

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"The man
 Of virtuous soul commands not,
 nor obeys;
 Power, like a desolating pesti-
 lence,
 Pollutes what'er it touches."
 —SHELLEY (Queen Mab).

INCREASING ARMED MIGHT

EVERYWHERE in the world to-day rulers are commenting with satisfaction on the armed strength they have achieved, or pointing with concern at weaknesses which require to be filled in. The U.S. Director of Defence Mobilisation, making his quarterly report to President Truman, records "impressive progress in developing the military and economic strength to oppose aggression and" (rather surprisingly) "promote peace". He warned however that "adequate strength is by no means achieved yet".

"Although much has been accomplished in enlarging the nation's industrial base and in raising the flow of military equipment, the greater part of the defence mobilisation effort still lies ahead. Most of the military goods authorised by Congress are yet to be delivered."

The *Times* calls this "painting this encouraging picture . . ."

N.A.T.O. Power in Europe

General Ridgway, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, had much the same kind of thing to say in Paris on October 6th: "There is military power in being, in Western Europe," he said, "far greater today than that which existed when the North Atlantic Treaty became effective. Any assailant can to-day be sure of finding his path a great deal harder and more costly should he now assault us than would have been the case at that time."

Lord Ismay had much of the same tenor to say recently.

Meanwhile, the recent air defence exercise, said to involve a quarter of a million persons, is described as the largest ever known.

In Russia, Too

It is needless to say that the "peace-loving Soviet Union" is in the same state of readiness. Marshal Vassilievsky claimed at the Communist Party Congress in Mos-

cow that "the new five-year plan (1951-56) would create conditions for a better supply of first-class modern arms and munitions in considerably greater quantities than during the war."

In Germany, armies are arising on each side of the frontier with the East. Within seven years of the ending of the war, arms production is in full swing, every nation is prepared not merely with vast supplies of arms, but with shadow factories ready for conversion overnight to enormously increased armaments production.

Drain on Human Wealth

Such "economic" activity is an appalling drain on the potential

wealth production of the world. In such an atmosphere, with its anxiety, its short-term perspectives, how can any social progress attain to a wide vision? No one seriously believes that armaments prevent wars, and it is becoming increasingly apparent that their production provides the means whereby wages are still paid out, though wealth is not increased. How few people believe that war will not come? And how dreary is the prospect of "peace" devoted to an armaments race which strangles all schemes for social improvement!

This is the "encouraging picture" of the newspapers.

After Morecambe "MOB RULE"

WHATEVER can be said against Herbert Morrison—and it is plenty—there is no doubt that his attitude to his own defeat in the elections for the Labour Party National Executive, at Morecambe, earned him the respect of the delegates who had just rejected him.

Morrison, of course, is the supreme Party man. He has been through the Party from bottom to top; he is the committee-man, organiser and wire-puller-in-chief, and it is because of this that he knew well enough how to react to the conference's decision. Bitter as the pill was to swallow, he swallowed it with relatively good grace—knowing, no doubt, as everybody knows, that whatever the Delegate Conference may resolve it is the Parliamentary Party which has the final say in the actions of the Party in Parliament.

The same compromise was not shown by some other supporters of the "orthodox" Party line. Hugh Gaitskell, for example, must have done himself (and the anti-Bevanites) a considerable amount of harm among the rank-and-file of the Party, by his bad-tempered reference to "mob rule".

It is always amusing to see how, when supporting their established leaders (and established leaders are invariably reactionary) the membership of any organisation are regarded as responsible and right-thinking. But as soon as they begin to criticise, or worse still, to act against the Executive, they become the tools of agitators practising mob rule.

Clement Attlee, too, leader of the Party, emerged from his long silence about the Bevanites, by bringing up the well-worn phrase about "a Party within a Party". But it's too late, Clem. To go into the attack now looks too much like being a bad loser, and if there is anything the jolly sporting British public does not like, it's a bad loser.

Another ex-Minister, John Strachey, had the sense to see this, and gently rebuked Hugh Gaitskell for his remark about mob rule. The democratic decisions of the conference, said Strachey, must be carried out. Strachey has been, up to now, more or less a supporter of the Attlee "orthodox" leadership. By his rebuke of Gaitskell he has at least moved to a centre position—a more convenient position from which to jump on to the Bevan bandwagon when the time comes. This would be right in the tradition of the man who in the past has jumped from the Fascists to the Communists to the Labour Party when he has seen which way the political wind was blowing.

But what of Bevan himself? In my opinion, Bevan has done no harm to the Labour Party at all. In fact, quite the contrary—he has done it a world of good. Since their triumphant entry into power in 1945 the Labour Party has undergone a steady decline in the support it received from its rank and file. The inspiration and enthusiasm for the Welfare State that swept the Party to power has withered away in the face of the reality. It has long since been realised by the rank and file that things were not going to be so radically different after all—troops were still sent into the docks to break a strike—dockers could be prosecuted for encouraging their fellows to go on strike—wage freezes could be introduced—

scription made permanent and the period of National Service extended—export drives and rearmament programmes, resulting in harder work and sacrifices for workers—all these went on under the Labour Government just as they would have done under the Conservatives.

So naturally the rank and file was getting fed-up. The 1950 election, leaving Labour with only a tiny fraction of its 1945 majority gave the warning signal. And Nye Bevan was that much ahead of Attlee and the rest of the leaders to see and take heed of it. Labour was due to be slung out in 1951 whether Bevan had resigned or not. He lost only a few months' pay at Ministerial rate (part of which he recovered by having the time to pay a visit to Yugoslavia and write a series of articles on Tito for the *Tory Evening Standard*) and in return has steadily built himself up as the next leader of the Labour Party, while bringing back to the Party a liveliness, appeal, and support such as it had not had since 1947.

Once again there is a sense of militancy within the Party. By continually talking about socialism, the Bevan group are bringing back many Party workers who had drifted away from the deadly dullness of the Cripps-Bevin-Attlee leadership. The ups and downs of the Bevanites' paper, *Tribune*, gives a reliable guide to all this. At about the same time that FREEDOM was becoming a weekly, last year (a very short time before Bevan's resignation), *Tribune* fell from a weekly to a fortnightly. It has now gone back to a weekly with a new format, with, it tells us, a bigger circulation than ever before.

The Bevan group has revived support for the Labour Party—and if at the next election Labour gets back into power, they will have "the ambitious demagogue who called one-half of his fellow countrymen 'vermin,'" as Churchill called Bevan, to thank for it.

Of course, in the process, heads will roll. Just as Ernest Bevin kicked out George Lansbury when he had served his purpose, Aneurin Bevan will kick out Clement Attlee when the time is ripe. It is the inevitable process up the ladder to power.

But for the rank and file? No change. A change at the top does not affect the relationship between the top and the bottom. There is no such thing as mob rule. A mob is always ruled by somebody. When the working-class becomes a collection of thinking and responsible human beings they will cease to be ruled by anybody. And they will cease to follow leaders, whether orthodox or heretic, Right, Left or Centre.

Then it will be the turn of the Bevanites, or their future equivalent, to howl about "mob rule". P.S.

"WHO WILL DO THE DIRTY WORK?"

IN response to readers' requests, the recent FREEDOM article by Tony Gibson on "Who will do the dirty work?" has been reprinted as a twopenny leaflet.

AFRICAN AFFAIRS

MAU MAU: SYMPTOM OF A SICK SOCIETY

The old chief prayed: "In your kindness you gave our fathers this beautiful land: do not let it pass from us now. There are those who came as friends but now they would take our land: look down and do not let it pass from us now. We were born in this beautiful land; our fathers and mothers were born in this beautiful land; our children were born in this beautiful land, and their children were born in it, too. Do not let it pass from us now. We pray that you should lead us as you led your servant Moses out of bondage to freedom. We pray that you should keep us under your protection and guard us from our enemies. And again we pray for our land for our land is the blood of our life. Look down in mercy, God, and hear our prayer."

There was nothing more to say then: there is nothing more to say now, except that I left Kenya feeling there was desperately little time left for God to grant the old chief's prayer. PETER ABRAHAMS, in a broadcast last August.

★

IT is very difficult to get reliable information about the activities of the Mau Mau secret society in Kenya. To the popular press secret oaths to drive out Europeans and the beheading of headmen loyal to the British are a news story likely to bring out all its powers of sensational misrepresentation. The *New Statesman* on the other hand, tells us that, "When the press in Kenya began to publish hysterical speeches and letters about the danger of Mau Mau, the African members of the Legislative Council, with the Chiefs and leading figures in the Kenya African Union (now recognised to be the most representative African organisation), called a meeting of thirty thousand people not only to denounce violence but to warn Africans against participation in secret and subversive activities, and to appeal to them

to discipline themselves against any provocation to break the law.

It can be stated beyond doubt that the significance of Mau Mau has been fantastically exaggerated by a group of European settlers, small in number but influential, who are conscious of the instability of their domination of Kenya."

Miss Elspeth Huxley, a well-informed observer of African affairs, does not believe that the mainspring of Mau Mau activities is political. She says:

"Discontent arising from other causes is, I believe, being cleverly manipulated by a small group of politically-minded men, who stay behind the actual scene of politics and whose director, a subtle, clever and possibly even diabolic man, is well-known to everyone but eludes implication. These men have watched over and encouraged the growth of the Mau Mau for several years and are now quite cynically using it for their own purposes. It seems likely, however, that a movement fostered in its earlier stages by the more sophisticated has now got out of hand.

"The roots of the Mau Mau spring from a maladjustment of society. Boredom, I am sure, is one of the major causes. British rule has brought many benefits and they are real ones; but also it has taken much away. It has taken most of the colour, excitement and open satisfaction of the passions which tribal life amply provided for. Gone are the cattle raids, the tribal wars, the prospect of loot, the sacrifices, the public executions, the numerous festivals and the dances condemned by Western opinion as indecent; gone, too, in large measure, the secret societies which were so much a part, in many regions, of tribal organisation. Almost everything that made life exciting, unexpected and stimulating has, in fact, disappeared."

This may very well be true, but the political conditions for an outburst of irresponsible terrorism. Mr. Mbiyu Koinage said in London last January, "The Africans are knocking in a peaceful way at the door of co-operation, and that door is not even open." He was speaking at the press conference called by the Kenya African Union after its delegation had been refused an interview by both

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Shops to Stay Open Later

THE Home Office has announced that shops will soon be allowed to return to the pre-war closing time of 8 p.m., and one night a week they may stay open till 9 p.m. Great news for shop assistants!

Mr. Alan Birch, general secretary of the Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers (membership 350,000), last night commented: "The union opposes any attempt to extend present shopping hours."

But it is undoubtedly true that present shopping hours are very inconvenient—especially for single working people who find the shops opening and closing at the same times as they have to go to work and to lunch.

Nevertheless, the shop assistants are right to resist extension of working hours. The only answer at the moment seems to be a shift system.

The real answer, of course, is the abolition of the money, wage and price machinery, then customers could help themselves to what they wanted and shops could be left open all the time!

THE WEALDSTONE DISASTER

THE train disaster at Harrow had all the horror of such catastrophes in a machine civilisation. One feels just the same sense of the appalling as with mining disasters or when large ships are lost at sea.

Over and above the horror of the accident itself, however, is the way in which such events are received. On the spot there is an immediate manifestation of mutual aid, and all the social virtues immediately show themselves. But beyond the immediate vicinity there is all the distastefulness of an obsessive interest in horror.

Dwelling on Details

The newspapers treat such events as the most important happening of the time. No detail is too small to be brought out in relief. Already on the day of the accident it was realised to be the worst disaster since 1915. But as the number of the dead began to rise, the newspapers almost seemed to be hoping that it would surpass the former disaster and become the worst accident on record in the history of railways in Britain.

Although one cannot fail to be repelled by the attitude of the newspapers, there can be little doubt that they do no more than reflect the attitude of the public. At the cinemas, the news-reels were showing the latest pictures of the tragedy, with enormous announcements outside.

Abnormal Response of Society

Once again, therefore, we have the spectacle of a ghastly human disaster becoming a source of increased income to the newspaper organisations and the cinema. We see a public evincing an altogether too avid interest in it—an interest which testifies to an abnormal attitude lying only just below the surface, ready to seize on an occasion like this for respectable and legitimate manifestations of interest.

To an objective observer, the response of the public to death by violence whether in such accidents or in the murders of women or children is plainly abnormal. It is clear evidence of the abnormal pathological nature of our society, and cannot be overlooked.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

POWER, GOVERNMENT AND AUTHORITY

IN view of the editorial comments on my letter in FREEDOM, 4/10/52, I must again try to make my position clear.

In certain circumstances, the granting of authority and power to a local council or some other executive committee may be desirable; on the other hand, it is always wrong to grant authority to impose executive decisions by force.

For instance, if I suspect that a man plans to shoot me, I make no apology for acquiring his gun by guile, force or otherwise. I then have the power to shoot him or anyone else, but I do not shrink from acquiring such power.

Similarly, in this case, a minority was using the machinery of the law to injure the majority. The majority seized that machinery and prevented its use against them, thus "imposing their wishes" on the minority who wished to use it to injure them.

The example given, of events in Spain does not affect my argument. A clear distinction can be made between the use of power to abolish a law and its use to enforce a decree, between the use of power to prevent injury and its use to inflict injury.

As it seems to be so difficult for my position to be appreciated, let me illustrate further. A teacher has the power to punish his pupils. By becoming a

teacher, I acquire this power, which is granted by law with the approval of the vast majority. But, in present circumstances, I gladly accept this power because I can use it to prevent any other teacher from punishing my pupils while they are in my care.

If the Editors are absolutely opposed to the delegation of authority and power, then they must divest themselves of the authority given them by us to edit FREEDOM, and abandon the power—which they certainly use—of deciding if and when this letter is to be printed.

P. L. Lewis.

Editors' Reply:

COMRADE Lewis is now saying that in preventing a man from shooting him with a gun, he is imposing his wishes on the other man. He then goes on to say that having acquired the gun he has the power to shoot his would-be assailant "or anyone else".

anxious to include members of the C.N.T. in his government, not because he thought that the Anarchist ministers were better ministers than the others, but because in so doing the whole syndicalist movement was morally committed to the authority and principle of government.

Comrade Lewis says that in that little town of N. Sweden (which for convenience we will refer to as X) the minority was using the machinery of the law to injure the majority.

The analogy of the schoolteacher is an unfortunate one, because comrade Lewis is equating the useful occupation of the schoolteacher with, from the anarchist point of view, the useless and harmful institution of government, and the power which the teacher has of using the cane with the power of government to coerce.

Having said all this, we must make one further point to avoid misunderstandings. We are not pacifists because we are revolutionists, and though we think that a social revolution which could be achieved in its initial stage without violence is the one which has the greatest chances of a successful outcome, we must face the fact that the ruling classes which maintain their position not through persuasion but by force will not consent to step down without attempting to defend their privileges by having recourse to violence.

to participate in these governmental institutions whenever it may suit their immediate purpose to do so?

As to the last paragraph of Comrade Lewis's letter, it is news to us that he and others have given us "authority to edit FREEDOM". We have never presumed to speak in the name of anyone but ourselves; our aim is to produce a paper which will incite people to think for themselves and which will, to the best of our ability, express anarchist thought.

On the other hand, the publication of FREEDOM is made possible by those comrades and readers who subscribe and send donations to the paper, to those who assist with the dispatching and distribution (and Comrade Lewis is most active in this latter respect) and to those who contribute articles.

South Coast Building Progress

IT is now more than twelve years since the cities of Britain were being subjected to nightly destruction from the air. It is about eight years since the last flying bombs hurtled their terrifying way over "South-East England" and "bombs were dropped at random" by hit and run raiders.

During the war great plans were produced for the rebuilding of our shattered cities. Morale was kept high by the consoling thought that at least the clearances left by the Luftwaffe could be put to good use by giving opportunities for town planning and architectural development.

In two blitzed towns on the South Coast, the progress is not heartening, and as our industry is bound ever more tightly to the needs of export and rearmament, the "shortage" of steel for building is likely to increase rather than otherwise.

By the end of 1944, Southampton had been raided 57 times; 21 per cent. of the property in the port has been written off. The central area of Southampton is a mess of temporary building and gaping bomb-sites, mercifully disguised by the willow herb and the yellow ragwort.

The industrial dockland has been well looked after. 400 acres have been rebuilt; a £750,000 ocean terminal has been built to welcome the travellers on the Cunard Lines mighty "Queens" and other great industrial buildings have risen.

About the other great South Coast port, Portsmouth, a correspondent gives us the following facts:

The commercial enterprises in Portsmouth are doing well. Among the city's new buildings since 1951 are: Montague Burtons (multiple tailors), Sandport Drapery Stores, Woolworths, C. & A.'s (multiple women's tailors), Timothy Whites (multiple chemists), a new Sailors' Home in Queen Street, Sailors' Rest in Edinburgh Road (500 rooms!), Odeon Cinema, Festing Road, and many other commercial buildings repaired and enlarged, including the Transport Headquarters at Eastney.

All of these buildings are very large, taking months to complete and using, of course, vast quantities of steel and other materials.

What about the housing progress? Of the original target of 1,000 homes by the end of 1952, not 500 had been completed in the City of Portsmouth by the end of September. Private enterprise is building a small estate of cottages for old

people in Arundel Street. In the Kings Road, which with 14 side streets was completely destroyed during the blitz, it is proposed to build houses and flats with a weekly rental of 2 and 3 guineas, plus rates, while out at Leigh Park, the Council are completing flats for workers at a lower rent, but costing them 1s. 9d. a day in fares to reach their work in the city. It is taking over two years to complete 600 flats at Leigh Park.

In the City of Portsmouth itself, where the work is, there are practically no new Council flats at all.

Thus we can see that there seems to be no difficulty in obtaining licences and labour for commercial building, but all the excuses are trotted out to quieten the patient people waiting for homes.

The chance to rebuild our cities in some pleasing manner is being completely thrown away. Ugly and ostentatious commercial buildings are simply being planted back in position with no discernible regard for town planning and the inadequate housing that is being produced is placed and priced without regard for the people who need it most.

We sometimes wish that some of the greed and envy and jealousy which are said to motivate all working-class aspirations, would in fact show themselves now and again! Then perhaps the greedy workers would make sure their basic needs were considered, instead of always being at the end of the queue.

Have you? Thank you? You haven't? Then please send your subscription renewal now without further delay

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

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

INDOOR MEETINGS at the IRVING THEATRE Irving St., Leicester Square Thursdays at 7.30 (Refreshments from 7 p.m.)

THURS., OCT. 23—Albert Meltzer on ANARCHISM TODAY

NORTH-EAST LONDON

DISCUSSION MEETINGS IN EAST HAM Alternate Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL

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

GLASGOW

INDOOR MEETINGS at CENTRAL HALLS, 25 Bath Street Every Sunday at 7 p.m. With John Gaffney, Frank Leech, Jane Strachan, Eddie Shaw, Frank Carlin

Lessons of the Spanish Revolution - 14

he describes his visits to the various prisons, but points out that though supplied by the Director of Prisons and the Minister of Justice with a permit to visit the Calle Vallmajor Prison (one of the Communist "preventorium") admission was refused, the official pointing out that "he did not take any orders from the Director of Prisons or the Minister of Justice as they were not his bosses.

The C.N.T. had exposed these secret prisons months before. On March 15, 1937, sixteen members of the C.N.T. had been murdered by Communists in Villanueva de Alcardete. To their demands that the perpetrators of this crime should be punished, Murdo Obrero, the Communist mouthpiece, replied by justifying the murders. Subsequent judicial investigation had established the fact that an all-Communist gang, including the mayors of Villanueva and Villamajor had been operating as a "Defence Committee" murdering political enemies, looting, levying tributes, and raping a number of women.

by seizing the entire edition of the organisation's newspaper, Cartagena Nueva, which carried a first-hand account by a worker who had been taken there for questioning.† Amongst those involved were police officers and Spanish members of the O.G.P.U.

It is impossible in the space available to detail the hundreds of cases of Communist terror that took place following Stalin's intervention in Spain's destinies.30 So successfully had Communist propaganda and fellow travelling journalists succeeded in convincing liberal and progressive opinion in the democracies that they were the spearhead of the armed struggle against Franco aided by Stalin, the only friend the Spanish people could look to for help, that the voices of the revolutionary groups appealing to the workers of the world to save the lives of Stalin's victims in Spain went unheeded.

† Reprinted in La C.N.T. en la Revolucion Española, Vol. 2. 30 Hugo Dewar, Assassins at Large (London, 1951) is an account of the executions outside Russia ordered by the O.G.P.U. One chapter deals with these activities in Spain.

Continued from p. 2 of the world, to join in the resistance against Franco (They did not form part of the carefully screened C.P. Organised International Brigades which only came to Spain towards the end of 1936.) With Russian intervention, Stalin transferred not only military and economic experts to Spain, but also the secret police. The Communist plan was to liquidate individual opponents (especially ex-Communists who "knew too much") and to destroy the revolutionary movement in Spain which had proved such a formidable barrier to any attempts by the Spanish Communist Party at political hegemony.

29 John McGovern, M.P.: Terror in Spain (London, 1938). Emma Goldman's Political Persecution in Republican Spain (Spain and the World, 10/12/37) describes a visit to a number of Spanish prisons in September 1937 and refers to the many prisons where permission to visit was refused.

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