

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"They that can give up essential Liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."
 —BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

BEYOND THE BERLIN TALKS

TRADE WAR IN ECONOMICS

SUPERFICIALLY the front pages are full of the four-power talks in Berlin. Leading articles and publicists stress the easing of international tension, the "genuine desire for world peace", and so on. But beneath all this the pattern of trade competition is re-enacting itself and history repeats the broad outlines which have followed each major war and then preceded the succeeding one.

FREEDOM has often had occasion to point out that although Britain and Russia are "enemies", competition for markets between them is limited, and mainly concerns China. On the other hand Britain and America are allies, but are locked in ever increasing trade rivalries. Although most people assume that any war which may break out in the future will be against Russia, this is only an assumption.

Revival of German Industry

Now a new factor, which is also an old one, is re-appearing: the revival of German industry and the penetration of western markets by German goods. In 1950 the Federal Republic of Germany constructed 90,000 tons of new merchant shipping. In ensuing years this amount has steadily increased: 1952, 235,000 tons; 1953, 225,000 tons; 1954, 417,000 tons. Not counting small craft and the fishing fleets but including vessels bought abroad, German shipping now totals 1,600,000 tons: after the war all that was left was 120,000 tons.

"Under the Postdam Agreement of 1945 Germany was not allowed to build seagoing ships at all. There was utter stagnation in the shipyards.

Hamburg, Bremen, and other once flourishing ports were dead. Gradually the restrictions were relaxed and the level of industry was raised. But it was not until the momentous Petersberg Agreement of November 22, 1949, between the western Powers and the newly established Federal Republic, was signed that the limitations on the size and speed of ships, on the construction of passenger liners, and on the purchase of ships abroad were abolished. The ban on the building of ships with installations customary to warships remained, and allied approval for the expansion of shipbuilding capacity was still required. War destruction and dismantling dealt hard blows at shipyards and port equipment. At Hamburg, for example, only 10 per cent. of the wharf buildings, 28 per cent. of the storage space, 20 per cent. of the cranes, and 32 per cent. of the railways were intact. Elsewhere the plight was almost as dire.

"What has been achieved since is a memorial to German industry and initiative. Most of the greater shipyards are booked up with orders till 1955. The Tina Onassis, claimed to be the world's largest tanker, was built by the Howaldtswerke of Hamburg. The Wilhelmine Essberger was launched last week, also at Hamburg, and the tanker fleet now musters about 74 units of 181,340 tons. The tanker fleet is now stronger than in 1939. The Hamburg yards alone turned out last year—excluding

coastal and inland vessels, tugboats, and dredgers—57 seagoing ships of roughly 267,000 tons, against 56 ships of 192,000 tons in 1952. Of these, 48 per cent. were for export. The Deutsche Werft, with a tonnage of 152,000, probably set up a world record for an individual shipyard." (Times, 21/1/54).

The recovery of German industry and her reappearance as a trade competitor was the subject of a recent radio talk by the *Manchester Guardian's* correspondent in Germany, Terence Prittie. He gave substantially the same figures as those quoted above, but went more fully into the question of trade rivalries. This talk was in the third programme and therefore no doubt, reached as restricted a number of listeners as the readership of the *Times*. The general newspaper reading public and the main news bulletins of the B.B.C. give emphasis to the purely political questions of the four-power discussions. But these economic questions remain the underlying ones.

The capitalist method of production moves in a certain way and the revival of these old rivalries proceeds independently of the wishes of administrators. After both the wars the victors sought to cripple Germany economically. (The avalanches in the Voralberg region of Austria, reminded the writer of the man-made disasters which befel this beautiful region after the first war, when the

Continued on p. 4

Victimisation Beaten by Direct Action 3,000 in Defence of a Docker

HOW many examples of militant working-class action have been given by the London dockers!

In the post-war period the best and strongest examples of spontaneous direct action have come from them. While the British working class as a whole has been apparently content with the benefits of "full employment", the dockers (chiefly on Merseyside, outside of London) have remembered that such a thing as the class struggle exists.

Their massive strikes at the time of the trial of the seven dockers at the Old Bailey were, until recently, the largest workers' actions since the war—and from the Anarchist point of view had the greater virtues of being unofficial and motivated by principles of solidarity rather than as part of a wage demand.

A new example has just been given us, which does in fact stem from the days of the dockers' trial. One of the men in the dock at the Old Bailey was Harry Constable, an anti-Stalinist militant whose part in the unofficial movement and on the Portworkers' Committee had already led to his being expelled from the Transport & General Workers' Union—and he hasn't got his card back yet.

Victimised

Since that time Constable has been a marked man. Many incidents have occurred to indicate that the employers intended to make life and work in the docks as difficult for him as possible. Over four years, time after time, there has been no work for Harry Constable.

But deliberate victimisation is very difficult to prove in an industry where men ply for hire day by day. If there are 100 jobs going and 104 men on call—it may be only coincidence if Constable is among them. And if it happens time and time again—well it's just bad luck and no malice can be clearly proved.

Last week, however, it happened once too often. On the Wednesday afternoon

call 100 men saw Constable and five other known rebels refused work. They began to ask why, and one foreman indiscreetly said that it was on the Superintendent's instructions. "Why?", again. Even more distinctly the foreman replied: "Because he's a trouble-maker."

3000 Strike

That, of course, did it. The 100 men struck work immediately. The next day, Thursday, by 9 o'clock, 1000 men were refusing to work, and by 12 o'clock 3000 were out. The whole of the West India Dock, full of ships, was paralysed.

Then the union men began to appear but to no avail. The men wouldn't listen to them, and after talks with the bosses, they approached Constable and asked him to take part in joint consultation with the employers.

This was a unique position. The Dock Board have consistently refused to negotiate with unofficial strikers, even when they were union members. But here was an entirely unofficial dispute and the Board were prepared to negotiate with an unofficial leader who hasn't even got a union card!

Harry Constable laid down his conditions for parley. One of these was that a delegate from the Stevedores & Dockers' Union (the "Blue" union—refused recognition by the Dock Board) should be present and that all the union officials should remain silent while he put the men's—and his own—case.

Complete Victory

The officials had no choice but to agree, and it was the Dock Board's only hope for getting the men back to work. Harry then negotiated with them, winning a guarantee that there would be no further victimisation and—for good measure—that old men should not be stood off, as had been happening.

At this the union officials hurried back to where 2000 men were waiting. They told them that it was all over, that they had won and could go back to work—but the men would not believe them. It was not until Constable told them himself that they had won that they took notice—and then their instruction was that he should have the pick of all the jobs going.

Then Harry went up to each of the eight foremen waiting for labour and asked each one what were the best jobs he had to offer. They told him. Then he asked which one had the *worst* job to offer—and he chose that.

This naturally brought a roar of approval from the men, and they went back to work in the knowledge that their solidarity and united strength has once again enabled them to chalk up one more win over the bosses. P.S.

NOTEBOOK

Sadism in Fiction & in Reality

MUCH publicity has been given to the trial of two publishers who were found guilty of "uttering and publishing obscene libels in the form of seven books . . ." and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined a total of £6,000 by the Recorder, Sir Gerald Dobson, who described such literature as debasing stuff which sooner or later will drag the whole reading public down into a veritable lagoon of depravity."

It appears that five of the books complained of dealt with "murder, robbery and every kind of crime" and the other two "had a background of slavery in some desert. The second theme of all the books was sadistic cruelty, with descriptions of the hero being tortured and young girls being tied up". It was submitted by the prosecution—and presumably confirmed by the jury who found the prisoners guilty—that the only possible effect of the books would be "to corrupt and deprave".

The hypocrisy of such trials is surely revealed when on the one hand we are told by the Recorder that the case had no doubt been brought at the instigation of the Director of Public Prosecutions in an attempt to put down so far as possible the publication of this kind of literature, while on the other, the defending counsel said that there was an increasing demand from the Forces for the books, which were bought by the Government for distribution among them!

Again, one might believe the argument about "corrupting" and "depraving" if these were the type of book which are kept under the counter in those special book shops which cater for unusual tastes. But Hank Jansen (the author of the books in the case) is a best seller, and though the literary journals do not review him alongside Enid Blyton—or at all for that matter, and the public libraries ban him from their shelves, he is to be found on the counter in hundreds of newsagents shops (perhaps alongside the *News of the World* and *Sunday Dispatch*) throughout the country. In three years more than five million copies have been

sold in this way. And it was stated in Court that every six months there is a fresh edition of 100,000 copies.

It is obvious that if anyone is being corrupted it is the author of these books whose literary integrity must be subjected to awful torment in his efforts to satisfy this insatiable public demand! To say that the public is being corrupted by Hank Jansen is ridiculous. All he and his public-minded publishers are doing is to satisfy a demand, and in capitalist terminology they are public benefactors whose services deserve some recognition. A knighthood or an O.B.E. but not Wormwood Scrubs!

OFFICIAL SADISM AND STUPIDITY

ACCORDING to last Sunday's *Pictorial* it has "become common talk among discontented ratings—'smash a few gauges and you go to prison for a year. Better that than serve another six years or so to complete your term [in the Navy]". In four cases at Devonport during the past five months, ratings found guilty of malicious damage to a ship have been given such prison sentences and dismissed from the Service. But last week a Stoker-Mechanic on H.M.S. *Eagle* who was found guilty of breaking eleven gauges in the engine room was sentenced to fifteen months in a naval prison but was not dismissed the Service.

This case says the *Sunday Pictorial* "was the first step to quashing a sailor's easy way of 'working a ticket'" for the man concerned who volunteered in April 1947 for 12 years "will have to stay in the Navy fifteen months longer because it is not counted as time served. He was said to be unhappy in the Navy".

The sadism herein demonstrated is as great as the stupidity of officialdom. A man who is prepared to go to prison for a year rather than spend a further five years in the Navy clearly indicates his feelings for the Service and from the official standpoint should be considered

a most unreliable member. To punish him and then bring him back to the scene of his "crime" is to invite a more desperate action the next time.

It may be said that he was foolish in the first place to "sign-on" for 12 years. It is human to do foolish things. But it is inhuman to demand that a man who is unhappy in his job should be obliged to remain in it simply because he once signed a piece of paper. Any employer would be glad to be rid of such a man

Continued on p. 4

KENYA

Operation Whitewash Under Way

THE revelations at the trial of Captain Griffiths about the payment of blood money to soldiers who were engaged in operations against the Mau Mau and the callousness of an officer who shot wounded Africans "to put them out of their misery" produced sufficient revulsion of feeling in Britain for the Government to feel the need to do something. Their way of dealing with it was to send a parliamentary delegation to Kenya.

The delegation is now well under way with its "investigation", and two members recently gave their views to the press. Mr. Walter Elliott (Conservative) said that there seemed to be general approval of the tactical conduct of the emergency, although there was a desire on all sides (All sides, Mr. Elliott?) for a quicker administration of justice. Anything speedier than the conveyor-belt technique of the mass trials would, we imagine, be difficult to devise.

Mr. A. G. Bottomley (Labour) said that the British troops in Kenya

resented the "five bob a nob" propaganda. Of course they do: it has shamed many officers into withdrawing their offers of blood money, and even if the British soldier does not need bribes to do his duty, as we are told, he has never been averse to any backsheesh that happens to be going.

Mr. Elliot added that African housing in Kenya compared very favourably with that in other parts of the continent. When we remember that shantytowns in the Union of South Africa and other African slums we may be inclined to think that it was not difficult for Kenya to achieve this. In any case it has no bearing on the issue the delegation were sent to investigate.

By the time the delegation has completed its tour of inspection and published its report the purpose of its visit will probably have been forgotten, and to the sound of the familiar soothing phrases the great British public will be able to resume its slumbers. E.P.

Positive Anarchism

ALL the articles and letters in FREEDOM recently on why there are so few Anarchists seem to have been written in a mood of patient despair.

Creed, which at the very least can serve as a basis for discussion:—

"I believe in myself and in mutual aid that holds society together. I affirm that life is worth living, freedom worth fighting for.

This covers the fundamental belief that man is enslaved by government and can only gain freedom by ridding himself of his rulers.

Coventry Controversy

Altho' Philip Sansom has earned the right as much as anyone in the anarchist movement—and more than most—to have his opinions, on the many dilemmas we are faced with, seriously and carefully considered as the product of much thought and experience.

WHEN IS A BEER A BIER?

How do we know when a bier is not a beer? Why, dear M.G.W., it's really very clear: In the same way that we know That the corn doesn't grow in a field, but has its root* In a tired and aching foot.*

the tribunal earnestly argues with whoever forces him, Philip or myself, and tells us "But it's got to be all or nobody". Our reply to that is "If the dissidents are only 5%, they don't make any difference; if they are 20% they should be taken into consideration; if they are 40% should there be a war at all?"

An argument of more fundamental importance (but which I have left till the last because it always carries less weight!) is that if a man is determined enough to defy a majority he can stick it out as long as he likes.

Manchester, Jan. 16. V. MAYES.

[*This letter was received before our correspondent had seen P.S.'s contribution in last week's FREEDOM—EDITORS.

I would like wholeheartedly to endorse the views expressed by A. R. Lacey.

How can an anarchist (as Philip Sansom appears to do) consistently oppose the rights of governments to control other people whilst defending trade unionists who try to force their colleagues to "toe the line"?

Surely as anarchists we oppose any and all forms of coercion whether by intimidation, force or boycott and by whomsoever carried out.

Penzance, Jan. 16. CHARLES SLATTER.

Anarchism not a Religion

Anarchism is not a religion as is sometimes stated.

Religion is based on faith, anarchism, a theory of freedom, is based on knowledge—of human character and capacity. The passion that sustains anarchists is not merely the hatred of tyranny or even love of anarchism, but the love of life—seen as a creative adventure.

S. Woodford, Jan. 18. MAY ROSE.

BERLIN Continued from p. 1

farms were stripped of cattle and stock as part of reparations, thereby reducing the entire region to poverty). Yet both times German industry has rapidly recovered.

Continued from p. 1

of course are most anxious that a verdict of guilty should always be recorded for they are responsible for all the investigations and for providing the prosecution with the evidence.

If there were more love and less "justice" in the world (and assuming that in such a world the criminal courts still existed) one could imagine that instead of "hoping" to prove the guilt of the prisoner, everybody concerned would be "hoping" they had been mistaken.

LIBERTARIAN.



"Sir Winston Churchill is doing his utmost to give rearmament a new look." —News Chronicle, 13.1.54.

Why So Few Anarchists?

THE eagerness of the discussion on the reasons for the low number of anarchists seems to suggest not only concern about that low number (that is always present), but also perhaps a wish to combat the lethargy, which it is claimed, has taken its toll of some of our propagandists over the past year or so.

I would say that it is the ability to pick out essentials, which is the most distinctive trait of an anarchist, or rather an anarchist who accepted anarchism through reason and bases his theory of anarchism on empirical evidence.

In picking out the essentials, I believe the anarchist comes to a fuller realization of the dangers of our lop-sided economy than the majority of politically-conscious people.

SOUTHAMPTON

If any comrades in Southampton or the surrounding districts are interested in the forming of a group in Southampton could they please contact Freedom Press.

from a normal flagging of energy to be expected from time to time, there is a waning of enthusiasm after the initial bright flash of the new vision of anarchism down to a steady flame, and I think the nearness of that flame in intensity to the first flash on becoming a professed anarchist is indicative of courage or lack of it.

Courage (not, I need hardly say, the military kind, which is often cowardice in disguise anyway) is my main consideration. I see it, with discipline, as at least part of the answer to any problems of weakness in strength and quality.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting HYDE PARK Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

NORTH-EAST LONDON

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

FEB. 10.—"PERSONAL CHOICE" Readings from Revolutionary Literature

GLASGOW

INDOOR MEETINGS every Friday at 7.0 p.m.

FEB. 5—Frank Waters COMMUNITY OF LIVING. FEB. 12—Jim McLachlan IS MONEY THE WAY TO SUCCESS? FEB. 19—Hugh McKeefery CHRISTIANITY—THE MYTH. FEB. 12—Mormon JUGGERNAUTS IN SOCIETY.

FREEDOM

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NOTEBOOK

as he would consider him inefficient. But officialdom has to demand its "pound of flesh" at whatever cost.

A SORDID GAME

IN his opening speech in the much publicised trial of Lord Montague and others, prosecuting counsel said that: "As a result of certain investigations the kit of various aircraftsmen and NCOs was searched, and there was found on December 16 last year in the kit of an aircraftman called Reynolds a letter which I hope to prove emanates from Lord Montague."

The words which we find so revealing are "which I hope to prove". Why "hope"? Will the prosecutor feel awfully disappointed if he cannot prove that the letter emanates from Lord Montague? Perhaps we give too much importance to the use of the word "hope" in this context, yet the little we know of the legal profession and the police convinces us that especially in the much publicised trials there is a kind of battle of wits between the leaders of the two sides—the prisoner being just an excuse for the game—which each is anxious to win. Considerations of humanity and justice are of secondary importance. The police