

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Are not conquest and defeat each of the same price, and taxes the never-failing consequence?"  
 —THOMAS PAINE (1792)

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Threepence

## A NEW PRACTICE IN INDUSTRY IN THE SHELL OF THE OLD

ONE of the arguments that is usually put up against Workers' Control is that modern industry is too complicated, and operates on too large a scale, to be run in any other way than by centralisation.

Our critics invariably point to large plants employing thousands of workers and plaintively ask how so many workers, unversed in the business of administration, can be expected to manage such vast enterprises.

The first anarchist answer is that nobody knew how to manage anything before they found out and learned how to do it. The managers of large-scale industry were not born with their knowledge of the business—they may have been born with the opportunities to learn management—but in fact they had to make use of their opportunities and gain experience to be able to do their job of administration.

This the workers can do as well. They are now operating the productive processes and in them can gain, if they wish to, the experience necessary to administer them. We must not forget, however, that anarchists do not want the workers to become the administrators in a capitalist society, so we are not interested in encouraging them to learn the intricacies and stupidities of commercial economics, but only to master the problems of production and distribution. And since in fact this is the work they already do, they start off with advantages in the task.

Secondly, it is not until the workers have gained this experience and knowledge and—most important, perhaps, of all—confidence in their own ability to do the job, that there will be any point or any likelihood of attempting the change-over to Workers' Control. We know full well that at the present time workers who have been conditioned to follow leaders will be lost if their leaders are taken away from them. We still hear workers claiming that we must have bosses in order to provide work!

So not until workers have more or less consciously trained themselves for the job of running industry can we logically expect them to be able to take over. It follows then that they should begin here and now to regard that as one of their most important tasks; and it is a task that can be performed in existing society, since after all, it will be the industry existing at the time of the take-over that they will be controlling—to begin with, anyway.

The third anarchist reply to the objection is that we don't have to think of workers in the mass, anyway. Even when ten or twenty thousand work in the same huge plant they do not necessarily have

to remain for all purposes in a huge unwieldy mass. The anarchist preference for small groups can be applied here by breaking down your mass into small functional units. Production is, in fact, already broken down in this way and in order to conform with the necessities of the work, the labour force should also be reduced to units of manageable size. And just as the products remain inter-related, so can the producers.

In this connection, it is very interesting to see that this conception is already being put into operation. A few weeks ago, a comrade of ours from the Midlands was telling us how, in factories in which he had worked, the workers had begun to organise themselves in small working units, all co-operating with each other, and were gaining experience and confidence in the running of their work. They were, in fact, introducing the system themselves, bringing in a union official only when it was necessary to get something they were already operating ratified by the management.

And in the *Sunday Times* for 6th July appeared a story on this matter which bears out what our comrade told us:

"A new approach to 'Unity in Industry' which is yielding significant and encouraging results has just completed its third year of successful operation in a Birmingham factory. In two other factories it has been in operation for one and two years respectively. In each case, its adoption has been followed by higher production, improved quality of work, and a definite raising of morale throughout the organisation.

"Last week Swedish Government observers were in Birmingham studying its operation, and an American expert, Prof. J. E. Walters, after a recent tour of British industries, said the concept was 'the most dramatic and best idea I have seen during my visit.'

"The idea is devastatingly simple. Each worker is associated with a small functional group of eight to 15 members which elects its own leader and meets once a month for an hour, in company time, to discuss any matters they care to. It is a fundamental point that representatives of management neither direct discussions nor attend meetings unless invited to discuss particular points.

"The minutes of each group are published in the monthly magazine, and the group leader reports its conclusions, complaints and suggestions to a group leaders' committee which in turn is represented on some form of management board.

"Experience indicates that, initially, groups concern themselves with welfare and safety matters. As confidence and experience grow, interest in, and sense of responsibility for, factors affecting production and economy increase. Groups do not hesitate to deal effectively with restrictive practices or the shortcomings of their own members.

"Mr. R. H. Best, managing director of the original firm in Birmingham, said to me: 'People become irresponsible and quarrelsome because they are treated like children and not allowed to function according to the capacity they really have. The group gives them an opportunity to exercise their powers.'

"In his company there is a profit-sharing scheme but neither of the other two companies has one, and Mr. Best himself regards it as of secondary importance. The basis of the new relationship is the small, freely-associated group, with organised and effective two-way communication between the operative and management at all levels.

"The groups have proved an effective and sobering influence on hot-heads and rabble-rousers. The techniques and catch-cries of the mass meeting do not survive the more intimate discussion and common experience of the small group.

"In one firm, I talked to Mr. Denis O'Sullivan, chairman of shop stewards. He greeted the scheme with deep suspicions. They are now gone. He is a group leader. 'We can get things done,' he said, 'and we all feel part of the team. It's a different atmosphere altogether.'

"In each company an officer called Personnel Welfare Worker combines the duties of personnel manager with day-to-day administration of the groups. A further departure from normal is that in each case the officer was either elected, or the appointment was submitted to groups for acceptance or rejection."

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Making allowances for the fact that this whole article—which we have quoted in full—has been written from a point of view sympathetic to management and not to the workers, we think it is rather remarkable. Remarkable that at last some bosses are catching on to the fact that "People become irresponsible and quarrelsome because they are treated like children . . ."

It seems to us that in the remarks of that managing director lie all the answers to the objections to Workers' Control, and the vindication of the anarchist point of view. Though we doubt if he realises that!

Personal gain (profit sharing) is not the most important motive—responsibility and feeling part of the team are much more satisfying. And common experience and function carry more weight than sloganising at mass meetings. And as confidence grows, the desire for responsibility for the work also increases.

Out of this sort of development can grow the desire for complete Workers' Control, and the circumstances, the knowledge and confidence necessary to ensure its success. At the moment, like everything else, it is being used to further the interests of capitalism, but the anarchists have always maintained that the organisms for the new society must grow within the shell of the old. This new development in industry looks like being one of them. P.S.

## Another Mine Disaster

THE mine disaster at Greenside, Glenridding, Westmorland, once more raises the question of the relationship of society towards this ghastly industry. Two men remained trapped by carbon monoxide gas 1,000 ft. down below the surface; two more men were trapped in the attempt to rescue them, and hope has been abandoned for these four. Of those who were rescued, one boy of 20 had to have both feet severed in order to release him from fallen debris.

The escape of gas is said to be due to an explosion arising from faulty electric wiring as in so many previous disasters.

It is no doubt possible so to concentrate on safety that such faults do not occur. Miners representatives at the inquests on mine disasters usually feel that if mine owners and management spent more on making mines safe, such disasters would not occur and no doubt this is true. But it is unrealistic to put forward such warnings as a solution to the problems. Even nationalised mines have to be made to show a profit and where balance sheets exist there must always be a weighting up of "justifiable" expenses. Only if mining were an end in itself, unconcerned with profit and loss, would the question of safety devices receive ideally efficient attention.

## Death Sentences in Czech Mine Disaster

FOLLOWING a mine disaster in the Borbora mine in Czechoslovakia on December 18th, 1951, two mining engineers, Dr. Vaclav Zalud and Josef Herel, have been sentenced to death, another to life imprisonment and two others to 25 and 20 years' imprisonment. In the Borbora mine, explosions resulted in the deaths of 13 miners. Nine deaths occurred in the Zapotocky pit the previous July. In this region output was heavily in arrears and no doubt full pressure was exerted to increase it. Whether it is profit or output (they are usually the same) that is the aim, safety devices

are bound to receive less attention than they should if the lives and working conditions of miners were the first consideration.

### Responsibility of Society

It is useless to seek a scapegoat in the boss—unpunished in this country; or in the management—with death sentences as in Czechoslovakia. The question of mine disasters raises the whole question of the right of society to tolerate dangerous work and the system of economic pressure drives men to undertake it. A revolutionary society will still have to face this problem.

## COMMUNIST DEMAND FOR POPULAR FRONT IN SPAIN

THE Communists have not forgotten the reactionary and counter-revolutionary rôle they played during the Spanish war, nor have they retracted from it. Echoes of that greatest of Communist betrayals have recently been heard in a declaration of the Spanish Communist leader, Dolores Ibarruri, known during the Spanish war as "La Pasionaria".

She calls for a "national anti-Franco front" comprising the working classes, the intelligentsia and the petty-bourgeoisie who would fight together to establish in Spain "a democracy, the achievements of which are in harmony with the principles of the bourgeois democratic revolution". It would aim to form a "provisional Coalition government".

So the very tactics which destroyed the revolution and ensured the victory of Franco, are to be used again! It is not surprising that La Pasionaria directs her appeal to every opponent of the Franco régime including discon-

contented Monarchists in the Spanish army, but excluding the Anarchists and the tiny fraction of so-called "Trotskyists" (disowned, however, by Trotsky himself) who formed the POUM.

Of course, the aim of such a tactic on the part of Ibarruri and the Spanish Communists is to try and ensure that the CP gets the credit for all resistance—the technique employed in the Resistance movements during the war—and that all such acts are labelled "Communist".

Such labelling suits Franco, too, of course. He would like to claim that all resistance comes from Moscow-directed Stalinists and to secure a camouflage for his brutal oppression. Once again, the Communists are more concerned with getting credit that may stand them in good stead when they seek to seize power, than they are with the needs of the resistance to Franco. Thus their tactics continue to be as dirty and as treacherous as they were in 1936-39.

## "OFFICIAL SECRETS"

"Lord, that Miss West! The things she says!"—ROSMERSHOLM.

MISS Rebecca West has for almost a lifetime been associated with progressive causes. Indeed, the very name she took as her *nom-de-plume* (that of Ibsen's heroine in *Rosmersholm*) in itself indicates on what side of the fence she started, and it is a pity that someone who was once prepared to associate herself with, say, Emma Goldman's attack on the Bolsheviks who betrayed the Revolution, should now be an apologist for American witch-hunting and a secret yearner for it here. One can understand better the attitude of the ex-Communists who shout louder to be less associated with what they formerly loved. After years of perhaps somewhat vague liberalising tendencies, Miss West now finds herself in the Right Wing camp, writing regularly for the Beaverbrook Press, and evidently considering herself a particular authority on treason.

It is so easy for an intelligent person to make progress on that side of the fence! How dexterously Miss West plies her pen! We must never feel any regret at the victims of American witch-hunting and even when they are found not guilty, well, there is more than meets the eye, one is foolish to get into such a position, how much worse would it be in Russia! And now I see Miss West has gone into a paroxysm of unipity over young Marshall. "It is surprising what sympathy has been aroused by his complaint, 'I was a misfit at the Embassy from the

start, the people were not my class and I led a solitary life.'" (*Evening Standard*, 11/7/52.)

Ah, yes, it is surprising how simple people are—how readily they sympathise with a young man in Marshall's position in Russia, later taken for a ride by astute Russian diplomats who never risk the necks of those likely to be useful to them otherwise. Of course, it was nothing like that at the British Embassy, "it was not due to the operation of archaic class feeling . . . but owing to the peculiarities of his temperament". Undoubtedly, many people can have a good laugh at life *à la* British Embassy and it is a different sort of temperament that is crushed by it . . . but no *archaic class feeling*? In a British Embassy? Careful, Miss West—half clubland thinks Beaverbrook a dangerous Red anyway, and he has never really lived down his 1945 Paddington speech when he quietened Communist hecklers with "Vote for Churchill—Stalin's pal!"

The more serious part of this sort of article is contained in the plea to public sympathy to stop being sorry for the dupes. "Poor William Marshall would have been happy had he not gathered there was nothing so dreadful about violating the Official Secrets Act." The campaign to disbelieve in the sacred and inviolate bond of the Official Secrets Act was "initiated in the interest of Communist traitors by the Communist Party." A lie. It was initiated in the interests of the Allied Powers themselves in 1939-

1945. They put forward then the appeal, above all by radio, that there was nothing so dreadful about violating the espionage laws. There was nothing terrible about the word "treason". It was, on the contrary, right and proper for all "good Germans" to assist their enemies. The radio appeals were largely made by Germans, to appeal to Germans to act against Germany. Later, this was extended to other countries. As regards France it is only a debating point which side were the "traitors". But the main theme was that ideology came before narrow ideas of patriotism. It was under this influence that Fuchs and many others acted. They were encouraged to do so by Allied propaganda against the "mother country"; by extension they did so in favour of Russia with which they were ideologically bound.

It is, of course, a travesty of law that the Allies proceeded against Quislings. British "traitors" were hung or imprisoned. Without sympathy for these somewhat older enemies of ours, who were undoubtedly fascists, it is obvious they did no more, no less, than German counterparts of theirs did on the other side. If the Allies were really bound to "Law" and the inviolate sanctity of Official Secretdom, they would not have connived at similar "crimes". But the fact is that they established in that war the principle that ideology came before patriotism, and it is untrue that this was merely something invented by the Communists. Moreover if to-day

## A NOTE ON FORTHCOMING BOOKS

A new book by George Woodcock, to be published this autumn, is an account of his journeyings along the Pacific seaboard of the Canadian North-West and Alaska, with descriptions of life among the Doukhobors and Red Indians and of the decaying settlements of the gold rush days, and is illustrated with about fifty photographs, and maps. The book is called *Ravens and Prophets*, and will be published by Allen Wingate at 15/-. Another book of a somewhat similar interest is *People of the Deer*, by Farley Mowat, which will appear next month from Michael Joseph at 15/-. This has been very highly praised by American critics, and is the story of a journey among the Eskimos who live in the barren lands of the Canadian Far North. In this almost unexplored country, Mr. Mowat lived for many months, sharing the life and incredible hardships of a people constantly threatened by starvation and studying the phenomenal mass migrations of the caribou deer, upon which their livelihood depends.

Mr. Joseph Goldstein's *The Government of British Trade Unions* (Allen & Unwin, 25/-), which has just appeared and is receiving a lot of attention in the newspapers, is a sub-titled "A Study of Apathy and the Democratic Process in the Transport and General Workers Union". The same publishers will be issuing *The Miners: Years of Struggle*, the second volume of Mr. R. Page Arnot's history of British miners, covering the years 1910-1930; and *The Attack, and other papers*, a new book by Prof. R. H. Tawney (author of *Equality, and Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*). Mr. A. L. Lloyd has edited a collection of miner's songs and ballads under the title *Come All Ye Bold Miners* (Lawrence & Wishart, 10/6, September).

A new novel by Alex Comfort, *A Giant's Strength* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 10/6) will describe "the situation of a genius behind the Iron Curtain who is tired of all forms of authority". This year is the centenary of the birth of R. B. Cunningham-Graham and Mr. Paul Bloomfield has edited a selection

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from his books of travel, history and short stories with the title *The Essential R. B. Cunningham-Graham* (Cape, 15/-, November). Among the novels to be reprinted as Penguin Books this autumn are André Gide's *Strait is the Gate*, Alberto Moravia's *The Woman of Rome*, and William Sansom's book of short stories, *South*.

An autobiographical volume by Arthur Koestler, *Arrow in the Blue*, is to appear in October from Collins and Hamish Hamilton at 18/-. *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Critical Biography* by Ralph M. Waldo has been published by the Richards Press at 30/-.

*Learning Laughter* by Stephen Spender (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 12/6) will tell the story of a journey on a "children's boat" from Marseilles to Haifa and of life on a new children's settlement in Israel where many orphans from concentration camps are being brought up. *The Children's Village* by Mary Buchanan (Bannisdale Press, 6/-), describes the "village of peace," Pestalozzidorf, in Switzerland. "This village was founded for European war-orphaned children, but now continues to flourish as a small oasis of hope in a troubled world." A book on *Developing Village India* is to be published by Longmans at 21/-.

Amongst a number of forthcoming books on building and town-planning are *School Buildings: 1945-1951*, by Bruce Marshall (Crosby Lockwood, 25/-), and *The Heart of the City*, a volume whose contributors include Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Siegfried Giedion (Lund Humphries).

The University of London Press is to publish *Saving Children From Delinquency* by D. H. Stott (probably 8/6). *Psychiatry To-day* by David Stafford Clark will be a 3/- Penguin Book. *Social Psychiatry* by M. Maxwell Jones (Tavistock Publications, 18/-) describes the development of three therapeutic communities with which the author has been associated during the past ten years.

But the book we shall be buried in next Christmas will not be *How to be Attractive* ("by one of America's most glamorous grandmothers"), nor the biography of the Queen's Siamese Kitten (with 37 photos and sketches) nor even the history of Steam Traction Engines. We shall be increasing our repertoire from the 200 songs quoted in *They Were Singing* (Harrap, 18/-) in which Christopher Pulling gives a history of English music halls as a mirror to the real life which their ballads and artists parodied and reflected.

## COST OF BABIES

The ultimate refinement of the tax gatherers' "cradle-to-grave" activities has been reached in the Karnal district of the Punjab. In future it will cost a boy one rupee (1s. 6d.) to embark upon life and a girl half that amount. Failure to pay this birth tax on all children born within the district board's jurisdiction will involve the parent or guardian in a fine of up to Rs.50. —*Times*, 8/10/52.

# Lessons of the Spanish Revolution

## Introduction

JULY 19th, 1936, will always be remembered as one of the landmarks in the struggle of the people against the forces of totalitarianism. What might have been simply a date recording a rising of a group of mutinous generals was converted overnight into a glorious manifestation of the aspirations of a people for freedom, not only against the attempts at dictatorship through a military *coup d'état* but in the positive meaning of that word: for the building up of the new society without rulers and without privilege. Subsequent events cannot delete the importance of the achievement of the Spanish people in those first weeks, for their heroism, the consciousness of their aspirations for the free society—which expressed itself both in their armed revolutionary struggle against overwhelming odds and in the spontaneous reorganisation of the economic life of large sections of the country on the basis of equality and of the dignity of the worker—are perhaps without parallel in working-class history.

But after three years, Franco was able to proclaim himself dictator of a devastated Spain, a prostrate Spain, with its two million dead, and with one section of the country avidly waiting its opportunity to wreak vengeance on the defeated. Tens of thousands of men and women have since been put to death by Franco's tribunals and hundreds of thousands have spent years in prison for, in many cases, the only crime of having sympathised with the workers' struggle. But hundreds of thousands have faced exile—including "democratic" concentration camps—for the past fourteen years, while in Spain to-day, thousands of members of the underground movement daily risk their lives in continuing the struggle against the clerical-military alliance under the leadership of Franco.

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To study the history of the revolutionary workers' movement in Spain during those three tremendous years 1936-1939, is not just an academic pastime. To try to understand the causes of the defeat is not to hold an armchair *post mortem*—or to be wise after the event. For what happened in Spain is not an isolated phenomenon, either so far as Spain or the world are concerned, though superficially it might seem that nothing can dislodge Franco's régime or change the present pattern of a world divided into two vast power blocs; two vast armed camps, in which all human values have been eliminated and with only the question of survival as the yardstick for policies. To accept the view—encouraged by the politicians—that the march of scientific progress and of production has made society so complex that only at the highest level can these problems be solved—and then only on condition that the mass of the people implement the high-level decisions unquestioningly and supinely—is unrealistic because it ignores the unceasing struggle throughout mankind's history, whether in its search after knowledge or in the struggle for its emancipation. For anarchists, therefore, to seek the causes of the defeat of the revolution in Spain is an important and a necessary task, for it will permit us to re-examine anarchist theory in the light of Spanish experience and to draw valuable lessons for future struggles.

Unfortunately, the documentation available to the public for such a study is still very fragmentary, and in the English language, virtually non-existent. And what must appear particularly surprising, is the fact that until last year no major work had been published by the C.N.T. (National Confederation of Labour) giving a documented account of its part in the Spanish struggle of 1936-39. The outbreak of World War II only a few months after the last refugees had escaped from the central zone, undoubtedly overshadowed the Spanish struggle, and one can well imagine that the archives saved from Spain were either destroyed or distributed in many places for safety, and much of this material may have since been lost. Yet the war ended seven years ago and only last year did the first two volumes on the work of the C.N.T. appear in France.<sup>1</sup> One quarter of this 400-page book deals with the C.N.T. prior to 1936; one half with the period from July 1936 until the end of 1936; the remaining 100 pages deal with the workers' collectives. The second volume, covering the period from January 1937 to the final defeat in Central Spain in 1939, is announced for publication in August of this year.

Having waited so long, one can be excused for feeling a sense of disappointment with the first volume, for the author, Jose Peirats, has had access to relatively few important documents of the organisation, and whilst, in spite of this both he and the anarchist reader can draw certain definite conclusions, they can only be general conclusions.

The defeat of the Republican forces in Spain by Franco has been explained in many ways: intervention by Germany and Italy, the lack of arms on the Republican side, as well as a badly organised army, food shortage, and so on. These are all valid reasons. What, however, we are much more interested in ascertaining, are the reasons why the social revolution with which the Spanish workers replied to the military uprising was stifled. Whatever our views before, the reading of Jose Peirats' book in conjunction with, to our knowledge, the only other attempt to explain the defeat, Diego de Santillan's *Porque Perdimos la Guerra*<sup>2</sup> ("Why we lost the War"), leads us to the general conclusion that the policy of compromise on the part of the C.N.T. leadership as well as the Executive power of the leadership, were the most important factors in ensuring that the revolution must inevitably fail. It is this interpretation which we propose to discuss with documentary evidence, and from which we will attempt to draw the lessons of the Spanish revolution.

## I.

### The Elections of February 1936

BY its constitution, the C.N.T. was independent of all the political parties in Spain, and abstained from taking part in parliamentary and other elections. Its objectives were to bring together the exploited masses in the struggle for day to day improvements of working

1 *La C.N.T. en la Revolución Española*, by Jose Peirats. Vol. I. (Ediciones C.N.T., 1951, Toulouse.)

2 *Porque Perdimos la Guerra*, by D. A. de Santillan. (Ediciones Iman, Buenos Aires, 1940.)

and economic conditions and for the revolutionary destruction of capitalism and the State. Its ends were Libertarian Communism, a social system based on the free commune federated at local, regional and national levels. Complete autonomy is the basis of this federation, the only ties with the whole being the agreements of a general nature adopted by Ordinary or Extraordinary National Congresses.

On January 6th, 1936, the Regional Committee of the C.N.T. in Catalonia called a Regional Conference to discuss two questions: the first, "What must be the position of the C.N.T. with regard to organisations which, without sharing our objectives, have a working-class basis," the second, "What definite and concrete attitude must the C.N.T. adopt in the coming elections." Owing to the hurried summoning of the conference, as well as the fact that most of the delegates were not representative of the Syndicates (most of which were still illegal), the Conference was hardly representative, and certain delegates went so far as to attribute to the Regional Committee a particular interest in discussing these questions. Nevertheless, the majority of the delegations, amongst whom prevailed the view that the anti-electoral position of the C.N.T. was more a tactical one than one of principle, decided to discuss the question. Peirats does not tell us how the discussion developed, but he reproduces a document from the Secretariat of the I.W.M.A. (the International Working Man's Association, to which the C.N.T. had been affiliated since 1922, headed "The I.W.M.A. and the Crisis of Democracy, the Elections and the Danger of the Lesser Evil." It is a closely reasoned defence of the C.N.T.'s traditional abstentionism, and an exposure of the ineffectuality of the political Popular Front as an answer to the fascist and reactionary menace. It created a deep impression on the Conference, and a reply was sent to the I.W.M.A. reaffirming the C.N.T.'s abstentionist position and a resolution drafted advising an anti-political and abstentionist campaign at the coming elections. On the question of Alliances, a majority were in favour of a pact with the U.G.T. General Workers Union—socialist dominated) on an exclusively revolutionary basis. The first proposal was that "the U.G.T. recognises that only by revolutionary action is the emancipation of the workers possible. It is understood that with the acceptance of this pact the UGT will have to break off all political and parliamentary collaboration with the bourgeois régime", which one supposes was more than the socialist union leaders could accept!

When the elections were held the following month, "the C.N.T. had concluded an anti-electoral campaign unnoticed by reason of its timidity". Peirats does not add that, in fact, the members of the C.N.T. voted at the elections of 1936 in large numbers, though in *The Spanish Labyrinth*, Gerald Brenan explains that the increased poll of the Left over the 1933 figures, amounting to a million and a quarter votes, "can to a great extent be put down to the Anarchist vote"! Santillan makes no bones about it. According to him, the masses voted, with their "usual sure instinct" for certain definite objectives: to dislodge the political forces of fascist reaction from the government and to obtain the liberation of the 33,000 political prisoners

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## INDIAN NOTES

# Bringing New Life to the Indian Village

"Don't let us wait for Government or the District Board or anyone else. Let us do things ourselves and join with our neighbours to do them. In this way, things will be done quicker, better and cheaper and will give us much more satisfaction than if we wait for someone else to do them for us—and in the end they may not do them at all or if they do, will put a heavy tax on us to pay for them."

—F. L. BRAYNE: *Village ABC* (O.U.P., Bombay, 1950).

"WE Indians are somewhat like the Irish in our preoccupation with politics," said Mr. Kushwant Singh in his recent broadcast on *The Struggle for Power in India*. But that some Indians are hoping to make progress in communal development outside the activities of governmental departments is illustrated by the formation of a body called the *Barat Sevak Sangh*—which is discussed in the *Eastern Economist* (New Delhi) 27/6/52:—

"I do nothing and the people are reformed of themselves. I love quietude, and the people are righteous of themselves. I deal in no business, and the people grow rich by themselves. I have

no desires, and the people are simple and honest by themselves." So says the *Book of Tao*, by Lao Tse, a Chinese philosopher, who lived about two thousand five hundred years ago, and preached the doctrine of *wu-wei*, which is the nearest Eastern equivalent of *laissez faire*.

"Lao Tse's prescription for practising the art of Government, namely, as little government as is possible, is hardly practicable to-day. In populous countries, where the administration is not intensive, it is, however, inevitable that Governments should sooner or later recognise their limitations; and the *Barat Sevak Sangh*, first thought of by Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda (as soon as he assumed office as a member of the Planning Commission) is intended to provide some means of mobilising non-official resources and effort, in order to supplement the activities of the public sector.

## VOLUNTARY EFFORT

"Sporadic instances of what can be done by purely voluntary effort have been plentiful, if anything, in recent months. If one merely intends to illustrate the possibilities, one may mention Sholapur, where unprecedented activity was organised by Mr. Mohite last year, the Rampur-Tibet road, recently built by about one hundred university students on vacation, and farther down south, the organisation of student expeditions for welfare work by two Government colleges. These examples have inspired Mr. Nanda to draw up a constitution for an All-India Association with half a dozen categories of members, so that every one who wants to volunteer may be fitted in. . . . The Sangh will have to concentrate on a few areas, community projects, perhaps, to begin with. These areas should be regularly visited, and here work, once started, must be continued till one phase of development comes to an end. In these areas, the Sangh will moreover have to concentrate

on literacy, road-building, and minor irrigation works, which are the most urgent needs of the rural community to-day.

"The General Council and Board of the Sangh will have to be satisfied in the first instance with quality and standards of work rather than with paper achievements and impressive statistics. It will be difficult to discard publicity, and the attractions of membership rolls running into thousands. It is particularly difficult also in this country to keep politics out of anything and, of course, the Sangh, if it is to live, will have to escape the omnipresent influence of Governments."

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ANOTHER aspect of the task of bringing new life to the Indian village, a task so lovingly described by Mr. F. L. Brayne in his *Village ABC*,\* was discussed by Mr. S. K. Dey in an essay in his pamphlet *Co-operative Reconstruction*, reprinted in *Co-operative Living*, the bulletin of the Group Farming Research Institute, in America.

"More than eight years ago," writes Mr. Dey, "an experiment was undertaken to organise cultivation of land on co-operative lines in a district not far from Calcutta. The attempt proceeded from the realisation that the root cause of India's agricultural plight lay in the minute size of the production unit. The only way to increase agricultural productivity was to apply more capital to land by means of irrigation, machinery, fertilisers and power; such application would not be economic unless the scale of production would be enlarged considerably. . . . The originators of this experiment met the difficulty by joining together contiguous plots of land into one large block for unitary operation by their different tenant-holders, organised into a co-operative society. None of these tenants was displaced from his land. The tenants were persuaded to exchange the separate possession and use of the individual plots for shares of equivalent value in the joint farm, and they continued to work on the new farm.

## OFFICIALDOM FROWNED

"No model precedent was available to help the planning of this venture. It

\* See FREEDOM's reprint volume for 1951, *Man-kind is One*, pp. 172-4.

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## FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

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## REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS IN THE CRUCIBLE

EXCEPT for the youngest and the oldest sections of the population, the most pressing political question during the lifetime of most of us has been the rise of totalitarianism. Whether it has sprung from the "right" as fascism or from the "left" as communism, this tendency has been accompanied by a disregard for liberal influences, a trampling on the conception of individual freedom and rights, and by measures of brutality unequalled in past history. The rise and spread of these essentially reactionary tendencies still provides the main problem of contemporary history.

It is a problem of urgency and one which fills with alarm and apprehension anyone who recognises just how urgent and pervasive a problem it has become. The ability of brutality to unseat liberal tendencies in the characters of so many men and women, is a disturbing phenomenon which requires first to be generally recognised and then to be understood. And this comprehension of the totalitarian phenomenon is a matter of the first importance. Unfortunately, it has to be said that this aspect of the general problem has hardly been even recognised.

But totalitarianism will never be defeated in the study, and since it first became a major trend on the scene of recent history, there has not been lacking a powerful current of opposition. Few political ideas have caught the imagination of English people so powerfully as did the anti-fascism of pre-1939 days. Kindled first by growing dislike and horror at the brutalities of Mussolini and Hitler, it received a more positive direction from the Spanish Revolution of 1936, an event which was seen in this country almost exclusively as an anti-fascist reaction.

Interest in Spain has therefore been mainly a secondary aspect of anti-fascism generally, and inevitably such interest became overwhelmed in the apparently much larger phenomenon of the "anti-fascist" war of 1939-45. Only gradually is it being realised that the totalitarian trend is still present and still advancing—as an accomplished system in the case of Russian imperialism, as a tendency still gathering strength in America and, to a lesser extent, in British political life.

Taking a broader historical perspective, the first major stand against totalitarianism was the revolt of the Kronstadt population in 1921. The Spanish Revolution of 1936 was the second great landmark. In both these popular revolts, the revolutionary aspect, because of its positive content and aim, has overshadowed the merely anti-fascist, anti-totalitarian reaction, and it is perhaps for this reason that instead of being the most studied phases of the history of the struggle against the totalitarian trend, they have been almost completely neglected.

For anarchists, the history of the Spanish Revolution has a much more burning interest. It provided the occasion for the testing out of many revolutionary and anarchist conceptions and the unravelling and proper comprehension of these experiences is of basic importance to revolutionary theory. Yet Spain, despite the glamour with which 1936 is surrounded, has never received that detailed examination from the English-speaking anarchist movement which is clearly demanded.

All revolutionary theory goes into

the crucible when revolutions occur. Anarchist theory was originally enunciated largely as an outcome of the experiences of 1789 and 1848. It was vindicated in the Paris Commune of 1871 and once more received the test of action in 1917. But the lessons of 1917, the lessons of defeat by the political party of Bolshevism, have never fully passed into the theoretical thinking of subsequent generations in the anarchist movement. Still stranger is it that the lessons of 1936 have been urgently studied by only a very few anarchists.

Yet nothing is more revivifying for revolutionary theory than this melting down in the fires of revolution itself. The present series of articles on the lessons of Spain, which begin in this issue, may perhaps open up a vista of revolutionary conceptions which may radically affect the thinking of many English anarchists. If they succeed in lifting anarchist revolutionary aspirations out of the cold field of broad generalisations, and show them in the heat and struggle of war and controversy, they will perform a quickening service of incalculable value.

### The Endearing General

GENERAL O'DONNELL: The main cities were Pyongyang, Seishin, Rashin, Wonsan and Chinampo . . . We thought the impact of taking those quickly and getting—we could have gotten the five cities—I could have done that in 10 days flat, and we thought the terrific impact would so shock them it might have pressed them into getting out.

SENATOR STENNIS: Now, as a matter of fact, Northern Korea has been virtually destroyed, hasn't it? Those cities have been virtually destroyed?

GENERAL O'DONNELL: Oh, yes; we did it all later, anyhow. I would say that the entire, almost the entire Korean Peninsula is just a terrible mess. Everything is destroyed. There is nothing standing worthy of the name. Just before the Chinese came in we were grounded. There were no more targets in Korea.

CHAIRMAN RUSSELL: I think you have demonstrated soldierly qualities that endeared you to the American people.

—Extract from the testimony of Major Gen. Emmett O'Donnell, Commander Far East Bomber Command, to the MacArthur Enquiry, 25th June, 1951.

## New Life to the Indian Village

would be some rise in the income of the co-operative farmers through the gains of large-scale production, that would demonstrate the benefits of the scheme and ensure its wider acceptance.

"It is possible now to see the error of this view. A vital condition for the success of the scheme was left outside the sphere of its action. For this reason the scheme was incomplete. Industrial expansion must be an integral part of any plan for agricultural improvement and must be carried out at the same time with the reorganisation of farming. Any delay in the industrial phasing would throw out of gear the process of agricultural reorganisation itself for one of two reasons. Either, there would be a growing number deprived of agricultural employment, who would resist and break up the process. These men would have to be content with the periodical distribution of their ownership dividends and would receive no wages. They could earn more under the old system and would demand restoration of their individual holdings. Or else, all would continue to crowd on the land as before, though the task to be performed by each became less. Under these circumstances the vital advantages of division of labour and specialisation of functions would not be realised on the farm, and progress would be blocked.

### VILLAGE CO-OPERATIVE

"The displacement of labour from land must be the inescapable feature of any scheme of rationalisation of agriculture, and provision must be made to deal with this problem from the start. Is this possible? Does not industrial planning set us a much larger task capable of fulfilment only over a much longer period of time? Will there not be an inevitable time lag between the short-range, parochial objective of joint cultivation and the country-wide mobilisation of resources required for any considerable development of modern industry?

"The problem can be solved in only one way, and that is to reduce the scale and the range of the industrial plan to the same territorial base as is adopted

## Birth Control and Religion in Asia

Birth control is often represented as hostile to the religious ideas of Eastern peoples. The following article, compiled from the bulletin of the International Planned Parenthood Committee (U.S.A.) shows how little substance there is in this "difficulty".

### MOHAMMEDAN POSITION

ACCORDING to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the Moslem religion, embraced by approximately 315,699,103 is exceeded only by the Roman Catholic enrolment of 421,340,901. Christians of all sects number roughly 741,985,482, comprising the world's largest religious body. That the Moslem faith has given a definite permissive ruling on contraception is not generally known. The first such *fatwa* or judgment was pronounced several hundred years ago. The latest is dated the 12th of *Dhi al Qaada* 1355, or Jan. 25, 1937. This was issued by His Worship, the Supreme Teacher Sheikh Abdel Magid Selim, Mufti of the Egyptian Realm, who is the highest judicial authority under Moslem law. An Egyptian inquired of the Mufti:

"What is Your Worship's Opinion regarding the following? A married man to whom one child was born is afraid that if several other children are born he would experience great hardship in rearing and providing for them; and that his health might suffer a nervous breakdown as a result of his exertions and worries. Or he may be afraid lest his wife's health might deteriorate as a result of repeated and frequent child-births, without sufficient interval for birth and recuperation. Now, should he or his wife, under such circumstances, be allowed to take certain measures, recommended by medical men, to avoid frequent childbearing, so that a long interval may pass between one childbirth and the next; in order that the mother may be rested and the father spared any undue hardship?"

After profound examination of the legal texts, the Grand Mufti sums up: "It is permissible for either husband or wife, by mutual consent, to take any measures . . . in order to prevent conception." (He refers to both natural and artificial methods.) He continues: "Later scholars of the Hanafy School consider that such consent is not even necessary if either husband or wife has an excuse such as those mentioned or any similar ones." (Example: " . . . if he is afraid that his offspring might become wicked because of the wicked times.")

The problem of abortion was also included: "Opinion on this subject has differed; but the majority are inclined not to allow it, except for a reason such as the interruption of the mother's milk, when she has another baby and the father cannot afford a 'wet nurse',

and the baby's life is therefore endangered. After the 'quickening' of the embryo, abortion is absolutely prohibited.

"Such is our answer as it appeared to us: and Allah, may he be praised and exalted, knows best."

In so far as the Moslem law is concerned, according to Professor Cleland, despite some opposition aroused by the *fatwa*, no doctor of the law has yet been able to challenge the judgment on legal grounds. The original *fatwa* was published in Arabic in the *Journal of the Egyptian Medical Association*, 20, No. 7, 54-56, July, 1937. Professor Cleland says the Mufti was extremely cautious before deciding. This *fatwa* greatly helped to clarify the thinking of Mohammedans, for social tradition favours big families.

### PAKISTAN

An editorial in *The Medicus*, Dec. 1951, entitled "Physiological Birth Control," refers to the oldest of the above-mentioned *fatwas* in these words: "There are reasons to believe that contraception was considered permissible by the Holy Prophet of Islam even for reasons other than medical, as shown by the following Tradition: A man came to the Holy Prophet and said that he had a slave but he did not want her to have children. To which the Holy Prophet replied: 'You may, if you like (practice contraception) . . . but if he is destined to have a child, she shall have it.'" The writer maintains that the state religion of Pakistan does not regard procreation as the sole purpose of mating, and quotes from the Koran: "And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may derive comfort from them and He has put love and mercy between you."

*The Medicus*' editorial is a powerful plea for birth control in Pakistan. "The resources of our young state are too inadequate to deal with the gigantic problems of never-ending influx of refugees and ever-increasing birth rate . . . It has been rightly stated that the crying need of Pakistan . . . is 'shiploads of contraceptives'."

### THE HINDU POSITION

Such is the Mohammedan position on the subject of contraception. We now present the Hindu position: "There is nothing specifically against birth control in the Hindu scriptures. In fact, they do recognise the need for planned parenthood!" We quote Dr. S. Chandrasekhar, head of the dept. of economics, and director, Indian Institute for Population Studies. In his excellent booklet, *Demographic Disarmament for India*, he continues: "The *Kamasutra* described both chemical and occlusive methods of

birth control. The *Brihadayogastarngini* (8th century A.D.) offers specific recipes . . . In *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* (B.C. 8th century) we are told what rituals to perform to beget intelligent and lovely children and what mantras to be uttered to prevent conception.

"It is true that there is a Verdic injunction demanding a Hindu mother to bear ten children; but . . . a later verse says that only the first child is the product of *Dharma* (duty) and that the later children are the product of *Kama* (lust). The Sanskrit word for son is 'putra', meaning one who delivers the parents from a hell called 'path'. So, a Hindu . . . must have a son, but not a dozen children of whom only five or six will survive . . . The superstition of the desirability of a large number of children was later on added." Dr. Chandrasekar concludes: "The real truth is that our religion is not opposed to planned parenthood . . . Fortunately all great Hindu reformers have been in favour of planned parenthood; and today no Hindu need run afoul of his conscience by practicing contraception."

### GANDHI'S POSITION

Mahatma Gandhi, whose spiritual influence in India is even more pronounced since his death, stated: "There can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth control. But the only method handed down from ages past is self-control, or *Brahmacharya* (strict celibacy) . . . The union is meant not for pleasure but for bringing forth progeny."

In 1935, Margaret Sanger visited Mr. Gandhi at his Ashram in Wardha. We quote from their conversation:

MR. GANDHI: "I have felt that during the years still left to me if I can drive home to women's minds the truth that

Continued on p. 4

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for the organisation of agriculture. Co-ordination of the two processes, essential for success, can be achieved only when their dimensions are approximately equal, and the planning of both is entrusted to the same authority. If the farm is to be set up in the village context, as it must be, then its industrial complement has also to be largely planned in the same setting; and the same agency must assume responsibility for organising both types of activity in an integrated village economy. The answer, in short, is the Multi-purpose Village Co-operative.

### SMALL BEGINNINGS

"A great deal of wishful and unclear thinking prevails about the prospects of large-scale modern industry in this country. Prevailing technological conditions demand a very high capital composition for industry, which means that the surplus resources required for its construction would be of a colossal magnitude, while its capacity for employing labour would fall far short of the number released from the land, together with the new job-seekers thrown on the market. One must also take note of the fact that, from our normal population increase, practically speaking, large-scale industrial resources are the close preserve of a handful of powerful interests in the country, and the competitive impetus to expansion does not operate firmly at this level. Consequently, we can build up a highly efficient industrial outfit overnight only by forced marches under a totalitarian order after liquidating a large proportion of our population through unemployment and starvation.

"The course of free development over most of the field must, therefore, lie through village industry, where the proportion of labour engaged to capital will be high for the present. This does not rule out technological progress, but only slows down its pace, so that the capital required for such progress may be accumulated in easy stages from small beginnings. It also provides an opportunity for the people to acquire democratic training and experience through

management of their own undertakings in co-operative institutions. However, in order that the way to further advance should be left open, the type of rural industry envisaged here cannot be carried on in the cottages of individual workmen as their part-time occupation. Craftsmen in each line have to work together under one roof, so that the advantages of enlarged organisation, division of labour and whole-time application may lay the foundation for village factories with increasing scope for the adoption of advanced technique. Co-operative industry is the logical counterpart of co-operative agriculture, each sustaining the other in an interdependent, expanding whole.

### "THE VILLAGE REPUBLIC"

"This intimate interdependence demands the setting up of a unitary agency for planning and administering the whole, which must obviously be the co-operative association of the entire body of adult workers of the village. Such an association is multi-purpose, because it has to concern itself with not one but every aspect of the economic life of the unit. In fact, it has to assume responsibility for more. Its function of wealth distribution must involve it in the administration of public health, education and other social amenities within its area. The logical conclusion is its emergence as the village republic.

"Let us realise that, taking into account the current limitations of administrative capacity, material resources and educational and cultural level of the masses, planning in our country is conceivable only in the above context. That this is so should be cause, moreover, for rejoicing. The basic political problem of reconciling freedom with organisation can perhaps be solved only in the life of the small group, where the individual has the best scope to exercise his talent, initiative, sense of personal responsibility and spirit of adventure. The village with its age-long tradition of corporate existence offers the most suitable medium for this great experiment."

## The Obsolete Pilot

TO the extinct creatures of natural history—the dodo, the dinosaur and their like—will soon be added that distinct product of the twentieth century's unnatural history, the fighter-pilot.

Around such names as those of von Richtofen, German air ace of the First World War, and of the young men of the Battle of Britain—Richard Hillary and Bader, the legless pilot—now grows a new uniqueness. To the pity which few of us can escape feeling at the tragic misuse of courageous young lives, we now add the knowledge that not only were they outstanding among their own kind, but that the world will soon see the last of their kind altogether. And they will not go out in the blaze of glory many of them would romantically choose; they will simply be quietly and ruthlessly rendered obsolete, like the machines whose names ("Spitfire") and "Hurricane" meant so much to the schoolboys of 1940.

It is as though, in the march of evolution, some fantastic winged insect came into being for a brief instant, to burn itself out and vanish from the air.

We are now beginning to see developed the air combat machines of the next war, and they are machines which have no need for courageous young men. Now going into production in the United States are what are known as "semi-automatic interceptors"—fighter planes in which the pilot takes quite literally—a back seat. These machines are regarded as the first step towards the ideal of our electrical age—pilotless, radar-controlled aircraft.

It seems that just as the Spitfire and the Hurricane are now regarded as trundling old buses, the men who flew them are also too slow for the jet-propelled age. In modern air combat, planes approach each other at a thousand

miles an hour—and even the split-second reflexes of the trained fighter-pilot are too sluggish to take the decisions—and translate them into action—necessary at that speed.

So electronics are coming to the rescue. The apparatus that can calculate in a few seconds mathematical formula which would engage a team of scientists for a year, is now being put to use in warplanes. The new semi-automatic interceptors have to be piloted by human agency only into the field of combat. Then, radar takes over. The nose of the aircraft is packed with electronic apparatus which guides the craft towards its target—the invading bomber. At the correct instant, mathematically and infallibly decided, the ring of rockets packed around this electronic nose are released, to hurtle unerringly upon their target.

The pilot—himself a passive target, for, presumably, there is similar apparatus carried by the bomber—now has only the task of bringing the aircraft home.

This is the first step. The aim of the gentlemen developing these scientific instruments is an interceptor which can be launched by radar, controlled and guided and brought back, if not destroyed, entirely from the ground and without a pilot at all. And undoubtedly it is also their aim to produce a similarly-controlled bomber. So the air combat of the future will be fought by flying machines of fantastic complexities and speeds tearing themselves to pieces

while, huddling in some radio station hundreds of miles away, the military men push buttons.

The Weltsian nightmare of push-button warfare carried on by mad scientists is coming true.

And where do we fit in? Well, in the first place, these machines have to be made, and since they are almost certain to be destroyed the first time out, they will have to be made in fantastic numbers. This will mean large-scale production and this needs workers.

The complexities and highly skilled nature of the work ("high brain content" products, these are) will entail tremendous costs of production which will inevitably lead to a falling standard of living. We cannot have automatic interceptors and butter.

The consumption of fuel by the modern jet engine is terrific. Clearly the cost of running a war on these lines is going to be absolutely crippling to the economy of every State involved. This, however, is unlikely to stop the statesmen, since "if we don't have them, the other side will have an advantage over us."

If it were not for one thing, the prospect of warfare in which human beings did not actually do the fighting would seem to be progressive. Unfortunately, however, apart from the fact that we shall be starved and enslaved to pay for such a war—we shall be the targets.

## Birth Control & Religion in Asia

Continued from p. 3

they are free, we will have no birth control problem in India. If they will only learn to say "no" to their husbands . . . The real problem is that they do not want to resist them . . . If a wife says to her husband, "No!" . . . he will make no trouble. But she hasn't been taught . . ."

MRS. SANGER: "But that advice is not practical . . . It leads to divorce. The average marriage contract assumes that married relationship will be harmonious."

MR. GANDHI: "There should be a mutual consent. Without it the thing will be wholly wrong . . ."

MRS. SANGER: "Haven't you some messages of encouragement . . . to help in this work which we are doing for humanity?"

MR. GANDHI: "I can only say may God guide you right as you would say to me. We are only human beings. I think highly of your purposes; otherwise I would not have given time to this subject . . . We have certainly come nearer together."

In London, on her way to India, Mrs. Sanger had first met Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the present Prime Minister. At

that time, as he has since, he expressed himself in favour of birth control for India, especially for the villages in which maternal and child mortality are "so appalling". Mrs. Sanger found the great poet and philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore, in favour of it. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, India's famous woman poet, had long been a staunch advocate.

Referring to opponents of contraception influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of self-restraint, *The Indian Social Reformer*, Bombay, comments (Feb. 1952): "If it is contended that the mounting population of the country is due to the uncontrolled passions of the population, then what hope is there of correcting the trend by homilies on self-restraint?"

The argument that "artificial methods of birth control" are "foreign to the Indian tradition" is also contested. "A casual reference to old Census reports will show that amongst the fishermen of Bombay there is frequent resort to a rough and undependable method of birth control . . . Contraception of a crude kind, observes the Madras Census Superintendent, has been noticed among the Goundans of Salem. It may be assumed that, though not publicized as widely as the Indian eagerness to have sons, these are not isolated instances."

## Official Secrets

Continued from p. 1

the Allied Powers can use any Iron Curtain "spy" or "traitor" they will do so, however morally shocked we must be in like circumstances if "they" do it to "us".

Let us therefore drop the humbug about the "sanctity of our contract to the State". Neither side believe in it anyway. We would like to know rather more what the "secrets" are that we must always be so careful about. The sad case of France in 1940 shows rather too well that when there is too much secrecy it is usually because they are going to betray without witnesses.

Military secrets never seem to mean much. Any intelligent school-boy graduating on Phillips Oppenheimer could have told the British and French Governments that Hitler was rearming, even without finding too many papers. He could—if he had dared—have told Hitler that the British Government would not co-operate with him after the fall of France, in order to attack Russia. Since politicians are so much wiser than the mere folk over whom they rule, however, the possession of such information leaves them not a whit better off. State secrets are useless to a secret service agent, too—for instance, why should a Russian agent seek to steal an enemy's secret police dossier of revolutionaries, when he knows full well that—as in France in 1940—the police will hand it over with open arms once the conqueror is installed?

True, it is distressing to see anyone acting as a spy, because it is something repugnant to human dignity, whether it is creeping round the office to lift a few codes so that a potential enemy may know that Hong Kong and Gibraltar are intended as fortified bases, or creeping round the park to find someone passing on the "secrets", or whatever else the police hope to find when they creep around the park. But it is perfectly

## Violent Crimes Decrease

There have been fewer cases of robbery with violence since corporal punishment was abolished nearly four years ago—842 cases in 1947, when it was still in force and 633 last year.

The Lord Chancellor, Lord Simonds, said this in the Lords on June 11th, when Earl Howe asked for the restoration of corporal punishment to be considered.

## Strike Over Control of Industry

The *New York Times* has reported a strike of 250,000 workers in the Ruhr and Rhineland over the issue of co-determination (worker ownership and participation in management). More walk-outs are scheduled. The same technique was used last year to force passage of a law granting co-determination to the coal, iron, steel and chemical industries, but the present action was taken for enlarging the scope of the plan to defeat a draft bill which would make the labour council only advisory. The *Times* reported that foreign governments feared that any success on the part of German labour would give rise to demands throughout Europe for co-ownership. The strike action was sufficiently anti-Stalinist to involve a riot in which the majority of the men resisted the attempt of Communists to take over the demonstration.

—*Catholic Worker* (U.S.A.), June 1952.

## LESSONS OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

Continued from p. 2

(victims of the savage repression following the Asturian rising in October 1934). Santillan justifies this position adding that, "Without the electoral victory of February 16th, we should never have had a 19th of July." "We gave power to the Left parties, convinced that in the circumstances, they represented a lesser evil" (p. 37). Santillan, it must be stated, was a leading member of the F.A.I. (Anarchist Federation of Iberia), organiser of the anti-fascist Militias in Catalonia and later one of the "anarchist" ministers in the Catalan government.

Having justified the intervention in the elections, Santillan then proceeds to say that "the Left-wing parties having been returned to power, thanks to us, we watched them persist in the same lack of understanding and the same blindness. Neither the workers in industry nor the peasant had any reasons to feel more satisfied than before. The real power remained in the hands of factious capitalism, of the Church and of the military caste" and the military proceeded with preparations for their *coup d'état* "to deprive the republican parliamentarians of what they had gained legally at the elections of February 16th." The victory of the Left resulted in the opening of the prisons in February 1936 and releasing most of the political enemies of the Right.<sup>3</sup> Four months later, on July 20th, when the workers of Barcelona had defeated the rebellion, their first task was to open the gates of the Barcelona prison, which, in Santillan's words, was "overflowing with our comrades"—this time not victims of the Right parties but of the Left! Santillan further admits that a change of government did not in fact transfer the "real power", and we know from documentary evidence that the generals had started preparing their coup before the elections of February. (Peirats reproduces in his book a manifesto issued by the C.N.T. before the elections in which they warned the Spanish people of the preparations being made by the generals—naming Spanish Morocco as the centre of activities—and calling on the revolutionary workers to be on their guard and ready for action. "Either fascism or the Social Revolution" was the keynote of this historic manifesto.)

The Popular Front government dismissed these warnings. In the words of the Minister of War, they

were "rumours" which could be described as "false and without any foundation" calculated to foment "public anxiety, to sow ill-feeling against the military and to undermine, if not to destroy, the discipline which is fundamental to the Army. The Minister of War is honoured to be able to declare publicly that all ranks of the Spanish Army, from the highest to the lowest are keeping within the limits of the strictest discipline, ever ready to carry out their orders to the letter . . . The Spanish Army, a model of self-sacrifice and loyalty, deserve from their fellow citizens the respect, affection and gratitude that are due to those who, in the service and defence of their country and the Republic, have offered their lives if security and national honour so demand," and so on, *ad nauseam*.

During those few months from the time of the February elections to the military rising in July, the whole of Spain was seething with unrest. 113 general strikes and 228 local strikes took place, many as protests against fascist outrages. In the struggle with the forces of "public order" and between political factions, 1,287 people were injured and 269 killed. And as we have pointed out earlier, the prisons were filled with anarchist militants.

Spanish history—and recent history at that—was simply repeating itself. In 1931 with the proclamation of the Republic, a Socialist-Republican government was formed. It was politically impotent except, as Santillan puts it, in being used by the old politicians of the monarchy to carry out the usual repression of the revolutionary movement.<sup>4</sup> In the 1933 elections the Left Government was defeated by the Right, mainly as a result of mass abstention by the workers for which the C.N.T. was mainly responsible. Peirats describes this "electoral strike" by the C.N.T. in these terms:

"The campaign was intense, and was continued throughout the electoral period and ended with a monster meeting in the Plaza de Toros Monumental in Barcelona, at which the speakers of the C.N.T., Pavon, Germinal, Durruti and Orobon Fernandez

<sup>3</sup> In *Histoire des Républiques Espagnoles*, Victor Alba describes the position after 18 months of the Republic: "the provocations of the Right and the vacillation of the Left resulted in the death of 400 people of whom 20 belonged to the police, 3,000 people were injured, 9,000 imprisoned, 160 deported; 30 general strikes and 3,600 local strikes; 161 periodicals were suspended of which four were right-wing publications."

launched the *mot d'ordre*: 'Frente a las urnas, la revolucion Social'—(that is that the alternative to the polling both was the social revolution). The C.N.T. and the F.A.I. aware of the repercussion and the transcendence of their position, declared at that meeting that if the defeat of the Left-wing parties was coupled with a victory for the Right they would release the forces of the social revolution."

Compare this position with that adopted by the C.N.T. in 1936, and there can be no doubt that whilst paying lip-service to the principle of abstention from participation in elections, the leadership of the C.N.T. was working behind the scenes, offering the Left politicians the potential vote the Confederation represented in return, perhaps, for guarantees that the political prisoners would be released in the event that the Popular Front was victorious at the February elections. These are far from being wild speculations. What is certain is that within the C.N.T. there have always been strong personalities who, as is always the case with those who would ride roughshod over basic principles, declared themselves to be the practical men, the realists of the movement and just as they used the potential vote of the C.N.T. as a bargaining weapon in their discussions with the politicians (often without any mandate from the organisation), so they used the thousands of C.N.T. political prisoners as an argument to justify their reformist, and, clearly, anti-C.N.T. policies and to blackmail the membership into accepting them.<sup>5</sup> V.R.

(To be continued)

<sup>5</sup> The student is referred to Peirats' book where he reproduces a speech made by Juan Peiró, a leading member of the C.N.T., at a Congress of the C.N.T. held in 1931 in which the rôle of the Confederation in the political events leading up to the proclamation of the Republic were debated. Peiró in that speech revealed the most fantastic "behind the scenes" negotiations that had taken place with the politicians and justified them all. Later, Peiró was among the scissionist syndicalists (the *Treintistas*) who were later readmitted to the C.N.T. at the Congress of May 1936, and became a Minister in the Caballero Government. After the defeat he was in France; was arrested by the Gestapo and handed over to Franco's régime and executed. Far from wishing to live down the reformism of men like Peiró, there are those who call themselves members of the C.N.T. who have actually published a volume by Peiró (*Problemas y Cintarazos*, Rennes, 1946, which had been printed in Spain in 1939 but was never distributed as it appeared just as the defeat was complete) not as a historic document but as representing the policies which they support.

natural for the public to feel sorry for a young chap getting a five-year stretch owing to getting entangled in the spiders' web of power politics. When the revolutionary gets a vindictive sentence he at least knows he was nobody's dupe, but in such a case as that under discussion these reflections add to the bitterness of the sentence. And what does the State gain from such a sentence when at last it disgorges its prey?

INTERNATIONALIST.

## ERRATA

In the article on "John Brown of Harper's Ferry" there were two misprints. John Brown was referred to as "the most militant of the anti-abolitionists". Obviously this should have read "abolitionists".

Later on, it said he settled near Osawatomie to defend the cause of "free socialism" and abolition. This should have read "free soilism"—a contemporary term to denote non-slave farming. As mentioned in the article, he had no acquaintance with such ideas as socialism.

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

#### OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting  
HYDE PARK  
Every Sunday at 4.30 p.m.  
MANETTE STREET  
(by Foyle's, Charing Cross Road)  
Every Saturday at 6.0 p.m.

### INDOOR MEETINGS

at the  
CLASSIC RESTAURANT,  
Baker Street, W.1  
(near Classic Cinema)  
MEETINGS SUSPENDED

### NORTH-EAST LONDON

DISCUSSION MEETINGS  
IN EAST HAM  
Alternate Wednesdays  
at 7.30  
JULY 23—Open Discussion  
ANARCHISM & PACIFISM

### WEST LONDON

Enquiries to—  
C. Brasnett, 79 Warwick Ave., W.9

### LIVERPOOL

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

### GLASGOW

#### OUTDOOR MEETINGS

at  
MAXWELL STREET  
Every Sunday at 7 p.m.  
With John Gaffney, Frank Leech,  
Jane Strachan, Eddie Shaw  
Frank Carlin

### LEEDS

Anyone interested in forming a group in Leeds, please contact Freedom Press in first instance.

### COVENTRY

Anyone interested in forming a group in Coventry, please write Freedom Press.

### SAN FRANCISCO

FREEDOM readers are invited to support a Spanish Protest meeting to be held in San Francisco, at the Hall in 827 Broadway on July 19th.

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