suppression and exploitation, but also directly by favouring Nazi officials, officers and politicians in the new State apparatus. The new German reaction has the political, financial and moral support of the authoritarian powers of the whole world."

GENOCIDE

Was the war fought to end the massacre of whole populations, the concentration camps and the pogroms? As Lewis Mumford wrote:

"By our concentration on atomic weapons and similar airborne agents, we have publicly announced, in effect, that in any large struggle with an enemy power we shall abandon the methods of war and resort to the wholesale extermination of enemy populations."

The exact term for this method of attack is genocide: a crime against humanity which in the United Nations we piously profess to abhor.¹

Nagasaki and Hiroshima cancelled out any Allied claim to moral superiority over their enemies. "If evil is to be retaliated by equal evil, what should prevent us from imitating the practices of the German extermination camps? For every rule of war the Japanese broke against us on the scale of hundreds, we have broken on the scale of thousands."²

To-day, the concentration camps still exist, run by our former allies. Sometimes even the occupants are the same.

Numerically, the biggest victims of the Nazis were the Jews. Can we claim that Britain fought to save them? The answer is that, outside Germany, no government did more than the British before, during and after the war, to prevent their escape from the Continent. We do not need to be reminded of Bevin's campaign against the post-war immigrants, which only ceased because of the requirements of Anglo-American foreign policy and the armed strength of Jewish nationalism (a phenomenon for which we bear a large share of responsibility); but it is as well to recall the British government's White Paper of May 17th, 1939, which planned to end Jewish immigration to Palestine. It never became law because it was never endorsed by the League Permanent Mandates Commission, but, despite this:

"Its provisions were implemented point by point: the sale of land to Jews was prohibited in 94.8 per cent. of their homeland, access to it was refused to survivors of the great massacre, and shiploads of them drowned in 1941 and '42 in the waters of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Those who succeeded in getting ashore were sent to prison or deported to Eritrea, the Sudan or the Island of Mauritius; helpers in the work of rescue were treated as criminals and given long sentences of imprisonment."³

OCCUPIED TERRITORY

Has the war preserved the territorial independence of Britain? The answer is that this island has now become a bombing base for America. It was recently announced by the U.S. General Vandenberg that the American Air Force in Britain, which was recently increased in size, was to be maintained after the end of the Air-Lift (although it had been stated when the first planes and men arrived that "There is no question of the U.S.A.A.F. establishing or reopening United States air bases in England").

1 *Freedom*, 6/8/49.
2 Mumford: *Programme for Survival*.
3 Koessler: *Thieves in the Night*.

THE SMITHS AND THE PRESS

You cannot hope to bribe or twist,
Thank God, the British journalist.
For seeing what the man will do
Unbribed, there's no occasion to.

ONCE more the gentlemen of the Press have excelled themselves in proving the aptness of the time-honoured jingle that has summed up English journalism to a nicety. We refer to the reports of the Atlantic crossing of the Smith brothers, whose achievement not only hit the headlines but the bullseye of the world so far as misrepresentation was concerned. We feel that one of the philanthropic Press lords might well present an annual prize for gross deception and the persons responsible for the Smith coverage would undoubtedly well qualify for this year's award.

The *News Chronicle* referred to the Smith brothers' Atlantic crossing as a "publicity stunt", but this must undoubtedly have been written tongue-in-cheek since the Smiths certainly knew considerably less about the capitalist press than they did about yachtmanship. Scarcely a word has appeared in the popular press about the ideals which the Smiths wanted to publicise by their voyage. There have been one or two references to their belief in international federation and all papers have conscientiously printed after the name of their craft *Nova Espero*, the words "New Hope", but without any indication as to the language used. In fact, the Smiths

wanted to publicise international federation (of what kind we are not sure, and there is certainly no means of finding out unless one cares to queue outside the *Daily Express* building to try and get hold of them and ask personally) and the use of Esperanto as a universal language. Their ideals are undoubtedly those of peace and internationalism, although as to how far they have gone on the road to a true understanding of these issues we have no knowledge—and most certainly one will get no information from the Press.

For what is the theme of practically every English newspaper article? In spite of one or two glancing references at the Smiths' belief in international federation and a mention of Esperanto in the *Daily Herald*, the Fleet Street chorus has been one of praise for British grit. Devon's traditions, English youth proving once again, blah-blah-blah. In fact, the newspaper writers have taken the opportunity to publicise not what the Smiths intended, but precisely the opposite, namely chauvinistic nationalism.

The casual newspaper reader must be thinking that foreigners must not suppose that the bulldog breed is down and out when we can still produce boys of the old brigade! He might instead reflect that anti-British detractors in America and Russia should not suppose they can get away with their lies so long as the unbribed British journalist can still produce more lies to cap them on behalf of his lords and masters. M.

IN TITOLAND

(from our Balkan Correspondent)

IN the days of the great alliance between Generalissimo Stalin and Britain against Hitler, Mr. Churchill told Parliament that he was in "agreeable" correspondence with Tito and urged all the Yugoslavs to rally round the Marshal. Since then many things have changed in the world but just as during the war it was not tactful to say anything against "our gallant Russian allies" so to-day, when Tito is fighting the Eastern bloc, no London paper asks the question: "Do the peoples of Yugoslavia find Tito as agreeable as did Mr. Churchill?"

The purpose of this article is to give our readers certain facts which the daily press prefers to ignore although it finds a great deal of space to discuss the disruptive effect of Tito's rebellion on the other Russian satellite governments and even urges London and Washington to give economic aid to a ruler who believes neither in Christ nor free enterprise.

TERROR

Like every other successful dictator, Tito has the moral outlook of a Chicago gangster and possesses an efficient organisation built largely by, and until now devoted to, him. This organisation, the Yugoslav C.P., with its half a million members holding key positions everywhere, directs the daily activities of all the inhabitants. Or, as the Yugoslav constitution puts it: "Every citizen must work according to his abilities; he who does not give to the State cannot receive from it." To make people work according to their abilities, there are no less than 114 Ministers, large numbers of young men in the army, women working in the mining industry, advertisements for many new jobs in the bureaucracy and the police, "voluntary" labour on Sundays, payment by results wherever possible, large bonuses for the managers of successful State enterprises and above all there are always "socialist competitions" between various factories, mines, etc., as to who will produce most for Tito's birthday or the First of May. [How far this campaign has gone may be seen from a newspaper announcement that a school of midwives challenged to a "socialist competition" all similar institutions in the country "in honour of the Fifth Congress of our glorious C.P."]

The minority of workers who establish new production records which all their comrades must also reach in the next competition receive better food (there are 11 different kinds of ration book in Yugoslavia), more clothing, a room to themselves, the title of *shock-worker* and all sorts of medals; although the highest decoration, that of "People's Hero", still eludes them. It is reserved for Rankovich, the head of the secret police (OZNA), who, in return keeps thousands in prison so that they may become "useful citizens",

sentences to death even schoolgirls, peasant women and Jehovah Witnesses, and then boasts: "OZNA is one of the most beautiful achievements of the Great National Liberation Struggle". Later, when some employees on a State farm tried to poison 1,000 pigs of which only seven died, "People's Hero" had three human beings executed.

CATCH 'EM YOUNG

As in the Eastern Bloc, Tito makes great efforts to win the support of the younger generation by rewarding the faithful with scholarships, holiday camps and well-paid posts in the State machine while subjecting all the young to never-ending propaganda, a single youth organisation, compulsory pre-military training for boys above 17, and to the building of strategic railways and roads by "voluntary youth brigades" during the summer holidays. The C.P. also controls entry into the universities; those who obtain such an education serve a year and a half as servicemen; the rest, the young peasants and workers have to stay in the army for two years.

In spite of all these inducements for the youth of Yugoslavia to play safe and support those who alone are in a position to distribute all sorts of favours as well as various forms of punishment, there has since 1945, hardly been a trial at which, among the accused "wreckers and traitors", there was not at least one person under the age of 25. Not only had Belgrade University to be purged several times of those who according to the government "have no moral qualifications to be students", but even secondary schools had to expel hundreds of boys who as "weapons of the class enemy" scribbled anti-Tito slogans on the blackboards and distributed leaflets after dark.

To-day, the people of Yugoslavia are confronted by events which they cannot control but which they know will bring them only further destruction and misery. They were promised the Atlantic Charter by the West, and Socialism by the East. They saw that as far as they are concerned, the Charter was and is, another piece of paper, just as they saw in Marxist Socialism another form of all-pervading oppression.

"ANARCHISTS IN THE COALFIELDS"?

SIR WILLIAM LAWTHOR, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, has been at it again. He described the pit-winders' strike as "a vicious anarchical attempt" to upset the procedure of the National Coal Board. He called the men "these anarchists of the coalfields", and concluded: "Let every winding engineer who is now on strike understand that he must pay the price for treason."

This tirade of abuse should not be taken too seriously, but we hope he is right if he assumes that the miners' next step is towards anarchism. His union admits, in its report to the T.U.C. on nationalisation that the goodwill that followed the vesting day "is being replaced by cynicism". With people like Lawther about it isn't surprising. Perhaps he is afraid that he will have to "pay the price for treason" some day.

"Turn me a prey to the wild
beast of the desert, so I be never
again the victim of man dressed
in the gore-dripping robes of
authority! Suffer me at least to
call life and the pursuits of life my
own! Let me hold it at the mercy
of elements, of the hunger of
beasts, or the revenge of barbarians,
but not of the cold-blooded
prudence of monopolists and kings!

—WILLIAM GODWIN
(Caleb Williams) 1794

SATISFIED ?

Now the question we would put to everyone this paper reaches is this: What are you going to do about it? Will you make war again?

2 Palestine Collectives and the Future

OVER many years, the Jewish development in Palestine has attracted attention not only among Jews interested in the elimination of their minority position, and among headline readers interested in the fight against the British occupation, but also among people interested in socialist potentialities. There have evolved a number of novel social forms such as the collective settlements; and while these have been on a very small scale from the point of view of world problems, and peculiar to the special conditions of the Jewish resettlement, nevertheless they have been of general interest.

The people who created these novel social forms were responding to particular problems: the need to make a living in an unindustrialised country where there were no businessmen to offer them jobs, and to which they came without capital, and the need to make room for additional immigrants like themselves. The particular forms which they developed in answer to these problems were determined by their social equipment: whatever they did had to be done in some volunteer fashion, since they had no state apparatus. Much of their work had to be carried on not through the usual channels, but in the face of opposition from the colonial administration and the institutions which it was able to control.

Achievements

The importance of the co-operative and collective sector of the Jewish economy is reflected in the numbers of their members and in their output of goods and services. In a population of 600,000 in 1945 there were 60,000 living in co-operative and collective villages, which also carried on industrial operations.

The collective towns are of greatest interest to us because the people there have succeeded in organising sustained production on a large scale and on a modern technical basis, while eliminating the boss-worker relationship. Decisions on production, or the use of their work hours, are made by the producers themselves. Control over use of instruments of production is in the hands of those who wield them. Paralleling the collective control of production is distribution of consumer goods and services on an egalitarian basis, with variation according to individual need. Associated with the network of co-operative and collective towns were by 1945 some 200 service co-operatives which carried out purchase and sale of their goods. (They handled 65 per cent. of the urban food supply). About 120 industrial producers' co-ops operated in the cities, and 80 per cent. of the public transportation facilities was the function of 50 transportation co-operatives.

The formation of an independent Jewish government over a large part of Palestine has changed the social-political implications of much of this development. The major social problem is now not immigration and obtaining an economic foothold, but rather construction and productivisation, so that the country shall be able to support its fast increasing population. The social equipment for meeting the problems has also changed. Many of the social organisations are now no longer voluntary but state-controlled. The same individuals and party (Mapai) which used to lead the labour federation, and the Palestine Jewish Community, now operate the state apparatus. Previously, when they were unable to wield external controls, they evolved internal controls by way of a national myth, allegiance to the public institutions, and the like. Now they can issue decrees. The old volunteer activities are declared unnecessary from the point of view of the "national task"; many observers report that the leaders and bureaucrats seem obsessed with the desire to efface the free social forms and to make their country identical with all the other "normally governed" lands, a tendency which receives strong support from the businessmen and clerical parties who never favoured the free institutions.

Reaction Begins

The pressure from government leaders against the co-operatives shows up in a variety of forms. Ben-Gurion and his aides have begun an ideological war. They have appeared at public meetings,

Anarchists have long recognised the value and significance of the Jewish Kibbutzim in Palestine (see Woodcock's *Basis of Communal Living*—Freedom Press, 1/-). The important article below is condensed from recent issues of the *Bulletin of the Council on Jewish-Arab Co-operation* (New York). It demonstrates the truth of the saying "Reaction Begins With the Conquest of Power", for the Israeli government has already begun its rear-guard action against the Kibbutzim, and has announced its proposals for agricultural conscription on State Farms. Is collective production doomed or can it play a leading rôle in the world of to-morrow?

in towns and in the rural collectives (kibbutzim) arguing that the collective production arrangements, while appropriate to the early pioneering period of the Jewish settlement, are now old fashioned and inappropriate for the present needs of absorbing and productivising the vast flow of new immigrants. Ben-Gurion has announced a plan for a chain of state farms using hired labour, or the manpower of military reservists brought to the state farms for periodic training and service to the state.

More directly, the government leaders, plans show up in the treatment of collectives with respect to allocation of building materials. If the kibbutzim are even to maintain their relative importance in the population they must expand their numbers, their housing and production facilities. In the allocation of construction materials for housing, the government favours investment in the cities, along conventional business lines in preference to the expansion of the collectives. Whereas the collective and co-operative production formerly represented a widely-appreciated contribution to the population as a whole, now it represents just one out of several possible ways of meeting the current common problem—a way which is convenient for the workers but not for the leaders or the businessmen.

Formerly, the political leaders and businessmen had to accept the socialist overtones of the collectives together with their much-needed national service. Today they can circumvent the collectives and compete with them. With this change, it is to be expected that such support as the collectives used to receive from these elements will rapidly diminish.

Social Organisation

The required increase in production, can be carried out by various social institutions. It can be brought about by business, but the fact that the basic determinant in business is profit—and the profit of the individual firm, at that—makes for considerable indirectness and inefficiency from the point of view of the whole community. Productivisation can also be brought about by government projects, as in Soviet Russia. But this necessarily involves a vast apparatus for the control of the people, a lack of regard for the preferences of the people involved in the work, and many bureaucratic and other inefficiencies. It is worthy of note that within the short period of the Jewish communal institutions in Palestine and the succeeding Jewish state, the higher and lower echelons of Jewish officialdom have already earned among Palestinian Jews a reputation for inefficiency, callousness, officiousness, favouritism, waste, and all the other ills of bureaucracy.

If the required productivisation is carried out by government or business, or some combination of the two, the social character of the country will be greatly altered. The decisions of the governmental and business manager would increasingly outweigh the preferences of the workers about their own work conditions and standard of living—already the workers have borne the great brunt of the recent fighting, both financially and militarily. The institutions of control would become much more powerful, as the organisational and production power that the workers can independently pit against these institutions decreases—already religious laws about food, marriage, and the like have been imposed upon all the soldiers or upon the whole population, religious, non-religious, and anti-religious alike.

Proved Advantages

The Palestine experience shows that voluntary forms of organising production can operate successfully and continuously, can satisfy their members in a way that

state-controlled projects could never hope to do, and can operate at an organisational efficiency (in terms of how many office hours spent per output hour) that is unheard of in government or business. During the last thirty years, Palestine developed a progressive social character because a considerable part of the local production was carried out by collectives and co-operatives, and because of the militancy of the bulk of workers and many technical professionals organised in the large labour federation.

This did not, of course, make Palestine into a socialist country, or prevent attacks on workers' interests and on individual freedom from being made by employers' associations, fascist and clerical parties, and union bosses. But it enabled workers to have considerable say over their wages and working conditions, to build large-scale services for themselves such as medical and cultural institutions and consumers' co-operatives, and to decide upon the conditions of work and leisure hours to a degree unattained in other lands where business or state capitalism predominates. (To give a minor example, workers during prolonged strikes have gone to collectives and tided over their payles period by working for their food.)

Undeveloped Areas

To-day, the new problems of mass immigration and settlement suggest the further development and expansion of collective production. In a more general form, similar problems of mass settlement and increased productivisation are world wide; the possibilities of collective production are to be reckoned with in all the vast undeveloped areas of the globe which are now on the point of being industrialised to some degree. The key problem is the extent and manner in which the populations of these regions may be able to circumvent some of the exploitation by business or state control.

The fact that this was not done in the history of Western Europe proves little. When we consider areas entering upon industrialisation at this time, under competitive pressure to catch up with the industrialised countries (or to be able to withstand them), there is no reason to expect that these areas will simply repeat the history of Western Europe. They are reacting to quite different world conditions. In part, these different conditions simply tend to make the undeveloped areas wholesale appendages of the industrialised countries. In part, however, the local population may be able to carry out organisation and productivisation of a kind which never occurred in Western Europe. In view of all this, it becomes clear that the Palestinian kibbutz is by no means an antiquated social and production form, as some people of the new Jewish government have averred.

The desire to mould a Jewish nation on the precise model of the existing ones in Europe and America has led many people, especially in the growing bureaucracy, to look askance at such hotbeds of idealism and autonomy and leftism as the collectives.

Collective Production

Various hesitations have been expressed over the fiction of collectives in the new Jewish state—whether they should be forgotten, now that the government can take over; whether there is time to bother with the special ideals of the collectives, no matter how fine they may be, now that there is such a pressure of immigration and construction; and so on. All of these hesitations depend upon a fallacious idea: that the usual way of doing things, or the governmental way, or the ways current in the big countries, are the natural or direct ways of meeting a problem, while such special methods as collectives represent the superposition of particular interests and ideals on top of the purely "practical" solution. But

considerable success attended these innovations, because they were invented with an eye to the specific conditions, setting the stage for a progressive and secular society, with individual freedom, as against reactionary, clerical, authoritarian one.

If the more recent developments have taken away a good bit of the progressive and secular character of the country, it is not because there are no other solutions possible to current conditions, but at least partly because the selection of possible solutions is being made on the basis of achieving a similarity to other nations rather than on the basis of workers' interests. It is possible to develop Israel so that it should be more like the other nations—but then it will be indeed like the others with the same inequalities and insecurities, the same waste in industry and human lives; and its further development will also be the same, with the same desperate condition of the workers, and increasing controls. It is also possible for the selection of possible solutions to be made to-day, as at certain times in the past, with a preference for workers' interests and for human freedom. For whereas governmental management of production can lay claim to the efficiency of centralisation and conscription, collective management can bring into play the greater efficiency of co-operative effort which is not based on overseers.

(Continued on page 3)

STORY WITH A MORAL

A MAN who worked in our factory was outstanding for his desire to be inconspicuous. His education had been like that given to a cow when she is taught to stand still and be milked. I had the same sort of education until I left school, but his teachers had achieved their object. And what an object.

He was not a gelding (not as far as I know) but a biologist observing only his behaviour would have thought he was. For he arrived every morning thirty minutes before time, with a bag of hay and a mashing of tea for his lunch, and worked conscientiously if not cleverly, from five minutes before starting time until five minutes after finishing time. Grumbling tediously to his workmates about every order he got, he obeyed every one meekly.

Riches did not attract him, because as a poor man he had the choice of working for less than the value of his work or trying to manage on the dole, the choice of submitting to law or going to gaol, and (being of a religious generation) the choice of fidelity or everlasting torment. Without poverty, he argued, he would have had no freedom of choice, and besides, he would not have known what to do.

The foreman had noticed his miserable, haggard expression, decided he was content to be a humble worker, and promoted him to chargehand. Most clever executives have unpopular, submissive lieutenants for underlings to grouse about. He made a strict if rather incompetent

chargehand, so the manager made him a foreman, and in this capacity he was soon hated by the men that when a vacancy occurred he was made manager.

But our employer was slightly too clever. This manager was so unpopular that when I started at the factory, some of us decided to really poison him, not just talk about it as people do about other managers. And he was such an abject toady that we poisoned him quite easily—by painting the seat of the boss's trousers with flea-killer.

ANARCHY, the society without coercion, would not preclude organisation, or even the professional organiser. But since organisers, scientists, technicians, skilled workers, labourers and children would be equally rich, equally respected, equally free, organisation would have to be based on agreement. Authority would appear to be replaced by the social instincts, and coercion by co-operation.

"Appear to be replaced" because, of course, co-operation and the social instincts are more important than authority, even in the most military of societies. Without them, group life would be absolutely impossible.

What really happens in the anarchist revolution is not a radical alteration of society, but merely the elimination of the horrible, agonising, crippling cancerous growth called Authority, that makes men and their world seem so vile.

DONALD ROOM.

BOOK REVIEW

OSCAR WILDE

THE PARADOX OF OSCAR WILDE, by George Woodcock. (Boardman & Co., Ltd., 15/-)

A BOOK on Oscar Wilde can hardly be said to have the appeal of novelty—the author of this one admits to having "read at least forty books" on the object of his study—and to produce yet another requires a considerable amount of courage—and optimism—on the part of both writer and publisher. Fortunately, despite such initial odds against it, the attempt has been extremely successful for this is easily the best book I personally have read on Wilde and, though I have not read as many as Woodcock himself, I have read quite a few. Though it is very difficult indeed to assess the lasting worth of a new book and though, consequently, it is a very rash reviewer who allows himself to prophesy—or at least to commit his prophesies to print—I am tempted, nevertheless, to hazard the guess that this book may very likely come to be regarded as the standard book on Oscar Wilde. (One might add, incidentally, that the book is, in my opinion, definitely Woodcock's best to date.)

There has always been the need for a balanced and reliable study of Wilde, and Woodcock is to be congratulated on providing it. For the truth is that there has been so far no really satisfactory assessment of Wilde as a man and a writer. Many, probably the majority, of books on Wilde have been written by people who knew him personally, and almost all these books (I have not space in this short review to substantiate this statement with examples) have been concerned primarily to prove a case, either for or against Wilde. That being so, these books are blatantly biased—one way

or the other. Furthermore, much space in these books is given over to self-justifications interspersed, and enlivened, with polemics against other writers on Wilde against whom the particular writer has a grudge. Much in some of these books is consequently more revealing as autobiography than as biography and the attempts to assess the worth of Wilde as a writer and thinker all too easily get mixed up with opinions on his life and morality.

A fair assessment of Wilde's works has been further complicated by the intrusion of moral and ethical judgments on the man, and his way of life, which have nothing directly to do with his writings which, like all art and literature, should be judged on their own merits. Thus on the one hand, the orthodox have been prevented by their moral disapproval from viewing Wilde's work with any degree of critical objectivity while, on the other hand, social reformers and people holding "advanced views" have tended to allow their indignation at Wilde's brutal treatment at the hands of the State to blind them to his obvious weaknesses as a man and his faults as a writer, and to cause them to react against bourgeois prejudice with uncritical adulation. Wilde's popularity on the Continent, for example, undoubtedly gained a considerable initial impulse from sympathy for, reinforced by amazement at, the manner in which he had been treated by the English law. It is, however, only fair to add that the quality of Wilde's work quite adequately sustained the interest which the sensational events of his trials and imprisonment had originally aroused.

The great merit of Woodcock's book is that he successfully avoids these two extreme approaches and that the "dia-

lectical" method which he applies to both Wilde's personality and his work is a method which, with Wilde, is most likely to yield profitable results. It has enabled him to resolve the superficially contradictory, and therefore bewildering, aspects of Wilde's character into a coherent and understandable whole and also, therefore, enabled the reader of Wilde's works to view them as the natural and logical expression of his somewhat schizoid personality. Woodcock also deals at some length with Wilde's social ideas which he shows were no flippant affectation but an integral part, and a very important one, of his character and outlook.

Much of Wilde's character that may appear and sometimes is, irritable and paradoxical becomes at least understandable, though not necessarily excusable, if one remembers that he was Irish. Almost certainly no other country could have produced him, and to this fact, I think, Woodcock might with advantage have given more emphasis. For, in as much as the individual members of national and cultural groups tend to have certain predominant characteristics in common, Wilde was essentially Irish, the Irishman, or more accurately, the Anglo-Irishman, par excellence. His vanity, his snobbery, his love of playing a part, his lapses into sentimentality, his inconsistency ("I hope I at least have the courage to change my opinions" were as Irish as were his gaiety and vivacity, his quick and lively mind, his wit and charm, his extraordinary generosity and warm humanity.

But this in a minor criticism and in no way lessens the value of this much needed and excellent study of Oscar Wilde, who himself indeed was something he so liked and had a weakness for—a paradox.

GERALD VAUGHAN.

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WORLD GOVERNMENT & ALL THAT

IDLE persons who have plenty of time want to scheme world government to put mankind into a straight-jacket. They want to make life flow within the constitutions which they forge. But life refuses to flow with constitutions, national or international, but bursts all constitutions to which it is intended to make it submit. Life is greater than man-made constitutions.

Napoleon, before Hitler, was the first who wanted "one Europe", naturally under his own hegemony. Later on, the Bolsheviks started and still intend to bring the world under the hegemony of Stalin.

The League of Nations was started to bring the whole world under the rule of England and France. Now the U.S.A. has brought the world under its hegemony, through the United Nations. Britain is but a junior partner in the dollar hegemony and France, Holland, Belgium and other colonial empires vassals of Anglo-American partnership in the hegemony. In spite of all this, there is an attempt made to form a so-called "World Federal Government".

Chimeras!

Early in the last war, tremendous propaganda was made to organise a "World Federal Government" according to the ideas of Mr. Clarence Streit, an American publicist. Before him, the semi-Japanese Austrian, Coudenhove-Kalergi, had formulated a plan called Pan-Europa. The Bavarian professor Karl Haushofer elaborated his so-called "Geo-Politik" from which Hitler took his ideas.

Recently an emissary of the "World Federal Government" movement visited India and organised a so-called "Indian Federal Association for world Federal Government" with branches in the big cities of the Indian Union. Recently, Sir Rustom Masani and Mr. Frank Moraes championed this movement.

World is West

Before this war, "world" meant Europe even for socialists. For the communists, it means only World under Stalin's hegemony. Stalin's regime is also colonial, for the Asiatic colonies of Russia are adjoining the "mother country". Apart from this, the regime of Stalin even in Russia is a kind of colonialism, for it wants to force the Russians, to drill them, to become civilised, i.e., become highly industrialised whether it kills off millions or not. Stalinism is a transplantation of the inferiority complex which Marx as an "underdeveloped German" admiring the British industrial methods carried into Europe. Industry for industry's sake, whether it enslaves or liberates people. Of course, he wanted to see people liberated with the help of the slave system which grew in England.

New Nonsense

Even now "World" means to Anglo-Americans and other Europeans only "Europe and North America". Of course other continents like Asia, Africa and South and Central America belong to the world only as adjuncts to Anglo-American finance capital. Not even as junior partners.

The emissary of the "World Federal Government" movement—Seth Dalmia

has also his own plans for world government—who came to India proposed a world constitutional assembly to be held soon. It must consist of about 500 delegates, of which about 180, i.e., one-third will be British. And, of course, the majority of the rest will be Americans. It is this world government movement which Pandit Jawaharlal blessed, saying that such a government must and will have to come into existence sooner or later.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad also supports such a movement as a Gandhian pacifist. It may be an accident that emissary of the world-government movement is a British gentleman. Now we have to choose between Stalin's world government and the Anglo-American finance capital plans. Choose between evils, but always choose the lesser evil!

Dollar Hegemony

We have already a world government, a government of the world through doles and pensions by American finance capital, and confirmed by the U.N.O. But U.N.O. does not consider itself as a world-government but only an association of governments, with America (U.S.A.) and England as the mainsprings. This world-government movement wants to give legal form to this *de facto* world-government. Only sentimental idealists may think this is an entirely new and independent movement, but the appearance of the American consulate spokesman standing with Sir Rustom Masani and Frank Moraes on the same platform in the Bombay propaganda meeting is not accidental. It must have some American backing also. Otherwise consuls would not have associated with or even countenanced any such movement even with their presence.

Mock Constitution

Till now, the world government movement had no territory, nor army nor even police and its formation and constituent assembly have no legal sanctions. When however, its constituent assembly elaborates the constitution and asks all governments to "fall into line", it will be seen whether the Anglo-American governments will "renounce their sovereignties". They will accept the constitution if they think their sovereignties are legally anchored in the constitution, i.e., their financial interests reign supreme and their armies and other defence forces are the only defenders of the "world government". In other words, they will "submit" if others accept their hegemony. Otherwise, the world government cannot mobilise its own army to fight Anglo-American defence forces and suppress their territorial and financial sovereignties. A world government which says to them: Place all your resources and forces under a common and freely elected government, will have no use for the Anglo-American finance-capital. The world government will then be put under lock and key by the Anglo-American powers. These are children who propagandise for a "world government", or they are being wire-pulled or misled by dark forces. Big people do not seem to know the ways of political wire-pulling

and roguery or they are themselves in league with them. There is no such thing as public opinion which can compel governments armed to the teeth to give up their strength without a fight. In fact, the governments who have violence in their hands can excite the public against a world government, saying that it is giving up national well-being for a chimerical idea. The people can easily be fooled.

Remedy—Worse than Evil

What is after all world government which cannot solve the economic evils? The world government is not supposed to change the economic fundamentals, even if the Stalin government joins it. The world government—if it ever comes into being—will also manage everything as now, i.e., for business. On the contrary, if the world government is established and the sovereignty of territories is abolished, i.e., if the frontiers and customs houses are abolished, trade will go into doldrums. The more sovereign territories, the more foreign trade territories. The more hopes of export trade. Export trade means making foreign territories pay profits. If the frontiers, customs houses and tariff laws are abolished, there will be no foreign trade, especially since the world will be governed from one political and economic centre. It will all be inland trade. Profits from internal trade alone cannot maintain any government, especially the most industrially advanced countries. That is why the more they manufacture, the more they must export. But raw material supplying countries cannot buy up all manufactured goods and pay the profits to run the government. If profits are still to be made and taxes are taken, it will mean depletion of the purchasing power of the people. Is the international and world government going to run economics without profits? No government can be conducted without profits, either its own or others' profits. Not even the Soviet government can be run without profits. Governments are not institutions which can spend without taking from others, even so-called socialist and communist governments. So when the international frontiers are abolished—economically and politically, as the world governments of Stalin and capitalists want—the government will collapse out of sheer inanition, because they will find there are no prospective buyers, because the buyers have not made profits, without which there is no use in production. Trade is holy to all governments, not merely internal but also external trade, because upon these the governments rest. Or do the world government sponsors think they can export to other planets?

MARCO POLO.

Reprinted from *Kaiser-i-Hind* (India), of 3rd July, 1949.

FAIRY TALE

From to-day, there will be no princes in the school fairy-tale books of Czechoslovakia. The Government has so decreed.

In future, the beautiful maidens in distress will always be rescued by a new hero—Communist president Klement Gottwald, "the first worker of the State", assisted by the "shockworkers" or, above-quota producers.

News Chronicle, 25/8/49.

MISERY AND CORRUPTION

IN SPAIN TODAY

THE British tourist descending at Barcelona Station is likely to take the Tramway No. 33. It will convey him to his hotel in the Plaza Cataluna after a conducted tour of all that the Government would like him to see of the city. He will pass by the palatial building, guarded by armed sentries, which houses the "Military Government of Barcelona", the grandiose post office; he will ride up the Ramblas, the city's main street, and note the well-stocked shops, their windows unaccountably full of British and American flags, the smart restaurants, automobiles and traffic police. In the Plaza Cataluna he may be surprised to see a couple of prosperous neighbouring banks, one French, the other a branch of the German Overseas Bank.

The division of Barcelona into rich and poor quarters is complete. The streets of each district are either wide and well-paved with solidly-built houses, or else conform to the common Mediterranean pattern, deprived of sunshine by the narrowness of the road and by overhung washing, romantic for the foreigner to wander through and tuberculous for the inhabitant. No traffic penetrates the intersecting streets beside and beyond the docks, so that the children can use them as a playground. Between this playground and the nearby sea it is true there is an open space—the beach—but it is privately managed and the charge of an admission fee ensures the bather that his rest in the sun will not be disturbed by the presence of dirty children.

As with the streets so with the people who live in them. Priests, soldiers and most civil servants appear well enough off. It goes without saying that, although employed by the government, workers in nationalised concerns such as railways have not the benefits of Falangists who sit behind their desks. To the outsider there does not appear to be much unemployment in Southern Catalonia. Between Barcelona and Tarragona there are few factories but much agricultural land, so that theoretically work could be found on the land. Yet because of the scarcity of houses and the fact that no such thing as a minimum wage exists, many men work under conditions that would certainly not be termed "employment" in less Fascist societies.

The average lowest daily wage paid to a worker is 18 pesetas. At the favourable exchange rate allowed to British travellers, this amounts to rather less than £2 per week. Comparisons between foreign currencies are seldom reliable guides to a standard of living, but considering that all clothing and most foodstuffs are expensive even in terms of English money, it is obvious that many Spanish workers exist with great hardship.

Food rationing is more severe than in any country of Europe with the exception of Germany. Unrationed articles such as chocolate, vegetables, fruit, eggs, are excluded from any diet except that of the rich by prohibitive prices, e.g., bananas 1/- a pound, eggs 9d. each, sardines 1/6 a small tin—remember the £2 weekly wage—and of rationed food the quantity, which is not always honoured, is almost minimal

for existence. Of this the most striking example is the ration of 1/2 lb. of bread a day. The worker in the South of France, who has similar eating habits to the Catalonian, is dissatisfied with three times that amount; it is not surprising then that the black market in Spanish towns is openly resorted to and not interfered with by the police. A pound of black market bread costs a Spaniard 1/6—a shilling extra if he wants it white. In the course of many conversations about the Police and Falangists, however, it was never stated that their ration cards were different from the general issue. Their diet is obviously very much better than that of the people they rule, but only because they can afford to pay for it.

Social services are often mentioned on old posters advising a vote of "yes" in last year's elections. Spanish women for instance are reminded of the maternity benefits they are supposed to enjoy through the grace of Franco. As with other "election" promises, more urgent matters have superseded maternity welfare, which for a working-class woman is non-existent. Hospitals are often ridiculously understaffed, and all services received there must officially be paid for, a rule that many individual doctors probably do not adhere to. It is difficult to believe the degree of irresponsibility exercised by the Falange to its subjects, but a Spaniard will laugh if you express disbelief on being told that his neighbour's wife recently died of acute appendicitis because there was no ambulance or other means of transport to take her to hospital.

Pensions for soldiers disabled in the Civil war are granted only to those who were on the right side. The others, the "Reds" as the Republican Army is officially referred to, are left without a pension, barred from certain jobs, prohibited from leaving the country and in some cases even the district in which they live. (The influence of the Revolution on Spanish life to-day will be referred to in a later article.)

For the rich, a term in Spain synonymous with Falangist, there are few difficulties. At the age of 18 a young man must serve, in common with everyone else, his two years military conscription, but after his training as an officer he will be fully competent to take his place in Spanish society. For him there will be high-powered American cars, a job perhaps in the administration of the Civil Guard, and a choice of the radio and television receivers decorated with Union Jacks and Stars and Stripes in the shop windows lining the Ramblas. Like other incognitities in Spain, however, there is no television programme broadcast for him to receive.

J.D.B.

THROUGH THE PRESS

SANITARY TIP

"Go down to history, this case will," remarked the Clerkenwell magistrate (Mr. T. F. Davis), when Charles Henry Waters was summoned for selling a toilet roll on a Sunday.

Imposing the fine, Mr. Davis remarked: "If she bought a newspaper and used it for the same purpose nothing would have happened, I suppose."

Holborn Guardian, 22/7/49.

EQUAL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, said "I do not believe for one moment in a classless society in which there is no differentiation in function. There is no ambition in such a society."

Observer, 24/7/49

ANARCHITECTURE

In so far as the architect is an artist, his job is to organise man's immediate physical environment by creating the spatial relationships which will permit maximum human freedom. Thus it is no accident that the social objectives of our time seem to be more truly expressed in architectural philosophy than in any other art.

Architectural Forum (New York)

SEE YOU IN THE BREADLINE, COMRADE

The *Economist*, alone among the journals that I have read, has the courage to declare that a moderate degree of unemployment, say up to 5 or 7 per cent. of the insured population, would do much good in bringing down our costs of production and discouraging extravagant wage demands.

The Individualist, Aug., 1949

FREEDOM PRESS

27, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

★

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CRUCIAL ROLE OF THE PALESTINE COLLECTIVES

(Continued from page 2)

Collective management can reduce some of the well-known features of governmental and business management: the cross-purposes, the monumental mistakes, the vested interests of bureaucracies and bureaucrats and businessmen, the cheating and bribing, the spending of countless hours (of people who could otherwise be working) on controlling and keeping track of each individual's production and consumption. It would also make different choices of alternatives. For example, if both military territorial expansion and scientific improvement of technology are possible solutions to an overcrowded population in the future, government and business are more likely to tend to the former, while collective management may be more likely to tend toward the latter. Finally, collective management is the only kind which will seek to manage production in such a way as to maximise the standard of living and to minimise difficulties of work; and it will not require the strengthening of control institutions—military, legal, economic, social, religious—such as is required by government and business management.

Possibilities

In order to meet the available opportunities, collective production will have to withstand the attempts of both business and governmental management to take over the whole increase of pro-

duction, and even to encroach over the present domain of collective production, since both business and government are systems of management and of power which have ever sought to expand. It will have to grow in the number of participants, in the technological efficiency of production and consumption (its social efficiency being relatively high already), in the amount of land and other resources available to it, and in the importance of its production to the rest of production and consumption in the country. If autonomous and non-authoritarian co-ordination is developed by the collectives, it would have to include production by the collectives for one another, so as to reduce their dependence upon the outside market; dovetailing of the specialised production of various collectives, so that they may together produce commodities or command a market which they could not do separately; development of productional ties between the many urban co-operatives and the collectives; and changes in the large Labour-Federation-controlled industries, now operated like any business factory, in the direction of worker-controlled co-operatives inter-related to the collective production areas.

It has been assumed here that the collective management of production is itself bulwark against the spread of authoritarianism, and a step toward creating the future conditions for socialism. This may be incorrect for occasional collectives

which support or belong to clerical parties. But for the great bulk of collectives, and for the co-operatives which do not employ labour and in which the equipment is jointly owned, the very forms of production and management militate against exploitation of controls over people; they militate for raising the standard of living and the degree of human autonomy.

All this applies to real collectives and co-operatives, not to state-controlled mass agriculture, such as the recently proposed Israeli state farms. These differ only in part from business-managed factories or from governmental work-camps; in any case, they do not have the features which have been discussed above as giving the collectives their significant effect upon the character of the country. State farms and the like are simply another example of governmental management, again copied from the industrialised countries, similar to the Soviet government solution for the peasants or to the American labour camps during the depression.

In order to rise to the occasion, and in order to avoid being snowed under, the collectives will have to consider many changes and expansions. In addition to expanding and intensifying agriculture and food-processing, they will have to enter heavily into industry. They will have to find how to operate factories without bosses, just as they managed to conduct large-scale agriculture without bosses.

ROLE OF THE CINEMA

TO-DAY, within the fully developed system of capitalist production, entertainment, like all other commodities is produced for one object alone—the making of a financial profit. During the last thirty years, one of the most profitable forms of commercial entertainment has been the motion picture industry. One of the most striking phenomena in the field of leisure is the immense popularity of the cinema. Huge amounts of capital are invested in this industry which is claimed to be the second largest in the U.S.A. It is internationally organised, the whole world is its market. Unlike the public amusements of the past, it is permanent, every town and almost every village having access to several cinemas, while in most large cities the cinema is open for as long as twelve hours daily.

What makes the cinema modern society's No. 1 entertainment? Does it draw its attraction from some deep social necessity? Is it a response to some insistent social demand? To attempt to answer these questions it is imperative to consider the manner in which great masses of the people live to-day.

The majority of people are members of the "working class", the producers and distributors of social wealth who, property-less, sell their energy to the owners of capital. To-day, in the sphere of production, workers are regulated to a

degree of intense monotony never before known, while the joy of workmanship as known by the craftsman has almost ceased to exist. The characteristic, one might say the ideal, worker under modern capitalism is the machine feeder, punching holes into steel plates, so many to the minute, so many per day, as long as the job lasts.

REALITY

Outside the factory, the worker's life is still a monotonous routine, week after week, year after year. The comforts of home life are almost non-existent, while within congested slums opportunities for healthy recreation are not to be found. A continuous round of work both exhausting and degrading leaves neither energy nor desire for creative pursuits or the acquiring of education which the State has denied him. Lodged in a narrow groove, his life becomes a perpetual circle of dull repetition. Habit and ignorance make him afraid of attempting to change the groove. Occasionally, a worker kicks against his existence and changes from the factory to a more precarious but exciting life as a criminal or tramp. But the majority have one common ideal—a permanent job, which inevitably means inescapable monotony.

By contrast with what the imagination can offer, the reality of life for the majority of people appears, in comparison with the past, narrower, duller and meaner. The average imagination yearns for more variety, colour and beauty which in reality is unobtainable in modern capitalist society, hence the widespread efforts to escape from reality to the fictitious romantic world of the cinema screen. Naturally, the primary section of the population is the adolescent—"youth is the period of romance"—but the cinema makes no age restrictions, the habit of seeking emotional stimulus through the movies becomes in time a necessity of existence, as strong as any other form of narcotic.

ESCAPE

The film, even more than the novel or play, satisfies the desire to escape from dull, sordid reality. It tells its story in visual images of a vivid and convincing type, no mental energy and no intelligence are necessary and it is therefore an ideal "opium for the masses" of to-day. The value of the cinema as a direct propaganda machine is immense and it is an indirect but powerful influence in inculcating and moulding the mental habits and moral ideas which are in the interests of our rulers.

Can we hope for a more intelligent, imaginative, or artistic standard of films in the future? The answer is simple—so long as the masses have to endure the conditions imposed upon them by capitalist society, the modern wage slave will crave for bigger and bigger doses of escapism. This will only cease to be necessary in a society where the realities of life will be such that for the first time in human history all men will really live. Then the cinema, unfettered by the profit motive, can become a response of the human imagination to the natural beauty and tragedy of the world.

MICHAEL FLANAGAN.

ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

WORDS AND DEEDS

A WELL-KNOWN French anarchist, Sebastien Faure, once wrote that the only two things politicians are really interested in is getting to power and staying in office. This seems to be so obvious as to be hardly worth mentioning, but how few people behave as though they realise it. In view of the approaching general election, it is worth while to study a few pronouncements of those who are supposed to be "logical" and to have "a realist approach to our daily problems".

Knowing well that in our present society with its pecuniary standards the voters prefer a job to the dole, Tory and Socialist politicians insist not only that they are in favour of full employment but also that they alone can maintain it. To the Conservatives it is all a matter of fewer controls plus some juggling with the rate of interest if the crisis gets worse, while to the Labour Party unemployment, an evil of capitalism, is impossible under State Socialism. The Communists as usual refer to the U.S.S.R. ("where nobody is out of work") and urge the West to follow Russia's example in solving this problem. What their propaganda fails to tell us is that in any society based on masters and slaves, the latter are never without work. Where all the politicians, irrespective of party membership, agree, is in that in spite of all their speeches and articles on full employment, none of them has ever called for the abolition of our weekly unemployment contributions to the State which they control, or hope to control.

The same attitude is adopted towards the part of the National Insurance "contributions" which goes to the National Health Service. After we have been reminded repeatedly of the social legislation passed by the two leading parties since 1940, and after we are told officially that we were never healthier, the "Welfare State" proceeds 52 times a year to penalise our healthiness.

As the vote-catching agitation increases, the electorate learns once more that it is the policy of the Labour government to "take from the rich and give to the poor". When one adds to this the constant wails of the Tory press over the fate of the upper and middle classes, a visitor just arrived from another planet would conclude that this country was putting the finishing touches to some measure for the equalisation of wealth. But a few days' stay in Britain and a glance at the income-tax regulations or at the financial pages of the newspapers would without doubt change his mind, and relieve him of his perplexity, if he takes for granted the wide gap between words and deeds.



MORE WORDS

IN a recent broadcast talk, Alistair Cooke, the B.B.C.'s American correspondent, had these remarks to make on the American character:

"What the conservative American deep inside him wants to conserve, to keep, is his right to be an anarchist. Anarchy and conservatism sound like queer allies, but somewhere way down they live together. They pull the same way in the American character at any rate. And the most conservative Americans I know are those who hope for a government, that will guarantee less and less government. For they have been taught, by their earliest history and their strongest folk-myths, that the free man is the man ungoverned from the outside, set at large with a big appetite on a boundless continent. Many of the early great Americans we now revere were fundamentally anar-

chists. Jefferson—the gentle, philosophic gentleman-farmer, amusing himself at Monticello with the violin, Italian architecture, inventing a revolving chair and playing at unprofitable farming—Jefferson was certainly one. And who are the folk heroes of American children? Paul Bunyan who tossed aside mountains that got in his way and lit his pipe on a lightning bolt; John Henry, who 'hammered himself to death' trying to beat a steam drill in laying a railroad line; Johnny Appleseed, who didn't like to see the pioneers going without fruit and who walked for forty years from Pennsylvania to the Gulf, planting appleseed in the forests, without so much as an application blank from the Department of Agriculture." The editor of *The Listener*, commenting on this view, says, aptly:

"When the listener to the B.B.C. is told by Mr. Cooke that 'what the conservative American deep inside him wants to conserve, to keep, is his right to be an anarchist', he cannot help thinking of the Sacco-Vanzetti case..."

The point is, of course, that when an anarchist has passed into history or mythology, he can safely be "revered". It's the lives ones which are a thorn in the flesh of the great American public. The sort of freedom the conservative American is interested in keeping is the freedom Churchill wants to keep—the freedom to exploit.



DOWN IN ARIZONA

A RECENT issue of the *Arizona Times* carries the following report of the activities of our American comrade Ammon A. Hennacy with a photograph of him picketing the Tax Office:

No To Taxes!

Placard-Bearing Protestor Defies Phoenix Police

A man picketed Uncle Sam to-day with placards inveighing against income taxes—and sent police and other authorities into a huddle over what to do about him.

A police patrol car scooped him up shortly before 9 o'clock this morning as he paced a beat around the post office, site of the internal revenue collector's office, with a blaring placard:

"75 per cent. of your income goes for war!—You don't want war, so why pay taxes?"

Shortly afterwards he walked out of the police station and back to his beat. Authorities for the nonce were stumped over a charge on which to hold him.

Ammon A. Hennacy, 55, farm labourer of Lateral 20 and Maricopa Rd., identified himself as a member of "The Peacemakers", an organisation of "individualists who do not believe in paying taxes to the government". He said its national membership is 41. He said he owed \$150 in income taxes, with penalties, had paid no taxes for six years, and did not intend to pay any.

Records showed him to have served two years in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Ga., for failure to register for selective service in World War I.

"The atom bomb will kill you—it can't save you," was a parting shot on a sand-wich board he bore in addition to his placard. "Your income tax buys bombs. Why pay taxes?"

We regret that our last issue was incorrectly numbered Vol. 10, No. 16. It should, of course, have been No. 17.

Meetings and Announcements

CALLING ALL ANARCHISTS!

The recent discussions in "Freedom" concerning the role of the anarchist movement have emphasised the importance of examining and analysing the structure and purpose of the Union of Anarchist Groups in relation to contemporary events and conditions. In their interesting and provocative statement of their position as anarchists, the editors of "Resistance" say:

"The importance of an anarchist movement is often not rightly understood... the anarchist idea of movement is something very different from Marxist concepts. A movement—an association or federation of groups of anarchists (the form is not so important as the active participation of individuals)—is the most important aspect of our activity. It is one of the main defences of the individual against society, and potentially a powerful lever for building a different society."

One need not fully agree with the whole of the above statement (it might be considered that the form of the movement is extremely important) in order to appreciate the sentiments that lie behind it. The creation of a militant anarchist movement is of vital necessity if we are to grasp the slender chance of avoiding the threatened holocaust. In order to facilitate the building of such a movement, the Birmingham Anarchist Group has undertaken to produce an internal bulletin of the U.A.G., in the pages of which, we hope, varying points of view concerning aspects of anarchist thought and activity will be debated. The bulletin will publish news and views of the movement in this country and abroad; it is also intended that it help to co-ordinate the groups of the U.A.G. The success of the bulletin will depend upon your support, and we hope that you will co-operate not only by publicising it among anarchists, but also by sending us news of groups and articles for publication.

BIRMINGHAM ANARCHIST GROUP.

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.

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.

THE NEW INDIAN ROPE TRICK

AS India is the only country in the world where a successful pacifist revolution has been carried out and one of the few lands in the world where successful pacifists are in power, it is perhaps instructive to look at it if only to add to our examples of political hypocrisy. In Russia, communist phraseology is still used just as much as references to democracy are made by the American statesmen, and Christianity by the Pope; however, power has corrupted those early principles until they stand as meaningless and empty signs.

Similarly, in India, Gandhi enunciated such clear ideals of non-violence and peaceful co-operation which carried so much weight amongst the Hindu masses, that no Indian politician dare publicly repudiate them. However, politicians being exactly the same in Delhi and Calcutta as they are in London, Moscow and Washington, there is not the slightest reason why they should not continue to profess non-violence to such a degree that they raise enormous statues and memorials to the Mahatma, while holding mass military parades in front of them.

The police has been militarised and military expenditure has risen abnormally; conscription has not been introduced as yet but the primary reason is without doubt financial. That pungent critic of Nationalism, M. N. Roy, has recently put it that every Indian might have been a soldier, though without a uniform for

lack of cloth... It is not moreover a question of merely putting men in uniforms and training and equipping them as soldiers. That may not be possible for various reasons. But the spirit of militarism can be developed even without resorting to conscription. Quite a lot of lip homage is paid to non-violence and its prophet, but it is effectively negated by a vigorous propaganda for military preparedness. The pose that we are a non-violent nation and that we are adopting a new non-violent and peaceful method for the solution of our national international problems is therefore a false and fraudulent pose." (*Radical Humanist*, 17/7/49).

In spite of the belief in the Gandhian ideas that has animated the whole present generation of Indian politicians, power is power, and the satyagrahis of yesterday are to-day reviewing Home Guards and military parades. In Kashmir and Hyderabad, the final decision has been made by force of arms. Nothing distinguishes the Indian Government from any other Government in this respect but its hypocrisy, just as nothing distinguishes the Russian Government's conquests from those of any other imperialism save its continued cant as to 'revolutionary achievements'.

But it is necessary to know, as the abler critics in India demand, the purpose of Indian rearmament and preparedness in the sacred name of non-violence. So far

as the world to-day is concerned there is no room for India as a conquering power except as the jackal of another power. While, for the time being, this talk of military might and nationalist conquest turns the people's minds from thoughts of social renovation so long overdue, sooner or later the arms will be used somewhere or other, and the ruling Congress has need to say never made this clear. It by no means follows that any nationalistic conquest will arise out of this war for which they are so clearly preparing, since as the experience of the last shows plainly, the division of the spoils depends on the decisions not of the minor powers but of the great ones. Indian politicians may intrigue for a greater division of the spoils but so will Pakistan politicians, and the decision between them will be made not on grounds of justice but solely on those of expediency.

In spite of the illusory and temporary benefits of armaments, the rulers of India lead it toward a war in which even they themselves will have little to say, let alone the common people. Meantime, they continue to weep for Gandhi and enthrone over his ideas whilst on the recruiting platform for the third world war.

British Tories need not doubt "the capacity of the Indian people to govern themselves": the Indian politicians have picked up all the tricks of the trade in a few short years and are as capable at the swindle of government as anyone else.

INTERNATIONALIST.

Soil Erosion

—a Reader writes

THE article on "Food and Soil Erosion" in *Freedom* (6/8/49), was both apt and significant, but the situation is infinitely more serious than Lord Boyd Orr would have us believe from his recent statement, which came as a surprise to those who have acquainted themselves with the facts in their entirety.

William Vogt, in *The Road to Survival*, tells us that the area of fertile soil per head of the population amounts to only one-fifth of an acre, and with a rising population (250,000,000 increase in the last ten years, which is expected to rise to 500,000,000 in another ten) we just have not a hope unless something is done about it. In fifty years' time we can expect our living standard to be lowered to that of the coolie. Furthermore, an improvement in soil conditions will be futile unless there is a substantial decrease in the population, which indicates a campaign for smaller families—not larger ones as our bright politicians would have us believe.

The tragedy is the more significant in that modern science has helped to accelerate the destruction of the soil, and this, working in collaboration with a ruthless capitalist economy with only the profit motive in view—the quickest return in hard cash regardless of the misery and suffering which follow in its wake, has brought about a crisis which has no parallel in human history.

In America, 80 per cent. of the cattle ranges are overgrazed and cattle are said to have to run so far looking for a "bite" that they wear themselves out in the process!

Trees form a natural vegetation cover and the action of their roots binds the soil together, subsequently acting like a sponge and retaining moisture. Their indiscriminate removal has not only caused erosion but has also altered the climate by a reduction in rainfall.

By continual cropping with cereals, the removal of natural cover vegetation, the employment of vast quantities of machinery, and the failure to obey the "law of return", America has ruined one-third of her top-soil in a hundred years.

The Sahara desert is the result of man's short-sightedness—Abraham's city of Ur, which was once one of the most fertile areas in Africa, now lies within 150 miles of desert.

These are just a few glimpses of the glaring spectacle before us. On the other hand, in some areas in China the peasants have been cultivating the same ground for over four thousand years without any loss of fertility. This is due to an instinctive respect for the laws of nature which govern the life-cycle in the soil.

Civilizations in the past have had their periods of famine and starvation, but never have they been forced into such a dilemma as we are now facing. They had vast reserves of fertile land on which to draw—an easy solution which no longer exists for our age. It is unfortunate that even amongst those engaged in soil culture, very few are aware of the true picture. However, there are movements in America and in this country which are facing up to realities, and are making their influence felt amongst a growing minority.

G. B. ASTON.

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