

HERBERT READ

KINGSLEY MARTIN

H. N. BRAILSFORD

Speeches reported

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Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

“Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it.”

—THOMAS PAINE

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LAST WEEK A LARGE PROTEST MEETING IN LONDON AGAINST POLITICAL TRIALS DECLARED ITS

Opposition to Franco's Regime

NOT since the end of the Spanish Civil War has a meeting in London aroused the enthusiasm and spirit which was recaptured at the Memorial Hall last week. An audience of over 800 applauded speakers who made a sincere attempt not to make political capital out of the sufferings of the Spanish people, but effectively to influence the Spanish Government in the course of these trials.

It was not specifically an Anarchist meeting, nor was its purpose to propagate Anarchism. The immediate aim of the meeting was a limited one—as the resolution below will show—which the organisers hoped could have an effect now in saving the lives of Franco's opponents.

THE CHAIRMAN (Philip Sansom)

YOU all know the reason for our meeting to-night. It is to draw attention to the current series of trials in Spain which are being held with the purpose of crushing political opposition.

I must make it clear that this meeting is being held on a non-political basis. Much of the propaganda in this country again Franco is vitiated by the fact that it is a means of directing attention away from another totalitarianism.

We have invited people of known achievements in the sphere of literature and the arts, who have won acclaim throughout the world, to lend their voices to this protest so that it may be recognised throughout the world.

In attempting to alter the course of the political trials in Spain, we recognise that it is difficult to appeal to a dictator. But at the moment we believe Franco to be susceptible to criticism from the West, to which he is looking for support for his tottering régime.

It is a bitter comment on our time that so shortly after a war supposedly against fascism, the democratic powers are preparing to bolster up a fascist

state. We feel that we must make known the abhorrence we feel towards Franco's régime and that we must let the authorities know that we protest most strongly against support being given to it from this country.

One way in which we can do this is to publicise our opinion at every opportunity. We feel that we are in a strong position to do this, and that we can do it in all sincerity because we do not criticise Franco and then turn a blind eye to dictatorship elsewhere. We are opposed to political persecution and the silencing of opposition no matter under which label it is carried out. And we are not protesting on behalf of one group or one section of Franco's victims. Whether they are Anarchists, Syndicalists, Communists, Socialists or Republicans, whether they are Basque or Catalan nationalists or Catholics, we claim they should have the right to freely associate and to express their point of view through speech and press.

For Spain is a very special case. All shades of opinion, from the extreme Left to the extreme Right are represented in the melting pot of Spanish politics. But for 13 years all those who are opposed to the extreme Right have been denied the elementary freedoms of expression.

“We have never paid in full measure the debt we all owe to the Spanish people”—MICHAEL FOOT

WE are meeting particularly to raise the issue of civil liberties as it has arisen in Franco Spain. Of course, if anybody among ourselves protests against what is happening in Spain at the present time there is always the danger that they may be accused of being Communists. Indeed, in some reports it is stated that the only people who are protesting against these kinds of trials are Communists. Just in the same way, when many people protest against trials that take place in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria or elsewhere, they are almost certainly accused of being Fascists. At one time or another all on this platform have been accused of being Communists or Fascists!

We are here to make a protest on a very serious issue and I believe the organisers of this meeting deserve our congratulations. If we are to be successful we should ensure that our protest is a real one and not a fake one, and not guided by a political reason but against the invasion of liberties generally.

The trials have been proceeding in Spain ever since the conclusion of the Spanish Civil War in 1939. There have been waves of political trials taking place but it became apparent a month or so ago that another wave of trials were to take place of a somewhat different character.

Some of you may have seen a letter which appeared in the Manchester Guardian written by William Shepherd, M.P., to the effect that the concern expressed in this country about these trials was unnecessary because he had received an explanation from the British Foreign Office which would set our minds at rest. The Foreign Office had taken the precaution to send someone to witness the trials.

Many of us in the House of Commons have received the same letter from the Foreign Office; the same letter was sent to Fenner Brockway and to me and I would like to refer to some of the details that the Foreign Office have used in trying to explain.

In Barcelona in February, 30 members of the Syndicalist C.N.T. were tried by a military court. The proceedings lasted only six hours. Nine were sentenced to death, five of whom have since been executed. Several of the others have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment up to 30 years.

The suggestion of the Foreign Office is, as I say, that reasonable evidence was

given that the accused were guilty of violence. Some of the accused alleged that the evidence for the prosecution had been signed under duress. Despite this information the Foreign Office accepted the view of the trials put forward by the Spanish Embassy. If trials had taken place in Hungary and the Foreign Office representative went to see the trials, do you think the Foreign Office would have circulated a letter to M.P.'s suggesting that we should on the whole accept these? I would suggest that a statement would have been made to the House of Commons protesting in the strongest terms.

Of course there is very much simpler disproof of the claim made by the Spanish Embassy and the Foreign Office

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But the régime is beginning to crumble and we hope that the British people will make it clear that we will not support a fascist régime for the sake of military expediency.

Next May, the Eucharistic Congress in Barcelona is expected to grant a limited amnesty to some political prisoners, and it seems to us that the reason for the trials coming up just now is that Franco can dispose of his more militant opponents before they can benefit from that amnesty.

No doubt you will have seen in the press that those who have been condemned were guilty of civil crimes—murder and armed robbery. It is an old totalitarian trick, to precede physical assassination of an opponent by character assassination.

This is foul political tyranny and it is of particular significance to us because the British Government is prepared to whitewash it if they can get away with it. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd in the House of Commons recently said that the British Government sought 'correct and friendly relations' with Spain, but that these relations were likely to be impaired because of the political trials on which 'public opinion in this country is particularly sensitive.'

We are trying to show how very sensitive British public opinion is on this matter, and we believe that if sufficient outcry is raised we may yet save further victims of Franco from facing the firing squad.

HENRY MOORE

I AM no speaker, but having heard the deeply-moving speeches to-night, I would just like to say that I am on the platform because I felt it a duty to lend my support to this protest.

AUGUSTUS JOHN

I AM glad that you have done something in this matter so that the Spanish people may know that they are not without friends in this country.

THE DECLARATION

THIS MEETING is opposed to all forms of political persecution wherever they occur. We therefore protest against the actions of the Franco Government which, during its thirteen years of dictatorial rule in Spain

has suppressed all the elementary freedoms of Assembly, of Speech and of the Press;

has imprisoned thousands of men and women for their opposition to the régime—many for years without even the semblance of a trial;

has held secret trials which are a mockery of justice, and has in some cases resorted to the use of torture to extract confessions and incriminatory evidence;

has been responsible for the execution of militant Trade-Unionists whose “crime” is that they defended the right to organise and to oppose Franco's dictatorship.

THIS MEETING expresses its solidarity with the Spanish people in their struggle for freedom, and calls on all men and women of good will throughout the world

to oppose any attempts by their governments to strengthen, directly or indirectly, the Franco régime by collaboration, military or economic;

to clearly indicate to Franco's representatives that a growing body of opinion is horrified by the imprisonment and execution of men and women for their political opinions.

We do not consider it interfering in Spanish politics when we declare that Political Trials, trials held in secret, and imprisonment without trial, are contrary to the most elementary concepts of justice and are the concern of all freedom-loving people. We direct our appeal to them to put moral pressure on the Franco government to release the political prisoners, and to demand that those among them who may be charged with civil crimes (as was alleged by the Franco government in the recent trial in Barcelona) should be tried not by military tribunals, as at present, but in open court, with proper facilities provided for their defence and for the presence of foreign observers and journalists.

The cause of human freedom transcends all frontiers. The struggle for freedom in Spain is our cause, our responsibility!

“We will not be any party to mass slaughter”—Dr. J. BRONOWSKI

I WANT to say something very simple and awfully near home. I have been very moved to hear the previous speakers and the width of problems which face the world all the way from the Poles to the African Continent, the iron curtain countries, the U.S.A., South Africa and Spain. I would like to talk about the way in which these things affect not persons elsewhere, not exiled chieftains, but just us.

You see, the infiltration of evil which we have experienced in the world in our lifetime does not take place anywhere except in our personal atrophy of con-

science. Just trying to conquer the world is not somebody else's conscience; it is our conscience. I was born in Russia when it was governed by the Tsar. I remember as a small boy being told by my parents of a most terrible experience that they had suffered when Cossacks had mowed down some children in the street. I dare not even bore you with the details of the story. To-day, it would be so commonplace that it would not even take two lines on the back page among the sporting news.

We have been part of a degradation of values, of debasement of the human man and world which chills me to the bone when I dare to stop and think of it. The aftermath of the war, Vienna 1920, Berlin 1927, Manchuria 1932, Munich 1938, you go on and on, and each time you ask yourselves: how many people have to hang from gallows to-day before it is worth putting in the newspapers? We have now just been told that at these last trials nine people were condemned to death in six hours—forty minutes a head. Forty minutes a head is worth a protest meeting to-day. This is the thing which concerns us. I am not making any pretence about this: I do not believe that what I say here will move the Spanish Government; it is to me that it matters, it is to you that it matters. The executions do not appear on the newsreels any more. The terror has become commonplace. The question of protest meetings has become one of expediency. Ought you to appear on this or that platform? The grey thumb-print of expediency blurs our conscience.

They Supported the Meeting with Messages

BERTRAND RUSSELL

I am glad that this protest meeting is expressing the feelings which all friends of justice and liberty must experience in view of the dictatorial régime in Spain. Those of us who oppose the suppression of freedom East of the Iron Curtain, have a duty to show that it is dictatorship that they hate, and not this or that particular gang of dictators. I hope that Franco will realise that he cannot hope for the whole-hearted support of the opponents of Soviet dictatorship while he continues to imitate Soviet methods.

E. M. FORSTER

(writing from Florence)

Please convey my sympathy and good wishes to the Protest Meeting of March 27th. I regret that I cannot attend it, and I hope that it will succeed in drawing public attention to the Political trials still prevalent in Spain under the present régime.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

(cable from Los Angeles)

Please add my name to the list of those protesting the recent political trials in Spain.

LEWIS MUMFORD

(from New York)

Wherever human beings are subjected to terror, torture, and tyranny, those three evil devices of government that would undo man's very humanity, each one of us has a special duty to speak up on their behalf. This protest is an affirmation of human solidarity; and in the act of making it we assume that those to whom we appeal, those whose acts we would undo, are themselves sufficiently human to understand our moral indignation and to respond to it. Those who serve this awful triumvirate have still, we must suppose, some residual human virtues, perhaps long-suppressed: a self-protective sense of justice, which admits the pos-

sibility that they themselves may become the victims of a similar injustice to that they have committed; or a latent sense of dignity that cannot be violated without making the violator hate himself and in the end do further violence to himself. In this spirit, while recognising that the case of the Spanish syndicalists is but one of an almost limitless series of similar acts of quasi-legalised violence, from which no country can virtuously claim complete immunity, I join with you in protesting against the Spanish Government's methods and acts.

V. S. PRITCHETT

I find I cannot be in London on the date of your protest meeting. But I entirely sympathise with its aims. The sentences you set out in your note fill me with horror and indignation and I should like to be put down as an ardent supporter of

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I hope very much that the Spanish Government and all governments will be moved by us to think that they are human beings and that the people in the dock are human beings and not animals. I am very much in sympathy with what Brailsford said about the fact that we should send greetings and sympathy to persons elsewhere. Something I believe in more than mere protest. But with it I would like to take a motion that I am here—I hope you are here—to say as human beings that we will not be any party to this mass slaughter.

Franco's Decree-Law for Legalising his

POLITICAL PERSECUTIONS

DECREE-LAW FOR THE REPRESSION OF THE CRIMES OF BANDITRY AND TERRORISM, 18th April 1947, published on May 3, 1947 in Franco's *Official Bulletin of the State*, the equivalent of the British *Official Gazette*.

Preamble: The crimes of banditry and terrorism, the most serious of the post-war situation, result from relaxation of the moral ties and from the exaltation of impulses of cruelty and assault by criminals and those who cannot adapt themselves, and who require special repressive measures, the gravity of which corresponds to that of the crimes which it is endeavoured to combat.

On the other hand, the technical difficulties arising from the interpretation of Articles 604 of the Penal Code, and the stability (*sic*) of the political situation which allows the Law of Security of the State to be dispensed with, makes it advisable to repeal it completely; since for the purposes of punishment, the dispositions of the common law are sufficient, together with specially severe Decrees only for the gravest of terrorist crime and banditry, adapting to present circumstances the precepts of the old Laws of Sequestration and Explosives.

This Decree enacts as follows:
Article 1. Those who, in order to attack public security terrorise the inhabitants of a village, carry out revenge or reprisals of a political or social nature, disturb the peace, public order or services, cause explosions, fires, shipwrecks, derailments, interruption of communications, landslides, floods or sabotage, or employ any other means or devices which cause great damage will be punished:
 First: By sentence of death if death is caused to anybody;
 Second: By sentences ranging from short-term imprisonment to death in other cases.
Article 2. The mere placing or use of substances, materials or devices required for the intentions referred to in the previous Article, will be punished by the sentence provided in the second part, even though the explosion, fire or result desired is not achieved.

Article 3. Those who, in order to commit a robbery, or on the occasion of the same, attack or intimidate persons with firearms, will be punished:

First: By sentence of death if death is caused to anybody;
 Second: By sentences ranging from long-term imprisonment to death in other cases.

- (a) If the criminal or criminals surprised the residents of any inhabited place, attacked any industrial or mercantile establishment or person professionally in charge of the custody or transport of funds or securities, or held up travellers in an uninhabited place
- (b) If any of the criminals carry firearms.

Article 4. Those who kidnap any person will be punished:

First: By sentence of death, if death, mutilation or violation is caused to the person kidnapped, or if, the latter having disappeared, they do not disclose his whereabouts;

Second: By sentences ranging from long-term imprisonment to death in other cases.

When the special circumstances of the case make it clear that at no time has there been any reason to fear for the life or bodily safety of the person kidnapped, the common law will apply.

Article 5. Those who, ostensibly withdrawing themselves from social life, or living surreptitiously in towns, form parties or groups of people for marauding, banditry or social overthrow, will be punished:

First: By sentence of death on:—

- (a) The Leader of the Party in any instance;
- (b) The Members of the Party who may have collaborated in any way in the commission of any of the crimes punished by this Law.

Second: By sentences ranging from long-term imprisonment to death on those who have taken part in the commission of crimes included in this law;

Third: By long-term imprisonment in the case of those not included above.

Article 6. Those who give any help, not constituting in itself complicity or concealment, to the members or groups or parties referred to in the previous Articles, will be punished by short-term imprisonment or exile, on the decision of the Court, which may also impose a fine of 5,000 to 100,000 pesetas (£125 to £2,500).

Article 7. Anyone who, taking advantage of fear more or less well-founded, has caused the commission of any of the crimes punishable by this Law, or others committed by banditry, or demands of anybody anonymously under open or concealed threats that he should hand over or leave in some place money, jewels, securities or property of any kind, or compels him to do or not to do something, will be punished by sentences ranging from short-term imprisonment to death.

Article 8. The following will be exempt from penalty to which they might be liable:

- (a) Those who, being committed to carry out any of the crimes punishable in this Law, denounce it before beginning to commit it and in time to prevent its consequences.
- (b) Those comprised in Section Three of Article 5 who help effectively in the capture of the party.
- (c) Those comprised in Article 6 who, having acted only through fear, advise the public forces without loss of time of the malefactors.

The mere omission to denounce quickly will be considered as help.

Article 9. The military jurisdiction will be the competent authority to decide the crimes punishable by this Law, which will be tried by Summary Procedure.

If, through special circumstances, there are incidents not sufficiently serious to be described as crimes of terrorism or banditry, and they should be so according to the common law, the military can withdraw in favour of the ordinary jurisdiction.

Article 10. The Law of Security of the State is repealed, together with any dispositions contrary to the provisions of the present Decree-Law, which will be made known to the Cortes.

Decree Law of 18th April 1947.

COMMENT

The Smokard in Our Midst

It is often remarked that our ancestors could carry an amount of liquor which would bowl over any of their degenerate ancestors, and they appeared no worse for it. The explanation is put forward that, whereas drunkenness was in the past "the done thing", to-day it is regarded as reprehensible. The conflict aroused between the desire for the joys of inebriation and the fear of social disapprobation seems to make the person more prone to sink into drunken stupor on the one hand, and more likely to suffer permanent ill-effects on the other. In brief, drunkenness has become a moral problem and not a matter of personal taste.

To-day a new situation has arisen as regards inebriety's sister vice, smoking. In our childhood days, we were introduced to the dread appellation "Drunkard". In recent years, a new type of viciousness has come into being, which may be described by the term "smokard". It is not that society has revived the attitude of James I to the tobacco addict, who wore learnedly and ridiculously in his "Counterblast" on the evils of smoking. At Berne, smoking was at one time a capital offence, and many papal bulls were issued prohibiting the vice. Society is no less tolerant towards smoking than formerly, viewing it still, in moderation, as an amiable vice.

Yet the existence of the smokard is a fact, a person who goes through an endless struggle to control his "bad habit". This new type of moral delinquent is a creation of recent governments and if the facts were faced—but this is unlikely—it would be demonstrated that the effect on society of smokeness (the quality of being a smokard) are out of all proportion to the value of the tax collected. Those who have imposed penal taxation on tobacco have acted with what I can only describe as callous stupidity. Even as wily politicians they have allowed themselves to be deceived by the apparent docility of the consumer. It all looked so safe and easy to raise the price of an eightpenny packet of cigarettes to 3s. 9d. Nobody seems to complain, and there is always the reply to anyone who might bethink himself to object, "You need not smoke unless you want to."

A volcano does not always give signs before an eruption, and the quiescence of the smoker is an equally unreliable guide to what is happening below the surface. There is a reason for the seemingly unresisting acceptance of what is indeed the punitive taxation on smoking. As children, we were all told that smoking was very naughty, and if we were caught doing it we expected certain unpleasant consequences. Even then it was not that we really believed that smoking was a crime, as many adults did it. The acceptance of the punishment was a part of the general economy. The world was such that you could not smoke without being liable to pay for it.

So it is easy to reproduce in adult life the childish situation—there is a sort of psychological precedent. But even as a child, there was rebelliousness, and despite appearances, the adult experiences a sense of dull resentment against those who seek to exploit him, taking advan-

not yet fully over) took over the responsibility from the loan company, and offered to allow the Doukhobors to stay—provided they would accept tenure as individual farmers, a move intended to destroy the community. Some stayed on this basis, others moved away and took farms elsewhere, doing casual work to keep going until they were established. But the Community was ended, and the Orthodox Doukhobors have remained individual farmers since then. The sole difference between them and the Independents is that the Orthodox still talk of re-starting the Community.

Nor is there any economic community among the Sons of Freedom. They refuse to acknowledge the ownership of land, rather in the same way as the Diggers in the seventeenth century, declaring that it is God's gift to man and should not be owned any more than air or water. They squat on tracts of government land, where they build their huts and till their detached bits of land, and usually sell their produce individually. The only communistic element in their society is that when a family leaves a house, it relinquishes rights over it and any Sons of Freedom in need of a place can move in.

The only group which is communistic in its ownership is that on Vancouver Island, and this is the smallest of all. It includes about one-half of one per cent. of the Doukhobor population of Canada, and actually seems to be decreasing rather than otherwise, particularly as a good half of its population consists of old people who naturally contribute relatively little to its upkeep and who dying off quite quickly.

Marriage and the Family
 On the question of family life, it is true that the Doukhobors do not recognise ceremonial or official marriage, and this is part of their rejection of Church

tage of irrational formations established in childhood. The boy did not argue out the question of the taboo, because it was one of the many taboos imposed upon him. It was just part of a system of numerous injustices. And the adult does not do so, but below the surface is aroused the old resistance to and hatred of authority. Somebody is again seeking to punish him. Well, yes, he accepts the punishment, but intense feelings of resentment are aroused within.

It is no use pretending the smokard in our midst is not a reality. It is a matter of experience that the smoking habit obtains a grip on a man or woman. Whether tobacco acts as a drug, or whether it provides satisfaction for a number of repressed impulses, no one can rightly tell. It probably works both ways. Whatever may be the cause, tobacco smoking takes a hold. In itself it is, on the whole, harmless, but not so when it involves intense moral issues. Few people can smoke without sacrificing the well-being of dependants. It is an extravagance of a serious order. Formerly, it was a mild extravagance that did not affect to any extent the family budget. Now, a packet of twenty cigarettes a day, or an ounce of tobacco, plays havoc with the economy of the home.

In the East, during the war, I am told that it might be considered safe to have an occasional shortage of drinks for the troops, but never cigarettes. We have heard of the huge sums paid in Germany for cigarettes. The worst punishment of prison life is said to be the deprivation of tobacco. There it is—unfortunate, perhaps, but a reality, that the smoking habit attains a power over the individual as great as a drug to the drug addict.

The government calmly exploits this weakness, and thereby creates a new moral problem, an indefinite amount of wasteful conflict. Supposing the moral weakness were overcome, supposing an effective cure were discovered, then the revenue would decline and no doubt propaganda would be used to draw people back into their old habit.

GORDON WHITE.

The Doukhobors--Myths & Realities

SOME months ago in *FREEDOM* (Nov. 17th), a writer who was discussing marriage made some statements about the radical Christian sect of Doukhobors which were very much at variance with the facts. Though I agree largely with the point of view which this writer was arguing, I feel that, since many legends and misconceptions have already arisen about the Doukhobors, there is some justification for a brief account on the present condition of this group. I think this is all the more necessary because, while all that is sometimes said in praise of the Doukhobors is not always justified, they have nevertheless done some things and made some achievements which we may well admire and even learn from.

The paragraph which I am quoting runs as follows: "They [the Doukhobors] recognise no claim to property, and are consistent in applying this principle to wives equally with other chattels. No-one is entitled to demand the service of

another's body as in civilised societies. Consequently, no child knows its own parents and does not want to, for all adults are equally to be regarded as protectors and providers. Needless to say, neurosis is unheard of, despite the fact that they have been persecuted unmercifully for practising Christianity in a Christian country."

Except for the persecution, there is not one single statement in this paragraph which is true as it stands, yet, in view of the myth which has arisen about the Doukhobors, and the out-of-date information which is generally available in England (except when one has to rely on distorted newspaper stories), the writer is probably hardy to blame for his inaccuracies. I believed very similar things myself until I actually went among the Doukhobors to find out the real situation.

The Doukhobor movement in Canada can be divided into four sections—Independents, Orthodox, Sons of Freedom, and a minute Christian communistic group on Vancouver Island which I described in a past issue of *FREEDOM*. The observations I am going to make are based on two stays with the Orthodox Doukhobors near Nelson, a stay with the Vancouver Island Group, and a stay with the Sons of Freedom at Gilpin, when I was able to discuss the Doukhobor situation with a mass meeting of the village's two hundred people. I have also kept up a correspondence with an Independent Doukhobor for many years, so I think the picture I can present is a fairly well-rounded one.

Whether the Doukhobors were ever completely communistic in their economy in Russia is not certain, but it is a tradition that they were, and I think this is probably true. By the time they emerge into prominence during the nineteenth century, this early communism had been abandoned, and the Doukhobor communes in the Caucasus consisted of independent peasants, some much wealthier than others, who carried on a certain amount of communal work, rather in the manner of the traditional Russian *mir*. It was only with the beginning of their persecution in the 1890's for refusing military service that the idea of returning to their traditional communism arose again and was fostered by a new spiritual leader, Peter Verigen.

Communal Ownership
 When the Doukhobor immigrants reached Canada there was a great deal of disagreement among them as to whether they should set up a communistic society. They were divided into

a number of villages on the Saskatchewan prairies, and some of the villages set up communistic economies, and some did not. To add to the confusion, the Canadian Government insisted on giving them land only in parcels allocated to individuals. There was nothing to prevent the individuals pooling their resources, but the fact of holding individual title deeds certainly put the idea of becoming property owners into the heads of many of the Doukhobors. The testing time came when the Canadian Government demanded the taking of an oath to the Queen for the land which the Doukhobors held. Verigen called on the Doukhobors to refuse, and planned an exodus to British Columbia, where they could buy cheap land in the Kootenays. But the idea of losing their land was too much for many of the individual peasants. They took the oath of allegiance, were more or less ostracised by their fellows, and became the Independent Doukhobors. In this way, more than a third of the set definitely cut itself away from any kind of communistic ownership.

In British Columbia the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood was founded, with more than five thousand members, and it proceeded to farm extensive areas of the Kootenay and Kettle River Valleys. Sawmills and brickworks were founded, orchards were planted, and the Community ran on a more or less communistic basis. There were secessions—some of the peasants were tempted by general Canadian standards and became independent farmers, some—the Sons of Freedom—demanded a more radical attitude to the surrounding society, including the burning of schools to frustrate the attempts by the authorities to educate their children, and many of these were expelled and formed villages of their own—Krestova in the Slocan Valley and Gilpin near Grand Forks. The Christian Community carried on, despite its vicissitudes, despite many internal quarrels and some abuse of leadership, until the latter end of the 1930's. It was never a fully libertarian community, and as the years went on it became less so, and the spiritual leaders, Peter Verigen and his son Peter Chestiakov Verigen (who called himself Peter the Purger), steadily encroached on to the material sphere. This produced great internal tensions, and the community would probably have split up of its own accord if the coup-de-grace had not been given by a threat of foreclosure on the part of a loan company. The British Columbian Government, scared at the prospect of having four thousand unemployed Doukhobors on its hands (the depression was

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Continued on p. 3

THE INDIVIDUAL'S STRUGGLE

THE recent executions in Spain and the political terrorism of Franco's régime were the immediate stimulus of the protest meeting at the Memorial Hall, in London, on 27th March. But for anarchists there has never been a time since April 1939—thirteen years ago—when the situation in Spain has been forgotten or laid aside. The struggle of the Spanish people has been in our minds during the war when the Allies successfully used all their diplomacy to keep Franco out of the war—and incidentally, thereby, helped him to consolidate his brutal rule: we did not forget when the Labour Government, loudly protesting their detestation of Franco, nevertheless accorded him one loan after another—helping him to consolidate his brutal rule at a time when the stigma of fascism was intensified by the defeat of Hitler; and we do not forget now that the desire of the United States for bomber bases in Spain is again eagerly seized by Franco as another means to extend the twilight of the Spanish people still further.

The protest meeting showed that the conscience of British people about Spain is not completely lulled. The presence of many young people at the meeting was a most welcome sign. And the response of so many distinguished men, both as speakers on the platform and in the messages of support sent to the meeting, shows that the best sections of intellectual life are not indifferent.

What distinguished names they are: Bertrand Russell, Gerald Brenan, Aldous Huxley, Lewis Mumford, Henry Moore, H. N. Brailsford, Dr. Bronowski, V. S. Pritchett, Benjamin Britten, Augustus John . . . and it is not surprising that the hall was filled. Yet this meeting received six lines in the *Daily Herald* and 13 lines in the *Daily Mail*, otherwise the daily and Sunday press were completely mute about it. The liberal and centre press which might be supposed to cater in some degree for progressives and intellectuals had nothing to say at all.

Several of the speakers spoke of the decay of the sense of indignation, of protest in our age of horrors. How much more difficult is it to revive that sense, when the press exerts a practical boycott? One cannot say that news of a galaxy of intellectuals denouncing political tyranny is crowded out by more important things when the papers are filled with so much unreadable trivialities. One can only surmise that any comment which implies a criticism of American policy is regarded as taboo. . . .

The practical lesson of all this is that one must disregard the newspapers as an instrument of progress and decency (did not Aneurin Bevan speak of the most prostituted press in the world?). Once again we see the task thrown back on the shoulders of the individual. Those who feel indignant at the tyrannies of the world and at the hypocritical word-spinners who keep them going, must accept the fact that they have to carry on their own struggle. Dr. Bronowski spoke of the importance of making one's own protest, of settling with one's own conscience. The struggle of Spain, and indeed all progressive endeavour is the struggle of individual men and women. It is our struggle, and yours.

AFRICAN AFFAIRS

World Citizens' Council for Human Rights

ON Sunday, 6th April, at 2.15 p.m., an international meeting will take place in Trafalgar Square for the principle of *Human Rights and Africa*. Public discussion on this vital matter has become imperative and it is necessary to define the moral obligations of Governments towards the African peoples under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The World Citizens' Council for Human Rights, which has organised this meeting, accepts this Declaration of Human Rights as the standard against which to measure any proposals or action affecting the peoples of Africa. It believes that the people of this country must fully realise that the problems of conflicting interests in Africa can never be solved unless the rights of the individual are recognised, accepted, and fulfilled with sincerity.

Speakers at the meeting will include: Fenner Brockway, George Padmore, John S. Hoyland, and a number of distinguished Africans.

The World Citizens Councils for Human Rights maintains:

That the human race is one, and the world belongs to all. That all human beings inherit the same fundamental rights and responsibilities. That the resources of the earth must be developed by everyone for the benefit of all.

It declares that throughout the world the human race is steadily being deprived of fundamental human rights: in consequence the peace of the world is threatened, and the economic and social well-being of every individual is jeopardised. That these rights have been defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10th December, 1948. That the work of this Council is to defend, maintain and secure such human rights irrespective of the race, colour, creed, political belief or social origin of the individual.

The Council maintains: that the voice of all peoples, no less than that of their Governments, must be heard with authority in defence of their human rights and for the achievement of social, economic and political justice. That the voice of the peoples can only be heard with authority in world affairs through direct election of their representatives, as distinct from Government representatives, to the United Nations and to any future world authority.

The Council claims that it is not a political body and has no partisan or racial ideology. Its secretary is Michael Howard, 33 Nassington Road, London, N.W.3.

Obviously it clings to certain illusions about government and the United Nations, but its propaganda against racial intolerance and injustice clearly merits support.

The Banishment of Seretse Khama

AS Anarchists, we are not concerned with the grievances of exiled chiefs, but we are very much concerned with the implications of the banishment of Seretse Khama. Nobody can have any doubt that the Government's "final and permanent" decision was determined not out of any consideration of the wishes of the Bamangwato tribe, nor because of any flouting of tribal traditions by Seretse, but in deference to White opinion in the Union of South Africa and in Southern Rhodesia, which are the southern and northern neighbours respectively of the Bechuanaland protectorate where the Bamangwato live. The Cape Town correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* (28/3/52) writes:

"Had earlier reports that Seretse and his wife were to return turned out to be true, the South African constitutional crisis would have taken second place in people's minds.

"White South Africans of all parties are united in the conviction that the presence anywhere in South Africa of a native chief with a white wife would be, in every sense, intolerable. Whatever steps the Malan Government might have taken, even the gravest would have received the support of the United Party.

"Many observers fear that the Administration's difficulties here are by no

means over, and that the tribe will be a long time before it settles for any other chief than Seretse. The personal loyalty of the majority to Seretse is intense."

The decision of the British Government is bound to have "a most harmful effect on the reputation of Britain among Africans throughout Africa," as Mr. A. Wedgwood Benn said in the House of Commons. The people of South-West Africa, victims of South-African expansion, and the people of the Rhodesias who dread the proposed Central African Federation clearly give up any hope that the British Government will take steps to protect them from the policies of their local White masters.

Mr. Fenner Brockway said in the debate that: "The action of the Government to-day on Seretse Khama will alienate the African population in the British Colonies against the Government and this country. The Government's decision to prolong the expulsion of Seretse would inevitably lead the people of Bechuanaland to regard as an alien and imposter any other chief which this Parliament imposed upon their country. It is degrading to a British Government that when it has done this wrong, it should seek to buy off the victim—first by a promise of money, and secondly by sending him to an island in the distant Atlantic. It makes me ashamed

of the sense of human values of this House, of the rights and liberties of individuals."

Mr. Brockway is, indeed, one of the few people in the House who can make such remarks without hypocrisy. For the Labour members who made such a fuss in parliament last week should remember that it was *their* government which summoned Seretse out of his country, and once he was out, imposed a five-year banishment on him and his uncle, Tshekedi. And the conservative members who loudly supported their government's confirmation of this banishment would have done well to remember that two years ago they opposed the Labour Government's treatment of Seretse and Tshekedi, and that on June 26th, 1951, Mr. Churchill supported a Liberal motion, moved by Mr. Clement Davies, deploring the banishment of Tshekedi and demanding that the decision should be rescinded.

Seretse, living on Government concession money in London and Tshekedi, who is now a private citizen in Bechuanaland, should have time to reflect on the duplicity inherent in political activity. It is to be hoped that they will find more fruitful fields in which to serve the interests of their people.

THE DOUKHOBORS Continued from p. 2

and State. Nevertheless, they do live in a *de facto* married state. The unions are rather like those of the gypsies, and are usually strictly monogamous and rarely broken. Though there is no official divorce, since there is no official marriage, nevertheless, among the Orthodox Doukhobors at least, the break-up of marriage without some particularly strong cause is regarded with disapproval. Even among the Sons of Freedom, monogamous unions are the rule rather than the exception. The family, contrary to what the writer in FREEDOM on the 17th November asserted, is a very strong unit among the Doukhobors, as it is among most peasant cultures. There is a great deal of clanishness, and almost an aristocratic element in such families as the Verigens and their related groups, who have constituted the Doukhobor élite. Doukhobor family life certainly has its oppressive elements, and this reacts particularly upon the girls, who receive little education and are usually kept at home more than the boys. As for neuroticism, this is in any case always less evident in rural than in urban peoples, but it is certainly far from being unheard of, and the moralistic attitude towards drinking, smoking and meat-eating which one often encounters among Doukhobors often leads to the emergence of extravagant guilt complexes among "backsliding" members.

The minute minority community on Vancouver Island did attempt the abolition of family relationships and of monogamous unions. The result of the first few months of experiment was that about half the younger members decided

it was not for them, and left the community to return to their monogamous unions. When I went there *only one child* had been born under the new dispensation, and so far as I know, he is the only Doukhobor who does not know his own father. But I may add, everyone else had a good idea who his father was, and I doubt if he will get far in life without finding it out.

The rest of the Doukhobors regard this experiment with suspicion. Even the radical Sons of Freedom, when I asked their opinion, said it was a question of going too fast and too far. For the present, at any rate, the family is the basic social unit with 99% of the Doukhobors, and is likely to remain so for a long time.

Eroded by external influences, strangled by internal tendencies towards leadership, the Doukhobors' positive experiments seem to have dwindled away, and to have proved very little more than a noble and interesting effort. It is in their resistance to authority that I think they have shown us something of more enduring importance.

By patiently accepting mass imprisonment, by refusing to work in gaol, by nude parades, by destroying schools, the Doukhobors have at last succeeded in gaining a great deal of immunity from State interference. No serious attempt is likely to be made again to force them into the army, they are left in undisputed possession of government land they have squatted on, attempts to tax them are made less and less frequently, they are allowed for the most part to educate their children in their own way, without

what a determined resistance on the part sending them to State schools, and efforts to register them have often been abandoned in despair. They have shown of a steadfast minority can still do against a State which has been backed throughout by the public opinion of the rest of the Canadians, who regard the Doukhobors with a semi-envious hostility.

But the moral courage which stands up against open violence is not always proof against the insidious attacks of social attitudes, and it certainly seems a melancholy fact that, since their community broke up, the Doukhobors have become steadily more property-conscious and have tended to become assimilated more and more rapidly into the general Canadian cultural pattern. They cling obstinately to their language and their songs, their oral traditions and their Russian cooking, but there is a tendency to become absorbed into the materialistic outlook of the world around them. The consoling fact is that the Doukhobor movement has always had a remarkable regenerative power, and it has always been from the young, as much as from the old, that the campaigns of resistance to the state and to war have come.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP
OPEN AIR MEETINGS
Weather Permitting
HYDE PARK
Every Sunday at 3.30 p.m.
TOWER HILL
Every Friday at 12.45 p.m.
MANETTE STREET
(by Foyle's, Charing Cross Road)
Every Saturday at 4.30 p.m.

INDOOR MEETINGS
at the **PORCUPINE**, Charing Cross Rd. 1 (next Leicester Sq. Underground Station)
Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.
APRIL 6—Albert Meltzer on ZAPATA

NORTH-EAST LONDON DISCUSSION MEETINGS IN EAST HAM
Alternate Wednesdays at 7.30
Enquiries c/o Freedom Press
APRIL 1st—Peter Green
SYNDICALISTS IN THE TRADE UNIONS

WEST LONDON
A Group has been formed in West London and any comrades interested in working with it are invited to contact—
C. Brasnett, 79 Warwick Ave., W.9

LIVERPOOL
DISCUSSION MEETINGS at 101 Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool, 8
Every Sunday at 8 p.m.

GLASGOW
INDOOR MEETINGS at Central Halls, Bath Street
Every Sunday at 7 p.m.
With John Gaffney, Frank Leech, Jane Strachan, Eddie Shaw

MIDDLESBROUGH
Anyone interested in forming a group in this area is asked to communicate with D. C. WILSON, 3 Norman Terrace, South Bank, Middlesbrough.

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

A Bad Week for 'Democracy'

DEMOCRATS suffered a severe setback last week in their mission of convincing the people of the world that it is worth fighting and dying for their cause!

The case of Seretse Khama is dealt with elsewhere in this issue. We will limit ourselves to two other examples of democracy at work which occurred last week. The first refers to the reprisals imposed by General Templer, British dictator in Malaya, on the 25,000 people in the district of Tanjong Malim as a result of "a long list of outrages" which were responsible for the death or wounding of 26 people.

The incidents included "five ambushes, ten attacks on police and military posts, the burning of five lorries and slashing of six thousand rubber trees, one train derailment, the destruction of three buses, and seven strikes caused through intimidation of labour."

General Templer told the leaders they were "too cowardly" to give information which they had about terrorists. He ordered a 22-hour daily curfew until further notice, with no civilians allowed to leave the town, the closure of all schools, a heavy cut in the rice ration, reorganisation of the district with additional police and troops, stoppage of all bus services, and shutting of all shops except for two hours each day. "It does not amuse me to punish innocent people, but many of you are not innocent," General Templer declared. "This has got to end." Earlier, the General made it clear that he would impose similar punishment elsewhere "if it is obvious that Communists are allowed by local inhabitants to thrive as they have been doing in the area of Tanjong Malim."

We have seen no protests in the press at this case of mass punishment. What play was made when German occupation

forces in France or Belgium did the same thing—and what howls of indignation came from our politicians, the same ones who have now appointed Templer and given him the unlimited powers with which it is hoped he will be able to subdue the Malayan peninsula.

The *Observer* (30/3/52) comments that only time can show whether the severe punishment imposed will produce the results "which alone could justify it". But it should surely be obvious that such measures as cutting the rice ration by more than one-half can only harden the attitude of the population towards British

rule. And how far we have travelled along the downward path when the people are accused of being "cowardly" for refusing to become "informers". The glorification of the "informer" is well known in the totalitarian countries. Franco's decree-law published in full on another page, contains this terrible and shameful sentence: "*the mere omission to denounce quickly will be considered as help*". In Spain, the people do not denounce their neighbours and friends, and the resistance to Franco's régime shows no signs of ending in spite of brutal repression. When will the Templers and the other tough men realise that they are fighting a losing battle, that their violence will be met with more violence, that time is on the side of the local populations. After three years of cleaning-up operations, the number of "incidents" actually shows an increase. Does not that teach the Colonial Office anything?

THE French Government's handling of the Tunisian crisis must have upset many a good democrat who was sure that such things as arresting the Prime Minister and his Ministers, and telling the ruler (the Bey in this case) that he must dismiss the Cabinet and appoint a new pro-French Premier or risk losing his job, only happened in the satellite countries East of the Iron Curtain. As each year passes, so the struggle between "democracy and totalitarianism" comes more and more to resemble a struggle between rival "totalitarianisms": Democracy has been dropped by the roadside as a luxury which a world struggling for its freedom, nay, for its very existence (as Mr. Churchill might say), can ill-afford in these difficult times!

LIBERTARIAN.

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"We protest against this Spanish Tyranny which is ... shooting men whose only crime is their love of freedom"--HERBERT READ

THIS meeting has been convened on a non-political basis, but it is difficult to decide where politics begin and end when the lives and liberties of politically-minded men are in danger. Franco's prisoners, whether they are trade-unionists, intellectuals, or members of the Catholic Youth Movement, are enemies of Franco's régime. In other words, they are anti-fascists. We, too, are anti-fascists, and we are anti-fascists not only because we disagree with fascism as a political doctrine, but more fundamentally because we believe in the freedom and dignity of man.

When we see those elementary rights of man denied in any part of the world, our indignation is aroused, and because we believe that the human republic extends over all national and political boundaries, we feel we have a right to protest, simply in the name of Man. Some of us may think of the spiritual brotherhood of man, and feel that we should protest in the name of God. In other days we might have left that privilege to the Church, but the Church, particularly the Church that prevails in Spain, is silent, although members of its own congregation are among the victims of fascism. Among Franco's prisoners at the present moment is Antonio Perez Cuadrado, vice-president of the Catholic Youth Organisation of Vitoria.

A famous Catholic writer whom I invited to attend this meeting, excused himself on the ground that it was unseemly for intellectuals to clear their consciences in such an easy way. I replied that there was a difference between the uneasy conscience that is due to guilt, and the spontaneous expression of human sympathy, and that the example of a Voltaire or a Zola was not to be despised by an intellectual of our own time.

Other people with whom I have discussed the subject were planning a holiday in Spain. Naturally, for it is the cheapest country in Europe. It is the cheapest country in Europe because it is the poorest; because the worker is oppressed. I do not say that on that account the traveller should take a guilty conscience to Spain; a few of our pounds, and a lot of American dollars, might trickle down to the poorer classes and alleviate their lot. But we should not be such cowards as to refuse to protest against injustice because our cheap holiday might be put in jeopardy.

Personally I sympathise with the politics, though not always with the political methods, of the men opposed to Franco. I would like to say a word or two about those methods, for there is a disposition to excuse Franco's violence on the grounds that some of the men arrested had been guilty of "direct

action". There is a grand phrase to frighten the bourgeoisie! What, in the actual situation in Spain, can any action be but "direct". It is forbidden to strike: it is forbidden to hold a meeting; it is forbidden to criticise the régime in any effective manner. To lift a finger against such an absolute tyranny is direct action! The least squeak of protest invites brutal retaliation. The Spanish temper is hot, and little wonder, then, that violence is answered by violence. I for one will not condone violence on either

side; but I will protest eternally against the tyranny that invokes violence. Franco's régime was established by violence; has survived by violence; we should not be surprised to see it perishing in violence.

At the end of the war I believe that the Allied politicians could have secured the abdication of Franco; by rights he should have stood in the dock at Nuremberg, alongside Goering and Ribbentrop. But, looking fearfully to the East, our politicians allowed Franco to stay, and subsequently his tottering

régime was stabilised by American dollars. The fear of Communism goes to that length—that we are prepared to compromise with fascism in order to fight fascism, to the utter confusion of all moral values.

We stand here on that question of moral values. In the name of justice and humanity we protest against this Spanish tyranny, which at this moment is arresting, condemning, imprisoning and shooting men whose only crime is the love of freedom.

MICHAEL FOOT on American Policy in Spain

Continued from p. 1

on this matter because if these men and women, some of whom are already executed, some under sentence of death, some under terms of imprisonment of 30 years, if in fact they had been guilty of civil crimes why were they not tried in a civil court? Why a military court? And if guilty of such crimes why were they held in prison for so many years before trial? ...

The speaker went on to discuss the general political aspect of this matter and said it was stated some time ago that there were more than 100,000 political prisoners in Spain.

... It does seem and it is no use disguising it that our relations with the U.S.A. are affected and I hope that if this meeting is reported in the U.S.A. it will be made known that all those on the platform have protested strongly against the savage trials which are taking

V. S. PRITCHETT

Continued from p. 1

your protest. There is a long tradition of cruelty in Spanish history, but there has also been a long tradition of humanity, mercy and honourable behaviour.

Public trial and freedom in conducting one's defence is an elementary right of the individual; it is hard to believe that a country which is Catholic and Christian by profession, seeks to emulate the monstrous practices of the Communist and German Nazi trials. Spain has sincere, indeed, passionate friends outside her frontiers who have learned very much from her. We shall learn to hate Spain if the sentences of these disgraceful secret trials are carried out, for they are not honourable trials, they are an affront to Spanish manliness.

Spain is anxious that English visitors should enjoy her country; how can we urge English people, indeed any free people to go there, when these abuses of simple elementary justice go on?

As you know, I have no party interest in the matter, but I know that a large number of Spaniards in Spain to-day strongly feel that the time has come when the cruelties and mockery of these trials ought to stop. Not only the present régime but the conscience of every Spaniard is dishonoured by them.

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

(from Austria)

You know how interested I am and how much I regret not being present to show my indignation.

place on the other side of the iron curtain.

"We are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and we are allies of the United States. I am not discussing the merits of that issue one way or another. Last year it was announced by the U.S. Government that they were going to have discussions with the Franco Government with a view to making a military alliance and we know what happened in that way."

American Policy in Spain

"If we are allies with the U.S.A. and they form an alliance with Franco Spain then our relations with Franco Spain are altered. When it was announced that the U.S. Government were proposing to make a military alliance with Spain, the British Government expressed its disapproval of their course, or any way, a strong opposition as to why Franco Spain should be brought into the North Atlantic Treaty at all. Most of the other countries made a protest but we did not make our protest strong enough because in fact the majority were opposed to this alliance and therefore the proper course for the British Government last autumn and to-day is to raise this issue concerning the American Alliance with Franco Spain in the North Atlantic Treaty.

"All the evidence that comes from these trials gives every reason why we should demand from our Government that they raise this issue so that every country, ours included, can come into the open and say what they think about this military alliance with Franco Spain at the very moment when these Spanish trials have reached such a crisis.

"The American Ambassador when in Madrid only a few weeks ago said Spain was in many ways a backward country, but as far as fighting Communists was concerned they were 20 years ahead of the rest of the world! This puts a very curious aspect on the claims of the North Atlantic Treaty.

"If we are genuine in our protest against this political persecution we should take effective action. One of the messages which the chairman read out refers to the conscience of Spaniards and the effect it might have on the conscience of Spaniards if this political persecution were allowed to go ahead without effective protest. But we must look to ourselves and our own consciences, for in my view we in Great Britain have never paid in full measure the debt we all owe to the Spanish people.

"I doubt if we would be meeting in this hall to-night if it had not been for the heroism of the Spanish people: in 1936 when Franco was only five miles outside Madrid, there was hardly a person who did not believe that within a few hours the Spanish people's republic would fall. If Spain had gone down in 1936 and become a Fascist country, then Franco would have been totally surrounded by Fascist countries. Something like a million Spaniards gave their lives in order that the rest of Europe might lift herself out of the lethargy and come to her senses. Therefore, if we examine our consciences honestly we will inform our government and allies that we are not prepared to condone the military alliance with Franco and make a maximum protest."

"The Cause of Liberty is Indivisible"--FENNER BROCKWAY

I APOLOGISE both to the meeting and the platform for upsetting your arrangements. It was a complete surprise to us at question time in the House to-day when it was announced that Seretse Khama was to be banished as Chief of the Bamangwato tribe for the rest of his life. I am very glad that the whole of the Opposition rose and demanded an adjournment debate to-night. I have come from the House of Commons where I have delivered I think the hottest speech of my life and I must get back because the Minister will be answering me and I must be there as he makes his answer, but I did not feel, important as I know the issue of Seretse Khama is, that I can be entirely absent from your gathering here. The chairman has mentioned that I went to Spain during the civil war. That experience had a profound effect on my thinking. I went to Spain as a Pacifist. In Spain I came closely in touch with the C.N.T. whose members have now been condemned to death and I want to say to this meeting that as the chairman has indicated I have never found in my experience such equality combined with such liberty as I found in the C.N.T. collectives, both Agricultural and Industrial, in Spain. There they held everything in common. They shared all things, and there they had a personal liberty which showed that equality and liberty are not necessarily enemies. As I went to those communities and I met the men who were engaged in the struggle against Franco I could not hide from my mind that Spain would be a better place if they won than if Franco won. After one had reached that decision one had to support them to the utmost in order that they won, but, as I say, I went out there as a Pacifist and it therefore had a very profound effect upon my thinking.

"I want to go on to say this: that those very principles of equality and liberty which were expressed so magnificently by the C.N.T. in Spain during the civil war in a struggle against Franco are still the most essential principles of this time. "If I might, I will refer to three issues to which I have been giving my mind to-day.

"The first is the situation in Tunisia where the Tunisian people are combating French Imperialism, where French militarists have arrested their Prime Minister and four Ministers and have declared martial law. I am glad that at the United Nations, the Asian and the African countries are challenging that action by the French Government and insisting that it be discussed.

"I put a question to the House as to the attitude of the British Government towards this struggle but was given a non-committal reply.

"Then this debate on Seretse Khama that I need not dwell on.

"Now, to-night this meeting in defence of the people in Spain. My time is so short that I must not dwell on all the evidence I have had regarding the trials which are now in operation. I have

found, as Michael Foot has found, that the Foreign Office has always been only too ready to believe the Spanish official reports when, if you look at the proceedings of this trial, they are absolutely identical with the trials which are taking place in communist countries and which the Foreign Office will not accept for one moment. Why, even the tortures are the same, even the claim that it is a public trial when no one is let in without being searched and even then there is a selection. In six hours, thirty men were condemned. Eleven sentences of death and five already carried out. The British Consul General at Barcelona was personally at that trial and informs the Foreign Office of this country that he cannot find reason for intervening as the case of the Government appears to be made out. I wonder what the Consul would have said in Budapest or Moscow?"

"I am going to urge upon this audience to-night that the cause of liberty is indivisible. If it is a crime for trials to take place in Communist countries it is just as deep a crime for them to take place in Fascist countries. And if on

the other hand we regard the communists as enemies, on no ground have we any basis for holding out a hand of friendship to Spain to-day.

"Michael Foot has spoken of the arrangements between the U.S.A. and Franco. You should have been in the House of Commons when Barbara Castle and Desmond Donnelly put their questions to the Government on this issue. You should have heard the snarls from the Tory Benches that these questions should have been put and that Donnelly should have dared to use the word 'thuggery'. I say to you that the danger is not only from American pressure but reactionary pressure in this country which is only hidden fascism in another guise.

"For these reasons I hope this meeting is going to resort to a committee of movement in this country which will defend our brothers and comrades in Spain and will do its utmost to see that Britain is not disgraced by being drawn into an alliance which practices political persecutions, of which the trials against which we are protesting to-night are only one illustration."

"Against these Monstrous Trials"

—H. N. BRAILSFORD

I FEEL that it was suitable that the previous speakers, our comrades Fenner Brockway and Michael Foot should have left with our best wishes to carry on the fight for equality and freedom for an African victim of Imperialism. And now we can turn to our own Continent feeling the same issues of equality, the same ideals of liberty with us and them in their struggle.

"We are here to protest against these monstrous trials, against our indirect alliance with the barbaric despotism. It has had complete control of the Spanish people now for 13 years. Thanks to Hitler, Franco won as complete a victory as ever was in military history, and yet through those 13 years there has never been a relaxation in his despotism, never a moment or gesture of reconciliation, never an attempt to re-unite the Spanish people. Under this tyranny their economic difficulty has sunk into an abyss of misery. A generation is growing up which has almost forgotten the very meaning of justice and civil liberty. And, worst of all, the intellect of the Spanish people, once in the forefront of European civilisation, now is stagnant. The best of the last generation is living out its life in misery. Great artists that Spain produced—Picasso, Casals—are unable, unwilling, to set foot on Spanish soil. Everything that is great in Spanish memory, in Spanish creative power, has been silenced or banished.

"I cannot say more than Fenner Brockway and Michael Foot have said about the monstrosity of these trials. But there is just one aspect of this on which

I would like to dwell: I would like to put our protest in perhaps the most positive form we can give it—in the form of a message of gratitude and sympathy to these fighters for freedom, men of all parties, whether in Barcelona, Seville or the Basque country, who have found their way into Franco's prisons or are still facing that risk.

"I, too, could say what Fenner Brockway said to you so well. I spent some time in Spain during the civil war and brought back memories certainly of cruelty and of danger, but also of imagination and hope. For when I came to know the Spaniards, either in the Anarchist movement or their Trade Union, the C.N.T., or among Socialists or among the Basques, always I found the unique character of courage and disinterestedness—something I never found in quite the same degree in any other country.

"I shall never forget the siege of Madrid, when amid squalor and danger, when all of us were half-starved, when the shells of Franco were falling regularly upon us—spending one of the most memorable days of my life with a group of Anarchist teachers who had gathered the children of Madrid under their guidance and were looking after them, not merely for their physical wants, not merely for their intellectual needs, but trying to give them in those days of horror a moral ideal and guidance for the future. As soon as the need arose hospitals were suddenly opened, as soon as the possibility of action came. Wherever I went I found this Spanish courage and imagination, preparing the creative future of the country.

"And now when I look back and wonder what has happened to those I learned to know then—some I know are killed, others are in exile, others I suppose have gone to Franco's prisons—but still there are some left, still there are some men left who have the courage to carry on the fight for freedom. And on their behalf I want not merely to protest against these trials but raise our voices with all the determination we are capable against the alliance into which we are being tricked by our American partners."

In Spain "naked force must be disguised with the fig-leaf of hypocrisy"—KINGSLEY MARTIN

AS I came here to-night my mind was moving along the same lines as Bronowski's, and remembering how as a child, Europe was seething at the injustice of the Dreyfus case; when the unjust trial and political persecution of one man roused public opinion. To-day there is a creeping plague of tyranny. People talk of the dark Middle Ages, but they compare kindly with to-day. In Spain we have the rule of absolute authority and one religion. To maintain this there must be no education or political freedom. There must be an army at the head of the state and a hierarchy of church bureaucrats. The vast masses must be kept in ignorance. Indeed, naked force must be disguised with the fig-leaf of hypocrisy."

The speaker then went on to point out that such tyranny, however, leaves small patches of freedom. In Britain, there was still a large measure of liberty, while in France a protest had been made in the French Courts against the extraction of confessions by third degree methods. He quoted from Mr. Hughes' book on Spain (*Report from Spain*), which carried

terrible descriptions of the methods used in that country for obtaining confessions, and from the Decree-Law of 1947 (repro- in full elsewhere in this issue), which lists as a crime the "inability to adapt oneself to the régime"—that means, said the speaker, those who cannot adapt themselves to starvation, to total deprivation of civil rights and to the rules of absolute tyranny.

Many people felt all meetings of this kind were futile. For this reason it was necessary that we should get ourselves straight. "We must make it clear that we will not idly allow ourselves to be drawn into an alliance with these forces of tyranny." The speaker believed that we could have some influence. On the platform there were people whose names are known throughout the world, and Spain is at present sensitive to criticism. This was an issue that united the progressive forces in this country and Spain, and we must demonstrate that the Tory Minister of State was right when he said that the British people were strongly opposed to political trials. The régime in Spain must be changed if it wanted our support.

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