

# Freedom

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Threepence

## THE DOCKS—A NATIONAL STRIKE?

BEFORE last week's *FREEDOM* reached its readers the figures given for the numbers involved in the London dock strike were out-of-date. Almost every day that passes involves more workers, and on the day we were printing last week, Tilbury's 2,500 dockers stopped completely and so did other sectors where work of a limited nature was going on, bringing the total to 22,500 by the weekend.

These were joined on Sunday by the 4,500 members of the Watermen, Lightermen, Tugmen and Barge-men's Union, which finally brought all activity on London's river to a complete halt.

*The strike in London is now bigger and more solid even than in the General Strike of 1926.*

With the employers, however, still refusing to budge an inch, it was clear that the strike could not be restricted to London. Delegates from both the Stevedores' & Dockers' Union (whose members are officially supported) and of the unofficial liaison committee of Transport & General Workers' members, went to Hull, Birkenhead and Liverpool over the weekend, with the result that many workers in these ports have joined the strike also. At the time of writing about 35,000 men are out altogether, about half the entire labour force in the ports of this country.

So far the only move by the Government has been to set up a Court of Inquiry—which has been rejected in advance by Dick Barrett, leader of the Stevedores' and Dockers', on the grounds that, the Court having no power other than to advise, its findings would be inconclusive, as

well as the fact that it will take a fortnight to deliberate and print its findings.

The three-man Court consists of Sir Raymond Evershed, Q.C., chairman; Sir Godfrey Way Mitchell, chairman of Wimpey's the great building contractors; and Mr. James Crawford, president of the National Union of Boot & Shoe Operatives. It is said that Barrett has objected to the choice of Mr. Crawford.

### Use of Troops Difficult

The Government has indicated that it is loth to send troops into the docks. It would like, of course, to be able to show that it was able to deal with the situation without doing that—although the Labour Government sent in the troops in 1947.

The fear that sending the troops in would lead to a national stoppage is no longer a deterrent, for the stubbornness of the employers is having that effect anyway. The real reason, however, for the Government's hesitation to use troops is that, unlike previous strikes, there are no key-men left at work in this one to instruct the soldiers in the work.

In previous strikes there have always been a number of permanent men, foremen and tally clerks, or crane drivers still at work, under whose direction the troops could manage to do at least some of the more essential work—like shipping arms to Malaya.

This time, however, there's no body.

### Deakin Helpless

This strike has shown up in startling fashion the helplessness of the Labour fakir in the face of determined action by the workers. Strongman Arthur Deakin, leader of the T.G.W.U., is very good at shouting down opponents at the T.U.C.

and Labour Party Conferences.

He is wise enough, however, to keep well away from the members of his union in the docks. He has not attended one single mass meeting of portworkers since the dispute began. Not even when, last week, the T.G.W.U. booked the Albert Hall for the officials to face the members, did Deakin have the guts to show up. Instead he let his henchmen, O'Leary and Bird face the music—and if the former's grip on his job survives the reception he got at the Albert Hall, it will only be because Deakin needs a punch-bag to keep between himself and his members.

Unable to explain by any other means the mass disobedience in his union, Deakin has once more dug out of his box of tricks a well-tried formula—The Red Bogey. Hysterically denouncing the strikers as having been got at by Communists, declaring that the 'Blue' union is the spearhead of Communist intrigue in the docks, Arthur was careful to keep his distance from dockland. His spiel came from Birmingham—110 miles away from the Port of London.

Deakin is very clearly on the skids.

The massive desertion from his union into the 'Blue' is only the beginning. In other industries, more and more workers are simply fed up with his dictatorship. His rule of office has been disastrous, not only for the workers themselves, but for the trades unions as well—and even Fleet Street, one time so friendly towards this 'responsible, statesmanlike and respected' leader are beginning to pull the blocks from under him. Why, even Cardinal Griffin (the Catholic Church blesses and fosters workers' union) has now said that some unions are so big that their structure is suspect! (Same thing could be said of churches!)

### The Strikers Will Win—if . . .

From the strikers point of view, however, the fate of Arthur Deakin is neither here nor there. He has been a dead loss to the workers for years and it is in times like this that they depend upon the only power they can trust—their own.

If the portworkers go on as they are they will win this strike. But they will need solidarity from other workers, too. For the vast majority the strike is unofficial, and the N.A.S.D.U. has no funds

Man in his smallness and narrowness strives towards uniformity and equality; the Creator, in his greatness, omniscience and omnipotence, wills otherwise."

—Dr. MALAN.

for strike pay. Financial contributions are necessary, as well as making known to the general public the strikers' case—which we have outlined in *FREEDOM* over the last month.

Readers sympathetic to the portworkers' struggle against compulsory overtime can send solidarity funds to Freedom Press, and we shall pass them on to comrades in the docks who will send them to where they are most needed and make sure they are not used for political purposes.

### PORTWORKERS' SYNDICATE LEAFLET

THE Anarcho-Syndicalist Committee has reprinted the Aims and Principles of Syndicalism (which were first published in *The Syndicalist*) with, on the reverse side, an appeal for a Portworkers Syndicate.

Thousands of these handbills have already been distributed among London dockers (Typical comment: 'Just what we want') and are available for distribution in other ports at 10s. a thousand.

Orders to:  
Anarcho-Syndicalist Committee,  
84a Whitechapel High Street,  
London, E.1.

## HOME GUARDS

## . . . And Our Defence is Sure

THE Home Guard has proved a most fruitful source of jokes, and also of patriotic romanticism. Three years ago it, and the jokes and the romanticism, was revived. The British public already pay no less than £1,500 million for the defence, such as it is, provided by the Army, Navy, and Air Force. "But," says a recent article in the *Picture Post*, "for the past three years they have been tapped for an extra donation—to pay for the reformed Home Guard. The bill for 1954 is £617,000—a piffling amount in this financial stratosphere! Yet for £617,000 Britain could have 374 new

three-bedroomed houses; or 42 new grammar schools; or a new 150-bed hospital. Instead of those houses, or schools, or hospitals, we have a thin brown line of middle-aged week-end soldiers, pretending to defend non-existent airfields against an invisible enemy. Is that fair exchange? Or robbery?"

In point of fact could such an organisation, even at its best, do much to defend a country? Particularly one so open, and at the same time so small, as England. The Home Guard has been compared to the "trained bands" of former days, but the comparison is not a happy one. The one thing that was certain about these "trained bands" was that they were not trained.

According to one of their officers, writing about 1639, the chief thing that the trained bands learned was to drink. If they met for their one day's drill a year near a town of any size, the soldiers would slip off and spend their time "in the inns and taverns tipping when they should be exercising in the field." Another writer put it differently. The god they worshipped in their trainings was not Mars but Bacchus. It was indeed fortunate that they never had to face Continental professional troops. During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries England had no proper army at all.

The old joke about tipping in ale houses has stuck, and was revived when the Home Guard was re-established in 1951. The papers were full of cartoons implying that its popularity would be due to the escape-route it would provide for harassed husbands anxious to flee to the pub.

But it was not all that popular after all. It was originally to be a force of 170,000 men, but only 22,000 came forward, with another 19,000 classified as "emergency reserve", which meant the person's name was on a list, but he had no duties. The target was reduced to 90,000, but at present the strength is 36,143, with 34,830 on the reserve. This after £2 million have been spent. The State is so efficient!

There are too many officers to the number of men, though the situation has not reached the extreme of that (probably mythical) Liberian gunboat, whose crew were all admirals, and took it in turns to stoke and steer. The truth would seem to be that it is a sort of plaything for ex-officers and old soldiers, who have nothing better to do with their time.

What is likely to happen in the future? It is not impossible that it may be made compulsory if the likelihood of war looms a bit larger. But it is not likely to be for a while yet, for what with National Service, Army Emergency Reserve, the Territorial Army, and God

knows what beside, the poor wretch who has once allowed himself to be conscripted is not likely to be free until he is 45. In view of this the State will not probably think it worthwhile to embark on the trouble and expense of a compulsory Home Guard. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the whole affair will be called off. But the whole matter raises wider issues, one of which is, can a modern nation, certainly one the size of most European states, be defended at all, by any means, against such super-states as the U.S.A. and Russia? I think the answer is definitely, "No".

Great Britain is of all large European countries the most vulnerable. In fact she is almost one of the most vulnerable countries of the whole world. In former days the fact that she was an island was her safeguard. She could sit outside European affairs, and regard the squabbles of the Continent with contemptuous superiority. But now the island fortress has become a death-trap. Quite apart from the fact that if her overseas communications were cut she could not feed herself (at least not without an agricultural revolution of which there is little chance), and her over-large population would starve, her people have nowhere to escape to. Surrounded by water they would be neatly caught, to evacuate large sections of the population in time of war would be nearly impossible.

Even though every man and woman went about permanently armed to the

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## GOD IS ON ARTHUR'S SIDE

A special prayer for the speedy settlement of the London strikes was offered at a service in Birmingham Parish Church attended yesterday by Mr. Arthur Deakin, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union. The service, the annual one arranged for the city's transport workers, was attended by transport officials and bus and railway workers, many of whom were in uniform. Mr. Deakin read one of the lessons.

Manchester Guardian, 18/10/54.

## THE CHURCH AND BIG BUSINESS

WITH £221 millions in assets the Church of England is described as "one of Britain's largest financial concerns". Advised by four financial wizards the Church Commissioners have by increasing their investments in Industry—which now totals £30 millions—added £1½ millions to their income which now stands at £8½ million a year.

Their investments are spread over 186 companies of which 127 announced increased dividends last year. The Commissioners also own 1,000 farms spread all over England, and more than 50,000 houses, flats, office blocks, shops, and factories. The rents from these increased by £144,000 last year.

£7 million of this income is spent on augmenting clergymen's stipends and a further million pounds is spent on repairing and maintaining parsonage houses. And in the coming year a pension scheme is being started which will absorb a further £850,000.

So, however much the Church may advise its flock to rely on God, it obviously does not propose to take any risks itself by waiting for pennies to come from heaven, but instead employs financial wizards! Or do the Commissioners, when they declare in their report that their advisers are ensuring that they, the Commissioners, are "pursuing the right aims by the right methods", imply that they are acting under divine guidance?

## Elections in Guatemala

IN Guatemala, recently saved from the Reds by that patriot Castillo Armas (with kind permission of the United States Government), they have just had, what the *New York Times* leader says "could only by courtesy be called an election and a plebiscite", and the results were a clear victory for President Castillo Armas and his supporters, and as the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent points out "the background to the voting was such that no other result could have been expected". In the Plebiscite Armas received 99% of the votes. "Whenever this happens—wrote the *N.Y. Times*—one knows it is not a democratic election."

"The elections were held at seventeen days' notice. The voters were asked to select, from a single list presented by the newly formed National Anti-Communist Front, 66 members of a Constituent Assembly, and to signify whether they wished President Castillo to continue in office for a period to be fixed by that Assembly. They could answer, verbally and in public, either yes or no, or they could abstain.

The great majority of those who went to the polls chose the first alternative, for Colonel Castillo has so far devoted most of his time and energy to removing all traces of opposition. Having appointed as head of his secret police Señor José Linares, who occupied that post during the Ubico dictatorship, he has outlawed a number of Left-wing organisations, such as the Guatemalan Confederation of Labour, and all political groups which supported his predecessor. In mid-August it was announced that 15,000 Government and other employees had already been dismissed, and at the end of September that 2,000 persons were imprisoned on charges of Communist activity."

Apart from the anti-communist drive nothing "constructive" has been done by the new régime in spite of their claims.

According to the *M.G.* correspondent: Early in July, for instance, he denied any intention of cancelling the agrarian reforms introduced by the Arbenz régime. Yet within a few days he had

revoked the agrarian law of 1952, declared void forced leases of private lands and suspended new land expropriations. The peasants were told that they could harvest their crops before leaving the land thus affected.

On August 22 a decree provided for Government reclamation of 120 estates, including crops, live stock, houses, and vehicles, which had been shared out among the peasants on a co-operative basis. These estates, comprising 800,000 acres, had been seized from their former German owners during the war. The decree declared that only Communists had gained from their expropriation, and that the result had been reduced production because the peasants were ignorant and incapable of using the land properly. In future the estates will be run by the Government and the peasants will work on them as paid workers.

These measures have opened the way for the return to the United Fruit Company of the 200,000 acres expropriated by the late Government, and the company has offered to negotiate a new contract with President Castillo, hinting at terms more favourable to Guatemala than it was ready to offer to his predecessor. Meanwhile President Castillo has signed the mutual aid agreement with the United States which was rejected by his predecessor. As a result United States aids to Guatemala has been increased from \$190,000 to \$1,500,000, with prospects of more to come.

But enthusiasm against Communists, real or alleged, a new contract with the United Fruit Company, more United States aid, and an impressive majority in one-sided elections do not of themselves match Colonel Castillo's recent avowal that "We are now committed to show the world that Guatemala, by democratic ways, can advance the welfare of all our people."

But the world is no longer interested in the affairs of Guatemala now that the Red Scare has been dealt with. And her three million people (73% of them illiterate) are allowed to sink back into oblivion and poverty, with the United Fruit Company back at the helm and \$1.5 million American dollars in the new Government coffers as the pay-off.

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# A GREAT ZOLA NOVEL

**EARTH, by Emile Zola. Translated by Ann Lindsay. (Elek, 15/-).**

THE first English translation of this book was banned (it appeared in 1888). This is the first edition (in a new translation) to be freely available in this country; and even with the passage of sixty years and the considerably more tolerant attitudes prevalent to-day—to say nothing of Zola's acknowledged position as a great novelist—the publishers had to postpone publication for quite some time because several printers refused to accept the work. The current rash of prosecutions for obscenity is having the desired effect.

The commonest criticism of Zola is that he is no more than an assiduous compiler of facts, that he is content merely to record everything he sees without exercising his powers of selection. Such anti-like activity—the criticism continues—is all very commendable when it has a social purpose as Zola's usually did, but it is all so dull: like one of those 'educational' films that takes you round a factory insisting on showing you every stage of manufacture of some quite uninteresting article. In fact, you would be as well employed reading a Blue Book as a Zola novel. Perhaps this is putting his critics' case a little too strongly but there are many who would half agree with it. To such people and to anyone who has not yet read any Zola I would say read *Earth*. This novel shows Zola at the height of his powers—it has horror, poetry, advanced views on agriculture, and humour. Such apparently ill-assorted ingredients are combined in this book into the Zolaesque view of life, magnified, distorted, lustful: not merely one facet examined through a microscope but the whole seen and felt with the abnormality of genius.

*Earth* is an epic of peasant life set in the France of the mid-nineteenth century. This was the time when the great prairie lands of America were being developed: there were stories of farms where the men were organised like an army to force wheat from the earth, to grow two crops in one season, with powerful machines to labour for them: if the ground became exhausted they just moved on to fresh prairie. When the first trickle of American wheat came to Europe, presaging the flood to come, it was clear that a crisis would develop. The price of wheat was dropping every year. This threat of disaster gives an ironic edge to the action of *Earth*. The Fouans, peasants of the plain of La Beauce, have a fierce passion for land; they work for it, they marry for it. For land they will lie, cheat and murder; their whole life is given in the blood and sweat of wrestling crops from it, their savings are used to gain a few more strips. This passion has so narrowed their minds that they

cannot imagine that anything from outside their small world could mean ruin and starvation for them; America is far away and free trade is only something the politicians fight about: the enemy that they fear most is the unpredictable weather.

The storm had wrought havoc in the region and cries of despair rang out as the extent of the damage was revealed... all the trees had suffered; the twigs, the fruit were cut as if by knives... The lanterns swung, jumped, swayed amid the groans and curses of the villagers. The vine-stocks were scythed down and the blossom clusters strewn the ground... Not only was the year's harvest ruined; the stems, stripped bare, would decay and die.

Zola has a lyrical vision of the land's continual re-birth as she brings forth her crops each year, made fecund with the dung of the animals whose food she provides, a continuous cycle between men and animals and the earth. The big farmer, Hourdequin, who uses the new fertilisers and compost and tries out the new machines which the peasants mock at, maintains that any matter which has come from the earth can be used again to revitalise it. In one passage he makes the (then) revolutionary suggestion that the sewers of Paris should be opened and the human excreta be allowed to flood the countryside and fructify the fields that provide the town-people's food. The peasants are repelled by the idea of using human dung: 'What was good enough for our fathers...' It is this conservatism that Hourdequin continually rails against: if only they would try out some of the discoveries of agricultural science, yields per acre could certainly be increased and labour costs reduced. But in the background there is the lurking shadow of the cheap American corn that will drive prices down and down. Cheap bread may mean ruin for the peasant.

The action of the book revolves round the vigorous hatreds, the lusts and toil of the Fouan family. Old Fouan, the head of the family, worn with work, finds that he can no longer till his fields as he used and decides to divide up his property among his children. He is bitterly admonished by his sister, La Grande, for imagining that his children will look after him once they have his land. La Grande herself is determined to hold on to her land to the end (it is a matter of much regret to her that she cannot take it with her when she dies); she has made a will and is constantly telling her relations that 'you're all in it', having made sure that it is so ambiguous that they will be fighting over it for years. After he has divided his lands, old Fouan, now just a useless mouth to be fed, is pursued by his chil-

dren for the savings he has managed to put by. His son Buteau, the completely immoral blackguard and the most ruthless in his lust for the old man's money, eventually murders him. Yet even Buteau, painted as black as any nineteenth-century villain, does not entirely alienate sympathy. His maniacal worship of the land is impressive:

... he felt his passionate longing assuaged in the brutal joy of possession—a joy that was doubled by the thought that his sister and brother had been swindled, his land being so much more valuable now that the new road ran alongside. He never met them now without bursting into sly laughter, winking as if to say, 'All the same, I've done them in the eye!'

... that first year of possession was sheer bliss for Buteau. In all his time as a hired labourer he never ploughed so deep, the earth now turned was his earth, he wanted to penetrate right in, fertilise it in the very bowels... when the strips had no need of more work, he

still went to look at them like a lover. He walked round, bent down and with his habitual gesture took up a fistful of earth, a rich clod which he loved to crumble and let run through his fingers, supremely happy when he felt it neither too dry nor too humid and smelt in it the good smell of growing bread.

Zola was constantly attacking the smug conventions of his day and the bourgeois were a frequent target for his irony. The wealthy retired brothel-keeper who sends his daughter to the strictest convent in order that she shall remain pure but who turns the tables on her father by buying the family 'house' and running it on the most modern lines, is a typical Zola creation; and, less expectedly, there are some scenes of bawdy humour which are very funny indeed. It is a reviewer's cliché that if an author does manage to be both funny and bawdy he should be compared with Rabelais, the iconoclastic cleric and master of the genre; and in this case such a comparison would not be inappropriate. Rabelais rebelled against the omnipresence of the Church, its deadening power used to stifle any manifestation

of unorthodoxy; he became what might be called a pagan Christian, by emphasising the animality of man and attacking the turgid sermonising and pompous fustian of the priests while retaining his belief in God. In *Earth* Zola shows what happens when the village of Rognes is deprived of its priest.

... they had no Mass, no services whatsoever; they reverted to a heathen state. At first some of the villagers were a little surprised, but Good Lord, after all, there wasn't any change for the worse. They all got used to it; the rain didn't fall more often, the wind didn't blow any more strongly, not to mention the fact that the commune saved a lot of money. A priest didn't seem essential after all; their experience proved that the harvest didn't depreciate and no one died more quickly; and so why not carry on without a priest for ever?

It is his vigorous and positive approach to reality, his constant attacks on the many manifestations of hypocrisy so prevalent in his day, that makes Zola such a powerful writer. In the field of nineteenth-century fiction he stands out—a great and lonely figure. M.G.W.

## Comment on Potatoes

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

IN the last few weeks I have picked enough potatoes to feed me (statistically speaking) for two hundred years or more. At first we were picking for the market. At intervals across the field were the riddles for sorting the potatoes and separating the earth. On one side of each riddle were the bags supplied by the wholesale merchants, for the potatoes retained in the top riddle, suspended from one hundredweight scales, and on the other side the bags for the small potatoes in the bottom riddle, and for green or broken ones. These were for the pigs. The tractor with the spinner behind, flinging the potatoes out of the ridges, went up and down the rows, and in its wake we picked them in wire baskets, which piled up around the riddles. An old woman walked from riddle to riddle, sewing up the bags as they came off the scales, with a huge curved needle she carried in her mouth, and the wholesaler's lorries drove up and collected the bags as they accumulated. As the day wore on we moved the riddles and scales further across the field and in the evening we followed a harrow over the rows we had picked, gathering the remaining potatoes it brought to the surface, and made bonfires of the haulms.

Then we were picking for seed, using riddles with a larger mesh so that only the largest potatoes went to market (for the chip-shops), and the remainder were bagged up for sorting during the winter into next year's seed and pig-food. Here in Lincolnshire they pick for seed only after one crop, and buy new seed (Lin-

colnshire King Edwards or 'pink-eyes') every second year. Finally we were picking for storage, filling baskets which were emptied into a trailer which took the potatoes off to a straw-lined clamp or grave (or a 'tater-pie' as they call it here), to be taken up when wanted in the winter and spring for the market.

We were on piece-work all the while and it was always a race to get 'picked-up' before the spinner came round on the next row, or to get 'riddled-up' before the scales had to be moved, or to get 'bagged-up' before it was time to load the bags. There is good money to be earned in potato-picking this year for a number of reasons. The lateness of the corn harvest in East Anglia meant a late start with potatoes which have to be finished before the frosts come; and the heavy rains which delayed the harvesting of cereals have had the opposite effect on root crops which were ready several weeks early. Education Committees have decided not to continue the 'blue card' system which allowed school-children time off for potato-gathering. Where I was working the picking was done by the wives of the regular farm workers, who were mostly on the riddles, by groups of women who came out from the town, by the usual gangs of Irishmen sending off their weekly postal orders to Cork and the Claddagh, and by people staying at the camps run by the Ministry of Agriculture, mostly foreign students who have come here for working holidays. These camps are being closed down this year as despite their usefulness

to farmers, they do not pay their way. On daywork you can get up to about thirty shillings a day and on piecework something over a pound a ton or about eight pound ten an acre. It depends of course on the farmer's commitments and on the state of the crops and the weather.

THIS year potato yields are expected to be lighter than usual and are not expected to keep well, and everywhere you hear of blight, while in the Fens there is the very serious problem of eel-worm infestation. The yield in the rich Lincolnshire soil where I was working is usually 10 to 12 tons to the acre as against the national average of between 7 and 8 tons. Further south in the Fens at Burwell it is usually 14 tons, and a farmer told me in a pub, of fields further west, in the Trent valley, where they get over 20 tons to the acre. The quantity of potatoes grown and consumed in this country has increased greatly since before the war. In the United Kingdom as a whole the potato acreage rose from 733,000 in 1938 to 1,548,000 in 1948 and the yield from 5,115,000 to 11,798,000 tons. In addition of course a very large quantity of potatoes are grown in allotments and gardens even though there are so many vegetables which repay intensive cultivation better. I saw a back-yard in Woolwich this year devoted entirely to potatoes. It is estimated that half the allotment area in England is planted with potatoes producing about half a million tons.

## Reflections on the First International

IT is ninety years ago since, on 28th September, 1864 at St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre, the International Working Men's Association was launched on its all-too-brief and tumultuous career. The First International—to give it its popular name—has been the subject of exhaustive debate and acrid recriminations. And not without reason. For the dissensions which finally ripped it apart and destroyed it, also opened up a great chasm in the working-class movement which has not been bridged to this day. But Time, which salves wounds if it does not always heal them, now permits a more dispassionate appraisal than has been customary in the past of this painful chapter of working-class history. The appearance of Cole's volume\*, which takes as its central theme the great conflict between marxism and anarchism, provides us with an objective account of the First International as is perhaps humanly possible. But the need for appraisal and re-interpretation remains. In what lies the significance of the First International for us, the anarchists of the mid-twentieth century? As the residuary legatees of one side of the controversy, the heirs of Bakunin and Guillaume, of Kropotkin and Malatesta, we cannot escape that question even if we wished.

'Who was right,' asked Bakunin, 'the idealists or the materialists?' And he answered, 'When the question is stated in this way, hesitation becomes impossible.' 'Who were right,' one might likewise ask, 'the anarchists or the marxists?' And, again, hesitation becomes impossible. But, just as Bakunin realised that the philosophical question was not to be dismissed as easily as that, so, too, the question of historical judgment cannot be disposed of so easily.

We can afford now to pass lightly over the issue of conflicting personalities and temperaments—important as they were at the time. Mehring, marxist though he was, has said all that needs to be said on that score. Bakunin was sinned against grievously but the sin was not all on one side. It is absurd for a marxist, as Mehring pointed out, to declare that a 'highly dangerous intriguer'—to quote Marx's libel of Bakunin—could have destroyed a proletarian organisation like the First International. It is equally absurd for an anarchist to forget, in his antipathy towards Marx, that without

Marx there would probably have been no International to fight about. If he is so tempted to forget, let him recall the generous words of Bakunin himself: 'Leaving on one side all his iniquities against us, one cannot help admitting—I at any rate cannot—the immense services rendered by him (Marx) to the cause of Socialism, which he has served ably, energetically, and faithfully throughout twenty-five years, and in which he has undoubtedly surpassed us all. He was one of the first founders, assuredly the principal founder, of the International.'

### II

LET us pass on, rather, to the real issues, the issues which are as alive to-day as when they were first joined. There were three major issues and every one of them was sufficiently explosive in itself to blast the International sky high.

First, the question of the organisation of the International. In the General Rules, drawn up by Marx himself, it was stated at the outset: 'This Association is established to afford a central medium of communication and co-operation between Working Men's Societies in different countries and aiming at the same end, viz., the protection, advancement, and complete emancipation of the working classes.' But Marx at no time envisaged an organisation which would simply be a 'medium of communication and co-operation'. He realised that a good deal of freedom must be left to the national Sections to shape their own policies in accordance with varying national conditions but he refused to countenance the idea that each Section should have complete freedom to shape its own policy without direction from the centre. Marx's conception of the International was that of a movement working under central and unified direction—Marx's direction—and between this and the federalist conception there could be no real compromise.

Marx's conception was not, of course, merely an organisational conception: it was rooted deep in his conception of historical evolution. The one followed naturally from the other. Similarly, the federalists' conception followed from their conception of historical evolution. They believed that the Nation-State was breaking up: national boundaries were on the way out and the free associations that would spring up in the course of, and after, the revolution would recognise no boundaries, national or local. Marx's vision of the future was that of a centralised, albeit international,

political economy: Bakunin's vision was that of a decentralised, federalist, non-political economy. Both desired to create an International which would mirror in the present their vision of the future.

Who were right: the anarchists or the marxists? Again, the answer is not so simple as the question. The issue between the anarchists and marxists has sometimes been presented as a racial one: between the Teutonic races on the one hand and the Latin races on the other. It was certainly not that; it was not even a geographical one. The issue had many sidecurrents and on occasions the British reformist trade union leaders were ranged alongside the revolutionary federalists, in opposition to Marx. But it is essentially true that the federalists drew their main strength from the Jura and more particularly from Spain and Italy. It was in these countries that the national idea, for one reason or another, was weakest and it was in these countries, too, that the industrial revolution had proceeded least—the two are not unconnected.

In the 19th century, whatever may be the case in the 20th, marxism appears as essentially the creed of the urban industrial proletariat. There is nothing to be ashamed of in accepting the marxist half-truth that the anarchist movement is or was petty bourgeois in character—the alleged association with the lumpen-proletariat is perhaps another matter. The petty bourgeois, when he is a peasant or a skilled craftsman, like the Jura watchmaker, is more likely to appreciate the anarchist ideal of a free and independent personality than is the disciplined blank-faced proletarian slaving at the factory bench. If anarchism made, and still makes sense, to the Italian peasant or the Spaniard, while it is regarded by the Englishman or the German as the creed of cranks and lunatics, then that is understandable.

But we are asked not only to understand but to judge. It is clear that there is something to be said on Marx's side. As the industrial revolution has spread, the old social bases of the anarchist movement have been undermined. (We cannot be so naive as to believe that the reason why to-day anarchists find it so difficult 'to win friends and influence people' is because they lack the personality and charm of giants like Bakunin and Kropotkin: the sort of people we could win and influence are, by and large, no longer being made). As Marx predicted—even if the wish was father to the thought—

Continued on p. 4

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\*G. D. H. Cole: *Marxism and Anarchism, 1855-1890*, reviewed in FREEDOM, 24 July, 1954.



## LONDON TRANSPORT

THE partial strike of London busmen has done more than just bring the general public's notice (or at least to that section of the public whose sources of information are not obscured by the "Red" bogey) to the unsatisfactory working conditions and wages in the industry. It has surely indicated that the transport services in London are as much a vital public service, as street cleaning, sewage disposal, public libraries, Health Service, water supplies, etc. To attempt to run transport as if it were a grocer's shop or a public house is, even under capitalism, as unrealistic as it has long been realised it would be to charge domestic users of water according to the quantity of water they use, or to attach pedometers to pedestrians and make them pay for street lighting and cleaning on the basis of the number of miles they walk in a year.

Public transport is not only for the benefit of those who use it to reach their places of work, or for their pleasure; it equally benefits the employer, public and private, who, because of the planning chaos of our large cities has to draw his labour power from outlying parts of the city. And without public transport the theatres, large stores, cinemas and restaurants concentrated in the centre of London might as well close their doors (the effect of the partial stoppage has already been felt in reduced takings). Yet in fact what is being attempted all along is to make only the people who actually use public transport pay to maintain a service which ultimately is of direct value to the whole community, from landlords to shop keepers, from business and industrial undertakings to the entertainment industry. Let us add in passing that even property values are enhanced by proximity to transport services, a benefit which the landlord reaps in increased rent but for which he makes no contribution.

THE retention of capitalist form in the case of transport is both an anachronism and an injustice. More than fifty years ago Kropotkin was already pointing to the application of the idea of "to each according to his needs" so far as public services were concerned, and the general trend since has been in this direction. The Health Service is the most recent example. With all its administrative and other disadvantages, it must nevertheless be recognised that the principle is a good one. The medical service is available to everyone irrespective of their means, or the gravity of their complaints. The man who says that he prefers to pay when he needs medical attention forgets one important thing: that he is in fact taking for granted that a medical service is in existence for when he requires it. The fact of paying the doctor's fee is only a minor detail in the whole organisation. Similarly the man who objects to transport being a public service because he travels in his car, will nevertheless travel by bus when his car breaks down, and will arrogantly maintain that by paying his fare he has discharged his responsibility. In fact, of course, he has done nothing of the kind! A public service, by its very definition has to be always available both when the demand is small as when it is large. From the businessman's point of view of profit and loss it cannot be but uneconomical.

WITH the foregoing in mind let us consider what possible solutions there are to the present break-

down in public transport. The problems are quite straightforward. Transport services are seriously understaffed because, say the busmen, wages are lower than in industry and conditions less attractive (shift working, etc.). The solution is not more overtime but more wages so that more men will be attracted to the service. The Transport Commission replies that more wages means higher fares which are already high enough. Thus on the surface there is a conflict of interests between busmen and public, with the Transport Commission sitting back, a model of virtue.

That the Transport Executive and Transport Commission have little to be proud about is shown by the considerable criticism to which they have been subjected during the past week by a large section of the Press. And as an indication of the direction of this criticism we quote from the Editorial comment in last Saturday's *News Chronicle* which pointed out that:

One of the greatest disappointments about transport nationalisation has been the failure to produce any... kind of bold replanning in the interests of the community.

Another disappointment has been the failure to get better relations with the workers. The average bus driver feels almost as remote from the London Transport Commission as he does from some of his own trade union leaders.

But, in the reorganisation which is needed, no one's voice should have more right to be heard. Great as is our respect for all the experts of the L.T.E., we have an obstinate conviction that some of the people who know most about the best way to run a bus service are bus drivers and bus conductors.

Genuine workers' consultation is not a kind of sop to disgruntled employees, but the first step to greater efficiency. And this applies to more things than running buses.

The *Observer* also deals with the problem of status of the workers, which it defines as the endeavours that should be made to "treat workers as responsible partners in an enterprise, and not merely as hired hands". And knowing the kind of resistance to expect to this anarchist common sense the *Observer* points out that:

Some people will dismiss it as idealistic moonshine, but this is not the view either of firms who have tried it or of social psychologists who have studied the discontents of industry at close range. They find that unexpressed grievances about status and working conditions are often the real irritant that leads to wage demands.

If these grievances are remedied, it becomes possible to urge the need for wage-restraint with some hope of carrying conviction. Certainly, this will not in itself always be enough: wage-restraint will be accepted only if it is paralleled by dividend-restraint, and only if genuine cases of pay hardship get proper and prompt attention. But if we neglect questions of status, or if we fail to develop methods of liaison and consultation which will turn the ideal of partnership into a practical reality, the national economy will be under the constant pressure and threat of more wage demands than it can meet.

It was necessary to quote at length from these "respectable" organs of the Press for they indicate that there is a growing public awareness, and one can therefore hope that what may to-day appear as quite revolutionary ideas will be accepted as common sense to-morrow. And in this respect, the unofficial strikes of the busmen and the dockers, serve, we believe, to hasten this process.

Just as to-day no one suggests that to the disadvantages of sickness should be added the injustice of penalising the sick by obliging them to make a greater financial contribution to the medical services, similarly it can be expected that the view will soon prevail which will remove the injustice of making a man who has the disadvantage of living far from his place of work (generally through no fault of his own), also pay the lion's share of the transport service bill. Indeed the suggestion is being put forward to introduce a standard fare on London transport (as has been operated for many years on the Paris

## ISOLATION AND ANARCHISM-2 THE COMMUNITY

THOUGH a certain amount of isolation may take place for any community to be self-sufficient it must have its initial roots in agriculture. It does not mean that the world will not hear about us, or that FREEDOM couldn't be printed from some glen in the Highlands of Scotland rather than from a stuffy old room in the East End of London. Or that the Anarchist doctors could not disseminate their knowledge and medicine to the people who need it in that part of the world. Or that the teachers could not start a progressive school, or that the craftsmen and artists in the anarchist movement could not ply their trade. The community offers an ideal social relationship between man and man, and man and his natural environment. It offers eventually both for the meditative period that everyone feels the need of now and again, and the group for social intercourse a venue for full expression of the needs of the different personalities. The problem of man being just a straw in the wind of circumstance undergoes a change. The objective factors are a direct product of the people on the community to a large degree, whether houses or a school are to be built; and is decided directly by those who are to live in the houses and use the school. The delegation of socially necessary work, a major aspect of capitalist society, to others, mainly those who have no direct relationship to the product, becomes a thing of the past. The mother, too, benefits from the communal structure, as she is unburdened of the constant necessity of looking after the child and seeing to his needs. The child grows up in the "children's community" without definite overseers and the relationship to the parent remains mostly of a wholesome quality devoid of that "stickiness" that the authoritarian family tries to re-

produce. The parents find time under such a system to pursue any interest they may have while the child develops without the restrictive atmosphere of "governing" parents and "governed" child. This alone will lead to a far healthier and stabler personality. The family, where there is no longer any economic motive for union, must undergo a change as well. Each man's status in the community is established by the work he does and as work is collective in nature and individualistic in essence the problem of the "nameless mass", unknown, unsung, and unappreciated, ceases to exist. The health, housing, and food, and general security becomes a collective problem, and as there are no classes or privileges—there being no money or property, becomes a solid manifestation of mutual aid in practice. For the first time one is removed from the constant worry of procuring one's daily needs and on such a basis he contracts his personal relationships on the basis of love, and for as long a period as he remains emotionally attached to his partner. The adolescent acquires new status on the community as his problem is mostly sexual demand in a hostile environment. The socially affirmative atmosphere of the community lays the foundation for a new morality and attitude to life.

In this way the community deals with the basic problems of living—something that orthodox politics seldom mentions.

This then is no "ivory tower" away from life's troubles, but rather an attempt to tackle them at their roots. The community is then no longer interested in merely making mental or verbal observations or criticisms about the stress and strains of modern living and political conduct, but to get about laying the foundations, if not for a complete anarchist society, certainly a seven-league

boot step ahead. There being no money in the internal interactions in the community, and with no hereditary privileges, this type of society represents the first real classless and wageless society in Modern History. There may be differences in personality or achievement, but those cannot be utilized for partisan purposes. The doctor in a decision affecting the community will have as much decisive control as the woman who is currently weeding the carrots.

If attempting to solve these problems in this manner is running away from them—then I am an escapist. But it does appear to me that the act of removing oneself from a pattern of living that is either rational or healthy suggests a far more "revolutionary" approach to the present-day impasse than to martyr oneself on the altar of this or that "ideology".

S.F.

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## Comment on Potatoes

Continued from p. 2

The potato is an especially interesting crop for several reasons. It is the only staple food to enter Europe after the establishment of historical records and it yields a greater food value per acre at less cost than any other plant. Civilisations grow out of the possibility of cultivating wild plants and of producing a surplus over the needs of the growers. Our civilisation and those of the Near East from which our own springs, grew from the cultivation of cereals. The civilisations of the Andes in South America were built upon the potato. A 'fascism imposed on a peasant communism' is how Dr. Salaman describes the Inca empire in his exhaustive book on the potato\*, with its solemn conclusion:

"If for any reason, good or bad, conscious or otherwise, it is in the interests of one economically stronger group to coerce another, then in the absence of political, legal or moral restraint, that task is enormously facilitated when the weaker group can either be persuaded or forced to adopt some simple, cheaply produced food as the mainstay of its subsistence. Experience shows that this course inevitably results in a lower standard of living. The lower the standard, the easier is the task of exploitation and the nearer will the status of the weaker class approximate to serfdom. The potato, being the cheapest and one of the most efficient single foods man has as yet cultivated in the temperate zones lends itself readily to the task of solving labour problems, along certain well-defined lines in a society which for any reason, is already stratified into social classes. Whenever, therefore, the potato wins an important, and still more a dominant position in the dietary of the people, it behoves us to ask ourselves the question: What part is it playing in the economic scheme, and what the risk society is taking in encouraging or suffering a continuance of the same?"

\*Redcliffe N. Salaman: *The History and Social Influence of the Potato*, (Cambridge University Press).

Metro). And a recent High Court case has revealed that in a number of provincial towns a system has been operated whereby old folk were allowed to travel on public transport free of charge.

To our minds there is only one way to ensure the maximum efficiency of public transport in London: The buses and underground trains should be run by the workers themselves in the interests of the community as a whole. These interests can easily be ascertained by periodic consultation with the public at local levels. Abolition of fares, and with it the major part of the bureaucratic machine, ticket punchers, inspectors, ticket counters, cashiers, etc. Then even with paying the busmen a proper wage the cost of running an efficient service will be less than it is now, and will be met out of the rates. To quote the *Observer*, this may sound like "idealistic moonshine" to some. If it does, may we suggest that those people just pause awhile and think of what the situation in public transport will be like in say ten years' time if the present attitude of the Transport authorities continues unchanged!

"The potato can, and generally does, play a twofold part: that of a nutritious food, and that of a weapon ready forged for the exploitation of a weaker group in a mixed society."

AFTER the Spaniards conquered Peru they used the potato to feed their slave labour in the silver mines of Potosi. In 1573 the patients of a Spanish hospital at Seville were being fed on potatoes, which means that the introduction of the plant to Spain must have been before 1570. When first brought to England it was thought to be an aphrodisiac which is why Falstaff cried *Let the sky rain potatoes: let it thunder to the tune of 'Green Sleeves'*. It became a food for the rich and for fattening bullocks, but did not become a commercial crop until the second half of the eighteenth century when it answered the needs of the new working-class created by the industrial revolution, the dispossessed labourers resulting from the enclosures.

In Ireland, with its humid climate, the potato, which can be grown in a fashion in any sort of soil, was accepted with a readiness which was "a measure of its need and of the danger of needing it so much." The cottier system of land tenure and the increasing population, led to an increasing dependence on the potato so that when the crop in 1845 and the following years was ruined by blight, it was a catastrophe on a scale which had not been known in Europe since the Black Death. A popular priest, Father Mathew wrote in a letter:

"On the 27th of last month I passed from Cork to Dublin, and the doomed plant bloomed in all the luxuriance of an abundant harvest. Returning on the 3rd inst. I beheld with sorrow one wide waste of putrefying vegetation. In many places the wretched people were seated

on the fences of their decaying gardens, wringing their hands and wailing bitterly the destruction that had left them foodless."

The Census Commission estimated that, quite apart from those who fled to America or England, a million people lost their lives by the famine and its consequences. The terrible irony of the Irish famine was, in Dr. Salaman's words, that:

"In Ireland there was plenty of corn, but following the usual routine, it was being shipped to England, at the rate of 16,000 quarters weekly. But had it remained in the country, the starving peasantry would not have benefited from it, except the government had intervened, for they had no cash wherewith to purchase it."

Even to-day the Irish are reckoned to consume five hundredweight of potatoes per head a year as against two hundredweight in the United Kingdom.

IN England the long agitation over the Corn Laws was partly a reflection of the Labourers' determination to retain the wheaten loaf as the staple food and to avoid the fate of the Irish and Scottish peasantry. When in 1846 the repeal of the Corn Laws was carried through parliament and cheap foreign corn could be imported, England as someone said, just and only just, kept the potato in its place.

But the repeal of the Corn Laws marked the beginning of another revolution in British economy. Although agriculture continued to expand until the 'high-farming' period in the 'sixties and 'seventies, to feed the growing population, the age of Britain as the Workshop of the World had begun. In payment for the goods and services exported, came the inward flow of food and raw materials until agriculture reached the depressed and stagnant state of the inter-war years. The two world wars, as we are so often told changed us from a creditor to a debtor nation, selling our exports with difficulty and paying competitive prices for our imports. Our agricultural production has greatly increased since 1939, and potato consumption which rose during the war for obvious reasons has remained about 60% higher ever since, our increased dependence on the potato being illustrated by the winter of 1947-8 when, despite the vastly increased acreage the low 1947 crop made rationing necessary at 3 lbs. a head weekly, a figure greater than some estimates of the normal pre-war consumption.

Are we becoming a nation of potato-eaters like the Irish or the Poles? I couldn't pause to consider this question in the potato-fields of Lincolnshire, but it has puzzled me since.

C.W.



It is tough on a writer to get a reputation as a sweetness and light man. Particularly if you happen to be of a cantankerous and somewhat critical temperament.

That's the position I'm in with one set of editors. Because I once wrote a series of light fluffy articles for them, these Simon Legrees assume that it comes natural for me to ooze the milk of human kindness. Whereas the truth is that only certain subjects, written about at certain times, strike that chord in me.

The editors of this anonymous magazine persist in giving me assignments accompanied by injunctions to "Make it humorous. Make it enthralling. Give it that lovable touch. You know what we want."

Yes, I know what they want. The positive approach. Keep it on the benevolent beam.

But to-day I'm rebelling.

Assignments are all very well, for a writer must eat and pay rent and buy shoes for junior, and assignments are practically a guarantee that the story will be paid for. And printed. Getting it printed is as important for me as getting paid for it. More important, if the words have come out nicely, in good rhythm, and I've been able to say what I wanted.

But on these assignments I have to censor myself. I think of a good thought and frame it in good words and write it down and then I read it and realize the editors won't like it. So I "xxx" it out. And put something else down.

-This something else is not exactly what I mean. But it will please the editors

## AMERICAN LETTER

and bring in the cheque. And a writer needs cheques so he can keep on writing.

Eventually however you reach a point of diminishing returns. You write for a cheque so you can keep on writing but if what you are writing doesn't give you pleasure, then you would be better off digging ditches for the cheque. Digging ditches may not give you pleasure either. But at least when you finish you have a ditch and you can say, "Look, see this ditch? I dug it myself."

And if you've written something you didn't mean, it is no pleasure to say, "Look, I wrote this. What do you think of it?"

So to-day I'm rebelling.

I was assigned to write a story about a huge corporation. It was a sacred cow, which means that I mustn't write anything bad about the corporation. It performs a function, a useful function, so I thought there ought to be some good things I could say about it. I agree to get the story and write it.

From the beginning everything went wrong.

I started out by phoning the publicity man, to make an appointment and let him tell me all the good things about his company. He wasn't in.

I asked for his assistant. She was on vacation.

The sales manager? He was in conference.

The production chief? Out of town.

His assistant? Assistants can't talk for publication.

How about the big boss, the general

## SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

manager. He couldn't come to the phone but if I could leave my number his secretary would call me back.

She did call back, finally, and I made an appointment to see the boss early next morning.

The next morning my temperamental old car developed a clogged gas line. By the time I got to the plant, a towering structure in the smog belt of East Los Angeles, I was nearly a hour late.

There were uniformed guards at the entrance and signs saying you needed a pass to ride the elevators. I convinced the guard I had an appointment with the superintendent, was given a pass, and ascended into the stately purlieu of management.

The manager's secretary greeted me with a frosty smile. She was a maiden lady with false teeth, frizzly grey hair and a bilious complexion. She was sorry I had missed my appointment. The manager would be tied up now for the rest of the day.

Could I pick up a copy of the annual report while I was there? She was sorry but the manager would have to give it to me. I pointed out that it was on her desk with my name clipped to it, waiting for me. She flushed and stammered and put it in a drawer.

I rose and walked toward the inner door, remarking that I'd just take a minute of the manager's time to let him know I'd arrived and ask him if I could study the report pending another appointment.

The old girl had a mild attack of

hysterics. She jumped up, scattering papers on the floor. Tremblingly she said she had worked for the manager for twenty years and nobody had ever tried to walk past her like this. I assured her that I didn't want her to lose her job but that since I had made the trip out there it seemed logical that I should at least pick up the annual report, that it would save her the trouble of mailing it to me.

She gave me the booklet. I said thank you. She didn't reply. She acted as if we had been fighting and I had won by violating the rules.

Eschewing the elevators, for I no longer had my pass, I took the stairs down to the next floor and looked around. The place was a beehive. Stern notices telling the employees to do this and to refrain from doing that were posted at frequent intervals.

The workers looked browbeaten. Some were lethargic and resigned, some were nervous and jittery.

I talked with a good-looking girl who told me there were 3,000 employees in the building. She apologized for not having time to talk longer but she was on her way to the restroom and they clocked her.

I asked questions of several men. They referred me to their supervisors. A supervisor said the only one who could give information was the general manager. He offered to phone the manager's secretary for an appointment and I explained that I had missed one appointment already.

## Home Guard Continued from p. 1

teeth like pirates, even though every house was a fortress and every public building a citadel, the subjugation of this country would be a relatively easy matter with the use of a few judiciously placed atom-bombs. In fact not only is a Home Guard out of date, but an army also, except for dealing with spies, saboteurs, and a few odd parachutists, and for rounding up subversives (including anarchists) and popping them into concentration camps. The patriots who talk about defending this country, under present conditions of warfare, are still living mentally in the age of the first Queen Elizabeth.

Quite apart from atomic weapons, however, Britain is too small for modern armies to campaign it. Under modern conditions it would take but a few days for mechanised troops to traverse the country from north to south. Such expressions as "The Battle of Britain" and "The Battle of France" make it abundantly clear that a battle does not take place at one spot, like Hastings, but covers a whole country.

Apart from Wales and Scotland, Britain is an open country, with no forests or mountains in which guerrilla bands can take refuge. There can be no Mau Mau here. There might be a sort of Resistance, as in France, but such a movement could never do more than trivial damage. The Resistance by itself could never have cleared the Germans out of France in any case. It was a protest, but little more.

So we are faced with the situation, shocking to the conventional patriot, of living in an indefensible country. We are in the position that soldiers would be in if they tried to defend a medieval castle. When the enemy had no artillery, and no aircraft, they would be safe, but as soon as heavy guns and bombers were let loose on them, they would find that the broad moat, and strong stone walls, in which they had put their trust, were in fact more of a danger to them than a defence, as they hemmed them in and prevented escape from what had become the centre of a target.

The only alternative would seem to be not to have a war!

Of course the anarchist answer to the problem is to say, very justly, that the present system breeds war, and that under it wars cannot be permanently stopped. But there is also the problem of the defence of the revolution. It is not likely that the whole world will become anarchist at one go. In fact it is more probable that it will take years (perhaps generations?) for it to spread, for an anarchist area cannot invade a non-anarchist one and force anarchism upon its inhabitants, as revolutionary France forced republicanism on the surrounding nations.

The anarchists are likely to be long on the defensive. At the same time they have got to remain anarchist, for, if they throw away their libertarian principles in defence of the revolution, the revolution is in fact lost already.

Now, it is a military axiom that the

best means of defence is attack. Supposing we have an area of Europe which is anarchist, and it proposes to defend itself by force against counter-revolutionary armies. Is it to use the atomic and hydrogen bombs? Whether an anarchist workers' militia could in fact become as efficient as an army trained in authoritarian methods is neither here nor there. If it could not it would suffer defeat, if it could then it would be just as destructive as an authoritarian army, and just as bad. Armies and air forces do not just destroy enemy soldiers, they wreck cities, and lay waste whole countryside; and I challenge any amateur Zapata or Makhno to prove to me that an anarchist army could possibly wage war without being every bit as destructive as an ordinary one.

To "humanise" war is almost an impossible ideal, though rather than face up to the necessity of changing the social system, and getting rid of the scourge that way, it is an ideal that man has frequently pursued. "Gentlemen's wars" however can only be fought as long as both sides are prepared to abide by the rules. This can generally only continue as long as neither side has a lot to lose by defeat. This was the situation in wars waged by feudal knights, who if captured had to go and live with their captor as his guest, until their bailiffs had wrung the necessary ransom out of the serfs on their estates. This would most definitely not apply in a revolutionary war, where the penalty for the counter-revolutionaries for being defeated would be loss of power and position, and for revolutionaries a new enslavement worse

than the old.

Both sides would fight like wild beasts. Besides which an army that fights in a "gentlemanly" fashion is bound to be defeated as long as it sticks to such methods. One reason why the English won most of the battles in The Hundred Years War was that they fought scientifically, whereas the French knights treated the whole thing as a tournament. But when they started to fight scientifically too they soon drove out the English, and brought this particular piratical venture to an end.

On the other hand, in the Boer War, the British began by acting as if they were at the Aldershot Tattoo. Their red coats made conspicuous targets. But their gentlemanliness broke down in the end, and they started rounding up the enemy's women and children, and packing them into concentration camps, where many of them died.\*

Thus ended ignominiously "The Last of The Gentlemen's Wars."

It seems to me therefore that the only way in which a revolution can be defended is by non-violence and passive resistance. That is, an anarchist revolution. The expression I used above, "an anarchist army", is almost a contradiction in terms, and looks ridiculous even in cold print. In reality it would be as extraordinary as "Catholic Anarchism" is now.

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

\*The idea was probably taken from the Spaniards, who had used such camps in their war in Cuba some years before. At one time it was said that half the population of Havana was in a concentration camp.

## Reflections on the First International Continued from p. 2

discontented rank-and-file how to build organisations which might conceivably point the way to a free society.

This last point brings us back to the purely organisational question from which this excursus on the deeper meaning of the conflict between the centralisers and the federalists started. On this point too there is something to be said for the marxists. The International did not die when Marx and Engels persuaded the carefully packed Hague Congress of 1872 to transfer the seat of the General Council to New York. What died—or rather was sentenced to death—was the marxist rump of the old International. Expelled from the Hague Congress, the anarchists adjourned to Zürich and from there went on to the Congress of St. Imier where the decisions taken at the Hague were repudiated and it was decided to refund the International as a free federation of autonomous national federations. At first it was mainly the Italians, the Spaniards and the Jura Swiss who were represented but these groups soon re-established contact with the Belgian and Dutch Sections as well as the relatively unimportant British elements which had quarrelled with Marx. There was every justification, therefore, for regarding this International as the true International and for calling the Geneva Congress of September 1873, the 6th Congress of the I.W.M.A.

Whether this claim can be upheld or not is only of minor importance. What is important is the fact that, just because it could make the claim, it was not, as it is sometimes called, an *anarchist* International. It adopted, indeed the anarchist and federalist conception of organisation: the General Council was abolished and replaced by a federal bureau; but the various national sections did not thereby become converts to anarchism. On the contrary, the division between the statist and the anti-statists reappeared, especially in the debates, initiated

by the Belgian, César de Paepe, on the future organisation of the public services. De Paepe was at this time more than half-way towards the full anarchist position but he and those who followed him still talked of a "workers' State", even if they meant by it something very different from the *Volksstaat* of the marxists.

Presumably, it might be argued, if the federalist conception was sound, these differences, if not welcomed, could be tolerated. And yet the reconstituted International did not long outlive the marxist rump. It held its 9th and last Congress at Verviers in September 1877 and then expired. Thereafter, marxism revived in the shape of the national working class (largely bourgeois-led) parties which were later to form the basis of the Second International.

But it would be a mistake to argue from this that Marx's decision at the Hague to put an end to the International was justified, that the changed conditions in Europe had rendered unnecessary the International in its old form, or that the federalist conception had been weighed and found wanting. The reconstituted International of 1872-77 never possessed the strength and vitality of the early International, not because it abolished the General Council and adopted the federal form of organisation but because it lacked the firm basis of the French Sections. It was these Sections which had formed the hard core of the early International and they had been shot away in the heroic and bloody battle of the Commune. It was in fact the defeat of the Commune, followed as it was by a general reaction throughout Europe, which dealt the real body blow to the First International: the ideological dissensions merely resulted in the *coup de grâce*.

GASTON GERARD.

(To be continued)

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

#### LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS

Every Sunday at 7.30 at THE MALATESTA CLUB 155 High Holborn, W.C.1. (Nearly opposite Holborn Town Hall)

OCT. 24—Albert Grace on DIRECT ACTION IN THE DOCKS

OCT. 31—Philip Sansom on THE ANARCHIST REVOLUTION.

#### OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting HYDE PARK Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

### ANARCHIST YOUTH GROUP

SAT. OCT. 23.—ANARCHIST COMMERCIAL TV.

Commentator: Shirley Rantell. Including: Fashion Show in the year 5,054 A.A.R. (After Anarchist Revolution)

TUES. OCT. 26—Bob Green on RECENT TRENDS IN BEHAVIORIST PSYCHOLOGY.

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#### INDOORS

at 200 Buchanan Street Every Friday at 7 p.m.

#### WORKERS' OPEN FORUM

GLASGOW OCT. 31—Mark Kramisch on CONSCRIPTING THE UNBORN —THIS SHAM CIVILIZATION.

#### DEBATE

'THAT THIS HOUSE DEPLORES THE INFLUX OF COLOURED WORKERS INTO BRITAIN'

Proposer: W. Hollywell (Union Movement)

Opposer: Philip Sansom (Anarchist Movement)

at University House, Victoria Park Square, London, E.2. on Friday, October 29, at 8 p.m.

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