

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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Threepence

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

Politics and the Oradour Trial

THOSE people who may still have cherished the illusion that the trials of war criminals still taking place, eight years after the end of the war, have anything to do with justice, have suffered a serious setback over the Bordeaux trial of German and Alsatian soldiers who were involved in the massacre of Oradour. In 1944, 642 inhabitants (including 200 children) of this village were shot by members of the S.S. Division "Das Reich" as a reprisal for a number of German soldiers who had been killed by resistance men.

Now this trial would have proceeded as so many others, but for the fact that alongside the German soldiers in the dock were a group of fourteen Alsatisians, all of whom, with the exception of one Sergeant Boos, had been conscripted into the German Army. Indeed, after the collapse of France in 1940, the province of Alsace was annexed by the Germans and 135,000 Alsatisians were obliged to fight as members of the German Army. In the course of the war, some 35,000 were killed or are missing.

The men standing trial, both German and Alsatian, were the small fry in the Oradour massacre. They did not give orders, but, as is expected of all soldiers, carried them out. However, they were found guilty and sentenced to terms of imprisonment; their officers, including former S.S. General Lammerding, were sentenced to death in their absence.

What has made the Oradour trial an international issue, has been the violent reaction in Alsace to the equal treatment of the German and Alsatian prisoners. As a protest

the province went into mourning, the pre-war autonomist movement suddenly sprung to life again in Mulhouse and the whole question of French "unity" was threatened. The Government weighing up the advantages to be gained from granting an amnesty to the Alsatisians, and so gaining Alsatian support, against the disadvantages such action would have in the Limousin where it would appear that anti-Alsatian feeling is as strong as anti-German feeling, decided that they could face the wrath of the latter if it meant having peace and support from the former, a province whose loyalty has never been very secure.

On February 19, the French Assembly voted by 319 to 211, with 83 abstentions, the Bill granting an amnesty to the thirteen Alsatisians who, as wrongfully conscripted German soldiers, had been present at the massacre of Oradour. Later, the Council of the Republic approved the amnesty by 174-79. The thirteen men have been released and made their way back to Alsace by night to avoid manifestations both of hostility and of welcome. And as the mourning flags and black crepe have disappeared from monuments in the towns and villages of Alsace, so in the S. West of France, where sympathy is for the victims at Oradour, feeling runs

high, and the local councils have threatened token strikes, and the erection in Oradour of a large board with the names of all the Deputies who voted for the amnesty.

But not only in S. West France has the amnesty created unrest. According to reports, there has been a "wave of resentment" in the German Federal Republic, where the amnesty is considered—rightly, we think—as a "political act" which makes a mockery of justice. The German press is also unanimous in its condemnation, and be summed up in the words of the independent *Dusseldorf Nachrichten*: "What has now happened in France is that the State has revised the law—not in favour of all the accused, but of some of them. We do not ask that anyone who has committed a crime should evade the penalty. But criminality is not an exclusively German characteristic. In Bordeaux the law has played the part of the blindfolded goddess of justice, but the decision of the National Assembly has allowed her to distinguish colours through the bandage over her eyes—national colours."

To complicate matters further, the British authorities are also being involved in the Oradour con-

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Bentley Execution Protest Meeting

AT the Freedom Press protest meeting held in March of last year against the shooting of nine anarchists in Spain, Dr. Bronowski said: "I do not believe that what I say will move the Spanish Government; it is to me that it matters, it is to you that it matters." If in fact we want to keep our self-respect and our respect for others we must individually protest against tyranny and injustice wherever they occur.

At the St. Pancras Town Hall last week, a meeting was held to protest against the hanging of Derek Bentley for what the chairman described as technical murder. It may be that since this incident occurred nearer home and there is a general feeling of injustice in this case that this effort will not have been in vain.

The speakers, including a Christian, an anarchist, a pacifist, a politician and a free thinker, expressed from their various standpoints their horror not only at this particular hanging but at capital punishment itself. Whatever punishment the speakers individually felt ought to be administered for anti-social behaviour all were agreed at least, that the only way to prevent a hanging of this nature occurring again was to remove the punishment entirely from the Statute Book.

DR. DONALD SOPER expressed his regret that he was unable to present the meeting with a pronouncement from the leaders of the Christian Church (few of us were surprised) more so since part of the Christian ethic was a reverence for human life. He went on to say that the test of a real civilisation was the attitude to those who were apparently worthless in terms of economics and usefulness, and that some of the money spent in the preparation for war could be usefully directed to the rehabilitation of such people as Bentley. He further made the very important point that if the punishment of hanging were to continue people would soon become accustomed to such brutalities and would cease to raise their voices in protest. His hope that the meeting would generate "more light than heat" was amply fulfilled as the night proceeded.

C. H. NORMAN followed and gave

us some astounding facts about the judicial system. One example was that a hearing before a civil court of appeal averaged three hours for each case, but that it was not unknown in the criminal appeal court to have as many as 57 cases in one day averaging about 44 minutes per person. The distinction is obvious. Civil courts usually deal with property and monetary matters, but in the case of one's liberty or even life 44 minutes is devoted to the consideration of justice. Another revealing insight on criminal cases taken to the High Court is, that the Judge has in his possession, before the case even starts, the evidence for the prosecution plus the full record of the person charged. We are then asked to believe that the Judge makes an impartial decision.

SIDNEY SILVERMAN, who, when it comes to an issue like this, strikes us as being among the minority of politicians willing to follow conscience rather than political expediency, was next. He enumerated the reasons why in this case clemency was the obvious course. It was a surprise to most of us to learn that Bentley was an epileptic as well as being backward and totally illiterate, and that his last letter to his parents had to be written for him by a prison warden. The

The following resolution was passed unanimously at the meeting:—

THIS meeting is profoundly disturbed by the execution of Derek Bentley.

It deplores the fact that in advising the Queen against a reprieve, the Home Secretary ignored both the overwhelming pressure of public opinion and the Jury's recommendation to mercy.

It believes the death penalty to be a survival from our barbaric past, and that its abolition is essential if we are to deal with the social problems of our time in the light of modern knowledge, and resolves to make every effort to bring this about.

other reasons were: his age, no other criminal charges, no act of violence of any kind, the attitude of the Jury, and even the Judge, and the fact that the policeman was killed 15 minutes after Bentley had been arrested.

Mr. Silverman was of the opinion that the failure of the Home Secretary (who he assured us is a kindly man) to advise the Queen to grant the prerogative of mercy was an indication that pressure had been brought to bear from an unknown source.

F. A. RIDLEY was the next speaker. His opening quotation expressed what many of us felt, that "Society prepares the crime, and society should go with the criminal into the witness box". He rightly pointed out that if we continue to glorify and sanctify murder during war and make heroes out of soldiers we must be prepared to take the responsibility of the Bentleys who are but products of this society.

SYBIL MORRISON, who made a plea for our continuous support for the abolition of capital punishment rather than getting indignant about one particular case, was followed by FRANK DAWTRY whose figures must convince even the most conservative that capital punishment has no connection with the number of murders committed, in fact in the countries where hanging has been abolished there has been a decrease in violent crimes.

Our comrade, PHILIP SANSOM, concluded the meeting, and left us in little doubt as to the real causes of "crimes" violent and otherwise in our society. In his opinion, there was only one source which pressure of this nature could have come—the police. Someone had to hang for killing a policeman and since Craig was beyond the law it had to be Bentley, even though he did not fire a shot.

Kitty Lamb, the chairman and organiser, who is to be congratulated on her efforts, read messages of sympathy with the aims of the meeting from CHRISTOPHER FRY, KINGSLEY MARTIN, CHARLES DUFF, H. N. BRAILSFORD, and WILLIAM DOUGLAS HOME. R.M.

"It is in our own interest that we should put our trust in our own selves and on each other."

—FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

Conscription for Another 5 Years

THE Government considers the international situation warrants the extension of the National Service scheme—for calling up 18-year-olds for two years military training—for a further period of five years when it expires this year. It will ask Parliament to approve this extension while giving assurances that the power "will be so exercised as to restrict the burden to the minimum that safety demands. 206,000 youths will be affected by the Act in the year 1953-4. Bills will also be introduced to modify the liability of Reservists. It will provide that men called up for whole-time service between Jan. 1, 1949, and Dec. 31, 1953, shall, after completing whole-time and part-time service under the Act of 1948, remain registered for a further period of five years as liable to recall in a military emergency. The White Paper adds, "It is not intended to call them up

for part-time or annual training during the period."

The Bill will also provide that the liability of "Z" and "G" reservists shall be limited to recall in a military emergency and shall cease at the age of 45. Some 330,000 "Z" reservists and about 11,000 "G" reservists (out of a total of several millions) were given fifteen days' refresher training during the past two years.

It has also been announced that the Defence Estimates for 1953-4 provide about £650 millions for production, £200 millions less than would have been spent if the "Attlee" programme had been carried out—and well over £100 millions for research and development. The cost of research and development is some 40 per cent. more than that in the current year, and the cost of atomic research is excluded from the Defence Estimates.

BOYS IN THE SERVICES

THERE have always been boys of fourteen and upwards in the Services, but the information early last year of the Infantry Regimental Boys' Battalion drew public attention to the fact. Boys are recruited for the Battalion at the age of fifteen, and were to serve from the age of eighteen for twelve years, four of which could be in the Reserve. Discharge may be purchased within three months of enlistment, as is the case with all volunteers, but discharge by purchase at any other time has been suspended since the beginning of the Korean war. Its reintroduction has been promised for September, 1953. Recruitment of boys was recommended in April, 1946, and between that date and June, 1952, the Army enlisted 11,924 boys.

A Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to make recommendations for the revision of the Army Act and Air Force Act, considered the terms of boys' engagements, but were informed that the Army Council desired to maintain the present arrangements. They have, however, been made "more flexible", although the total period of service after attaining the age of eighteen is still twelve years for both the Army and the Air Force. The terms for the Boys' Battalion are now six years with the colours and three in the Reserve (so that a boy who joins at fifteen is committed for twelve years). Boys in the Air Force, other than apprentices, serve twelve years full-time from the age of eighteen.

The Select Committee had before it a proposal that a soldier who had been enlisted as a boy should have the right to apply for discharge on the ground of conscientious objection on reaching the age of eighteen. Draft clauses were prepared, following closely the machinery of the National Service Acts, and providing for discharge, relegation to non-combatant duties or assignment to civilian service. The proposal was supported by Michael Stewart, Geoffrey Bing and other members of the Committee. There was no suggestion that the machinery was unworkable, but the Committee was informed that such a contingency (as a boy C.O.) had never arisen in the Army or the Air Force, but that a bona fide case would certainly be dealt with by discharge or by restriction to non-combatant duties. The Admiralty were in full agreement with this.

"After long consideration, and in view of the complexity of the new clauses required," the Committee recommended that any such case should be dealt with administratively. The *Manchester Guardian* of 10th December published a letter from the Board referring to known cases of boy-C.O.s, and expressing the hope that Parliament would not accept such a solution. (The Committee's report will come before the House in a few months' time, when the Acts are due for renewal.)

War Office anxiety to avoid the embarrassment of a conscience clause in Army Act manifests itself in a new Queen's Regulation. This provides for the re-allocation of a boy if he is not suited to his particular work, and, if that is not practicable, for his discharge "services no longer required".

—The Objector (Bulletin of the C.B.C.O., Feb. 1953).

FOOTNOTE ON "LIMELIGHT"

Of course, Chaplin's incomparable gifts as an artist have nothing to do with his private life or his opinions. His private life may not be exemplary, and his opinions not very different from those of Henry Thoreau, an anarchist who, perhaps because he is safely dead, is considered a great American. But for all his oddities and peculiarities, this non-American, Chaplin, has raised to the level of eternal art the human stuff of which America is made.

—The Reporter (New York), 6/1/53.

DOWN WITH EDUCATION!

(A Lecture delivered to the London Anarchist Group)

THIS evening I am going to talk about education. In case any of you are wondering what position I occupy in society, so that you can gauge the force and authority that I am told this gives to my ideas, and as I have several times had the mortification of being told that I look like a teacher, I want to make it quite clear that my only qualification for giving this talk is that I am one of the multitude who have suffered the horrors of our educational system. It is as one of the victims, not as one of the practitioners, that I am speaking to you this evening.

I should like first of all to dispose of the definition-mongers and those metaphysicians who delight in speculations about what a word "ought" to mean. "Educate" is derived from the Latin "educere", which means "to bring up from childhood"—a metaphorical extension of the word's primary meaning, which is "to draw forth", as a sword from a scabbard. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary gives these definitions:

Educate: (1) To rear, bring up (-1818); (2) To bring up from childhood, so as to form habits, manners, mental and physical aptitudes.

Education: (1) The process of nourishing or rearing (-1616); (2) The process of bringing up (young persons); the manner in which a person has been brought up (*obs. etc.* with notion of 3.); (3) The systematic instruction, schooling, or training given to the young (and by extension to adults) in preparation for the work of life. Also the whole course of scholastic instruction which a person has received.

Lexicographers, let me remind you, are not legislators: they do not decree how a word shall be used; they merely record instances of the use of a word by different writers and abstract from these the meaning that seems common to each instance or group of instances. Just as you cannot walk through the same river twice so no word can have exactly the same meaning in two different sentences: its reference is modified by its context. "Education", like other abstract words, is particularly difficult to pin down. Before I try to do so I want to read you what the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has to say. "Many definitions," it informs us, "have been given of the word 'education', but underlying them all is the conception that it denotes an attempt on the part of the adult members of a human society to shape the development of the coming generation in accordance with that sense that I shall be using the word. I know that many persons use it to denote the acquisition of knowledge, either for its own sake or for what use

can be made of it, but I see no reasons to confuse what I consider to be quite unrelated concepts.

For most of us, education meant going to school. We had to go whether we liked it or not—and, if we are truthful, I think most of us will admit that we did not like it.

This state of affairs, where everyone goes to school, is comparatively modern. At one time school was only for those whose parents could afford to send them, and the children of the poor received only such instruction as their parents gave them. When a school education was a privilege of the rich there was inevitably a feeling of loss on the part of those who did not receive any. It was thought that the gentleman owed his superior power and position at least as much to his education as to his birth. Knowledge is power, and knowledge was one of the things the rich seemed to derive from their education. But even those who emerged from their schools in a state of ignorance barely distinguishable from that in which they entered seemed to possess the same self-assurance and approach to life as the others. The educated man seemed never to be at a loss in any situation. So it is not surprising that many should long for the schooling that was denied to them.

Throughout the nineteenth century there was a crescendo of agitation by a growing number of persons who believed that everyone, regardless of his position in society, should go to school. Their motives were mixed. Many were muddle-headed philanthropists who confused education with learning and wanted to give everyone the key to the treasure-house of intellectual delights. Some were devout Christians who saw in the board schools an opportunity to combine Christian charity with the indoctrination of their beliefs. Others were Platonists of varying hues who wanted to make the schools an assembly-line for the production of as perfect copies as they could achieve of their ideal types. At first the government made grants of money to the various church and other schools for the children of the poor. The grants grew larger as the years went by, and it was not long before the State began to feel that as it was paying the piper it was time to start calling the tune. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 first made the schools available to all, though it did not compel attendance or provide completely free education. In 1876 came universal compulsory attendance. The Education Act of 1902 consolidated the State's grip on schools and made the County or County Borough the authority with its own ideals of life. It is in for every form of education below the university. For many people this was a great step forward, another manifestation of the "progress" that seemed at the time so inevitable and so exhilarating.

There is an old English proverb that tells us we should not look a gift-horse in the mouth. The Trojans, however, who had an unfortunate experience with a certain gift-horse, had a different proverb. They said, "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts"—a useful warning to have in mind when the State offers you something. "The gifts of the State," Malatesta warns us, "are poisoned fruits that bring with them the seeds of slavery."

It is time we took a good look at the gift of free compulsory education. It is time we took a good look at all education.

The English educational system reflects the English passion for compromise. Although everyone goes to school, and although there is a pretence that school for all means an equal chance for all in the competition for the best jobs (and you will remember from our dictionary definition that education can mean the training given to us to fit us for our work in life), in fact the schools are part of the pattern of class distinctions that is such a feature of our society to-day. In the private schools, whose fees are such that only the comparatively rich can afford to send their children to them, there is a tradition that their function is to train the leaders of the nation. They really believe that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, and the ambition of the less famous of them is to be as much like Eton and Harrow as possible. The elementary

THE THEATRE IN NEW YORK

A CRITIC in the Third Programme, in a talk given recently on the New York Theatre, complained that there were no new plays of promise and the two successes of the season (apart from the curiosity value of Bette Davies in a revue) were seven revivals of "The Male Animal" by Thurber and Nugent, and "The Children's Hour" by Lilian Hellman.

It is significant that in the present intellectual climate of America, "The Male Animal," which attacks the nebulous concept of 'Americanism' and highlights Vanzetti's statement on 'justice' should find favour.

The second play is an attack on the mechanism of denunciation so prevalent in the Committee for Un-American Activities. Its author, Lilian Hellman, not only refused to testify whether or not she was a Communist but refrained from naming other party associates.

It seems that however absolute the conditioning of American thought, the true feelings of the people will express themselves, if only passively, in theatre-going. J.R.

schools—or primary schools, as I believe they are called nowadays—make no such claims. Even if their pupils succeed in satisfying the examiners their social background still puts them at a disadvantage when they try to enter one of the professions. Class distinctions are deeply ingrained in most people, and those who stand a little higher in the social scale than their neighbours tend to be jealous of the superiority they feel their position gives them and feel a contempt for those beneath them. I had an early introduction to the snobbery of our educational system. When I was five or six I asked a little girl I used to play with whether she would not rather have been a boy. She replied that, although it would be a great convenience not to have to sit down every time she went to the lavatory, her mother had told her that if she had been a boy she would have sent her to a council school. As I was attending a council school at the time I was too crushed to pursue the matter.

Another compromise concerns religion. The various churches, although quite willing to let the state pay for education, want to control the schools to the extent that their beliefs shall be taught in them. Most of them are not content with ensuring that children of their own members shall be indoctrinated with the tenets that distinguish their own denomination from the others: they insist that all children shall be taught to believe the rather nebulous body of doctrine that all Christians hold in common. The most vigorous of these bodies is the Catholic Church, which has secured large State subsidies for its schools and, by means of all kinds of pressure and threats, manages to get most children of Catholic parents into Catholic schools, where their minds can be vaccinated against the dangers of thought. (As I went to a Catholic school myself perhaps I should point out that in my case—as in some others—the vaccine was not very effective.) On the whole, this compromise works fairly well. Most religions teach obedience to the State: their members render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. And the State is not averse to having its work done for it at cut prices. E. PEEKE

(To be concluded)

Canadian Censorship: The Public Intervenes

IN my last Canadian letter, I described the banning by the courts in Ottawa of two of Erskine Caldwell's novels. The same author has more recently been the victim of a second attack, this time at the other end of Canada, in Vancouver.

On the 16th January, the Everyman Repertory Company was playing Caldwell's "Tobacco Road" to a packed theatre when a morality squad of nine

WE commented in our issue of January 3rd on the Registrar-General's Statistical Review for 1950, which illustrates the very much higher mortality rate in the north of England compared with the south. The Registrar-General's review has led Dr. Metcalfe Brown, Medical Officer of Health for Manchester to ask why this is so and what can be done about it. On his report, which has much bearing on FREEDOM's recent articles on atmospheric pollution, the *Manchester Guardian* remarks:

Dr. Metcalfe Brown gives a striking illustration of the rising rates of mortality and of infant deaths as the railway line runs from Hale to Manchester; the degree of atmospheric pollution rises, too. We pay the penalty of old housing, old factories, and wastefully consumed fuel. For any great improvement we must look to better and less congested housing, more modern factories, and the use in home and industry of smokeless fuels. There is also, of course, the human side. If we have abolished acute poverty we have not abolished low living standards, which are nowadays by no means wholly the consequence of low wages. As Dr. Metcalfe Brown points out, a section of the population has "a lack of sufficient knowledge of the art of healthy living."

The worse the physical conditions, the more difficult it is to exercise this art. All too often bad conditions and incapacity to cope with these conditions co-exist.

This is the vicious circle into which we are thrown by our inheritance of nineteenth-century industrialisation. Studies like this of the Manchester Medical Officer are an inspiration and a stimulus to social action—for the resolute improvement of housing, for the lessening of congestion, for the modernisation of industry, for more health education, and for drastic measures of smoke abatement. All these things can be translated into the saving of human lives, and that is their justification.

WHOSE ?

Richard Dimbleby (interviewing Chief Superintendent Miss E. C. Bather, O.B.E., of the Women's Police Force, at Scotland Yard, in the Television Service, 13/2/53): "Policewomen haven't always had powers of arrest, have they?"

Miss Bather: "No, indeed—like everything else in this country, it has grown from voluntary effort."

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP OPEN DAILY

New Books . . .
Arnold Toynbee *The World and the West* 7/6 (Reith Lectures)
Federico Garcia Lorca *Lament for the Death of a Bull-fighter and other poems* 10/6
New Penguin Reprints . . .
William Faulkner *Sansctuary* 2/-
Frenz Kafka *The Trial* 2/-
Angus Maude and Roy Lewis *The English Middle Classes* 2/6
Bertrand Russell *Mysticism and Logic* 2/6
E. M. Forster *A Passage to India* 2/-
Second-hand . . .
This week's Bargain—
Wilhelm Reich *Function of the Orgasm* (was 45/-) 25/-
Ethel Mannin *Bread and Roses* (Utopian survey and blueprint) 4/-
Just arrived . . .
"Retort" Anarchist Calendars for 1953 2/6
Individual Action, No. 6
Syndicalist for February 2d.
Postage extra on all items
Obtainable from
27, RED LION STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

Society and the State

I AM well aware that it is part of the traditional climate not only of Oxford, but of academic teaching and thinking in Great Britain, to make the State the point of focus for the consideration of men in their social relations. It is sometimes said that we derive this tradition from the Greeks; but that, I think, is quite untrue. Polis does not mean "State", and in translating it as "State" we are twisting Greek thought to suit our own patterns of thinking. Our preoccupation with "the State" as the central conception in the theory of society has, I think, arisen rather in this way. In the Middle Ages nobody thought like that. Nobody could; for all social thinking had to take account of two main points of focus, of which one was the Church and the other—not "the State" or even the Emperor, but the much more complex set of institutions embodying the secular powers. "The State" emerged as a point (or rather a series of points) for the concentration of these several powers; and thereafter great battles were fought, in the realm of theory as well as in that of practical affairs, between Church and State. In the course of these battles the Church was worsted and broken; and first in Machiavelli and again in Hobbes, Political Theory took shape as pre-eminently the Theory of the State. Social thinking was secularised, except among the Catholics, and Protestant determination to repel the "Kingdom of Darkness" led to an exclusive concentration on the secular State as the repository of Sovereignty and, as it took a more democratic turn, of the people's will. The main course of Political Theory in the 18th and 19th centuries reflected this attitude, which fitted in well

not only with the theories of nationalism and national independence but also with the economic-social theories of laissez-faire. For the laissez-faire thinkers believed in an order of nature which would shape all things (except a few) for the best if nobody interfered with it; and the only great exception they allowed was the preservation of "order", which involved the regulation of the rights of property. The State thus stood out, in its police capacity, as an isolated instance of the need for regulation in a world otherwise best left to the "government" of natural forces; and accordingly "the State" called for a theory of its own quite apart from any other forms of human association or group action. Indeed, other forms were apt to be looked on with suspicion, as potentially at least, conspiracies against the "natural order", and therefore to be kept down and either prevented or strictly circumscribed by the State as the guardian of order.

That world of laissez-faire is dead, and so is the conception which accompanied it of the all but all-embracing natural order, which it was regarded as man's affair to obey and not to mould to the service of his ends. The apartness of the State from all other forms of human grouping and association dies with these notions and historical conditions. Our century requires not a merely Political Theory, with the State as its central concept and the conflict between the Individual and the State as its central problem, but a wider Social Theory within which these concepts and relations can find their appropriate place. We have to start out, not from the contrasted ideas of the atomised individual and of the State, but from man in all his complex groupings and relations, partially

embodied in social institutions of many sorts and kinds, never in balanced equilibrium, but always changing, so that the pattern of loyalties and of social behaviour changes with them. This brings us back to a much more real kind of man than the social atom of Hobbes or of Herbert Spencer. It brings us to men who are not isolated individuals, but members one of another in a host of different ways, and behave differently as different loyalties and associations come uppermost. It makes the stuff of society seem much more malleable for good and evil, and emphasises the diversity of the influences by which society can be moulded, as well as the immense importance of all the means by which the moulding can be done.

For this reason, it suggests to some the totalitarian conception—the idea that everything must be captured for the State—because it makes plain that all forms of social organisation, and not merely the political forms, are of vital importance in making a society what it is, and as driving forces in settling its future. But it also suggests anti-totalitarianism, which I call "Pluralism", as a recognition of the positive value of this diversity, and a repudiation of the Idealist notion that all values are ultimately aspects of a single value, which must therefore find embodiment in a universal institution, and not in the individual beings who alone have, in truth, the capacity to think, to feel, to believe, and singly or in association to express their thoughts, feelings and beliefs, in actions which further or obstruct well-being—their own and others.

—G. D. H. COLE (in a lecture on "Scope and Method in Social and Political Theory.")

male and female flatfeet descended on the theatre. Instead of giving in immediately to the police, the company proceeded to indulge in a game of hide-and-seek in the wings, while stagehands and newspaper and radio reporters co-operated by getting in the way of the police. Finally, at the beginning of the third act, the police were forced to march on to the open stage and make their arrests. They were greeted by a spontaneous burst of derision from the thousand members of the audience, who jeered, booed and shouted "Gestapo" in chorus. As soon as the actors had been taken off, the management asked the audience to stay and await the upshot of the affair. Poets, singers and entertainers who were present as customers, went on the stage and kept things going until nearly midnight, and very few of the audience departed before the returning actors, released on bail, came back and finished the play in defiance of the police.

Since then, the law has followed its usual blinkered course, and the actors and management of the theatre have been fined. But the public feeling of hostility to censorship which was shown so effectively on the evening of the raid has continued, and the last has not been heard of the matter. There seems little doubt that with each clumsy move the authorities and their puritan friends are making their own position all the more untenable, and that something like a general revulsion against the censorship laws and their administration is already becoming evident. A further annoying local incident in connection with the censorship has been the banning of that light-hearted and delightful French film, "La Ronde".

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

THE DILEMMA: HOUSES OR FOOD

Of 178,321 families on London County Council's housing list, over 69,000 are living in deplorable conditions, says Mr. G. E. Palmer, of the housing department.

He was giving evidence at an inquiry yesterday into an order made by Ashford, Kent, Council for the compulsory purchase of 102 acres of farmland. Here 900 houses would be built, some for the overspill population of London.

—News Chronicle, 11/2/53.

WAR & ECONOMICS

FREEDOM has for long held the view that the principal factors in bringing war nearer are economic ones. Preparation for war in the shape of rearmament or (as it is nowadays called) defence, provides such timely easement of many insoluble problems of peacetime production that it became a prominent feature of national economic patterns almost without any interval after the cessation of actual hostilities in 1945. The experience of two wars has provided a clear demonstration to industrialists of the economic aspects of war production. We have frequently drawn attention to the economic repercussions of the Korean war and the reaction of stock exchanges to what has more than a few times been called, in all seriousness, the "threat of peace".

In one of his most recent pronouncements, Stalin has declared that the divisions and rivalries in the "imperialist camp" (by which he means the States outside the Russian Empire) are more important than their hostility towards Russia. Hence, he wishes his readers to conclude, England and America are more likely to fight against each other than against Russia. There are not lacking evidences of Anglo-American rivalry on the imperialist field, and on the old conception of wars as being due to increasing competition for markets there would seem to be much in this point of view.

But to accept it without further reflection would be to miss the function of war to which we have alluded—its economic importance as a method of production. The advantages of war from this point of view are not confined to the Anglo-American bloc; they also are needed by Russia, and the supplying of China's war needs in Korea are of considerable advantage to Soviet economy, just as the supplying of the United Nations forces is to American economy.

Awareness of this aspect of war makes one less ready to get worked up about the wickedness of the enemy. Instead of blinding oneself with fear of the successor of Kruger, the Kaiser, Hitler and the other Aunt Sallies, one seeks to replace a mode of economy which needs war by one that does not.

Such a point of view is not fantastic. The economic origins of the wars of the past are recognised by historians almost as soon as the peace is signed. Although no political party seeks to eliminate war by abandoning the type of economy which makes it necessary, it seems reasonable to suppose that people in general will gradually come to demand such an abandonment.

But the political climate of today—one of sedulously fostered anxiety—is most unfavourable to such reasonable hopes and speculations. Here is one of the Sunday political commentators:

"The Defence White Paper rightly points out that 'if the risk of war has receded in past months, the cause has been the growing strength of the Western nations,' and it emphasises that this strength must be further developed and maintained over a long period of tension if there is to be an effective deterrent to open war or to any extension of the cold war."

The operative phrase here is "a long period of tension". In fact there has been little or no respite from this tension since 1914. Whether they realise its institutional character or not, men and women living to-day have come to know war as a fact or a threat inseparable from their lives.

Government propaganda also diverts attention from the economic roots of war which are there whoever is the enemy, and concerns itself with patriotism and fear and hatred of the enemy of the moment. Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, the Home Secretary, in a speech at Liverpool last week-end, said:

"Civil Defence preserves the base from which the fighting services can hold aggressors in check and then seek out and destroy them. It maintains the morale of the civilian population and of the fighting services. Because these tasks were so important Civil Defence had been made an integral part of our defence system. It was the fourth arm of defence.

"One or other of the Civil Defence services offers a job to suit everyone—young and old—whatever their capabilities or tastes. One of my tasks is to convince people that they should join Civil Defence now."

—Observer, 22/2/53.

However useful Civil Defence may be from a strictly military point of view, its effects as a creator of morale—that state of anxiety and tension which accepts war through fear of the aggressor without looking to the deeper causes—is far more significant. A *Reuter* dispatch in the *Times* next day (23/3/53) shows that Civil Defence plays exactly the same part in Russia:

An appeal to the youth of the Soviet Union to join a mass defence organisation known as D.O.T.A. to co-operate with the armed forces, was made yesterday in *Pravda*.

"This all-Union voluntary association of co-operation with the Army, Air Force, and the Navy," *Pravda* added, "represents a mass defence organisation called upon to educate its members in the spirit of Soviet patriotism, devotion for their Socialist homeland and in readiness to serve it. Taking an active part in the work of D.O.T.A., the workers of our country thereby give expression to their ardent desire to strengthen still more energetically the power of the Soviet Army, and to increase the fighting readiness of our Socialist country."

If government propaganda uses fear and patriotism for its own ends, it cannot be denied that anti-militarist trends have displayed considerably muddled thought on this question. The remedy of the pacifists, non-resistance to invaders, does not readily commend itself, and ignores the basic economic problem. Revolutionists have applauded the spontaneous resistance of the people such as the people of Spain displayed in 1808 and 1936, and not without cause. But some of these have combined their admiration with an acceptance of patriotic feeling that has tended to nullify their views. Many socialists—among them George Orwell—joined the Home Guard regarding it as a potentially revolutionary instrument, only to find complete disillusionment.

For the humanist the problem of what to do in the event of war becomes an insoluble dilemma if war is looked upon simply as a struggle between more or less evil contestants. We have discussed this sterile choice of the lesser evil before in these columns. The recognition of war as a basically economic pattern to a considerable extent releases one from this dilemma. And it frees one's energies for placing before one's fellow war-sufferers the conception of a rational and humane economy in which war would be a meaningless and pointless barbarity. War to-day, is barbaric indeed; but it is very far from being pointless or without meaning to stocks and markets and production processes.

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troversy, because it is alleged that General Lammerding is in hiding somewhere in the British zone of Germany and under the revised Occupation Statute the British authorities could still arrest him and hand him over to the French after convening a special extradition court to deal with the case. To do so will not help Anglo-Franco-German "good will", for whatever action is taken either the French or the Germans are not going to be satisfied! As one correspondent put it, "The documents sent by the French Government are being studied therefore by the British authorities with some uneasiness—for there is no desire to whip up the ill-feelings already caused by the Oradour trial."

We believe that from any standards of justice it can be said that justice has not been done—if only because political considerations have permitted ethical arguments to be used in favour of one group of prisoners which could have equally been applied to the others but were not. And in certain quarters in France this has been recognised with the admission that the younger Germans accused seemed to have been as little volunteers in the S.S. as the Alsatians. The argument was also put forward by an Alsatian deputy that the French Generals had deliberately setting fire to the town of Gerardmer because they could prove that they were obeying orders, whereas the same argument had not been found valid by the Bordeaux military court for privates.

All the very valid arguments that are being advanced are in fact saying that there is no justice. But it also exposes the War Criminal Trials for what they are: the revenge of the victors over the vanquished; the seeking of scapegoats for the real crime which is war itself. If the rôles had been reversed, the Germans would also have held their trials against War Criminals among the Allies, and they would have found no difficulty in staging their Nurembergs, and

their Bordeaux. Is the Atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the terror bombing of almost every city in Europe any less a crime against humanity than the reprisal massacre of Oradour? And were the air-crews on these flights allowed to select their targets or refuse to go if they were not satisfied that civilians would not also be among the victims?

War crimes have been committed by all the participants in the last war. The niceties of the "rulers of warfare" are all very well when your side is winning. They are matters of less importance when you are losing and desperately trying to extricate yourself from certain death; then there are no rules. And this is true of the armed forces of all countries.

War Planes for Middle East

THE debate in the House of Commons on the supply of jet aircraft to certain countries in the Middle East was a mixture of principles (by the Opposition) and opportunism (by the Government). Not because the Opposition was Labour and the Government Conservative, but because it is always the case that the party in power always puts forward the "practical realities" of a case and the Opposition the "moral case". As one Labour man put it in a nutshell:

Mr. H. N. SMITH (Lab., Nottingham S.) said that a division on the issue would be nauseating and he would not vote. Neither party had clean hands in the matter. When the Labour Government sold arms there was an element of humbug in Conservative criticisms. Now there was an element of hypocrisy about some of the speeches made on the Labour side. (Cheers.)

The practical issues were given in a frank way such as one only expects to hear from the lips of American politicians. The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd in putting the Government case said there were a number of factors to be considered. "The questions we should ask ourselves are: Is the export worth while financially? Will it strengthen productive capacity at home? To what use will the purchaser put these arms? What will the consequences be if we do not supply them? Will the transaction constitute a general increase in tension and the risk of war? Two points should be made clear as matters of fact. 'The numbers involved are extremely small. It is not the practice to reveal the actual numbers. Since this Government decided that we had some jets available for sale, we have sent to all the Middle East countries fewer than half the number sent by the previous Government to Egypt in 1950. When the deliveries now contemplated

are added to those already sent, the number sent to the Arab States will still be less than the number supplied to Egypt in 1950.

It cannot be denied that the Minister put the vocal opposition in its place, and since to-day the magic word "export" exonerates one from any crime, one almost saw a halo forming over his head!

The Minister offered further justification by pointing out that:

"The real menace to security is the risk of Soviet aggression and that risk only recedes as we build up our strength to face it. This is not a short business. Our potential enemies hope we shall tire of building up our defences. The only way to make that burden tolerable and at the same time maintain productive capacity and a skilled labour force adequate for an emergency, if it comes, is to sell part of our arms production abroad. The case is overwhelming for continuing with these sales upon economic grounds. But I agree, of course, that there are political considerations." (Our italics.)

This statement contains an important admission, and leads to a conclusion which is continually being stressed in *FREEDOM*, namely that arms production, through the maintenance of the permanent cold war, has become an integral part of capitalist economy. It was again stressed by the Foreign Under-Secretary, Mr. Nutting, replying to the debate, when he said, "On the whole, the Government consider that this decision to release these sales has been correct and right. We do not think these sales will increase tension in the Middle East, we think they will assist us economically and will help to maintain both our exports and armaments production. We think they will be a contribution to the defence of the Middle East countries and, as such, a contribution to peace and stability in that vital strategic area." (Our italics.)

Permanent "Cold War"?

That the "cold war" economy has come to stay seems to be the point of view held by the Italian Ambassador to France, Signor Quaroni, when he addressed the Anglo-American Press Association in Paris quite recently. He said that N.A.T.O. had done everything possible to reach its first objective—readiness for a hot war. Now, he said, this "danger seems less imminent", and the West should prepare itself for the many years of the cold war situation.

This latter, he said, was much different from war since "it must be balanced in terms of both guns and butter."

To achieve impregnable "cold war" solidarity, Mr. Quaroni said that Nato nations, which joined together to form a defensive alliance, should become a community based on a "policy of internal solidarity between people and nations—a Nato community with one foreign policy internally and externally."

Mr. Quaroni said that "the logic of the cold war asks that we organise ourselves in this way."

He added: "Stalin hopes to win the cold war through the reaction which might arise at the contrasts of economic standards between Nato nations, at the contrasts of standards of living within the nations themselves and on the fact that there is a shrinking of the markets which are still open to the West."

Mr. Quaroni said that the Western nations "must make a co-ordinated effort" to find new markets in the many parts of the free world which were yet undeveloped. He said that his proposals would be a "readaptation of the Atlantic policy so that it responds to the needs of our times." (Our italics.)

Mr. Quaroni, coming from a have-not country, naturally stresses the need for a sharing of markets which, of course, includes the cold war market.

Everyone admits that the world markets are shrinking, at least so far as consumer goods are concerned. And with more capital goods being available they

will shrink even more as each country is able to produce its own consumer goods. What would happen tomorrow if all countries stopped producing armaments? In this country alone 850,000 men and women are engaged in armaments factories; there must be more than a million men in the armed forces. And with all that, the most recent unemployment figures show that nearly half a million workers were out of a job. If we take the equivalent figures in other industrial countries (bearing in mind the high unemployment figures in countries such as Italy (nearly 2 million), Germany, France, and the United States, one has some idea of the economic chaos and depression that would result—that is from the point of view of capitalist economics. This has clearly been seen in America where an attempt is already being made to get round the problem by having parallel industries, a permanent war economy—with armament factories existing alongside factories for the production of consumer goods.

Labour Shortage in Denmark?

PERHAPS Denmark is not affected by the problems of the cold war. At least, that is the impression one gets from the report last week that an attempt was being made to get full-time tramps to earn their livings! The manufacturer who had the idea, has, one must concede it, a sense of humour as well as a practical mind. He is a manufacturer of rubber soles and he wants to test them out, just as tyre manufacturers test the durability of their tyres. Who better to carry out a test on rubber soles than full-time tramps? Five have been engaged at a weekly wage of £10, to which is added a daily food allowance of £1. The only conditions imposed are that the tramp must cover 20 miles a day, and will face immediate dismissal in the event of shirking! It sounds almost like the Tramp's Utopia come true, if only one didn't have to walk 20 miles a day!

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THE ANARCHIST REVOLUTION

THE article by "Andreas" on "The Anarchist Revolution" sets out to show a "widening division" between Anarchists. This it did not do, for a very simple reason, namely, that it discussed purely a bourgeois conception of Anarchism and such a gulf as it described is one solely between the bourgeois pacifist conception and a purely bourgeois-revolutionary attitude.

"Andreas" hardly conceives of the industrial struggle in any way whatsoever. He dismisses without even mentioning it the whole theory of Anarcho-Syndicalism, but not only that, at no point in his article does he envisage the workers playing any rôle, as workers, in the Revolution whatsoever.

While agreeing, therefore, with his critique of pacifism, I would go further and point out that the disastrous effect of pure-pacifism upon the Anarchist movement has not been in the repudiation of revolutionary action, since in the war years the attitude of pacifists and anarchists has been parallel, but the introduction of middle-class ideas and arguments into the Anarchist movement during the last fifteen years in this country in which pacifists have found anarchism by logic rather than by conviction.

"Andreas", however, has clearly no more conception of working-class action than have the pacifists, and the very fact of seeing the argument of one as "violence" versus "non-violence" proves this. A very revealing sentence refers to the time (a few months ago) when the "question of the political trials in Spain was still a burning issue and not a dead and buried cause, another paper protest gathering dust . . ." Are the political trials in Spain any less of a burning issue now than then? Only to one who can stand outside the conflict—the bourgeois by conviction as well as by origin. His conception of a crisis is a newspaper one. For the working-class, struggles continue perforce.

This question of revolutionary action is one that does not occur every morning. When it does occur the workers have always known what to do. They have never needed leaders to tell them what was right or not. The essential totalitarianism of the pacifist idea is that a leader (such as Gandhi) should positively forbid them to act otherwise than by passive resistance on such occasions. Those who would form their own private party to organise revolutions, whether to act in one way or the other, are basically not Anarchists at all, and, if they call themselves so, mistake their convictions.

It is for this reason I have always been convinced that Anarchism could only take the Anarcho-Syndicalist form. As the editorial of Feb. 14th points out, there is an increased ferment and flow in anarchist ideas. The manner in which they can be put into practice to-day is primarily by the syndicalist method, which not only puts forward a plan of immediate action (other than propagandist) but clearly envisages that libertarian groups at the point of production can not only intensify a wage-struggle now, but can be the means whereby the places of work can be taken over. At

such a stage there well may be resistance and counter-resistance, but this is by no means a primary problem to those not steeped in the bourgeois-Christian morality that produces pacifism or counter-pacifism as a sideline.

I would like to add to the editorial that as one of the group publishing *The Syndicalist*—which will celebrate its first anniversary as a monthly when *FREEDOM* celebrates its second as a weekly!—that I regard it primarily as an Anarchist paper, just as I do *FREEDOM*. It clearly has a specialised field in addressing itself to workers as workers, and if that editorial did not mention

The Syndicalist I know it is not for lack of appreciation of the fact of its weathering the storms of to-day in the printing world, but rather to considering Anarchism and Syndicalism as ideas apart. The Anarchist form of Syndicalism is not, however, an idea apart from Anarchism, and if once one begins to think that, then one falls into the illusions of "Andreas", who talks of a revolution without considering the working-class once, and refers to the Anarchist movement as "little more than a debating ground for dissatisfied intellectuals" solely because, no doubt, there is nobody else he knows. A.M.

Stalinists, Not Communists!

I HAVE only recently been introduced to *FREEDOM* and, generally speaking, I like it and look forward to the next issue.

But an article on "Communists" struck a jarring note for me. They are not Communists—they are Stalinists.

I can well understand the everyday gutter press using this term, for obvious propaganda purposes, but when you use it—well! I am well aware how little honesty there is in the political world. Even Tito called Stalin's régime "A Byzantine perversion of Communism," with which all advanced thinkers agree.

The same applies to the Labour fakirs when they are described as Socialists.

So let's not fall into the same errors, deliberate or otherwise, as the others do. Sheffield. D. HOULDSWORTH.

Editors' Reply:

Our correspondent has made a valid point and we stand corrected, with no real argument with which to answer.

We can, however, assure him that we do not have the same intention as the gutter press, which is obviously to debase the very term "communist" by making it synonymous with Stalin's régime—as we agree, they have debased the word "socialism" by tying it up with the Labour Party.

To-day the Anarchists are practically alone in their support for the ideas of communism in its real sense. We do advocate the decentralisation of control away from the State into local communes, to give people direct control over their own environment instead of being dictated to from the centre of power. For us, the commune should be the basis of social organisation, while (for most of us, anyway) the workers' syndicate should be the basis of industrial organisation.

But the unfortunate fact remains that the Stalinists call themselves the Communist Party—and so do the Titoists! While the Trotskyists distinguished themselves (when they existed as a separate organisation) merely by putting "Revolutionary" in front of it! "Communist" remains the generally accepted term of identification for all these perversions of communism and we can only say that when the word is spelt with a capital 'C' it means the perversion and when with a lower case 'c' it means the genuine thing!

FREEDOM AND LIBERTY

THERE is much confusion in the use of the words "freedom" and "liberty", some innocent, some deliberate. I think this is possible only because while attitudes are always changing towards the idea of freedom, the word itself cannot change and has an increasingly complicated load to carry. Freedom in 1953 means our attitude towards freedom in 1952 plus, to a lesser extent, that of 1951 and before.

As a part of the drift of language, compare the "liberty" of 1789 with the "don't you take liberties with me" that is possible to-day. Since the war, the word freedom has been amply made use of: the "four" freedoms of President Roosevelt, somehow special sorts of freedoms that were to become universal but which are now admitted to need qualifications for their best enjoyment; the "freedom" of Coventry, Plymouth and other towns badly damaged in the war became a mystic rite bestowed upon Eisenhower, Churchill and other war leaders—a practice which seems to have died out completely. Now we have the "free peoples of the world," meaning the people lucky enough to be this side of the Curtain, who will please not forget to whom the luck is due.

These remarks are prompted by a meeting the other week in which the speaker, an anarchist, proposed "Down with Education." The denunciation included all forms of education in any sort of school (even for deaf-mutes) "unless

the children wanted it," thereby raising the whole question of freedom inescapably. For freedom without free choice is a euphemism for compulsion, and Marxist minds can play for hours on this basis. ["All freedom means in the West for the worker is the freedom to starve; for the Soviet worker it means freedom from starving."]

Let us be clear, however, that certain arguments derived from Marx are justified. Where there are not the means to make use of freedom, freedom does not exist, even though it may be guaranteed in all good faith in the constitution. I think it is realised by most politicians now that a man using all his energy to obtain food, shelter and clothes has not the energy left to be as free as even they would wish him to be.

I find it disappointing, however, that an anarchist can speak of a "free" choice being made by someone without an understanding of the alternatives. Does he believe a neurotic to be free? Does he believe the creature of instincts to be free? Does he think that anyone without knowledge in a scientific society can be free? By a person with knowledge I mean one who reads, writes and thinks rationally, who is able therefore to choose. I address these remarks to those who agree with the speaker referred to above. If they agree, why do they agree?

London, Feb. 18.

J.S.B.

ANARCHISTS & BLUE PRINTS

THE question "Why haven't anarchists a clear-cut programme," is one of those hardy annuals we have come to expect from critics and in answer to which one is often tempted to shrug one's shoulders.

None of these critics have ever put forward a really irrefutable reason as to why we should lay down blueprints for our descendants to follow. They seem unable to grasp the basic anarchist principle that in the free society of anarchy social forms will spring from the needs of men, not the needs of men be forced into pre-ordained forms. We have enough Procrustean beds in this society without fitting the future to one.

The latest usherette of the social revolution, B. Gelstein, argues that we cannot succeed in "reshaping" society without a programme (unspecified). To support his contention, he states that the basis of the Communist Manifesto of 1848 was implemented in Russia 69 years later.

In the next paragraph of his letter, he cites Hannah Arendt to the effect that "lack of programme is a characteristic of totalitarian régimes" and he concludes by implying that unless anarchists adopt a "clear-cut programme" (again unspecified) we could "easily degenerate towards totalitarianism".

So there we have it. If we refuse to elaborate programmes we are doomed to futility and extinction—or to become totalitarian. Why? because no programme characterised Hitler, Mussolini and Franco, whereas the programme laid down by Marx and Engels in 1848 has triumphed in the régime of . . . Stalin! The nazis had no programme and established a totalitarian régime; the bolsheviks had one and did the same thing . . . It would appear that whether a social movement has a programme or not has little to do with whether it becomes totalitarian or not. The creation of a free society will result from a conscious understanding of our principles and their implementation by the people concerned in a manner determined by the conditions of the revolutionary situation. Ordered mass movements and programmatic regimentation will not bring us liberty only the imposition of fresh oppressions.

Finally, if the Gelsteins desire programmes so much, why do they appeal to us for one? Let them write what they consider is a suitable programme. Who knows, it might contain something that is new . . . or will it?

London, Feb. 8.

S. E. PARKER.

SUDAN SELF-RULE

"I congratulate the Sudanese on achieving self-rule and self-determination."

—GEN. NEGUIB, quoted in the *Manchester Guardian*, 13/2/53.

EXTRAORDINARY we did not know the Wykhams of our Foreign Office are really Sudanese.

Neguib as well, has just found out he's Sudanese without a doubt, for Sudan has achieved self-rule through self-determination.

Ashstead, Feb. 14.

M.G.W.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting
HYDE PARK
Every Sunday at 4.30 p.m.

INDOOR MEETINGS

NOTICE

London Comrades are requested to note that the London Anarchist Group's Tuesday evening meetings will be held in future at:

GARIBALDI RESTAURANT,
10 LAYSTALL STREET, E.C.1
(3 mins. Holborn Hall)

The meetings will be held on TUESDAYS at 7.30 p.m.

MARCH 3—S. E. Parker on
WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

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 Carlin
Jane Strachan, Eddie Shaw,

Mutual Aid in the Flood Disaster

IN case you missed it, I am enclosing a cutting from Tom Driberg's article in to-day's *Reynolds News*.* It is just one more bit of evidence that in times of natural disaster, the doctrines of selfishness, cut-throat competition and mutual distrust imposed on us by capitalist civilisation go by the board and man's first instinct is towards co-operation and mutual aid.

Incidentally, I doubt if Tom Driberg would be willing to accept all the implications of what he has written. Altrincham, Feb. 8. A.J.B.

["The floods have evoked one of those manifestations of the human spirit at its best, which are all too rare in peacetime.

"In our part of Essex at any rate, civilians and Servicemen alike have worked and 'mucked in' just as in the days of the blitz, unselfishly, giving all they've got, not worrying about property rights or compensation.

"The attitude, refreshingly, is: 'We've got to have the stuff now—we'll sort out afterwards who's to pay for it.'"

"Most encouraging of all has been the response by the young Servicemen—the lads of 18 and 19, only children when the war was on, who are sometimes written off as a delinquent and apathetic generation by their censorious elders.

"Those I have seen have been mostly in the R.A.F., and most of these have volunteered for this job on the sea-wall. The work is arduous in the extreme, monotonous, and dirty; the weather has been bitterly cold. They start out for the wall at 6.30 a.m.—and, believe it or not, many of them are reluctant to obey the order to finish at dusk.

"They understand what they are doing; they see the gaps in the wall closing as they fill and stack the sandbags. Again and again I have heard them say: 'It's nice to be doing something useful for a change.'"

"I don't expect the Air Ministry—who have been very good in releasing and provisioning these men—to accept all the implications of those last three words; but there is surely a profound, yet simple lesson here for all statesmen and all who despair of 'modern youth'?"

Have You Read THE SYNDICALIST?

THE front-page article of the February issue of *The Syndicalist* declares, "People matter more than money. Let's have a flood-workers' scheme." It is pointed out that one ten-thousandth part of the sum allotted for armaments would have saved Canvey Island. There are articles on Syndicalism in Italy, on Industrial Unions, and an appreciation of the late Frank Leech. Among the industrial topics discussed are the miners' wage award, conditions in the baking trade and amongst painters, and the treatment of seamen arriving at "iron curtain" ports.

An article, "Who will clean the Railways," sums up the perennial press topic of our dirty railways with these words: "It is quite obvious where the solution lies to-day, and that is in making the job of a railway cleaner worth while. It is a job that lends itself easily to part-time work and there are no lack of applicants to-day for better-paid work.

It is because railway-cleaners' pay is not such as to attract more people that the railways are less clean than they could be. And it is significant to note how much more pleasant the smaller stations are, where the staff has the opportunity for engaging in a little gardening and where flower beds brighten the place. For there the workers have a little more freedom than they have in the larger stations. Which suggests that a great deal will be altered when the workers take control."

The article on seasonal unemployment in the painting trade has a bearing on the subject of Workers' Productive Co-operatives described in last week's *FREEDOM*. The writer declares: "It must, I think, be admitted that the equipment necessary to put painters to work could easily be purchased by the painters' societies and a drive made to take over the work from the bosses. The work could then be spread over the year in a manner acceptable to the men themselves. We all know how the painter in hard times goes out jobbing and, provided he has the necessary materials, no boss is needed to tell him what to do, he gets his instructions from the customer. Is it not a fact then that the next step calls for: (1) organisation to cut out the dozens of petty tyrants; (2) for the painters as a body to make direct contact with the customers, and (3) for the painters to prove that Workers' Control is the only way out."

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