

Freedom

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Threepence

GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR FARMING

IN the to be expected and all too familiar warnings about economic crisis which the government have issued, and which—as we go to press—are to be debated this week, there is one slightly new note. This is the statement that to place the national economy on a more secure footing agricultural output has to be increased by as much as 60 per cent. over pre-war levels.

Over the past year or so FREEDOM has noted a tendency among economists and politicians to pay more attention to farming as an economic activity. Of course this tendency is directly connected with the falling off of industrial exports to the once under capitalized agricultural countries. In the past this country's industrial products were paid for mainly by agricultural imports—a process which has been gaining momentum for some seventy years and which caused the gradual destruction of British farming. In the course of these seventy-odd years more than half the country's arable land went out of cultivation (becoming permanent grass) while the numbers of men employed in agriculture also fell to less than half its former figures. This decline becomes even sharper if one takes into account the considerable increase in the population as a whole.

Political Somersault

Figures such as these had to be dug out of text books and reports. Before the war the average newspaper reader was encouraged to believe that vast food imports were essential for our population, that the soil of Britain could not support the population, that "cheap food imports" were a major factor in raising the cost of living. FREEDOM derided this line of propaganda during the war when food production in Britain was vastly increased (despite the inability of the soil to support, etc., etc.). The calm way, in which the politicians now call for an increased agricultural output, however, will only surprise naïve observers of the political scene.

Agricultural Stability

Anarchists have always regarded stability in the economy of food production as a necessary basis for a stable social system. It seems obvious that food production should be the primary economic activity of

every region, and should be balanced with industrial activity not ousted by it.

It is this attitude which has made Marxists deride anarchism as a "peasant outlook", etc. But anarchists have never fallen for the idea of large-scale industry which leads to increasing regional specialization, and in this country by concentrating almost the whole of economy into industrial production, created a national economic specialization which almost strangled agriculture altogether.

The Marxists in their uncritical belief in the "inevitable" superiority of large-scale enterprise carry it even further and believe that even agri-

culture should be carried on by large undertakings with the peasant proletarianized into a wage worker in collective agricultural collectives. In the post-war years in Russia, the smaller collectives have been progressively merged into larger and larger units.

Such a standpoint is essentially capitalistic and contains no revolutionary conceptions. The present proposals of the Conservative Government are in the same category. Their desire to expand British agriculture does not spring from social needs, but from the exigencies of a capitalist economy whose overseas markets are shrinking.

Nevertheless, any measure which increases the output of agriculture, provided it improves the productivity of the soil, is to be regarded as a social advance. The ability of the land to produce food is a social asset of the first importance to a rational economy and a rational organization.

FOREIGN COMMENTARY The "Broad Basis of American Capital Distribution"—Fact & Fiction

ACCORDING to the *New York Herald Tribune*, the "broad base of capital distribution in the United States" is shown in a study made by the Brookings Institution, a private research organisation.

The study reports that there are some 6,500,000 individual owners of publicly held stock issues. Furthermore, the study found, this ownership is distributed throughout all income groups with more than 200,000 families whose incomes are less than \$2,000 yearly holding shares.

Summarising the findings of the study, Brookings Institution said: "The study shows that vast numbers of people have a direct stake in the ownership of business enterprise. In addition to ownership of stocks, the general public has a substantial interest in the operation of corporations by virtue of ownership of bonds and other credit instruments—both directly, and indirectly through holdings of life insurance and savings accounts."

The report shows that there are 30,300,000 shareholdings in stock issues traded on the organised stock exchanges and in over-the-counter transactions.

But let us examine a little more closely how "broad" is the base of capital distribution in the United States. Firstly,

"Toleration is not the opposite of Intolerance, but is the counterfeit of it. Both are despotisms. The one assumes to itself the right of withholding Liberty of Conscience, and the other of granting it."

—THOMAS PAINE
 (The Rights of Man)

the term "shareholding" applies to individuals holding one share or a million shares in a particular issue, so that before being hypnotised by the 30,000,000 shareholdings, one must examine how the shares are distributed amongst them. We then learn that 46%—or 13,800,000 shareholdings are of only one share each and that 8%, or 2,400,000 shareholdings, are of ten or more shares. And since it is estimated that the total number of shares held publicly in the 16,655 stock issues is 5,000 million it will be seen that nearly 14 million shareholders possess nearly 14 million shares, whilst 2.4 million shareholders possess 4,900 million shares . . . not to mention the millions of Americans who possess no shares at all. So much for the "broad basis of capital distribution in America"!

FIGURES for the consumption of spirits in America tell a curious story, with a moral.

Apparent consumption last year was 194,000,000 gallons, which works out at an average of not more than 1.26 gallons per person. The average for the years 1939-1951 was 1.23 and for 1947-1951 at 1.22 gallons. During the years under examination the consumption of spirits was legal.

Now, according to Dr. Warburton's *Economic Status of Prohibition*, an authoritative work on liquor consumption during the prohibition years, the consumption of "hard-liquor" in 1929 was 226 million gallons or an average consumption of 1.86 gallons per head and for the whole period of prohibition the average consumption is given by Dr. Warburton as 1.71 gallons.

In other words, Americans drank more in prohibition days than they do now that drinking is legal.

FOR the defenders of capitalism as an efficient system here are two items of information which appeared on different pages of the same issue of an *Economic Supplement of the New York Herald Tribune* recently. From Singapore it was reported that imports of cement to Malaya from Japan have been cut by a half. No reason is given, though it is pointed out that builders prefer using Japanese cement because of its low cost and that there will nevertheless be no shortage as the deficit will be imported from other sources. The amount involved is 88,000 tons.

From Hanoi, in French Indo-China, the A.P. reports that the big French-controlled cement plant at the Port of Haiphong in the N.E. of the country, boosted its production to 204,000 tons in 1951 from 137,000 tons in 1950. A large part of the output was absorbed by the needs of the military but their was also "a considerable export to Japan."

We know this is nothing new, but there is no harm in pointing out these cases when the very business leaders who send coals to Newcastle spend their time exhorting the workers to produce more, and more efficiently in the national interest and all that. But business goes on in its own sweet way, and the people foot the bill in higher costs for raw materials.

LIBERTARIAN.

Summer School 1952

THOSE requiring accommodation have been circulated with forms. It would help facilitate arrangements if they would complete these forms whether they have written previously or not, and return immediately to the Summer School Committee.

If any comrades in the London area have accommodation to offer we should be grateful if they would contact the Summer School Committee, L.A.G., c/o Freedom Press, 27 Red Lion Street, W.C.1.

Railwaymen Miss the Boat

WHEN the Railway Executive began to recruit new workers to counteract the "work-to-rule" of Western Region locomotive shed men last week, they underlined the definite change that has taken place in labour relations in the last few months.

The "pool of unemployed" which the workers have so long and so rightly feared returning is in fact here now, and the first definite use of it as a management weapon against employed workers sounds a warning of what is to come.

The locomotive shed men—who clean the fireboxes, fill the boilers and light the fires of engines in service—began a work-to-rule by cutting out overtime and piece-work. This they did as a protest against the fact that increases in pay for piece-work have not kept pace with that for time, and they are claiming back pay—amounting to as much as £145 a man—dating back to 1947.

Since then, national wages awards have amounted to 16s. on basic rates, but no increases have been given on piece rates. But it is surely logical that, since there is a recognised connection between basic pay and piece-work pay, if the basic is increased, so should the rates for the piece. Simply to benefit by an increase in basic means only that a man working on payment by results is given an increase representing a smaller per-

centage of his earnings than the man on day work.

That is the logic of the men's case, and it seems fair enough. But the Executive think otherwise, and its firm stand has uncovered the dependence which many workers now have upon piece-work and overtime to make a living wage.

These locomotive shed workers, for instance, have been earning from £7 10s. to £14 a week—but their basic rates are between £5 10s. 6d. and £5 19s. 6d.—which is well below the average wage for the country and even further below a decent living wage for a family man.

Thus, by working at piece rates the men have masked the low standard of their pay. The union, incidentally, have negotiated the increases on the basic but have not, for all the apparent results, done a thing about increasing piece rates. Hence the men's action now, and at depots throughout the Western Region, a work-to-rule resulted in a hold-up of trains at Paddington on main line holiday services and also on freight traffic.

The management's answer was to begin recruiting new men to take their place. Saying that work-to-rule could work both ways, and that if the men chose time-work they could stay on it, the management brought three men from London to the Banbury depot to learn the job and get the work done that was piling up.

This was only the beginning, but it was enough for the men to see they were not going to win. Although nine depots were working-to-rule and others were on the verge of joining, very little support was forthcoming from railmen in other grades. Realising their weak position, the shed men gave in and re-

A POLICE JOB

THE rationing system was intended only to ensure that the holders of the card got the food to which they were entitled. But he has been shocked to find that the information required brought in other things than food. "A friend recently was lucky enough to find someone to come and cook for his family. She applied in the normal way for a ration card but, to my friend's amazement and the cook's fear and disgust, who should turn up but a cruel and sadistic husband, whom she was frightened of and had escaped from, to cash in on her job, tipped off so to do by none other than the police."

—Report of speech by Lord Sempill in the House of Lords debate on Lord Samuel's "Liberties of the Subject Bill." 16/7/52.

OBJECTORS

THE June issue of *The Objector*, reports that of 286,635 young men registering for National Service in 1951, 722 registered as conscientious objectors. In 1950, there were 635 and in 1949, 595. There were 672 applications to the seven local tribunals.

Eighty-six National Servicemen were prosecuted during the year. The corresponding figures for 1950 and 1949 were 61 and 34 respectively.

Of 80 men who were prosecuted for refusing to submit to medical examination, 60 were imprisoned, 17 were fined and 3 submitted to examination. One man was prosecuted for failing to attend for examination, but no order was made for him to submit. Twelve of the 80 had been prosecuted once during 1950, and 20 more were prosecuted a second time during 1951, 14 being imprisoned and 6 fined. One man was prosecuted three times during 1951, and 2 others were prosecuted for the third time. Prison sentences ranged from one to twelve months, and fines from £5 to £50.

Four conditionally-registered C.O.s were imprisoned (sentences of 41 days to 9 months), and one was fined £30,

for failing to comply with their conditions.

Z MEN

Of Class Z Reservists recalled for training this year, at 12th June, 324 applicants had been before the local tribunals and exemption had been granted in 184 cases (56.8 per cent.). Sixty-eight appeals had been heard and thirty had been allowed.

Twenty-two Z Reservists who claimed conscientious objection have been prosecuted for failing to report for the training in 1951. There were five prison sentences: one of fourteen days, two of one month and one of two months. The remaining seventeen were fined amounts ranging from £1 to £20. Several who have been summoned again for training this year have been exempted by the tribunals.

SCHOOLBOY OBJECTOR

Paul Brown, a student at the City of London School, has refused to serve in the school Combined Cadet Corps and has been expelled in consequence. Membership of the Corps is compulsory for all boys from the age of fourteen.

The *Objector* is issued by the Central Board for Conscientious Objectors, 6 Endsleigh Street, London, W.C.1.

LETTER FROM NEW YORK YOU TOO CAN BE PRESIDENT

IN all the bluff, buncombe, bluster and braggadocio sluicing out of Chicago recently, one fact crystallises for even the most amateur of political observers: the United States is now blessed with two Republican Parties. However, the glib quack publicists for the crowds involved in the raw contention for party control, attempt to graft strong scar tissue over the scarlet wounds, they are doomed to failure, for the gashes are irremediable. These were not incisions made by honed scalpel in skilled hands—these were the huge wedges excised by desperate party-hackers lusting first after the patronage to devolve upon the survivors in this internecine carnage, and then after the spoils stored up to crown the sweaty pates of whichever carpet-bagging cutt succeeds in better hoodwinking the American electorate come the Election Follies of 1952 next November 4th.

Only incidentally was the tug-of-war between two ambition-ridden individuals—they were the hagling punchinello of the carnival; in essence the struggle lay between the "Old" and "New" Guards within the Republican Party itself, winner-take-all and no holds barred. It is patent beyond seeking that the "New" is just the woman face to the same corroded coin as the "Old", but in order to transfuse fresh interest into a failing side-show, the string pullers had to float an illusion of fundamentalism-at-stake, and triumphant Eisenhower regiments can now be expected to exploit that illusion for all its limited worth. I say limited because the Democratic candidate will not be the straw man for Eisenhower that Taft proved to be. In the preliminaries, a boyish ignorance of things was a fetching pose for Eisenhower to strike, for certainly a general who has spent so much time abroad in the service of his county could scarcely be expected to be *au courant* on too many of the political, economic and social intricacies of a well-run capitalistic establishment like the United States. From now on though, protested ignorance cannot but be a serious handicap to a politician who must diligently solicit the suffrage of an electorate at best indifferent, at worst hostile. The brand-new nominee will be forced to make some positive declarations on his own behalf as he is groomed by the stable boys prior to his taking to the rotten hustings, and his Democratic opponent-to-be can be counted upon to force the general into as many unpopular assertions as possible. The first order of business for the Democrats, indeed, will be to taint the untainted.

Under the campaign pressures which must develop, Eisenhower will veer more and more toward orthodox Republicanism, a course which will be tarnish enough as a start, for, for two decades now, the Republican Party has been wallowing in odoriferous disrepute. This initial derogation of the general might well take the form of the obvious observation that notwithstanding Ike Eisenhower's virtues as an individual, general, or statesman (not, to be sure, that he is *invulnerable* on those scores), he still is the candidate—signed, sealed, frozen and delivered—of his party whose symbol might better be the Bradymus than the poor maligned elephant which after all is quite an intelligent animal capable of rapid and constructive behaviour when the occasion demands. Not so the barnacled Republican Party, however.

Not the least treacherous of barnacles with which the Eisenhower crown will have to contend is the party platform. I have no intentions of detailing this woeful document, this specious jeremiad against the Democratic Party, this agglomeration of political placebos so adroitly clobbered with double-talk that

in four thousand words it contrives to say little and pledge less. As usual, though, it does encompass all the *chevaux de bataille* on which the Republican Party, the last four times out, has ridden *ventre à terre* to defeat. Since it so happens that in those losing races the gap between them and the front-running Democrats progressively diminished, the Republicans appear to be reasoning that this time, if they just sit tight and jockey for riskless openings, some esoteric law of mathematics decrees that they *must* come in first. Bookies have flourished on more substantial hunches than this.

The best tip-off on the platform, authored in the main by the little gaddly John Foster Dulles, is that it was acceptable to all factions of the party; indeed, when the platform committee got around to putting their jaded carbon-copy generalities to paper, they discovered a pleasant unanimity among the factions. That explains, for instance, the rather anomalous, situation in which the nominee now finds himself: one of the platform planks declares for emphasis of air power and de-emphasis of ground power. This is a Hoover-Taft confection directly repugnant to everything Eisenhower had been saying and working towards up to the afternoon of his nomination, and directly contradictory to the position emphatically pronounced by Eisenhower's hand-picked successor. A *contretemps* of cut could embarrass non-politicized individuals, but then, if Eisenhower intends to qualify for the Professional Tumblers and Politicians Union, he will have to start some place to arm himself with that slippery shiftiness of stride and tongue which distinguishes its flip-flapping membership.

A point of interest in the pre-convention skirmishing was that the self-styled "liberal" (Eisenhower) juggernaut proved more anti-Negro in the South than did the "conservative" (Taft) steamroller. The Eisenhower crowd was and is making strenuous overtures to the effective (i.e. Democratic) southern poli-

tics, ergo its indorsement of the *status quo*; the Taft crowd, realising that it was too heavily redolent of the Republican stench to woo away any significant portion of the traditionally Democratic south, had instead toadied up to factions that have not been enjoying political preferment, which is to say, the dissidents, the Negroes, labour, and so forth. It was this direct collision between well-heeled juggernaut and potboiling steam-roller, in fact, which proved a Titanomachy, which festered into the ineradicable acrimony which rent the convention in Chicago, and which produced the issue of delegate-seating which eventually jet-propelled the Eisenhower crowd to its Pyrrhic victory and catapulted Taft into disaster.

There would be little purpose in recapitulating a blow-by-blow sequence of the convention proceedings themselves. Ironically enough, the actual nominating roll-call of the states was anticlimactic; the confident Taft camp became an immediate shambles the moment the convention voted to seat Eisenhower's henchmen from Georgia and to oust Taft's rubber-stamp cronies from the same state. That decisive vote reduced subsequent proceedings to mere formalities. Taft forces were already demoralised, if not actually decimated, by the time the fateful Friday toll was taken, and although Eisenhower could not muster a majority on the first run-through of the states, what remained to be settled was not the end but the means—which independent group, in other words, would be the first to scurry to Eisenhower's camp and thus set off a general stampede of vote-switching before the results of the first ballot were indelibly recorded for all posterity. As it developed, it was Harold Stassen's derelict Minnesota delegation which usurped for itself a spot of glory by ramming the sievy buckling Taft dikes. With juicy appointments at stake, it would have been quite indiscreet for a Stassenite to remain loyal to his skipper. Why go down with nailsick ballahou, its distinguishing pennant furled, that

never had a chance to stay afloat, much less sail, once out of dry-dock? One can easily imagine a farsighted ward-heeler slithering up to Stassen in the cauldron of Chicago's convention auditorium to beg the latter's permission to bail out: "Tis for my vocation, Hal; 'tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation." The ambushed Minnesota votes, jettisoning Stassen for Eisenhower, were more than enough to scuttle Taft and steam the general into free waters, but a couple of hundred more patronage-eying votes were tacked on for good measure. Even so, it is significant that no fewer than 280 votes, colours nailed to their mast, stuck with Taft even while their champion, his frantic telephone consultations with New York encamped MacArthur working to no avail, was treading the plank. They stuck it out until their fallen leader was fished out on his *passé* hatchments, and then they themselves were hustled off in irons to the debtor's brig whence there is no political returning.

After that there remained only the ritual of certifying whomever the Eisenhower crowd chose to sanctify as the general's running mate. Following a pocket palaver, the details of which are locked in the political hearts of a few silent king-makers suddenly grown fat with success, Senator Nixon of California was tapped for the post. Nixon's claim to fame is the ephemeral one of having manifestly an ability to "ferret out" communists, ex-communists, would-be communists, potential communists, near communists, and assorted "un-Americans" who might dare to run counter to official Washington decretals, those extant and those to come. True to his "hatchet-man" reputation earned by the rôle he played in the Alger Hiss affair, Nixon already has ominously vowed to smash communism "at home and abroad". To most of us that might seem to be rather an over-sized bite for any vice-presidential candidate, political party or even nation to chew, but for a youthful senator brimming with flame and vinegar that might appear to be

little more than a post-prandial chore. It is unfortunate that the boy might awaken next January to find head-spinning power thrust into his itching fingers, which would mean the devil to pay and no pitch hot.

Eisenhower, the mildest mannered man that ever scuttled ship or cut a throat, accepted the nomination with an informal sabre-rattling address to the convention on the evening of his triumph. While the general did obeisance to his new masters by loosing a veritable diarrhoea of pap and polite platitudes, one could not help recalling that from that very platform, only several nights before, Hoover and MacArthur, those worn Taftite Republican wheel-horses, had spewed torrents of words at the assemblage. Hoover, the most recent Republican president and thus some sort of extinct species of rapture? escaped from its tumultuous for one night to haunt the political jungles, was embarrassingly senile, lush and simplistic; MacArthur was his old demagogic self. Their shadows hung heavy over the rostrum as a bewildered, Spanish-walking Ike Eisenhower, already in the fussy clutches of nomenclators, chivvying advisers, television speech-experts and sundry political *coutouriers* commissioned to remould him to an *alamode* nondescriptness, summoned his party and the nation to a crusade—a house-cleaning crusade, to be conducted, if you please, by the same old jaded, stercoraceous, impotent and repudiated Knights Templars setting tilt against a gale of words, words, words. Hoover, MacArthur and Eisenhower—"three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green"—Hoover and MacArthur, their shades guffawing hysterically at the picture of a phlebotomized Eisenhower girding his abecedarian loins to slay the sticky gossamer spectres of old-guardism, an Eisenhower in a new and strange arena, an Eisenhower *Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new-reap'd, Showed like a stubble-land at harvest home; He was perfumed like a milliner, And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held A pouncet-box, which ever and anon He gave his nose and took 't away again.* Strangely enough, Eisenhower, now

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Lessons of the Spanish Revolution-2

IT might perhaps be said that we have made too much of the vacillating attitude of the C.N.T. leadership in the elections of February 1936 seeing the general contempt in which all governments have been held by the Spanish people who would therefore approve of participation by the C.N.T. in the elections if it resulted in the release of the political prisoners without considering that such action would in any way compromise the revolutionary principles of the Confederation. If the issue could be isolated in this way, the human element involved might easily overcome objections of principle. But this is not the case. Tactics are like the game of chess which demands that each move shall be viewed not only in the light of its immediate results but in all its implications several moves ahead. The moment the C.N.T. leadership was prepared to abandon principles for tactics (and, as we shall see, it was neither the first nor last occasion that they did so) new factors besides the original one of liberating the political prisoners would have to be considered.

For instance, by ensuring the Popular Front victory as a result of their participation at the election the C.N.T. had to take into account that such a victory made certain that the preparations for the military putsch would proceed unchecked. On the other hand a victory of the Right, which was almost certain if the C.N.T. abstained, would mean the end of the military conspiracy and the coming to power of a reactionary but ineffectual government which, like its predecessors, would hold out for not more than a year or two. There is no real evidence to show that there was any significant development of a fascist movement in Spain along the lines of the régimes in Italy and Germany. The Right wing parties were much the same as they had always been.

The C.N.T. in taking part in the Popular Front campaign should have therefore taken into account the effect of a military uprising. Who would resist the Military? And the question fundamental to the C.N.T.'s very existence as a revolutionary organisation: Can such a situation as will arise be converted to the advantage of the social revolution? To the first question it was clear to them that no effective resistance could be expected from the Government which would prefer to perish than arm the Spanish people. Therefore once more, all the sacrifices had to be made by the workers who were without weapons⁶ and needing time to co-ordinate and to re-organise their forces against a trained and well armed and financed force which had the advantage of initiative in attack on its side. Could the workers in the circumstances defeat the militarists' *coup d'état*? For failure to do so would mean wholesale reprisals, and once more the prisons would be filled with political prisoners, quite apart from the internal disruption in the revolutionary ranks that would result from the repression. Such, as we see it, are some of the considerations and consequences resulting from the acceptance by a revolutionary movement of political tactics at the expense of principles.

II.

The Saragossa Congress: May, 1936

THE months before the Militarist uprising were characterised, as we have already pointed out, by widespread political unrest and armed provocation from the Right. So far as Peirats' account goes it would appear that the revolutionary movements took no steps to counteract the preparations being made by the Military for their putsch, and even at the National Congress of the C.N.T., held in Saragossa in May 1936 there appears to have been no discussion on this question. This was one of the most important Congresses in

the history of the C.N.T. both because it was representative of the whole movement (it was attended by 649 delegates representing 982 Syndicates accounting for 550,595 members) and because it discussed such important questions as the internal crisis and revolutionary alliances, and examined the revolutionary activity of the movement in the uprisings of January and December 1933 and October 1934. At the same time the Congress undertook to define the Confederation's concept of Libertarian Communism in its post-revolutionary application to the important problems of the life of the Community, as well as to study what was to be the organisation's position to the government's programme of Agrarian Reform.

The internal crisis was soon solved with the re-admission of the scissionists (referred to earlier in this study as the Treintistas) and the 60,621 members they represented, to the C.N.T. On the question of a critical analysis of past struggles, the discussion of which was to determine any modification in the organization's immediate and future activities and aspirations, Peirats' does no more than reproduce in full the speech made by one of the delegates as an example of the high level of the debate. One would, indeed be tempted to reproduce many paragraphs from this revolutionary and anarchist contribution, but to do so might lead one to a wrong evaluation of the general spirit of the Congress.⁷ One of the "most significant results of the debates" according to Peirats—was the resolution on Revolutionary Alliances, which is also significant when viewed in the light of later events. This resolution declared that:

"During the period of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, many were the attempts at revolt by the people, resulting in efforts by the high level politicians to direct the revolutionary feelings of the workers into the reformist channels of democracy, which was made possible

⁶ Santillan, who was an active supporter of the Popular Front as the only means of resisting "the enemy" writes in *Porque Perdimos la Guerra*: "For the effective struggle in the streets, to use the weapons and win or die, clearly, our movement was practically the only one to rely on [the was of course referring to Catalonia where the C.N.T. were unchallenged by the U.G.T. or the political parties—V.R.]. A Committee for co-ordination with the Generalitat [the Catalan Government] was formed, in which I took part with other friends well known for their determination and heroism. Besides advocating possible collaboration, we thought that in view of our attitude and activity, arms and ammunition would not be denied us, since the best part of our reserves and small deposits of munitions had disappeared after December 1933 [in the uprising following the elections of November 1933], and during the *bienio negro* of the Lerroux-Gil Robles dictatorship." But in spite of continued and laborious negotiations the Government refused arms to the people. The reply given was that the Government had no arms! And Santillan adds later, "Direct action gained what we had failed to obtain in our negotiations with the Generalitat." Here the author is referring to a daring action by members of the C.N.T. who boarded a number of boats anchored in the port of Barcelona and seized rifles and ammunition from the ships' armouries.

⁷ At the time of writing we have been unable to ascertain whether the minutes of the Congress exist or are available, though from conversations with members of the C.N.T. who took part in the debates, we understand that no real attempt was made to draw conclusions from past actions. Controversy, and divergence of approach were avoided as much as possible in an attempt to create an atmosphere of unity within the Confederation.

by the agreement of the U.G.T. workers' organisms to enrol in the convocation of elections which resulted in the political triumph of the Republic. With the defeat of the Monarchy the U.G.T. and the party which acts as its orientator have become the servants of republican democracy, and have been able to verify by direct experience the uselessness of political and parliamentary collaboration. Thanks to this collaboration, the proletariat in general, feeling itself divided, lost a part of its revolutionary strength which characterised it in other times. The fact of Asturias demonstrates that, once the proletariat recovers this feeling of its own revolutionary strength it is almost impossible to crush it. In the light of the revolutionary period through which Spain has lived and is living, this Congress considers it an inevitable necessity to unify in a revolutionary sense the two organisations U.G.T.—C.N.T." The conditions for realising such a pact were as in the case of the Regional Conference in Catalonia earlier that year, so revolutionary as to be unacceptable to the politicians of the U.G.T. And only in April 1938, eighteen months after the military rising, was agreement reached between the two workers' organisations. But by then the revolution had been crushed and the workers were engaged in a heroic but hopeless military struggle.⁸

Space considerations prevent any detailed reference here, to the Congress' statement of principles and objectives. This long document can be described as an undogmatic statement of anarchist ideas in which an attempt has been made to incorporate the different shades of interpretation of the Libertarian Society—from the syndicalist to the Individual Anarchist points of view. In the preamble, it is interesting to note that the C.N.T. justified the discussion of the post-revolutionary society because it considered that the period through which Spain was passing could easily result in a revolutionary situation from the Libertarian point of view. This attitude makes all the more surprising the lack of any discussion of the problems that might face the organisation during the revolutionary period. Or more specifically, what was to be the attitude of the organisation on the morrow of the defeat of the Military putsch, when they found themselves suddenly at the head of the revolutionary movement. Such a possibility could easily be envisaged in Catalonia, if not in the provinces under the Central Government. Perhaps for the rank and file the answer was a simple one: the social revolution. But in the light of subsequent actions, for the leadership of the C.N.T., it was not as simple as all that. Yet these problems and doubts were not faced at the Congress, and for these serious omissions of foresight or perhaps of revolutionary democracy in the organisation, the revolutionary workers paid dearly in the months that followed. V.R.

(To be continued)

C.N.T. : Workers' National Confederation
Revolutionary Syndicalist organisation influenced by anarchist ideas, and whose objectives were Libertarian Communism.

U.G.T. : General Union of Workers
Reformist Trade Union movement influenced by social democratic ideas and controlled by the Socialist Party.

⁸ The "Programme of Unity of Action between the U.G.T. and C.N.T." was published in translation in *Spain and the World* (No. 33, April 8, 1938). An earlier issue of the same journal (No. 31, March 4) published the texts of the original proposals for such Unity put forward by the U.G.T. and C.N.T. respectively, as well as critical appraisals of these by our comrade Emma Goldman and by the Spanish Anarchist Federation.

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GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

DURING the first World War many restrictions were placed on the liberty of the individual by such measures as the Defence of the Realm Act (D.O.R.A.). Anti-militarists and others fought them at the time but were always met with the promise that these restrictions were emergency measures to be lifted with the return of peace. Of course, they were not lifted and civil liberty after 1918 was very much curtailed as compared with before 1914.

Exactly the same performance was enacted in 1939 when the Emergency Powers Act (E.P.A.) was stamped through Parliament. Of course, these emergency powers would be rescinded at the end of the war, etc., etc.

But more important almost than individual regulations restricting liberty, has been the tendency for government to be carried on by statutory orders, rules and regulations issued by Ministries without discussion in Parliament and without the possibility of discussion and opposition. With the growth of such powers, administrators increasingly see themselves as rulers and lose sight of the (admittedly fairly nominal) control which is supposed to be ultimately with the electorate.

In 1950 the octogenarian Liberal peer Lord Samuel introduced a Bill to safeguard the liberties of the subject and cut down the practice of delegated legislation. It demanded greater parliamentary control over ministries and the boards of nationalized industries, and provided for greater legal protection by the Courts for individuals penalized by governmental action in such structures as marketing boards.

It is worth remarking that this Bill explicitly called upon the government to implement the recommendations of the Donoughmore Committee on Ministers' Powers of 1932—twenty years back.

In 1950—when the Labour Party was in office—the Conservative Party gave official backing to Lord Samuel's Bill. On June 7th, 1950, Mr. Churchill declared in the Albert Hall: "Here, let me say, I am much encouraged by the Bill embodying individual rights and liberties which the Liberal Party has sponsored and which, I understand, Lord Samuel has introduced in the House of Lords. This Bill serves to demonstrate that upon these great issues Conservatives and Liberals are completely united." The Conservatives even issued a leaflet about it on which Churchill's portrait appeared together with Lord Samuel's, and the above words quoted. This leaflet was used later for purposes of a by-election. The Bill got as far as a second reading.

The situation now, of course, is different. It is the Conservatives who are in office when Lord Samuel reintroduces his Bill. The *Manchester Guardian's* Parliamentary Correspondent treated the whole situation as a wry comedy. "It was the best comedy played at Westminster for some time. . . . Also it was a very interesting debate and such as only the House of Lords could have staged. But to the comedy . . . Lord Samuel called the roll of some of the distinguished Tories who flowed into the Lobby in support of his Bill. Among them were most of the leaders . . .

Anyone with half a political eye could see the makings of the comedy to-day. What would the Tories in office do for Lord Samuel's Bill? Well, they played the "game". They did for Lord Samuel's motion what the Labour government did for

Lord Samuel's Bill—they sat on it and offered the same reasons for doing so as the Labour government. In fact, Lord Salisbury and the Lord Chancellor between them knocked Lord Samuel's proposals about even more heartily than Lord Jowitt had done when Labour was in office.

It is perhaps unnecessary to press the point which FREEDOM so often makes—that when it comes to governing, one political party is very like another. Or indeed that politics is not a very honest business. Or even that the Communist Party is not the only performer of somersaults!

What of the reasons given for dismissing Lord Samuel's plea—of course everyone hastened to applaud the Bill in principle—as a practical measure? The Lord Chancellor declared in effect that the government was always on the look-out for chances to repeal these emergency regulations, but they could give no undertaking till better times came. As to delegated legislation, Lord Samuel's Bill would defeat the whole purpose of it which was swiftness and flexibility in administration. He did not actually say that parliamentary and democratic methods were altogether too cumbersome but that was the implication.

The severest attack on the Lord Chancellor's position came from Viscount Simon—by no means a friend of progressive causes in the past. He declined to support Lord Samuel but "wished the Lord Chancellor had been more forthcoming on the growth of delegated legislation. We were in danger of changing fundamentally the nature of the law. We were moving into a state of society in which we were governed more by subordinate regulations than by the law of the land. This trend, was closely associated with the development of the Socialist State."

Viscount Simon quoted certain unanimous findings of the Donoughmore Commission and observed rather acridly that the Lord Chancellor was a member of that Commission "before he became a politician"—a remark that stung the Lord Chancellor into demanding a withdrawal of that "singularly unpleasant observation".

So FREEDOM is not alone in regarding the term "politician" as one of approbrium!

In the event the Bill was abandoned.

It scarcely seems needful to make further comment.

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION

RECENT Trends in Realist Painting—the current exhibition at the I.C.A. Gallery in Dover Street, has some good paintings, and those by Giacometti, Bacon and Gruber are very good indeed.

Giacometti's figures and still-lives never fail to please. His interiors, luminous with a subtle range of greys, emerge gradually from a maze of long thin brush strokes, and there is always an intensely satisfying emotion as one discovers the familiar studio with its delicate still lifes and the mysteriously evoked human figures. The two paintings by Giacometti at the I.C.A. are typical and excellent examples of his work.

Gruber's gaunt, tired and anxious nude is deeply felt and well painted; as with Francis Bacon's work they should not be passed by.

This brings us hesitating before the two Sutherlands—just what is he up to these days? The portrait at a Casino is so ludicrously like a cover design for a pulp magazine's detective story that one hesitates no longer and walks on to see the very good "Chair and Objects" by Andre Minaux, and Bernard Buffet's startling "Les Poulets"—three skinny, trussed fowls almost comically gruesome and at the same time, repulsively macabre. R.S.

HOUSING: Hypocrisy and Deception

WHILE Mr. Harold Macmillan, Minister of Local Government and Housing, was spilling platitudes about pressing forward with the housing crusade to the Town Planning committee of the R.I.B.A. last week, local housing officials were scratching their heads over their allocations of steel for housing for the third and fourth quarters of this year. The largest housing authority in the country, the London County Council, found, for instance, that despite its representations to the Ministry, its allocations for the third and fourth periods were to be telescoped into the fourth period alone, and that it would get one ninth of its requirements. This is presumably one item in the doleful tidings which Mr. Churchill has promised us for next week.

Another aspect of the perennial housing problem which was ventilated in the House of Lords last week, illustrated once again how reformist measures defeat their own object. It has been seen for very many years that a very large proportion of the working population could not afford to be healthily housed because the rents they could pay would not show a big enough profit to make it a "worth-while" investment to build houses for them. The activities of philanthropic and semi-philanthropic bodies were on far too small a scale to meet the needs of working-class housing, and through the heroic efforts of reformers a series of Housing Acts were pushed through grudging parliaments authorising local councils to build houses and flats financed by local rates and subsidies from the Exchequer.

The rapacity of private landlords, and the resulting rent strikes during the first World War forced the government of the time to pass a Rent Restrictions Act, and as a result of that experience another Rent Restrictions Act was passed at the outbreak of the second World War in 1939.

The Conservative Party which traditionally reflects the interests of people with large incomes and property-owners, has always been hostile to rent-restriction and to public expenditure on housing, and the Labour Party which traditionally reflects the interests of people with small incomes who are not property owners has always championed them. But it was a Labour peer, Lord Silkin, former Minister of Town & Country Planning who drew cheers from the Conservative benches in describing some of

the anomalies of reformism. Lord Woolton, Lord President of the Council, had introduced the second reading of the Housing Bill which, he explained, raised subsidies to meet increased building costs.

Lord Silkin said that the normal subsidy was now going to be £35 12s. a year, and in extreme cases £2 or more a week. On the basis of 250,000 houses a year, the total would be something like £10 million. It would become £20 million next year and £30 million the year after.

Predicting that housing subsidies might eventually reach £200 million or £300 million a year, he declared: "It looks as though, before long, 90 per cent. of the people of this country will be housed at other people's expense."

"That is not the whole picture. We have to take into account the large numbers of people who are being subsidised out of private funds in rent restricted houses." (Government cheers.)

There was also the problem of houses falling into decay because their owners no longer made profits on them with which to do repairs.

Earl Winterton interrupted to say that houses had actually been abandoned or given away to local authorities.

"That is perfectly true," said Lord Silkin. "In my own experience I have been offered a row of houses which I have had to decline for that very reason."

The newspapers have of course had much to say in approval of Lord Silkin's remarks. The *News Chronicle* for instance says, reasonably enough:

"The subsidy suffers from being indiscriminatory. Tenants get the benefit of it whether in need or not. A glaring case has come to light of a highly-paid executive living in a council house in Glasgow. His poorer neighbours were helping through rates and taxes to pay his rent. There must be countless other examples which are not known."

"But it is not only council house tenants who are being subsidised. A great number of private tenants do not pay the economic rent for their homes. They are being supported at someone else's expense, either the landlord or other tenants whose homes are not covered by the Rent Restrictions Act. Or, what is worse, perhaps, their homes are falling into rack and ruin around their ears

for want of repair. In any case, a false sense of values is created."

But the trouble is that, inevitably, any attempt to make the subsidy less discriminatory can be equally unfair. Mr. Jack Ellis in an article in the *Socialist Leader* (5/7/52), described the imposition of a "lodger tax" amongst the 2,000 tenants of the borough of Brentford and Chiswick.

"More and more council house tenants are being asked to pay a "lodger tax" on top of their weekly rent. Some tenants having married relatives living in the same house are asked to pay more than twice the normal rent. The scheme at Brentford and Chiswick provides for an extra payment of as much as 12s. 6d. per "lodger" in certain cases.

"Many local authorities have introduced a similar system of differential rents—the more people who live in the house, the more the tenant pays. It would be difficult to imagine anything more unfair and unprincipled. On the face of things, there seems to be some argument for the "tax". Council tenants are supposed to be paying an "unduly cheap" rent (although in many districts even this is open to question). Tenants who take in lodgers can, if they choose, charge the highest market price for this accommodation, and some local authorities claim that they are therefore entitled to a proportion of the tenant's profit.

"This argument will not bear investigation. It is sheer opportunism on the part of a council to charge vastly different rents for similar accommodation, yet in various boroughs a total of hundreds of thousands of tenants have recently become liable to this 'tax'. There are cases where, if a daughter living at home in a council house marries, and remains

Continued on p. 4

Letter from New York

'possum-playing to the groundlings, and falsely coy, was making his acceptance address to galleries upsettingly unpopulated; above the head of the newly anointed political warrior, yawned vast empty spaces as though already mocking his moneyed triumph. The circus, apparently, was over. Here no longer was an adulated captain who had happened to lead America in its greatest national war; here was a seeker after mere captation, an adumbral petitioner for political office. The fogleman who once had served, would now be served. Strange alchemy—strange alchemy indeed—strange triumph for the general. That Friday evening it made all the difference in the world, and in days ahead even a Candidate Eisenhower would come to learn that difference with pain and heartache.

Taft, with four futile attempts upon the nomination already to his discredit, has already announced that he has forsaken further designs upon the holy political grail. Subdued, relieved, smiling and affable surface-wise, he might have said with Worcester:

*I could be well content
To entertain the lag-end of my life
With quiet hours; for, I do protest,
I have not sought the day of this
dislike.*

But this equanimous façade could scarcely have camouflaged Taft's bitterness at having had victory snatched from his fingers at the very last moment by a political tyro, an *enfant terrible*, a come-lately whose chances he had held in such contempt a scant six days before. Inwardly, Taft was far from affable; inwardly, he was stewing: "Call you that backing of your friends: A plague upon such backing!" As it turned out, Taft had few friends; everyone was for him except the delegates.

Some three hours after the nominating roll-call, with the newspapers already black with huge headlines, I was riding on a bus when a man, florid with mild intoxication, wobbled up and into the vehicle. Brandishing a scuffed cardboard suitcase, he wove through the standees to the centre of the bus, planted his suitcase on the floor, spread his legs and declaimed:

"So Eisenhower won! What's all the fuss about? What difference does it make? The whole thing was a put-up job, anyway. You all knew he would win, didn't you? They just wanted to give you a good show, a run for your money, that's all. Those people down at Wall Street, they had the whole

thing rigged up. You're fools if you swallow this phoney business. Eisenhower, Taft—they're all the same, I tell you, so what's all the fuss about?"

The passengers glared icily at this interloper upon their sweet reveries of knights errant and ladies fair, and you could almost hear the collective sigh of relief when finally he removed himself from the bus. But their week-end prospects had already been considerably dampened; they looked sullen and ill-tempered, as though this one irresponsible creature, this spoil-sport, had articulated something which each of them had confessed in his heart but either would not or could not verbalise. One inevitably resents being reminded that the reality of a circus cannot survive the final act; to dash cold water on the delusion is to condemn the deluder and to chide the deluded. This was too excruciating, too brutal an operation for unanaesthetised passengers; they would have like an indefinite extension to their dream-world of excitement, significance, competition and substantiality—all the trappings—in a word, with which the Republican convention had been embellished by press, radio and figment. Now, all at once, the embellishments were skinned away and the quivering raw flesh was the same—repulsively the same as it was in 1948, 1944, 1940 and as far back as memory could transport the oldest passenger. All at once you remembered the petty ambitions, the petty passions, the petty power deals, the petty arguments, the petty harlequinisms, the petty conceits and deceptions, the petty puppets, the petty corner-cuttings, the pettifoggery, the petty manoeuvrings and manipulations, the petty appeals to purse and pride, the petty pettiness of the whole petty charade. All at once you remembered the venomous broadsides of defamatory accusations hurled from one camp to another like so many ninety-millimetre shells, and you remembered your having felt at the time how strong was the likelihood that there was truth in the bombardments from both camps. All at once you even remembered, in spite of yourself, that the radio and television rights to the convention proceedings had been peddled to industrial gargantuas for commercial sponsorship, and now, even as the voice of the spoil-sport seemed strangely to linger in the close atmosphere of the bus, you had to admit that the candidates—the front man that conquered and the also-rans—had been no less commercially sponsored.

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LAND NOTES

Profit & Loss in the Cherry Orchard

ON Sundays when the radio programmes take on a bucolic note, the news announcers will sometimes tell us unctuously of the prospects of good crops this season. "But why should we be pleased," someone said to me last Sunday, "the growers won't get any benefit, and we shan't have to pay any less."

The same observation is made by Mr. Robert Raymond in an article in last week's *Picture Post* on "Cherry Profits: Who Gets Them?" And he answers his question thus:

"As the cherries ripen, the growers hire pickers, mostly part-time. They are getting, this year, an average of 1s. 6d. for picking a 'chip', which holds 12 lb. The cardboard chips cost the grower 1s., and are non-returnable. Big growers tend to hire wooden boxes supplied by their wholesaler. If they want their own boxes they cost around 3s. 9d. each.

"The evening of the day they're picked the cherries are sent to Covent Garden by road or rail. Either way it costs 1s. per chip. Since rail transport entails more jolting about—farm to truck, truck to train, train to truck, truck to market floor—most growers now use motor transport.

"When the cherries reach Covent Garden, they are subject to a portage charge of 1d. for 'toll' (using the market) and 1d. for 'pitching' (an apt description of the unloading by the market porters). A similar charge is paid by the buyer when he takes the fruit away. These levies are taken by the porters, who can make up to £20 a week in the season (and who belong to a branch of the Transport and General Workers' Union which is organised to strangulation point in the Garden) even though many growers and buyers find it quicker to unload and load the produce themselves.

"Around midnight the unloading starts, and by 5 a.m. the fruit is displayed on the stands of the wholesaling firms. (A good pitch can cost £100 a week in rental alone; but competition for pitches is high, and wholesaling fruit firms prosper.) The salesman, on a commission of 10 or 15 per cent., then starts work on the prowling suburban retailers.

"At this point, before the cherries have even been sold, they have cost the grower about 3s. 9d. to 4s. per 12 lbs. (3½d.-4d. per lb.)—not counting his farming costs for the year, and regardless of whether they are good cherries or bad.

"When they're sold, the salesman takes his commission, and credits what's left to the grower. The best quality cherries, for sale in expensive shops or areas, might fetch 15s. per 12 lbs. Deducting commission and portage, the grower (allowing for picking, packing, sending) makes 9s. profit on a chip of cherries. With a tree averaging 30 chips, that means a paper profit of £13 10s. per tree over the year—not counting spraying, pruning, etc.

"The retailer takes the cherries back to his shop in the suburbs and, working at anything from 75 to 150 per cent. profit, sells them at 2s. 6d. per lb."

Mr. Raymond emphasises that the retailer with his 100 per cent. profit mar-

gin just can't lose, even if he slashes his price in half, he is still getting his cost back", and the wholesaler or salesman "gets his cut" whatever happens. "If the stuff rots at his feet he hasn't lost a penny—not even the portage, which is paid by grower and buyer, if any. On cherries he naturally tries to get the most he can—but often holds out too long, misses the main buying wave, and has to practically give them away, to the grower's loss."

Is there no way of getting cherries to the public (which spends about £5 million a year on them), more cheaply. Mr. Raymond tells the story of Mrs. Maxted, a grower near Canterbury, who had ten acres of small white and black cherries which she couldn't sell, because they would have been something like 1s. a lb. in the shops. She spread the word in Canterbury that on Sunday afternoon for three hours anyone could help themselves, at 3d. a lb. for whites, 4d. a lb. for blacks. The families who poured into the orchard picked 2,000 lbs. of cherries. "They wanted small cherries, all right, no matter what shop-keepers say—at 3d. and 4d."

There is no single solution to the problem. Mr. Raymond thinks. "The grower, for instance, is the big loser, when anyone is. He takes all the risks—of a bad crop, hailstorms, uncertain demand. But many growers are too conservative. They don't get together enough. Picking costs can't be reduced, but surely bulk purchase of wood, and winter work (such as is practised by Scilly Isles daffodil growers), would cut the cost of boxes from 3s. 9d., which seems absurdly high.

"Then the retailer. Is his traditional profit margin of 100 per cent. still fair? No one seems to question it—least of all the public. But the really big target is Covent Garden, that congested, expensive, inefficient market that serves 10 million people every day. On Saturdays retailers from seaside resorts such as Eastbourne come up to Covent Garden and buy cherries for the holiday crowds. They pass almost through the cherry orchards in order to pay up to 1s. 9d. a lb. for fruit to retail for 3s. 6d. Couldn't they buy direct from a grower? They could—but they might find a strange shortage of bananas next time they went to Covent Garden."

Finally there is the consumer. Mr. Raymond emphasises that "the responsibility for high prices in glut periods lies with you. If you read that cherries (or plums or tomatoes) are making nothing for their growers, don't pay shop prices. Don't buy; wait until the price is right; that's what the barrow boys do. In the end the absolute whip-hand—and Nature—is with you. For cherries won't keep more than 48 hours. They've got to be sold—to you."

LAND OF PROPERTY

TWO hundred soldiers, five armoured cars and police were called to a migrant camp near Melbourne, Australia, when 2,000 Italian migrants threatened to burn it down unless they were given work immediately.

—*News Chronicle*, 19/7/52.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ON SYNDICALIST PYRAMIDS

COMRADE P.S. writes in his reply to my letter: "It is feared that the syndicalist system of delegation would lead to pyramids of delegates, each one up the scale more and more remote from the workers on the job. This, of course, can be so if the workers set up a permanent bureaucracy and give them the right to make decisions. But that would simply not be anarcho-syndicalism, it would just be industrial unionism."

In his pamphlet, "Syndicalism—The Workers' Next Step," P.S. states (p. 36): "The workers in a factory form their works council, all the works of that industry in a certain region send delegates to a regional council, then the regional councils send delegates to the national council, who federate with syndicates in all countries." This is the "vertical" federation of councils. The same pattern he proposes for the "horizontal" federation, with the addition of a local council as well.

All this, we are assured, will not lead to the delegates being remote from the workers on the job. This is probably true in respect of the delegates to the local council—or even the regional council (though it depends on the sizes of both the region and the association sending the delegate). But what of the national council and the implied international council? The delegates are already three or four times removed from the worker in one case (vertically) and four or five times in the other (horizontally). What immediate control does the worker have over them? The instruction of the factory delegate to instruct the regional delegate to revoke the mandate of the national delegate? It seems to me that the "Co-ordinative" function which is the presumed purpose of the national (or international) council will be quite some way from the workers on the job. Even the direct election of the democrats is—theoretically—a more valid method of control.

On p. 37 of his pamphlet he also writes of "control from the bottom up" of the permanent committees. From the bottom up to where? The top? There is some value in Marx's criticism of Bakunin's concept of "control from the bottom". It would seem that the term "pyramid" is not out of place when applied to the delegate council system of the syndicalist, even of the "anarcho" variety. (If P.S. uses his analogy of the honeycomb in answer to this, it will be the first time I have heard of a honeycomb having local, regional and national councils.)

P.S. considers that this method of "linking up" industry does not lead to "pyramids of power". Nowhere in my letter did I imply that the anarcho-syndicalist envisaged any power structure in their concept of the organisation of industry. What I did state—and reiterate—is that in such a system there is a grave danger of authoritarianism developing in spite of the principles which motivate its advocates.

In his efforts to prove that other forms of organisation are subject to a like danger, he cites the soviets of the Russian revolution of 1917 as an example of non-pyramidal organisation. To cite them thus is, to say the least, erroneous. The local service sends delegates to the regional soviet—and so on up to the "Central Congress of Soviets" with its executive committee. As for the

soviets being small units, one could hardly call the soviets of Petrograd and Moscow "small".

The Bolsheviks were able to achieve their domination of the revolution, not because the other revolutionary elements were any less conscious, but because the soviet system was capable of being used for the achievement of power ("all power to the soviets" could easily be interpreted as meaning all power to the soviet of soviets). Surely the first principle for guarding against the reinstatement of authority after (and during) a social revolution is to ensure that no structure exists which can be used for the purposes of power. If the soviet system allowed the Bolsheviks to gain power (by the simple expedient of gaining majorities) then that is an argument against the soviet system. And if the anarchist movement in this country was so arranged at the period P.S. mentions that it allowed bids for sectional control to be made, then there was something wrong—from an anarchist point of view with its methods of association. Surely a free-anarchist-association must be qualitatively different from associations which are in danger of falling under the control of a section, not merely differentiated from overtly authoritarian organisations by its greater number of "Checks" against bureaucracy? To argue that the reason why the soviets were used as stepping stones to dictatorship was because the Bolsheviks gained control of them, smacks rather of the claim put forward by political parties in opposition that there is nothing wrong with government itself, only, the wrong boys are in control of it. The mode of a free association must be such as to make impossible its subordination to authority, otherwise we have no right to call it "free".

Perhaps our basic disagreement arises—as P.S. suggests—from the differing attitudes we have towards modern industry. P.S. is in favour of it. I am not. With the usual exaggerated objections of the opponent of the "simple life", he writes of not wanting to return to the era of the rushlight. Nor do I, particularly, but if I have to choose between a cave and a modern factory, I shall choose the former. I do not think the alternative is as bad as that. Good use can be made of modern technological knowledge, but freedom does not necessarily consist of working shorter hours, it is rather the possibility of creative, integral work at things one enjoys making or doing. And creative work implies more humanization and less mechanisation. Wilfred Wellock puts the case cogently enough in his *A Mechanistic or a Human Society*. The gross diversion of labour that characterises mass-industry (and its correlative

mass-man) and the amount of mechanisation that such a division implies, are in themselves a potential condition for the growth of technocracy. Only in a drastic simplification of our present methods of industry in the shape of the system of production (with the tendency towards creativity and away from "machinism") can the "multiplicity of free associations" of which I wrote be achieved and the dangers of syndicalist industrial unionism be avoided.

S. E. PARKER.

Walk into my Parlour

The Spanish Communist leader in exile, Dolores Ibarruri (famous as La Pasionaria), has come out for a "national anti-Franco front" in which the working-classes and the "petty bourgeoisie" and "intelligentsia" would fight together to establish in Spain "a democracy the achievements of which are in harmony with the principles of the bourgeois democratic revolution". Its aim would be the formation of a "provisional coalition Government", which—La Pasionaria makes plain—would be provisional indeed, for the Communists' tactical alliance with other groups would not stop them from carrying on the struggle for a "dictatorship of the proletariat". La Pasionaria's appeal is directed to every opponent of the Franco régime including, apparently, discontented Monarchists in the Spanish Army, but excluding the Anarchists and "Trotskyists" who were the mainstay of Catalonia in the Civil War and whom the Communists shot, dispersed, and overpowered.

—*Manchester Guardian*, 26/6/52.

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,
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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.

Housing: Hypocrisy and Deception Continued from p. 3

with her parents because her husband is serving overseas, she is classed as a 'lodger' and the tenants become liable to 'lodger tax'. When a Labour councillor asserted last week that no private landlord would dare to make such a charge, the Housing Committee chairman made, in effect, the astonishing reply that if the girl's husband was in the army, then, in the example given, the army authorities would "see that the tenant was all right". Opposition to these iniquitous charges came from both Labour councillors and the Trades Council, as far as Brentford and Chiswick is concerned. The position now is that the borough council has waived the 'tax' in some cases but not others, and refuses to disclose detailed reasons for doing so.

The point is that there is much to be said for each point of view. If I were a Glaswegian I should say "Why should my rates and taxes help to subsidise the rent of someone better off than me?" If I were a borough councillor I should say, "My council levies a rate and administers a government subsidy to help people afford a decent house or flat. If a tenant sublets a part of his accommodation, possibly very much to his own profit, isn't it fair to increase his rent, for the opportunism lies with the tenant not with us? But if I were a council tenant I should say, "I pay my rent; if I in this time of housing shortage go to the inconvenience of having other people in the house, that's my business." And if I were Brentford and Chiswick Council answering Mr. Ellis's last point I should say, "Of course we refuse to disclose detailed reasons for the cases where we

have waived our 'lodger tax'. How would you like your Borough Council to make public your private affairs?" In fact, this is a case where within the economic and financial structure of our society there is no 'fair' solution, just as it is impossible to say what is a 'fair' rent.

The occasion for Lord Silkin's consternation over the effect of the reformist measures which he has been advocating for a quarter of a century was the second reading in the Lords of the government's Housing Bill. Now I said that Lord Woolton explained that the bill "raised subsidies to meet increased building costs", but in fact he wasn't quite telling the truth. The Bill in fact is to offset (almost) the increase in the interest charges that the Council's have to pay because the government has raised the bank rate. Mr. G. R. Mitchison, M.P., says in *Tribune* that the Tories provided for the increase in subsidies because when the Bill was introduced the Council elections were still to come and without the increase there would have been "an extra four or five shillings a week on the rent of a Council house, and that would have brought an avalanche in the elections instead of a mere landslide." He goes on, "As Nye Bevan pointed out on its Second Reading, the increase in subsidies was based on the Councils building the cheapest possible standard houses, 'the most inferior type of house'. It made no allowance for their wishing to build better ones. Nor, as Charles Gibson and others told the Minister, did the increase meet the rising cost of building."

These "most inferior" houses are those based on the recommendations of the Ministry in the pamphlet *Houses 1952*, the second supplement to the Housing Manual. But though this pamphlet is introduced by Mr. Macmillan, who christens them "People's Houses", the designs and standards were prepared under the Labour government on the basis of its circular 38/51 of 28th April, 1951. Whether it is really worth while to scrape and save on these minimum plans is the question asked by Mr. R. Fitzmaurice, for many years director of the Building Research Station. He writes, as technical editor of the *Architect's Journal*, (3/7/52):

"... it is time it was generally realized that the architect has little influence on the total cost of housing, which includes fees, land, road services, loan charges, rates and repairs. A reduction of building costs by, say, ten per cent., would be only two per cent. of the total cost.

"Why should the architect be asked to reduce the cost of houses when everyone else is putting the cost up? While he tries to get costs lower by cutting areas and fittings and economizing on construction, other costs are rocketing. For example, the £100 or so saved by authorities who use the MOHLG house plans now has to be spent on the increase in public works loan charges from three and a half to four per cent."

Where, of course, all the politicians are deceiving us in the suggestion that our economic plight has anything to do with expenditure on housing subsidies and house-building. W.

Father Scratched His Nose...

"My father was a Lancashire working man," said Mr. Michael Harald in a recent broadcast. "He was born and grew to young manhood during Lancashire's Golden Age—although he was quite unaware of this. I have a fine feeling for that age, a nostalgia for the Lancashire I never knew.

"I remember talking to my father about this only a few weeks before he died and painting rather a self-conscious word picture of the Manchester of the turn of the century and the early nineteen-hundreds: Manchester Liberalism, Free Trade, and a Ship Canal that really meant something; a Hallé Orchestra, Monkhouse and Montague at the *Guardian*, Sir Henry Irving at the Theatre Royal and Miss Horniman's seasons at the Gaiety; carriages and pairs, German commerce and German culture, and the Old Trafford cricket ground where you could see Maclaren on his good day hit a century before lunch. Lancashire life in those days, I informed my father, had spice and flavour. An aesthetic and economic renaissance was being launched, and he, my father, had been born in Arcady—and wasn't he lucky?"

"My father scratched his nose with a blunt forefinger. 'Well,' he said at last, 'Ah know nowt about all that. All ah know is, we 'ad to work damned 'ard from first thing in t'morning to last thing at neet, and t'harder we worked the worse we wor thowt on'."

Difficult Position

For years, bottles of water from St. Walstan's Well, Norfolk, have been sent by the vicars of Bawburgh to ailing people all over the country.

Yesterday there was laid before the local council—and the present vicar—a public analyst's report saying the water is unfit for human consumption.

In his desk the Reverend Herbert L. Davies has 80 letters from people wanting water from the well—which is credited with miraculous cures since early in the tenth century. "I am now in a difficult position," said the vicar last night. —*News Chronicle*, 16/7/52.

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