Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Do what thy manhood bids thee do, from none but self expect applause;

He noblest lives and noblest dies who makes and keep his self-made laws."

—HAJI ABDU EL-YEZDI

Vol. 13, No. 34 August 23rd, 1952 Threepence

ECONOMIC FACTS OF LIFE

The Need for Revolutionary Changes

"Like the soldiers of the First World War, whose valour was again and again squandered by unthinking generals in tactically ill-conceived offensives, the nation is now sliding into a sullen and semi-mutinous mood; it no longer responds to repeated exhortations and alarms, and it no longer believes in promises of final victory."

—THE OBSERVER, 10/8/52.

FOR years our paper's criticism of economic policy in Britain (apart from our criticism of the economic policy as such) has hinged upon two points: firstly, the fallacy of "salvation through exports", and secondly, the consequent need for a great increase in home food production. During the past year many other thoughtful people have been led by events to think on the same lines. The end of the "seller's market", the re-entry of Japan and Germany into export markets, the inability or unwillingness of other countries to buy our manufactures and the world-wide textile slump have led them to question the policy of the export drive. The increase in the price of imported foods, the decrease in other countries' exportable surpluses, and the lack of money to pay for them, together with the impact of a stream of books, pamphlets and articles on the world's diminishing food resources in the face of its growing population have led them to believe, in Mr. Easterbrook's words, "that our country really is in danger of being hungry, and perhaps worse than hungry; that if we act now with determination we can immensely improve our food situation by our own efforts; that here, beneath our own feet, is the key to Britain's survival in the great dangers that threaten us."

This new thinking upon our economic problem is by no means anarchist thinking, it is merely common sense. But common sense is so rare these days that we are bound to welcome the plain-spoken series of additional articles on *What Britain Must do to Survive* which began in the August 10th issue of *The Observer*.

"Seven years of hard work and austerity," says The Observer, "have not succeeded in bringing Britain's economy back on to firm ground. It looks as if the national effort, which has been willingly given, has been ill-directed . . ."

The two basic facts which the article declares have been avoided so far by Governments and Opposi-tions, politicians and economists, parliament and press, are, of course, "that population is increasing faster than food production, and manufacturing industries faster than the supply of raw materials." *The Observer* points out that no other country is so terribly vulnerable to the long-term world trend which tends to make manufactures a drug on the market and to put food and raw materials at a premium." The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. produce most of their food and raw materials at home:

". . . foreign trade represents only 5 per cent. of the national income in the case of the United States, even less in that of the U.S.S.R. Even the two countries which most nearly resemble Britain in their economic structure, West Germany and Japan—both of them also with a large population on a small territory, a narrow raw materials basis at home, and a traditional reliance on exporting the products of their industrial skill—are in a less vulnerable position. Western Germany depends for 14 per cent. of her national income on trade, Japan for 11 per cent. (1950 figures). The chief difference is that both countries have squeezed the utmost out of their soil and their agricultural resources at home, while Britain has for a century deliberately and almost arrogantly neglected her own agricultural possibilities, relying on 'cheap food' from abroad.

"There was a time when Britain, enjoying a near-monopoly in most manufactures, could pursue this policy with immediate profit. Those days have long gone by, and they will not return—yet we are still acting as though they might. Most Britons still take it for granted that 50 million people can live on this small and crowded island only by being 'the workshop of the world'—when being 'the workshop of the world' has become perhaps the least

☛ Continued on p. 4

German Rearmament

WE were bitterly exhorted during the war not to trust the Germans again. Journalists wrote angry articles asking us if we were going to allow "the Hun" to get away with it once more. Politicians told us indignantly that we should be tricked a second time if we were not careful. All sorts of public figures got up and lectured us on our incredible folly after the first war, and explained that we must never be so foolish again.

"We," that is the wonderful part of it, the poor long-suffering inarticulate public. As if it made any difference what the public thought! It could agree as much as it liked not to trust the Germans, not to allow "the Hun" to get away with it; it could promise to be more careful and never to be foolish any more, but for all the good such acquiescence does it might just as well have gone for the evening to the dogs—which it probably did anyway.

Who is it that is rearming Germany? Is it the foolish, generous, hoodwinked public? Who is being deceived a second time? The official line we are exhorted now to follow is to let them be rearmed, a line coming down from above to us below, endorsed by Government and Opposition, and we must reiterate that it is no piece of folly, no "generous" attitude, no magnanimity that causes the Germans to be forgiven so readily. *Nor was it last time.* It was a favourite theme of wartime propaganda that we were too generous last time—a deliberate, calculated lie. Germany was squeezed till the pips squeaked, reduced to beggary and humiliation because of its military defeat, and it was allowed to rearm under the Hitler régime for the same cynical political motives that induce the Western politicians to rearm Western Germany once more.

But even the opposition to the rearmament of Germany is largely insincere, because of the people who compose it. They bring to mind all the reasons why Western Germany should not be rearmed, except the one reason dearest to their hearts—namely, that it is going to serve Western Imperialism instead of Eastern, and against East German rearmament they roar as gently as any sucking dove.

What we, as Anarchists, oppose is rearmament, whether German or French, British or Russian, American or Chinese. We are with those who in Germany are opposing the further sacrifice to the military machine, as with those, who on both sides of the dividing line between Imperialist blocs, stand for a rejection of all these useless tributes to militarism and the State.

IT MAKES YOU THINK

Families at East London, South Africa, are getting their mutton at half price by forming syndicates, buying at the abbatoir, and sharing the carcases. Butchers have lost a tenth of their trade.

—*News Chronicle*, 16/8/52.

Canterbury Cant

SINCE the Dean of Canterbury's return from China bearing with him the lengthy scroll containing allegations of the American use of germ warfare, he has been under contant fire by the Press. The fact that he has so long and faithfully followed the Communist line without undue exacerbation of the keepers of the public conscience is overlooked. The whole pack of them are now at his heels demanding that he be sacked. One Conservative M.P. went so far as to ask, "Will no one rid us of this turbulent priest?" somewhat overlooking the context in which that phrase was first used by a politician who found a Canterbury prelate off the line of conformity. But the M.P.s have no chance in such a context against the Press. Omitting those who definitely ask for his dismissal, one finds that all sections of the Press combine to make his job impossible. It is hard enough for the poor man to reconcile what he doubtless considers to be God and Mammon without this sort of thing:—

"RED DEAN SPEAKS AT WAR SERVICE.

On the anniversary of the start of the First World War, the Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Hewlett Johnson, yesterday conducted the annual service of remembrance at the Kent War Memorial in Canterbury Cathedral.

He said: 'Let us remember with thanksgiving and with all honour before God and men the sons and daughters of Kent who have died in war, and all those throughout the Queen's Dominions who have given their lives for their country."—*News Chronicle*, 5/8/52.

Obviously, a parson who is in any way off the current State line has to do that sort of thing, and it may well be that in time the Dean may even have to pray for those fallen in Korea—an incident the Press will seize on as avidly as they did that of the public school prizegiving where the "gallant old boys" were commended as Dr. Johnson sat on the platform.

What is significant about this matter is not that it matters two hoots who is Dean of Canterbury, nor whether the holder of that office supports the Chinese or the Americans. It is not really important, except to the Archbishop, that in some countries they apparently fail to discern the difference between a Dean and an Archbishop, and a few public advertisements could soon clear the matter up. Dr. Fisher may be interested to know that Jehovah Himself has in the last few centuries been seriously considering whether or not to put a few notices in the papers instructing all and sundry that He does not propose to be responsible any further for anyone demanding credit in His name, not even His own son.)

What *is* important is to note the failure of Protestantism and the complete breakdown of Protestant diplomacy. Throughout many generations, Protestant diplomacy has been agile and active in counteracting Roman Catholic influence, and in this England (with Holland) has always taken the lead. The Fifth Column in the shape of Anglo-Catholicism has now so undermined Anglicanism that it is too weak, powerless and abject towards Rome to be able to apply its own policies. Obviously, any vigorous Protestant would have welcomed the Dean of Canterbury's activities with delight. Here they had a man who—with all his wishy-washy Communist tendencies—was undoubtedly one of their fold, and who, by means of long and tireless propagandist activities (and not least by the general denunciation he received from professional anti-Communists), became fêted and honoured throughout the Communist world. A wonderful bargaining position for the Churches behind the Iron Curtain, particularly in Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia, as well as that in Russia which is in communion with the Anglican Church, and one of their few opportunities for a deal with Stalin, and in the old days they would not only have made such a deal, but got a good dig in at the Papists in the meantime. They did venture timidly on these lines, particularly during the war, and in China above all they had the opportunity of preserving the Christian Church and its missions there by means of the Dean's offices.

They have failed to do so, and while we do not particularly have cause to weep over the break-up of these centres of superstition and ignorance, we may come to shed a few tears when we realise that Jimmy Muggins, who does not care two pins one way or the other about these Churches, is going to be asked to go out and help fight to restore them. And not only that. In default of the Protestants taking any independent moves behind the Iron Curtain the Catholics have acted, and it is they who are going to do, through their Quisling priests, all that the Protestants did not do. It may be that we will later be asked, perhaps not by actual war but at any rate by that industrial and military sacrifice that is demanded in lieu of actual war to enforce demands ("we are a Great Power"), to redress this balance of power that is going to Rome.

INTERNATIONALIST.

SYNDICALIST NOTEBOOK

Meter Men Sold Out

THE threatened strike of London electricity supply workers, referred to last week, failed to materialise. From the meeting of shop stewards from all over London deciding to call out all electricity workers in defence of the sacked meter men, support fell away until not only was there no strike, but there was not so much as a gesture of solidarity from the men's own workmates.

What emerges very clearly from this incident—or rather, series of incidents—is that the London Electricity Board has chosen to use the issue of redundancy to cover up the fact that they have sorted out militant workers and quite coolly got rid of them.

Since last January's dispute, when the meter readers struck in protest against the employment of inspectors to check up on how hard they were working (in the Hammersmith area, incidentally, some of these snoopers were university students on their Christmas holidays), since last January, 65 meter men had voluntarily given up their jobs. It says a lot for nationalisation that they should be sickened with the Board's attitude to its workers and should quit their jobs themselves. One meter reader was sacked during that period for a rather blatant piece of self-interest—he went to the baths when he should have been reading meters!

So that already there were 66 less meter-readers than last January, but that did not satisfy Mr. Randall, chairman of the Electricity Board. He wants more than 200 got rid of (there were only 700 altogether) and, as is the way with bosses, he decided to get rid of the militants first.

The Bethnal Green depot had produced the strongest resistance in January. There, three militants, including George Hall, led the strike committee. So the good old tactic of divide and rule was operated. The three were transferred, Hall to Stepney, the others elsewhere.

Within three weeks of being transferred, two of them had notice to quit. The third has been lying low since January and has been spared—so far. But the 26 that have been fired already are only the beginning. Another 134 dismissals are on the way.

These men were given a month's notice. Their period of notice expired last week. They are out—finished, and the big question is—why was no action taken in their defence?

It is not as though no one else is involved or threatened. It used to be recognised that an injury to one is an injury to all, but quite apart from that, the workers unaffected so far by these redundancies should recognise that their own self-interest is involved.

Of the remaining meter readers, 134 have still to be axed—so the authority's decision goes. How do the meter readers know who it might be? It may be any of them, and if they don't put up a struggle now, they can't expect any support when their turn comes. One out of three of these workers will have been eliminated by the time the Board's plans have been put through. Which means that the remaining two-thirds of the meter men will each have 50 per cent more work to do.

And what about the supply men, who promised to support the meter readers and then backed out? Are they so secure in their jobs that they can ignore calls for solidarity? The new supply schemes of the LEB, soon to come into operation, are going to render 400 power station workers redundant in the not very distant future!

The Board has refused to discuss redundancy with the union (Electrical Trades' Union). It is a question, claims the Board, of managerial function. But at the last policy conference of the ETU, its President, Brother Foulkes, declared that in the course of his discussion with Lord Citrine, head of the British Elecricity Authority: "I have told him—and I want our members to appreciate this, because it is no good my telling Citrine things if our members go back on what I tell him—that if he declares any redundancy without any consultation with us or with the workers, he has got to accept the responsibility for that. If 200 meter readers are sacked without consultation, then we expect everybody—not only meter readers—to respond to anything that we suggest they should respond to."

Brave words from Mr. Foulkes. Unfortunately, for the sacked meter readers, he has not suggested anything that they—or anybody else—should respond to, to defeat redundancy. In fact, following on the decision of the London Shop Stewards to give seven days' notice of strike action, the leadership refused to give it official backing, a factor which has obviously helped to whittle away support. So it was not the members who went back—but Foulkes & Co.

But both Brothers Foulkes and Walter Stevens (Gen. Sec.) are members of the Communist Party, as are other executive members, and as we pointed out last week, they are probably not at all sorry to see rank and file militants eliminated. The C.P. do not want rank and file militants whom they cannot control. And George Hall was one such.

When he went along to the Labour Exchange last week, to register for unemployment benefit, Hall (married six weeks) was told he was not eligible because there was a dispute on. He pointed out that there was no dispute, that he had simply been sacked by the LEB. But the officials had obviously been given orders from above, and were making things as difficult as possible. No benefit was forthcoming.

So George Hall is now appealing to his ETU branch for victimisation benefit. It certainly is not difficult to prove victimisation—and not only by the employers, it seems.

This case bristles with unpleasant aspects, but one thing is very clear. That it must be taken as a warning of things to come—if not of things already here.

Once again a trade union leadership has shown its devotion to interests other than those of its members. The bounden duty of the ETU was to resist redundancy. It has not done so—and for reasons which workers should not accept.

The only answer to this situation is a mobilisation of working-class strength outside of the official unions. If we do not see an emergence of rank and file committees prepared to gather support to resist these attacks, the workers will remain sitting targets for the employers—private or State—to pick off one by one, while their "leaders" play politics.

The workers must once again realise that: An Injury to One is an Injury to All!

P.S.

Workers' Control and the Free Society - 3

(Continued from our last issue)

IT may be laid down as a sound historical generalisation that no new society succeeds another until, in Marx's words, it has fully matured within the womb of the old. The classless society will not be built at all unless a start is made to build it here and now. It is not the task for to-morrow or for the day after to-morrow but the task for to-day. In its development society is like an organism made up of many cells. The human body in the course of a lifetime renews itself completely many times and is all the while building new cells and getting rid of the old ones that have served their purpose. So with society. The world we want will only come when we have created the new cells within the present society. When the process of renewal has gone far enough, it will be a relatively easy matter to slough off the remaining useless and harmful cells. It is this conception of social evolution which renders futile so much of the debate between revolutionaries and reformists. Too many revolutionaries, captivated by the idea of *la lutte finale* have dissipated their energies in mere talk about the appointed day when the world's woes were to be set right; too many reformists have lost their way in attempts to adapt the instruments of bourgeois domination for ends which they could not possibly serve. Both have neglected the real task of creating the new society within the confines of the old. In the final reckoning, the real revolutionaries will be those who have done something to build up worker-controlled organisations of various kinds and not merely those who have preached about the coming dawn. The new workers' movement, therefore, must be constructive before it can be destructive. Destruction may, as Bakunin put it, be a form of creation, but there will be no real or lasting destruction of old and hated forms of society until we have created the new forms which will succeed the old.

If we anarchists are to take our part in building a new workers' movement, we must be on our guard against sectarianism. It is a fundamental error to assume that the free society will be built only by men who have consciously adopted it as their objective. If anarchism had to wait upon the conversion of all men to anarchy, we should have reason enough to despair and to give up the struggle. In building up the new movement, the stress must be upon creating libertarian organisations, not organisations of libertarians. When, for example, a group of workers manage to establish a producers' co-operative, they may not consciously see themselves as setting out for the New Jerusalem. But their action is the stuff with which revolutions, real revolutions, are made. If successful, one brick, however small, has been laid in the foundations of the free society; one more centre has been created from which the workers in it can resist the predatory attacks of the new rulers of the state.

Syndicalist Weapons

I cannot in this paper, sketch, even in outline, the various means which the new workers' movement should adopt in order to achieve its end but I do wish to insist upon this fundamental point: no overt revolutionary action will be successful unless it has been preceded by the building up and consolidation of the power of the workers in the economic field. The classical syndicalist weapons of the boycott, sabotage and strikes of various kinds have a proper place in the workers' armoury but by themselves they are not sufficient. No social general strike will succeed unless this fundamental preliminary condition has been fulfilled. If a general strike were declared to-morrow and the workers seized the instruments of production within a few weeks or a few months the bosses would be back in their old places. The workers would find that they could not take control just like that. In the inevitable chaos that would follow such a premature seizure of power, an irresistable cry would go up on all sides for the return of the old directors of industry who did at least know how to keep the wheels turning. Modern industry is a highly complicated and delicate piece of machinery. It was constructed by the capitalists to serve their own interests and it is being taken over and modified by the managers to suit their interests. It responds to the touch of the present controllers who have fashioned it, but it will not easily respond to the touch of the workers. The social general strike, if it ever comes, will not, we confidently predict, be the *means* by which the workers take over control of industry: it will be a registration of the fact that the workers have, for the most part, already taken over control of industry. It will be the final notice to quit, served by the workers to bosses who have already lost their power. In other words, the workers must have taken control and learned how to exercise control before they can challenge successfully the formal right of the bosses to be the masters of industry.

Collective Contracts

But how, you may ask, is it possible for the workers to do that? If you think of control as some sort of indivisible entity which the bosses have and the workers haven't, as a sort of Lonsdale Belt which the workers win when they have delivered the knock-out blow at the last big fight, then the question would indeed have point. But control is not like that: it is made up of many parts and it is always a question of more or less. The management function is composed of numerous specific functions—hiring and firing, appointment of foremen and supervisors, control of promotion, organisation of production and sales and so on. At the moment the workers have a *negative* and *partial* control over several of these functions: they can and do resist, for example, the dismissal of a certain worker or the appointment of so-and-so as foreman. In certain cases, they exercise joint control with management over promotion and have a say in the organisation of production through works committees. The aim of the workers should be the *positive and complete* control of each of these functions, the transference to the organised workers through their workshop organisations and unions of as many as possible of the functions at present controlled by management. In short, they should adopt the technique of encroaching control. This idea is not a new one. It was first put forward by the British Workers' Committee Movement during the first world war but it has been lost sight of since then. It is in the true line of development or syndicalist ideas and worthy of revival to-day. So, too, is the idea of the collective contract which forms part of this technique or encroaching control. Briefly, the idea of the collective contract amounts to this. When the workshop organisation is sufficiently developed, the workers demand that the individual contract be superseded by the collective contract. Instead of each worker being taken on individually, placed on a certain job, told what to do by the boss and sacked when the boss no longer requires his services, the workers in the shop authorise their workshop committee to conclude a contract with management in some such terms as these: For a lump sum, which we will distribute among ourselves as we think fit, we will under such an such conditions, produce this amount by a given date. You, that is the management, will undertake to provide us with this much raw material,

☛ Continued on p. 3

FILM REVIEW

The Little Man

OUT of the variety of discussion which takes place within the anarchist movement, many of us are agreed that the motivation behind human behaviour is largely egoistic. But this does not explain fully why people prefer martyrdom to degradation, or why others will compromise on any issue rather than suffer discomfort and unpopularity.

In any given political situation the time may come (as it has under dictatorships) when the choice is either between collaboration or suffering the penalties of non-collaboration. Under these circumstances the position of the anarchist ought to be quite clear: no compromise. This, however, cannot be made a rule because just as situations differ, so do anarchists, and while some may prefer death rather than act against their principles, in others the desire to live may be the stronger force. It is well to bear in mind, however, that the history of revolutionary struggle and the success in the past of what are considered to-day mild reforms were made possible by the martyrdom of some of the participants.

To the Spanish people must go the credit of holding back the fascist Franco for so long, just as the discreditable figures of Hitler and Mussolini are monuments to the apathy of the Italian and German people.

In the post-war reshuffling of enemies into allies we are often told that most of the German population were ignorant of the brutalities going on within their concentration camps. Similarly, we are assured that fascism is alien to the Italian character. Both of these statements may contain some truth; the people of Italy and Germany may not have been directly responsible for the behaviour of the fascist leaders, but the fact remains that by allowing Hitler and Mussolini to rise to power they must carry some of the responsibility of the effects of fascism in Europe, which is rather like the conclusions arrived at by the hero of "The Little Man," the Italian film (Academy, Oxford Street, London), directed by Luigi Zampa.

The little man, played by Umberto Spadaro, is the father of an ordinary family living in a small town in Sicily during the fascist era. Uninterested in politics he is nevertheless approached by the fascist Mayor of the town who gives him the alternative of joining the local party or losing his job. Weak, bewildered and bludgeoned by his wife, he eventually becomes an unhappy member and lives to regret his weakness.

His son (Massimo Girotti), an unwilling conscript, is equally apathetic. He dislikes fascism and war, and after having fought in three countries (Abyssinia, Spain and Russia) he is shot by the retreating Germans before the Americans land on Sicily.

When "The Little Man" was first shown in Italy, both fascist and communists were vehement in their protests. The fascists because it satirised the fascist leaders, and the communists because they considered it pro-fascist.

There is a tendency in British and American films at any rate, to whitewash the enemies of yesterday. We rarely see the snarling face of the German spitting venom from the skies which was typical of the early post-war epics, and one is naturally suspicious of the slightest sign of justification. "The Little Man" cannot be said to be "pro" anything. It is a convincing study of the effects of fascism on ordinary human beings too weak to resist its onslaught. In the portrayal, too, of the local fascist leaders who supported Mussolini as long as he was in power and who discarded their allegiance with their uniforms to greet the allies as demorcats, it is an excellent lesson in expediency.

The figures of the local intellectuals whose opposition to tyranny consisted of attacking it in the back room of a chemist's shop, are a familiar sight to most of us.

If there is a moral in the film for us it is that the time to resist political tyranny is *now*, before it becomes so powerful that we have to choose between compromise and extinction.

R.M.

Lessons of the Spanish Revolution — 6

The C.N.T. and the U.G.T.

Principles and the Realities of the Struggle

(continued)

BY the end of July 1936 the attempted *coup d'état* by the generals had been crushed in half of Spain, but in the other half Franco's armies by mass executions and terror had established themselves and were preparing for the offensive against the remainder of the peninsula. The success of the social revolution was therefore directly linked with the ability first to defend the territory freed from Franco's forces and then to proceed to the offensive against the regions occupied by Franco. As to how this struggle was to be organised most effectively was of the utmost importance to the leaders of the C.N.T.-F.A.I., and whatever criticism one may have to make of the decisions they took in this respect, one cannot doubt their sincerity in thinking that the concessions they made would ensure the victory over Franco.

The first problem that faced them was that the armed struggle could not be carried on exclusively by the C.N.T.-F.A.I. That in any case there were large numbers of workers in the U.G.T. and in certain of the political parties who had taken part in the struggle in the streets and who were just as determined as they were to defeat Franco's armies. Clearly there was common ground between the C.N.T.-F.A.I. and other organisations so far as the struggle against Franco was concerned. But what was equally clear was that the methods and the reasons for the struggle were different. So far as the political parties were concerned, their objectives in defeating Franco were, firstly, to prevent the establishment of his dictatorship over the country (with which the Anarchists could not but agree) but with victory the creation of a government, the nature of which would depend on the political views of the party or parties which would emerge triumphant: from the federalism professed by some to the out and out dictatorship of the Communists.

In a speech made on January 3rd, 1937, by Federica Montseny, a leading anarchist and at that time Minister of Health in the Madrid Government, she referred to "a problem besides which the problem of the war seems easy. For the war, a common cause against a common enemy, made it possible to have and to maintain the unity of all the anti-fascist forces—Republicans, Socialists, Communists and Anarchists. But imagine the panorama once the war is over with the different ideological forces that will attempt to impose themselves, one against the other. The war over, the problem will rise in Spain with the same characteristics as it had in France and Russia. We must prepare ourselves now. We must declare our point of view so that the other organisations will know what to expect . . . We must look for the platform, for the point of contact which will permit us with the greatest amount of freedom, and with a minimum plan of economic realisation to continue on our road until we reach the goal."[16]

We do not think Federica Montseny was being frank when she declared that the common cause—the war—had made it possible to "have and maintain the unity of all the anti-fascist forces." There was already too much evidence to the contrary. However, what she states in no uncertain terms is that a struggle for power in the anti-Franco camp was inevitable once armed victory was achieved. For the social revolution to succeed, therefore, it was necessary for the workers to emerge from the armed struggle against Franco *stronger* than when they entered it, and to make sure that the political parties emerged *weaker*. This implies that in the course of the "war" the workers' organisations had to go on strenthening their control over the economic life of the country; that is, as producers of the economic wealth of the country they should consolidate their control over the means of production. And at the same time making sure that control of the armed struggle in which they were both the fighters, and the producers in the arms factories, did not develop in such a way as to allow any strengthening of the institutions of government, by permitting control of the armed forces to pass into the hands of the politicians.

The leaders of the C.N.T. were mistaken, in our opinion, in orienting their propaganda with the slogan of "anti-fascist war", and to even suggest, as did Federica Montseny, in the meeting already referred to, that "the struggle is so great that the triumph over fascism alone is worth the sacrifice of our lives." The enemy of the revolutionary workers is as much the system of which fascism is an expression.

But the consequences of such an attitude as adopted by the leadership resulted in a one-sided "unity", in which the C.N.T.-F.A.I. made all the concessions, and from which the political parties reaped the benefits. The "war" went from bad to worse and, later, when the forces of government, virtually controlled by the Communists, were strong enough, declared war on the social revolution.

16 *Militant Anarchism and the Reality in Spain*, by Federica Montseny (Glasgow, 1937). *Reflections on Federica Montseny's Address*, by Max Nettlau (X.X.X.) was published in *Spain and the World*, Vol. I, No. 6, London, February 19, 1937.

VII

The C.N.T. and the U.G.T.

THE only unity which could strengthen the resistance to Franco without jeopardising the social revolution was between the C.N.T. and the other workers' organisation, the U.G.T. We do not say that this was a simple task. The very fact of the workers being organised in two organisations was itself proof of an ideological disunity, but whereas all previous attempts had failed, the heroic struggle by the people, on July 19th, irrespective of factions must have created possibilities of co-operation at least in the rank and file of these two organisations.

Just as we pointed out earlier that the million members of the C.N.T. were not all anarchists, similarly it is a mistake to assume a homogeneity in the ranks of the Socialist U.G.T., and if we examine the causes of its meteoric increase in membership from the time of the fall of the dictatorship, when it had less than 300,000 members, to the million and a quarter members it boasted in 1934, we shall see what possibilities there were in 1936 of the organised workers in the C.N.T. and U.G.T. finding a common objective in the armed struggle and the social revolution. The increased membership of the U.G.T. in the years before 1936 did not come from the miners, factory workers and railwaymen who were already either in the C.N.T. or U.G.T. but from the small peasants, landless labourers and shop-employees who had hopes that new legislation and the presence of the Socialists in the Government would bring improvements of their conditions. With nearly half its membership among the rural workers, the U.G.T. leaders were for obvious reasons most concerned that some attempt should be made at Agrarian Reform. From the point of view of the C.N.T., therefore, any revolutionary programme which included taking over the large estates would be bound to have the support and co-operation of the landless labourers in the ranks of the U.G.T. The moral strength of the C.N.T., even before July, 1936, is another factor which cannot be discounted. It was this strength, coupled with the failure of the Socialists to do anything in the way of agrarian reform during three years in power that created a revolutionary wing in the ranks of the U.G.T., which for fifty years had followed a course of strict reformism. And it was Largo Caballero, President of the U.G.T., who in February, 1934, had declared that "the only hope of the masses is now in social revolution. It alone can save Spain from fascism."

Gerald Brenan has pointed out that at the root of the Socialists' disillusion with the Republic, was the refusal of the Republican parties to treat Agrarian Reform seriously. "It was a feeling that welled up from below, affecting the young more than the old, the recently joined rather than the confirmed party men. That is was especially strong in Madrid was perhaps due to the small but energetic Anarchist nucleus in that city. (Generally speaking, a small but well-organised group of Anarchists in a Socialist area drove the Socialists to the Left, whereas in predominantly Anarchist areas, Socialists were outstandingly reformist.) (*The Spanish Labyrinth*, p. 273.)

The obstacles to joint action, or fusion between the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. were not of recent origin. At the second Congress of the C.N.T. which met in Madrid in 1919, the delegates rejected outright a proposal of unity with the U.G.T. and instead proposed the absorption of its members into the ranks of the C.N.T. on the somewhat curious grounds that the C.N.T. membership was three times as large as that of the U.G.T. and that since the represenatives of the U.G.T. had not accepted the invitation to be present at the congress it was clear that they could not accept the C.N.T. ideas nor share its desire for unification. The congress then proposed that the Confederation should draft a manifesto directed to all the Spanish workers giving them three months in which to join the C.N.T. adding that those who did not would be considered as "amarillos" (blacklegs) and outside the workers' movement. However, the repression at that time was such that in spite of this rigid attitude, Salvador Segui, an outstanding militant of the C.N.T., later murdered by gunmen in the pay of Martinez Anido (the civil Governor of Barcelona), negotiated a pact with the U.G.T. which was unanimously condemned by a Plenum of the C.N.T. held at the end of 1920. But since the pact was a *fait accompli* it was decided by the C.N.T. to put the good faith of the Socialist leaders to the test. On the issue of the strike of the Rio Tinto miners, the U.G.T. backed out from taking part in a general strike, proposing conciliatory solutions,

☛ Continued on p. 4

* **F.A.I. : Anarchist Federation of Iberia.**

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.

Freedom
THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

Vol. 13, No. 33 August 16, 1952

A MODERN DILEMMA

IT is only a few years since the trials of Alan Nunn May and Fuchs for the offence of passing on scientific information about atomic research to agents of the Soviet Union. Recently they have been brought to the bar of public opinion all over again through the serialisation of Alan Moorehead's book, *The Traitors*. It is perhaps encouraging that intellectual opinion, as judged by this "re-trial" has proved very much more humane and has shown a much broader grasp of the principles involved than the legal ones—against whose severity FREEDOM was, at the time, almost alone in protesting.

We have recently had occasion to draw attention to the anomalous nature of this new kind of "crime". Where science used to be universal and scientists accustomed to international co-operation and exchange of ideas and information, they are now hemmed in by Official Secrets Acts and the like. And failure to conform is not treated—as smuggling, for example, is,—as a venial offence, to be passed over with light penalties; failure to realize that the old openness of science is a thing of the past, exposes a scientist to the charge of being a traitor. And furthermore, a scientist working on atomic energy is not required "to reason why". He must not consider the social consequences of research of this nature, nor of the secrecy which cloaks it round. Yet all this is pressed on him at a time when thinking people are appalled and oppressed by the spectacle of "man unable to control his technical advances", and are asking this very question about the social conscience of science. How many people will be found to say that Leonardo da Vinci was wrong in the fifteenth century to destroy his plans and experiments for a submarine?

All these problems have been raised again by several reviewers of Alan Moorehead's book. It is conceded that Nunn May was actuated by the conviction that it was wrong for the development of atomic energy to be confined to the United States. In Fuchs' case, the question of conscience is even more patent, and was stressed significantly by the reviewer in the *Sunday Times*, a paper which published extracts from Moorehead's book before publication. This reviewer—Raymond Mortimer—of Fuchs, says: "Mr. Moorhead writes of him, 'he was basically a man who would always refer to his own conscience first and society afterwards. There is no place for such men in an ordered community.' This (writes Mortimer) seems to me a shocking doctrine, proper to Fascists and Communists but certainly repugnant to Christians and humanists. It condemns the martyrs who throughout the centuries have been executed for their faith. It is true that conscience can mislead—and not least when subservient to an exterior authority—yet every duty has to be brought home to the individual by his conscience; it is conscience that enjoins us to be loyal to our country . . ." And he then goes on to qualify this by reference to those anti-Nazis and anti-Fascists who worked against their own countries (governments) during the war and so were, technically, spies and traitors.

Finally he quotes E. M. Forster's "provocative remark (that) if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I would have the guts to betray my country."

The *Listener*'s reviewer refers to this aspect: "Fuchs was in a moral dilemma . . . on the one hand he thought the Russians were going to build a better world, on the other he had doubts about their sincerity and found that devotion to an abstract ideal may mean the betrayal of concrete friends. The issue is not new, and to call the experience 'pathological'" (as Mr. Moorehead does), "is simply misleading. Fuchs was entangled in one of the most serious moral difficulties of our time."

This reviewer also attacks Moorehead's opinion that Fuchs and the early Christians "'were so convinced of their rightness that they were prepared to destroy the State in order to have their way'. And, says Moorehead further, 'there is no place for such men in an ordered community. They belong where Fuchs now is, sewing mailbags, in Stafford Gaol.' One cannot help wondering which way Mr. Moorehead will jump if, and when, we are 'liberated'."

This reception of Moorehead's book amounts to a re-evaluation of the whole conception of the traitor in the modern world of authoritarianism and the forcible subordination of individual opinion to the State. It is an encouraging sign.

American Elections: The Real Issues of 1952

In an address to his fellow-citizens, from which we print extracts below, Ammon Hennacy, the "one-man revolution" of Phoenix, Arizona, explains why he urges them not to vote in the forthcoming American elections, and why he has refused to pay income tax for the past nine years.

★

YOU, as a citizen of the United States and a registered voter, are asked to vote for politicians representing certain political parties. Have you ever stopped to think what this voting really means?

You are told that if you do not vote you are irresponsible. If you *do* vote, then you are indeed irresponsible, for the very act of voting is dodging your responsibility by passing the buck to others. You have no kickback if your elected representative does not live up to his promises. You are told that unless you vote, you have no right to beef about the way things turn out. The answer to that one is very simple: when you vote, you have no way of knowing that your candidate will win. If he loses, the issues he has endorsed will have faied. If he wins, there is nothing to prevent him from turning his back on these same policies or conveniently forgetting about them. In either case, win or lose, you will have consented, by having voted, to accept the winning candidate's judgment as superior to your own. You know, of course, that politics abound with examples of these situations. If you have any lingering doubt of the validity of this, just ask yourself who it is that actually selects your candidates for you!

Now, you might agree with me so far but be tempted to say: "But if the good people don't vote for good candidates, the bad men will run the country." A really good candidate makes an ineffective official because he won't stoop to the low methods that are essential to the efficient operation of government. Nowhere is this conclusion more eloquently demonstrated than in the autobiography of that famous muckraking journalist of 40 years ago, Lincoln Steffens, whose experience in "cleaning up" many American cities made him an authority.

What is Democracy?

Throughout several centuries before the advent of nation-states, various kinds of city-states developed in many regions and endured for long periods of time. The democracy we associate with the Greek city-states rested upon a slave economy and extended the blessings of democracy to the slave-owners only. In the city-states that flourished during the Middle-Ages, people had never had it so good. They knew no wars as we know them. Professional "soldiers of fortune" fought, except on Sundays and the numerous holidays, on rather well-defined battlefields. Civilian lives and private property were fairly well respected, and conscription and rationing were unheard of. While they did not have our gadgets, they had perhaps a larger degree of security than any people have had before or since expect in jails or under slavery. When the guilds had pride in their work, artisans produced fine goods with skill and loving care, and the same spirit made the functioning of these medieval city-states one of the most outstanding examples of decentralised government ever to have existed. The guilds and the city-states fell, finally, for the same reason that modern craft unionism has become an "old man of the sea" on the back of the labour movement—they refused to help and protect the unskilled worker. That "Cradle of American Democracy", the New England town meeting, is democratic only during that one day of the year that it meets, for the rest of the year delegated authority usurps the real democratic idea.

Capitalism and the State

The advent of capitalism in England with the invention of the steam engine divorced the worker from the ownership of the tools of production. The Enclosure Acts, which aimed to produce wool for this new system of factory production, resulted in the farmers losing their lands and becoming the pitiful wage slaves described in the novels of Charles Dickens. Capitalism paved the way of the nation-state. The nation-state did not acquire its ultimate power until Napoleon introduced military conscription, centralising and consolidating power in the all-to-familiar pattern of to-day. This myth that teaches the right of an omnipotent state to lay claim to the allegiance of the bodies and minds of its citizens and to-day masquerades under the high-sounding phrase of "Selective Service" is the backbone of strength of the nation-states of to-day. Destroy this myth, and a tremendous stride will have been taken towards the day when nations will live at peace with each other. . . .

Capitalism and War

To-day, most workers do not own the tools of their trade. Yet where these tools consist of industrial processes of the factory system, to-day's productivity is many times that of the feudal worker. To-day's worker is paid not in terms of the worth of his labour or skill but is paid a portion of it, called a wage, and the difference which he does not get is called a profit and is taken away from him by the owner of the productive proces as tribute. Since the worker cannot buy back more than a portion of what he has produced with the wage he is paid, the owner is alway in danger of stock-piling an unsalable "surplus" (as happened in 1929). This condition holds true even when the nation-state owns or controls the productive processes, as in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, or the Soviet Union, not just in countries where capitalism is still more or less privately owned. All modern economies answer this problem of the "unprofitable surplus" by directing this portion of their economy's output into the production of goods earmarked for destruction—tanks, guns, uniforms, battleships, bombers, and the like. Before these implements of warfare become entirely obsolete, "practice" wars are waged as in Spain and now in Korea, and the hoary alibi of "national defence" perpetually justifies the continued production of these expendable materials—at the expense of the peace of the world. This is done by tacit mutual consent between the various nation-states. And this, briefly, is why neither the United Nations nor any other combination of nation-states can possibly end the threat of war. So wars are not accidental—if we didn't have this war in Korea we would have to have one somewhere else, or face the alternative of another depression. Do you remember the sharp stock market slump during the short Korean cease-fire late last year? President Truman was forced to interrupt his Florida vacation and vigorously deny any cease-fire agreement before the stock market recuperated. And as for the truce talks which have lasted for more than a year, do you really believe a truce will result until agreement is reached upon a new battle zone?

Hiroshima

Since our national government has truly been created in our own image, it is obvious that the place to begin any reform of government is not by "voting for the good candidates" but by changing our own motivations and actions. As an instance of the satanic ingenuity of this organised evil, our government in cahoots with the real owners of our economy has assumed the major share of paying for the "unprofitable surplus" produced by our economy and earmarked for destruction, and has reached into the workers' wages through the device of the withholding income tax to compel the workers to pay the brunt of this "profit insurance".

The withholding tax was scarcely two years old when President Truman secretly ordered the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, just seven years ago this week. Six months previously the Japanese had sued for peace through the offices of General MacArthur. The terms upon which they were prepared to surrender were identical with those we accepted later on V-J Day. The history of the war reveals that during the months following this bid for peace we engaged in the bloodiest battles of the Pacific islands fighting, climaxed by the most dastardly action of any war in history—the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This act, which earned us the label of being the bloodiest killers of all time, was done in *our* name, yet we were never consulted on this policy of atomic bombing or even informed of our adoption of it.

Crackpot?

I am fully aware that my message may seem too far-fetched to have any place in the world of to-day and, that in self-defence, you will wish to dismiss it and write me off as a crackpot. I would almost be inclined to agree with you if it weren't for the fact that we have, right here in Arizona, a thousand-year-old example of a people already living a good life, having had no need for government, election campaigns, courts, prisons, murder or warfare. I speak of traditional Hopi Indians who have found the key to living harmoniously together. The major sin they recognise is to try to get even with the neighbour who may have wronged them. Their wholesome culture rests upon each individual's complete acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of his motivations as well as his actions, and their keen awaredness of the spiritual significance of life.

Workers' Control and the Free Society

☛ Continued from p. 2

this number of new machines and so on, and we will undertake to turn out this amount of finished product. We will organise the work among ourselves to suit ourselves and you can keep your ugly face out of the workshop: your relationship to the workers will be purely impersonal and external and confined to the signing and keeping of the conditions of the contract.

Encroaching Control

If you like, the idea of the collective contract is the establishment, within the boss's factory and using the capital he owns, of a limited system of co-operative production. But, of course, it doesn't end there. The object is to provide the workers with the opportunity of learning how to run part of the show themselves so that eventually they can run the whole show and reduce the boss's functions to nil. Once the system is firmly established in industry, it will be a relatively easy matter to enlarge the foothold in the factory, step up the terms of the contract and reduce the management's powers to such a degree that it will be unable to offer any strong resistance to the workers' demands and their eventual seizure of the whole concern. It is not, of course, intended that the contracts should be limited to individual groups of workers and individual managements. In drawing up the contracts the workers will need expert guidance and this is where the unions come in. The unions will also have at their disposal technical experts who will be on tap to give advice to the various groups when and where it is most needed. And it would be through the unions that each successive step forward will be prepared for and the final assault made.

I hope I have made it clear that the technique of encroaching control and the collective contract is essentially different from the current policy of joint consultation and joint control. Joint control gives the workers a fake share in management, and, except in very exceptional cases, the management always has the last word. It retains the employer-employee relationship; it is part of the technique of modern management—nothing more. Encroaching control, on the other hand, is not participation in management but the wresting of control, piece by piece, from management. To some, no doubt, it will smack of reformism but, if it is reformism, it is reformism with a revolutionary objective. It seeks to establish the base from which the workers can fight the new totalitarian managerial society. It provides the workers with a real and powerful weapon in the long and arduous struggle that lies ahead while at the same time it lays the foundations of the classless society. It ensures the gradual fulfilment of the basic condition of a successful social revolution: the building up and consolidation of the industrial power of the workers within the workshops.

The Cockpit

Let me conclude on this note. Workers' control of industry is not wanted for its own sake. It is not the final objective. It is only wanted because without it there can be no classless and, hence, no free society. In the past, the anarchists, the apostles of the free society, have been a few lone voices crying in the wilderness. They have been dismissed by ordinary men as hopeless visionaries and impractical theorists. To-day, when the so-called practical men have had their way, the people are finding that it is the socialists who are the real utopians. By teaching that the classless society could be achieved through the conquest of politcal power and the state-ownership and control of the means of production, the socialists have delivered us over to new masters. In these circumstances the time is ripe for a new workers' movement which has learned from the errors of the past and understood the reasons for this great betrayal. But only when we ourselves have understood the full significance of workers' control and act accordingly shall we be able to point the way out of the present impasse. Finally, let me quote to you the words of that great Irish revolutionary, James Connolly. They contain the gist of what I have tried to say to-night and cannot be too often repeated:

"We must not forget," he said, "that it is no theorists who make history; it is history in its evolution that makes the theorists. And the roots of history are to be found in the workshops, the fields and the factories. It has been remarked that Belgium was the cockpit of Europe, because within its boundaries have been fought out many of the battles between the old dynasties; in like manner, we can say that the workshop is the cockpit of civilisation, because in the workshop has been, and will be, fought out those battles between the new and old methods of production, the issues of which change the face and history of the world."

Yes, indeed, the workshop is the cockpit of civilisation: there or nowhere shall we make and win the revolution.

GEOFFREY OSTERGAARD.

(*Concluded*)

At the Conference of the Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions—

"SO MUCH CHAOS"

AT the conference of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, at Southsea, the oldest delegate, Jack Wigglesworth (Metal Dressers' Union) declared that he had "never attended a conference where there is so much chaos on what we want and how to get it."

Without having been present at the conference and relying only upon the various newspaper reports upon it, one can certainly sympathise with him. The only thing that emerges clearly from the Southsea exhibition is that the British Trade Union movement has not the foggiest idea of what it wants or how to get it.

From the Anarchist point of view, it is a sign of servility that the unions make no attempt, or pretence, even, to be more than wage-bargaining institutions. At Southsea, however, there seems plenty of evidence that they hardly want to be that. If anything can be said to emerge clearly from that verbose confusion, it is that the unions of this Confederation are smothered by fear and politics.

Any fundamental grasp of the workers' position, any desire to change it, any declared opposition to capitalism, any recognition of the strength of the working class; one looks in vain even for references to these.

For the opposite, however, there is plenty of evidence. Confederation President Harry Brotherton, for example, proposed a resolution giving the Executive the authority to open fresh talks with the employers on wage increases.

"There are people," he said, "who think in terms of a direct strike as a possible outcome. There are people who think of other things.

"But it doesn't need a direct strike to dislocate the economy of this nation.

"It was the union's duty to do all they could to prevent such chaos. That is why they are going back to the employers, so they could say, 'You know you are sitting on a volcano,' and try to get something fruitful by negotiation."

But Jack Tanner, President of the Amalgamted Engineering Union, had already told the Conference that when the union's wage claim had been turned down last month, the Engineering Employers' Federation had declared that they were willing to face a dispute rather than pay more.

"We frankly cannot believe," said Mr. Brotherton, in a quiet and dignified tone, "that if this resolution is agreed, and we are permitted to talk with them again, that the employers would permit these talks to be abortive." The whole trade union movement is perfectly well aware of the volcanic situation, he added, "but we are not fools or villains, and we are in a very, very unsettled frame of mind because of the duty which devolves upon us and the responsibility that rest there."

The leaders of the Confederation, of course, are not in sympathy with the size of the claim demanded by the rank and file. At the conference of the AEU earlier this year the Executive, led by ex-revolutionary Jack Tanner (one-time Anarchist, Syndicalist, Communist, now careerist), did its best to restrain their members from passing a resolution demanding an all-round increase in the engineering trades of £2 a week.

Unlike the high-ups in the union, however, the delegates in the body of the hall had to go back and face their members, and the demand went through. The employers, seeing the reluctance with which the Executive handled the claim, rejected it out of hand, with the result that three days before the Confederation conference began the National Committee of the AEU passed a resolution instructing its Executive Council to request the Confederation to take a ballot on (1) strike action, or (2) a national ban on overtime and piecework.

This suggestion has obviously scared the daylights out of the Conference leaders, who had a back-room conference of their own before the delegate conference started and decided among themselves to soft-pedal the demands and get them whittled down to something that could be got out of the employers without any bother. Hence Brotherton's quiet and dignified tone.

Confederation leaders maintain that the claim for £2 is "unrealistic". But J. Gardner, of the foundry workers showed that at to-day's values and prices, 32s. 6d. a week increase was necessary to restore the *real* wages of the standard rate of 1939. The extra 7s. 6d. of the £2 claim, therefore, can only be regarded as a slight improvement on 1939's pay, and an insurance for a short while against further price increases. It seems likely that the leaders, in approaching the employers with no fixed amount to their claim, will settle for 10s. a week increase, rather than face a dispute. And if the employers refuse? One can imagine the whining of the leaders—"*Please* don't embarrass us in front of our members" "Just make an offer—whatever it is—we'll be grateful"—"*We* don't want trouble", and so on.

The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions contains 3,000,000 of the most essential workers in this industrial country. The employers are able to contemptuously reject their claim because the chicken-heartedness of the Executive is there for all to see. The rank-and-file are the ones who would suffer from a strike—and they are prepared to face it. The Executive are afraid of it because they know that in times of stress the control of the action would pass out of their hands. They know that with railwaymen, miners, dockers, transport workers getting restive, a general strike might suddenly arise and they just would not know what to do about it.

The question that one has to ask is simply—what is the aim of the British Trade Union movement? The leaders very clearly have no aim other than hanging on to their jobs. But what about the rank-and-file? Do they want to remain forever the slaves of capitalism? Does the conception of workers' control not mean anything for them?

The Southsea conference has its lessons. The workers would do themselves a bit of good if they made the effort to learn them. P.S.

GENEROSITY

F—— & Sons, printers, have introduced what is thought to be a unique form of long-service recognition. Instead of the usual two-weeks' notice an employee with ten years' service will be entitled to three.

—*World Press News*,
quoted in *New Statesman*.

WILLIAM GODWIN

I AM engaged on a study of William Godwin and his circle, and should be very grateful for information your readers might be able to give me as to the whereabouts of any of his letters not previouly published. I am also anxious to trace a sketch of Godwin and Holcroft made by Lawrence as they sat together at the 1794 Treason Trials.

R. GLYNN GRYLLS.

Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton.

ECONOMIC FACTS OF LIFE

☛ Continued from p. 1

promising national business in which 50 million on a crowded island can now engage. Moreover, the British workshop is in many respect not even up-to-date."

Some readers may recall the similar comments in our article "Economics of Disaster" in 1945.

In considering what is to be done, *The Observer* seeks to combat several fallacies—"To escape from this position it is not enough to work harder and to consume less . . . The whole crux of our situation is that as a nation we are largely working at a wrong and obsolescent job, and this means that many of us are in wrong jobs as individuals." Two further tempting fallacies are "that we can solve our difficulties by large-scale emigration, and the belief that intensified Commonwealth development can save us from a structural change in our home economy."

"Our first aim, in a world increasingly pinched for food and raw materials, must be to reduce our dependence on food and raw material imports. This sounds simple and obvious, but it means a revolution in British economic thought. In place of the over-worked and out-of-date slogan, 'Export or Die', we need another: 'Import less and Live.'

"The answer to our problem is not to work harder at the wrong job; it is to change our job. The scientific talent and inventive ingenuity which are the chief assets of this nation—and are as yet far from receiving the scope and status they deserve—must now, in the first place, be applied to the questions of how to get more food out of Briitsh soil (and, perhaps, in some more distant future, food out of British laboratories and factories); how to replace imported raw materials with home-produced ones, natural and synthetic; and how to make raw materials go further."

The Observer refers to this policy as "a revolutionary course" and certainly the sentence, "*Broadly speaking, we should aim at trading as little as we must, rather than as much as we can,*" will raise the eyebrows of the business-men, as will the paragraph that concludes the article:

"The relatively small (and highly over-propagandised) banking and insurance income which we may lose through a reduction in the volume of our foreign trade will be far outweighed in the national balance by our gain in economic stability and seaworthiness through a higher degree of self-sufficiency."

But where have we heard this before? Not merely in FREEDOM but in Kropotkin's fifty-year-old book *Fields, Factories and Workshops*.

"The characters of the new conditions are plain, and their consequences are easy to understand. As the manufacturing nations of West Europe are meeting with steadily growing difficulties in selling their manufactured goods abroad, and getting food in exchange, they will be compelled to grow their food at home; they will be bound to rely on home customers for their manufactures, and on home producers for their food. And the sooner they do so the better."

Perhaps the experience of two world wars, each occasioned by the desperate search for economic outlets by manufacturing nations, and of the disastrous slump of the inter-war period, caused, they tell us, by "over-production", will make us pay more attention to these economic facts of life. C.W.

Lessons of the Spanish Revolution - 6

☛ Continued from p. 2

which resulted in the defeat of the strike. Later, the U.G.T. refused to take part in a general strike to protest against the wave of assassinations of leading militants of the C.N.T. (including Salvador Segui). With this further proof of the lack of revolutionary spirit in the U.G.T., the pact was broken between the two workers' organisations.

During the years that followed, the problem of workers' unity came up again for discussion without any concrete results, except in the Asturias where a revolutionary pact was signed by the C.N.T.-U.G.T. in March 1934 which declared that the only possible action in face of the political-economic situation was the joint action of the workers with "the exclusive object of inciting and of bringing about the social revolution." This pact of alliance was put to the test some months later, on October 6th, 1934, with the rising of the workers of Asturias. In practise, it was not altogether satisfactory, for a number of reasons outside the scope of the present study, but "it leaves no doubt as to its revolutionary importance" (Peirats). At the Saragossa Congress of May, 1936, the resolution on Revolutionary Alliances, already referred to,* was so revolutionary and intransigent as to be clearly unacceptable to the U.G.T.

Why was it that the C.N.T., which made compromise after compromise with the political parties and the government from the first day of the struggle against Franco, adopted such an intransigent attitude to the U.G.T.[17] that no official pact of unity emerged until April, 1938, when the struggle had degenerated into a fratricidal war and final defeat was only a question of time? And to what extent did unity in fact exist among the workers in industry and on the land from the moment these were taken over by the workers? Was it possible for two workers' organisations jointly to direct the revolutionary economy and the armed struggle against Franco? We believe that the determination, and initiative that existed in the workers' ranks during July, 1936, could have made possible a revolutionary alliance between the C.N.T. and U.G.T. with fewer compromises and concessions than were made to the political parties; that such an alliance would have permitted effective control by the syndicates, thus neutralising any attempts by the politicians to gain control with the consequent centralisation—and concentration—of power in a few hands.

If we bear in mind that between them the C.N.T. and U.G.T. comprised the majority of the working classes, not excluding blackcoated and professional workers, it seems inconceivable that they should have entered governments, or joined in alliances with political parties, which had ceased to have any real influence or power. Under C.N.T.-U.G.T. control, those political parties with a class basis would have still been represented through their members who were also members of either the C.N.T. or U.G.T. and only the professional politicians would find themselves isolated and without a voice in the conduct of the struggle. And one can hardly believe that this would have been a matter for concern, and certainly of no consequence to the successful prosecution of the struggle.

* * * *

The confused thinking that reigned among the leaders of the C.N.T.-F.A.I., so evident in the contradicting statements, manifestos and decisions taken by them, springs from many causes, often equally contradictory. They felt that an alliance with all the anti-Franco parties and organisations on a basis of loyalty was essential for victory; yet at the same time in their hearts they knew that such loyalty would be one-sided—on their side only. They felt that some central authority was necessary to maintain international political and economic relations, yet at bottom they distrusted governments. They were tempted by the idea that to fight a disciplined well-equipped army such as Franco's, needed an equally centralised, disciplined army, yet at bottom they realised the superior strength of the people in arms ("The Government of Madrid thinks that one can proceed with the creation of an army to fight Fascism which has no revolutionary spirit. The army can have no other expression than that which emanates from the voice of the people and must be 100% proletarian. . . ."—Garcia Oliver, August 10th, 1936.) They hoped for the solidarity of the international proletariat yet at the same time were so obsessed by the possible reactions of the British and French Governments, and their inability to buy materials abroad, that they encouraged the facade of a struggle between a legal government and a rebellious army. They were afraid of imposing the "anarchist dictatorship", yet were in favour of conscription.[18] They proclaimed that the war must be won at all costs, even at the expense of the revolution, yet they knew in their hearts that the war and the revolution were inseparable.

This mental confusion in the face of realities is, we submit, the result of a further confusion: between principles and ideals. None of the anarchist "critics" of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. have ever suggested that it was possible in 1936 to establish the anarchist society overnight, or that because this was not possible the anarchists had to withdraw from the struggle. Concessions so far as our ideals are concerned is quite another matter to concessions of our principles. Faced with a powerful enemy, we believe it was necessary that every effort and every compromise of our ideals should have been made to bring about an immediate and effective alliance between the two workers' organisations in Spain. For they represented the real forces, and the only effective basis for waging battle against Franco and reorganising the economy of Spain and at the same time having control of the means of production and the arms for the struggle. Instead, to draw these two organisations into a Government, a Generalitat, Anti-Fascist Committee, or Defence Council—which were all governments except in name—as *minorities*, was simply to transfer power from the syndicates to a central body, in which the politicians were in a majority, and could have no other effect but that of permitting the politicians to rebuild the institutions of government, with their own armed forces and laws, law courts, judges, prisons, jailers and so on. The anarchists and the C.N.T. could have no part in such a conspiracy. For then the Revolution would be faced with two enemies: Franco and a once more powerful Republican Government. This is in fact what happened, with the result that every excess perpetrated directly or indirectly by that government (militarisation, the May Days of 1937, the armed attacks on the workers' collectives, *carte blanche* to the Communist minority to control the army and to assassinate militant workers, trumped-up trials of the P.O.U.M.—the opposition Communist Party—etc.) to which in normal times the C.N.T.-F.A.I. would have replied with general strikes and more, was condoned by them because to do so "would open the fronts to Franco".

May we sum up in two sentences: Alliance between the two workers' organisations which were the spearhead of the struggle justified concessions in ideals (final objectives) without abandonment of principles (e.g., Workers' Control). Alliance with political parties in governments was the abandonment of principles and ideals (final objectives) as well as of immediate objectives (defeat of Franco).

Because this was not the view of the leaders of the C.N.T.-F.A.I., and is still not the view of some of them, we must pass on to examine the reasons which prompted the C.N.T.'s acceptance of portfolios in the Governments, the results achieved, and the price paid. V.R.

(*To be continued*)

17 It would, for instance, be interesting to know the C.N.T.'s objections to Largo Caballero's proposals in 1934 for a Workers' Alliance (*Alianza Obrera*) which Gerald Brenan describes as a sort of Popular Front, confined to working-class parties and organised locally". Mr. Brenan explains the C.N.T. refusal as follows: "Feeling between the two great unions was very bitter and the Anarcho-syndicalists refused to believe that the Socialists could change their skin so suddenly and after fifty years of domesticity develop revolutionary instincts. They also had a deep distrust of Caballero who had always displayed a strong hostility to them. They got on better with the Right wing, with Prieto." (*Spanish Labyrinth*, p. 274.)

* In the second article of this series, FREEDOM, No. 30, July 26.

18 Not only did the C.N.T.-F.A.I. by its participation in the Generalitat of Catalonia subscribe to its political declaration which includes this phrase, ". . . creation of conscript militias (*militias obligatorias*) and strengthening of discipline," but in September 1936, at a National Plenum of Regional Committees, presided over by the National Committee of the C.N.T., a resolution on the Constitution of a National Council for Defence included a demand for the "creation of a Militia of War based on conscription (*con carácter obligatorio*)." There can be no doubt but that the C.N.T. leaders who were unwilling, to the point of self-effacement, to oblige the Spanish people to have anarchism forced on them, were however, quite prepared to oblige them to fight again Franco on behalf of the Government!

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FREEDOM PRESS
27 Red Lion Street
London, W.C.1 England
Tel.: Chancery 8364

Printed by Express Printers, London, E.1. Published by Freedom Press, 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.