

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Treason? Surely a matter of dates?"

—TALLEYRAND

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Threepence

## THE ENGINEERS' ANSWER

THREE times the federation of the employers in the engineering industry have rejected the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions' plea for a wage increase of £2 per week.

Readers will remember that we dealt with the Confederation's recent congress at Southsea, when its president, Harry Brotherton, talked the delegates out of their decision to prepare for strike action. This was after the employers' original and complete rejection of the £2 figure. The congress then voted for its leaders to approach the employers and plead for at least something (10/- was mentioned!) to save the unions from the embarrassing situation of having to take direct action.

So the union leaders went, cap in hand, to a meeting with the negotiating committee of the employers' federation. The answer was "No", and the last chance came and went when the federation's management board reaffirmed the negotiating committee's decision.

So now the union leaders are really on a spot. They were from the beginning opposed to the size of the demand, saying that it was unrealistic to demand so much, although it was shown at the Southsea congress that the Engineers needed 32/6 more to get back to 1938's living standards—which were not so wonderful after all. But union leaders to-day are so "responsible"—to everybody else except their members—that they forget entirely the struggles that workers are having to-day to make ends meet. ("Every time you think you're going to make ends meet, somebody moves the ends!" as Gert and Daisy put it.)

But with the employers slamming the door in their faces, the executives now have to take action—the one thing union leaders dread more than anything else. They have decided to call for a ban on overtime and piecework, and to switch to a 44-hour week or a time-rate basis.

There are 38 member unions of the Confederation, totalling 3,000,000 workers. It is to be left to each union to make its own arrangements for operating the ban and fix its own timetable. Some unions require a ballot before they can take part.

The ban will mean a considerable loss for the workers. On piecework and overtime, skilled workers can earn up to £15 a week. But their basic wage may be only £6 9s. This shows the deplorable situation which has been created in industry, when the real in-

adequacy of basic wages has been hidden by overtime and piecework rates. Workers are having to work hard and fast and for long hours in order to make good wages.

If the engineers get their £2 a week increase—that will bring the figure for most of them to £8 9s.—only nine shillings a week more than the new, unskilled recruit of the unproductive job of London policeman—and, if the policeman's uniform and living accommodation is taken into account—much less in value.

The engineers, however, are vital workers in both the export and armament drives, so dear to the hearts of our Tory and Labour Governments and T.U.C. alike. By switching to time rates, which would mean in effect a go-slow, they could very soon upset all the production schedules, time-tables and—most important of all—profit figures for their employers. About 60 per cent. of the Confederation's 3,000,000 membership are on piecework, and a switch to time rates could cut their output by half.

It still remains to be seen whether all the unions will confirm the Executive's decision. Next Wednesday, the executives of all the 38 unions will meet at York, and we shall then know whether we are to see the first big-scale official trade union action for many years, or whether the soft soap being lashed out

at Margate\* will wash out what spirit of resistance is left.

But the significance of the coming struggle—if it comes—will not be lost on the employers. The engineers will provide a test case, and workers, too, should watch very closely what transpires. This will in fact be far more important in its implications than all the hot-air being generated at Margate.

If the workers win their struggle with the engineering bosses it will show once again how, when they turn to direct industrial action, they can get things done in half the time that negotiation, collaboration and arbitration take. If the workers lose, then it will indeed be a very severe warning that the class struggle is entering a hard and bitter phase. Then, nothing less than a general mobilisation, maybe a general strike, will be necessary to defend the workers' standards.

The employers will know this, and if they are wise, will yield to the engineers—even if not their full demands. For it is far better for the bosses to deal with the workers piecemeal than have them all united at once. When that happens, when the workers all get together to bring the boss to his knees, they may remember the lessons of 1926 and of the consistently reactionary attitude of their leaders ever since, and throw the leadership out and run the show themselves. If they do this, we don't fancy the chances of the boss-class.

## Drought in Yugoslavia

(From our Balkan correspondent)

ONCE more Yugoslavia is in the throes of a drought which has reached dangerous proportions. According to official statistics, 50% of the fruit and the maize crop, 30% of the potatoes, 40% of the tobacco and industrial crops have been lost already. Such is the lack of water that in some parts the peasants are obliged to walk ten miles to obtain some, while the shortage of feeding stuffs is causing a widespread slaughter of cattle and sheep. When one bears in mind that 70% of the population of Yugoslavia is engaged in agriculture one can understand how hard many millions are hit again.

The belated measures of the Communist Government include the ban on exports of foodstuffs and a great deal of speechmaking about the value of saving this and that and on the need to import corn and fats from the U.S.A.! There is nothing new in their policy nor in its ineffectiveness: in the past seven years six droughts occurred and Yugoslavia, an exporter of corn before 1940, is forced now

to rely on imports to stave off large scale famine.

The Communist dictatorship, of course, bears the main responsibility for this state of affairs. Like good Maxists all over the world, Tito and his followers mistrusted and ignored the peasantry except when the villagers had to provide cannon fodder in wartime and cheap, unskilled labour to carry out vast experiments under the name of Five-Year Plans. In Yugoslavia, after the ravages brought about by the Nazi occupation, the Five-Year Plan followed the same line and had the same results as in the USSR. Heavy industry with a strong emphasis on armament factories, and the erection of numerous public buildings to commemorate Marshal Tito's era, received priority. The absence of hard currency to buy vast quantities of machinery abroad, led to the dragooning of hundreds of thousands of able-bodied peasants to work under poor conditions and for little pay on sites and for purposes decided by bureaucrats whose chief qualification for the jobs they held was membership of the C.P. The peasants who remained in the villages were compelled by various administrative and economic measures to surrender a large part of their crops at low prices fixed by the State or even to join collective farms. The amount of waste and pressure going on there caused such a fall in output that a bad year regularly brings the spectre of famine to the threshold of thousands of families.

It is true that strategic considerations of the Cold War will force the U.S.A. to send food again to a Communist dictator with the moral outlook of a Chicago gangster, and thus prevent starvation such as took place in Russia when collective farms were established twenty years ago. Unfortunately, this aid will be used by the unscrupulous régime to extract further concessions from the peasants who without much food, seeds and cattle will be in a disadvantageous position. Yet, although the stakes are against them, they are fighting back as much as they can under present conditions. Tito's press keeps on deploring their lack of sympathy for the "progressive" measures taken by the "peoples" government" and an-

Continued on p.

## Aspects of Straffen's Reprieve

PROGRESSIVES will welcome the Home Secretary's decision to reprieve Straffen. The question of his guilt turned on a nice discussion of whether, in the legal sense, he was of unsound mind or not. English law assumes that guilt can only be present where the individual charged can be held to be responsible for his actions, and the plea of insanity seeks to show that he is not so responsible.

What is now known about the mechanism of the mind is practically a growth of the last 60 or 70 years: yet the legal definition of

unsoundness of mind in relation to responsibility is founded on the McNaughton Rules laid down more than a century ago, when our attitude towards insanity was very different and practically uninformed.

### Out-of-date Criteria

By the McNaughton Rules, Straffen was responsible for his actions and therefore was guilty. But what reasonable person would regard a man so mentally backward that he was said to have a mental age of 9 and who had already been certified, as responsible? The Home Secretary's decision may be taken as a victory of common sense over an outworn legal formula.

The McNaughton Rules have often been attacked by doctors and especially by psychiatrists: they have so far been successfully defended by lawyers who are always unwilling to consider mitigating circumstances. The Straffen case is now being used by doctors once more, headed by Sir W. Russell Brain, President of the Royal College of Physicians, to demand a Royal Commission on the question of insanity in law.

### Society's Share in Straffen's Guilt

This campaign will be supported by most progressive people and if successful will once again drive the law and the judges into the defensive, just as the abolition of flogging did.

But there are two aspects of the Straffen case which have received little attention. Much discussion has centred on the legal definition of insanity, and much on the question of what to do with such problem cases as Straffen presents. But there has been almost no public discussion of the real basic problem which is what factors make psychopathic criminals what they are and can social measures be taken against such factors? Straffen's early history is known as are many other such histories. In it are mirrored many of society's own attitudes—towards sexual matters, the sexual attitude of the young, the

attitude of adults towards children, and so on. Straffen's case is an indictment of failure on the part of society and should be taken as an extreme lesson which sheds light on many less extreme and on apparently normal cases. Yet there is no sign that the medical or legal professions or any informed section of public opinion has grasped these challenges of Straffen's and many another such case. (Freedom Press have drawn attention to it in the pamphlet "Sexual Freedom for the Young" by John Hewetson, which they published at 6d. last year.)

### Responsibility and Mitigation

The second aspect is also virtually undiscussed. It is the question of "responsibility" itself. The law, in majestic and idiotic impartiality, judges the crime itself and is very unwilling to consider mitigating circumstances—although all reasonable people are continually tempering their everyday judgments by such considerations. In the question of stealing, the law, except in the most spectacular cases of destitution, treats a poor man as on the same footing as a well-to-do person, although temptation is obviously much greater in the former case. Of course, some progress has been made for even the law cannot remain impervious to contemporary ideas; but in general legal decisions try to be unconcerned with mitigating factors.

What this means is that, in effect, the legal machinery does not want to understand, it only wants to establish guilt and to punish. But it is surely time to realise that every grossly anti-social act must mean that the individual is in the grip of factors beyond his control and therefore cannot be held fully responsible. It is man's nature to be social and to act kindly towards his fellows and every exception must be treated as abnormal. The result is that to-day one cannot maintain an attitude of moralistic judgment and condemnation. Such an attitude is absurd in its results and absolutely unproductive of any advance in understanding.

## Korea a Testing Ground for Chinese Military Re-Equipment

THE present visit of the Chinese Premier and Foreign Minister, Chou En-lai to Moscow is almost certainly connected with the military needs of the Chinese Government and its dependence on Russia.

Ninety per cent. of Chinese trade now, it is said, goes to Russia, and in return the Chinese Communist Party asks for more aid in the Korean war. This aid takes the form of re-equipment of the armed forces—a process which requires both material aid in the shape of machinery, tanks, artillery, etc., and warplanes of all descriptions; and also technical assistance in training Chinese personnel for the use of such modern equipment. The Chinese are said to be changing from their "human sea" tactics made possible by their seemingly limitless manpower, to an army which depends on equipment in the same way as the armies of the west. Russian arms and Russian technicians are pouring into China to effect both aspects of this transformation.

Meanwhile it has been pointed out—for example, by the correspondent of the *Sunday Times*—that the Korean war is extremely useful to the Chinese in providing a training ground where the practical

lessons of modern warfare and modern equipment can be studied by the military hierarchy. Korea may be a drain on Chinese resources which makes the régime more dependent on Russia, but it is also the occasion for making possible the modernising of Chinese military power.

We are therefore reminded of the concealed aspect of the Korean war to which FREEDOM has often drawn attention—its usefulness as a test-ground—and which Lord Alexander admitted when he declared that "the United Nations were learning a lot in Korea."

The present movement in Chinese diplomatic and military circles shows that it is not only the United Nations who use war in this way. It completes the martyrdom of the Korean people, destroyed in a war which is also an experiment. FREEDOM many months ago drew this analogy with the Spanish Civil war which was studied from a military experimental point of view by the Nazi, Fascist and Soviet governments. The situation in Korea shows that this use of war is not ideologically restricted to totalitarians of red or black variety but also extends to democracies and is, in fact, simply an aspect of governments' attitude towards war.

## THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS

UNFORTUNATELY for FREEDOM, the Trade Unions do not arrange the days of its annual Congress to fit in with our days of going to press, and until we are a daily we shall not be able to present full reports as promptly as we should like.

Writing this after only the presidential address has been given by Arthur Deakin, it is, however, perfectly plain that this year's T.U.C. is simply the mixture as before. The "extremists"—i.e., those who do not agree with the executives—are going to get steam-rollered by the "responsible" leaders. The leaders are going to be justified in their reactionary attitudes by the acclaim they will receive in the capitalist press, which will refer to the solid understanding the Deakins and Tewsons and Lawthers show for the real problems facing this country and how only harder work for less pay, restraint and sacrifice will enable us to pay our way . . . etc., etc.

If it seems worth it, we shall discuss it next week.



# SACCO & VANZETTI: 2 - Their Ideas

SACCO and Vanzetti belonged to that school of anarchist thought known (in its popular sense wrongly) as "anti-organisational anarchism", the main exponent of which was Luigi Galleani. Vanzetti, during the earlier part of his imprisonment contributed several articles criticising syndicalism to the Italian anarchist weekly of New York, *L'Adunata dei Refrattari*. A few quotations from their letters<sup>1</sup> give some idea of the beliefs which sustained them through their seven long years of incarceration:

SACCO: "Although knowing that we are one heart, unfortunately, we represent two opposite classes; the first want to live at any cost and the second fight for the freedom, and when it come to take away from him he rebel; although he know that the power of the first, of the opposite, class will crucify his holy rebellion. It is true, indeed, that they can execute the body but they cannot execute the idea which is bound to live. And certainly, as long as this system of things, the exploitation of man on other man reign, will remain always this fight between these two opposite classes, today and always."

VANZETTI: "I abhor useless violence, I would my blood to prevent the shedding of blood, but neither the abyss nor the earth, nor the heavens, have a law which condemns the self-defense. . . . The champion of life and of the liberty should not yield before the death. The struggle for the liberty, between the oppressor and the oppressed, shall continue beyond the life, beyond the graves. I know what they have done and are doing to me and to thousands of others, rebels and lovers. And I know that they are and will always be ready to do against us. . . . Are they not ready to do with other comrades what they are doing to us? Are they not more willing than ever to squeeze out the worker's blood for more gold? Are they not preparing a greater war? . . ."

than the old ones for this. . . . By these criterion I came to understand the philosophy of 'free will' and that of 'determinism'. According to the latter, none is guilty. The former is more wrong and deleterious than the latter, and it explains the mercilessness of the law, the dishonesty of the State, the ferocity monstrous of the churches, and the immorality of the pure moralists. The latter, too, has its weaknesses and bad consequences. It tends to weaken the human will, to incline its believers to an idle fatalism, to self-indulgence and irresponsibility in a way, for if things cannot be otherwise than how they are, or go otherwise than how they go, if we are what external factors determine, you can see the consequences of such thinking. As for me, I believe to a certain extent in both, as limited and changeable phenomenon, interdependent, and dependent from some higher phenomenon. So, I have no ultimate word on them and I remain a *Voluntarist*."

" . . . the dead civilisations tell their tale as well and what came and passed before the dawn of our historical knowledge, we cannot know. History, like evolution, as we know of it now, fails far from explaining the request of a deep thinker. Then, what will follow to this age of reversion and tyranny? A false democracy again, which in its turn will inevitably yield to another tide of tyranny? As it is happening from thousands of years?"

"Anarchy, the anarchists alone, we only can break these deadly circles and set life in such a way that a natural synchronism, produced by the very nature of the things which create the new order, more exactly, which constitute the new order, history will be

THIS DAY  
AUGUST 23, 1927  
NICOLA SACCO  
and  
BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI

workingmen, and dreamers of the brotherhood of man, who hoped it might be found in America were done to a cruel death by the children of those who fled, long ago, to this land for freedom

Their voices are gone into all the earth, and they will be remembered in gratitude and tears, when the names of those who murdered them—

JUDGES GOVERNORS SCHOLARS  
have gone down into everlasting shame

streamed toward the infinite sea of freedom, instead to turn in the above said dead, close circle, as, it seems, it did 'til now."

[The apparent discrepancies between the style of the above letters of Vanzetti and his previously quoted autobiography are due to the fact that the autobiography was translated from the Italian, while the letters represent, as do Sacco's, Vanzetti's attempts at English.—S.E.P.]

The Lessons to be Drawn  
As was mentioned at the beginning of this article, an international protest of a size and a vigour that the world has not seen since, was raised to prevent the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti—it failed. It failed because the vast majority of its supporters did not understand the nature of the state and its laws; did

not understand that justice cannot be obtained from an institution whose primary purpose is the protection and perpetuation of the very privileged classes that Sacco and Vanzetti fought against and were killed by because of their fight. During the twenty-five years that have passed since their martyrdom we have seen what for want of a better term is called "the conscience of the world" punch-drunk into almost a silence of death. Still pitifully clinging to the hope that the system which sacrificed Sacco and Vanzetti can be improved into a better one, it was led into supporting more and more "lesser evils" and, who knows, perhaps we have witnessed in its recent feeble protests against the murders of the Franco régime, its last fling before its final demise. In a sense this is something to be regretted, in another sense perhaps it is an omen that those who still remain faithful to the principles of free and independent thinking will some day see the way out of this nightmarish world that anarchists such as Sacco and Vanzetti have tried to show.

For anarchists in particular, there is a fundamental lesson to be got from the martyrdom of Sacco and Vanzetti. Some twenty-three years ago, Marcus Graham<sup>2</sup> in an article entitled "A Repetition In History", drew an interesting analogy between the Sacco-Vanzetti case and that of the Chicago anarchists of 1887. Among the Chicago anarchists were two men who stood out from sheer force of character: one was Louis Lingg who, like Sacco, was essentially a militant; the other was Albert Parsons who, like Vanzetti, was essentially a philosopher. In both cases, it was the philosopher who had most faith in acquittal by the state's courts. Vanzetti, taken in by the outward appearances of Governor Fuller and the commission of "learned

men" appointed by him, hoped they would see justice done; convinced that no court would dare sentence an innocent man, Parsons voluntarily surrendered to the authorities. On the other hand, Sacco persistently refused to sign appeals to the state and believed that he and Vanzetti were doomed to die—Lingg adopted a similar attitude. Graham concludes: "We can only conjecture upon what may and probably would have been the outcome of these two famous cases had the defiant attitude of Louis Lingg and Nicola Sacco been followed. Naïve, trusting confidence in the State has resulted in the inevitable tragedy. They who died so valiantly cannot be brought back to life but the sacrifice they made should make us pause to consider if such tactics bear worthy fruit. . . . We would do well to take heed of the lessons taught us by Chicago and Boston."

Twenty-five years have passed since the State of Massachusetts, with the support of the federal government of the U.S.A., murdered two of the finest of men. We who have succeeded them in the task of struggling for the free society of anarchy cannot but feel proud that they, our two comrades, should have died so bravely in a martyrdom that brought them from obscurity to the status of world figures. The prospect for liberty seems more sombre in our day than it did in their's, but if we can succeed in keeping alive the ideas and principles for which they stood, in the face of the catastrophe that threatens to engulf us, then we shall have done our part towards the vengeance of which Vanzetti wrote—"the realisation of freedom".

S. E. PARKER.

<sup>1</sup> The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti, 1928.  
<sup>2</sup> The Road to Freedom, New York anarchist monthly, September 1929.

## COMMENT

### Seaton, North Fara and Lynmouth

"The only vengeance which could placate me is the realisation of freedom, the great deliverance which would benefit all my friends as well as all my enemies: All. But till that, the struggle goes on, till we are breath to breath with the enemy fighting with short arms, till then, to fight is our duty, our right, our necessity."

"All what I have said may induce you to believe that I am a so-called 'Determinist'. I am not so, though I believe in the existence of a 'together of things' which we pass through and which influence is a 'concomitant' factor of our individuality. That 'together' is made of the things of nature above the human will and power, and the things which result from the human behaviours and their worksome matters. But that is not 'all', for each of us differ from the others, though many spoke of conception, maternity, atavism, etc. Well, those things too are subject to changes and conditions that alter them—still determinism. But, why are we? Why are we as we are? Why chances make differences? Here the 'determinism' spring from something else—from the unknown. If we follow it, it ultimately opens in the unknown again.

" . . . Yet life, happiness, health and goodness depend from things which are what and as they are, and not what and as we believe and hope them to be. So that wrong faith, absurd hope, unfounded optimism and confidence are or may be fatal or at least very deleterious to the individual, in spite of their real help to him as animators. . . ."

"It is for such reason that I indict all the new and all religions. They dope the people so to eternal slavery, inequality, exploitations, crimes, vices and death. The new religions are not better

AT Seaton Sluice in Northumberland, a group of thirty volunteers led by Mr. John Liggett set to work a month ago to restore the harbour at the mouth of a small river, the Seaton Burn. It was blocked by the ruins of its old walls and jetties, and the first task which the "Seaton Sluice Harbour Volunteers" have set themselves is to deepen and widen the channel. "Most fine evenings, when the tide is out," says a Press account, "they are at work lugging stones out of the channel, putting them in their place in a rebuilt wall, and fixing them with concrete. All this is done with primitive tools—including an improvised crane made from a discarded winch dug out of the sands—and sheer muscle, but better equipment is promised (and, in fact, has already begun to arrive) from sympathisers. The Whitley Bay Urban District Council (in whose area Seaton Sluice lies) is to send a crane and a light railway. A contractor has lent a cement mixer and a brewery leased a storage room at a rent of 6d. a year."

"The volunteers are lorry drivers, office workers, bricklayers, and so on . . . many are miners; at least one of them, when I left the site, was about to go on night shift. Some own boats, but at least as many do not. The scheme, in fact, seems to have captured the imagination of the village, and the interest has spread further."

Mr. Liggett himself, is Lecturer in Applied Psychology at King's College, Newcastle, and one can easily imagine that the experience will be grist for his professional mill and that he might well write a monograph with one of those impressive titles that the industrial psychologists love so much—"Spontaneous Association in the Work Process," "Absence of Tensions in Functional Group Activity," or something of the sort. If he does, it should be interesting to see what his conclusions are. He would probably say that the work was done with zest and delight that would be completely absent had it been undertaken as wage labour by the proper authorities, quite apart from the fact that however desirable it may be to have the harbour open, it would never get done in the normal course of events, for "economic" reasons. He would no doubt remark on the complete absence of those psychological tensions, hostilities and so on that are the subject of a solid and exhaustive volume from the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, on "The Changing Culture of a Factory." During the depression, some unemployed Welsh miners got permission to dig coal for their own use, in what was known

as The Rhymney Outcrop Scheme and in describing the scene, the organiser, Mr. J. Thomas\* said that the miners "rejoice in the freedom to do the work as real craftsmen should; in no mine, however well-managed, has better workmanship in roadmaking or timbering been accomplished." No doubt Mr. Liggett, too, will observe his group's delight in a good job well done.

THE island of North Fara in Orkney, has recently been evacuated by its inhabitants. This was not, as in the case of some of the remote Hebridean islands, or the Blasket islands of Ireland, because of the difficulty of scratching a living there, for the Orkney Islands are one of the most productive parts of Scotland and North Fara itself yielded, according to the B.B.C., £20,000 worth of agricultural produce last year. The reason why North Fara's stone cottages are empty is the lack of a jetty and a schoolteacher. There used to be a ferry connecting with the drifters that nose about among the islands but the ferryman died, and North Fara has now become a mere sheeprun. Surely, Mr. Alistair Dunnett asked on the radio, there must be some way of paying for a little stone pier that will bring the

people back to their island and, by giving it more accessibility, make a schoolteacher willing to come?

Seven years ago, I watched Mr. A. V. Alexander formally open the causeways which link four of the south islands with the Orkney mainland and when we were told of the inestimable benefit they would bring to the inhabitants, I felt quite reconciled to the time I had spent in shovelling hardcore on them. The government willingly found the money for this project which would build a hundred piers for North Fara, but, of course, its motivation was naval strategy and the usefulness of the causeways was quite incidental. Experience in other parts of Britain suggests that if the Orkney County Council decided to build a pier, the Ministry of Transport would refuse a grant in aid, so unless something like the Seaton Sluice Harbour Volunteers can be mustered in that remote spot, North Fara will stay uninhabited. What a pity North Fara is so far from Northumberland.

THE sense of purpose and communal activity which motivates the volunteers at Seaton harbour is so strikingly absent from ordinary life and work,

that when it emerges in some catastrophe, like the disaster at Lynmouth, people are amazed. The *Observer's* correspondent writes: "Life here is now governed by a universal and sometimes overwhelming good will. At voluntary centres all over Devon, the system is reported to be clogged by gifts. One detects a sense of surfeit. 'The Danes are sending us two tons of processed food,' says a W.V.S. officer, her gratitude audibly struggling with dismay."

Another officer of the Women's Voluntary Services said to him impulsively, "This would be really enjoyable if it wasn't so tragic," and the County Surveyor remarked, "What strikes me as odd is that it takes a disaster to make people behave like this."

But it is not really odd when you consider that in the normal affairs of life, we are, as Ashley Montagu says in *On Being Human*, "enslaved to the principles and practices of an acquisitive society."

"A society such as ours," he declares, "in which human relations are submerged in the economic system, can rescue itself only by submerging its economy in the matrix of human relations." C.W.

ON BEING HUMAN, by Ashley Montagu. (New York: Henry Schuman, \$1.95)

DR. MONTAGU, chairman of the department of anthropology at Rutgers University and lecturer in the fields of sociology and psychiatry, has written a book of special interest to all those who believe that man is not the ruthless creature who lives only by "tooth and claw". The book is only a summation of a more extensive work upon which he has been working for many years.

After a brief outline of the attempts of sociologists and biologists to discover the laws by which the organic world operates, the author states his thesis. Co-operation and mutual aid are the most important factors in the survival and origin of life. In the reproductive process of even one-celled animals, Dr. Montagu sees the beginnings of mutual aid which is prevalent all through nature and which underlies human society. Because love and co-operation are necessary for the well-being of the individual as oxygen is necessary to the lung for breathing, the author sees the possibility of a human society in which those biologic factors are extended to include all peoples.

Dr. Montagu gives full credit to Peter Kropotkin who in 1890 answered Malthus, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and a host of other propounders of the theory of natural selection and the "survival of the fittest" which served as a

justification of the ruthlessness and the destructiveness of the rising English capitalism. Kropotkin pointed to the wealth of material biologists already gathered by serious biologists which indicated that mutual aid was an important factor in evolution. He showed that this law applied with equal force to human society.

Like Kropotkin, Dr. Montagu is aware of the harmful effects of oppressive institutions on the normal development of individuals, but he differs from Kropotkin and all other revolutionists in that he places the cart before the horse. It is true that it is a vicious circle—the interaction of the individual on the institutions and vice-versa. But he puts the emphasis on the individual and not on the oppressive institutions which are primarily responsible for most of his ills.

We agree when he says, "This failure to develop social life is due to the privations of love suffered by the infant during the first six years of his life." But the mother of the child is herself a victim of the oppressive environment. If she is a working-class mother, she is beset by all the trials of her economic situation which exercises a bad effect. If she is a member of the "upper crust", she imparts to her child the twisted values of the leisure class, in addition to the cold cash that she leaves her offspring upon her death.

## Mutual Aid

In these tragic times when hatred and brutality seem to envelope the globe, it is encouraging to hear from a man of such standing in the scientific world a justification for the faith in the essential goodness of man. It is to be regretted that Dr. Montagu suffers from the great evil of specialisation. Preoccupation with his own speciality prevents him from seeing the problem in its proper perspective. He approaches social reconstruction from the standpoint of psychiatry, thus, "Our world at the present time is directed by criminally irresponsible adventurers and cynical and complacent men who have grown old in the ways of self-interest and ultra-nationalism. Unless their place is taken by men of understanding and humility, whose guiding principle is love, the world of man is doomed."

In other words, elect a "good" man to office. The cult of leadership, the belief in the "good" leader has robbed men of their initiative and helped bring on the oppressive institutions which must be supplanted by new types of social organisations based on the mutual-aid principle, if mankind is to survive and progress to a better and freer world.

J. E. MILLER

(From the *Industrial Worker*, Chicago.) Some extracts from *On Being Human* were printed in our issue of 15/3/52.

## FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

- Portrait of England  
Laurence Thompson 10/6  
Not about Anne Hathaway's cottage or the Changing of the Guard, but a description of what this country is really like.
- South  
William Sansom 2/-  
Stories of Mediterranean lands.
- Attitude to Africa  
The authors of this Penguin Special are Prof. Arthur Lewis, Michael Scott, Martin Wright and Colin Legum. 2/-
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George Orwell 10/6  
By far the best personal account in English of the Spanish Civil War, with a detailed narrative of the "May Week" in Barcelona in 1937.

Obtainable from  
**27, RED LION STREET,  
LONDON, W.C.1**

\*In *Experiments in Social Reconstruction* (Allen, 1937).



## The C.N.T. enters the Madrid Government

### IX

(Continued)

#### Dr. MALAN AND THE WORLD

DR. Malan has once again made one of those speeches which seem to come out of an intolerant and bigoted past, rather than out of the second half of the twentieth century. Yet in another sense such speeches are possible to-day in a way in which they would have been quite impossible for a government fifty years ago.

Malan stands for white hegemony over the coloured African population which so enormously outnumbered it. But he also stands for the racial mission of a tiny bigoted religious group, the Boers of the Dutch Reformed Church. Hitler's racial claims were for a large and industrially significant nation of 70 millions; Malan makes even higher and more absurd claims for a handful of ex-Dutch exiles.

Democratic opinion is still largely—if nominally—liberal opinion in this country. It believes in progressive advancement of "backward" peoples and it deprecates, officially, such racial intolerance as the colour bar (how skin deep such liberal attitudes are is shown by an article "Colour Bar in High Places," in FREEDOM of 30/8/52). Such progressive attitudes are sufficiently traditional to make it impossible for any government of this country publicly to adopt an attitude like Malan's without a disastrous loss of face.

This means that governments are, on the whole, still sufficiently dependent on public opinion to be careful to conceal reactionary opinions. That Dr. Malan can make his extraordinary speeches shows that public opinion in South Africa exerts no such pressure.

How real is the difference here? Malan himself declared that he had no complaint against the British Government, which had acted very correctly, but he had a complaint against what might be the future British Government—the British Labour Party—which had been lending its ears to appeals for action against the South African Government. This may be regarded as one up to the Labour Party. But in office the Labour Party appeased Malan over the Seretse Khama affair as thoroughly as could be wished. What is probably true is that the Labour Party leadership feels more pressure from its membership and the workers generally to adopt progressive standpoints than does the Tory leadership whom Malan pats on the back for its "very correct" behaviour.

It would have been unthinkable fifty years ago for a government like Malan's to be received with diplomatic civility by a British government. Twenty years ago, the indulgence of the British government towards Hitler and Mussolini showed how far governmental behaviour had degenerated after the first world war.

But it would be wrong to think that governments have degenerated. At no period of history have they shrunk from despicable actions. What has happened is that they are now far less subject to pressure from those they govern. The Conservatives and Labour can appease Malan outright as in the Khama case, or they can stand by in "correct" non-interference while he serves up the repulsive Hitlerian rubbish—because they do not disastrously lose face by so doing.

It may be that people are so accustomed nowadays to international disputes being settled by

LARGO CABALLERO, who succeeded Giral as Prime Minister, had as his first mission that of creating a government that would function as such. During the previous weeks, "the masses had gravitated to the workers' organisations, dazzled by their revolutionary achievements, or to the front line to face the common enemy," writes Peirats in *La C.N.T. en la Revolucion Española*, adding: "To save the Government, the principle of government, it is necessary to give it prestige with watchwords and with a man. The watchwords can be improvised, and the man, once the situation is saved, removed from office. What is important is to find something which will permit the reconstruction of the State apparatus, place the reins in the hands of any government which will carry out the task of disarming the people and reducing them to a state of obedience. In a word, to put the revolution in a straight jacket. For this Largo Caballero was the man sent by providence." He was a leader of the U.G.T., Socialist dominated Trade Union and an "extremist" of the Socialist Party who was held in esteem by the C.N.T.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> According to Pierats. The reader will recall that in reference to Caballero's relations with the C.N.T., quoted from the *Spanish Labyrinth*, the contrary view was put forward. We believe that both Peirats and Brenan expressed the situation as it existed at the times they were describing (i.e., 1936 and 1934 respectively). To our minds, the attitude of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. leaders to the politicians sheds interesting light on their outlook to politics. Both Caballero and Companys had been responsible at some time or other for sending anarchists to jail, but neither side views this with horror or shame. It appears to be accepted as part of the political game, with neither side bearing any grudge against the other. So that in July 1936 the C.N.T. in Catalonia could declare their faith in "the word of a Catalan democrat [Companys]" and in the crisis of May 1937 refuse to join a Central Government in which Caballero was not Prime Minister. One cannot help feeling that the C.N.T.-F.A.I. leaders were politicians at heart.

His immediate task will be to give prestige to the badly battered republican institutions and give new life to the State thereby making it possible to achieve what the previous governments had been impotent to do: militarisation of the army, reorganisation of the armed corps and the control of these by the Government with the simultaneous disarming of the rearguard. The watchword was not difficult to find: the need for discipline and a single command as a reply to the reverses of the war; the necessity of carrying on and winning the war above all else.

The C.N.T.'s reply to the Caballero Government was the National Plenum of Regional Committees held in the middle of September in which they proposed the constitution in Madrid of a National Defence Council which they described as "a national organism empowered to take over the functions of direction, on the question of defence, and consolidation in the political and economic fields." As we have already stated, this Council would have powers to "create a conscript War Militia. In other words, this 'Council' was a Government in disguise, albeit a revolutionary government.

On November 4th, 1936, four members of the C.N.T. entered the Caballero Government: Juan Lopez and Juan Peiró as Ministers of Commerce and Industry respectively; Federica Montseny as Health Minister and the portfolio of Justice was entrusted to Garcia Oliver. None of these Ministers has been able to say of his six months' tenure of office that the presence in the Government of representatives of the C.N.T. in any way contributed to an improvement in the war situation (no longer a "war" since it had assumed by May 1937, the character of an international war). Juan Lopez has pointed to the impossibility of achieving anything in the economic sphere when the portfolios of Commerce and Industry were in the hands of Syndicalists and Agriculture and Finances in the hands of a Communist and Socialist respectively. Federica Montseny has publicly admitted that the C.N.T.'s participation in the Government was a failure, and only Garcia Oliver was extatic in describing his achievements as the legislator for Justice. He might perhaps have shown less enthusiasm for his revolutionary discoveries in the field of penology had he been acquainted with the work of even such cautious though well-meaning bodies as

the Howard League for Penal Reform in Capitalist Britain!<sup>23</sup>

The acceptance of Government posts by the C.N.T. was described in their daily paper, *Solidaridad Obrera*, as "the most transcendental day in the political history of our country." It goes on to explain that "the government in this hour, as a regulating instrument of the organisms of the State, has ceased to be an oppressive force against the working-class, just as the State no longer represents the organism which divides society into classes. And both will tend even less to oppress the people as a result of the intervention of the C.N.T. [in the government]. The functions of State will become reduced, in agreement with the workers' organisation, to the function of regularising the development of the economic and social life of the country. And the Government's only preoccupation will be to ably direct the war and to co-ordinate the revolutionary task according to a general plan. Our comrades will bring to the Government the collective and majority will of the working masses previously assembled in vast general assemblies. They will defend no personal or capricious criterion but the freely determined wishes of the

Continued on p. 4

<sup>23</sup> All four C.N.T. Ministers in the Caballero government gave an account of their activities in their respective Ministries at huge public meetings. These were published in pamphlet form. Unfortunately, we have at present only a copy of Garcia Oliver's speech, to which we shall refer elsewhere in this study. The C.N.T.-F.A.I. Ministers in the Catalan Government do not appear to have made similar statements, but we have found two references by Santillan published in the magazine *Timon* (Barcelona, August 1938) which we think of considerable interest. "Simply as governors—writes Santillan—we are not better than anybody else and we have already proved that our intervention in governments serves only to reinforce governmentalism, and in no way to uphold the rights of labour against its parasitic economic and political enemies." Elsewhere he declares that one must trust and serve the people. "But one cannot serve two masters at the same time. If we are with the people we cannot also be with the State, which is the enemy of the people. And at the moment we are on the side of the State, which is the same as saying that we are against the people..."

## Assassination and Coercion

ANARCHISTS deny any value whatsoever to Laws. The codes formulated by castes of legislators attached to the foundation of the State and its subsequent development, are nothing else than a crystallisation of various "precedents", of a few customs chosen with a view to maintaining safely the existence of societies of class and privilege. Doubtless there enter into these codes some tendencies bearing a general character of arbitration or compromise. And even, under the pressure of mass action or the evolution of the economic structure and social morals—and therefore of public opinion—certain essential interests of the oppressed groups (the proletariat, the woman, the child) are in fact protected, at least partially, by certain laws.

This does not detract from the fact that, viewed as a whole, legal codes express the division of society into classes and castes, and its submission to a network of authoritarian parasitical institutions called the State; the codes tend in addition to clothe with a protective mantle of "sanctity" the privileges of the ruling and exploiting minorities.

Even the most "social" of the laws, those which express the concessions made by the ruling castes in face of the long, drawn-out struggle of the oppressed, never have the contractual character of the pacts and conventions which in a libertarian communist—anarchist—society would be more or less the only "legislation" to which juries of arbitration could refer.

force, even by war, and are so afraid of war, that they are completely apathetic where they ought to be indignant, completely passive where they ought to resort to direct action. But if it is the fear of war which makes us afraid to do anything, then we ought to be searching for other means of exerting pressure. Certainly fear should not drive out indignation and the capacity to take up the cause of suffering peoples.

Whatever the cause, indignation is a feeble affair to-day when causes for indignation are more present than ever before. The indifference of governments, no less than their enormities, reflects the inability of individuals to make their protest and compel their governments to recognise it. Malan is a fantastic figure by any reasonable standard: but his most sinister significance lies in the practical tolerance with which he is regarded by most Englishmen.

The Paris quarterly publication *Positions\** has devoted its second number to a campaign against capital punishment and police brutality (the latter is a particularly burning question in France to-day) and the main part of the book comprises the answers of some thirty people to a questionnaire sent out by *Positions*:

1. If "An execution in defiance of the law is called an assassination,"† what name can one give to an execution in conformity with the law?

2. In more general terms, can one accept as legitimate the power of coercion which man exercises over man?

The answers to these questions, and the longer essays contributed to the subject by the editors are of great interest to anarchists, as a very critical survey of the idea of the State and the conception of a society based on the power of law. The essay we publish below, translated from *Le Temps des Assassins*, is an answer on behalf of the French Anarchist Federation to the questions raised, and should, we think, provide the basis for some fruitful controversy among anarchists in this country.

S.W.T.

It will be understood, then, that for the Anarchist Federation, Paulhan's phrase is devoid of sense. Executions in conformity with the laws are for us nothing more than "legal assassinations". For us, the problem is quite other than knowing whether assassination is an execution in defiance of the law or in conformity with the law.

It might possibly seem that we are merely disputing a point of vocabulary, a dispute which would in fact be justified by the form of the questionnaire of *Positions*: "What name can one give . . . ?"

For us, who give the name of "assassination" equally to legal murder, to execution in the name of law, the dispute embraces a basic and vital problem.

The anarchist theoreticians, Kropotkin especially, have devoted a great deal of attention to the study of the phenomenon called "justice", and we cannot do better than refer the reader to one of his pamphlets, "The Vengeance Called Justice," written in 1901, in which he condemns legal punishment, "legalised vengeance", and opposes to it the idea of juries of arbitration composed of people chosen by the two parties in dispute.

The law neither prevents crime nor is capable of making restitution except in an entirely accessory manner. Its true aim is to punish, inheriting as it does the conceptions of the Roman, hebraic and christian empires.

We may say that "assassination" and death "penalty" exist if a State, a political group, a party, execute men because they have attacked or are presumed to have attacked the sacred nature of the State's laws and dogmas. There is assassination when there is a "judge" and "punishment", "legal vengeance". But there is no element of

assassination, nor does one find any of the loathsome characteristics of the "death penalty", in the execution of a chief of State, of an oppressor, of a real assassin, by the revolutionary, the individual in revolt. This is, on the contrary, only a measure of defence, a health measure.

Nor again is it a case of assassination when, during the course of a movement with a revolutionary character, the direct action of the masses, outside any legal consideration, suppresses during the struggle the counter-revolutionaries and hostile combatants.

We do not claim that revolutionary direct action as we envisage it is always to be found in a pure state. There will probably always be, despite our efforts, executions by the side of revolutionary acts of defence, or mingled with them, which bear the character of assassination. But let us also add that this consideration should not be allowed to weigh against the idea of a Revolution.

What gives the character of assassination to certain summary executions of 1944-45, accomplished by certain "resistance" groups, is not that they took place in defiance of the law (they could have taken place under the formula of exceptional laws, as did the executions carried out by the Vichy or Franco régimes); they assumed the character of assassinations when they no longer had even the impulsion of vengeance in its true sense, when they were not justified by any reason of defence or security, when they constituted "legal vengeance" even without the application of laws, when they were designed not to repair nor even to avenge an injury but to punish those who were executed for not

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\**Positions*, No. 2: "Le Temps des Assassins" (Paris, June 1952), obtainable from Freedom Bookshop, price 6/-.

†Jean Paulhan: "Letter to the directors of the Resistance (Paris, 1952)."

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# Anarchism and Parliamentarism

IN an interview with an English comrade, Philip Lewis, published in *Arbetaren* (the daily organ of the Swedish Syndicalist Movement) August 15th, appear some incorrect and somewhat misleading information about the Swedish Anarchist Movement, which we would like to correct.

Comrade Philip Lewis is quoted by *Arbetaren* as having said: "Before I arrived in Sweden, I couldn't visualize that there were anarchists and syndicalists who participate in the municipal elections with their own candidates. However, since I have come to know the 'Swedish situation' I understand that there might be reasons for such a tactic."

The quotation above proves that our English comrade has been misinformed and that the interviewer has neglected to correct the error. One wonders whether this negligence is intentional or if it really is due to ignorance. As several correspondents and contributors with characteristic social-democratic leanings have appeared in *Arbetaren* during the past few years, we are not in the slightest surprised that misinformation of this kind occurs. The fact is, nevertheless, that there has not been, or can ever be, a situation in this or in any country to justify an anarchist movement in participating in political elections of any kind.

Anarchism and parliamentarism repudiate each other. Geographical boundaries or national peculiarities do not alter that difference of principle between anarchism and parliamentary socialism. Thus the Swedish anarchists are just as opposed to "electoral double-cross tactic" as are anarchists in other parts of the globe. The moment we accept the ballot box as a means to forward our ideas, we have become renegades to our anarchistic anti-parliamentary views.

If the interviewer of the Swedish Syndicalist Press had been more familiar with the Anarchist—and Syndicalist Movement, he would not have committed such a folly. Nothing has oc-

curred in Sweden to justify the anarchists deserting their anti-parliamentary attitude. We have, on the other hand, a small minority within the Swedish Syndicalist Movement, that has recently been converted to the electoral method. This particular group has been carrying on its political salvation-army activity in a few insignificant places. Their efforts have been rather in vain, due to the fact that the great majority of the Swedish syndicalists are too intelligent to be persuaded by antiquated merry-go-round methods.

However, it is not news, that syndicalists participate in parliamentary action. They are not voting or making propaganda for any election as syndicalists but only as individuals. The international syndicalist movement has not taken a definite anti-parliamentary attitude but endeavours to unite the entire working-class regardless of their political, philosophical or religious

## NEWS FROM NORWAY

SOME 200 children tore down a hundred yards of boarding round a building plot in Oslo last week and turned the site into a playground. This show of force was prompted by an accident in which a boy who had been playing in the street was run over. The site had been reserved for a playground by the city authorities, but nothing had been done to prepare it for this purpose. A sequel to this successful piece of direct action is the offer of an Oslo firm of builders to pay part of the cost of turning the site into a proper playground. Oslo City Council is giving the matter high priority.

—Times Educational Supplement, 29/8/52.

views. In other words, it has declared itself to be politically neutral. Thus it is possible for a member of the syndicalist movement to vote for any candidate of his choice. Syndicalism differs from Anarchism in that respect. But the anarchists have preferred the syndicalist movement to the reformist trade unions since the syndicalist movement is more or less related to anarchism in its final anti-state position. The anarchists are, therefore, and have always been, the most active syndicalists in Sweden. However, there are also syndicalists, like the interviewer in *Arbetaren*, who do not approve of anarchism. The syndicalist movement has maintained that flexibility. We anarchists do not object to that either, but we certainly object to be known as being actively engaged in the political game of intrigue and clowning.

The anarchist movement in Sweden is not a mass-movement, but we carry on with our educational work and we can point to a certain progress. Our paper, *Brand*, has increased its circulation and we have reasons to believe that we will be able to publish it more frequently in the near future.

With comradely greetings to our English comrades!  
Anarkistiska Propagandaförbundet.

TIDNINGEN BRAND.

[So far as we know, comrade Philip Lewis is expressing his personal views, and not those of any anarchist group in this country. So far as the Freedom Press Group is concerned, we are in complete agreement with the views expressed by our Swedish comrades in the letter reproduced above. That our comrade P.L. can so lightly dismiss all anarchistic teachings and principles in favour of political tactics, and he is probably not alone in a world desperately seeking short-cuts to salvation, convinces us of the importance of studying the Spanish Revolution which is a classical example of political collaboration by a revolutionary syndicalist organisation.—EDITORS.]

# India and Reform

THE National Executive of the Indian Socialist Party appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Shri Jai Prakash Narain, to take necessary steps to launch a peaceful national movement to secure redistribution of land.

The National Executive had recommended to members of the party, who owned land of more than a certain acreage, to distribute the excess to landless peasants.

The Gandhi Sangh Conference, which concluded its two-day session at Vijayawada on May 30th, went even further than the Socialist Party. It passed a resolution urging the Government to "abolish landlordism of every type—without compensation and distribute land equally among the tillers before March 31st, 1953." The resolution further urged the Sarva Seva Sangh to organise the people and use all non-violent sanctions against the Government and the landlords to compel them to do so in case of the failure to effect redistribution of land within the time limit.

The Congress Working Committee, which recently met in Delhi, also decided

to give topmost priority to the implementation of "radical" land reforms all over the country as envisaged in the Five-Year Plan. The Committee noted that in some of the States, as in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the Congress Ministries had already passed legislation for abolition of zamindari and steps were being taken to give effect to them. The Committee was of the unanimous opinion that in the remaining States measures should be initiated for early abolition of zamindari.

The Commission recognises that the tenancy and other legislations enacted in recent years do not "to any significant extent bear upon the problems" of the agricultural workers who constitute about a third of the rural population; the Commission observes, "that the existence of a large body of workers who have little to lose and live in indefensible social and economic conditions is itself a strong justification for effecting, as early as may be possible, radical changes in the structure of the rural economy." Yet the Commission fights shy of recommending "radical changes". The only protection that the Commission can visualise for the landless agricultural workers is that which may be offered

by the Minimum Wages Act. There are so many difficulties in the way of enforcement of the Minimum Wages Act which was passed in 1948.

The talk about co-operative farming sounds rather unconvincing. None of the Congress Governments in the States seems to be keen on the introduction of co-operative farming.

—Peasant International Agency.

## YUGOSLAVIA

Continued from p. 1

nounces from time to time the death of some Communist official killed "on duty" and the burning down of "houses of Culture" by "unknown people" while in Serbia where the libertarian tradition is strongest, Communist newspapers even boast of the capture of guerrilla bands composed of peasants who hid in the forests over a number of years and occasionally assail the secret police.

# ANARCHISM AND COERCION

Continued from p. 3

having respected the values, the conceptions, the dogmas of the executioners.

Once again, we insist on the gulf which separates assassination, the death "penalty", with their character of punishment, from the execution whose necessity is imposed by the struggle or because the disappearance of the individual executed acquires a character of necessity felt by all as being the only possible solution. No one will feel to be an assassination the execution of a few public enemies and avowed traitors. And this popular feeling, this "impression" of the masses who, far from being bloodthirsty have always erred on the side of softness towards their butchers (the revolutionary terrors weigh nothing in the scales opposite the counter-revolutionary terrors, as history testifies)—this popular feeling is worth more than all the legalistic appreciations of those sensitive souls who are quite prepared to accept the abominable concept of solitary confinement or capital punishment in the framework of the law. One would require a strong dose of hypocrisy to talk of assassination in relation to the execution of Mussolini, when one considers objectively the death each day of thousands of human beings from hunger, disease and war, as a result of the systems of domination and exploitation in force.

In replying to the first question posed by *Positions*, we have already laid the foundation for our answer to the second: "Can one accept as legitimate the power of coercion which man exercises over man?"

Rejecting legal codes as an expression of class and caste domination, we obviously reject equally all coercive power which springs from this domination.

Anarchists have always opposed all forms of authority which imply an alienation of the human being, and privilege and power for the agents of authority. We only recognise technical authority and even moral authority if these rest on a basis of acceptance, or of voluntary submission. We combat all coercion and refuse to countenance it even as a revolutionary weapon.

It is, however, incontestable that during revolutionary periods and every day in direct workers' action (strikes, demonstrations, etc.), the masses have to break resistance and opposition by force. We therefore find ourselves faced with the same problem again, and again we refuse to confound assassination with the elimination in the struggle, by necessity, of counter-revolutionaries.

But what attitude are we to take to evilly-disposed or indifferent adversaries, once the phase of brutal conflict is passed? How are we to proceed against active adversaries, saboteurs? These are questions which appear to force us to accept coercive measures.

In actual fact, the pressure of economic needs is sufficient to constrain the majority of non-revolutionaries to participate in the life of the country. And we need hardly emphasise the importance of the contagion of revolutionary enthusiasm.

In the degree in which the revolution has an authentically libertarian character, it realises the aspirations and wishes of the masses. There can therefore be no question of imposing decisions on those very people who have taken them. As against the power of the State, coercive, imposing the decisions of a minority, even if it be a party claiming to be the

representative of the proletariat, the anarchists propose the direct power of the masses whose organs are the syndicates, the councils or soviets, the Communes and their Federations, achieving with the least possible centralisation the organisation of Society from the roots upwards. The two conceptions, authoritarian and libertarian, were fiercely opposed in the Russian and Ukrainian Revolution of 1917 (opposition between the partisans of the federated free Soviets and the bolsheviks who were forcing the masses to apply decisions which culminated in the struggle in the Ukraine between Makhno and the bolsheviks, and in the Kronstadt Commune) and were again opposed in Spain between 1936-1939.

The Libertarian Revolution is then the very negation of the notion of coercion. The use of force, controlled not by a police force or a specialised army in submission to a committee or government but by the people's organisations (syndicates, communes) should be limited, therefore, to specific tasks: to prevent asocial elements from doing harm, to carry out measures of arbitration, without there being any question of punishment, but only of precautions, of reparations or of exclusion, and in cases of necessity elimination in accordance with the limitations we have already discussed in reference to the first question.

In any case, just as we cannot compare revolutionary execution with assassination, whether legal or not, so we must be sure not to permit confusion between the Revolution's measures of defence and the coercion designed to impose on the masses a conception which is foreign to them.

FONTENIS.

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### LEEDS

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

### COVENTRY

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

# Lessons of the Spanish Revolution - 8

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hundreds of thousands of workers organised in the C.N.T. It is a historic fatality which falls on everyone. And the C.N.T. accepts this fatality to serve the country by its determination to quickly win the war and to see the revolution is not disfigured. . . .

Compare this adolescent and naive nonsense with the views of the C.N.T. as expressed two months earlier in their *Information Bulletin* (No. 41, dated September 3rd, 1936) and reproduced in the very *Solidaridad Obrera* from whose Editorial we have just quoted.

With the significant title: "The inutility of the Government" the C.N.T.-F.A.I. pointed out that:

"The existence of a Popular Front Government, far from being an indispensable element in the anti-fascist struggle, is qualitatively a cheap imitation of this very struggle.

"It is useless to recall that faced with the fascist putsch the Governments of the Generalitat and of Madrid, did absolutely nothing. Authority has only been used to hide the manoeuvres being carried out by the reactionary elements and by those of which the government was consciously or unconsciously the instrument.

"The war that is being successfully waged in Spain is a social war. The importance of the moderating Power, based on stability and the maintenance of classes, will not know how to impose a definite attitude in this struggle in which the foundations of the state

are vacillating and which is itself without any security. It is, then, true to say that the government of the Popular Front in Spain is no more than the reflection of a compromise between the petty bourgeoisie and international capital. . . .

"... The idea of replacing these governments, feeble guardians of the status quo, of property and of foreign capital, by a strong government based on an ideology and on a 'revolutionary' political organisation would only serve to postpone the revolutionary uprising.

"It is not a question therefore, of Marxism seizing Power, nor of the auto-limitation of popular action for reasons of political opportunism. The 'Workers State' is the end result of a revolutionary activity and the beginning of a new political slavery.

"The co-ordination of the forces of the Popular Front, of organisation of the supply of food-stuffs with an extensive collectivisation of undertakings is of vital interest in achieving our objectives. This is clearly what matters at this hour. It has been achieved up to now in a non-governmental, decentralised, demilitarised manner. . . . Many improvements remain to be made to meet these necessities. Greater use could be made by the Syndicates of the C.N.T. and U.G.T. of their forces to bring about these improvements. A coalition Government, on the contrary, with its base political struggles between majorities and minorities, its bureaucratisation, based on chosen élites, and the fratricidal struggles in which the opposing political factions are engaged, make it impossible for such a Government to benefit our work of liberation in Spain. It would lead to

the rapid destruction of our capacity of action, of our will to unity and the beginning of an imminent debacle before a still fairly strong enemy.

"We hope that Spanish and foreign workers will understand the justice of the decisions taken in this sense by the C.N.T.-F.A.I. To discredit the State is the final objective of Socialism. Events demonstrate that the liquidation of the bourgeois State, weakened by suffocation, is the result of economic expropriation and not necessarily by a spontaneous orientation of the 'socialist' bourgeoisie. Russia and Spain are living examples."

This valuable document contains all the arguments we would have wished to use in order to demonstrate that collaboration with Governments and political parties was a mistake from all points of view: from that of the social revolution and the armed struggle, of revolutionary tactics and principles.

Whatever the apologists of collaboration may say to the contrary, events—from the time of the "war" government of Largo Caballero to the Negrin "Government of Victory" ending with the ignominious surrender of Catalonia and the liquidation of the Communists and the Negrin Government in Central Spain prior to final capitulation—confirm in every detail the analysis contained in the historic document we have reproduced.

What caused this somersault which landed the C.N.T.-F.A.I. in Ministerial armchairs only a few weeks later; and to what extent was the rank and file of the organisation responsible for this complete abandonment of anarchist principles and revolutionary tactics?

(To be continued)

V.R.

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