

Freedom

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Threepence

OIL POLITICS

THE oil issue in Persia is still hanging fire, at the time of going to press, and the struggle is still being waged with diplomatic notes, if not always with diplomatic language. Inevitably the use of such verbiage (much of it, in Persia for example, designed also as internal propaganda) clouds the real issues.

We have already pointed out that oil politics are not carried on for the benefit of the population—often illiterate and economically “backward”—of the oil bearing territories. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company is for Persian nationalists an open example of foreign imperialism exploiting the wealth and labour of “their” country. Since the British Government hold the controlling shares in the company, it is really a branch of British imperialism. And since oil is one of the sinews of war, the British Government (whether of the right or of the left) is bound to do everything in its power to safeguard its continued control.

Persian nationalists, representing the Persian capitalist class, for their part seek to secure for themselves the complete control over the oil profits. But, of course, they also seek much more than that. With oil under their own control, they could then exploit the need of war economies for oil as a powerful lever for economic bargaining. And since Iran is geographically situated in the Middle East, where British spheres of influence abut on the Russian borders, they no doubt also hope to use the independence which complete control of their oil resources (and the consequent exclusion of British control) would give them by playing off one great power against another. Nationalists in small countries are almost always fanatics who do not care to face the fact that independence for such countries is in reality illusory.

“The Law’s on our side”

There can be no doubt about the legal position. The sixty-year agreement of 1933 stated categorically (as the British Government’s Note to Persia did not fail to point out) that: “The position of the company under the agreement shall never be altered by action of the Iranian Government or even by Iranian legislation (Article 21) except as the result of an agreement between the company and the Iranian Government.” Hence it is not surprising that the Nationalists, in order to break the existing situation rushed through the necessary legislation in the obvious hope of creating a *fait accompli* out of which some advantage would accrue to them.

CONSCRIPTS JAILED FOR MUTINY

Three years for man who “Objects to being a member of a National Press-gang”

SIX conscript National Service men, five aged 19 and one 21, who broke out of the detention block at Maryhill Barracks, Glasgow, on March 11th, were found guilty of mutiny at a court-martial last week and given sentences of from one to three years.

Counsel for their defence said of Pte. Bates, who was given three years: “He strongly objects to being a member of a national press-gang”; of Pt. Stewart, “Your sentence could well break him for life. He is nothing more than a boy”; and of Pte. Cameron, a sawmill apprentice in civilian life, a cook in the Army, “He had no interest in cooking and often asked for a transfer. But he was told not to be silly, and carry on.”

The British Note stresses the legal rights of the company and points out that if the Persian Government refuse to go to arbitration, or to negotiate, they will have recourse to the International Court of Justice at the Hague. It must be clear to all concerned that on an appeal to law (we do not say, justice) the British would win, hands down.

Might is Right

But the British Note itself reveals the basis of this legal right (as so often happens when one examines legal “rights”) to be no other than superior force. It declares: “The 1933 agreement is a contract between the Persian Government and a foreign company concluded under the auspices of the League of Nations after an attempt by the Iranian Government to deprive the company of these rights under its previous concession had been brought by His Majesty’s Government before the League of Nations” (our italics).

The British Government now insist that “the real issue is . . . the wrong done if a sovereign State breaks a contract which it has deliberately (*sic*) made.” Quite apart from the general attitude of nation States towards contracts, there is no doubt that this contract was entered into under duress under pressure from an imperialist power backed by its own legal machinery, the League of Nations.

What of the Persian People?

If the Persian Government is smarting under a legal wrong, however, we should by no means jump to the conclusion that they are in the right. In their statements the Nationalists always talk about “the people” and the Government having no alternative but to carry out the wishes of the people “clearly expressed through the two Houses of Government”. Needless to say, all that is merely the demagogic verbiage currently used in the mid-twentieth century. The Persian Majlis’

claim to represent the people is even more ludicrous in a predominantly agricultural and pastoral population than it is in industrial Britain. Persia is run by landlordism, being a country of huge estates owned by a few immensely rich landowners, of whom one of the largest and richest is—Dr. Moussadik, the Nationalist Prime Minister.

Persia is a very poor country and there is something revolting in the way the Government is using that poverty as propaganda against the oil company, seeing that the general lot of the people will in no wise improve if the Nationalists achieve their aims. Persian “independence” will require increased military defence, increased expenditure on the armed forces, conscription and so on. Meanwhile, however, the hovels of the poor in Teheran are useful to show off to foreign journalists as propaganda against the oil company.

The U.S. and Russia

The U.S. Government have evidently decided that they would lose more than they would gain by allowing themselves to be played off against the British. American publicists declare that oil is of fundamental importance to Western Defence and therefore British claims must be upheld. The Government has limited itself to rebuking the unilateral action of the Moussadek’s Government (with an eye to the validity of their own contracts with Middle Eastern countries), and indicating that no U.S. technicians will be available if the British are expelled.

No doubt they foresee that it is not only a question of the Iranian Government seeking to play off one imperialism against another. An incidental gain from such Western disharmony would be Russia . . .

Even so brief a review as this one makes it plain that in the oil dispute there are no “rights”. The only people who have no say, and little enough interest, in the matter are the population of Persia. Despite the fiery assertions of the Nationalists, these rights have no spokesman.

THE NEW NAZISM

(from our German correspondent)

FOR over a year the Nazis have been spreading propaganda for the revival of their movement in dozens of newspapers. This propaganda was begun about two years ago as a trial to test the reaction in Germany. A publisher in Argentina and the publishers of an English magazine sent this propaganda into Germany and, after it had met with some success, the Nazis inside Germany set to work.

In the election of May 6th for the Diet of the province of Niedersachsen, in the British Zone, the Neo-Fascist party received 367,000 votes, 11% of all the votes cast, and this gives the party 16 members in the Diet, out of a total of 158. It has thus a better start than the old Nazi party, which in the old Imperial Diet in the years 1925-1930 had eight members to the other parties’ 500.

The new Nazi party calls itself the *Sozialistische Reichspartei* or S.R.P. (Socialistic Empire Party). Within the party is a para-military organisation like the former S.A., called the *Reichsfront*. For tactical reasons, to prove their “democracy”, the leaders of the S.R.P. thought it best to dissolve the *Reichsfront* “voluntarily”, two days before the election. This follows the manoeuvres of the former Nazi party which did the same thing with the S.A., for the same reason.

This election for the Diet of Niedersachsen is only a start. Western Germany is divided into 12 provinces, each of which has its Diet. From now on the Nazis will put up its candidates for them all, and also for the parliament of all West Germany at Bonn.

The leader of the S.R.P. is General Remer, who is known as the butcher of Berlin. During the officers’ rebellion in Hitler’s army in July 1944, Remer commanded the security troops in Berlin, and he had everyone, officers or civilians, who he thought had any complicity with the

rebellion, shot or hanged. The total was almost 5,000 people. Remer is still the same. At one of the election meetings he declared that if he had his way, everybody who had anything to do with the resistance against Hitler and the Nazis would be condemned by a German court of justice.

A close associate of Remer, is Dorl, who plays a more political game. According to him, this new Nazi party intends to join forces with the nationalism of the “Communists” in the Russian Zone, and also with Stalin. Dorl declared at one

Australian Call-up 20% Fail to Register

A SYDNEY report (15/5/51) states that when registration for military service closed last week, thousands of 18-year-old youths had failed to register for military training under the compulsory national service scheme.

The total number was not known but in the larger States of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia there were nearly 7,000 defaulters out of 36,500 eligible for registration.

Youths who do not register are liable to a fine of £50.

A NEW 1305?

THE workers’ agitation and struggle against 1305, together with the farcical result of the Old Bailey trial against the dockers, is bearing fruit.

1305 will be abolished next month. But it will be replaced by another order—with a different number!—under which compulsory arbitration will be replaced by voluntary.

The new order is to be discussed at a meeting between Alfred Robens, new Minister of Labour, and employers and union representatives, to meet both sides’ objections to the originally proposed amendments to 1305.

The result will be interesting—but not very. Collaboration between the Government, bosses and unions will not materially affect anything in the workers’ interests. Only their own direct action will achieve that. After all, would the

unions have even considered abolishing 1305—which suited them very well—if there had been no pressure from the rank-and-file?

COMMITTEE REPORTS ON THE DOCKS

A YEAR ago a Committee of Inquiry was set up to investigate the causes of the frequent disputes in the London docks.

They have now presented their report, in which they deal with the Industrial Background, Activities of the Unofficial Committee, the Dock Labour Scheme, the Trade Unions, and the Amenities in the Docks.

They also make certain recommendations, including “Sack the Agitators”. But we shall deal more fully with the Report next week, when we are hoping to publish a comment upon it by a member of the London Port Workers’ Committee.

Politics of Indian Famine

OUR remarks in the issue of *Freedom* for May 5th, regarding the political capital which is extracted from such a social disaster as the Indian famine, have proved only too well justified. The *Observer’s* correspondent, Rawle Knox, writes (20/5/51): “. . . political capital has unhappily been made of the pathetic scarcity in Bihar. The Socialist Party and the Democratic Front, which are now in process of quitting Congress, both have an enthusiastic following here, and both are concerned to accuse the Congress administration of callous inefficiency.

“At the same time, the Bihar Congress Party, fearful of its own popularity, has tended to exaggerate the plight of the province in order to extract more grain from the Central Administration.

“Because Mr. Munshi, the Central Government Food and Agriculture Minister, was aware of this propaganda war, he perhaps underestimated the danger, and delayed too long in increasing supplies to Bihar . . .”

Policies and politicians may gain, but they do so at the price of peasants’ lives. Those who go in for politics cannot

escape responsibility for the results of this chicanery, nor can they easily avoid the moral contamination involved.

Meanwhile, Truman’s suggestion of an outright gift of a million tons of food grains to India, has evaporated under Congress discussion into a business proposition with payment in the form of war necessary metals, etc., and a considerable number of political conditions.

KOREA

Why the Sacrifice?

ONE would have thought that the heavy losses of the Gloucestershire Regiment would have aroused public feeling in this country to condemnation of Britain’s part in the futile and senseless war in Korea. But whatever the condemnation we hear in conversation, there is little sign of it in the press. What hypocrisy is it for the *Spectator* (18/5/51) to write:

“Their shoulders held the sky suspended; They stood, and earth’s foundations stay.”

And they did that not, as so many men in so many famous regiments have done through the centuries, for the defence of their native land, but for the defence of a principle—on which, in the end, no doubt, the defence of everyone’s native land in the end depends. They fought and died in resistance against aggression which was no aggression directed against their own country, and in defence of a rule of law which they had no immediate reason to invoke on their own behalf.

The truth is that they died because they were sent to Korea to kill or be killed, not for the defence of a principle or a rule of law. They died, too, if we are to believe reports, because their officers did not reveal to their superiors the desperateness of the position.

That the irresponsible throwing away of lives should be met at home by heroic rhetoric and not by overwhelming public indignation is a matter for shame.

BARCELONA ARRESTS

A *Reuter* report from Madrid on 16/5/51 says: “Barcelona police have arrested 15 men alleged to have organised the strikes there. They are said to have acted on orders from the Anarchist National Labour Confederation in Toulouse, France.”

Oh Dear No!

Freedom for the child, as Dr. Montessori sees it, has never been confused with anarchy.

— *Times Educational Supplement*, 18/5/51.

ZERO!

ZERO, by Robert Payne. (Wingate, London and New York. 12/6d.)

"THIS is a terrifying and brilliant book" giving a full and dispassionate account of the history of nihilism and terrorism—such is the claim of the publishers. The serious reader, misled into starting it by such a blurb, will probably throw it aside after the first chapter, which reveals that the author does not understand the first thing about nihilism or terrorism, even though he has apparently read some Dostoyevsky. But if such a reader persists with the book to find out what the devil the author is getting at, let me warn him that it is a "shaggy dog story"—a story that wears, puzzles and exasperates and then at the end there is no *dénouement*, no point to it at all.

Mr. Payne hurries us through a sketchy account of the career of Sergei Nechayev, Dostoyevsky's fiction, Dadaism, Roman Triumphs, Tartar massacres, Chinese Taoism, The Protocols of Zion, Hitlerism, Concentration Camps, Leninism and Lord knows what unrelated titbits of gossip, and then brings us slap up against what seems to be a significant headline: *There must be war to the death against nihilism.*

This is on page 259; on turning page 262, however, we find that the book has ended, giving us what its title implies—Zero.

I have indicated that the serious reader is unlikely to persist after the first chapter,

but this book is hardly meant for serious readers. There is enough sensationally presented material and sadistic anecdote in it to appeal to quite a wide range of readers. Its significance, therefore, is that of a red herring which unifies by its stench some totally dissimilar ideas and trends which happen to be the present target of those who believe in the "democratic" way of life. Among prominent nihilists the following figures are included: Nechayev, Tamerlane, Max Stirner, Mao Tse-tung, Hitler, David Hume, Ivan the Terrible, Cato the Younger, Lenin. I note that Harpo Marx and Nebuchadnezzar are not included in an otherwise broad and catholic list.

Nowhere in the book has the author made the elementary distinction between the nihilist revolutionary terrorist, and the tyrant who uses mass terror as a means of government, and it seems pertinent to make that distinction here. We may take Nechayev and Lenin as our examples, the latter having learned from the former. Nechayev was a fanatical preacher of revolutionary terrorism; he aimed to destroy all the institutions of authority in Russia—to destroy them by every means, but he took no thought of anything beyond that. To quote his Revolutionary Catechism (which is reprinted in Mr. Payne's book): "... the Society has no intention of imposing on the people from above any other organisation. The future organisation will no doubt spring up from the movement and life of the people, but this is a matter for future generations to decide. Our task is ... destruction!" Lenin admitted his debt to Nechayev's

BOOK REVIEWS

teaching of unscrupulous violence against the Tzarist State, but he was certainly no nihilist when he seized power (any more than was Tamerlane, Hitler, etc.) Lenin's energies went to preserving and strengthening the structures of authority which the popular revolution had broken. If a nihilist has any meaning, it does not mean a defender of an authoritarian State.

Mr. Payne's recipe against the "Nechayev monster" (whose horrid face glares from every page) is sheer pulp. It smacks of Moral Rearmament, but is not even as definite as that. I suppose we must expect a spate of such books as this from across the Atlantic at this present time, but I wish they would send us more tinned goods instead.

RESISTANCE

RESISTANCE (New York), Vol. 9, No. 3, April, 1951. (Obtainable at Freedom Bookshop, 3d.)

THE new issue of *Resistance* includes the following articles: "The Politics of the Permanent War"; "Challenging the Inherited Ways"; "Political Behaviour in the Concentration Camp—2 Views"; by Sander Katz and David Wiek; "Free Education and the State"; "State versus Commune in Israel"; "Heroic Resistance in Hungary". There are also some extracts from Malatesta's writings, and a review of Ralph Bordosi's *Education and Living*.

Portraits & a Caricature

MEMORIES & PORTRAITS
by Ivan Bunin (John Lehmann)
12/6)

IVAN BUNIN is a Russian novelist who has lived in France since shortly after the October revolution. This rather miscellaneous volume of memoirs is, apart from the "ancient and noble family" from which the author is descended, and an account, in every detail, of the award to him of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1933, is a series of reminiscences of his contemporaries in Russian literary circles in the years immediately before the revolution.

It will not take the reader long to discover that M. Bunin is what is called a reactionary. In his youth he "dreamed of a pure, healthy, kindly life close to nature where, dressed in simple clothes, I would earn my daily bread with hard manual work, and live in brotherly friendship not only with the poor and the oppressed but with the whole vegetable and animal world." Consequently he sought frantically to make the acquaintance of Tolstoy, to be instructed in the "good" life among the "brethren",

"... who would quite seriously put questions to him like the following: 'Lev Nikolaevich, what ought I to do if I were attacked by a tiger?' On occasions like this he would say with an embarrassed smile, 'But why a tiger? Where do you find tigers? I've never seen a tiger in the whole of my life.' I remember once saying to him, in an attempt to make myself agreeable and get into his good graces:

'Temperance societies are now springing up everywhere.'

He frowned slightly: 'What societies?'

'Temperance societies ...'

'You mean, when people meet in order not to drink vodka? What rubbish. There is no need to meet in order not to drink. But if you have to meet, then you had better drink. What nonsense all this is, what a deceit, what substitution for action of the semblance of action ...'

M. Bunin evidently soon got over his desire to out-Tolstoy Tolstoy, and he writes wittingly of those of his acquaintances who adopted peasant blouses and rough manners, and like Gorki and Chaliapin, invented for themselves poverty-stricken and vagabond origins, and his most blistering remarks are reserved for those who "went over" to the Bolsheviks—Mayakovsky, Blok, Alexei, Tolstoy and Maxim Gorki (one would like to hear his comments on Ilya Ehrenburg!) But the best and most penetrating of his character studies are those of Chekov, Kuprin and 'His Imperial Highness the Prince of Oldenburg, who in exile in France wrote short stories of peasant life. This prince, a former major-general, lived on a farm in Bayonne, which he finally gave to his former batman. For this act, before he died of consumption in poverty, the French authorities certified him insane.

The interest of M. Bunin's portrait gallery leads us eagerly to his 'miniature' of Peter Kropotkin. But this turns out to be a caricature. Kropotkin, he begins:

"... emigrated to England, where he remained up to the February Revolution of 1917, when he returned to Moscow. I met him then for the first time, and was very surprised and moved: the man of European fame, the friend of Elysee Reclus turned out to be a little old man with pink cheeks, with thin white hair light as fluff, vivacious and irresistibly charming, childishly naive, and very friendly in his speech and manner."

COMMENT

As Others See Us

A LEADING article in the May 16th issue of the old and decorous Edinburgh newspaper, *The Scotsman*, comments on the motion adopted at the conference of the French anarchists at Lille which declared itself, "against Truman without being for Stalin, and against Stalin without being for Truman." Says *The Scotsman*:

"It is true that the terms of the policy adopted in Lille do not carry anyone forward, but at least they must leave an impression of deep satisfaction among those who voted for the resolution. Few of us are given any opportunity to express contempt for our rulers without at the same time expressing approval for alternative rulers. To be sure, we may refrain from exercising our franchise, but one gets very little pleasure out of the act of not voting. People are prone to misconstrue one's absence from the polls and to put it down to apathy or indifference. One can, of course, scrawl on one's ballot paper, 'Down with So-and-So!' but that action only leads to a spoilt paper which is apt to classify one as an illiterate. The worst of democracy is that it denies the average elector any chance to register his unutterable abhorrence of any kind of Government at all. Since, in this country, anarchists do not offer themselves as Parliamentary candidates, a man who takes a poor view of any kind of administration is virtually denied suffrage.

"Anarchy, of course, is always treated as if it were a deplorable state of affairs. Politicians who dislike the kind of policy put into effect by their opponents refer to it with scorn as being 'sheer anarchy'.

It seems rather an understatement to call Kropotkin's escape from the Peter-Paul Fortress emigration! What follows (which M. Bunin has learned second-hand, since he himself fled from Moscow in 1918) is, to say the least, a curious account of Kropotkin's last day. He says that Kropotkin

"... persistently tried to get an interview with Lenin, in the singular innocent hope that he would bring him to repent for the monstrous terror which was already sweeping through Russia. At long last the interview was granted. For some unknown reason Kropotkin was 'on friendly terms' with Bonch-Bruyevich, a close associate of Lenin's and it was in Bonch-Bruyevich's flat in the Kremlin that the meeting took place. It seems incredible that a man like Kropotkin should have been 'on friendly terms' with someone who stood out even among the Bolsheviks as an exceptional blackguard—and yet he was! And even more incredible: he actually attempted to direct Lenin's activities on to a humanitarian path. Having failed in this, he was 'disappointed' in Lenin and spoke about the interview with childish bewilderment: 'I found that it was utterly useless to try and convince that man of anything. I reproached him for having allowed two and a half thousand people to be murdered in reprisal for the attempt upon his life, but I realised that it made no impression upon him ...'

Now, firstly, Bunin is confusing visits made at different dates. Kropotkin did not originally seek an interview with Lenin, the meeting was arranged at Lenin's wish (for his own purposes), by Bonch-Bruyevich. Secondly, Kropotkin's acquaintance with B.-B. dated from their exile. (B.-B. had been editor of a social-democratic paper *Raevsk*, in Geneva years before.) Thirdly, Kropotkin could hardly have been bewildered, since he had said a year before the first meeting (to Edgar Sisson): "Lenin is not comparable to any revolutionary figure in history. Revolutionaries have had ideals. Lenin has none ... He is willing to betray Russia as an experiment." Fourthly, would Bunin have preferred Kropotkin not to intercede with Lenin? (Actually Kropotkin discussed the point with Atabekian who said that he would approve of pleading even to the Tsar to save those who were condemned to death.)

M. Bunin concludes his note on Kropotkin with a description of his life at Dmitrov "in cave-like conditions which no anarchist had ever dreamed of".

"He spent his evenings by the light of a torch, finishing his posthumous work, *On Ethics*. Can one imagine anything more horrible? Nearly the whole of his life—the life of a man who once had been a close friend of the Emperor—had been wasted on revolutionary dreams of an anarchistic paradise (that among beings who are only just learning to walk on their hind paws properly!) and ended in hunger and cold, by the dim light of a smoky torch, in the very midst of the long-awaited revolution, over a manuscript on human ethics!"

Contrast this with what Kropotkin says in one of his last letters:

"I have undertaken to write on Ethics because I regard that work as absolutely necessary. I know well that intellectual movements are not created by books, and thus just the reverse is true. But I also know that for clarifying an idea the help of a book is needed, a book that expresses the bases of thought in their complete form ... The need for such books is particularly urgent now ..."

"I have only a little time left to live ... Thus, dear friend, I am concentrating my strength to ethics ..."

"I believe profoundly in the future ..."

C.W.

CAN WE DO SOMETHING?

The letter reproduced below was published in the March 31st issue of the *New Statesman & Nation*:

SIR.—Can any of your readers dispel my political bewilderment? As a young art student towards the end of the first World War, I read the *Herald* in the Underground, hiding it before I reached my Liberal home. Lansbury, Brailsford, Evelyn Sharpe and so many other writers opened a new horizon for me. The Labour Party seemed to offer my youthful enthusiasm an opportunity for service in the cause of Peace and internationalism. For thirty years I have believed, both in Local Government and in National Politics, that the Labour Party, with all

its obvious shortcomings, was the channel through which we could attain fairer conditions at home and, above all, Peace. But to-day, if those of us who are in our fifties and have lived through two horrible wars, utter the thoughts we learnt from the Labour leaders of 1917, the local Labour Parties of to-day are shocked and say frankly that there is no room for such as we in the Labour Party. Where is there room for us? If we complain of the present tendency of the Labour Government to decontrol and institute, instead, rationing by the purse, we are told that we should be in the C.P. If we talk of Peace and the iniquity of slaughtering human beings in war, we are to join the C.P.—if we are not accused of being already secret members of it. But the

C.P. has no use for independent-minded Socialists like us.

Is there *nothing* we can do? Must we accept, as Professor Cole appears to, that all we can do is to put our beliefs in writing? Are there so few of us that no party can offer us an organisation through which we can work together for real Socialism? Are there so few of us that we cannot create the organisation for ourselves? URSULA RIDLEY.

Our reader P.L.L. addresses the following open letter in reply to Miss Ridley's questions. We invite other Freedom readers to submit their views for publication (if possible not exceeding 300 words in length).

Peace and justice are never given; they must be taken by those who want them. Do you want peace? Then take it! No government can commit you to war unless you accept their right to do so. Stop complaining that your gaolers ill-treat you, and get out of the dungeon. The door isn't locked—it's just that you have come to accept without question, after unending propaganda, that "of course" it is locked: "of course" one must submit to governmental oppression!

Do you want justice? Then insist on it! Stop whining to those who torment you with their laws and their orders. Get up off your knees—they are no bigger than you.

The State, with all its paraphernalia of oppression, its army, its police force, its courts of "justice", its taxes, its wars, is the instrument of the ruling class, and should be treated as such. Don't imagine that the phrase "ruling class" is invalidated by the absorption of trade union leaders into its ranks. Power corrupts the member of the proletariat just as it does the member of the aristocracy. And I have no illusions that anyone else would or might escape such corruption, even you or I!

Despite our criticism of the Victorians, the workers of the last century knew what they wanted, and fought for it. They wanted to combine in trade unions: did they bring pressure to bear on the Liberal and Tory Parties to give them trade unions by law? Did they form a political party with the object of seizing power and enacting trade unions into existence? No! They formed their unions, and they fought for them against the oppression of employers, politicians, and judges alike. And they won! I know the struggle was hard and bitter. But nothing comes easily in this world—nothing worth having, anyway.

People to-day think they can sit back and be given socialism, peace and justice on a platter. What nonsense! We will have socialism when the workers in the factories decide that they are going to have socialism whoever objects, and set about building it as they want it; we will have peace when people realise that the power to insist on peace will be in their hands as soon as they take the power out of the hands of the politicians; we will have justice when people stop confusing justice with the laws of the State and cast aside a system whose essence is the retention of privilege, the perpetration of injustice, the consolidation of the power of corrupt men.

I don't pretend to think that you will accept all the arguments in this letter without a second thought: the ideas and habits of a lifetime are not so easily abandoned. But if one or two points arouse reflection and lead to a reconsideration of your basic political assumptions, then I shall be satisfied.

Yours, etc., P.L.L.

together for real Socialism". You claim to be "independent-minded", and yet still wish to work through a political party; you apparently accept, without question, that it is possible and practicable to work for real Socialism by supporting a political party. You see no possible incompatibility there? And even if you did, would you not be prepared (as are so many others) to compromise your ideals for the sake of achieving a measure of Socialism now (or in the near future)?

Why do you insist on your desired "organisation" being a political party? Must it? What is the real Socialism that you want? Apparently you are not satisfied with the Socialism which the State gives you—State monopolies, State "health" service, State insurance, State conscription, and all the other benefits of a "Welfare" State. No! You want "all this and heaven, too!" You want Peace, you want "fairer conditions"; in fact, you want—apparently—what I want as well.

Yet you draw no lessons from your past experience. "The Labour Party seemed to offer ... an opportunity for service ... Why 'seemed'?" It did offer that opportunity. Political Parties are always glad to receive young enthusiasts into the fold. Why? Not because the leaders like your blue eyes (if you have got blue eyes!) but because you—insignificant though you may seem to yourself at the time—are the source of their power. You may think that the power you contribute becomes the power of the party. It doesn't. Parties don't do things; parties don't have power. It is persons within the party who have power and who use that power—for their own ends.

As long as the party has no likelihood of becoming the Government party, there is a fair chance that the "idealistic" leaders will continue to appear idealistic, although this becomes less true as the "power of the party" (i.e., the power of the party leaders) increases. If the party "comes into power", either the "idealistic" leaders are replaced by "hard-headed politicians", or the leaders themselves become corrupt.

You don't need to take my word for this—just look at the history of the last thirty years.

However, I must be more positive, and come out into the open. If you want Socialism by State legislation (which is implied by your support of Party Politics), then I say you are asking for the moon.

Do you think the leaders of the Labour Party—or any other party—are altruists? Do you think they are concerned to give the people what the people want? Yes: just so far as they have to do so in order to retain power. It was the people throughout the country who in 1945 wanted peace and "fair shares for all". And so, under the delusion that the Labour Party would give them those things, they voted it into power. Where are their dreams now? And where are yours?

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

- The House and the Fort Charles Humana 9/6
A novel of post-war Italy.
- Modern Science Leo Tolstoy 3d.
A little-known pamphlet.
- The Pattern of the Future Alex Comfort 6/-
Four broadcast talks.
- Outline of European Architecture Nikolous Pevsner 3/-
An enlarged edition of this famous Penguin, with 64 pages of plates.
- Story of a School A. L. Stone 1/-
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EMOTIONAL IMMATURITY

"EMOTIONAL immaturity is seen best perhaps in the House of Commons. Reading the debates of the last four or five months you would think you were reading a description of life in a nursery school."

Far be it from us to differ from so eminent an authority as Dr. Alfred Torrie, wartime Director of Army Psychiatry. Nevertheless, we must point out that many nursery schools of our acquaintance are unfairly insulted in the above quotation; and we have not noticed anything special in the last four or five months in parliament to justify particular mention.

Dr. Torrie's remarks had a limited audience—he was addressing the conference of the National Marriage Guidance Council at Harrogate. But they are of first class interest in that they represent an open admission of a lamentable state of affairs, and an admission furthermore that emotional immaturity is a powerful influence in public actions. For Dr. Torrie went on to point out that the emotionally immature person, when faced with a problem, kicked the cat, cursed his wife or the Government or Russia, and looked about for a scapegoat. "We must start rearming in a different way, rearming for emotional maturity, making sure that the next generation rearms so that if we cannot prevent the next war, we shall at least prevent the war after next."

He squarely planted the blame for this in the sexual field, pointing out that Britain as a nation was both emotionally immature, and obsessed with sex. "If you listen to the crooners on the wireless and read certain Sunday papers, you will see that because of lack of sexual education, and because of our lack of psycho-sexual maturity we are interested in other people's failings. Some sort of education is necessary in order that we should grow up emotionally. We should not act in an ungrown-up, infantile and non-adult way."

Now here is a direct implication that war is the result of an emotionally immature, and sexually immature, outlook on the part of our people generally, and our government in particular. And there is the realisation that to tackle the problem sexual education, a long term project, is required. The very existence of a Marriage Guidance Council (an official body which, though not chosen by the government, nevertheless receives government support in the form of a money grant) is a plain admission of the failure of our educational methods in the sexual field.

But when one begins to suggest remedies, one immediately finds that rational solutions are blocked at every turn by—laws and governmental fiat. Education authorities which pursue a progressive line in sex education are actively discouraged by officialdom, and the Sunday paper to which Dr. Torrie refers is full of examples of the way the law harries young people who take their sexual needs seriously enough to put them into practice. That there are deep-seated emotional causes of sexual immaturity is plain enough; but it is also plain that these causes are entrenched behind solid official and legal sanctions. How can maturity be achieved without some regard to sexual needs and practice? How can men and women be expected to act responsibly in their sexual lives when the law insists on regarding them as children until far beyond the age of physical maturity?

But it is also apparent that it is unreasonable to expect deliverance from above. Governments manifest the prevailing immaturity: why then

LETTER FROM AMERICA

(from our New York correspondent)

AT first glance, the conflict between the Truman administration and General MacArthur is one between war and peace. In fact, MacArthur's relief was widely heralded as a significant step towards cessation of warfare in Korea.

There is a certain obvious—but misleading—truth in this interpretation. MacArthur is plainly a Military Man, influenced by no considerations other than victory in the third world war, who recognises the plain fact that war exists and seeks to bring a showdown as speedily as possible regardless of its cost. The popular enthusiasm for MacArthur, though inflated by the jingoist press, was spontaneous enough and contained all the elements of wild patriotism, world-conquest, super-violence. Against these stands the Truman administration, influenced by somewhat saner capitalist groups, somewhat saner about the need for allies in the war, not committed on principle to total war; and supported by the more liberal elements in the country. So the socialist Norman Thomas easily finds himself in the "Truman-Marshall corner", and there is no denying that, in some sense, Truman is—as opposed to MacArthur—a symbol of peace.

But now let us examine more closely.

Truman is attempting to pursue an elaborate military strategy—let us give the administration the benefit of

Dilemma of the Liberal State

doubt, and concede that it is not hell-bent on atomic warfare as soon as its allies can be persuaded to it. The administration is attempting to hold certain lines of empire-defence and make the cost of breach of them prohibitive; to hold the European allies; to avoid over-commitment in one area; to build up American war-potential; to be prepared for all-out war whenever the total strategic picture demands it.

This is not a foolish policy, from the point of view of survival of the American State and its ruling groups. But it makes elaborate demands on a population. In the first and second world wars, Americans were spectators until the decisive moment that their nation entered and thenceforward there was nothing but maximum military effort for victory. Now, instead, there is a war fought merely in order not to lose it, and without public expectation of victory. Such a strategy calls for mercenary armies—but these are out of the question; or it calls for a government totalitarian enough to be able to prevent any more awareness of the war among the civilian population than the government find convenient—but this is still out of the question in America. Or, finally, it is a war for liberals: that is, for people who are used to withstanding tension, who even enjoy it, who can comprehend and even appreciate an elaborate strategy and prefer in any case not to be too deeply committed to a particular position.

But in America the mass of people is more or less informed, and its self-styled jingoist tribunes demand the right of publicity; the mass of people is intolerant to the mounting tension, can appreciate only the act of war or the act of peace and is easily susceptible to exploitation by ambitious power-groups.

The tendency therefore has been for the Truman strategy to break down, internally, as the external situation grows more complicated. However much the administration tries to steer a middle course, it either sacrifices its shrewd strategy, or it offers ammunition to those who will, from self-interest or wild conviction, proclaim the policy of explosive relief of tension that MacArthur represents.

Thus, paradoxically, MacArthur represents, in many of his followers,

a yearning for peace; more exactly, a protest against the permanent war implicit in the Truman strategy, a protest offered no alternative means of expression. Once again we see how the policies of liberalism have no firm ground: as the liberals compromise with the principle of war—as by the Korean intervention—for the sake of restraining the McCarthys and MacArthurs, they set going a self-reinforcing pattern which gives more and more strength to the proponents of all-out war. And now America is at war with China; the possibilities for negotiation of any armistice grow dimmer with every day of Senatorial investigation; and in the last analysis it will make very little difference whether MacArthur triumphs, if the triumph of MacArthurism proceeds as at present.

D.T.W.

MALAN WITHHOLDS PASSPORT

THE action of the South African Government in refusing a passport to come to England to Dr. Alper, the woman nuclear physicist who is head of the National Physical Laboratory in South Africa, shows once more the extent to which government now encroaches on the freedom of individuals. It also exhibits the derisive meaning which has come to attach to the word "passport"—originally a device to facilitate travel.

Dr. Alper's statement is very interesting:

"The Minister of the Interior," she said, "has made use of powers given him under recent regulations to refuse a passport without giving reasons. I can only make conjectures about what prompted the Minister's refusal. I have always been opposed to Communism and the methods of the Communist Party. I have never taken any active part in political life, nor belonged to a political organisation. I am quite prepared to submit to an open investigation of my past actions.

"It may have been brought to ministerial attention that I signed a petition against the Cape Coloured franchise Bill, and invited others to sign it. I also spoke against the Bill in strong terms in private conversations. I regard it as not only a right but a duty for democratic citizens to discuss current affairs freely and frankly, but this may not be the ministerial view.

"As my professional work is associated with atomic research, I am particularly vulnerable to damaging inferences which might be drawn from the action against me. I have tendered my resignation to the council for this reason, and also because it will be easier to fight the implied accusation against me when I am no longer a member of an organisation that falls under a Government department."

LIBERTARIAN.

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

Death Pays Handsome Dividends

IT is now no longer fashionable to portray the armaments manufacturer as a bloated top-hatted creature with an outside watch chain and wearing spats. And because wars and war preparations are now on such a scale and of such a complexity, the armament manufacturer cannot obviously promote sales of his lethal commodities as his grandfather was accustomed to do in the bad old days of free enterprise.

However, in accepting this new situation one must not be blinded to the fact that industry in general has still a vested interest in cold wars: they are good for business. And since businessmen are interested in making profits one is not surprised to see that they are patriotically making a good thing out of the Korean war and the world rearmament programme. Some of the returns made by large American companies recently are quite staggering and we think can be quoted to advantage.

The United States Rubber Company's net earnings for the first quarter of 1951 were just over \$9 million, compared with just under \$4 million for the same period in 1950. And remember that the amount paid in tax this year was \$23 million as against \$3 million last year. Which means therefore that the net profit before taxation had risen from \$7 million to \$32 million! The Sinclair Oil Corporation and its subsidiaries have also a rosy quarter's business to report to shareholders. Though they paid an extra \$9½ million dollars in taxes in the first quarter of 1951 compared with last year, their "earnings" (as they euphemistically call profits from death in Wall Street and the City) after payment of taxes were \$18 million or \$5 million more than last year. The total earnings before taxation were \$30 or almost double the figure for 1950 and the largest for the first quarter in the Company's history.

The National Steel Corporation has been able to pay \$13½ million more in taxes in the first quarter of 1951 than in the corresponding period in 1950 without hardly making shareholders feel the pinch, as distributed profits declined by only

should we expect anything from them?—for we do not go to the sick to be cured. Dr. Torrie's thesis not merely underwrites the anarchist-view of government, it also squarely places the onus of changing all this on the shoulders of the individual. "We have a chance," he declared, "of producing that kind of balance between the male and the female attitude to life which will do something to stop a man behaving as if he is in a nursery, with his big bangs and atomic bombs and so on."

\$½ million to \$13½ million. Though profits after taxation were slightly lower, actual profits increased from \$23½ million to \$36½ million.

Standard Oil of Ohio can look back to the first quarter of 1951 with satisfaction and a feeling that they have done their bit in the cold war and for the democratic cause. They showed an increase in profits from about \$4 million in 1950 to \$9½ million, and in spite of crippling taxation they were still able to distribute \$4½ million to the shareholders or \$1.25 per share compared with \$2¼ million or \$0.75 per share in 1950.

This list could be added to, with contributions from all countries.

For readers in the country it will be easier to interpret the above figures by providing them with just two more pieces of information: \$1 million is equal to about £357,000 and the number of American casualties (not to mention all the other casualties on both sides) in the Korean war is now 65,523 including 11,112 dead, 43,506 wounded, 9,621 missing.

And so we say farewell (until next week!) to that fair land of Free Enterprise and the Un-American Investigation Committee (which cannot, in our opinion, see the wood for trees!)

Why Trust Nehru?

PANDIT NEHRU is the perfect example of the corrupting effect power has on any man or politician. His past as an agitator against British Imperialism has blinded many woolly-headed, well-meaning people to hope of better things from him than from the professional type of politician. Yet, since he came to power he has abandoned all his ideas of non-violence (threats of war, etc., over the Kashmir problem); he also agreed to the imprisonment without trial of thousands of "Communists". Yet when in the world scene he tries to pose as a peacemaker, all this is forgotten by those who send him messages supporting his efforts for world peace, etc. . . . Nehru's actions in India can only make us ask, "What is his game?" when he assumes a neutral rôle in the crisis in Asia. And this view is strengthened by a recent proposal he has made in the Indian Parliament to amend the freedom-of-speech clause and other sections of India's Constitution.

Mr. Nehru denounced "irresponsible elements of the Indian Press, adding, "What are we to do about these little sheets coming out day by day which poison and vitiate the atmosphere? There is a limit to the license one can allow, and more so in times of grave peril to the state."

Official sources said his reference was to anti-government weeklies.

Mr. Nehru added: "There is no country in the world where there is so

much freedom and regard for the press as India. But it is a matter of deepest distress to me to see day by day the way these newsheets are poisoning the minds of the younger generation."

How familiar is that word "irresponsible" in the mouths of politicians! "Irresponsible" dockers, "irresponsible" miners. And how familiar it was to Nehru the agitator for Indian independence. But now that he is in power it is he who is calling his critics "irresponsible". Surely the moral of this little story is obvious.

The Suppression of News

ONE of the great advantages of the British Press is undoubtedly the fact that (as I have mentioned before in these columns) one does eventually learn the news from them—usually about fifteen or twenty years afterwards, when one searches assiduously. A further case in point to prove my contention was the serialised biography of the Duchess of Windsor by Colin Frame in the London Star recently. He told a story which I think is symptomatic. An American news agency tried to organise an opinion poll amongst the British public prior to the Abdication, to see what their views would be on the King marrying Mrs. Simpson. Of course, the pollsters dizzily failed in getting results. The well-informed, wide-awake, worthily-served British public had then never even heard of Mrs. Simpson, whose romance was blazoned in the world. American magazines entering the country were mutilated in order that the story should not be told here until Authority deemed fit. (Thus Democracy takes decisions!)

Something rather more serious took place at about the same time: namely, the struggle in Spain. Issues of more importance than Edward and Wally were fought out. The British Press remained true to form. When Mr. Attlee visited Spain, a journalist from an anarcho-syndicalist paper asked him what the British workers in general, thought about the C.N.T. It was, after all, the largest union in Spain, it was participating in a major scale in the struggle, and it was taking a prominent place in an unprecedented social revolution as well. Mr. Attlee, needless to say, could not answer the question any more than the unfortunate American pollsters could get any satisfaction about the British reaction to Mrs. Simpson. He had to say that the British workers "knew very little" about the C.N.T.—he might as well have said "nothing", and could have added that his own party, and their paper, joined in the conspiracy of silence at home to keep it secret from them.

At the London Anarchist May Day meeting I asked the audience to consider for a time the position of the Korean Anarchists. Their fate is self-evident, and it is a fate which in an atomic war may well be ours. Only a short while before all hell broke loose over Korea I received a communication from a comrade in Korea, who set out their position very clearly. After many years of fighting against feudal Japanese dictatorship (a struggle in which they were ever conscious of their links with the Japanese anarchists, and the Japanese workers) it was at last possible to organise and their propaganda was increasing rapidly, in view of the defection of all the socialist parties. Then came silence from Korea: proscribed by both sides and shot at by both dictatorship, "liberated" successively by "free" and "new" democracies, the movement could only go into hiding, and only hope, as individuals getting out of the way as much as they could, that their message would be heard should the days of reconstruction come. That too is likely to be our task.

What interested me was a letter I received from a Chinese friend who told me of reports in Japanese and Chinese papers that the workers were seizing the factories in Seoul when the first withdrawals took place.

His information was sparse—culled only from newspapers also giving little information—and it is significant that the Press, which has told us so much about Seoul that we have lost count of the times it has been "liberated", told us nothing about this. Needless to say it could not have lasted long. The "liberating" forces of China as well as the "liberating" forces of the U.S.A. had too much at stake to be prepared to tolerate what (with what I can only presume in the circumstances to be colossal irony) the local newspapers apparently referred to as "banditry"! Similar scanty reports reached us during the war regarding Warsaw. But workers' control is not "news" . . . any more than the Spanish Revolution was.

INTERNATIONALIST.

SEGREGATION?

THE Torquay Town Council are considering a plan put forward by their Councillor Gibbings who suggests spending £30,000 on a special block of flats. He proposes building them with indestructible material, concrete floors, and concrete stairs so that the inhabitants can do the minimum of damage, and with a caretaker provided to see that they keep themselves clean. This is not the specification, as one man who works at the London Zoo, remarked, "for housing dangerous animals," but is for proposed flats for 18 "problem families" in Torquay, so named because they won't pay the rent, are dirty in their habits and have no respect for neighbours or landlords.

The families concerned have been conditioned by years of slum dwelling, and appear to be slow in adjusting themselves to better and cleaner conditions. But the suggestion to segregate them from other members of the community could only come from someone who is completely out of touch with human needs and reactions.

The effects of years of poverty cannot be overcome by treating the people concerned like wild animals. That such urgent social problems can be overcome in a human way is illustrated by Louise Morgan in an article in the *News Chronicle*, where she describes a case concerning a group of four people, who, during the war took up residence on a slum clearance estate, and from the confusion of air raids, poverty and filth were instrumental in building a happy responsible community which now consists of 500 families.

Louise Morgan wrote:

"The estate had become a worse slum than the condemned area from which its dwellers had been removed. Yet these four middle-class people had lived for two years in one of the cheapest of the flats, on an income lower than their neighbours, and doing their own shopping, washing, scrubbing and cooking with the same bare equipment as everybody else. What is more, they had gone into flats and cleaned up indescribable bedrooms,

washed and cleansed children's heads, scrubbed and cooked, and showed mothers patiently how to keep simple accounts, and in general put new heart into women who had collapsed under a load they had not been prepared either physically or mentally to bear.

"As one of the four explained, 'There's no earthly use telling a worn-out mother how to clean up her children at an advice centre. You must do it for her, and then do it with her, and keep on doing it with her until she gets the knack and wants to do it herself.'

"And, believe me, it's a supreme moment when a mother says, 'Look! I can do it myself!'"

"By the end of the war this tiny group had transformed five hundred derelict and half-alive families with 2,000 children into a self-respecting community.

"And in doing this they had proved beyond question that the only power which can rouse outcast families from lethargy and degradation is the regenerating assurance of having a friend. Only the spark of friendship can light the dormant fires of human self-respect and dignity."

Employers' Squabble Threatens 20,000

AT the end of 1949, workers in the clothing trade won an increased paid holiday—a second week. Ever since then the employers—large and small—have been squabbling among themselves as to how this extra week is going to be paid for.

The clothing trade differs from many others in the extent to which subcontracting goes on. Thousands of small firms operate not through independent trading with wholesalers or retailers, but through "out-door work" as it is called, for large manufacturers.

The latter, formed into the British Mantle Manufacturers Association, are the firms who launch the nationally-advertised names in women's wear. They usually have their "parent" factory, and as their trade expands, they find it profitable to farm out their production, the out-door workers producing strictly to the manufacturers' designs.

This works well for the manufacturers. One of the curses of the clothing trade, as far as the workers are concerned, is the seasonal nature of the work. In the busy season, skilled workers can earn

good wages, but there are slack periods of the year when they are simply stood off. Under the out-working systems, the large employers can keep their own factory going all the year round, and if slack times come, they simply withdraw their out-door work and it is the employee of the small firm who is out of a job. Thus, the manufacturers keep a nucleus of skilled workers who know their styles and keep their organisation intact throughout the year, expanding and contracting as the seasons demand, at the expense of the out-door workers.

The small employers, associated as the Master Ladies' Tailors, are those who organise this out-door work, and they claim that the manufacturers have agreed in principle to pay for the extra weeks' holiday for the tailors' employees. But they cannot agree on the method of payment. The tailors want to be paid in a lump sum—which is understandable, since they will have to pay out two weeks' wages in a lump sum when the workshops close down for the annual holiday.

The manufacturers, however, want the payment spread over the year, to be added

to the tailors' costings—which is understandable from their point of view.

So there is a dispute between the two employers' organisations and, as usual, it is the workers who suffer. For the Master Ladies' Tailors have given notice to 20,000 employees of 800 firms in the London area as from May 24th, unless the manufacturers agree to their method of payment.

At the time of going to press, Mick Mendel, secretary of the London Mantle and Costume Branch of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, is approaching the Minister of Labour to intervene.

Now, under Regulation 1305, both workers and employers are compelled to give notice of a dispute to the Ministry of Labour before either a strike or a lock-out. Yet what is this proposed action by the Master Tailors but a lock-out?

But in the dockers' trial last month, the defence established the point (confirmed by the jury's decision) that although the dockers were on strike, there was no quarrel between the employers and the workers (only between workers and union) therefore no trade dispute existed. In the present garment workers' trouble, it can be equally said that no dispute exists between employers and workers—only between employers and employers.

The Master Tailors, however, have the power to "close our factories rather than run at a loss" and the Ministry of Labour say, "We have no status to intervene in what is regarded as a commercial and not an industrial dispute."

So a ridiculous squabble threatens the livelihood of 20,000 workers. And those who advocate the end of the money system are regarded as impractical!

P.S.

SYNDICALISM—THE WORKERS' NEXT STEP—2

THE TRADE UNIONS TODAY

VERY early in the development of capitalism, the workers began to realise that although, as the producers of all wealth—they were indispensable, they were so *only as a class*. The individual worker, with no resources to fall back on, was completely at the mercy of his employer, who owned the means of life.

The early days of capitalism saw the establishment of working conditions that make one's flesh creep just to read about to-day. The development of the power of steam and its application to coal-mining and textiles in particular brought about working and living conditions, not only for men but for women and children too, that were far, far worse than anything that had been known before. The invention of great new potentials for production brought to the people, not wealth and more leisure, but savage exploitation and long hours of slavery. It is small wonder that the first reaction of many craftsmen among the weavers—the Luddites, for instance—was to smash the new machines made possible through steam power.

But when it became apparent that the new industrialism was here to stay, it also became clear that new forms of struggle must be adopted, and out of the vague feelings of class solidarity engendered by common suffering, grew the knowledge that "unity is strength".

The story of the association of the workers into unions is a story of hard and bitter struggle. From the Combination Act of 1799-1800, when any form of combination by workers was punishable by prison, to the Trades Dispute Act of 1906, which made trade unionism legal, every step forward, nearly every demand for a betterment of wages and conditions, was not only resisted by the employers but was also fought by the State. For even though the workers themselves did not realise the possibilities behind their own organisation—still, in the main, do not realise them—the ruling class quickly saw the danger to its domination if the workers really organised themselves to take over industry.

But that was not the purpose of trade union organisation. In spite of the methods of direct action which the unions regularly used, there has never been anything revolutionary about them. They have always been reformist, concerned as much with getting themselves legally recognised, as with the struggle for better conditions. Content always to remain wage-bargaining bodies within the framework of capitalism, trade unionism has never seriously challenged the capitalist system itself. Its rôle has been merely to gain a few extra crumbs for the workers without pointing out to them that, after all, they produce the whole cake.

The Political Wing

In order to be constitutionally recognised, and to speed certain reforms, the trade unions established their own political wing. The early unionists had looked to the Liberals for parliamentary support, but because Liberalism was not altogether in favour of government interference in the affairs of industry (the Liberals, after all, were in the main the industrialists!) the unions founded the Independent Labour Party, to be followed later by the Labour Party. And to this day, the bulk of the support, both in votes and in funds, for the Labour Party, comes from the Trade Union movement.

From the Syndicalist point of view, of course, this arrangement has been fatal. Syndicalists have always criticised political action as a deviation from the real struggle, and although the arguments of trade unionists may have seemed to have some force while their political wing was in the opposition in Parliament, as soon as it became the ruling Party the fallacies became obvious. And the growing disillusionment with the Labour Government and the Trade Unions among their own supporters could have been foretold by Anarchists and Syndicalists years ago.

For while Labour was the opposition Party in Parliament, the unions had no embarrassment in being in opposition in industry—they could be militant (within their limitations—which are considerable!) and could defend their members' interests against the Tory government and the bosses. But when the Labour Party became the Government and the State took over the basic industries, the position of the unions became very different indeed.

Under free enterprise capitalism, they had degenerated into coffin clubs and friendly societies. The immense funds they had accumulated were invested in capitalist enterprises, in war loans

and government bonds; they were prosperous concerns with well-paid officials. But with the coming of nationalisation, the panacea for which the unions has always campaigned, they became all this and much more. They became organisations for the maintenance of discipline over the workers. Their main function became, not the representation of the workers' point of view in disputes with the boss, but the maintenance of industrial peace through collaboration with the boss. The unions became, in the nationalised industries, the impersonal machinery through which workers' complaints reached the managers, vainly trying to make the workers believe that "things are different now". The unions have become organs of the State and apologists for the Government.

In these respects, the trade unions in Britain differ very little from those in totalitarian states—or from those in America. They are all stooge organisations for their governments. In U.S.A., the leaders of the C.I.O. and the A.F.L. proudly state that they are in favour of private enterprise ("The more profits for the boss, the more wages for the worker—therefore let us make capitalism more efficient"), while in the U.S.S.R. the unions are frankly State organs ("The first task of the trade unions is to penetrate the large masses of the workers with the idea that they do not work for a capitalist State, but for the State, the State of their own class", and "The member of the T.U. must, by setting an example, bring all the workers to participate in socialistic emulation and to become shock workers [udarniks and stakhanovites]"). In Britain the unions accepted the wage freeze, the production drive and talked the miners into giving up the five-day week to save the Government from a fuel crisis.

Union Structure

I have said nothing about the structure of the trade unions. Our main criticism on this point is that, whereas Syndicalists advocate industrial organisation, the T.U.'s are organised in *crafts*, which means that workers in the same industry—in the same factory—may belong to different unions, so that no common action can be taken. This suits the trade union official very well, for his first concern is to prevent action being taken. But the division of the workers by the unions has now reached such lengths that one union will actually blackleg upon another (when colliery winders went on strike in 1949, N.U.M. members scabbed on them) or will force another out of existence with the assistance of the employers (the Transport and General Workers Union demanded that the London Passenger Transport Board forced a dozen tram drivers to leave their own smaller union and join the big one—or be sacked!)

The structure and nature of the unions, too, provide perfect channels for the job-hunters. Permanent jobs with high salaries make trade unionism, which used to be a risky business, an attractive career to-day. Nor does it stop there. If you get to the top, you can always step out into a cushy job in a nationalised industry. A member of a State Board receives a salary of anything from £3,000 to £5,000 a year—a considerable advance on a worker's pay.

But workers should not delude themselves that either the unions, or nationalisation operate in their favour. Instead of the old free enterprise economy we now have a State planned economy. But the workers are still at the bottom, taking orders from above. They still have a struggle to make ends meet—and the struggle for improvements are now harder than they used to be. For now, whenever the workers take action in their own interests, it is not only against their employers they must struggle, but also against the State—which may be the employer—and their own trade unions!

All strikes to-day are unofficial and it is no wonder that the workers are setting up rank-and-file unofficial committees in opposition to the official unions. It seems to me that it is only a matter of time now before these committees harden into a definite movement of industrial organisation which may quite closely approximate to Syndicalism. It is obviously necessary, and so we shall deal next with the general ideas of Syndicalism.

PHILIP SANSON.

(To be continued)

The previous article in this series, *The Importance of the Workers appeared in last week's Freedom*. Copies are still available at 4d. post free.

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