

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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

—BENJAMIN TUCKER

THE DEFENCE DEBATE—OR ALICE IN WESTMINSTER

VESTED INTERESTS & THE BOMB

MUCH of the 252 columns of Hansard taken up by last week's debate in the House of Commons reads like some surrealistic fantasy by Lewis Carroll, with the difference that the Debate was fantastic reality. That the people of this country place confidence (and their lives) in the hands of the government and their "representatives" can only be explained by the fact that very rarely do they undertake to read the full report of a debate, contenting themselves with the high-spots selected for them by the daily Press, more often than not coloured by the particular newspaper's opinions and personal dislikes. The real issues in the debate, concerning the military policy of this country has been completely swamped by the "Bevan-Attlee struggle". Yet in fact Mr. Bevan's contribution occupies only nine columns of Hansard out of 252, and what is more his speech occurred late in the debate when other Labour Party speakers had already asked questions similar to the ones he was to ask. But the Press' spotlight was directed on Mr. Bevan for reasons which are not difficult to seek.

The debate was, as are all such debates, notable for the accusations and counter-accusations hurled at Ministers by ex-Ministers and vice versa, each attempting to justify his actions when in office, blaming his successor or predecessor depending whether he was out of office or in. Even when they discuss the Hydrogen Bomb these petty men seem more concerned with personal vanity than the issues at stake; of scoring

party points than of establishing the real facts.

But, as we are always trying to stress in commenting on such debates, they carry little weight, for the decisions have already been made before the debates take place. As Sir Winston pointed out at the beginning of his speech

What is the present position? Only three countries possess, in varying degrees, the knowledge and the power to make nuclear weapons. Of these, the United States is overwhelmingly the chief. Owing to the breakdown in the exchange of information between us and the United States since 1946 we have had to start again independently on our own. Fortunately, executive action was taken by Mr. Attlee to reduce as far as possible the delay in our nuclear development and production. By his initiative we have made our own atomic bombs.

Confronted with the hydrogen bomb, I have tried to live up to Mr. Attlee's standard. We have started to make that one too. It is this grave decision which forms the core of the Defence Paper which we are discussing this afternoon. (Our italics).

In fact, faced with the fait accompli there was little argument on the question of the merits of producing the bomb. Sir Winston himself seemed to be of the opinion that it was not only a "deterrent" so far as Russia was concerned but would help in Britain's dealings with the United States (a view we put forward two weeks ago in FREEDOM):

"Personally I cannot feel that we should have much influence over their [The United States] policy or actions, wise or unwise, while we are largely dependent upon their protection. We too must possess substantial deterrent power of our own."

WHERE there were marked differences of opinion was on the

rôle to be assigned to the conventional weapons of warfare and to the Army, Navy and Air Force in this era of nuclear strategy. Some Members echoed the views of Captain Liddell Hart that all the existing ideas on the Services and weapons were obsolete. But as he pointed out in a *News Chronicle* article (1/3/54):

The new situation will not be easily accepted. Vested interests are sure to oppose any replanning and re-distribution that follows out the logical conclusion. The reluctance of these interests will be reinforced by a cautious reluctance to abandon any familiar form of defence—even though these provide no real safety.

I can well understand such hesitation to accept the logic of the atomic era. After devoting 40 years to the study of warfare, it is not easy to face up to the fact that this accumulated knowledge has become useless.

The Labour ex-War Minister, Mr. Strachey, said much the same thing:

I was arguing that the rôle of the Services had been altered. The White Paper says that it has not been. If hon. Members opposite really think that the invention of the hydrogen bomb has made no radical change in the rôle of the Services, I find it very difficult to believe that I can open their minds to reason at all.

What does that preposterous sentence really mean? It means that the great military interests are still writing White Papers and Defence Estimates—and they are vested military interests. I do not want to attack them; in many ways they are perfectly legitimate and natural interests.

But he went on to deplore the fact that apparently not even the hydrogen bomb could "shift the dead weight of military tradition" even though as another member re-

Continued on p. 3

AN ANARCHIST'S NOTEBOOK

THE SCHOOLMASTERS' PROTEST

THE National Association of School Masters has announced that it was very "concerned to learn that the Burnham Committee has decided to recommend the adoption of equal pay in the teaching profession". The president of the London Schoolmasters' Association declared that "over two thousand London schoolmasters are bitterly angry at the proposal. We are no party to it and our representatives were excluded from the negotiations". Why, one wonders, should they have been invited? After all, their salaries are not being affected; it is not being suggested that their pay should be dropped to the present level of women teachers' salaries. And since they have formed themselves into an exclusively male organisation what business have they to take part in negotiations affecting women teachers? The answer is not far to seek. In their view "equal pay would lead to the decline of the man in the teaching profession where the number of male recruits is already too low to replace wastage". Thus by raising the salaries of women teachers they fear competition and the unlikelihood of being able to support claims for increased salaries in order to attract more male "recruits" to the profession. By all means press for increased salaries but not at the expense of another section of the teaching profession, but rather in unity with them. One cannot classify the worth of teachers according to sex. There are only two kinds of teachers: good ones and bad ones.

was the youngest of "a happy family of five children and had found army life unsettling".

Anyone other than a military court would have realised how desperate the youth must have been to have done what he did. But their minds do not work along these lines. For them, to show understanding in such a case might give an excuse to every youth called up to put their feet under the wheels of a train. And therefore an "example" must be made of those whose desperation drives them to such extremes. The Army authorities have now taken upon themselves the responsibility of breaking down this youth in a detention camp. But have we, the public, no responsibility if in the course of his detention this youth is driven into taking even more drastic measures to escape from military service?

THE U.S. POSTMASTER GENERAL IS AN ASS!

WASHINGTON, March 5.

A Californian bookseller, Mr. Harry Levinson, is seeking to prevent the United States Postmaster-General, Mr. Arthur Summerfield, from destroying, on the grounds of indecency, a rare volume of *Lysistrata*, by Aristophanes.

Lysistrata tells in comic form how the women of ancient Athens and Sparta tired of the war which their menfolk had been waging, banded together and agreed not to live with their husbands until a peace treaty was signed.

The copy of the play was ordered from a London shop, and seized last August by the Los Angeles Post Office, under a law of 1873 which gives the United States Postmaster-General or his agents the right to censor literature or paintings sent through the post. Books banned under the law in the past include: *The Arabian Nights*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

Mr. Levinson has brought a court suit, charging that the law is unconstitutional since it acts as an impediment to free speech. In a letter to Mr. Levinson, the Postmaster-General has said that the play contains "numerous passages which are plainly obscene, lewd and lascivious in character . . ."—B.U.P.

The Postmaster-General has also given instructions that the postal authorities must do all in their power to prevent delivery of copies of *Pravda* and *Izvestia* to persons in the United States "not authorised to receive them". In a letter of protest to the *New York Times*, Mr. George Kennan, former head of the Policy Planning Staff in the State Department asks:

"Are there really people in our Government who believe that our own political philosophy is so unconvincing, our attachment to it so weak, our youth so bewildered and gullible—and the outlook of our adversaries on the other hand so

Continued on p. 4

African Miners End Strike

THE thirty thousand African strikers in the copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia have gone back to work on the same pay as before. The strike has been, in terms of immediate gain, a failure. But from a longer view, the experience gained by the strikers, and the degree of organising ability and level-headedness they showed, will be to their advantage.

This was the longest and biggest strike ever staged by an African organisation, and it showed what they could do. And had it not been for the blacklegging operations of the European miners, together with about 10,000 African volunteers, the result might have been very different.

The white miners looked upon the struggle as a great opportunity for the companies to break the African's union, which the whites see as a threat to their own positions. They are apparently incensed at the surprisingly moderate attitude the companies have shown in taking back the Africans on the same terms when, the white unionists maintain, the strike would have collapsed in another ten days and the companies could have got what terms they liked.

The white miners seem to be a little naive in this matter. Clearly the companies are employers first and white men second (a sensible attitude from their point of view) and are quite happy to play off African and white workers against each other to their own advantage.

Some of the European workers have seen what their position, as trade unionists, should have been. It is time for all of them to see it, and to adopt the same attitude as their employers. They should regard themselves as workers first and white men second.

There should be one organisation for miners in the copperbelt—irrespective of colour. Black and white should work together in their common interest, and not allow themselves to be divided by superficial differences in the bosses' interests.

Legal (and Illegal) Eavesdropping

THAT singularly unpleasant method of obtaining information—the tapping of telephone conversations—is used by the police both in this country and in the U.S.A. Although it has not specific legal sanction here, a recent Home Secretary claimed that authorising "listening-in" was part of his prerogative and admitted that it had been used frequently in the past. Evidence so obtained is not admissible in a court of law—as is also the case in the Federal and higher courts of the U.S.A. where both the police and the F.B.I. can tap wires. State courts will admit such evidence. Needless to say, information so obtained has many uses outside of a law court.

A recent case in New York, where a police raid uncovered electronic wire-tapping equipment which was capable of intercepting conversations on six telephone exchanges, has occasioned the setting up of an investigation committee on illegal wire tapping. It seems that as the law now stands wire tapping is only a crime if it involves the old-fashioned method of cutting into a telephone wire; whereas modern devices make it possible from a distance of several hundred yards without involving any cutting.

The news of the original raid was not made public until a week after it happened—and then only because the information leaked to an unofficial body, the New York Anti-Crime Committee, who submitted a memorandum on wire tapping to leading New York politicians which mentioned the case. It seemed that someone was anxious to keep things quiet.

The investigating committee, according to some reports, is likely to rake up as much dirt as the famous Szabury investigation into New York vice of the 1930's. Wire tapping, both legal and illegal, is very much more widespread than those

in authority have cared to admit up till now. According to a *New York Times* report (22/2/55):

"In a joint statement to-day the two spokesmen for the Republican legislative majorities said the committee would undertake a far-reaching, penetrating inquiry into "an area where unconstitutional invasions of the personal privacy of law-abiding citizens warrant drastic action against the highly skilled, professional Peeping Toms and those who hire their scurrilous services."

The information on which the two leaders are basing their resolution was furnished principally by the New York City Anti-Crime Committee, which has been making its own investigation of wiretapping. Last week's disclosures of a tapping centre in New York City did a great deal to remove any doubts as to the need for such an inquiry.

In to-day's statement explaining their purposes, Senator Mahoney and Speaker Heck said:

"The increasing use of wire-tapping and other technically fantastic electronic listening devices apparently has become a standard *modus operandi* for some business pirates, social scavengers and unscrupulous political opportunists.

"There has even been evidence of improper and unethical abuses, in some instances, by those legally permitted to use wire-tapping. This is authorized by law in order to utilize most effectively the processes of justice for the protection of society. In the wrong hands—or its irresponsible use in legal hands—wire-tapping obviously can have the dangerous and damaging opposite effect."

To many people this odious power of eavesdropping at will—quite apart from its obvious illegal possibilities, such as blackmail—is dangerous whoever may be exercising it. And it can be particularly dangerous when used by authority whose power for making use of such information is so great. M.G.W.

(see also American letter p. 3)

THE LAW HAS NO HEART

CHESTER Court Martial last week sentenced a nineteen-year-old National Service soldier to nine months detention for "wilfully maiming himself to render himself unfit for service". He was said to have put his foot on a railway line and a train ran over it, as a result of which he lost two toes and part of a third. His injuries however did not render him unfit to warrant his discharge. The youth's defending officer said that he had been three months in the army.

We're Still in the Jungle

READERS of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* will remember the terrible story of conditions in Chicago meat-factories at the beginning of the century.

One of the most horrible disclosures was that workers had been known to fall into vats of boiling fat in the lard-making sheds. Sinclair's book caused such a sensation that a great deal of public pressure was brought to bear on the meat barons, who were forced to clean up their factories.

But still ghastly things can happen to workers, as the following *Reuter* report from New York on 4th March shows:

New York, Thursday.—A 72-year-old factory worker was burned to death today when he fell on a conveyor belt feeding an oven in a New York cannery.

Malenkov is Written Out

KRUSHCHEV is wasting no time in having history put right (in his own favour).

During the war, as every Russian knows, Malenkov was one of Stalin's right-hand men in the organisation of the country's economic life. Krushchev had other duties—chiefly dealing with lack of enthusiasm for the war and the régime in the Ukraine.

Now, however, documents are appearing promoting Krushchev to the higher position fourteen years ago.

When, for instance, Marshal Koniev wrote recently in the *Pravda* about the State Defence Committee formed in 1941 to direct the Soviet war effort, he had the boldness to "appoint" to it Krushchev, who was not a member of the committee, and to omit Malenkov's name as well as Beria's. In the new accounts of the Stalingrad battle, for the economic and political preparation of which Malenkov was responsible, Krushchev's name

is already stealthily substituted for Malenkov's.

Bulganan, now Russian premier, has also been promoted. Marshal Koniev maintained, in his *Pravda* article that the four men who had contributed most to World War II victory were Bulganin, Krushchev, and the two principal victims of the "Doctors' Plot," Zhdanov and Shcherbakov.

Malenkov's downfall has differed in several minor ways from the usual pattern of the purge. It now seems that the usual process of extinction is to be reversed, and his name is to be obliterated from the records before his actual physical elimination.

We have only space to ask two questions:

1. How long before the 'doctors' plot' is revived?
2. How long before we learn that it was really Krushchev and not Stalin who was the great war leader and architect of victory?

ORWELL & ANARCHISM—3

IN our last issue we quoted at great length from *Homage to Catalonia* in order to illustrate the impact on Orwell of the Spanish revolution and in particular of Spanish anarchism. Spain made a deep impression on him in a variety of ways—the experience of revolutionary Barcelona (“There was much in it that I did not understand, in some ways I did not even like it, but I recognised it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for”); his fellow volunteers, especially the Italian militiamen he met the day before he enlisted, and Georges Kopp, his Belgian commandant; the Spanish workers (“A Spaniard’s generosity, in the ordinary sense of the word, is at times almost embarrassing . . . And beyond this there is generosity in a deeper sense, a real largeness of spirit . . .”); the counter-revolutionary nature of Communism; the war-mongering of the Left-wing intelligentsia outside Spain; the falsification of history (“I remember saying once to Arthur Koestler, ‘History stopped in 1936’, at which he nodded in immediate understanding”). Ultimately his feelings were not of disillusionment:

This war in which I played so ineffectual a part, has left me with memories that are mostly evil, and yet I do not wish that I had missed it. When you have had a glimpse of such a disaster as this—and however it ends the Spanish war will turn out to have been an appalling disaster, quite apart from the slaughter and physical suffering—the result is not necessarily disillusionment and cynicism. Curiously enough the whole experience has left me with not less but more belief in the decency of human beings.¹

This leads him to examine the meaning of socialism once again in the spirit of *The Road to Wigan Pier*. What was it really that had so stirred and moved him in Spain?

One had been in a community where hope was more normal than apathy or cynicism, where the word ‘comrade’ stood for comradeship and not, as in most countries, for humbug. One had breathed the air of equality. I am well aware that it is now the fashion to deny that Socialism has anything to do with equality. In every country in the world a huge tribe of party-hacks and sleek little professors are busy ‘proving’ that Socialism means no more than a planned State-capitalism with the grab-motive left in-

tact. But fortunately there also exists a vision of Socialism quite different from this. The thing that attracts ordinary men to Socialism and makes them willing to risk their skins for it, the ‘mystique’ of Socialism, is the idea of equality; to the vast majority of people Socialism means a classless society, or it means nothing at all. And it was here that those few months in the militia were valuable to me. For the Spanish militias, while they lasted, were a sort of microcosm of a classless society. In that community where no one was on the make, where there was a shortage of everything but no privilege and no boot-licking, one got, perhaps a crude forecast of what the opening stages of Socialism might be like. And, after all, instead of disillusioning me it deeply attracted me. The effect was to make my desire to see Socialism established much more actual than it had been before. Partly, perhaps, this was due to the good luck of being among Spaniards, who, with their innate decency and their ever-present Anarchist tinge, would make even the opening stages of Socialism tolerable if they had the chance.²

“Well, they fought to the end all right,” he remarks, looking back six years later, “For the last eighteen months of the war the Republican armies must have been fighting almost without cigarettes, and with precious little food.” And he reflects:

When one thinks of the cruelty, squalor, and futility of war—and in this particular case of the intrigues, the persecutions, the lies and the misunderstandings—there is always the temptation to say: ‘One side is as bad as the other. I am neutral’. In practice, however, one cannot be neutral, and there is hardly such a thing as a war in which it makes no difference who wins. Nearly always one side stands more or less for progress, the other side more or less for reaction. The hatred which the Spanish Republic excited in millionaires, dukes, cardinals, play-boys, Blimps, and what-not would

in itself be enough to show one how the land lay. In essence it was a class war. If it had been won, the cause of the common people everywhere would have been strengthened. It was lost, and the dividend-drawers all over the world rubbed their hands. That was the real issue; all else was froth on its surface . . . The much-publicised disunity on the Government side was not a main cause of defeat. The Government militias were hurriedly raised, ill-armed and unimaginative in their military outlook, but they would have been the same if complete political agreement had existed from the start . . . The Trotskyist thesis that the war could have been won if the revolution had not been sabotaged was probably false. To nationalise factories, demolish churches, and issue revolutionary manifestoes would not have made the armies more efficient. The Fascists won because they were the stronger; they had modern arms and the others hadn’t. No political strategy could offset that.³

★

And the ultimate outcome? Orwell described the talk of a ‘war for democracy’ as plain eyewash. “In any serious emergency the contradiction implied in the Popular Front is bound to make itself felt,” he wrote in 1937, “For even when the worker and the bourgeois are both

fighting against Fascism, they are not fighting for the same things; the bourgeois is fighting for bourgeois democracy, i.e. capitalism, the worker in so far as he understands the issues, for Socialism.”⁴

No one in his senses supposed that there was any hope of democracy, even as we understand it in England or France, in a country so divided and exhausted as Spain would be when the war was over. It would have to be a dictatorship, and it was clear that the chance of a working-class dictatorship had passed. That meant that the general movement would be in the direction of some kind of Fascism. Fascism called, no doubt, by some politer name, and—because this was Spain—more human and less efficient than the German or Italian varieties. The only alternatives were an infinitely worse dictatorship by Franco, or (always a possibility) that the war would end with Spain divided up, either by actual frontiers or into economic zones . . . Whichever way you took it, it was a depressing outlook. But it did not follow that the Government was not worth fighting for as against the more naked and developed Fascism of Franco and Hitler. Whatever faults the post-war Government might have, Franco’s régime would certainly be worse. To the workers—the town proletariat—it might in the end make very little difference who won, but Spain is primarily an agricultural country and the peasants would almost certainly benefit by a Government victory.⁵

FREEDOM

These quotations reveal very clearly the difference between Orwell’s attitude—the acceptance of the lesser evil—and the point of view adopted by anarchist writers in this country. Herbert Read, for instance draws from a similar appraisal of the situation, the opposite conclusion:

... the defeat of the Spanish Government, regrettable in that it leaves the power of the State in still more ruthless hands, is to be looked upon with a certain indifference; for in the process of defending its existence the Spanish Government had created, in the form of a standing army and a secret police, all the instruments of oppression, and there was little prospect that these instruments would have been discarded by the particular group of men who would have been in control if the war had ended in a government victory.⁶

Orwell admitted, ‘realistically’ that, “The fact is that every war suffers a kind of progressive degradation with every month that it continues, because such things as individual liberty and a truthful press are simply not compatible with military efficiency.”⁷ The question is, how far can this progressive degradation continue before one must withdraw one’s support? The leaders of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. took the view, as Vernon Richards says in his

Continued on p. 2

SCIENCE NOTES

Are We Getting Older?

WE find the frequently expressed fear that there will soon be too many old people in this country, very confusing. This does not, presumably refer to the regrettable fact that none of us are as young as we were, but to the overall effect of the declining death and birth rates. What are the facts? The birth rate after falling more or less continuously for nearly 60 years, levelled out

in the years immediately preceding the war, and has since increased, as steeply almost as in the last stages of the fall. It appears that the increase is not entirely due to the after effects of the war.

Increased use of birth control techniques, the decline in infant mortality, and increased life expectancy due to improved nutrition and health, are producing a new equilibrium state in which the age group distribution differs from that of 60 years ago in containing a higher proportion of people in the higher age groups. But the better health which exists throughout the population is obviously to be welcomed, and preferable to the ill-health and low life expectancy that exists in India, even from an economic point of view.

More significantly relevant to the standard of living is the employment of so many in the armed forces, banking, insurance, and the other socially valueless activities so essential to a capitalist economy. To some extent we are suffering from the appalling economic conditions of the inter-war slump years. During the 1930’s, the birth rate was low due to large-scale emigration, workers leaving their home town in search of employment, and the simple impossibility of rearing young children in such conditions. The politicians who talk so much now would do better to reflect on this.

Rain Making

SCIENTISTS are trying to help those farmers who have had to watch large cloud masses pass by overhead while their crops languished for lack of rain, as a parliamentary under secretary recently announced that in the Spring it was hoped to hold the first trials in artificial rain-making in cloudy weather in the region of Salisbury Plain.

A cloud will only produce rain when the clouds of water vapour rise high enough for the temperature to drop sufficiently for ice crystals to form. If this height and temperature are not achieved the drops of rain fall so slowly that they evaporate before they reach the earth’s surface. Low flying clouds rarely produce rain and the object in artificial rain-making is to lower the temperature sufficiently for the formation of crystals or large drops. This can be done by spraying cloud bases with solid carbon dioxide, calcium chloride (a hygroscopic substance which by absorbing water enables large drops to form), a smoke, microscopic silver iodide crystals, or even water. All these methods require that the clouds are already in a suitable position, which depends on the wind, the earth’s motion, and the ocean currents, all of which are still outside man’s control.

It is clear that such rain-making is still of very limited practical value. In the Salisbury Plain scheme it is only hoped to produce a slight increase in rainfall which would be detectable only by careful measurements over a long period of time. Desert areas are more likely to benefit from irrigation schemes, but the work is increasing our knowledge of the natural history and physical properties

of clouds, and may lead to useful results in the future.

MacDougall’s Rats and E.S.P.

EXPERIMENTING with 32 generations of rats over 20 years ago, Professor MacDougall of North Carolina concluded that learning capacity was increased by training over successive generations, a Lamarckian conclusion which contradicted the generally accepted view that acquired skills cannot be inherited. The essential experiment was to put rats into a water tank from which they could escape up either of two ladders. One of the ladders was illuminated but administered an electric shock, while the safe ladder was kept in semi-darkness. The learning accomplishment was to associate absence of light with a more comfortable escape from the tank. Others repeated his experiment with negative results but it was not until recently that the correct explanation was established by Professor Agar at Melbourne University. In his experiment he maintained two independently bred lines of rats, using one line for rats which underwent training and the other for rats which didn’t. A number of rats from each generation of the untrained line were tested for learning capacity like the others but these were not used for breeding.

Up to the 12th generation both lines showed some improvement in learning capacity, from then until the 28th generation the trained line did progressively better than the other, but after that both lines learned more slowly and he difference between them disappeared. A general study of all the rats showed that at least three independent differences of a hereditary kind had appeared and that the variation in learning capacity was not an acquired characteristic but due to hereditary variation. This showed that MacDougall’s assumption, that inbred lines of laboratory animals would remain unaltered over successive generations was unwarranted.

Rhine’s well-known work on extra-sensory perception was based on the assumption that people would guess numbers in a random manner. This has since been shown to be false thus to some extent invalidating his conclusions although not necessarily disproving E.S.P. In both cases it was the failure of other workers to repeat the results which pointed to the possibility of there being a mistaken assumption in the original experiment.

As all scientific work involves making innumerable assumptions, any of which may be later shown to be false, anarchists should be very careful when they use the results of scientific experiments to illustrate the validity of the anarchist case.

Bios.

POLICE POWERS & YOUR RIGHTS

In the review of the N.C.C.L. publication printed in last week’s issue we omitted to include the title which is: *Handbook of Citizens’ Rights—A guide to the Law for the Man in the Street.* (N.C.C.L., Price 2/6d.).

BOOK REVIEW

The Assassins

THE ASSASSINS, by F. A. Ridley. Published by the Author at 65 Grays Inn Building, Rosebery Avenue, London, E.C.1. 8s. 6d.

YEARS ago, before the last war, I read with great interest and pleasure F. A. Ridley’s incisive historical account, *The Jesuits—a study in counter-revolution*, and its successor, *The Assassins*, which was, by reason of the similarity of subjects, something of a companion volume.

Now, I am very glad to see, *The Assassins* has been reprinted, and, upon reading the new edition, I can find no reason to alter the high opinion which I formed of the book on its first publication. It remains one of the most complete, and certainly the most readable, of all the accounts of the strange sect of religio-political conspirators who, from the mountain retreats of the so-called “Old Man of the Mountain”, terrorised the whole of the near and middle East for several centuries of the middle ages.

Ridley very ably discourses on the history of the Assassins and on other methods of politics-by-dagger. He assembles all the necessary historical evidence to present a well-rounded picture of the order in the palmy days of the “earthly paradise” of Alamut, and he dissects the paradox of a sect which, in order to preserve unswerving a fundamentally conservative political attitude, perfected a technique of “direct action” that has since been used by many revolutionary (and equally many counter-revolutionary) movements in the attainment of their ends. He also collects a great deal of interesting evidence which suggests that underlying the open conservatism of the Sheikh-al-Jebal there was an esoteric doctrine, shared only by the elect, of religious free-thought and social communism.

Ridley also traces some interesting common points between the techniques and organisation of the Assassins and those of a number of other movements, like the Jesuits and the Templars, which may well have borrowed from the Assassins through direct or indirect channels. And he goes on to show the parallels, probably accidental, which exist between later terrorist movements and that of the Sheikh-al-Jebal.

It is here that I find the only reason to join issue on points of fact with Ridley.

One of the conspiratorial movements he describes is “The Nihilists”, and he begins this passage with the statement that: “Distinct resemblances exist between the Assassins and the modern Russian movement of Anarchism or Nihilism, which carried on a reign of terror against the Tsars and the dominant classes in Russia throughout the second half of the nineteenth century . . . Tzar Alexander the Second (1881), Grand Dukes, leading statesmen such as the Prime Minister, Stolypin (1911), high police officials, etc., were murdered by these terrorist intellectuals, prior to the rise of the mass movement of Bolshevism in the present century.”

This account is historically incorrect on a number of points. First, Anarchism was not a Russian movement by origin; it stemmed from the ideas of Proudhon, and, though it was largely fostered by two outstanding Russians, Bakunin and Kropotkin, both of these became converted to Anarchism in western Europe and carried out most of their work outside their native country. It was not until very late in the nineteenth century, long after the terrorist campaigns had begun in Russia, that anything in the shape of a large anarchist movement grew up there.

Nor can Anarchists be equated with Nihilists. In the correct meaning of the term “Nihilist”, it can only be applied to that philosophical movement among Russian intellectuals, denying all the basic assumptions of orthodoxy, which arose during the 1860’s and was portrayed by Turgenev in *Fathers and Sons*.

The movement commonly called “Nihilist”, and associated with most of the terrorist acts that Ridley mentions, was actually the *Narodnaya Volya*, the Party of the People’s Will, a group which was certainly not anarchist in any strict sense of the word, since its militants, including the slayers of Alexander II, wished to use their terrorist tactics in order to force the Tzar to grant constitutional government. They were, in fact, liberals whom the circumstances had forced into a course of violence.

I know Ridley’s friendliness towards the Anarchists too well to suggest that he has here attempted any deliberate misrepresentation, and, having registered this one point of historical disagreement, I would end by once more recommending this book to all those who are interested in an account of one of the most curious and fascinating byways of political action.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

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THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

Vol. 16, No. 11. March 12, 1955

VESTED INTERESTS AND THE BOMB

Continued from p. 1

minded the House the U.S. experiments had shown that "a battleship can be plucked out of the sea, thrown in again on its stern, turned over and sunk" by the H-bomb!

There was, however, a large measure of support for retaining the military set-up in Western Europe even though there was no intention—or hope?—of being able to match Russian strength in equipment or man-power. The question then arose as to the meaning of the word "aggression" in paragraph 19 of the White Paper which reads:

"The knowledge that aggression will be met by overwhelming nuclear retaliation is the surest guarantee that it will not take place".

Did it mean, asked a number of Labour M.P.s, that aggression with conventional weapons would be met with nuclear retaliation? Some said yes, others said wait and see. But neither the Government nor Mr. Attlee said "No!" This question was a blow below the belt for if the would-be aggressor were told that any attack would be answered with a few H-bombs then what would be the advantage of launching his attack with conventional weapons, since he would be giving the other side the opportunity to strike the first crippling nuclear blow which might make retaliation impossible. So the "deterrent" effect of the H-bomb becomes very slender indeed since there is no way of preventing an aggressor from dropping the bombs except by becoming the aggressor and dropping it before he does! And how and who is to determine when the other side is about to become the aggressor so as to forestall him?

One Labour Member, Mr. Healey, suggested a way out of this very ticklish problem:

If there is an advance by the Red Army we shall have to drop bombs on the Red Army wherever it may be. My point is that it is surely better, if bombs are to be dropped, to drop them only on the Continent, and not on Britain and on the United States and the U.S.S.R. That is something, I should have thought, that we should have agreed about. [Laughter.] I ask hon. Members to think twice before laughing about this.

One cannot imagine that the French or German people who would be at the receiving end of these bombs, would find the suggestion a laughing matter. (But then perhaps we have almost reached the stage where such a proposal might well be considered "inspired statesmanship" on the grounds that only 100 million people would thus be slaughtered, as against the whole of humanity in an "all out" nuclear war).

TO our minds, the H-bomb propaganda is having the serious effect on the public of confusing the means with the ends. The politicians are trying to make us believe that war or peace are dependent on the H-bomb. But weapons are in fact still the means for waging wars, not the causes of war. The causes are still power politics, vested interests, slumps; causes which, we will go on repeating, existed before Hitler, before Stalin. Power politics is as much the vice of democracy as of the totalitarian régimes and is at the very foundations of the class society. War is an integral part of such a society.

The menace to world peace is not the Hydrogen bomb but the structure of our society and it is this that needs to undergo revolutionary changes if we wish to banish the horrors of war from the face of the earth.

AMERICAN LETTER

NEW YORK, March. IT seems that our ideas about privacy are due for another revision. A few weeks ago a tip to the New York City police led them to a private wire-tapping centre operated, one does not know whether legally or illegally, by some people interested in the private lives of residents of the Upper East Side. Equipped with a hundred thousand dollars worth of the latest electronic gadgets and with private arrangements made with operators in six New York telephone exchanges these master minds could listen in at will and record the conversations of—who were they? Rival gangsters, business men, communists? The finer details have not come out but the whole subject of wire-tapping is obviously going to have some legislation. Officially illegal it has not until recently provoked much comment since it was believed that little of it went on except by permission of a magistrate, given to the police upon request. Sensible people for instance have always condemned the practice of listening in to a Senator's telephone calls and it will be remembered that Senator McCarthy was able to let off very effective steam when he found that his opponents in the Army investigation had a written record of the sometimes indelicate conversations from his office, the most immoral act he has yet heard of, he called it.

Still, the accepted methods until now have involved the actual cutting in on the circuit of two people speaking on a telephone. It is now much less cumbersome although a technique still in the early stages of development, to listen in with the new ultra-sensitive microphones that can amplify with ease both sides of a conversation taking place inside a public phone box 20 or more feet away. If a couple of suspects are talking out of doors their sounds can be picked up by means of parabolic sound reflectors a hundred yards away in a restaurant or crowded street; and it is reported that

underworld characters who until now have often conducted their deals in a hotel bathroom against a background of taps, showers, lavatories and air-conditioners can do so no more, since a pocket-size noise analyser in the suite next door can select only those frequencies of the human voice that the listener wishes to hear.

Thus a whole new area of privacy is under attack and the invasion has certainly only just begun. To begin with there will be ineffectual resistance by people with traditional ideas on the "rights" of privacy, but it will become very quickly apparent that these rights are no more than habits we have fallen into because of the inefficient scientific techniques we have been contented with. People will defend Private Conversation as something sacred. (After all, we may hear, where would Moses have been if there was a microphone hidden in the burning bush?) An Englishman's voice is his fortress, they will say. An elaborate act of constitutional guarantees will be proclaimed to make us safe for all time from the undemocratic practice of aural intrusion, and, perhaps, we will breathe a sigh of relief, unheard and unrecorded, except that possibly may the police not have got permission from the magistrates' court . . . ?

"Ah," I hear, "but that is different, because if you were saying something you shouldn't, then the police have the right to overhear you."

"But you said you believed in Free Speech."

"Yes I do, but not illegal Free Speech."

As long as wire-tapping was confined to the telephone wire the solution was simple: one just did not say anything that might be incriminating over the telephone and by incriminating I am now referring to anything that might be called subversive. I have several friends in

New York who are careful not to reveal too much of their thoughts at any time on the telephone, for to be called subversive means to risk being considered a security risk, and this for people working in certain occupations means losing their job. The case rests on the definition that may be applied at any time to the word subversive. There is some organization which yesterday was scathingly referred to as subversive by a member of the Senate, because it was "working for Fabian Socialism". Yet one has the feeling that this has a touch of the Old Guard about it and as I suggested last time it is probable that the security panic is subsiding.

It can be taken for granted that within a very few years it will be possible for anyone interested (and willing to go to the trouble) to make a record of every sound we speak and noise we make for

an indefinitely long period of time and without our knowledge. There will be "safeguards", of course, but the fact that technology has made the action possible makes also its justification probable. The result is anyone's guess. Mine is firstly that speech will become more standardized, less colloquial and sensitive, and finally dehumanized (I am caught with an example of what I mean); secondly that obscenity will disappear in all but a few incorrigibles, probably anarchists.

Footnote on Harvey Matusow: legal experts are reported to have found no way to prosecute him nor anything to prosecute him for. They have concluded that swearing on oath to each of two self-contradictory statements cannot be considered perjury. One of the statements has to be proved a lie.

THE POLICE & PROSTITUTION

MR. R. R. STOKES, M.P. asked the Home Secretary last week to what extent the whole prostitution organisation in London's West End "is run with the knowledge and approval of the police". Pressed by Major Lloyd George to withdraw these offensive reflections on a "fine force" Mr. Stokes was even more explicit:

"I want to know whether you can deny that the whole of this prostitution organisation is not within the knowledge of the police, and connived at by them?"

The Home Secretary refuted the charge in a sentence, but Mr. Stokes stated that he would raise the matter again. The problem of producing evidence to such a charge is not an easy one, principally because the evidence would have to come from the prostitutes themselves, who, apart from the fact that their word would carry little weight against that of our "fine force", have to consider the effects such disclosures would have on their ability to continue their "profes-

sion". As things are at present there is a tacit understanding between them and the police that they will be arrested every so often and hauled before the magistrate and pay their fines, and give no trouble, in return for being allowed to walk the streets. As to what other arrangements are made on the side only they, their "men" and the police know the exact details, and it pays none of them to spill the beans. The girls accept the fines and the rest (not forgetting the enormous rents they pay) as part of their overheads. They may feel that they are being fleeced, but so long as they can make enough money to meet their overheads and have enough over to salt away for the day when they will be able to open up a club or café of their own, they will accept the situation. The police know this and can feel fairly sure that there will be no sensational disclosures. But occasionally things do go wrong. One wonders whether Mr. Stokes has an Inspector Goddard case up his sleeve!

ORWELL & ANARCHISM

Continued from p. 2

Lessons of the Spanish Revolution, "that anything was preferable to Franco, that every compromise should be made in the name of unity and for victory over Franco, justifying this position on the grounds that defeat by Franco meant also the defeat of all the revolutionary gains made by the workers." Orwell witnessed the implications of this point of view, one might say that he experienced them, considering the manner of his own departure and the fate of his friends:

The jails were places that could only be described as dungeons. In England you would have to go back to the eighteenth century to find anything comparable. People were penned together in small rooms where there was barely space for them to lie down, and often they were kept in cellars and other places. This was not as a temporary measure—there were cases of people being kept four and five months almost without sight of daylight . . .

Smillie's death is not a thing I can easily forgive. Here was this brave and gifted boy . . . who had done his job at the front with faultless courage and willingness; and all they could find to do with him was to fling him into jail and let him die like a neglected animal . . .

As I write, six months after the event, Kopp (if he has not been shot) is still in jail, untried and uncharged. At the beginning we had two or three letters from him, smuggled out by released prisoners and posted in France. They all told the same story—imprisonment in filthy dark dens, bad and insufficient food, serious illness due to the conditions of imprisonment, and refusal of medical attention . . . More recently he disappeared into one of the "secret prisons" with which it seems impossible to make any kind of communication. His case is the case of scores or hundreds of foreigners and no one knows how many thousands of Spaniards.⁹

Despite this, Orwell declares that one cannot say, "One side is as bad as the other. I am neutral". The anarchist attitude is not one of neutrality, but of hostility to both sides:

We believe that anarchists can only participate in those struggles which are the expression of a people's will to freedom and justice. But when such struggles should be organised and conducted with the same ruthlessness as that of the enemy, with armies of conscripts school-

ed in blind obedience to leaders; by the militarisation of the rearward, and the censorship of the Press and of opinion; when secret prisons are connived at, and to express criticisms is considered High Treason (as in the trial of the P.O.U.M. leaders); before that stage has been reached, anarchists who are not afraid of unpopularity or the 'Judgment of history' should declare their inability to co-operate, and conduct their struggles against both régimes in whatever way they consider consistent with their aspirations and their principles.¹⁰

IN 1939 in a mood different from that of *Homage to Catalonia* and that of his later reminiscences of Spain, Orwell wrote:

One question that is still not satisfactorily answered is why the war went on so long. After the beginning of 1938 it was obvious to anyone with any military knowledge that the Government could not win, and even by the summer of 1937 the odds were in Franco's favour. Did the mass of the Spanish people really feel that even the atrocious sufferings of the later part of the war were preferable to surrender—or did they continue to fight at least partly because the whole of Left-wing opinion from Moscow to New York was driving them on?¹¹

And he reflects that the average man in relation to war is simply a victim. "How many millions of people in Spain and elsewhere," he asks, in a different mood from that of his other writings on Spain, "are now looking back on the Spanish war and asking themselves what the devil it was all about? . . . Looking back on casual contracts with peasants, shopkeepers, street-hawkers, even militiamen, I now suspect that great numbers of these people had no feelings about the war whatever, except a wish that it were over."¹² Meanwhile another, greater war had broken out, the war which had haunted him for years.

At any rate, I have known since about 1931 (Spender says he has known since 1929) that the future must be catastrophic. I could not say exactly what wars and revolutions would happen, but they never surprised me when they came. Since 1934 I have known war between England and Germany was coming, and since 1936 I have known it with complete certainty. I could feel it in my belly, and the chatter of the pacifists on

the one hand, and the Popular Front people who pretended to fear that Britain was preparing for war against Russia on the other, never deceived me.¹³

This feeling runs through his early novels. In 1935 he wrote in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*:

But what is behind the grin? Desolation, emptiness, prophecies of doom. For can you not see, if you know how to look, that behind that slick self-satisfaction, that tittering fat-bellied triviality, there is nothing but a frightful emptiness, a secret despair? The great death-wish of the modern world. Suicide pacts. Heads stuck in gas-ovens in lonely maisonettes. French letters and Amen Pills. And the reverberations of future wars. Enemy aeroplanes flying over London; the deep threatening hum of the propellers, the shattering thunder of the bombs.¹⁴

In *Coming Up For Air* written in 1938-9, the war and its aftermath ("the kind of hate-world, slogan world. The coloured shirts, the barbed wire . . . the processions and the posters with enormous faces"), nag at Orwell's hero, George Bowling, like neuralgia. He goes to a Left-Book-Club lecture ("What he's saying is merely that Hitler's after us and we must all get together and have a good hate. Doesn't go into details. Leaves it all respectable. But what he's seeing is something quite different. It's a picture of himself smashing people's faces in with a spanner"), and afterwards talks to a young man in the audience:

"Mr. Bowling! Look here. If war broke out and we had the chance to smash Fascism once and for all, wouldn't you fight? If you were young, I mean."

I suppose he thinks I'm about sixty.

"You bet I wouldn't," I said, "I had enough to go on with last time."

"But to smash Fascism!"

"Oh, b— Fascism! There's been enough smashing done already, if you ask me."

The little Trotskyist chips in with social patriotism and betrayal of the workers, but the other cuts him short:

"But you're thinking of 1914. That was just an ordinary imperialist war. This time it's different. Look here. When you hear about what's going on in Germany, and the concentration camps and the Nazis beating people up with rubber truncheons and making the Jews spit in each other's faces—doesn't it make your blood boil?"

They're always going about your blood boiling. Just the same phrase during the war, I remember.

"I went off the boil in 1916," I told

him. "And so'll you when you know what a trench smells like."

And then all of a sudden I seemed to see him. It was as if I hadn't properly seen him till that moment.

A very young, eager face, might have belonged to a good-looking schoolboy, with blue eyes and tow-coloured hair, gazing into mine, and for a moment actually he'd got tears in his eyes. Felt as strongly as all that about the German Jews! But as a matter of fact I knew just what he felt. He's a hefty lad, probably plays rugger for the bank. Got brains, too. And here he is, a bank clerk in a godless suburb, sitting behind the frosted window, entering figures in a ledger, counting piles of notes, bum-sucking to the manager. Feels his life rotting away. And all the while, over in Europe, the big stuff's happening. Shells bursting over the trenches and waves of infantry charging through the drifts of smoke. Probably some of his pals are fighting in Spain. Of course he's spoiling for a war. How can you blame him?¹⁵

The war came, and, late in 1939, Orwell wrote:

While I have been writing this book another European war has broken out. It will either last several years and tear Western civilisation to pieces or it will end inconclusively and prepare the way for yet another war which will do the job once and for all. But war is only 'peace intensified'. What is quite obviously happening, war or no war, is the break-up of *laissez-faire* capitalism and of the Liberal-Christian culture. Until recently the full implications of this were not foreseen, because it was generally imagined that Socialism could preserve and even enlarge the atmosphere of liberalism. It is now beginning to be realized how false this idea was. Almost certainly we are moving into an age of totalitarian dictatorships—an age in which freedom of thought will be at first a deadly sin and later on a meaningless abstraction. The autonomous individual is going to be stamped out of existence.¹⁶

But soon afterwards he wrote in a different tone about the war whose coming he had expected for so long. His wartime political attitude will be discussed in our next issue.

SOURCES:
1, 2, 5, 7 and 9: *Homage to Catalonia* (1938).
3: *Looking Back on the Spanish War* (New Road 1943).
4: *Spilling the Spanish Beans* (New English Weekly 29/7/1939).
6: H. Read: *The Philosophy of Anarchism* (1940).
8 and 10: V. Richards: *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* (1953).
11 and 12: *The Spanish War* (The Adelphi, December 1939).
13: Orwell's Diary, 8/6/40 (World Review, June 1950).
14: *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936).
15: *Coming Up For Air* (1939).
16: *Inside the Whale* (1940).

READERS' VIEWPOINTS

Co-operation with Nature

(From a Correspondent)

MR. HARRY HOOTON'S letter on "The Conquest of Art" (26th Feb.) proclaims an outlook which is, unfortunately, all too prevalent in the West (which culturally speaking, includes Sydney). It is an insistence on the dissociation of Man from Nature, a declaration of war on Man's environment, which is supposed to be "enslaving" him. This attitude overlooks a fundamental and obvious truth, namely, that Man is himself a part of this Nature which Mr. Hooton wishes to conquer, and our part in the interplay of counteracting influences, our romantically conceived "fight against the elements" is in itself a natural process and is shared by all living organisms. Mr. Hooton's arrogant assertion: "We had to fight nature every inch of the way, until it learned to do our bidding, until it learned to co-operate with us—until it learned to operate for us," is based on a misconception of the history of mankind. It is Man who, starting out on an unfamiliar path in an artificial existence, had to grope his way from failure to failure until he had learned to discipline himself to the laws of soils, seasons, and crops. It is man who has had to change, who has had to discard old methods and search for new ones, who has had to adapt himself to the requirements of his environment. In other words, it was Man who had to learn to do Nature's bidding, who had to learn to co-operate with the world he lives in.

Perhaps Mr. Hooton is blinded by the sight of huge dams, hydro-power stations, artificial rain and chemical fertilizers. No doubt these things exist. But does that mean that Man has abolished the laws of nature and created new ones? On the contrary, Mr. Hooton will discover, on a closer examination of the facts, that all these technological advances are in precise conformity with natural laws, and the slightest interference with these laws would render the procedure futile.

What are we to make of another of Mr. Hooton's fanfares: "Bees, ants, tapeworms—innumerable living forms are

adjusted to, and at peace with their environment; man is at war with, and adjusts his environment to him?" Mr. Hooton has labelled man a conqueror merely because he feeds on animals and harnesses rivers, and it is surely unjust to exclude the above-named animals from the triumphant band. After all, bees make use of floral pollen to manufacture honey, ants bear a close resemblance to man in their habits of uniting to drag down a victim stronger than themselves, and as for tapeworms, they often have the temerity to feed on the intestines of the invincible humans.

Art can be regarded as a creation and a destruction, but it is Man's mind which suffers this adjustment, not Nature. Art is the process by which the human mind creates truth, but metamorphosing reality to a form acceptable to the human intellect. It is a process by which Man gives cohesion to the incoherence created by his own mind. Far from being "a destruction of natural forms," it is rather a cycle of destruction and creation of human concepts.

One is forced to ask why modern man is so obsessed by this belief of his struggle with nature, by this complex of persecution by nature. For it is undeniable that this belief is prevalent only among those influenced by modern society, and historically speaking, the concept is quite a recent one. I cannot think of any human beings who have struggled harder and with less reward to earn a living than the peasants of the East, not least among them the peasants of my own country, India. For them life has been reduced to its most elemental terms, and their outlook does not extend very far beyond the cycle of sowing and harvesting, of life and death. Surely they have more right than anyone else to claim a battle with nature? Surely this mystique of militant humanity, this declaration of a war against the common enemy should find most support among them? I can, however, assert that this concept is absolutely unknown among them, precisely because they are more in touch with reality.

I believe that the cause of the existence of this outlook can be found in the unreal nature of modern society. This attitude prevails because modern man has failed to adjust himself to nature. Modern authoritarian society has driven man further and further from reality, further and further from self-realisation. It has crippled human personality by smothering it under blankets of unflinching repressions and artificial loyalties. It is perhaps relevant to consider Wyndham Lewis's remark: "We are living in a vast lunatic asylum, peopled by the variously complexed." This complex of nature-conquest is caused by the interaction of two conflicting drives in the human mind, one towards greater artificiality and complexity, the other towards existential truth. The former is a product we live in, the latter is inborn in man. It is this interaction which has produced the violent contemplation of nature. It is, after all, a psychological truism that love and hate are merely the opposite sides of the same coin.

Lastly, as someone who has been impressed by the philosophy of anarchism, I reject Mr. Hooton's contention that anarchism is destruction. Anarchism, surely, is not merely "a destruction of what is inimical to man", but a restoration of the human mind which is being destroyed by a disease, one of the symptoms of which is this complex against nature. I prefer to see Anarchism as a movement to take us back to the reality from which we have diverged, not merely to destroy unreality, which is a negative concept. And that is how I intend to continue thinking of Anarchism, precisely because it recognizes that this attempt to achieve a total conquest of nature, if persisted in, can only end in the total eclipse of man.

CALYPSOS AND THE COLONIAL OFFICE

NOW that Princess Margaret has finished her West African trip and had a very enjoyable time in the islands of calypsos and warm tropical sunshine, it might be wise to consider the motives of the Colonial Office and the governmental advisers who arranged her visit. Besides the aim of enabling a member of the Royal Family to have a good time there was a political purpose in sending her to the West Indies—lands of unemployment and lack of opportunity for the negro peoples. Once many West Indians emigrated to the United States until Immigration laws seriously restricted their entry.

Since the war more and more West Indians have come to Britain seeking work. This has unsettled the petty-minded colour-bar boys of West Bromwich and elsewhere but as citizens of the British Empire these West Indians have every right to settle in this country. Bearing this in mind the Princess's visit may for a time turn the attention of the islanders away from their empty bellies and poverty-stricken shacks. After all, glamour, colour and excitement are missing from most people's lives and provide a delightful change to boring routine.

Two incidents of the tour are most revealing. One is reported by the *Observer* (27th Feb.)

"One of her (Margaret's) appreciated gestures was an unscheduled meeting with the cricket team of the colony that has recently been giving trouble—British Guiana. The fact that the Princess was not visiting this colony was, I am told, being interpreted there as an indication that they were being deliberately ignored. Her few words with the cricket team has made it plain that Guianese are not taboo: she did not visit British Guiana only because it was miles off her route".

So the good people of B.G. need not think they have been neglected by a spiteful British Government.

The other incident occurred in Jamaica where Princess Margaret made a bee-line for Norman Manley, the new Chief Minister, had a long talk with him and gave him a share of the limelight with her. Manley is the head of the Jamaican government, a coloured man, a Socialist, a clever lawyer and an old friend of Sir Stafford Cripps. He is potentially the most dangerous man in the Caribbean and could if he so wished, preach nationalism and demand immediate independence, but this shows, I believe, that Manley loves pomp, ceremony and power as much as the next fellow and will not be far away when the O.B.E.'s are handed out.

So the West Indian tour has come to an end. Margaret has had her sunshine while other folk left in England have had some particularly foul weather and she has left the West Indies a better place for British officials and home-grown politicians to live in. F.T.

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In the Shadow of the Mountain

BIG mergers in the world of commerce mean headlines in the financial columns of the daily press, but can also mean headaches for many humble folk low down in the firms concerned.

An example has been given us by our Leeds correspondent, who writes:

Our firm used to belong to Sir Henry Price (of the Fifty Shilling Tailors) but is now owned and controlled by a gentleman called Mountain, and the trade name has been changed to 'John Colliers'. Mr. Mountain, besides controlling Colliers' is also at the head of United Drapers and a few weeks ago they got control of Alexandre's clothing factories and retail shops.

Two directors who were formerly at Alexandre's have now been installed at our firm, with the result that some of Price's directors have become redundant. And so also have many foremen and chargehands, who have been sacked over the last few weeks. The method is for them to discover a note in their pay packets on Friday saying that their employment is terminated. None of them know before getting their pay packets that the sack is coming with it.

Many of the men have been with the firm for years—for instance the assistant engineer was dismissed on 28th January after 23 years with Price's. He was very well liked too. Now there is a very bad atmosphere in the factory every Friday

and the foremen refer to it each week as Black Friday.

Of course the foremen are not in the union and therefore have no protection, but on the 28th January four workers also received redundancy notices.

But now—what a difference! On the Monday word was sent round the whole factory regarding these four men, with the result that we demanded to see the management. As a committeeman I could not be on the delegation, but our stewards from each department negotiated with the management. But I did my part far better by talking to the workers, pointing out that our duty was to get those four men their jobs back and that we should strike first and talk afterwards.

Every worker was 100 per cent. determined on strike action, so the stewards had a very easy job. By Wednesday the four men were back at work.

Perhaps the management will keep things equal by sacking four more foremen. But we know that production is just the same without them—perhaps better.

The moral should be: Don't aspire to be a foreman or chargehand at John Colliers'! The prospects aren't too good!

'MORE DIRECT ACTION'.

SLUMS AND THE RISK OF FIRE

IN an article in the *New York Times* of Feb. 7, it is pointed out that fires in New York—which in the last five years have accounted for the deaths of 614 persons and the destruction of \$110m. worth of property—are largely due to the overcrowding in the city's slums.

"Every wave of immigration into the United States has brought New York... congestion that inevitably breeds slums. But the influx of Negroes from the South and Puerto Ricans free to enter without passport or quota controls has aggravated the problem beyond comparison with previous times."

"Fire follows population" is an old fire-fighting axiom. And when the population is socially and economically depressed, poorly educated and, as a result, careless of life, the fire danger is increased manifold.

This is the case in what are considered the most hazardous areas of the city—the slum areas where Negroes and Puerto Ricans are hemmed in by social and economic barriers.

In the past the division of the European immigrants into nationality groups was gradually broken down until they became absorbed into the American population. There is no reason why the same should not happen with the Negroes and Puerto Ricans, once they have been accepted as fully human beings.

An Anarchist Notebook

Continued from p. 1
forceful, so logical, and so persuasive—that we must shield our people physically from every confrontation with Communist thought?"

Mr. Kennan said it was ironic that such suggestions should so often come from "those whose stock in trade is the claim to be the most ardent devotee and guardian of the national virtue."

BRITISH REVOLUTION

LAST Sunday's *Observer* carried an article on its back page with a double column heading "The History of a Revolution". Eagerly one looked closer to see what it was about. Russia, Spain, Mexico? But no, it was CRICKET!

The record of the British team and of cricketing relations with Australia is "a dramatic revolution" and "The October Revolution of 1917 was no less final in its implications than the overthrow of maturity by youth this summer".

In the H-Bomb era, all we can do in this country is to have a cricket revolution!

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Author	Title	Pub. Price	Offered at
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