

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"War and its preparations are explained, we may even say necessitated, by the accepted philosophy and the social psychology of our paleotechnic cities, and particularly of the metropolitan ones. In the first place, war is but a generalising of the current theory of competition as the essential factor of the progress of life."  
—PATRICK GEDDES.

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Threepence

## BELGIAN WORKERS RESIST Extended Conscription Attempt

MOST of industrial Belgium took part last week in a protest strike against the two-year conscription for Army recruits.

The Socialist-dominated Belgian Trade Union organisation called

the strike and a mass demonstration in Brussels streets. The CSG, Social Christian Trade Unions, opposed the strike as political in nature and ordered their members to stay at their jobs.

No incidents were reported. In the Walloon eastern and southern industrial areas almost all important industries closed.

In Brussels, 20,000 demonstrators lined the main streets carrying posters. Reinforced police watched them. The posters said: "Free Our Soldiers," "Fewer Guns, More Houses," and "Playboys Are Sent Home, Sons of the Workers Are Sent to the Barracks."

Union leader André Renard told a mass meeting that the Socialist unions did not oppose Belgium's international military commitments, but could not indorse them if they were to mean social injustice. He attacked the Communists, saying they were not at all concerned with Belgium's interests.

Supplies of water, gas and electricity remained normal throughout the country. No interruption of telephone or telegraph communications was reported. Trains at Brussels station poured in and out with their usual flow of office and factory workers.

In the important industrial Liège area, the strike was reported complete. Coal mines, steel mills and shops closed down. Dockers and ship repairers struck at Antwerp.

The 24-hour strike was the climax of a fortnight of scattered strikes and disturbances in some military barracks against the two-

year conscription. Unfortunately, one cannot report that the strike was against the principle of conscription. The Socialists think that 18 months is enough, while the Communists opt for 12 months!

However, with the world's workers silently going to the slaughter without a murmur, one cannot but record with approval any protest even if it is only against an extension of conscription.

### Detention without Trial to continue in India

BY an "overwhelming majority" the Indian House of the People agreed to extend the life of the Preventive Detention Act which expires in October, for another two years. Under this Act, the Government is empowered and has often used it, to imprison without trial for a year people "acting or likely to act in a manner prejudicial to India's security." There are 987 people at present detained under the terms of the Act.

### Millionth Conscript in U.S.A. since Korea

By the end of last month, the Government had inducted the millionth draftee into the armed forces since the beginning of the Korean war.

### American Communist Leaders Convicted

Fourteen Californian Communist leaders were convicted on Tuesday, August 5th of conspiring to teach and advocate the violent overthrow of the United States Government.

The jury in the Federal Court trial had been out since the previous Thursday afternoon. It was the longest Federal Court trial in the Los Angeles jurisdiction, having lasted exactly six months. The trial and conviction of eleven leading Communists in New York in 1949 lasted nine months; the charges were similar.

## Needs of Modern Education

LECTURERS at the Present Question Conference held in Oxford last week, included our comrade Herbert Read who took as his subject "Sign and Symbol". According to a *Manchester Guardian* report, he said that Professor J. Z. Young, the biologist, who had made a special study of the human brain and nervous system, had concluded that man was primarily a communicating animal.

Mr. Read considered that of the two systems of communication, based respectively on sound and sight, the latter had been sadly neglected by modern society. Any satisfactory social or personal integration required the full development of both.

What relative attention was paid by society, asked Mr. Read, to the ways of finding out about reality—one through logic, the other through visual images? The answer was, on the one hand, everything; on the other, nothing. Everything was done to perfect linguistic communication, but so little aware were we of visual modes of comprehension that we now conceived them as the function of an artistic minority. Education was regarded almost exclusively as a system for developing a capacity for forming concepts.

### "Revolution Needed"

A revolutionary change in our methods of education was called for. Artistic abilities were innate in a child, but were neglected in favour of abstract thought. "So in due season we get the uniform and dreary product of the modern educational system—the slick slave of the desk or the machine, a man who can tolerate without protest and even aid in prolonging the ugliest civilisation in history."

But Mr. Read did not think the adult was necessarily condemned to "visual sclerosis". Given the will we could re-educate ourselves. The creative energies of the people must be roused. "We may have to sacrifice wealth for joy, comfort for vitality, cleverness for wisdom. The question is, whether we can acquiesce in a civilisation that proliferates anxiety in the mind and ugliness in the streets."

Professor Niblett, professor of Education at Leeds University, who spoke on

"Education and Indoctrination," put forward views which contrasted violently with those of Herbert Read. He said that all the time a child's conscious mind was being taught, his unconscious attitude and standards were being formed. It was impossible to teach in isolation what one was seeking to teach.

If it was true of school it was even truer of that much greater part of education given outside. Everyone had to be indoctrinated very early to become a real member of any community.

"Schools, even universities, exist largely to perpetuate those elements in our civilisation which the sections of society behind them regard as important. If nobody is behind a school, if nobody really believes in the education it is giving, it cannot be a very potent place. That, maybe, is what is wrong with quite a number of our schools to-day."

Professor Niblett went on to say that to ask whether there was such a thing as "pure" education was unreal. It was doubtful whether some of the most important things could be taught in a detached way, although the Spens Report, playing for safety, argued that religious knowledge should be taught historically and objectively.

In spite of the importance of learning detachment, it was quite wrong to think that it was the business of education, whereas learning beliefs and behaviour according to good tradition was not. Neutrality must not be an end in itself. The distrust of the ordinary man for the expert arose because he suspected neutrality was an escape from real living.

The man who was truly responsible was the one who had come to share actively his society's values and become a representative within his civilisation. The educated man incorporated the best thought and knowledge in his world. Professor Niblett distinguished emphatically between indoctrination and propaganda. The latter was sometimes necessary, but used for self-interest in the wrong hands was a betrayal of humanity.

He concluded by expressing his belief in religious education, which was a matter of bringing children up to believe that life had a meaning of which they could find out something themselves.

## The Soldier and His Conscience

WHATEVER distinguished jurists may have had to say about the operations of the Court that conducted the trials at Nuremberg it was not a Court of Justice.

Its foundation was military victory and only those charged with war crimes among the vanquished were put on trial. It was assumed that it was impossible for Americans, Russians, French or British to be guilty of criminal acts in war.

To-day, it is to be presumed that the Americans, French and British would not make any such assumption of innocence about the Russians; and clearly the Russians would not do so about the Americans. Both sides are now finding that Nuremberg sentences have certain inconveniences in regard to their new plans for Germany's place in Europe, and time has brought a strong disposition to look again at what was done there.

Nevertheless, Nuremberg did come near to establishing that a soldier's conscience must guide his actions despite military orders, and this again has been causing a good deal of embarrassment. One trouble relates to the "Manual of Military Law."

At the beginning of the war the relative passage on this point had read:

"It is important to note that members of the armed forces who commit such violations of the recognised rules of warfare as are ordered by their Government or by their commander are not war criminals and cannot therefore be punished by the enemy."

In 1944 it was realised that this passage would be rather awkward when the war trials were undertaken so it was revised to read:

"Members of the armed forces are bound to obey lawful orders only, and they cannot escape liability if, in obedience to a command, they commit acts which both violate unchallenged rules of warfare and outrage the general sentiments of humanity."

Nuremberg being over and done with, however, this revised version has become a nuisance and the problem now arises how decently to get back to the original version.

After all, British soldiers are being called upon to use napalm, and the leading statesmen of both the Conservative and the Labour Parties are agreed that circumstances may arise in which they can be called upon to drop atom bombs on towns once more.

—Peace News, 1/8/52.

### SOCIALISATION OF THE GANG

The problem of anti-social gangs of adolescent boys is neither new nor confined to this country alone. Causes of outbreaks of aggressive behaviour vary; in occupied countries, for instance, separation of children from their parents has led to the existence of gangs of wandering children living by their wits; in New York, increased racial tension led to outbreaks of gang warfare in Harlem. The Central Harlem Street Club and the Barge Boys' Club in Wapping are two experiments started to cater for the needs of the so-called unclubbable and unattached group. There seems little doubt that acts of violence in some form or other are the main source of leisure occupation for the anti-social street gang. Remedial action must therefore concentrate on the socialisation of the gang as a gang, and not on the individual members. The Wapping club experiment has taught a number of important lessons. Spontaneous groupings formed by young people without adult interference form a necessary basis for further work. With skilled guidance the group can help the individual to achieve a degree of maturity and stability which he would probably not be able to achieve on his own.

—British Medical Journal, 19/7/52.

## SYNDICALIST NOTEBOOK

THE strike of the London Electricity Board meter readers last January has had its sequel in the Board's new action in sacking 26 meter readers, declaring them to be redundant.

Readers will remember how the Board announced that they had discovered that their meter men were spending most of their working hours in cafés drinking tea, and supervisors were engaged to go with the metermen on their rounds to check up on how many meters they could read in a day. Rather naturally the men resented being saddled with these "snoopers", as they unkindly called them, and refused to work with them.

No support, however, was forthcoming from any other section of the workers under the Electricity Authority, and the meter readers were beaten back to work.

Now, some months later, the LEB has made its next move—and has attempted to be very smart in its tactics. First, some of the meter-men were shuffled around between the various depots. Then the dismissals began, the Board obviously hoping that newcomers to a depot would not be able to claim the solidarity that long-established workers would. 26 men were fired first—a month's notice is being given "to be fair"—the Board claiming to be operating the principle: "last in, first out".

It is not without significance, in our opinion, that among those 26 are the leaders of the last strike!

The LEB, however, has really stirred up a hornet's nest now. At a meeting of shop stewards from all the London power stations, the decision was taken to give the Board seven days' notice of strike unless the dismissal notices are withdrawn. In other words, it is not only the meter-men with whom the LEB must deal, but the actual producers of electric power in the huge stations at

## METER MEN SACKED

Battersea, Barking and other London power stations as well.

Now, while the Board could afford to sit back last January and wait for the meter readers to be starved back to work, the stoppage of electric current in London would be a very different matter. Since we have to go to press the day before the strike is due to start, it may be that London will be affected by the time these words appear in print.

The strike will, of course, be unofficial and one may well ask what the ETU leadership is going to do about defending their members. The answer is nothing, for the very good reason that the Board has declined to discuss the issue of redundancy with the union.

The Board said that "it must emphasise that the existence and extent of redundancy is a matter to be decided by the management."

The whole function of an official reformist trade union is to collaborate with the boss. But what can it do if the boss refuses to collaborate with the union? There is, however, another reason why the ETU leadership is not very enthusiastic, and that is that the ETU is Communist-led, but the leader of the unofficial action last January, Mr. "George" Hall, has before now exposed some of the tricks the Commies have got up to, and was at one point expelled from his union branch because of an article which appeared in a local South London paper telling of the struggle he had trying to see his own union secretary at the country mansion which was union headquarters.

George Hall is also one of the leaders of the present action, and is under notice to quit from the LEB. Could it be that the Commies in control of the ETU would like to see Hall out of the industry? And the other non-Communist militants who are supporting him, as well?

Such considerations obviously cannot be ruled out. We can only hope that if the rank and file see that this is being done, they will also see the present leadership is thrown out!

Meanwhile, for those who are wondering why the power-men have given seven days' notice of their strike, we should point out that they did this in order to cover themselves under the Public Utilities Act of 1875, which makes it a punishable offence for workers in a public service (electricity, gas, water, etc.) to strike without seven days' notice. But in this particular industry, it does not make a lot of difference. Electricity cannot be stored up. The London Electricity Board cannot lay in a stock of juice against the proposed strike—all they can do is to make arrangements for the Forces to keep the power stations going. But if all the London stations come out, the blacklegs

in uniform will have their work cut out to keep the current flowing.

Also, our power stations depend on coal. No doubt there are good stocks already available, but they will soon be used up, and the men of the Merchant Navy, bringing down further supplies from Newcastle and Sunderland, should know what to do about that!

The miners' leader, Sir William Lawther, one-time revolutionary, said recently, "If we were to use the strength we have at our disposal, the whole caboodle would come down." In our electronic age, the electrical workers are of tremendous significance. At their last annual conference they passed a resolution urging workers' control of their industry. If they are prepared to use the strength they have at their disposal, they might be surprised to see how soon they could achieve their aim.

## Hotel Strike Against Redundancy

ANOTHER strike in defence of workers declared redundant has occurred in Birmingham, where the management of the Grand Hotel (largest in Birmingham) dismissed six waiters and two waitresses employed in the hotel's Grosvenor Room, where the management has decided to stop serving lunches from September.

The strike has the support of the union (USDAW), one of whose complaints is that they were not consulted before the notices were given. The waiters and waitresses have been in their jobs for periods ranging from fifteen to three years, and as a special gesture of generosity the hotel has offered to pay the senior workers a week's wages for every year of service above seven years, half-a-week's wages for war service.

This would give the senior waiters (fifteen years, including six in the Forces) twelve weeks' pay, the two waitresses the same, and the rest of the sacked waiters (seven, seven, six, five and three years' service) nothing at all.

But 150 of their fellow workers have downed tools and are picketing outside the hotel. Inside, the manager has rolled up his sleeves and is working himself, his family are helping him, as are the families of those employees who have not joined the strike, which is not 100%.

USDAW extended their action, however, and instructed members not to handle foodstuffs or other goods for delivery to the hotel, which received no supplies of bread. The union has

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Workers' Control and the Free Society - 3

(Continued from our last issue)

THE failure of the socialists to see this elementary point explains why the increasing socialisation of the instruments of production in every country is not resulting in a classless society; why socialism will never and can never secure the emancipation of labour; why socialism, when it comes, does not abolish the proletariat but simply hands them over to new masters.

it more effective and all-embracing. Thus nationalisation, formerly conceived, albeit mistakenly, as the means to labour emancipation, is now regarded simply as one way, and not necessarily in all circumstances the best way, to achieve state control.

The Real Rulers

Under socialism as it has developed in the 20th century, whether it is a society in which the state owns all or most of the means of production or a society in which there is still a considerable degree of nominal private ownership, the real rulers of society are—or will be—those who control industry—the managers, the techno- and pluto-bureaucrats and the state planners;

solidation of the power of the new ruling class of managers. Economically this new society will be a highly centralised planned society in which the new rulers organise production, ostensibly in the interest of society as a whole—in the "public" or "national" interest—but in reality in such a way as to ensure for themselves a disproportionate share of the national product measured in terms both of money and of privileges.

which made this possible will be closed up; the state, economically, politically and culturally will be all-embracing—totalitarian, in fact: the worker will count, not as an individual, but as a mere unit of society; he will be steadily and systematically dehumanised.

The Socialist Fallacy

Although this will be possible because, although the worker, as a member of the state will, along with other members of the state, nominally own and control the means of production, he will not in fact control them.

It is plain, therefore, why workers' control of industry is of such special importance, why it is indeed the essential foundation of the classless society. When the workers are really and continuously in control of the workshops, the mines and the factories, there is no economic basis upon which a new ruling class can establish itself.

Managerial Determinism

Burnham and his followers, as you know, regard the managerial socialist society as inevitable. In this respect they show themselves to be mere mechanical determinists. The managerial society is only inevitable if nothing is done to prevent it.

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SOBER REFLECTIONS

IT is noteworthy that the disasters of the last thirty years or so have come from those who at the beginning possessed no arms at all. Hitler's little gang of failures and psychopaths meeting in the Munich beer hall had no arms.

What both leaders had was skill in so presenting evil fallacies as to make them attractive to the mass of men. The leaders could do nothing of themselves; only by persuasion of great numbers of the Common People, who in the German case included great numbers of the Middle Class.

In the United States, notably, one may read almost any day such comments as that "Our first enemy is Communism"; "We must destroy Communism or Communism will destroy us."

What answer do we give? -SIR NORMAN ANGELL in World Review, August, 1952.

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Lessons of the Spanish Revolution- 5

Principles and the "Realities of the Struggle"

ANARCHISTS have always been scornful of those "practical" pacifists who were pacifists in peace-time but who placed their pacifism in cold-storage during the war years. Not that their particular attitude in any way reflects on the rightness or wrongness of the pacifist position, or on its validity as a means for abolishing wars.

Such alternatives are contrary to the most elementary principles of anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism. In the first place, an "anarchist dictatorship" is a contradiction in terms (in the same way as the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is), for the moment anarchists impose their social ideas on the people, they cease to be anarchists.

The power of the people in arms can only be used in the defence of the revolution and the freedoms won by their militancy and their sacrifices. We do not for one moment assume that all social revolutions are necessarily anarchist. But whatever form the revolution against authority takes, the rôle of the anarchists is clear: that of inciting the people to abolish capitalistic property and the institutions through which it exercises its power for the exploitation of the majority by a minority.

From these general considerations of the rôle of the anarchists we will attempt to examine its application to the Spanish situation.

From the outset we have to recognise that the insurrection was not initiated by the people. It came from a group of generals, with the moral support of some reactionary politicians and the financial backing of Spanish industrialists, landowners, and of the Church. Their rebellion was directed against the revolutionary workers organisations as well as against the government in power, from which they aimed to seize the whole apparatus of government, and operate it in their interests with utter ruthlessness.

The government's immediate reaction was to reshuffle the Cabinet with a view to making a political compromise with the Generals. Had the Generals doubted their ability to seize power they would have agreed to this. By refusing to do so they revealed the strength behind the coup d'état. There were two courses open to the Government: the demobilisation of the armed forces (which would have given the legal and moral authority to soldiers and officers, who were not in sympathy with Franco, to desert or even, in some cases, to disarm the leaders of the military revolt) and the arming the people.

The people in arms, were the workers—the producers, and it was a natural consequence of the defeat of the rebellion and of government authority that they should view their status as workers in a new light; no longer as that of employees or serfs but as human beings freed from the tyranny of the boss and with all the means of production in their hands.

We cannot develop our argument clearly unless the reader understands the relationship between the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. The C.N.T. (National Confederation of Workers) was a revolutionary workers' organisation existing for the purpose of bringing together all the exploited masses in the struggle for better working and economic conditions and for the eventual destruction of capitalism and the State.

Are we justified in saying that if the social revolution is to succeed it is necessary to abolish every vestige of proprietorial capitalism and bourgeois power? If that is conceded then it is the height of revolutionary naiveté to leave hundreds of tons of gold in the hands of an otherwise powerless government or ruling class. It is, however, only an error if, having the possibilities to seize this gold, no action was taken.

From these general considerations of the rôle of the anarchists we will attempt to examine its application to the Spanish situation.

In other words, though almost all the anarchists of the F.A.I. were members of the C.N.T., not all members of the C.N.T. were anarchists. It follows therefore that if in considering whether the anarchist social revolution was a possibility in Spain or even only in Catalonia, in July 1936, we rely on numbers alone, we must recognise that the numerical strength of the C.N.T. could not be simply taken as a necessarily true picture of anarchist influence.

It is clear then that though the anarchist social revolution was not generally acceptable, the workers had demonstrated their determination to carry through a deep and thorough social revolution along lines which must in the end lead to a society based on anarchistic principles. There can be no doubt as to the rôle of the anarchists in such a situation: to support, to incite and encourage the development of the social revolution and to frustrate any attempts by the bourgeois capitalist state to reorganise itself, which it would seek to do, by reviving its means of expression: the government apparatus and all its parasitic institutions.

The power of government rests on three main assumptions: that it has armed strength at its command, that it controls directly or indirectly the channels of information (press, radio, telephones, etc.) and that it controls the economy of the nation. During those eventful days of July 1936 in the un-occupied zone of Spain, it commanded no armed forces, nor controlled information channels. The economy of the country was in the hands of the workers except for one important part: it still controlled de jure the finances of the country.

At any rate, we were sure of not failing in the purchase of raw materials and machinery for our war industry, and we could then ourselves make the arms. With very few accomplices, the idea was mooted to transfer to Catalonia at least a part of the gold of the Bank of Spain. We knew beforehand that it would be necessary to have recourse to violence and 3,000 trusted men were posted in Madrid and surrounding districts and all details settled for transporting the gold in special trains.

Here we must leave the question until documents or further information are forthcoming which will confirm or refute our conclusions.

## THE WORKING DAY

WHEN Oscar Wilde wrote that "work was the curse of the drinking classes," he was satirising not merely the leisure class but the whole belief of such people that labour was somehow the natural function of the "working class", and alcohol a serious vice for them. Like so many of Wilde's witticisms, his inversion of this belief had more than a leavening of truth in it, for it is equally absurd to imagine the comfortable life as having eliminated work.

The workers, especially in the nineteenth century, when working hours were very long, certainly have had more than their belly full of toil. And perhaps it is a natural reaction that the end of economic inequality and class division should sometimes have been seen as "naturally" involving a maximal elimination of work. For many years the Industrial Workers of the World carried the slogan "For the four-hour day and the four-day week" and no doubt this was a salutary criticism of the rather meagre objectives of reformist trade unions. But it is often assumed that the revolution will release the great labour-saving potentialities of modern technology and that this will be beyond question a good thing. And it has also been sometimes implied that any pre-occupation with work has an obsessional basis, the implication being that any normal person seeks to do a minimum of it.

There is an obvious objection to this last attitude simply on grounds of expedience in the class struggle. The great difficulty which a militant worker is up against is the readiness of the boss to sack him, and full protection cannot always be achieved by reliance on solidarity, particularly with the trade unions as they are to-day. His best remedy is to be not merely the most militant worker in the shop but also the best worker as well. Efficiency at work may well give a man a certain freedom from the fear of unemployment, and it was noteworthy after 1939 that the Spanish militants who went into exile were often able to take up work in other countries simply because they knew their jobs well.

But that is only a small aspect of the whole matter, which really involves the whole attitude of a revolutionary movement towards work. Modern industrial technology has no doubt made great achievements, but satisfaction in work itself has not been one of them, and the nostalgia for the day of the craftsmen is not wholly reactionary. Frustration in work is almost certainly one of the causes of general apathy to-day, and is also the obverse of machine-made pleasure. A revolutionary psychoanalyst has declared that the mainsprings of human life are "work, love and knowledge," and finds that satisfaction in the sexual sphere makes the doing of mechanical dull work impossible, so that such people insist on finding satisfaction in work as well.

A revolutionary orientation should surely not, therefore, be a *minimum* of work, but *fulfilment* in work. And since it is plain that, in present society, such fulfilment only comes from creative work, whether in the aesthetic or the social sphere, it seems reasonable to seek advance in the greater individualisation of work.

But large-scale industry of the kind basic to the labour-saving attitude to work clearly tends in quite the opposite direction.

## READERS' VIEWPOINTS

YOUR editorial for August 2nd is disturbing because, like some other articles which creep into left-wink publications, it totters on the brink of metaphysics.

There are many figures in history who have made as much of circumstances as circumstances have made of them, that is to say, by virtue of an astuteness and an amoral understanding of the values operative in their own society they have achieved fame. Tolstoy spends many pages of *War and Peace* speculating on this, and perhaps lays too much emphasis on willy-nilly and a blind fate.

This does not justify the type of generalisation implied in: "It seems likely that individuals who employ powerful forces, whether economic or unconscious psychological ones, express only a partial aspect of human striving, and represent humanity under conditions of extreme stress." A plea that I have taken this from its context cannot be fairly entered, for the statement is of such a form that it must stand on its own. But what does it mean, if anything?

If an individual embodies economic forces, presumably by controlling a large amount of capital, he can hardly embody unconscious psychological forces (delightfully mysterious phrase) in the same sense. For if they are unconscious they will hardly be at his disposition, and the relation between himself and these forces, assuming that they exist in their own right, which is itself doubtful,

## "Metaphysics" and Emotion

cannot be expressed analogously with the first example. And why these individuals represent humanity under conditions of extreme stress is not at all apparent; certainly every conscious individual is continually in a state of unresolved tension which tries to resolve itself by a resultant action, but to equate this with social tension in a group, or class of groups, i.e., humanity, is too facile to be swallowed.

Further, the expression of "only a partial aspect of human striving" would imply that some individual can express

the *sum total* by comparison, which is ridiculous, unless the author has contrived some quaint meaning to "human striving" which fits his hypothesis.

For some time I have felt that Anarchists waste time by using such words as "personality", "tension" and "free society" in a manner more charged with emotion than rationality. Perhaps some of our self-styled practical comrades will accuse me of being merely noetic or even verbose.

Derby.

R.A.M.G.

FREEDOM is far from taking the view that dictatorships can be explained solely on psychological grounds. That dictators have to maintain large repressive police forces show that they do not rely on psychology alone. Yet populations, when they act in a revolutionary way, have brushed aside repressive instruments like so much paper, and therefore their docility at ordinary times cannot be explained solely by physical repression or by economic forces. Populations are themselves the slaves of their own individual conflict and until we understand these factors we shall not reach a method of action grounded in the truth.

The necessity to undertake such should not be glossed over by accusations of "metaphysics". Nor shall we get very far if we conduct our thought as though "rationality" were everything good, and "emotion" everything bad. Modern thought whether of the left or the right is characterised by a fear of emotion, in a manner which itself seems to us quite irrational.

EDS. FREEDOM.

## EDITORS' REPLY:

On re-reading the editorial in FREEDOM for August 2nd which our correspondent stigmatises as "tottering on the brink of metaphysics", there seemed little to support his fears. It is true that left-wing publications do often go in for vague speculations of a kind which smacks of the metaphysics and not seldom of the ridiculous. But it is also true that many individuals of the left lean over backwards in the attempt to avoid problems which possess a human content and are not adequately explained by economic analysis. Such people appear to be disproportionately chary of embarking on problems of social psychology and it is to be suspected that this is what underlies our correspondent's charge of metaphysics. This suspicion receives confirmation from his fourth paragraph, with its logician's flourishes.

What was the aim of the editorial in question? Within its necessarily brief compass, it sought to stimulate understanding of certain forces in history which are not primarily economic. Our correspondent seems not to have understood what is meant by "humanity under conditions of extreme stress", though little imaginative effort is required to do so. A people living under chronic starvation is under such stress, easy to understand because they lack a plain material need—food. But a people living in continuous fear from political oppression is also under stress. So also is the anxiety which follows repeated economic upheavals. So also is a subject race like the Negroes of the southern states of America. These are obvious situations of stress. But in modern life in civilised communities it is plain that other stressful factors are at work: an obvious one is sexual misery. It is to such concealed stresses that certain political figures may exert a powerful appeal and it was suggested that Hitler and Eva Perón were such figures. They may be said to represent "unconscious psychological forces", and indeed it is difficult to understand contemporary history if one does not give consideration to these forces.

Now, integrated free individuals are at one with their own nature, which they are able to accept and express freely. Such individuals are rare, and exceptionally so among people living under the kind of stresses referred to above. Where there is a powerful unconscious conflict at work an individual's strivings will represent that conflict and not human endeavour as the proponents of a free society envisage them or as integrated individuals exhibit them to-day. Instead their behaviour will be a resultant of the unconscious psychological forces (which our correspondent, rather strangely, calls a "delightfully mysterious phrase") arising from the conditions of stress. A Hitler succeeds in using such forces because in some way he "embodies" these unconscious psychological forces present *en masse* in such societies as post-1918 Germany. But these unconscious forces can fairly be described as "only a partial aspect of human strivings" because they do not arise from "human nature" as such (another indefinite phrase, though hardly a mysterious one for most people) but from the conflicts arising from stressful conditions.

## Workers' Control and the Free Society

Continued from p. 2

the duty of all genuine revolutionaries to readjust their scattered forces and to reformulate their aims. Above all we must remember that it is not our task to prepare for yesterday's battles. The revolutionary forces must not emulate the British General Staff who, hitherto, at the outbreak of hostilities, have always found themselves well prepared—for the previous war. The world in which the classic anarchist and syndicalist movements were born is not our world: the strategy of the 19th century will not necessarily be the right strategy to employ in the second half of the 20th century. We must not be mere wooden disciples of those whose traditions we have inherited.

Let us ask ourselves this question: What is the main task of anarchists in the present situation? As I see it, our function is to become the inspirers of a new proletarian movement, the midwives, if you like, of a movement which is struggling to be but which has not yet been born. This new movement must not be just anti-capitalist; it must be post-capitalist and anti-socialist and its central doctrine must be that the proletariat can achieve its emancipation only through workers' control. Workers' control is, in fact, the revolutionary objective to which all other objectives must be subordinated. At the same time, workers' control is the criterion of what is and what is not revolutionary. Everything is revolutionary which furthers the idea of workers' control and everything is reactionary which hinders it.

### Establishment of Managerial Power

I think we have to admit that many of us in the anarchist movement have been too simple-minded in our conception of social revolution. We have tended to think and act as though our task was to propagate our doctrines, educating the workers for the appointed day on which they would rise against their masters and usher in the free society. In this respect, despite the fundamental soundness of our criticisms of the state and of political action, we have shown ourselves to be excessively utopian. New forms of society do not appear overnight, nor can they be achieved in a few weeks, a few months, or even a few years. To think so is to court disillusionment and to grievously underestimate the strength of our opponents and the hold their ideologies have over the minds of the workers. We delude ourselves and mislead the workers if we

While it is difficult to envisage in any detail the form work will take in a free society, it is certainly time to recognise that it is likely to take a very different form from what we are accustomed to. What is needful is to recognise that work, the productive and creative activity, is natural to man and without it he is frustrated just as much as when it is meaningless. We may end by recalling a contemporary of Oscar Wilde's, William Morris, who contrasted with "useless toil" not no work at all but, quite simply, "useful work."

imagine that a free society can be bought so easily and so cheaply. Revolutionaries have been far too much influenced by the bourgeois political revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries. These revolutions were successful because they had been preceded by many decades in which the bourgeoisie had built up its power in the economic field. They were mere political registrations of economic facts: the final not the first step in the consolidation of the power of the capitalist ruling class. The rise of the managerial class so far has, on the whole, been unaccompanied by violent internal social struggles or political revolutions. Instead they have established their power through centralising social and political institutions and through quasi-public corporations and commissions, utilising here the capitalists and there the labour parties in order to extend their rule, secure in the knowledge that whatever may happen to the other contending parties—the capitalists and the workers—they at least will always be essential if the modern centralised planned economy is to be run efficiently.

GEOFFREY OSTERGAARD.

(This is the substance of a lecture given to the Anarchist Summer School, and will be concluded in our next issue.)

## ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

### Geddes, Gardens and the Italian Girl

VISITORS to the anarchist Summer School in London may have been puzzled by the yellowing newspaper cuttings framed in passe-partout on the wall of the meeting-room. The explanation is that the London Anarchist Group had borrowed the room from a body founded by Patrick Geddes, the author of these sacred texts. Geddes has been an acknowledged influence on innumerable aspects of life in this country, from the town planning projects of Sir Patrick Abercrombie and Professor Holford, the Land Utilisation Survey of Professor Dudley Stamp, and the "New Towns" which are so slowly taking shape, to expository exhibitions like last year's on the South Bank and the whole system of "projects" and "local studies" which are so admirable an innovation in our primary and secondary schools.

His acknowledged legacy is to be found in the writings of Lewis Mumford whose books *Technics and Civilisation* and *The Culture of Cities* brilliantly develop and amplify his view of economic and social evolution, and in the work, sadly curtailed by lack of money, of the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction.

Geddes was greatly influenced by his anarchist friends, the brothers Elisée and Elie Reclus, the first a celebrated geographer\* and the second one of the pioneers of comparative anthropology, and of course by Peter Kropotkin, whose *Mutual Aid*, besides "correcting" Huxley's interpretation of the Darwinian theory of evolution, interprets

human history in a truly "Geddesian" fashion, and in whose *Fields, Factories and Workshops* epitomises the teachings of Geddes on industry, technology, and "integral education" and at the same time, though its statistics are fifty years old, provides an answer to the soul-searchings of the economists of to-day.

"Patrick Geddes," wrote Lewis Mumford, in the *Architectural Review* two years ago, "though dead these eighteen years, is fast becoming a rallying centre for the best minds of this generation: his thought, like that of his old associate and friend, Kropotkin, will probably guide the future, since the mechanists and the Marxists, in the present hour of their triumph, demonstrate the failure of their philosophies to do justice to either life or the human spirit."

I DID not realise that there was a potato shortage until my neighbour leaning over his chicken house begged some off me. With an air of self-sufficient superiority I invited him over and handed him the fork. My triumphant air did not last long, however, for I had to admit to him that after several weeks of one egg to a ration book, the girl in the grocer's shop had blandly said: "No eggs this week." So potatoes were exchanged for eggs and the man next door and I joined in condemning the economic system which finds it so hard to satisfy our simplest needs that we can do better in our back-yards. He also recalled his winter pilfering expeditions to Epping Forest, picking up bits of wood because his coal-merchant couldn't provide any fuel, while I confided in him about the new school where some of the concrete is reinforced (un-

known to the education committee) with bits of old bedsteads and gas pipes, for lack of steel.

ALL this reminded me of an article in my Sunday paper some months ago by Mr. John Horsefall, about a girl who came from Italy to be the maid in his house. "Little did we realise," he wrote, "how much we were to learn in the next twelve months from an illiterate Italian peasant girl."

"Of course she had made her own woollen clothes; but not only had she woven the material and stitched the garments, but she had also spun the yarn from wool that she had clipped off lambs that she had reared.

"During the war she had helped her mother to make silk stockings, beginning with the breeding of silkworms, and she had made eiderdowns on frames of saplings that she had cut, with down plucked from the farmyard. When soap had been unobtainable, her father had made the family a sufficient supply from hogs' fat."

Mr. Horsefall found it impossible to explain to her "why there was so much unproductive land along our roadsides, and when the meat ration sank to eightpence-worth the sight of Englishmen playing golf on excellent grazing land near our house was as hard for her to understand as it was for us to justify." Eventually, the desire to go home overcame the attractions of "relative wealth and lonely comfort" and she left. "Undoubtedly," Mr. Horsefall ruefully concluded, "she had learned something more about Western Civilisation; but since she left we have not been quite so sure as we used to be just what civilisation means."

C.W.

\*Geddes' exposition of the "Valley Section" as the key to economic geography is anticipated in Elisée Reclus' *The History of a Mountain* (1881).

