

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Love of power does far more harm than love of drink or any of the other vices against which Puritans protest."

—BERTRAND RUSSELL.

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Threepence

## THE TUC MODERATION

THIS year's Trades Union Congress eased its well-padded self into its favourite armchair and pontificated mildly upon everything in particular and nothing in general.

The conversation followed the usual well-worn line, marked this year only by an almost complete absence of controversy. This was exactly as expected, since the gathering of the industrial clans can only present a reflection of the general political and social situation in the country, and particularly the 'Labour Movement's' attitude to it.

It can hardly be said that there is any more antagonism to capitalism displayed in the Trade Union movement than in—say—the Federation of British Industries, and what attempt there is at policy-making is directed in exactly the same direction; the stabilisation of Britain's economic position. Nor was there any hint from any quarter of any considered alternative to the existing type of economy or to the Conservative Government's measures for keeping it on an even keel.

Even the Communists, who in the past have created some liveliness if nothing else, were reduced to a mumbling dullness by the necessity of keeping in with the international new look. The thaw in the cold war (as far as it goes) necessitates a lessening of militancy on the part of the comrades, who must do nothing to create any bad feeling between East and West. So that even if the interests of the workers in Britain demand a more vigorous struggle, it is unlikely that the Communist

Party will do more than pay lip-service to it. Maintaining a cosy atmosphere in which East-West trade can be encouraged and 'talks at the summit' can 'bear fruit' means no stirring up of strikes—although if any start, the C.P. will naturally do its best to muscle in and benefit from them, as they always do.

**Keeping the Rank-and-File Quiet**  
Small wonder, then, that the keynote for Congress was respectable moderation. The farthest the Communists were prepared to go was in presenting a resolution urging 'firm opposition to any form of wage restraint' and support for 'the efforts of all affiliated unions to improve wages and working conditions of their members'. This was put forward by the Electrical Trades Union, but was comfortably defeated in favour of a more moderately worded resolution sponsored by the Distributive Workers' union.

The intriguing part about this particular gambit is that some of the unions who supported the General Council's plea for moderation have wage claims already pending. In other words, in Congress they support restraint on wage increases but in fact they are going ahead and claiming increases. A very nice piece of doublethink which indicates that some unions think that they should have more wages, but that others should not.

The real issue, however, was to curb militancy among the rank-and-file. This was behind the other decision which hit the headlines—that the General Council should

have the power to intervene in labour disputes before they reached strike stage. This places considerably more power in the hands of the General Council, although it has been pointed out that the G.C. is limited more by the loose nature of the TUC than by its formal constitution. This means that the constitution is giving the G.C. more power, and the only means of combatting its dictatorship might be for the individual union concerned to withdraw from the TUC—a drastic step which, for reasons not quite clear to us, unions are very reluctant to take; even they are getting a raw deal like the Stevedors on the 'poaching' issue.

To-day all 'responsible' journals are congratulating the TUC (and themselves) on the moderation and statesmanlike attitudes which carried the day at Southport. This is because once again the Trades Union Congress has made clear its identification with the Government, with the prevailing economy, with—the *status quo*.

Completely absent from any resolution were the words 'Workers' Control'. Completely absent was any conception, as far as we could see, of any form of society different from that which exists. The idea was not even mooted that there was anything wrong with the position of the industrial worker in our society or that the wage system, for example, was an affront to his dignity.

Everything is very satisfactory and just as it should be in a world where working class leaders earn the thanks and congratulations of the Conservative Government and its Press.

## CYPRUS

THE supreme insolence of governments was well displayed last week, when representatives of the authorities in Britain, Greece and Turkey met in London to discuss Cyprus.

There was nobody there to speak for the Cypriots themselves. The fate of the half-million people who dwell on the East Mediterranean island being settled by Governments in whose election the Cypriots had no vote and in whose policies as regards themselves they have no voice.

The Turkish delegation, it is true, claimed to speak in the interests of the 100,000-strong minority of Turks on the island. And the Greek delegation claimed the allegiance of the remaining, Greek-speaking, 400,000. The British delegation spoke on behalf of the British Government, which owns the island and therefore the people on it as well.

And the result of the conference has been the generation of bad blood between the bargaining parties, the straining of the traditionally hostile Turko-Greek relations (recently made more friendly through mutual defence pacts in NATO and, with Yugoslavia, in a small South-East Europe *entente*), and the preparation of the ground for more violence in Cyprus.

### The Switch from Suez

The present wave of unrest in Cyprus is a direct result of the shift of Britain's main East-Mediterranean naval and military base from Egyptian soil to that island. It will be remembered that when the antagonism of the Egyptian nationalists finally persuaded the British Government that it would be more

diplomatic to come to terms with them than to try indefinitely to hold down a hostile population, an agreement was signed between Nasser's Government and the British Government.

In this agreement it was decided that British troops should pull out of Egypt, leaving only a skeleton staff of civilian technicians to keep the huge military installations in good order. Should the Egyptian Government, however, give the word in any future emergency, the British would come flying back to their aid.

As we pointed at at the time, this provided a very happy compromise for both sides. For the British it meant cutting out the expensive business of maintaining a large garrison in a hostile country. For the Egyptian Government it meant at last the achievement of a nationalistic aim: to get the British troops out of Egypt, and thus an enhancement of its prestige among its own people. But at the same time it did not deprive either side of the benefits of co-operation in time of danger.

### How Defend Cyprus?

One of the excuses for withdrawal put forward by Sir Winston Churchill at the time was that the development of nuclear weapons made the Canal Zone impractical to defend! It would never do, after all, to admit that it was the development of terroristic activity by Egyptian nationalists that made it impracticable for British troops to remain in the midst of hostile country! Present-day imperialism, in the more advanced countries anyway, demands that the imperial power comes to terms with militant nationalism, rather than trying to crush it and thereby weakening the bonds of Empire.

But, before vacating Egypt, an alternative base had to be found in the Eastern Mediterranean. And there was none better than Cyprus. Unfortunately, however, the people there rather resent having their island turned into an atom-bomb target. For quite obviously in the event of war—and bases are maintained in order to be ready in the event of war—all British military and naval bases will be legitimate targets for the A-bombs, if not the H-bombs, of the enemy. And we have not yet heard Winston explain how it is that it is possible to defend Cyprus against atomic attack whereas it was impossible to do so for the Canal Zone.

### Not British—They Resist

Now it is one thing for the people of East Anglia, here in the Mother Country, to be quite happy at becoming atom-bomb targets because of the presence of atom-bombers based on their door-steps, but it is quite another for

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## French Conscripts Revolt

THE revolt of a thousand conscript airmen who refused to leave France for Morocco last Sunday may well start further unrest among French conscripts.

When a train carrying a thousand conscripts left Paris on Sunday night the alarm bell brought the train to a stop, and to the accompaniment of family pleas and "no conscripts for Morocco" slogans, the security guards had to empty the train and cordon off the station.

Security guards were given strict orders not to use violence, but men were huddled into police vans and taken back to their barracks in Versailles.

## Reaping the Profits

THE International Harvester Company, said to be the largest producer of farm implements and farm tractors in the United States, increased its profits (the reports always refer to "earnings") by \$12.8 million (about £4½ million) in the past nine months. Net profits in that period amounted to \$41.5 million (£14 million) compared with \$28.7 million (£10 million) in the corresponding nine months last year. Quite a harvest!

Even railways are profitable in America. The New York Central Railroad showed a half-million dollar increase in the first eight months of this year. Indeed it was one of the Company's most profitable years. Turnover was just under \$500m. (£170m.) and, to quote the report "the road managed to carry \$34.5m. (£12m.) through to net income."

The Dayton Rubber Co. showed "record sales and a sharp rise in profits" in the first nine months of 1955. Whilst sales rose 21 per cent., profits increased, from last year's \$568,891 to \$1,475,566; that is a rise of about 160 per cent.!

Punishment can be administered to individual deserters without much trouble, but it is difficult to see how a thousand men refusing point blank to accept a military order can be dealt with in the circumstances. If they are severely punished there is sure to be an outcry in France if only from the relatives of the men, since it is clear from the reports of this incident that the women were protesting against war as such. Discipline has of course to be maintained otherwise other conscripts might get ideas.

Another headache for the French Government who through its repressive policy in North Africa has had, by force and terror, to finally agree to enter into negotiations with a "qualified Moroccan Government and grant the protectorate some measure of self-rule".

In the meantime 80,000 French troops in Morocco are on the alert, civilians are being issued with arms and more troops are pouring into Morocco. Armoured cars and lorries packed with conscripts are filling the streets.

As we go to press the deadline date for a political settlement in the protectorate promised by Premier Faure expires, and the state of "explosive tension" reported from North Africa is no doubt due to the fact that the Moroccans have had little reason to trust the French in the past and are probably expecting yet another let down, only on this occasion, even if the French Government is forced to concede some of the demands, it may be too late to prevent further massacres since explosive tensions have to burst somehow.

## The Disarmament Wrangle

EVERYONE knows what comes after the Lord Mayor's show, and the analogy as related to Geneva seems to be no exception—for the U.N. Subcommittee on disarmament, at present in session in New York, seems to fill the bill only too well, as that which comes after the Geneva show.

With the genial and benevolent smiles of Bulganin and Eisenhower still firmly imprinted on their minds, the second-stringers congregating at U.N. Headquarters are still trying to puzzle out what disarmament is all about. The "spirit of Geneva" which was supposed to be the outward and visible sign of the existence of a panacea for peace, appears to have induced a totally different sort of spirit in New York. The smiles are forced, the atmosphere strained—agreement just as hard to attain as ever it was in the dark days of the heated cold-war.

To readers of FREEDOM this can come as no surprise, for it was stated at the time of the conference, that whatever the atmosphere might be "at the summit", and despite the apparent goodwill between the leaders, there would be no effective change in the relationships of the great powers. It was only too easy for "the Big Four" to talk glibly of their earnest desire for peace, freedom and disarmament, and indeed it reminded us of our own politicians at election time, promising anything and everything, with just as little likelihood of fulfilling their words.

However, since big-hearted Dwight Eisenhower made the suggestion to exchange military information and start a system of ground-air inspection, what could Nikolai Bulganin do? So the subcommittee started to discuss—both sides equally determined to give as little away as possible. Messrs. Lodge and Stassen made a proposal to which dele-

gate Arkady A. Sobolev replied with a series of questions. Russia did not like the U.S. proposal, and the U.S. did not like Russia's questions—the formula as before.

Whatever may be the apparent outcome of the discussions, there will be no effective change in the inherent relationships between the great powers. There will still be the economic struggle for world domination supposedly based on the idealistic differences which are always given as the reason for one State acting beligerently towards another.

What is so hard to stomach is the obviously cynical attitude of the powers-that-be, in proposing a series of disarmament measures which they have not the slightest intention of carrying through in such a way as will prove to the rest of the world any sort of sincerity of purpose. In fact they are no doubt well aware that the present proposals are incapable of being put into practice so as to satisfy the other side of a genuine desire for a permanent peace. This being so one can only assume that the actual intention is not to solve the problems of disarmament, but to maintain the impression of doing so.

The principle result of the Geneva Conference may well stem from the tacit recognition by all concerned of one of the horrible facts which has emerged in the last decade—that nuclear weapons are too dangerous, even in wartime. Here, at last, is something upon which all can agree, and it is possible that East and West have reached a behind-the-scenes agreement, that no-one shall use bombs which are capable of destroying, not only the opposing side, but themselves as well—including the Governments. This cannot necessarily be regarded as a significant step towards freedom as such, but is unquestionably a major factor in remaining alive. S.C.

## PROGRESS OF DEFICIT

WEEK 36	
Deficit on Freedom	£540
Contributions received	£477
DEFICIT	£63

September 2 to September 8	
Chamonix: D.S. 1/9; Chichester: G.B.A. 3/-; London: N.B.T.* 3/-; London: J.S.* 4/-; London: N.B.T.* 3/6; Leicester: C.M. 10/6; Oxford: Anon.* 5/-; Hove: J.McE. 3/-; London: S. 5/-; London: A.B. 2/6; Lakewood: S.M. per S.D. £1/15/0; London: E.P.* £1; New Delhi: R.D.B. 1/6; U.S.A.: Anon. 7/1; London: N.B.T.* 5/-.	
Total	5 9 10
Previously acknowledged	471 12 0
1955 TOTAL TO DATE	£477 1 10

\*denotes regular contributors.



# Practical Origins of the Jewish Collectives

"Each wave of immigration that preceded 1904 was accompanied by wide publicity, resounding slogans and waving banners. But the immigration movement of 1904 was different. No-one organised meetings, no-one made any promises. This spontaneity, this individual action, was an important feature of the new movement and had consequences of great value. One man came from a town, one or two from a district, individually and singly, they came in their own way and on their own responsibility. The driving motive was, I think, not the slogan of the redemption of the people and the return to the land, it was not the idea of saving someone else; it was mainly the aim of self-redemption. Before you go out to save others, save yourself. This spontaneity and personal responsibility, which was then an asset of the very few, was to become the foundation stone of the entire structure."

—SHLOMO ZEMACH: "Introduction to the History of Labour Settlement."

THERE is an apparent paradox in declaring, after describing the variety of ideas and influences in the minds of the *halutzim*, that the Jewish Village Communes owe their existence not to a doctrine but to a situation, to the needs, the stress, the demands of the situation. Martin Buber resolves this paradox thus:

"True, the point was to solve certain problems of work and construction which the Palestinian reality forced on the

settlers, by collaborating . . . But what is called the *ideology*—I personally prefer the old but untarnished word *ideal*—was not just something to be added afterwards that would justify the accomplished facts. In the spirit of the members of the first Palestine Communes ideal motives joined hands with the dictates of the hour; and in the motives there was a curious mixture of memories of the Russian *Artel*, impressions left over from reading the so-called 'utopian' Socialists, and the half-unconscious after-effects of the Bible's teachings about social justice. The important thing is that this ideal motive remained loose and pliable in almost every respect . . . nothing of this ever hardened into a cut-and-dried programme. These men did not, as everywhere else in the history of co-operative settlements, bring a plan with them, a plan which the concrete situation could only fill out, not modify; the ideal gave an impetus but no dogma, it stimulated but did not dictate."<sup>1</sup>

The Kvatza did not emerge as a deliberate social experiment, Arthur Ruppin told the Zionist Congress, the question, he said, was not whether group settlement was preferable to individual settlement, it was rather a matter of group settlement or no settlement at all:

"Group settlement did not, however, immediately take the form of the Kvatza. This type of socio-economic organisation evolved only step by step, in response to and under pressure of circumstances.

The Palestine Office realised that the first group would need a trained manager to supervise and direct the work. . . . An expert was hired and put in charge . . . But conflicts at once arose between the manager and the group. He looked on his position as one whose main concern was efficiency and profitability, while to the group the work signified the fulfilment of a vision. The conflict finally led the community to request that the agent be recalled. When this was refused several of the more experienced left and started one of their own: to continue in the same manner, to work together and share the profit—but without a manager. Soon, however, they had to realise they could not expect any profit for a long time to come, and, making a virtue of necessity, they decided to forget about 'mine and thine', and to hold 'all things in common'. Everyone was to work according to his best ability and to receive in return all he needed from the available goods. Thus originated the first Kvatza . . ."<sup>2</sup>

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### Opposition

THIS was one of the turning points in the history of the movement. The account I have quoted is by Dr. Henrik Infield, the sociologist. Joseph Baratz, one of the settlers concerned gives his version in his memoirs (see FREEDOM 15/1/55), and Arthur Ruppin, who as

the Palestine representative of the National Fund, made the land available to them, gave his account in a report included in the collection published in his honour. A reading of this book reveals a patient and humane administrator, passionately defending the Kvatza against their Zionist critics. In 1923 he said:

"The reproaches which have been levelled against the Kvatza from various sides are unjustified, for it must be remembered that we have to seek and try out new forms for our colonisation. We cannot simply copy the methods employed by the Russian muzhik or by peasants of any other country. Our human material has too much of a character of its own . . . it must create its own satisfactory forms of social co-operation."<sup>3</sup>

Chaim Weizmann too, tells how the collectives had to face an extremely hostile section of Zionist opinion: 'We were told that they were 'Communist' (i.e. Bolshevik) cells . . . leading lives of sexual promiscuity; that they were irreligious, atheistic, subversive—in short, sinks of iniquity scattered up and down the Holy Land.'<sup>4</sup> In 1927 the experts of the Joint Palestine Survey Committee of the Z.O. came to the conclusion that the Kvatza form should be abandoned, and that no new Kvatza should be started. Ruppin said, "The Kvatza or collective settlement has been furiously attacked from many sides on the ground that it is presumably uneconomical." He pointed out that in fact the Zionists had spent more on starting the Moshave Ovdim and other middle-class settlements than on the Kvatza, and he declared:

"I hope that we shall offer to this world, shaken as it is by social strife, the living example of a community in which this strife has been reduced to a minimum and the happiness of the individual increased. Some may believe that in Palestine a higher type of humanity will evolve itself. I do not share this belief. We shall reap in Palestine what we sow to-day. That is why it is so important that the seed shall be a good one."<sup>5</sup>

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### Expansion

THE seed was good. And when the coming of the Nazi terror in Germany brought the *Aliyah* of German youth,

"It was not to be expected that young men and women, coming from urban homes and professional families of Germany, would favour this unrestricted communal life which had been inspired by the peasants of Eastern Europe. Yet it was otherwise. The generation yearned for a complete change in life, abandoning the town for the land, individual seeking for the common well being, the bourgeois standard of money for the principle of sharing, even the family for the community. They were morally and intellectually an elite of pioneers. The Kibbutz, on its part, in 1933 and the following years, gave a warm and brotherly welcome to the boys and girls coming from Europe to be trained in the land . . . They made the immigrants of Youth *Aliyah* part and parcel of their collective community . . ."<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile the movement grew. Joseph Baratz's son writes, "From one lonely kvatza a chain of kvutzot and kibbutzim spread. The size and the type varied, the routine of life was ordered to satisfy different minds, temperaments and beliefs . . . The Kvatza gave birth to many other forms of life." This variety, from the strictly communal to the individualistic, from the Orthodox to the free-thinking, from the 'purist extremism' which chilled Stephen Spender when he visited Negbah, to the non-party Neoth Mordechai which he found, "distinguished by an air of tolerance and kindness which is most impressive"—this variety is one of the reasons why Buber calls the experiment a *non-failure*:

"New forms and new intermediate forms were constantly branching off—in complete freedom. Each one grew out of the particular social and spiritual needs as these came to light—in complete freedom, and each one acquired, even in the initial stages, its own ideology—in complete freedom, each struggling to propagate itself and spread and establish its proper sphere—all in complete freedom. The champions of the various forms each had his say, the pros and cons of each individual form were frankly and fiercely debated—always, however, on the plane which everybody accepted as obvious; the common cause and common task, where each form recognised the relative justice of all the other forms in their special functions. All this is unique in the history of co-operative settlements."<sup>7</sup>

I have not included in this notebook any descriptions of life in the collective settlements—organisations, family life, work, education, and recreation. Four books which will give the reader this information are: *Collective Adventure* by Maurice Pearlman (Heinemann, 1938)—an informal personal account; *Co-operative Living in Palestine* by Henrik Infield (Kegan Paul, 1946), a sociological study of great value; *A New Way Of Life*, (Shindler and Golomb, 1949) a symposium by nine writers; *Learning Laughter* by Stephen Spender (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1952), contains critical impressions of the present situation.

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IN looking for the theoretical and practical origins of the collective settlements, I ought to mention that I have not been able to consult two books which I am sure would throw much light. They are *Origins of the Russian Jewish Labour Movement* by A. L. Patkin (published in Australia), and a Hebrew compilation, referred to by Buber, called *The Kibbutz and the Kvatza* edited by Berl Kazzelson.

Next week's notebook will discuss the intrusion of politics and nationalism.

C.W.

- MARTIN BUBER: *Paths in Utopia* (Routledge, 1949).
- HENRIK INFELD: *Co-operative Communities at Work* (Kegan Paul, 1947).
- ARTHUR RUPPIN: *Three Decades of Palestine* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1936).
- CHAIM WEIZMANN: *Trial and Error* (Hamish Hamilton, 1949).
- ARTHUR RUPPIN: *op. cit.*
- NORMAN BENTWICH in *A New Way of Life* (Shindler & Golomb, 1949).
- MARTIN BUBER: *op. cit.*

## VIEWPOINT

# Anarchism and Activity

ANARCHISM can be regarded either as an individual philosophy, as a sociological theory suggesting the relations between people which would give to each the best possibilities of a satisfying life, or as having elements of both. It is not, however, a political theory. Politics is the subject of government, and although anarchists are constantly referring to government and assessing its various tendencies, it is only so as to expose the restrictive effect which its existence has on the human personality, and not to find out what are the best forms of authority, or how government could be improved if the anarchists took control of it.

This difference between anarchism and all political philosophies implies a wide divergence between the kind of things anarchists do in order to attain the society they desire and the activities of socialists, communists, social creditors, etc. These latter recognize that the pre-

sent structure depends on the passive support of the mass of the people, and demand that this passive support should be transferred from capitalism to socialism, communism or social credit respectively. That is, that people should go on living in the same way as they do now, but should take orders from different leaders. The ultimate goal is that the relations between individuals should be changed in their mutual benefit (in fact the ultimate aim of communism, is in theory, an anarchist society), but for the time being things must go on as they are now.

In consequence, there is only one road of action open to the political revolutionary, that of direct propaganda, either by word of mouth or by circulation of literature. And if anyone should be converted to his point of view, all he can offer the unfortunate convert is to become a direct propagandist in his turn.

The libertarian approach on the other hand is that social relations can only be changed by people consciously getting down to fundamentals, and changing the situations in which they themselves are involved. In a society in which the vast majority of people accept government, and submission to authority, it is impossible for one, or a small group of individuals to live entirely free lives, but the extent to which they can do this is well worth the effort.

While political propagandists therefore have to invite newcomers to join their party for what they can put into it, anarchists are in a position to ask people into the movement for what they can get out of it. The politician uses the same methods as the State or government which he opposes. Instead of "Become a man—by fighting in the Queen's army" or "Develop your talents to their fullest extent—by becoming an anti-aircraft gun operator", it is "Become a man—by spending all your spare time fighting for the workers, and their noble defenders, the Genuine Revolutionary Marxist Party"! In this way originally healthy instincts of rebellion can often be distorted and result only in frustration. Instead, anarchists advocate that the only satisfactory way of realising the dignity of one's personality is to break through the barriers with which bourgeois society fences it in, steer clear of the substitutes offered by political or religious evangelists, and live in a natural healthy way.

Because of this, anarchists have always placed emphasis in their activities on the creation of oases in the desert of authoritarianism which people could actually use in order to experience a greater amount of freedom, instead of merely talking about it, and hoping that someday a revolution will drop freedom in front of their feet. It is important, so as to maintain a balanced attitude towards them, that each such organisation should be regarded as fulfilling primarily a natural function, and not an abstract propagandist one. A free school exists so that children should have a chance to grow up free from the repressions and unhappiness thrust on them by authoritarian schools, and not as a showpiece to 'prove' to outsiders that anarchist views on education are correct. A community, or a collective village exists because its members enjoy living a communal life, not as an eternal witness to the brother-

hood of man. At the same time, they can serve a secondary purpose of helping to convince those interested in libertarian ideas that they are in fact practicable.

One disadvantage shared by all these ventures in that they are insecure, financially and in the numbers that support them, and they are threatened constantly by the forces seeking to maintain the present system in their interests. The most obvious way of fighting this disadvantage is in obtaining the support of great numbers of people. It is this reason which motivates a rational propagandist, and it is in his own interests that he should be as efficient as possible in such activity. The fact that on accepting anarchist ideas it is possible for the person who accepts them to live a happier life is a factor which lends enhancement to the work, or at least avoids any feelings of ethical guilt. Of course, an increase in numerical support for a revolutionary sociological venture will allow it to be extended, and increase even more the pleasure of those involved in it.

The rôle of a propagandist for anarchism becomes therefore, that of a connecting link. His audience cannot achieve anything by listening to him, and mentally agreeing with his ideas. They can only become effective agents of social revolution insofar as their behaviour and actions change. The nature of the anarchist case, and its divergence from political theories, as outlined above, makes it impossible to convert people to anarchism from a platform, or by selling them newspapers. What a speaker can and should do is to arouse an interest in anarchism, and let practical experience of libertarian realisations do the rest. Many of the disappointments caused by those who just come into the fringe of the movement and then disappear are due to the fact that they have been led to expect a political party that doesn't fight elections . . . and they find a group of people more interested in sociology and life. It is essential that verbal and written propaganda should be based on actual facts, and that progressive institutions in their turn should use and draw support from propaganda relevant to them.

In order to be most efficient, the sower should throw his seed on fertile ground, and this can be done if anarchists are prepared to mingle with whoever gets together to discuss social matters. The discussion groups of the N.C.L.C. have provided me with an opportunity for putting forward anarchist ideas, and selling literature, and there are dozens of similar groups into which anarchists could go, enjoy the discussions for their own sake, and at the same time spread their views. The most common objection is that anarchism is only talk, and that we have achieved nothing; an argument which has made me conscious of the need for relating propaganda to reality as outlined above. To sum up this article: people will only be won over if our propaganda is anarchist in nature as well as in content, a little energy expended scientifically is worth as much as a lot expended wastefully, and such activity should spring from a conviction that freedom is worth while, and not be indulged in in order to bolster up a half-hearted idea that it is. P.H.

## England Expects too Much

UNLESS it's a dear old shaggy dog, with limpid brown eyes and slobbering great tongue, hardly anything rouses the Englishman's sentiment more than a ship. We are, of course, a seafaring nation, with salt in our blood, (next time you drink some, notice how thirsty you feel afterwards), and there isn't a land-lubber amongst us who hasn't felt the call of the lonely sea and the sky as we belt across London Bridge at five to nine, trying to get to the office, with our bowler on the hook and our ledger open, before the boss arrives.

Our sturdy Island Race owes its freedom and its independence to our mariner fore-fathers, who sailed the seven seas in search of adventure (and loot), showing the world that the English sea-dog, like his cousin the yeoman of England, knew how to live and die in defence of his Island Home (and his loot).

Our history teems with tales of derring-do aboard ship, of how this jewel set in a silver sea has been guarded against the foreign foe—of how the wooden walls beat back the Dutchman, the Spaniard and the Frenchman, with stories about games of bowls on Plymouth Hoe, and blind eyes to telescopes and messages about England expecting again (which is why she's called the Mother country).

With all this behind us, how can we fail to be moved when we hear of the plight of the *Victory*, Nelson's own flagship, which survived the fury of the French at Trafalgar, only to provide a meal for the death-watch beetle 200 years later? This grand old ship, assured forever of an immortal place in History, is *rotten*. Wet rot and dry rot are doing for her, and where once the

roar of cannon and the bawdy songs of rum-sodden sailors, happy at having been press-ganged aboard such a grand ship, made her timbers ring, now nothing is heard but the much, munch, munch of the death-watch beetle, stuffing itself to the gills on her sea-sodden timbers, and the trickle of dust from the wood-worms' holes.

There is going to be an appeal to raise a fund of half-a-million pounds sterling to renovate and rebuild the *Victory*. But the experts say that to make a good job of it, the worm-eaten oak should be replaced by teak and steel. It'll hardly be the same old ship, will it? And it's only 30 years since the last repair and rebuilding job was carried out to the tune of £120,000.

(It rather reminds one of the old woodcutter who boasted of having had the same old axe for 35 years. Mind you, she'd had seven new heads and twelve new handles—but 'twas the same old axe . . .)

The Admiralty have tried all they know to combat the deadly insects, even going so far as to bombard them with radio-active pellets. But the death-watch beetles gobbled them up as well and came back for more, bigger and stronger than ever.

No, it really looks as though this tangible piece of our glorious naval tradition is going to rot out of effective existence at last. If your grandchildren are interested they may be presented with a phoney reconstruction of a blood-stained hulk—and much good may it do them.

For ourselves, we wistfully wonder—couldn't a huge bottle be built around it? Or are we expecting too much? OLD SALT.

## FREEDOM BOOKSHOP OPEN DAILY

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## ANARCHISM, ANARCHISTS AND ACTION

IN his article "Should we make a Fuss" (FREEDOM 10/9/55), P.S. writes:

"As anarchists we also want the best of everything here and now, without waiting for the revolution, and we should not be expected to put up with bad food, dirty conditions or slipshod service".

Ammon Hennacy writing in our American contemporary *Individual Action* (September 1955), on "The One Man Revolution" defines it as

[the secession] from the bourgeois exploitative society and to some extent living the ideal that is written and talked about. This is the most difficult thing to do for it means sacrifice and suffering.

P.H. elsewhere in this issue writes on "Anarchism and Activity" that

anarchists have always placed emphasis in their activities on the creation of oases in the desert of authoritarianism which people could actually use in order to experience a greater amount of freedom, instead of merely talking about it, and hoping that someday a revolution will drop freedom in front of their feet.

In his article on "Taxation, Wage Claims and the Welfare State" (FREEDOM 20/8/55) G. wrote:

It was out of a selfish concern for my own freedom, my own enjoyment of life and my own skin that I evaded conscription, and I have reason to believe that a great many other war resisters were similarly motivated by personal selfishness. If we are to wait until people oppose the many demands of the State on the individual out of motives of pure disinterestedness then indeed it is for pie in the sky that we wait. I prefer to place some reliance on elementary self-interest as an anti-totalitarian force.

★

WE have quoted from four anarchists of whom, P.S. and P.H., we would call communist—and Hennacy and G. individualist—anarchists (we apologise to them in advance if we have incorrectly "labelled" them!) Yet in his approach, the individualist Hennacy stresses the same points as the communist P.H. whilst G. and P.S. are on common ground in advocating the "enjoyment of life" and "the best of everything" here and now.

We have not quoted from these four comrades in order to underline a confusion in anarchist thought nor to attempt to establish a "party line". Quite the contrary. It is the diversity of approach which is the strength of anarchist thought and the guarantee that anarchism as a philosophy of life will never die from a hardening of the arteries or by becoming, as Marx is for the Marxists, a kind of bible, an absolute truth, which admits of no criticism, no new thought; an argument to end all arguments; a timeless equation to solve mankind's problems and questionings to-morrow as well as yesterday.

Having said this we\* feel justified in offering a fifth approach! Or at least an expression of our agreements and disagreements with our four comrades. P.S., we think, obscured his real point when he quoted

\*On this occasion the editorial "we" must be taken as referring to the present editorial writer and not necessarily to the Editors collectively.

### CORRECTION

In the article on the "Prerequisites for Responsibility" which appeared in FREEDOM last week, a misprint occurred in this column at the end of the fourth paragraph which made nonsense of our argument.

We were made to say that "so long as la condition ouvriere persists . . . the ugliness that surrounds us will be the anarchists' responsibility" whereas, of course, what we wrote was that it will be "the architects' responsibility".

from Harold Nicolson's most readable remarks in the *Observer* which, however, omitted to say how much he had paid for that delightful *cestino* with its "small flask of white Chianti, a pot of spaghetti, half a cold chicken, bread, cheese and fruit . . ." or for the "roast beef a l'anglaise" which was "pink and fresh and tender"! The "best of everything" is available here too for those who can afford to pay the price. The question for the anarchist or libertarian is whether it is worth paying the "price" to be able to pay the price! But, as we have said, we do not think this is the crux of P.S.'s argument. What he is really concerned with are human relations; the relations between the consumer in a café, or the traveller in a bus and the persons giving those services. What is irritating is not so much whether a meal is not first class as the attitude of the person who has produced it (after all does a man in love complain if his companion is a bad cook? When he does then he is either grown old or fallen out of love!) Even a packed bus can lose much of its discomfort if the conductor is a cheerful, friendly sort of person!

Now, as to the "best of everything" as defined by Harold Nicolson in his catalogue of Italian gastronomic perfection, plus all the other material needs which go with "keeping up with the Jones", and which are what Hennacy refers to as the values of the "bourgeois society", does "secession" from these, and to some extent living our ideals mean "sacrifice and suffering"? Do we have to declare that holding anarchist ideals and projecting them into our way of living involves us in "sacrifice and suffering"? Perhaps it is the religious approach which influences Hennacy's choice of terms. For us anarchism is the liberation of the mind and the body from the strait-jacket of bourgeois and religious conformism and taboo. It frees us from doing the things that are "done" (and there is as much conformism in working class—as in middle class—circles); of measuring the value of things and activities in money values (which make Diana Dors a greater success of life than Sir Alexander Fleming); of viewing life as meaningless, as a seeking after ways and means of relieving the boredom of the idle hours.

This is the materialist society from which we have "seceded":

NEW YORK (AP)—The Ford Foundation announced Saturday it is allocating a \$15,000,000 fund for study of what may be the greatest health problem facing mankind—mental illness. In making the announcement, the foundation noted that about half the hospital beds in the United States are occupied by mental patients.

We have, in fact, seceded only from the values of a society which in its search after material security and "prosperity" is creating a world of neurotic, unhappy, anxious people. We can perhaps, though we think anarchists should not, secede from society in order to build up "oases" which may serve as the living example of the "free society". Such "oases" very easily become, if not deserts, at least islands, in which the means become the ends, in which the example is drowned by the sheer struggle for physical survival. Indeed a point is reached where no distinction can be drawn between the "communism" of the communists and the "individualism" of a G. who resists conscription to save his skin or of the one-man revolution of a Hennacy. There is, to our minds, a kind of self-consciousness, a kind of exhibitionism, which is common to both these attitudes, and which we think contrary to the real spirit of anarchism which seeks its expression not through an élite but through the people. "One man revolutions", "oases in the desert", certainly unconsciously so far as their authors are concerned, smack of leaders and leadership.

We are part of humanity. However much, intellectually, we have understood and overcome its problems we will be spiritually dead if

## THE SUPERMEN

The following quotations are extracted from chapter 6 "Supermen" (pp. 76-80) of Bergen Evans' book "The Spoor of Spooks (And other Nonsense)" (Michael Joseph, 1955).

★

IF the Hero is the greatest figure of the past, the leader is the great figure of the present. The world has never had more leaders. There used to be a pretence that leadership grew out of merit, that the most capable men put aside their personal interests and, for the common good, assumed the burden of directing affairs. There is no such nonsense any more. Leadership is now regarded as a trade to which any brisk lad, unsuited to any other occupations, may be apprenticed. It's a poor college that doesn't offer at least half a dozen courses in the training of executives . . .

There is no necessary connection between the desire to lead and the ability to lead and the ability to lead somewhere that will be to the advantage of those led. "A craving for public attention", as has been pointed out "is not in any sense a qualification for public responsibility."

Leadership is more likely to be assumed by the aggressive than by the able, and those who scramble to the top are more often motivated by their own inner torments than by any demand for their guidance. The urge to leadership, says Dr. C. S. Blumel, in his study of nervous and mental diseases (C. S. Blumel: "War, Politics, and Insanity", Denver World Press 1948, page 105) "is a psychopathic trait that seldom associates itself with judgment or wisdom". Dr. Blumel found that the broadcasts of the national political conventions disrupted the decorum of his insane asylum, and felt it necessary to silence the radio during the election in order to protect his patients (Ibid) . . . Certainly our acceptance of "leadership" as a profession in itself, the "managerial revolution", as it has been called, has had some alarming-effects and portends worse.

Legislators who are of even average intelligence stand out among their colleagues. Many governors and senators have to be seen to be believed. A cultured college president has become as much a rarity as a literate newspaper publisher. A financier interested in economics, is as exceptional as a labour leader interested in the labour movement. For the most part, our leaders are following out in front; they do but marshal us the way that we are going . . .

All authoritarian political systems offer "leadership" and those who support them argue that they are at least efficient. They get things done! This is untrue. The publication of Hitler's private conversations shows him to have been semi-literate, confused and ignorant. The Nazi régime was riddled with corruption, cynicism and inefficiency. Refugees got past the border guards by the thousand. Spies were set ashore in America in a ludicrously ill-contrived way. German invasion maps of Great Britain, when captured, turned out to be common Ordnance Survey Maps, purchasable at

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we imagine that we can contract out of society to enjoy the full simple life. We cannot better express our thought than by quoting from an anarchist writer's appraisal of Vanzetti:

Like other anarchists in his tradition who do not happen to be orators or writers, Vanzetti was the most inconspicuous of men, a working man, not a leader; he was a militant, made propaganda, agitated strikes . . . He was a patient man, who was not looking for martyrdom or anything like it. Yet it happened, and he knew how to act; each step of the way, he knew which step to take next. This is all his greatness consisted of, that he had the power to act greatly when the occasion demanded it; he had an ideal, he believed in it with his life, he was not the first nor the last to die for it. Suppose it did not happen to be his 'luck' to be arrested? With unfeigned humility he tells us that he and Sacco would have been nothing, were destined to live out their lives as simple working men. We must not believe him; true humility is extremely misleading.†

†David Wieck in *Resistance* (New York, June 1954).

The myth of fascist efficiency is fossilized in the endlessly repeated assurance that Mussolini "made the trains run on time", a phrase that implies that, whatever minor inconveniences the fascist régime may have caused the Italians, it at least brought order.

It didn't; it brought disaster and reduced the Italian people to beggary for generations to come. And the trains did not run on time! The author was employed as a courier by the Franco-Belgique Tours Company in the summer of 1930, Mussolini's hey-day, when a fascist guard rode on every train, and is willing to make an affidavit to the effect that most Italian trains on which he travelled were not on schedule—or near it. There must be thousands who support this attestation. It's a trifle, but it's worth nailing down.

In whisky advertisements, at banquets and commencements, and in certain sumptuously-printed magazines, nothing is more stressed than the fact that our leaders are seers, "men of vision" who "look ahead" and "plan for the future", which lesser men are incapable of imagining. It has been found, however, in the course of testing a large number of executives, that, as a class, they are not highly imaginative. What they have is a large vocabulary. This does not necessarily mean that they have talked themselves into their jobs (by referring to their superiors as "men of vision"), but that they have an unusual amount of factual knowledge, clearly defined. An executive's function is to make decisions, and successful decisions must be based on knowledge and concisely conveyed to those who have to carry them out. Executives are highly-paid, not because they are supermen, but because (it is hoped) their decisions will make money for those who pay them. That—and the fact that more and more they have the key to the till.

## CYPRUS

Continued from p. 1

the people of Cyprus to swallow it. After all, the East Anglians are British, and can thus be relied upon, in their stoical fashion, to put up with anything the Government tells them is good for them.

But the Cypriots, being un-British (except in the technical sense), are not so well-trained in the game of identification with the British Government. And, strangely enough, they just don't want their beautiful island turned into an atom-bomb target.

So the ground is very well prepared—by the British—for an upsurge of national resistance. And it has come. The now familiar pattern of bomb-throwing, rioting, assassination, appears again, to be followed as ever by the usual retaliatory measures by the Government—shooting, imprisonment, repression, the Commandos flying in and the rest.

Not that the nationalism is a new thing. Cyprus has been colonised by one foreign power or another for 2,000 years. In 1878 the Sultan of Turkey, then the occupying power, ceded the island to Britain for administrative purposes, in return for assistance in fighting the Russians. It was annexed by Britain in 1914 when Turkey sided with Germany, and has been a British colony ever since. A constitution was given the Cypriots, providing for a legislative council, partly elected, as well as an executive council, appointed by Britain. In 1931, as a result of anti-British demonstrations, the legislative council was abolished and Britain has ruled undisturbed by any nonsense about democracy ever since.

Now, as a result of the renewed pressure from below, the Government is offering a constitution in which some measure of elected representation will be allowed—but the Turks are blocking that by demands for equal representation for their one-fifth of the population.

### Not in the Interests of the People

As anarchists, we can find little to sympathise with in any of the organised activity—whether from the governments involved, or the opposition. Nationalism offers only barren soil for the seeds of freedom, and we can find no sense in the call for 'Enosis' if it means putting the Cypriots under the domination of a semi-fascist Greek government instead of the British.

And, in fact, we cannot help but be suspicious of the forces in Cyprus demanding Enosis. Led by the Archbishop Makarios, self-styled ethnarch (i.e. governor) of the island, and head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus, we find it difficult to believe that those forces have nothing but the interests of the Cypriots at heart. The secret terrorist organisation, EOKA, is recognised as being right-wing, and gets its support

from the people by terror against them.

Anyone suspected of collaboration, or of informing to the British, is likely to be assassinated, but there is little informing since, as one Cypriot put it to a *New Statesman* correspondent: "How are we to be sure that the policeman to whom we pass [the information] is not himself an EOKA member?"

It seems to us, then, that a movement which has openly at its head an Archbishop of the Orthodox Church, and counts policemen among its ranks, is not one which can offer the people of Cyprus any true emancipation.

We understand the desire of the Cypriots to be free from the domination of the British Government—we desire the same thing ourselves! And any forces in Cyprus which will give to their struggle a libertarian and social revolutionary aim will have our support. But we cannot jump on the bandwagon, like the Communists and other political tricksters, and support demands, based on emotion and hysteria.

Let the people of Cyprus be free from British, Turkish and Greek governments. To choose between any of them is to jump from the frying pan into the fire.

## Justice in South Africa

A WHITE farmer named Ivan Oswald Bursey, farming in the East London district, employed a 40-year-old African, Mlonge Tembeni.

Tembeni stole three sheep from his employer's herd of 261. Such dastardly deeds cannot, of course, go unpunished.

Further facts came out in court: Tembeni had a wife and six children. His pay was £1 a month.

Of this, in at least one month he received only 10s.; his employer charged 10s. for taking Tembeni's wife to hospital.

In addition, this benevolent employer provided Tembeni with food—a four-gallon tin of mealies a week.

Three times the man had asked, in vain, for more rations: his twin babies could not eat mealies, and he had exchanged some of the mealies for meal and sugar.

The learned magistrate (Viljoen by name), having digested all this evidence, imposed an exemplary sentence: nine months' imprisonment with compulsory labour, and a compensatory fine of £20 15s. 6d. (or two months more in jail).

That was all—except for an irrelevant and disrespectful observation by Mlonge Tembeni: "My children and my wife complained that they were hungry. If your wife and children starve, you will do anything."



## A Weapon in the "Battle for Freedom" Torture by Orders

IT now appears that military training in the two big democracies includes the torturing of "prisoners" for the purpose of making them both reveal as well as resist imparting "military secrets" to the enemy. Let us explain.

At a mock battle on Salisbury Plain last week a "prisoner" was alleged to have been subjected to "torture". Witnesses have said that the "prisoner", a man of the Fourth Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment (who were acting as the "enemy") had his arms and legs twisted, his hair pulled and his face slapped, until he finally broke down and gave away the position of his battalion and the name of his officers. An "informal investigation" into the allegations has been opened by the military authorities.

The following quotation comes from the American magazine *Newsweek*:

It was difficult to estimate the temperature in the windowless wooden shack. It might have been 110 degrees. It might have been 130. The lieutenant couldn't see his surroundings because three powerful spotlights flooded his face from three feet away. He kept staring at his arms. They were stretched forward with a thin, naked wire looped around each forearm. Whenever somebody behind the lights felt like it, the wires pumped a electric shock through the lieutenant's body.

As the *Manchester Guardian* puts it "the event is not, as one might think, taking place somewhere in Communist China". It is in fact taking place at Stead Air Force base Nevada. The lieutenant is the navigator of a jet bomber and he is being "trained" to withstand torture in the event of capture by the enemy. According to *Newsweek* one thousand students a month are being put through this "training" which lasts

seventeen days and includes besides the foregoing, keeping the men short of food and subjecting them to constant questioning; keeping them confined in small boxes which are not long enough to permit a man to stand upright; putting them into dark pits with water up to the shoulders; kneeling on broomsticks while holding a large stone, and so on.

The training, it seems to us, has a dual rôle. Not only does it teach people to resist pain in silence but it also teaches others the techniques of how to use physical pain most effectively so that their victims will talk. Are the military in fact preparing their own torture department for when they capture real prisoners? Will their techniques as well as their operators perhaps be found useful by the police? Such a suggestion is not as fantastic as it may sound.

A recent issue of the *New Leader* (New York 22/8/55) contains an article on the problems of "Police Brutality" in which it is pointed out that:

Almost every year in the United States, policemen kill at least twice, and sometimes as many as four times, the number of people who are legally executed. In 1953, the last year for which figures are available, for example, the total of those who lost their lives through "injury by intervention of police," as the National Office of Vital Statistics labels it, was 255. In the same year, 62 persons met their deaths through legal execution.

In addition to those who die each year as the result of "injury by intervention of police" between 2,500 and 4,000 people are wounded.

Their wounds should vary from superficial to permanently disabling:

John Harvey Brown was crossing a street on his way to work very early one morning when two policemen, off-duty and not in uniform, emerged from a

nearby tavern with pistols drawn and ordered him to put up his hands. After emptying his pockets, one of them said, "Let him run and we'll plug him." "No," the other said, "let him have it right here." They did. Brown did not recover consciousness for four days. Now he has a metal plate in his skull and is crippled for life.

Training torturers might also be useful in the task of "pacification" in Africa. Instead of the crude, improvised forms of torture resorted to by the British in Kenya a more refined, studied method could be used in which the prisoner does not die from his injuries before he has "confessed" his crimes and "revealed" the identity of his "accomplices" (irrespective of whether he has anything to confess or accomplices to expose). The recent case of Kamau Kachina is one of many which have

been given publicity (how many other cases have been buried with their victims?). He was a Kikuyu who fell into the hands of the British police in Kenya. The manner of his death was summarised by the British magistrate in these terms:

No effort was spared to force him Kamau Kachina to admit his guilt. He was flogged, kicked, handcuffed with his arms between his legs and fastened behind his neck, made to eat earth, pushed into a river, denied food for a period, and was left out at least two nights tied to a pole in a shed, not surrounded by walls, with only a roof overhead, and wearing merely a blanket to keep out the cold.

(His tormentors—two European police inspectors aged 22 and 23 respectively—pleaded guilty to "causing grievous bodily harm" and were sentenced to 18 months hard labour).

Commenting on this case, *The New Statesman and Nation* remarks that it has "aroused no public protest in this country which used to be sensitive to issues of justice". Is it surprising when torture is becoming

part of the new army's military training?

And as for Kenya the real injustice is that the whole country is being tortured on behalf of a mere 20,000 white settlers. To make Kenya safe for them half that number of Kikuyu have already been killed (officially), thousands more have been herded into concentration camps and forced labour camps, without rousing any body of public opinion in this country, or any of those "progressive" journals which are shocked (without however losing their dignity!) when an individual case of horrible torture comes to light. Even the *New Statesman* congratulates Mr. Lennox Boyd for his efforts in Malaya, and suggests that he must now "tackle the colons in Kenya". Does the *N.S.* really think that the colons in Kenya will ever want to see justice done to the "natives" any more than their counterparts in S. Africa, Morocco, Algeria, or Malaya?

Torture is only one of the many vile manifestations of power.

### DISCUSSION

## Should We Make a Fuss?

"SHOULD we make a Fuss" asks P.S. (in *FREEDOM* 10/9/55), referring to people putting up with poor service and slipshod work or other things which are common experiences of our daily lives.

After reading the article I too asked myself "... perhaps it doesn't matter," but on reading it a second time the question of "what to do now", and the dilemma facing P.S., I decided there was more in the problem posed than appears on the surface.

"As anarchists," P.S. writes, "we also want the best of everything here and now, without waiting for the revolution, and we should not be expected to put up with bad food, dirty conditions or slipshod service."

As one who does not believe in the inevitability of a revolution in the popular sense of the term, I think it important that we discuss behaviour which has bearing on a tolerably social life, instead of sitting back and blandly asserting—"When people understand," then they will all don the mantles of cherubims.

This attitude is all too common among anarchists as with S.P.G.B.'ers who, when asked "What is socialism?" reply "the common ownership of the means of life," and when further asked, "when will it come", are told—"when the mass of the people understand." When they will understand is never answered.

This view of the arrival of the form of society—call it what we may, it matters not—savours too much of a Messianic redemption, and no doubt the bearer of a placard headed, "The Coming Of The Lord Is Nigh" would be equally as struck if asked, "When?"

It seems therefore that what we do here and now is important, and as P.S. suggests—"In the long run, education is the only answer..."

But the dilemma P.S. posed has not been answered. I haven't the "gospel" on it either, but need the question of a dilemma arise? Being often at the receiving end of the complaints of "fuss pots", I can discriminate between those justifiable or otherwise. I have felt qualms of conscience at times, when it has been beyond my power to satisfy someone as I think they ought to be satisfied.

As P.S. says, "... we can understand the frustrations and restrictions, the lack

of choice and free opportunity, that puts round pegs in square holes..."

We are not in control of our work, hence not in control of situations which are often more a result of bad management, and indifferent proprietors than of bad employees. As far as catering is concerned "get 'em in, and get 'em out" predominates, which is satisfactory for profits, but not for individual attention, nor for the chance of the worker to give of his best.

The question of how to complain arises which may show that P.S.'s dilemma needn't arise. Most of us are familiar with the outbursts of Gilbert Harding, or Mrs. Gerald Legge, which are good publicity for them, but not considered as "good manners" by other people. In these days of full employment complaints to management are not so serious and workers are as likely to tell both client and manager "where to get off". This situation and rationing has had a lot to do with people having to put up with lots of things they would not formerly have accepted. A certain amount of skill is required in giving service, but as George Orwell wrote, "It is a skill in being servile". Can this attitude be removed? Can servility and sucking up to solely economic superiors be transformed into willing service to fellow men and women?

I think it can, given first of all the abolition of the degrading "tipping" system, and the dropping of the snob mentality of the customer. For my own part I prefer people who are friendly and not pretentious, considerate and not "cultured", and appreciative for service rendered.

We can protest at bad service in a spirit of friendliness without complaining to a manager or proprietor. But if you approach every individual as if you were a little tin god and they beneath you—you are bound to create hostility straight away.

We should, however, as organised individuals protest very much, not only in regard to cracked cups, cold soup and the like, but against all attempts from the employing class to give us the shoddy and the indifferent, the travelling conditions for the "masses", the spurious entertainment for the "masses".

An example of such action was taken

recently at a railway station when the whole body of passengers refused to board a dirty train. A clean one was brought in to replace it. There is no end to the amount of things people could get done if only they were to organise their demands and use the boycott method of protest. Plain refusal to accept the cheap and nasty would have an effect. A certain amount of responsibility and sacrifice will be required but such things shared are more easily borne.

As an example, if an organisation of tube passengers decided to walk to and from work (however late they arrived!) as a protest at being bundled like cattle into trucks twice a day no doubt something would quickly be done.

So by all means let's kick up a fuss, but let us distinguish between responsible individual behaviour and pretentious boorishness, and between collective protest and irresponsible ragged action.

London. GEORGE HILBIN.

### MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## The Coventry Strikes

THERE have been two strikes at Coventry—one at Alfred Herbert's machine tool works. A charge-hand there got so worried by the complexity of the piece-work system (and his inability to satisfy the men—and the firm), that he committed suicide in despair.

A wave of indignation resulted in a strike. 250 men took time off to go to the funeral, and about 3,000 stopped work as a protest.

Even men almost wholly immersed in the machine system are compelled to assert their humanity at times.

One of the large insurance companies has many millions invested in this firm. Alfred Herbert himself is well over 80 years old; a real old-time conservative capitalist—personally "generous" in the sense that he has given hundreds of thousands of pounds to Coventry for an art gallery, and for preservation of historical relics, etc. The Coventry Theatre was built through one of his pet schemes. He lives at the works most of the time, even at such an age.

Opposed to him and the insurance bosses the official Trades Unions put up a poor show; poor that is for Coventry.

Some of the mediaeval craftsmen's spirit still survives here—an independence based on skill, which capitalists are always seeking to eliminate. Automation however calls for more and higher skill in making new machinery and appliances, and firms like Herberts are in the forefront there.

#### Guides & Teachers

Strikes in such firms are rare because so many men seek to become experts—"superior" beings. That is a peculiar curse of this age—clever men outsmarting each other.

On the other hand there are men like the poor chap who killed himself, who are centres of confidence. Not leaders, but guides and teachers of their mates. Every factory has them—they are the basis of progress—such as it is.

Eventually the Trade Union leaders and politicians claim the progress as theirs. "Experts" and the money-grubbing middle-class are adept at adjusting themselves to changes coming from below. Those who cannot adjust themselves are the grumbling-middle-class who are too proud to strike.

Strikes are rare in the Midlands because there are so many jobs where men can move away from awkward bosses. En-

gineering, motor cars, aircraft, and electrical trades are so complex that the loss of a few skilled men can produce chaos.

Machine tool men are in the key position. Everything in the factory system comes from them—other machinery, transport, tools and dies on which are made consumer goods—nylons—everything.

One day the machine men will work for humanity instead of the stupid greedy people who control them now. They do not fight a system—they fight people who impose systems on them.

#### Daimler Dispute

A strike, and a go-slow, ban on overtime, etc., is in operation at the Daimler car (and bus) works. 50 men were made redundant and short time was asked of the management to keep the men employed. This was refused—hence the strike.

3,000 are being made redundant at Armstrong Whitworth aircraft works, Coventry, over a period up to next spring. The idea seems to be Government policy to produce a surplus of labour here. Anything is better, of course, than military aircraft.

There is very little idealism—yet. Everyone is money-grubbing. We increasingly resemble America in the Midlands. Coloured folk come here to work on low-paid jobs with awkward hours: transport, silk spinning (Courtauld), etc.

I do not think a slump is imminent. Too much re-planning for larger production is going on. Some people would like a slump—would engineer one—but those days have gone—it is too dangerous. The idea now is, "Keep 'em working—and keep 'em skint". Bait them with tele, cars, furniture and frills, cheap paltry films, etc.

The phase we are in is a preparatory one—changing over to larger scale; larger output with same labour. Of course it cannot go on indefinitely—something will give way one day—but not yet.

All we can do is to build centres of confidence round ourselves—trust, understanding. Work on the best people, especially the young. Put the ideas there ready for a burst of idealism.

We are in a negative phase from the Anarchist point of view, at the moment. The pendulum will swing—it always has.

MIDLANDER.

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#### "THE UNIVERSITY LIBERTARIAN"

The next issue of the university anarchist periodical entitled (at present) "The University Libertarian" is being prepared for publication about the beginning of November. A particular effort is being made to make it a prestige issue of high standard. Many of *FREEDOM's* readers will already know of this effort by circular, but if there are any students, staff or graduates of universities, technical colleges, or similar institutions who have not been contacted and who would be interested in receiving a copy of the issue—or even contributing to it!—would they please write soon to V. Mayes, 13 Bannerman Avenue, Prestwich, Manchester?