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# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"The people cannot afford to be  
enslaved for the sake of being  
insured."

—BENJAMIN TUCKER

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Threepence

## HOW SOON BEFORE THE H-BOMB IS OBSOLETE?

IN this Atomic cold war nothing is final except death. To-day political discussions are conducted with each side making a mental note of the other's H-bomb stocks as well as his available man power and conventional weapons. Defence is organised on this basis, and Civil Defence plans go ahead more or less remotely connected with what knowledge America imparts from her trial explosions. At some future date the geneticists will be able to predict what monsters will emerge in the post H-bomb era. But we are told that our Government is banking on the fact that their policy of "Peace through Strength" will ensure that we will never have to use the H-bomb. If everyone has the H-bomb no one will dare to use it. That's just what they said of the A-bomb, just as Mr. Churchill, and the advocates of a powerful Air Force before the last war, put forward the theory that if everyone had vast bombing squadrons then they could mutually destroy one another, and for that reason no one could use the bombing plane. Tracing this argument backwards we reach the bow and arrow stage if not the peashooter.

It has proved a fallacious argument in the past. Why then should it be applied to the H-Bomb? The answer is because the H-bomb is so powerful that it can do damage which thousands of loaded bombing planes could not do. Because its effects are so disastrous no country would dare to use it. In the first place this is not true since America is prepared to use it in the event of aggression by Russia who, assuming it to be true that she has an overwhelming superiority of conventional weapons, could invade Western Europe without dropping a single H-bomb. But that is simply mentioned in passing, having only academic interest.

The real reason why the H-bomb may never be used is because by the time the next war breaks out it will have already become obsolete, and

America will already have disposed of her stocks, under some Lend-Lease agreement, to a third rate South American republic. And this is the lunacy of the *Peace through Strength* policy; that no one is ever "strong" enough, for science is always discovering new phenomena and developing new techniques. Let Dr. Teller, the atomic scientist who is credited(?) with "sparking the idea that opened the way to the hydrogen bomb" explain what are the prospects.

In a long article in the American official scientific journal *Science* he points out that the next major steps beyond the multi-megaton hydrogen bomb are not likely to be "just bigger bombs again".

"The world is full of surprises," he writes, "and great developments rarely go along straight lines." He did not know just where the next steps will lead, he said. However, in an article he wrote several years ago in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, he discussed the possibility of releasing radioactive clouds at a distance off our Pacific Coast that would enable an enemy to "make life hard or even impossible for us without delivering a single bomb into our territory."

One of the possible "surprises," not mentioned by Dr. Teller, is what is

known as the "cobalt bomb," a large hydrogen bomb encased in a shell of cobalt.

Such a bomb, when exploded at a distance, would transform the shell into a gigantic cloud of radioactive cobalt, equivalent to about five million pounds of radium. The cobalt cloud could be carried by the prevailing winds over areas of thousands of square miles, destroying all life, plant and animal, in its path.

"The very size of our progress," Dr. Teller writes, "has opened up other dangers. We may be led to think that this accomplishment is something ultimate. I do not believe that this is so."

"Where the next steps will lead I do not know. It is not likely that it will be just bigger bombs again."

So as not to allow ourselves to be "surprised" by our potential enemies, Dr. Teller suggests that "the skills and the knowledge that developed the A-bomb and the H-bomb can undoubtedly be turned to new directions," emphasizing that "we shall fail if we rest upon our accomplishments."

Some might say that atomic scientists in all countries have "accomplished" quite enough, and that the peace and sanity of the world might be saved if they were put to work on the land and their workshops of death were blown sky-high by the smallest of atom-bombs in stock.

## No Overtime Settlement in Docks —Employers Provoke Action

THE advocates of negotiation, collaboration and procrastination must be feeling somewhat deflated at the latest announcements about the discussions between the unions and employers in the docks on the issue of overtime.

The tremendous strike of last autumn, in which the whole of the Port of London was brought to a standstill and thousands of dockers in Southampton, Merseyside, Hull and other ports also joined in, was brought to an end by the employers agreeing to end the practice of reporting dockers who declined to do overtime and to open discussions on the issue at stake: that overtime should be voluntary.

Thirty-five thousand dockers struck for a month to establish that principle; they went back convinced they had won, for that is what their leaders told them.

Now comes the news that after four months of negotiation the unions and the employers cannot come to an agreement, and the employers are reverting once more to their practice of reporting to the Dock Labour Board all dockers who refuse to do what, in the Board's view, is 'reasonable' overtime.

This provoking action is likely to have precisely the same result as before. In our opinion, the dockers' reply should be solid and immediate—there should be a nation-wide stoppage of all port-workers. And we mean all, not only dockers but stevedores, watermen, warehousemen—everybody connected with port work. And this should be backed

up by a steady withdrawal of all subsidiary labour from any contract with the ports—electricians, road and rail transport workers, and so forth.

The high-handed action by the employers, directly talks break down, can only mean that the blame should be put fairly and squarely on their heads.

The whole sorry story also shows the futility of these protracted negotiations. The port-workers got nearer to winning the principle of voluntary overtime by their direct action last autumn than at the negotiations going on since. Let them go in next time and settle the matter once and for all.

## THE VOTE

IT is a myth perpetuated by democrats of all persuasions that the ballot, though imperfect, is the only way by which the people can express themselves.

Here's what the liberal *News Chronicle* had to say about it the other day:

"The British people have one—and only one—direct way of shaping the democratic government of the country. That is the vote.

"But the form of Parliament rarely bears more than a rudimentary resemblance to the wishes of the electorate. Only two Governments since 1910 have been backed by more than half the voters."

The *Chronicle* goes on to urge the appointment of a Royal Commission on voting methods. What it will not do is to question the whole basis of majority rule nor, it goes without saying, the idea of government.

The passage quoted above is carefully worded. It talks of 'shaping the government' and that is in fact an accurate description of what can be achieved by the vote. We can 'shape' a government, but we cannot abolish it, by the vote. We can choose the individuals of which it will consist, but we cannot influence its policies, by the vote, once they are in power. We can choose our masters but we cannot control them, by the vote.

What even the *Chronicle* does not say, however, is that the people can express their own desires by the vote. That, we maintain, can only be done through each individual taking responsibility himself for the achievement of his aims. And truly free people do not hand over that responsibility to representatives, no matter how constitutionally and democratically the handover is arranged.

## Churchill - The B.B.C. & Democracy

FEW democratic citizens of this country were aware until a fortnight ago that an agreement had been made in 1948 between the B.B.C. and the political parties to the effect

(a) that the B.B.C. will not have discussions on *ex parte* statements on any issues for a period of a fortnight before they are debated in either House;

(b) that while matters are subjects of legislation M.P.s will not be used in such discussions.

But few of them have ever been so naive as to look upon the B.B.C. as an independent body, and those who did must have been dealt a bit-

ter blow by the banning of the Television discussion on Britain's decision to make the H-Bomb, and by Churchill's reply in the Commons when it was suggested to him that the 1948 agreement should be dropped and the advisability of discussing certain topics left to the "discretion" of the B.B.C.

Answering one questioner, Sir Winston said:

So far as I am concerned, I will never reconsider it. I believe it would be a shocking thing to have debates in this House forestalled time after time by the expressions of opinion of persons who have not the status and responsibilities of members.

Mr. E. Shinwell (Lab. Easington): Does not the Prime Minister recognise that debates in this House are frequently forestalled by discussion in the press? Is there much to be lost by having similar discussions on the radio or television? Surely—while discretion must obviously be exercised in debates and discussions of this kind on the radio where industrial disputes are involved, where merely political issues are involved there can be no objection?

Sir Winston: On the contrary, I always attach great importance to Parliament and the House of Commons.

I am sure that the bringing on of exciting debates in this vast new robot organisation of television and B.B.C. broadcasts timed to take place before debates in this House may have a very deleterious effect on our general interest. Members should consider the interests of the House to which we all owe a lot.

Mr. Shinwell: Does not what the Prime Minister has said mean that the B.B.C. is not an independent authority, but is subject to the will of the Government?

Sir Winston: No, sir. It is not a question of the will of the Government, but an arrangement which was reached after a good deal of thought between the leaders of both parties and people in them. It is easy to turn against this arrangement on any particular case, but I think the House would be well advised to stay where they are before they yield up a great deal of the significance and dignity of the House.

Mr. P. C. Gordon-Walker (Lab. Smethwick): Won't he take steps to

apply this principle to commercial television as well when it starts?

Sir Winston: I certainly think it should be the same all round.

If, as Churchill says it is not "the will of the Government" but an "arrangement" then presumably the B.B.C. is at liberty to break it. But such does not appear in fact to be the position, and Sir Winston's dogmatic "I will never reconsider it" sounds to us very much like the boss talking, and certainly not one who is only a party to a gentleman's agreement!

★

ONE could sympathise with Sir Winston's outburst at this "vast new robot organisation of television and B.B.C. broadcasts" if he had shunned its use himself for personal and party advantage. But he, no less than many second-rate comedians and parlour-game stars, owes much of his fame as a national figure to his frequent appearances before the B.B.C.'s microphones, and he should therefore be the last person to speak deprecatingly of this medium of entertainment, enlightenment or propaganda!

It is, we suspect, just because the Prime Minister is aware of the power of Radio-Television to influence (or to *form*) public opinion, that he is so jealously guarding what he considers are the prerogatives of the House of Commons. But in so doing he is also declaring that "democracy" is a sham; that opinions are a monopoly of those members who have "status and responsibilities", and that they cannot be "forestalled" in their debates by the layman. How ridiculous this all is, when one considers that these debates are simply facades to create the impression of earnest discussion when in fact the government has already made up its mind, and the opposition, at its private meetings, has already issued its instructions to its members as to the party line. If "uninformed" opinion "forestalls" debate in the House, then how much

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## S. WALES MINERS & FORMOSA

THE miners of South Wales have resorted to direct action many times in the past, with various aims and various measures of success.

It is many years, however, since any threat of direct action has been made on such an important issue as that at Cardiff last week, when a conference of 200 delegates from the South Wales coalfields threatened to strike if Britain backs America in a war over Formosa.

The conference passed a resolution warning the Government that "in the event of any development to war in defence of Chiang Kai-shek, serious dislocation would result in this area of the mining industry".

Now this seems to us to be an expression of an attitude which should be taken up by workers—not only miners—throughout the country and, indeed, throughout the world. As long as 'opposition to war' is limited to pious appeals to the 'good will' of the rulers of the world and the only resultant action is the signing of petitions, governments will sit back and laugh, going ahead with their war plans irrespective of what their subjects think.

If, on the other hand, governments knew that an attempt to go to war would land them straight in a revolutionary situation, they would very soon find alternative methods of solving their international differences. We should like to see the people of this country so aware of what a war would mean to them that, in Alex Comfort's words, the very talk

of war would 'empty the factories and fill the streets.'

We do not know who did the organising and took the initiative for this South Wales conference, so we are not able to denounce it as a Communist stunt. We can only hope that the Communists were not the prime movers although clearly they would muscle in on it if possible whoever started it. The miners of South Wales, however, are not such political innocents as the Commies would like them to be, and there are probably many thousands who would support an anti-war stand while at the same time knowing full well that the C.P.'s 'Peace' line is in no way a reflection of their concern for the welfare of the workers of this country, but merely an expression of their loyalty to another government.

All parties, however, including the Communist Party, are concerned that the workers should not realise their strength. For all parties will be equally redundant when the workers discover the means to express themselves directly without the middle-men and misleaders.

In the meantime, let the lead given by the South Wales miners' delegates be taken up. Instead of asking the Government to please not land us in a war if it can possibly help it, it should be made perfectly clear that the first reaction by the workers of this country to a war situation will be to down tools. Our diplomats will very soon start earning their keep then.

## Transport Commission Ban Another Poster

THE banning of the *Tribune* posters advertising a mass meeting under the title *Arm Germany?*, by the London Transport, reminds us of our own experience with them a few years ago when we tried to get space for posters in the underground advertising a protest meeting against the trials and shootings in Spain of Anarchists and trade unionists. All arrangements were made; the cheque was written out; the posters were printed and some actually delivered when we were told that because of the political nature of the meeting the London Transport would be unable to put them up. Obviously the word political has a special interpretation for them, because at that time several underground stations had given space to the Liberal Party to advertise a political meeting.

## Morals with Religion ?

The Archbishop of Canterbury yesterday told how he met the prisoners' choir in Maidstone Jail.

"I was prompted to ask 'How many of you were once choirboys?'" said Dr. Fisher. "Believe it or not, practically the whole lot of them had been."

"I can't point any moral for that," he added. He was addressing Kent County Association of Teachers at Canterbury.

Sunday Express, 27/2/55.



## CHURCHILL-The B.B.C. and DEMOCRACY

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more pernicious to free debate are the party Whips who have reduced the House to a bunch of "yes" and "no" men whose principal function is to be available in the lobbies when the time comes to go through with the formality of voting! Not that parliamentary democracy has ever been other than a sham; now it is also a tragic farce.



IF the popular press moulds public opinion, how much greater are the powers of Radio and Television to destroy independent thinking, either through the build-up of personalities, or by reducing ideas simply to a choice between viewpoints which differ sometimes on matters of detail but never on fundamentals. This, with very few exceptions is the pattern of all the quiz, forum, or panel programmes put out. And the added danger is that more and more of the people's leisure hours will be taken up with listening and viewing at the expense of reading and discussion which are the only channels available to progressive movements to express their views and develop their thought. We are no Radio, Television or Press Luddites. But we are passionately opposed to all Monopolies whether they be of motor car tyres and electric lamps or ideas and facts.

How to break down this monopoly is not simply a matter of converting the Press to a higher concept of its rôle in society. We cannot ignore the fact that to-day the newspapers which are the most objective in their presentation of the news, and intelligent in their expression of opinion, have the smallest circulations; only the most scurrilous of the fraternity enjoy circulations that run into millions. The need to-day therefore is as much for objective readers as for objective newspapers. This was the theme developed by a speaker in New York recently in a series of lectures organised by one of the most objective of newspapers *The New York Times*

Theodore M. Bernstein, assistant managing editor of *The New York Times*, acknowledged that the posture of objectivity was difficult to maintain in the face of heated pressures. Readers demand objectivity, he said, until their own oxen happen to be gored. But he held that "neutral" readers as well as "neutral" newspapers were needed if the democratic system was to work.

How to break through this vicious circle is a problem of the first importance not only for anarchists but for all progressively-minded people in every sphere of human activity. And at no time was it greater than to-day with the development of new media of communication such as Television which, like the Radio and the Press, could be a powerful instrument for enriching people's lives and knowledge, but which, like them, is fast becoming a weapon for converting man into a grotesque creature who sees but has no fantasy, who hears but does not understand, and who is mute.

A gross exaggeration? Well, perhaps not mute. But join your fellows at the local pub, or at a "middle-class" party or some such gathering, and eavesdrop their talk. It would only need someone to produce a Whitaker's Almanach and a Bradshaw Timetable to make all further "conversation" redundant!

The real menace to mankind is not the H-Bomb but man's stupidity, a view shared by Sir Winston, if one reads him between the lines. But whereas he and his kind thrive on it . . . we despair, and shout in the hope that some may hear and heed our warnings.

## American View of Comics

### SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT, by Fredric Wertham, M.D. (Museum Press, 21s.).

DR. WERTHAM is an American psychiatrist who has been campaigning for many years for the banning of what he calls 'comic books' and what in this country are known as 'horror comics'. This book (which runs to nearly 400 pages) is a rambling, ill-arranged collection of partial case-histories, descriptions of comics and of their evil effects on children.

Much printers' ink has been used and many indignant speeches made in this country in the cause of censoring these comics—and the most highly charged epithets used to describe them. A typical specimen occurs in *Hansard* for Nov. 30, 'We must . . . do something to protect our youngsters from the diabolical influence of these comics'. It is as well, however, to be aware of what these comics do contain. From examples quoted by Dr. Wertham and from other sources it is clear that they depict more than just that violence which is to be found, for example, in the British *Hotspur* or *Rover* or any of the magazines dealing in the clean-limbed-hero-against-fearful-odds type of story which are usually considered suitable for children. Sadistic and masochistic scenes are common, the emphasis is on exploits where somebody takes advantage of somebody else, violently, sexually, or threateningly—the theme of hate is present in almost every story. To give but one instance (quoted in this book)—the hero throws bombs and a Negro from his airplane. A picture shows the bombs and the Negro in mid-air while the hero calls out: "Bombs and bums away!"

The evidence which Dr. Wertham puts forward to support his contention that these comics encourage delinquent behaviour in children is impressive—and would be more so if it were not presented in such a scrappy fashion. His re-

*"Every one is by nature constituted to be his or her own government, his own law, his own church—each individual is a system within himself; and the great problem must be solved with the broadest admission of the right of individuality which forbids any attempt to govern each other, and confines all our legislation to the adjustment and regulation of our intercourse or commerce with each other."*

—JOSIAH WARREN.

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April he returned to Barcelona on leave. There, he and his wife (who was John McNair's secretary at the I.L.P.'s office in Barcelona) witnessed the events known as the "May Days" which marked the virtual end of the revolution and the turning-point of the war. In defining the standpoint of the various factions Orwell puts the anarchist position thus:

In any case the loose term 'Anarchists' is used to cover a multitude of people of very varying opinions. The huge block of unions making up the C.N.T. (*Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores*), with round about two million members in all, had for its political organ the F.A.I. (*Federacion Anarquista Iberica*), an actual Anarchist organization. But even the members of the F.A.I., though always tinged, as perhaps most Spaniards are, with the Anarchist philosophy, were not necessarily Anarchists in the purest sense. Especially since the beginning of the war they had moved more in the direction of ordinary Socialism, because circumstances had forced them to take part in centralized administration and even to break all their principles by entering the Government. Nevertheless they differed fundamentally from the Communists in so much that, like the P.O.U.M., they aimed at workers' control and not a parliamentary democracy. They accepted the P.O.U.M. slogan: 'The war and the revolution are inseparable' though they were less dogmatic about it. Roughly speaking, the C.N.T.-F.A.I. stood for: (1) Direct control over industry by the workers engaged in each industry, e.g. transport, the textiles factories, etc.; (2) Government by local committees and resistance to all forms of centralized authoritarianism; (3) Uncompromising hostility to the bourgeoisie and the Church. The last point, though the least precise, was the most important. The Anarchists were the opposite of the majority of so-

marks on the significance of juvenile delinquency are very much to the point:

"There is an enormous literature on juvenile delinquency. One might think that society hopes to exorcise it by the magic of printers' ink. It would seem that the real scientific problem is conveniently overlooked. Juvenile delinquency does not just happen, for this or that reason. It is continuously recreated by adults. So the question should be, Why do we continuously recreate it? Even more than crime, juvenile delinquency reflects the social values current in a society. Both adults and children absorb these social values in their daily lives . . . Juvenile delinquency holds a mirror up to society and society does not like the picture there.

So it goes in for all kinds of recrimination directed at the children, including such facile, high-sounding name-calling as "hysteroid personality", "hystero-compulsive personality", and "schizophrenic tendencies".

In spite of these remarks, however, Dr. Wertham dismisses in one sentence what is the central problem of horror comics when he says 'the question should not be so much why children get the habit as how are so many of them able to protect their integrity against them'. But why they are so popular with children is the question. Some 80 millions of these comics are produced each month in the U.S.A. and most of them pass through several hands, being sold and re-sold. According to one survey, quoted by Dr. Wertham, of children in grades 4 to 6 it was found that the average child read 14.5 comics a week.

How can these high figures be explained? Unless one believes that children are by nature evil it cannot be maintained that they have a natural appetite for such fare. As Dr. Wertham says in the passage quoted above children absorb the social values current in their environment. Would so many comics be sold if newspapers did not give sensational reports of every sordid crime? if Hollywood did not produce films glorifying violence and war? if the atmosphere of war-preparation was replaced by a peaceful one? if the exploitation of sexual emotions for commercial profit ceased? If, in fact, the positive and constructive factors of society were dominant and not the negative and destructive ones. Horror comics would have few readers in a healthy society—they are a sign of a sick one.

M.G.W.

## AN ANARCHIST'S NOTEBOOK

### Problems of Old People

#### Worker Priests Revised

WE have heard nothing of the worker priest movement since it was disbanded last year in France, because of the corrupting secular influences on the worker priests which resulted in many of them being absorbed into the working class struggle to the exclusion of their priestly duties. The Lenten pastoral letter of Cardinal Feltin, Archbishop of Paris, however, contains references to a new revised form of the 'mission to the industrial worker'. The Cardinal writes that the workers are hostile to the Church, but the Church is capable of acting among the men of the 20th century as a witness for Christ, and the rôle of the priests will be to implant the Catholic Church once more among the proletariat from which it is almost totally absent. They must not, however, accept all the attitudes and reactions of the workers, even if these tend under pressure of surrounding atmosphere to coincide spontaneously with their own reactions.

It is unlikely that the workers of France who had contact with the old worker priest movement will have forgotten the rumpus raised by the Church when the priests took their working class support too far; even the French clergy were more than critical of the Vatican reaction. In view of this and the limitations in the form of safeguards placed on the worker priests, it is unlikely that, from the point of view of the Church, the new mission will be very successful.

#### Coloured Workers

THE *Manchester Guardian's* special correspondent (26/2/55), writing on the

public reaction to the West Bromwich bus men on strike over the employment of an Indian trainee conductor, says that it is one of outright condemnation. He claims that a great deal of the hostile reaction is due to the high opinion which "has been earned by the coloured workers who have been in the town for the last five years". It is also true, however, that the public reaction to a strike is often one of annoyance because of inconvenience felt rather than sympathy, or not, with the issues involved. We hope however that wisdom and decency have inspired the West Bromwich people on this occasion.

An article in the journal of the Post Office Workers' Union, *The Post*, directed at trade unionists indicates an intelligent approach to coloured labour which many trade unions would do well to emulate. The writer comments that trade unionists must be "prepared to undergo a long course of mental and emotional therapy. Either that or declare to the world that all men are not brothers under the skin". Quoting from a memorandum on West Indian Immigration which had been prepared and forwarded to the T.U.C. by the Ministry of Labour Staff Association, which concludes that "while there was no specific evidence available about the attitude of trade unionists to coloured workers, it appeared that often, either by formal or tacit local agreement with employers, coloured workers were rejected", the writer points out that these rejects are full citizens of the British Empire.

## ORWELL & ANARCHISM

called revolutionaries in so much that though their principles were rather vague their hatred of privilege and injustice was perfectly genuine. Philosophically, Communism and Anarchism are poles apart. Practically—i.e. in the form of society aimed at—the difference is mainly one of emphasis, but it is quite irreconcilable. The Communist's emphasis is always on centralism and efficiency, the Anarchist's on liberty and equality. Anarchism is deeply rooted in Spain and is likely to outlive Communism when the Russian influence is withdrawn. During the first two months of the war it was the Anarchists more than anyone else who had saved the situation, and much later than this the Anarchist militia, in spite of their indiscipline, were notoriously the best fighters among the purely Spanish forces. From about February 1937 onwards the Anarchists and the P.O.U.M. could to some extent be lumped together. If the Anarchists, the P.O.U.M. and the Left wing of the Socialists had had the sense to combine at the start and press a realistic policy, the history of the war might have been different. But in the early period, when the revolutionary parties seemed to have the game in their hands, this was impossible. Between the Anarchists and the Socialists there were ancient jealousies, the P.O.U.M., as Marxists, were sceptical of Anarchism, while from the pure Anarchist standpoint the 'Trotskyism' of the P.O.U.M. was not much preferable to the 'Stalinism' of the Communists. Nevertheless the Communist tactics tended to drive the two parties together. When the P.O.U.M. joined in the disastrous fighting in Barcelona in May, it was mainly from an instinct to stand by the C.N.T., and later, when the P.O.U.M. was suppressed, the Anarchists were the only people with dared to raise a voice in its defence.<sup>5</sup>



ORWELL devotes a large part of his book to the 'May Days' and

the counter-revolution. *Homage to Catalonia* and Vernon Richards' *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* are the only works in print in the English language which interpret these events in any detail. The theme of Richards' book, the whitening away of the popular revolution by the leaders of the revolutionary factions in the alleged interests of the struggle against Franco, is illustrated by many of Orwell's observations. Of the "May Days" he writes, "On the Anarchist side the action was almost certainly spontaneous, for it was an affair mainly of the rank and file. The people came into the streets and their political leaders followed reluctantly, or did not follow at all". And of the counter-revolution as a whole:

There was no general and obvious counter-revolutionary move, and until May 1937, it was scarcely necessary to use force. The workers could always be brought to heel by an argument that is almost too obvious to need stating: 'Unless you do this, that and the other we shall lose the war.' In every case, needless to say, it appeared that the thing demanded by military necessity was the surrender of something that the workers had won for themselves in 1936. But the argument could hardly fail, because to lose the war was the last thing that the revolutionary parties wanted; if the war was lost democracy and revolution, Socialism and Anarchism, became meaningless words. The Anarchists, the only revolutionary party that was big enough to matter, were obliged to give way on point after point. The process of collectivization was checked, the local committees were got rid of, the workers' patrols were abolished and the pre-war police forces, largely reinforced and very heavily armed, were restored, and various key industries which had been under the

control of the trade unions were taken over by the Government (the seizure of the Barcelona Telephone Exchange, which led to the May fighting, was one incident in this process); finally, most important of all, the workers' militias, based on the trade unions, were gradually broken up and redistributed among the new Popular Army, a 'non-political' army on semi-bourgeois lines, with a differential pay rate, a privileged officer-caste, etc., etc. In the special circumstances this was the really decisive step; it happened later in Catalonia than elsewhere because it was there that the revolutionary parties were strongest.<sup>6</sup>

For Orwell, "the issue was clear enough. On one side the C.N.T., on the other side the police. I have no particular love for the idealized 'worker' as he appears in the bourgeois Communist's mind, but when I see an actual flesh-and-blood worker in conflict with his natural enemy, the policeman, I do not have to ask myself which side I am on." He had decided to leave the P.O.U.M. and to go to another front when his leave was over. "As far as my purely personal preferences went I would have liked to join the Anarchists", but events sent him back to Huesca where he was wounded. He was sent to hospital at Lerida and from there to Barcelona. The P.O.U.M. had been suppressed. His friends were arrested, his wife's room was searched, and after futile attempts to secure the release of Georges Kopp, they slipped out of Spain, one step ahead of the police.

SOURCES:

- 1 *Tribune* 15/9/1944.
- 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 *Homage to Catalonia* (1938).



In next week's issue we will outline Orwell's conclusions on the Spanish War and his attitude to the second World War.

