

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

GENEVA 1955?

"The swarms of cringers, dough-faces, lice of politics, planners of sly innovations for their own preferment."

—WALT WHITMAN
on Politicians.

(Preface to "Leaves of Grass").

Vol. 16, No. 47

November 19th, 1955

Threepence

HITLER'S GENERALS MARCH AGAIN

TEN years after the war which was to eliminate German militarism for 50 years, the Wehrmacht has been born again.

Last week, on Saturday, 12th November, 95 officers and 6 sergeant-majors went on parade before an 8 ft. high Iron Cross in a garage at Ermekeil Barracks in Bonn. These 101 pioneers are the first of the 12 divisions Dr. Adenauer hopes to have ready to defend freedom and democracy in three years' time.

The historic garage was tatted up to give some semblance of pomp to the swearing-in ceremony. As well as the Iron Cross there were drapes of red, gold and black, the colours of Western Germany, while strips of scarlet coconut matting stretched on the concrete floor in front of a dais banked with chrysanthemums.

Only ten of the new soldiers—all veterans of the last war—had uniforms. Not because there were not plenty ready, for a Defence Ministry official announced that they had hundreds of uniforms—but apparently they had only 10 that would fit properly.

Fortunately, however, there were two uniforms available for the two generals who took the salute and are in fact the commanders of the new Wehrmacht. These are Lieut-General Adolf Heusinger, erstwhile chief of army operations to Hitler, and Lieut-General Hans Speidel, one-time Rommel's chief of staff.

Labour Call for Death Penalty Suspension

Three Labour M.P.s, Mr. Geoffrey de Freitas (Lincoln), Mr. C. J. Simmons (Brierley Hill), and Mr. George Thomson (Dundee East), have tabled a motion for the suspension of the death penalty for murder. It reads: "That this House, having considered the Report of the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment of September, 1953, is of the opinion that for an experimental period of five years no person should be sentenced to death for murder."

It should not be thought, however, that the Labour Party are all for abolition and the Conservatives all for hanging. At the meeting (reported elsewhere in this issue) of the National Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, Conservative, Labour and Liberal speakers were present.

Incidentally, our readers may be interested to know, that in drawing attention to the various political opinions represented on the platform, the chairman, Victor Gollancz, said that there was one point of view not represented, except by himself, and that was the anarchist, and that, he said, gave him greater pleasure in reading a telegram from Alex Comfort, supporting the meeting.

Free Leaflet Available

READERS may be interested in obtaining, reading, and distributing, an eight-page leaflet published by the National Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment.

It presents cogently the case for abolition and supplies facts and arguments with which you can arm yourselves to argue the case.

The campaign intends to hold meetings in as many provincial towns as it can, and in Scotland. Interest will be aroused all over the country and supporters are more effective if they are well versed in the arguments. As we see it, Anarchists should particularly concern themselves with affecting public opinion on this issue.

The leaflet ("Thou Shalt Not Kill") is free (although of course the campaign needs funds), from the National Campaign, 14 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.2.

These two professional soldiers served Hitler well and, because of their military experience, are well-equipped to serve the cause of democracy—or so we are asked to believe.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by the presence of the Defence Minister himself, Herr Theodor Blank. It will be recalled that when, in the Spring, Blank went down to Bavaria to speak at election meetings on behalf of Christian Democrat candidates, the young people who will be affected by his proposed conscription plans, gave him a hearty welcome with a riot complete with flying bottles.

The Real Reasons

The ex-generals of Hitler's army, however, are men of the world, and understand the reality of the situation much more clearly than the callow youth of Bavaria—and so, of course, do the rulers of Britain. For it is in their interests as much as anyone's that re-armament is being forced upon a reluctant Germany, that militarism will be encouraged in a population tired of it and of the wars that it brings.

We have consistently pointed out the real reason for British support for German re-armament. It has little to do with the threat from the East, although Stalin played beautifully into British hands by his aggressive and expansionist policies since the war. The real reason is that German re-armament will interfere with the capacity of Germany's industry to compete successfully with Britain in the commercial markets of the world, and also that, if Germany's boom does bust (and a few cracks have already appeared, though they may not be serious yet), an armament programme will provide the usual buffer against a full-scale depression.

For Britain, although economically she would like to see a German recession, politically would not like to have a depressed Western Germany with an embittered army of unemployed providing a sitting target for Communist propaganda right in the centre of Europe, flanked by 'Peoples' Democracies' in which unemployment will be kept at bay even if only by selling arms in the Middle East.

Russia Too

Neither should it be thought that Russia is altogether against the re-emergence of a new German army—whatever Communists and their stooges may be saying over here. Germany has already regained national sovereignty and as soon as there is a Wehrmacht strong enough to take responsibility for the defence of Western Germany, the British and American troops will be withdrawn.

Without any waste of time the cry has already gone up from no less a respectable journal than the *Sunday Express*, which, the day after the heel-clicking ceremony took place in the garage in Bonn, demanded the return of the four British divisions still stationed in Germany, which are costing the British taxpayer £80 million a year. (Incidentally the *Express* did not suggest that these soldiers should be sent home. Knowing its policy of Imperial Preference, it will no doubt maintain that they can be more fruitfully used in Cyprus, the Middle East or Malaya—where they will still cost the British taxpayer £80 million a year, but then in defence of the interests of Lord Beaverbrook's friends in the City).

Postmortem on the Geneva Spirit

WE are not surprised that the professional diplomats take themselves seriously—all professionals do whether they are footballers, boxing champions or cricketers with water-on-the-knee—but that the public should be made the accomplices in inflating the egos of these very ordinary people is a little unfair. And there is no escaping! If you read the popular press you may be spared the harrowing details of the Geneva struggle, only to hold your breath with millions of other fans awaiting the specialists' verdict on Ron Barton's future as a boxer or Dennis Compton's chances of helping the old country down-under next year. If you read the serious press then you have to take Geneva seriously. And a serious student of the activities of the Foreign Ministers needed to equip himself with a map with little flags, for these gentlemen seemed to spend less time in Geneva than in aeroplanes on flying visits to Spain and Jugoslavia, to Moscow, or right into the fray at Westminster to whitewash the Burgess-Maclean affair with a brilliant piece of oratory.

But however much the serious press takes the foreign ministers seriously the inescapable conclusion they have come to is that there is not much left of the "spirit" of Geneva. It is "evaporating" was how one commentator described the present state of the Geneva "spirit", while the *New York Times* rather more sadly uses the word "droop-

ing". Only *Pravda* is still full of spirit, refusing to pronounce Geneva "dead". Fortunately for the serious press their editorial columns will be fully occupied for some time to come with the Middle East "crisis".

★

WE do not apologise for our light-heartedness in reporting these "serious setbacks to world peace", or refusing to go into mourning over the demise of the Geneva Spirit (in any case we have always denied that it ever existed). For we think it high time that the farce called diplomacy, and the organisations and machinery that it has created for its own survival, should be exposed to public ridicule and unceremoniously buried once for all.

★

WHAT could be less united than the United Nations whose Council has spent a month, during which 21 ballots have been held, unsuccessfully, to decide which nation was to fill a vacant seat on the Council? They have now postponed further balloting for a fortnight, during which time we suppose it is hoped that some hard bargaining over whiskeys and soda may end the deadlock. Obviously if they were united nations then the purpose of the council would be to serve the best interests of everybody and the national composition of the Council would matter little. But this is not the case; no member country has the

slightest intention of sinking its sectional interests for the commonweal in this market-place of the nations. It is not only the Russians who walk out when they are crossed; France walked out over a suggestion that the N. African situation should be discussed, and only this month the South African delegation at the General Assembly was recalled by its government from the remainder of the present session after the Political Committee had adopted a resolution to keep the racial situation in the Union under review during the next twelve months. (Incidentally the British delegation, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, S. Africa, the Netherlands and Belgium voted against the resolution. Birds of a feather...!) And let it not be forgotten that some time ago it was proposed that Cyprus should be discussed, the British delegation warned the Assembly that in the event of the proposal being adopted they were instructed to walk out.

★

LABELLING Molotov as the "villain beyond dispute" for the failure at Geneva, the *Manchester Guardian* concludes from Russia's intransigence that she is not "in such urgent need of easement as some commentators thought last summer", pointing out that

whatever the internal pressure due to farming and food problems, the expansion

Continued on p. 2

vived to the satisfaction of both sides.

If, therefore, at any time during the next decade, German militarism begins once again to give us all headaches, we should remember in whose interests it is all being started up again—the British industrialists and imperialists and the Russian power-politicians. Certainly the manpower will have to come from the German people and they will be stupid indeed to supply it. At the moment they are opposed to it and Herr Blank is going slow (recruitment may be through the police force for a start). But some weeks of unemployment and the unremitting propaganda of the State machine may do the trick. It would in Britain—so why not there? But in the event, the German people would be pathetic pawns in the hands of cynical politicians of East and West.

And the propaganda has already begun. Last Saturday Herr Blank told the first of the many: "Your job is to create readiness for defence for the preservation of peace"

While General Heusinger told his men: "Obedience, faithfulness, comradeship—to those qualities we pledge ourselves to-day". The kind of qualities one might expect from a cocker spaniel, in fact—and obedience first, of course.

COMMENT

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS LORDS

DURING the past week a conference of the Commonwealth Press Union has been held in Canberra, big newspaper changes have taken place in Manchester and Glasgow, and the suppression of "managing" of news has been discussed in Washington.

We think that much that has emerged from these events confirms and underlines what FREEDOM had to say recently on the subject of the Free Press (*Reflections on the Free Press*, FREEDOM 1/10/55).

ON the opening day at the Canberra conference a lot of high-sounding nonsense was put forward by newspaper proprietors, editors and by politicians which purported to define the relation of a "free press" with political democracy and the freedom of the subject. Mr. Roy Thomson chairman of *The Scotsman* suggested that the conference should consider formulating a code showing "just what freedom of the press was and what the press had the right to expect". "Freedom of the Press" is one of those misleading slogans which everybody repeats automatically but which few people ever bother to analyse. At the Canberra conference its meaning was made quite clear if only by implication.

Mr. Hugh Astor of *The Times* suggested "three threats to press freedom":

from Governments on the pretext of national security, from industrial disputes closing newspaper offices, and from the public itself if it lost confidence in the press. Press freedom, he said, derived from the freedom of the subject, of whom the press was merely a hired agent. "By refraining from the persecution of private individuals, even when they hold public office, by maintaining our reputation for fairness and accuracy, and by constant and concerted endeavour to make good taste more attractive than bad, we can destroy the basis for the demand for statutory control."

Mr. Malcolm Graham, president of the British Newspaper Society and chairman of the conference said that "he held fast to the principle" that

the decencies of life depended on democracy, and that democracy could not possibly exist without the freedom of the press to print news and the freedom to comment on it.

Mr. V. Norton, the editor of the *Cape Times* (Capetown), said that if newspapers were to continue to enjoy the confidence of the people, from whom they derived their strength, they themselves must observe the ideals of tolerance, justice, and decency. Mr. N. Smith, associate editor of the *Ottawa Journal*, said that too much was heard of freedoms and privileges and not enough of responsibilities. "In Canada, the United Kingdom, and perhaps in Australia we exploited our freedom almost to the point of irresponsibility," he said. "I doubt if our handling of the Princess Margaret issue impressed thinking members of the public."

Mr. Roy Thomson said the real weapon was public opinion and if, in attempting control, powers realised in advance that any encroachment on press freedom would be universally attacked, the move-

Continued on p. 4

The Relevance of Max Stirner - 3

The Ego and His Own is not to be compared to other philosophical treatises. The construction of the book is haphazard and the style most uneven. Stirner often leads us up by-paths largely for the sake of indulging in mockery of philosophies and philosophers. One cannot help suspecting a malicious enjoyment in his own talent for exposing the weaknesses and humbug in the religious and ethical systems of his contemporaries, and in their social, sexual, political, and economic moralities. Yet in spite of all Stirner's seemingly irresponsible jeering and his methods of guerilla attack in argument, a powerful logic is maintained throughout the book. He has no real protest about what people say or do, he is solely concerned with the analysis of the reasons which people have for talk or action. In this he is closest to Machiavelli of all writers, who wrote not of how men ought to act but how men do act in practice. If one can get over the shock of having oneself torn to pieces and mercilessly analysed, Stirner is a powerful means to clear thinking. He undoubtedly had a profound influence on Karl Marx, who, although he bitterly attacked Stirner, developed the more practical side of his social theories under the lash of Stirner's criticism of Hegel, Hess, Bauer, Forbach and the other writers who formed the intellectual climate of the time. In a private letter to Marx, Engels admitted perhaps more than he would have cared to in public.

"But what is true in his (Stirner's) principle, we, too must accept. And what is true in that before we can be active in any cause we must make it our own egoistic cause—and in this sense, quite aside from any material expectations, we are communists by virtue of our egoism, that out of egoism we want to be human beings and not merely individuals".

Applying Stirner's ideas nearer home, we see what he has to offer to anarchists. We are anarchists because of our egoism—what does that mean? We wish for freedom, the free society: but what is the meaning of this freedom? Stirner takes it a stage further.

"Free—from what? Oh what is there that cannot be shaken off? The yoke of serfdom, of sovereignty, of aristocracy and princes, the dominion of desires and passions, yes, even the dominion of one's own will, of self-will, for the completest

self-denial is nothing but freedom—freedom, to wit from self-determination, from one's own self. And the craving for freedom as for something absolute, worthy of every praise, deprives us of own-ness: it created self-denial. However, the freer I become the more compulsion piles up before my eyes, and the more important I feel myself. The unfree son of the wilderness does not yet feel anything of all the limits that crowd a civilized man . . .

Being free from anything means only being clear or rid. 'He is free from headache' is equal to 'he is rid of it'. 'He is free from this prejudice' means 'he never conceived it', or 'he has got rid of it' . . . What a difference between freedom and own-ness! One can get rid of a great number of things, one yet does not get rid of all; one becomes free from much, not from everything. Inwardly one may be free in spite of the conditions of slavery, although too it is again only from certain things not from everything: but from the whip and the domineering temper of the master one does not as a slave become free. 'Freedom lives only in the realm of dreams'. Own-ness on the contrary, is my whole being and existence; it is I myself. I am free from what I am rid of, owner of what I have in my power or what I control. My own. I am at all times and under all circumstances if I know how to have myself and do not throw myself away on others. To be free is something that I cannot truly will, because I cannot truly make it, cannot create it: I can only wish it and aspire towards it, for it remains an ideal, a spook.

Stirner goes on from here to analyse the fact that when we say we want freedom we do in fact want something that is more concrete than freedom, and something that is not unattainable—namely the consciousness of our own selves as the ultimate desired end to be fulfilled. This has been endlessly misinterpreted as meaning that Stirner denied the importance of society and the social nature of human beings; but this conclusion is not implicit in his argument. Talking of the Christian concept of God as the Supreme Egoist, he writes:

"How one acts only for himself, and asks after nothing further, the Christians

have realized in the notion of 'God'. He acts 'as it pleases him' and foolish man who could do just so, is to act 'as it pleases God' instead. If it is said that even God proceeds according to eternal laws, that too fits me, since I too cannot get out of my skin, but have my law in my whole nature, i.e. in myself."

"I have my law in my own nature", the conscious egoist is under no delusion of freedom or lawlessness then; as he finds his law in his own nature so he acts. If he is moved to co-operativeness, kindness, sociability just so he will try to act, just as much as if he is moved to aggression, hate or solitariness. This is the kernel of the whole utilitarian argument; we will serve our interests best by creating social forms which serve the law of our human nature, and not try to modify the laws of our human nature to serve pre-existent social forms. The whole problem then is one of consciousness—what do we really want? Are we to serve the law of God, the law of the State, the law of Man (with a capital M), or the law of our own nature?

Here Stirner tackles another problem which has sometimes beset anarchists. His contemporary Feuerbach had attacked religion and the whole idea of representing our purpose on earth as being the service of God; but, as Stirner pointed out, Feuerbach had simply replaced an ideal construct of God with an ideal construct of Man—Man with a capital M. Stirner sought to show how the service of Man could be just as onerous as the service of God and that the individual person gains nothing from the exchange. We know to our cost just what is justified in the service of Man; war, political repression, the prostitution of science, the destruction of objective truth—all this is justified as being in the interests of something greater than ourselves—the ideal of Man. The communists see Man as represented by the ideal proletariat, the Nazis saw Man as the blond Aryan, in Britain he is often seen as an ideal Decent Chap famous for his tolerance, his sense of fair play and his unquestioned right to set the moral tone for the whole world to follow. Anything is worthwhile to preserve the essential character of Man—his proletarian purity or his Aryan purity or his essential Christian Decency. The lives of millions of

little egoists, each one pursuing his own selfish little ends, can be ruthlessly sacrificed for the greater glory of this idol Man, hence we have religious and political creeds of self-renunciation, we have constriction, we have weapons of mass destruction.

I have already pointed out that the contemporary journal FREEDOM has been much influenced by Stirnerite ideas: the mildness of the editorial opposition to egoist ideas, as expressed in the recent controversy over tax-dodging would make Kropotkin and Tom Keel turn in their graves; but there is a great deal of anarchist literature which makes an idol out of Man—I believe there is even a journal of that name. But we have progressed. We still have the muddled idea current in the movement that there is somehow, an irreconcilable antipathy between being an anarchist and pursuing one's individual interests.

Is *The Ego and His Own* a philosophical treatise? I do not know, nor do I think its author cared how his readers regarded it. Stirner was originally one of the young Hegelians, deeply learned in all philosophy and whose passion in life was discussion and polemic among themselves. Stirner then brought out this bombshell of a book which utterly bewildered and outraged the other young Hegelians. His attitude to philosophy is perhaps represented by a verse of Omar Khayyam:

"Myself when young did eagerly frequent Doctor and Saint and heard great argument

About it and about but evermore
Came out by the same door as in I
went.
With them the seed of wisdom did I
sow
And with my own hand laboured it to
grow.
And this was all the harvest that I
reap'd.

I came like water and like wind I go."
The Ego and His Own begins with a line from the poet Goethe "Ich hab' mein' sach' auf nichts gestellt", and after all its meanderings, after all its intricate analysis, it ends with precisely the same line "Ich hab' mein' sach' auf nichts gestellt". That line is hard to translate; it can only be understood in the light of Goethe's poem. Goethe describes how he had become possessed, he was the possessor. Stirner's ideals had used him, eaten him up one after another. In the end Goethe's philosophy was one of detachment, and likewise with Stirner, he was no longer the possessed he was the possessor. Stirner's concept of self-ownership, self-possession is interesting because it is dynamic, it takes into account the fact that we are transitory phenomena—all our striving ends in death and the dissolution of our uniqueness.

"If I concern myself for myself, the unique one, then my concern rests upon its transitory, mortal creator, who consumes himself, and I may say—Ich hab' mein' sach' auf Nichts gestellt". Literally one may translate the line "I have set my being on nothing". G.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Vintage Incident

THERE has been the wildest speculation amongst England's left-wing intelligentsia as to the possibilities in 1960 of the correctness of drinking vintage Beaujolais, say '49 or '50, with partridge or slightly raw steak. This problem has caused a certain amount of trouble in the recent past, but in a different guise—it will be remembered that in 1942 a noted connoisseur of Rhône wines, Vivien Bouteille, had occasion to remark that wine-drinking other than port with partridge, was inexcusable in view of the fantastic condition of society in general. We remember only too well the incident

which took place in the House of Commons a few days afterwards, when Sir Simon Booze held the attention of all members with a scintillating speech, delivered with considerable verve and aplomb, on the rigours of conducting a hectic war without the attendant comfort of wines—or at least a choice of two or three good vintages in each class. The House was ecstatic and refused to allow the debate to continue (on "Housing in Wartime"), without according Sir Simon three hearty cheers.

Comparative Collections

This moving episode remains as fresh as ever in our memory, and is easily comparable with a more recent happening in our time. We refer of course to the enormous sum of money which was collected for Britain's beloved old war-horse, Winston Churchill, in recognition of his achievements on behalf of democracy throughout the war. It never fails to astound us that such large amounts can be collected for causes like this. And then there was the million odd pounds collected for the preservation of Westminster Abbey—who could have suspected that such a noble pile was in so great a need of repair. One other collection figure also comes to mind now that we are on the subject; it was subscribed only last week in fact—about £1,100 for the movement for the abolition of hanging. Not so great a sum as we could have hoped—but it must be borne in mind that the emotional content in the appeal is not quite so great as for other perhaps less worthy causes.

Union Dues

News from the Trades Unions of the U.S.A. brings tidings of a remarkable accomplishment by the American Federation of Labour "teamsters" (transport workers). They have just held the grand opening of their new headquarters in Washington, costing \$5,000,000. The building is a four-storey edifice in white marble, complete with auditorium decorated in 23 carat gold leaf and equipped for CinemaScope and Vista-Vision, walnut panelled conference room, dining room with television, coffee room, wood panelled offices for labour leaders, oil paintings all over the place and many other expensive little items.

It would seem that the top men of the Union believe in doing themselves rather well out of the proceeds from workers' contributions. There have been criticisms in this vein but they have no doubt been satisfactorily answered by similar observations to the one made by A.F.L. boss, Dave Beck, when he said, "This is a tribute to what the working people of America can accomplish". Undeniably it is quite an accomplishment—especially the gold-leaf.

It is interesting to note that in spite of one of the original A.F.L. dictums to the effect that unions should always attempt to steer clear of Government entanglements, 51 unions now have their headquarters in Washington, the seat of Government. No doubt there are good reasons from the point of view of the labour leaders, though one cannot avoid the thought that there may be some slight divergence of opinion between leaders and ordinary members as to what constitutes a good reason. H.F.W.

REVIEW

The Heart of the Matter

A NEW campaign against the death penalty is under way in this country. Whether it will succeed or not is difficult to say at this stage. Hanging is an old-fashioned tradition, and the modern expression "gala day" comes from the Saxon custom of making "hanging day" or "gallows day" a public holiday. Undoubtedly the idea of hanging appeals to the sadistic mind. Strangling is a common method of the sadistic murderer. The sense of suffocation is sometimes sought by masochists. Appeals to public conscience will not be effective for frustrated individuals, who cannot bear to forego their satisfactions, but they can be effective for a fairly large section of the population who are not too far gone.

In his new pamphlet* Victor Gollancz "If I believed it established . . . that the death penalty is preventative of murder as nothing else could be; if—I am anxious to put my case in as extreme a form as possible, so that nobody can misunderstand me—if I felt certain that abolition would immediately be followed by a startling increase in the number of murders: I should still say . . . that the most urgent task that confronts us, or could confront any people that had a care for religious or humane values, is the ending of capital punishment . . . Capital punishment is wrong, and that is all there is to it; and the defence of it on any practical grounds whatever—and irrespective whether those grounds are well or ill taken—is not an atom more relevant than the defence, on similar grounds, of the practice, a couple of centuries ago, of executing little children for the theft of five shillings."

He goes on to ask what would be the attitude of the majority of men and women brought up in the "liberal or Western tradition" if the safety of their country depended on the extracting of information by torture from an enemy child. I am not quite so sure of the answer as he is, as I happen to have seen quite a lot of child-torture (admittedly on a fairly mild level), in schools run by folk brought up in the "liberal or Western tradition". However I agree with him that many people faced with this dilemma would say, "We cannot do it; let the child alone, come what may."

He does not argue about the practicality or otherwise of abolition, he con-

siders such considerations really irrelevant. He is not one of those who would substitute a real "life sentence" for the death penalty, as would some well-meaning but muddle-headed reformers. The truth is that such a sentence is almost equivalent to burying a person alive, it is a sort of suspended death, and may in fact be the harder sentence. Indeed towards the end of the pamphlet the author seems to approach the position that all punishment is wrong.

There is much talk of Jesus Christ in the pamphlet. To get a humanitarian idea across in the Anglo-Saxon world it is almost essential to bring in some form of liberal Christianity. The appeal of the Christ-figure, as interpreted by liberal Protestants, is very great. Actually it is essentially a nineteenth century creation, which does not of course occur to those who write in this strain. The Christ of the gospels is a complex figure, who is represented as saving a woman taken in adultery on the one hand, and consigning all his opponents to Hell on the other. Allowing for all the contradictions of human nature it is rather difficult to believe that we are dealing with the description of one man. It is more like the confusion of several different characters, some of whom may not be wholly fictitious.

What ultimately it is that makes people feel that taking life is wrong? Surely because man's instincts are pacifistic, his famous "aggression" being at bottom an impulse directed at his environment, or rather the hostile forces in it, and to kill his fellows is something abnormal?

The author says that he rests his case on the imperative, "Thou shalt do no unspeakable cruelty to any human being"†

"I do not propose," he writes, "to ask about it, as I asked about 'Thou shalt not kill', the question 'Why?' You either accept it or you don't. Almost everyone accepts it if they starkly face up to the matter: even Hitler did it a sort of ghastly lip-service when he sent women and children to the gas-chambers, for he ordered that they should be kept in ignorance of their fate, and that their progress should be accompanied by the music of Viennese waltzes. If we transgress against this commandment of our

†It would have been better said if he had omitted "unspeakable".

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP OPEN DAILY

OPEN 10 a.m. to 6.30; 5.0 SATURDAYS

All books sent post free, so please get your books from us. We can supply any book required, including text-books. Please supply publisher's name if possible, but if not, we can find it. Scarce and out-of-print books searched for.

New Books . . .

- Mental Health and Infant Development Kenneth Soddy (2 vols.) each 25/-
- The Supreme Doctrine Hubert Benoit 25/-
- The Home and Social Status Dennis Chapman 35/-
- Studies in Class Structure G. D. H. Cole 21/-
- Changing Forms of Art Patrick Heron 28/-
- Second-Hand Books . . .**
- South Sea Tales Jack London 2/6
- The Cruise of the Snark Jack London 2/6
- The Strength of the Strong Jack London 2/6
- Tales of the Fish Patrol Jack London 2/6
- The Metropolis Upton Sinclair 4/-
- End as a Man Calder Willingham 3/-
- The Sixth of October ('Men of Goodwill'—Book One) Jules Romains 2/6
- Eros in Paris (Book Four) Jules Romains 3/-
- The Proud of Heart (Book Five) Jules Romains 2/6
- The Aftermath (Book Seventeen) Jules Romains 5/-
- French Stories from New Writing Gide, Sartre, etc. 2/6
- Christianity v. Secularism Hetherington and Chapman Cohen (1892) 2/6
- The Agnostic Annual 1886 & 1887 the two 3/6
- The Religion of Woman Joseph McCabe 2/-
- Four Lectures on Freethought and Life Chapman Cohen 2/6
- Dialectical Materialism V. Adoratsky 3/6
- The Epic of the Black Sea André Marty 2/6
- Footsteps of Warfare R. L. Worrall 3/-
- The Awakening of Asia H. M. Hyndman 5/6

Postage free on all items

Obtainable from
**27, RED LION STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1**

*CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, by Victor Gollancz, 1/- Available from Freedom Bookshop.

THE CRISIS IN RUSSIAN AGRICULTURE



Vol. 16, No. 47 November 19, 1955

POSTMORTEM ON THE GENEVA SPIRIT

Continued from p. 1

sion of the Soviet strategic air force and of the Russian Navy is continuing at a fast pace. The talk of thousands of men being demobilised should not confuse anyone, since it much less than compensates for the new jet bombers and long-range submarines. The Soviets may smile but they are still arming to the teeth.

Apart from the M.G.'s confused argument (unless they suggest that the expansion of the strategic air force, etc. absorbs more man-power than was released by the demobilisation of the 640,000 army men—plus the civilian workers engaged in equipping and feeding them—which seems unlikely), it would certainly give one a clearer insight into the Russian system to know whether "easement" is an "urgent need" or a hindrance from an economic point of view. The Geneva conference does not help one except indirectly.

One tends to forget that this was a meeting of the "Big Four", a sinister term for it in fact refers to the four powers who between them (flanked by their respective satellites) can carve up the world. As we have already written Geneva was power politics at the summit—once removed. Now whatever Russia's internal needs demand there is obviously a limit to the concessions that she can make in the political struggle for world domination (and it is only the unfree "free press" of the democracies that can take it for granted that ambition for world domination only comes from Russia and that the rôle of the democracies is a defensive one). The Big Three at Geneva could obviously well-afford to press for German unification, free elections and all the trappings of "democracy" because they have a pretty shrewd idea that the results will be all in their favour and against the Russians' political interests; they also favour mutual inspection of military establishments because they know that Russia would reveal more than she learned (this was pointed out by a *New York Times* commentator when the Geneva "spirit" was at full strength 22/7/55). We are not surprised that in the circumstances, that is knowing the answers beforehand, Russia should refuse to play ball with the West (any more for instance, than that Macmillan is agreeable to permitting free elections to be held in Cyprus on the union-with-Greece issue. Politicians never cut their own throats consciously!) Molotov's stubbornness at Geneva does not therefore, in fact, prove that from an economic point of view the Russian system is not in "urgent need of easement".

SUCH however cannot be so surely said of the avowedly capitalist countries. Butler's cure for Britain's economic troubles is aimed at the kitchen-front but leaves untouched the armament programme (the effect of deferring call-ups will on his own admission only be noticed in two years' time). And in America far from being satisfied that they have succeeded in squeezing the last word in horror from the brains of their scientists, the government has now ordered the U.S. Army to "widen research into germ and gas warfare, and warfare by the use of radioactive particles". The Army's Chemical Corps, which is to be reorganised, is to develop the agents and weapons of biological, radiological, and chemical warfare, as well as the methods to combat them, "to the fullest extent the human mind can encompass."

And once these weapons have been developed they will have to be produced, at some fantastic cost, even if only to "remove any tempta-

It is, ostensibly, because of the failures in Soviet agriculture to reach its targets, that Georgi Malenkov was tumbled from his position of eminence last Spring. His abject apologies—and his being saddled with responsibility for the failures—did not ring true, and the irony of the situation was that the man who came up from behind and gave Malenkov the push was Nikolai Khrushchev—the man who was in fact the agricultural planner!

The Communist Party, well practiced in the art, covered up its embarrassment at Malenkov's demotion fairly well, but could not hide the intriguing fact that he had been Stalin's right-hand man, with the job of supervising the economic planning for the entire Soviet Union, during the war.

Either Malenkov was inefficient then, and the great Stalin either had not noticed it or had his own reasons for keeping Malenkov in the job, or he had in fact been able to cope with that tremendous task in appallingly difficult conditions, but had fallen down on a much smaller job in a much easier time. Which is inconsistent except in terms of the power struggle which goes on at the top.

However, these things have no more than a basis in reality. What is true is that there is a crisis in Russian agriculture, which has been relegated to the same secondary position in the national economy as agriculture has in Britain. The needs of the rapidly developing industrialism are taking peasants from the land and making the production of food always subjugated to the State's plans for industry and the armed forces.

Added to that, however, is a factor which British agriculture has never had to contend with—the direction from above and the forced, dictatorial collectivisation through which party bureaucrats have tried to compel the peasantry to do the State's bidding.

In order to get any sort of grip on agriculture at all, the Bolsheviks have had to be utterly ruthless towards the peasants. Stalin's ukase against the kulaks and his eventual boast that they had been eliminated is a spectacular example that stands out from the steady struggle that has gone on ever since Lenin's day.

The present plans of the Soviet Government for demobilising 600,000 men from the Red Army and conscripting them in agricultural collectives has been greeted by Stalin-eyed peace-lovers as a gesture in the Geneva spirit. As far as the men themselves are concerned this represents no advance in freedom, since they will be under a militarised kind of discipline, only they'll be working on State farms instead of drilling in State barracks.

For the State, however, it means a more economic use of this mass of manpower, while not relinquishing its grip upon them, and may be a very valuable experiment in the use of highly disciplined workers in an occupation where the natural labour force is indisciplined and indeed rebellious.

For the resistance against the State still goes on, and we reprint below an article from *Views and Comments*, published by the Libertarian League of New York. This article presents translations from Russian papers showing the massive discrepancies between targets and achievements in Russian agriculture.

P.S.

THE RUSSIAN PEASANTS FIGHT BACK

AN article appearing in the conservative Russian-language daily, *Russkaya Zhizn* (San Francisco, Aug 19, 1955) presents some interesting statistics on the Soviet agricultural situation as reported in the official press of that country.

tion for some future enemy to resort to germ warfare".

So long as the world goes on arming there will always be the potential danger of that bogey-man the 'future enemy'. So long as there is the danger of a 'future enemy' there is the 'justification' for armaments. That vicious circle, we submit, is a guarantee for the continued existence of capitalism, and spells security for the army of diplomats, experts, advisers, co-ordinators, committeemen, interpreters, bodyguards, flunkies and all the other globe-trotters whose "task" it is to break that vicious circle but whose very existence depends on its maintenance. Is the crab-like progress of diplomacy surprising therefore? We imagine Stirner (see page 2) would say that we, the people, are the mugs for paying these parasites to trick us into believing that their interests are the same as ours!

The writer of the article, N. Zhigulev, considers that the Russian economy has been kept in a state of permanent crisis largely through the conscious withholding of labour by the producing masses.

While admitting the effectiveness of the more spectacular examples of resistance such as the Vorkuta strike or the derailment of a munitions train near Shepetovka (this incident was also reported as far back as Feb. 1955 in the Munich paper *Nabat*—trans.), he feels that the basic attitude of the people has been one of passive resistance.

Because they underestimated the extent of this passive resistance, the Western experts have—through the years—built up a false picture of a resigned if not complacent Russian working class. He claims that the régime has shot or interned far more people for the crime of "economic counter-revolution" than for other political acts.

We are not sure if Zhigulev is or is not correct in his assertion that the Russian people have deliberately—with the awareness of sure famine to follow—resorted to such extensive slow-downs in production. But here are some figures from the Soviet paper, *Radianska Ukraina*, which Mr. Zhigulev quotes. The reader should bear in mind that all grain crops in the Ukraine—the Soviet bread basket—should be sown before the end

of April to insure them reaching maturity before the killing frost. The 1955 Khrushchev plan called for the sowing of 5½ million hectares of corn (maize) in the Ukraine.

"As of the 18th of May, the planting of corn in the Vishkovetz area has not been completed."

"In the Kharkov area, the districts of Petrovsk and Lozovenk have fulfilled respectively, 19.5% and 14.8% of their corn planting programme."

"On May 11th, planting had only just begun in the farmlands of Barvinkov, Lozov, Bogodukhov, Krasnokutsk and Dergatchev."

"In the Volodarsko-Volhynia region the corn planting programme has been 14.8% completed. Twenty State collectives (kolgospis) of this region have not started planting." (May 15).

"The collective serviced by the Ushomir machine tractor station had by May 10 planted only 85 hectares of a scheduled 853."

"The arrels serviced by the Ushomir machine tractor station, have planted 146 out of a scheduled 1,216 hectares."

From *Sovetskaya Byelorussia* of Dec. 10 and Dec. 15, 1954, he relays some interesting figures on the state of agriculture in White Russia at that time. In size this republic is a comparatively small part of the vast Soviet land mass. However it is of considerable importance as a producer of flax, hemp, meat and dairy products.

"Officials of the Krasny Pakhar collective farm near Mstislavl suggest that collective farmers bring the new-born calves into their homes so that they will not freeze in the ancient cow barns belonging to the collective."

"At the Progress collective farm near Zelvensk in the state of Grodno, there are ample reserves of grain and fodder. However the shortage of drinking troughs allows the livestock to be watered only once every 24 hours. This in turn necessitates a drastic reduction in their intake of food."

Libertarian Forum in New York

The Libertarian League runs Round Table Youth Discussions every Friday at 8 p.m. at the Libertarian Centre, 813 Broadway (between 11th and 12th Sts.) New York City.

All readers of FREEDOM in New York not in touch with the Libertarian League are invited to make contact.

Copies of *Views & Comments* are available for English readers through Freedom Bookshop.

The Negro in the Deep South Segregation & Industrialisation

THE inevitable industrialisation of the Southern States of America is developed at a fantastic rate. When we discussed this some time ago in FREEDOM, we pointed to the benefits to be gained by industrialists through the exploitation of cheap labour and an unorganised working class. In the light of still greater expansion the position of the depressed Negro worker seems to have improved very little.

In 1939 the South's industrial output amounted to 11,000 million dollars. It has now reached 60,000 millions, and in the next ten years the South expects to build 11,000 factories. It is estimated that the population between 1950-1975 will have increased by 14 million. More than half of the nation's chemical factories have been built in the South in the last few years. These and other figures were brought before the recent conference of Southern Governors in Alabama.

Max Freedman, writing in the *Manchester Guardian* on the vast changes which have taken place since the war tells us a little of what has happened to the Negro population during these changes. Greater variety of employment, increased emphasis on civil rights, and improvement in health are the gains which "appear impressive only by contrast with the meagre standards which prevailed previously", but, in fact, the Negro's share of the South's labour force has failed to keep pace with industrial expansion. He writes:—

"Although workers in the South increased by nearly two million between 1940 and 1950, the number of Negro workers actually fell by 300,000. The mechanisation of agriculture drove more than 500,000 Negroes off the land between 1940 and 1950. They had to find jobs in the city; some went to Southern towns and stayed in spite of segregation; others went North to work in the factories paying big wages for war production. A great migration took place; in 1940 the Negro population in the Northern states was 2,960,000; ten years later it was 4,600,000.

It is not surprising that the Negro worker is the first to suffer in the South where he is blatantly discriminated against by all classes. Recent measures taken by the State of Virginia to combat the Supreme Court's ruling on segregation, make it clear that the whites are determined to keep the Negro in his inferior position. A special commission appointed in 1954 recommended a few days ago that:— "local school boards should be given the power to assign pupils to particular schools, using many standards other than

race, to keep schools as segregated as possible. It also recommended that tuition grants for private schooling be given to students in those localities which abolish public or state schools, and to students who object to attending integrated schools in those localities which continue a public school system.

Before tuition grants can become effective it will be necessary to amend section 141 of the Virginia Constitution. The Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals gave a ruling on November 7 that this section prohibits the use of public funds for private schooling. But the Gray Commission recommended that a constitutional convention be summoned to amend this section."

If this recommendation is accepted it means in effect that grants will be made available for white pupils to enable them to attend separate schools, and where a public school system is maintained, presumably for the "benefit" of the Negro pupil, differential treatment will be applied to the amenities within the schools.

Where the Negro population is small, the problem will not be so acute. In 31 countries in North, West and South-west Virginia, the Negro school population is less than 10% of the whole; in 24 of the South Eastern counties it exceeds 50%. Where there are large Negro populations the commission believes that "people will abandon public schools rather than accept any integration". Thus giving a lead to the rest of the white population.

It has to be noted too as a further bar to integration, that Virginian school property represents an investment of nearly 500 million dollars.

"These properties are owned by local districts and the money for their operation is raised in great part from local taxes. The schools cannot continue without the support of the people and"—the commission says—"we must leave a large measure of economy to the localities even though that may result in the closing of public schools."

It is difficult to see how the economically depressed Negro can receive any education under these conditions. It would appear in fact that if the State of Virginia pursues its opposition to integration in the public schools, the Negro pupil will be worse off.

At the moment there are 39,000 Negro pupils in the high schools, and according to this commission, the pay of white and Negro teachers has been equalised.

Although we feel that the decision of the Supreme Court is progressive in that it recognises the rights of all men to equal education, it is obvious that in dealing with the Southern neurosis legislation cannot remove such deep-rooted prejudices. R.M.

"At the Vlast Sovietov collective, eleven calves died of starvation in a single night."

"In the state of Moghilev, the average yield per cow for the first quarter of the preceding fiscal year was 124 kilograms of milk. The figure for the same period of the present year is 85 kilograms of milk. In the state of Gomel the milk yield per cow (for the same fiscal periods) dropped from 114 for last year to 90 kilograms for this year."

"At the Pobeda collective farm, for all of last year only 26 out of 300 pigs were fattened and raised."

"On Feb. 1, 1955, on all of the collective farms of the state of Vitebsk, there was a grand total of 28 young pigs ready for fattening."

"The sowing of flax and hemp has fallen off catastrophically. In 1949, 800 hectares were sown to flax—in 1954, 299 hectares."

"A whole series of collective farms still have on hand a considerable amount of raw flax and unworked hemp harvested in 1953. The collective October has not turned over to the State a single kilogram of its 1954 flax and hemp harvest."

Well, there it is—straight from the horse's mouth. Lack of space prevents our giving the rest of the statistics which are very much in the same vein. The writer of the article may be correct in ascribing this situation to the conscious resistance of the peasants. Equally important as a contributory factor, may be the bungling of party hacks and NKVD agents who double as agricultural planners (and who to-morrow, may be disguised as industrial or military planners).

There is also the artificial farm labour scarcity created by the government's frantic attempts to catch up with American industrial production. If the White Russian and Ukrainian reports are representative of conditions in the USSR as a whole, this promises to be the third consecutive year of extensive crop failures in the Soviet Union.

(Views & Comments, New York, Oct. '55)

FREEDOM PRESS

VOLINE :
Nineteen-Seventeen (The Russian Revolution Betrayed) cloth 12s. 6d.
E. A. GUTKIND :
The Expanding Environment 8s. 6d.
V. RICHARDS :
Lessons of the Spanish Revolution 6s.
MARIE-LOUISE BERNERI :
Neither East nor West cloth 10s. 6d., paper 7s. 6d.
Workers in Stalin's Russia 1s.
ALEX COMFORT :
Delinquency 6d.
Barbarism & Sexual Freedom boards 3s. 6d.
HERBERT READ :
Art and the Evolution of Man 4s.
Existentialism, Marxism and Anarchism 3s. 6d.
Poetry and Anarchism cloth 5s., paper 2s. 6d.
The Philosophy of Anarchism boards 2s. 6d., paper 1s.
The Education of Free Men 1s.
GEORGE WOODCOCK :
Anarchy or Chaos 2s. 6d.
New Life to the Land 6d.
Homes orhovels? 6d.
Railways and Society 3d.
What is Anarchism? 1d.
The Basis of Communal Living 1s.
ERRICO MALATESTA :
Anarchy 6d.
Vote—What For? 1d.
F. A. RIDLEY :
The Roman Catholic Church and the Modern Age 2d.
RUDOLF ROCKER :
Nationalism and Culture cloth 21s.
TONY GIBSON :
Youth for Freedom paper 2s.
Food Production and Population 6d.
Who will do the Dirty Work? 2d.
JOHN HEWETSON :
Sexual Freedom for the Young 6d.
Ill-Health, Poverty and the State cloth 2s. 6d., paper 1s.
PHILIP SANSON :
Syndicalism—The Workers' Next Step 1s.
Marie-Louise Berneri Memorial Committee publications :
Marie-Louise Berneri, 1918-1949: A Tribute cloth 5s.
Journey Through Utopia cloth 16s. (U.S.A. \$2.50)
K. J. KENAFICK :
Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx paper 6s.
27, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

Report on a Successful Anti-Hanging Meeting

THE National Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment held its first meeting at Westminster Hall last Thursday. We are in sympathy with the aims of this group and with the seriousness of their intentions. The impressive list of "public" figures may do more to influence the general public in their attitude to the death penalty than anarchist agitation over the years. It is unfortunate that a campaign of this nature has to be given an air of respectability before the conscience of the people is aroused, and no doubt the organisers had this in mind when they included in their programme Tory, Labour, Liberal, Protestant and Catholic supporters. Be that as it may, and even if the "big-names" were the chief attraction for some people at Westminster Hall, the fact that publicity has been given to the organisation, with its intention to agitate throughout the country, may give the campaign momentum, and in spite of the Home Secretary's reaction to the Report of the Royal Commission, a powerful organisation, backed by large numbers of people, will force the Government to formulate more convincing arguments than at present, namely, that there is no evidence of strong public feeling in favour of abolition.

The practical arguments put forward at this meeting are familiar enough to readers of FREEDOM. Both the Select Committee of 1929-1930 and the Royal Commission 1949-1953 have compiled impressive data which should prove to anyone seriously accepting the possible deterrent effects of the death penalty that such measures can no longer be considered tenable.

The moral basis for opposition to the death penalty was mainly based on the Christian ethic, Thou Shalt Not Kill. No human being is infallible; only God knows the truth, and since God gave life he alone can take it. The Catholics on the platform avoided the polemic of the Pope's infallibility, which presumably means that since his power is God-given he can, if he so chooses,

pronounce the death sentence. The finer points of theology however, were rightly laid aside for the moment. The arguments based on human values were much more convincing, but the conclusions of all we heartily support.

Another problem which is not so irrelevant and which could not escape thinking people when listening to the politicians on the platform discussing the sanctity of human life, is the question of war. Does life become less sacred when taken in the official interests of the State than it is when the State decides to hang a man who may have committed an individual murder? To us the answer is obvious. It is just as stupid and immoral to organise the killing of millions of people in the interests of a particular State as it is to hang a man who, in a moment of mental derangement commits a murder.

We will leave it for the politicians to square their consciences with their behaviour when it comes to the question of war, and while we do not doubt their sincerity in opposing the death penalty, we suggest if they carried these arguments to their logical conclusion they would have to declare themselves opposed to killing in war. This would mean the loss of a job perhaps, and a man has to be really dedicated before he will give up his place in the sun for a mere principle.

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 45

Deficit on Freedom £675
Contributions received £596
DEFICIT £79

November 4 to November 11

Sheffield: G.P.* 5/-; Dundee: A.S.L.R. 44/6
Anon. 5/-; Liverpool: R.E. 1/-; Hitchin: L.A. 4/-; Chilcompton: H.J.C. 10/-; London: D.R.* 10/-; London: Anon. 1/9; London: P.H. 10/-; London: N.B.T.* 7/9; London: J.S. 4/-

Total	5	3	0
Previously acknowledged	591	1	11
1955 TOTAL TO DATE	£596	4	11

GIFT OF BOOKS: London: C.W.

Waiters Win Lightning Strike at Park Lane Hotel

(From our own Correspondent)

WITHOUT waiting for the formation of an organisation (see FREEDOM 22/10/55), waiters at London's swank Park Lane Hotel took direct action last Sunday to win an extra seven shillings for their evening's work.

The occasion was the annual banquet of the Vaudeville Golfing Society, when 600 music-hall artists have a slap-up party. The Park Lane Hotel usually employs waitresses for this kind of function (they are cheaper), but the blue jokes with which the diners (all men) entertain themselves persuade the management to employ waiters for this occasion.

The recognised number of diners for each waiter is ten, but last Sunday only 50 extra waiters were engaged making one to twelve diners, and for working from 5.30 to 9 p.m. the management were paying 23s.

Or so they thought. In point of fact, 15 minutes before the meal was due to be served, a majority of the waiters folded their arms and demanded another 7s.—making 30s. for the evening—before continuing to work.

The head waiter refused their demand, but the manager, Mr. Bishop, saw that he had no choice, and after a spell of blustering about 'blackmail' he agreed to meet the waiters' figure.

The threat of strike action was taken by the men on the initiative of one syndicalist-minded waiter who recognised the strength of their position. The waiters had 'welsh rarebit' for their supper (which contrasted rather badly with what they were handing out to the diners), and this as well as the extra two diners each had started them grumbling.

It is possible though, that it would have ended with the grumbles if our comrade had not shown them how they could make the evening a bit more worth while. And these unorganised workers (for their official unions do nothing for them), then spontaneously organised themselves and won their demands easily.

This small action should show to catering workers how an organisation run by themselves for themselves could operate in their interests. And the managements of London's smart hotels would very soon asking themselves: Is it our turn to-night? And would treat the waiters—and waitresses—accordingly.

BLACK SASH WOMEN PROTEST IN JO'BURG

JOHANNESBURG, November 12.—To the slow beat of black-draped drums, thousands of white men and women poured into the small square in front of the City Hall here to-day to protest against the Nationalist Government's Senate Act, which threatens vital changes in the South African Constitution.

A crowd was addressed by Mrs. Ruth Foley, chairman of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League (otherwise known as the Black Sash women), which is behind to-day's protests. Mrs. Foley was loudly cheered, and there was no counter-demonstration. Non-Europeans took little interest in the proceedings. Some, operating on the fringes of the

'New Statesman' Ethics

A BRIEF glance at the advertisements which appear week by week in the *New Statesman* & *Nation* tell us one thing: that principles should not be allowed to interfere with advertising revenue. The shady history of the Insurance Companies and the I.C.I. to mention only two, must be difficult to reconcile with the socialist principles sometimes expressed in the columns of this periodical.

The history of the Catholic Church is no less shady than the above-mentioned organisations, but what does that matter if they are willing to pay for advertising space. This week's *New Statesman* carries a useful advertisement for those contemplating entering the Church. We are offered, in confidence, from the Catholic Enquiry Centre, details of the Catholic Faith forwarded free of charge. We are told that tens of thousands have already replied to these advertisements, and daily they tell of their gratitude. We hope that we will not appear churlish if we fail to feel grateful to the *New Statesman* for offering us this opportunity.

EYES LEFT!
we need a further £200
by the end of 1955
Are You Helping?

prejudices of the newspaper men themselves. So that by the time the public reads the facts they will have been twice "managed" (and even three times if they come via a news agency!).

In FREEDOM's editorial on the Freer Press it was argued that

Just as it is true that the public won't get the best kind of furniture, clothes, food and services until they know what they want so with the Press. It's not enough to complain. You have also to know what you want and be prepared to join with others-of a like mind to get what you want.

Such an argument, if we assume it is valid, demands a complete revision of our ideas as to the function of the Press, the presentation of news and the distribution (in the sense of the geographical location) of the Press. We are convinced that the Press, no less than Society, will be free only when it is organized from below, co-ordinated nationally and internationally but with local control. Such a press would not only serve to build up a sense of community—for it would both foment and co-ordinate local activity and development—but would at the same time avoid the building-up of larger-than-life personalities, which to our minds is one of the most dangerous rôles played by the mass-circulation press to-day.

Canada, the United States and the Scandinavian countries between them produce more than 8 million tons of newsprint a year. Though this represents an increase of 3 million tons on the figures for 1945, the Canberra conference was warned (by the representative of the Daily Mirror group of course!) of the world shortage which was becoming "more serious" each year. More and more newsprint is being swallowed by the giant rotaries, yet educationists are continuously pointing out (as if we couldn't see it for ourselves), that "civilized" man was becoming every day more stupid and ill-informed.

Is this not food for second thoughts on the rôle of the Press, its "freedom" and its purpose?

NEMO.

crowd, collected signatures for their "Let Huddleston Stay" petition. *Observer*, 13/11/55.

There is no hope of Fr. Huddleston staying in S. Africa, however. His successor has already been appointed, and, as *The Observer* gently points out, it is unlikely he will be as active as Huddleston in defence of the Africans.

Cyril Dunn writes: "Though Father George Sidebotham will take over Father Huddleston's part as Provincial of the Community of the Resurrection in South Africa, it does not follow that he will also take Father Huddleston's place as a leader of the non-Europeans. As some of his predecessors have shown, it is possible to be an excellent Provincial of the five Southern African missions of this small but powerful Anglican order—headquarters at Mirfield, Yorks—without becoming prominent in local politics.

Not that Father Sidebotham—a strong, resolute, Cambridge rowing-man who served as an Army chaplain in the war—eschews activities of political significance: on the contrary, he was a member of Father Huddleston's protest committee. When the South African Government evacuated the "black spots" of Johannesburg—as part of their apartheid mission school the few families who refused to leave. But he is also a deserved man—much more of the monk by nature than Huddleston—and has a strong distaste for holding the kind of public position which is absolutely necessary to anyone who is effectively to champion the non-Europeans in South Africa.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS
Every Sunday at 7.30 at

THE MALATESTA CLUB
155 High Holborn, W.C.1.
(Nearly opposite Holborn Town Hall)
NOV. 20—Bonar Thomson on
WHY GOD DOES NOT EXIST
NOV. 27—Philip Holgate
To be announced.

INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS
Every Thursday at 8.15.

OPEN AIR MEETINGS
Weather Permitting
HYDE PARK
Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

MANETTE STREET
(Charing X Road)
Saturdays at 5.30 p.m.

GLASGOW

INDOOR MEETINGS
Friday evenings at 7 p.m. commencing
Friday, October 14th at 200 Buchanan
Street.

The Malatesta Club

155 HIGH HOLBORN,
LONDON, W.C.1.

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP
Informal Discussions Every Thursday,
at 8.15 p.m.

DISCUSSIONS:

Saturday, 19th Nov., at 9 p.m.
LEMON "TEASE"
"Humorous Contributions original or
Un".

Thursday, 24th Nov., at 8.30.

Bonar Thompson on
"SEAN O'CASEY AND THE
IRISH THEATRE".

Saturday, 26th Nov., at 9 p.m.

POSTER COMPETITION: Theme:
"HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS AND BE
INFLUENCED BY PEOPLE".

Thursday, 1st Dec., at 8.30.

Discussion by Philip Holgate,
A Vexing Problem for Anarchists,
"WHAT IS INTELLIGENCE?"

FREEDOM

The Anarchist Weekly

Postal Subscription Rates:
12 months 17/- (U.S.A. \$3.00)
6 months 8/6 (U.S.A. \$1.50)
3 months 4/6 (U.S.A. \$0.75)

Special Subscription Rates for 2 copies
12 months 27/- (U.S.A. \$4.50)
6 months 13/6 (U.S.A. \$2.25)

Cheques, P.O.'s and Money Orders should
be made out to FREEDOM PRESS, crossed
a/c Payee, and addressed to the publishers

FREEDOM PRESS

27 Red Lion Street

London, W.C.1. England

Tel.: Chancery 8364

Freedom of the Press Lords

Continued
from p. 1

ment [to resist control] would be helped." Mr. Robert Menzies, the Prime Minister of Australia in his address to the delegates pointed out that "in this competitive age newspapers compete for circulation and politicians for votes" and expressed his hope that

"wherever competition occurs there will always be public consciousness that good should be preferred to bad, honest to corrupt. It is better to be dull than crooked."

From the significant remarks by Mr. Menzies we can put all these approaches to "freedom of the Press" in their proper perspective. The Press is an industry (and in this country a monopolistic industry), which exploits a public need out of which it makes profits for its shareholders just as any other industry. And just as the Federation of British Industries fights government controls which hamper its "freedom" to function in the ways which it considers serves its particular interests, so the Press jealously defends its freedom from control by government. But the Press lords are no more interested in the public interest than are the F.B.I. in human needs. Their principal function is to exploit the public, and only incidentally to serve it. (The exceptions, we would submit, only go to prove the rule!)

★

IF one needs proof of this sweeping statement of ours it is provided by the recent upheavals in the Kemsley Press. The *Daily Dispatch* has been published in Manchester for the past 55 years. It has a circulation of nearly half-a-million copies a day. The *Sunday Chronicle* printed on the same presses has a circulation of 800,000 and has been in existence for 70 years. We have never read either of these papers, though we gather that they are no better or worse than the mass circulation press. But according to the arguments of the delegates at the Canberra conference we might be led to assume that they "served" a public of no less than half-a-million. Yet without consulting this public, both these newspapers are, to quote the *Man-*

chester Guardian, "to sink without trace". The Kemsley Press finds it apparently more profitable to rent the printing works to the Mirror-Pictorial group to publish a Northern edition of their papers than to continue to "serve" its faithful half-million (800,000 on Sundays!).

In Glasgow the *Daily Record* (yet another Kemsley newspaper) with the largest circulation among the provincial press, is to pass under the control of the Daily Mirror Group. Again we do not know what this means editorially, but the fact remains that the opinions of the readers of the *Glasgow Daily Record* were not given a moment's thought in this transaction.

The "Freedom of the Press" which the newspaper proprietors advocate has very little to do with "civil liberties" "justice", "tolerance", the "decencies of life" or "democracy".

The most successful daily and Sunday newspapers are those which publish virtually no news, which limit their reports of parliamentary business to a few snippets of a more sensational kind, coloured by background padding of "scenes" in which Members or Ministers are involved, but no attempt is made to give a factual record of what is happening in this country and in the world.

The pressures exerted by governments on newspapers are admittedly serious, but no less serious than the suppression of news by the newspapers themselves. "All the news that's fit to print" is another slogan which hides the prejudices and the interests of the newspaper proprietor concerned.

★

ON the subject of government pressures the Canberra conference expressed its concern with the ruling in the Singapore Assembly under which "the Speaker or Deputy Speaker, where he judges a newspaper report to be unfair, has power to order withdrawal of the reporter's ticket of admission to the House."

And in Washington last week newspaper men told Congress that official

suppression of news was "seriously endangering the public's right to know the facts about Government activities."

But, according to the *New York Times* (Nov. 8),

they were unable to give a House Government Operations sub-committee more than general suggestions as to what to do about it.

At an informal panel discussion opening public hearing on Government secrecy, the sub-committee heard participants agree that there was both deliberate withholding of news and "managing of news" that sometimes gave the country a false impression of Government policies.

James S. Pope, executive editor of The Louisville (Ky.) *Courier-Journal*, said the public's "right to freedom of information" had been "invaded and flouted" by executive departments and agencies. He said that while the Eisenhower Administration had improved over past Administrations in some respects, there had been a "frightening deterioration" policy in the Defence Department.

"There is a state of mind of arrogance and contempt for the public on the part of some officials of the Government," Mr. Pope said. "The fact that we have to fight for freedom of information is a disgrace."

James Reston, Washington correspondent of the *New York Times*, noted what he termed the Government's "growing tendency to manage the news."

As an example, he cited the "conscious effort" to give official news of the Big Four conference at Geneva last August "an optimistic flavour." Later, he said, this optimism had to be revised downward by the Government when it became apparent that Russian policy actually had not changed.

Mr. Reston said it was understandable that the Government should insist upon secrecy concerning negotiations with its allies in the free world coalition. But he criticized secrecy when used by such agencies as the Bureau of the Budget in attempting to conceal facts concerning purely domestic matters.

A careful reading of the foregoing reveals not only the shortcomings of the Government departments but also the