

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Society is perpetual motion; it does not have to be wound up; and it is not necessary to beat time for it. An organised society needs laws as little as legislators. Laws are to society what cobwebs are to a beehive; they only serve to catch the bees."

P.-J. PROUDHON.

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Threepence

More Talk in Cyprus

THE dreary round of "parleys at the summit" which we have witnessed in the last few years have merely served as a facade to recruit public opinion to the view that the leaders of the respective countries are primarily concerned with peaceful negotiation which can best be served by the big boys getting together and "honestly discussing differences and mutual interests". The real decisions as always are made in secret session which allows limited powers only to the public figure who represents each country.

It is therefore refreshing to find one country refusing to play ball in the game of political "negotiations" even although the prize is frankly the control of a whole island, and the struggle is between two groups contesting for power.

Lord Radcliffe has been sent from Whitehall to Cyprus to discuss drawing up a Constitution with the leaders of the Greek Cypriots. On the grounds that the mission is simply delaying tactics, all factions in Cyprus, with the exception of the Turkish leader, have refused to take part in further discussions. Mr. John Clerides, Q.C., who resigned from the Governor's Executive Council because it was not consulted over the exiling of Makarios, said that it would be a waste of time for both of them to discuss a matter which could have been dealt with months ago by the British Government which was then, as now, in full

possession of the demands of the Greek and Turkish communities.

Lord Radcliffe's statement to reporters on his arrival in Cyprus sounds ludicrous. He expressed his desire to meet the leaders and the people informally, and Cypriots were told that anyone wanting to meet him should write to his secretary asking for an appointment, and the letters should "be in English wherever possible". Press correspondents who met his plane, however, were told that if they moved outside the security barrier they would be shot dead, which made a jolly start to his proposed informal round.

The sorely-trying people of Cyprus have expressed their wishes strongly in the past year and their views are perhaps summed up in *The Times of Cyprus* in an open letter to Radcliffe which says:

"Why must yet more months—and more lives—be lost? . . . Why squander time on yet another round of profitless consultations, on listening once more to things which have already been said over and over again on both sides?"

It is difficult to see what the British Government hopes to gain from its present tactics in the face of the intransigent Greek Cypriot position. It has lost face, but cannot relinquish its hold on Cyprus for the reasons which have been put forward so bluntly by Anthony Eden.

The suggestion from Cyprus which asks for Makarios to be taken to London for consultations may be under consideration. And the report from the Seychelles that Makarios is now allowed more freedom of movement about the island may be an indication that this is being considered.

Although Makarios appears to be enjoying his comfortable martyrdom guaranteed to increase his support, it would be no surprise to us if he came to terms with the British. Either way he stands to gain.

Law Notes

Illegal Censorship of Mails by U.S. Post Office

THE biggest criminals are those who make the laws. But they are not generally regarded as such because they have one supreme advantage over the "common" or "petty" criminal. The small criminal has no means of freeing his criminal acts from the taint of illegality, and he is consequently regarded by superior people as very wicked, or at least as a presumptuous wretch who lacks the decency to conform to the rules "society" has seen fit to make. The big criminal is under no such disability: if he wants to do something illegal he has only to change the law to suit his convenience.

The most recent case in support of this doctrine comes from America, and I have no doubt it will be cited as a precedent on many future occasions. It appears that for some years past the United States Post Office has been unlawfully confiscating mail from overseas. This was revealed when an American group of Quakers tried to secure the release of some pamphlets addressed to them that the Boston postal authorities had impounded. The pamphlets had been ordered by the Quakers from pacifist organisations in England and dealt with Indo-China, Guatemala, the hydrogen bomb, and the question of Communist China and the United Nations. "Only a fraction" of the confiscated material was released, and then only after the Quakers had threatened legal action.

One can well understand the annoyance of the postal authorities at being pestered by the intended recipients of mail they have confiscated. Fortunately the U.S. Government has taken prompt action: it has passed a Bill, which is now before the Senate, to give the Post Office full legal sanction for its censorship. This will render the unfortunate postal authorities immune from the pin-pricks of misguided individuals who have seized on the fact that what they have been doing is illegal. Legality, as is well known, is merely a technicality.

KRITES.

A Day that Inspired the World

19th JULY 1936

IT is just twenty years ago this month that a *coup d'etat* by high officers of the Spanish Army all but failed in its intention of assuming power by sweeping away the "moderate" Leftist-government which had assumed power as a result of the elections of February 1936. In two thirds of the peninsula the Rebels carefully planned military assault was defeated not by the government of course, since the forces which it could dispose of to defend itself, the army and the civil guard, were in the main on the side of the Rebels! To arm the people was more than could be expected from even a "moderate" government. Instead they relied on coming to terms with their recalcitrant generals (in whom, even when they were issuing blood-curdling threats over Valencia Radio they continued to express their complete confidence in their loyalty). That the *coup d'etat* was not successful within twenty-four hours; that the unholy Trinity of the Military, the Church and the landed aristocracy, had to wait nearly three years before they could declare that Spain belonged to them, can only be accounted for by the resistance they met in the streets from the ordinary people, unarmed or ill-armed, but determined to the point

of recklessness, to meet the challenge as one involving them, the people, and not the government.

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HOWEVER unprepared they may have been to resist physically the military uprising, the event came as no surprise. For months they were aware of the preparations being made by the Generals; the victory of the Popular Front at the February elections had been followed not by the kind of political complacency one witnessed in this country after the victory of the Labour Party in the post-war general election. The months between the elections and the military uprising were marked by widespread political unrest and armed provocation from the Right, which did not go unchallenged by the workers' organisations. In that period no less than 113 general strikes and 28 local strikes took place, and in the struggles with the forces of law and order, as well as between political factions 1,287 people were injured and 269 killed. And the prisons which after the elections of February had disgorged their political prisoners, victims of the unsuccessful October Revolution in the Asturias in 1934, were once again being filled not just with the agitators of the Right, but with those revolutionary elements of the Left who resisted their provocations.

Psychologically therefore, Spain was prepared for a climax to these clashes at street level between extreme Right and Left. Only the Government, glued to their armchairs of office, seemed unaware of the fact that they were sitting on a volcano about to erupt. And when it happened they were blown sky-high . . . unfortunately for the Spanish people, not high enough, for in the months that followed they were able once again to worm themselves back into office and undo all the positive achievements of the people by guile, blackmail, sabotage, international "diplomacy" and the undermining of the revolutionary movement itself. But this is outside the scope of our present comment and the limits of our space*

*And we should only be repeating what has already been written in the *Freedom Press* publication dealing with the *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*.

Continued on p. 3

Cyprus Concentration Camps

The inmates of the detention camp at Kokkinotrimithia to-day issued an appeal to international bodies to "visit the (Cyprus) concentration camps, learn the conditions of our confinement, and establish the invalidity of our detention."

They alleged that detentions in most cases were the result of "intrigues, secret charges, and malicious information"; and that among the detainees "rotting behind barbed wire" were Greek Cypriot scientists, priests, policemen, Government employees, farmers, merchants, schoolboys, lawyers, old men in their seventies, and juveniles under 15.

Manchester Guardian 16/7/56.

Co-Operation Overcomes Caste

IT is true to say that one of the principal functions of FREEDOM is to criticise, and although this may be regrettable since at times it appears to be a purely negative rôle, it is of course unavoidable, for FREEDOM represent a way of thinking which runs counter to so many present philosophies (or lack of them), and is entirely opposed to all social systems which are practised at this time.

Therefore it is with unaccustomed pleasure that we are able to report a happening which confirms our view that people are not only capable of acting in a sensible manner, but are able to do so in a co-operative and social way for the benefit of the whole community.

Benchi is a small village in the Himalayas, with a population of 800. It is situated 75 miles from Tibet at an altitude of 5,000 feet.

Two years ago the villagers were contacted by a representative of the Punjab's, Kulu Valley Community Project, an organisation which exists for the purpose of improving the standard of living amongst the rural communities of India, (about 80% of the total population). He observed that countless hours of arduous toil had been expended over the centuries by the inhabitants of Benchi, in climbing one mile up and down the steep mountainside to fetch drinking water from a river.

He suggested that it would be possible to install a piped water tap provided the villagers would raise half the cost. Within ten days Benchi had guaranteed half the amount in voluntary labour, cash and materials.

At that point the scheme came under fire from the religious reactionaries—they said that it was unthinkable that there should be a common tank for high-castes and "untouchables". The representative of the Community Project left Benchi—left them to consider the value of caste prejudice against the advantage of a piped water supply.

Six weeks later the problem was resolved, and the tap was installed. It is reported that class distinctions are now perceptibly breaking down.

In addition the villagers have been shown how it is possible for them to double their terraced rice crop by more intensive cultivation. Adults have asked that they may have evening classes to enable them to learn to read and write. There appears to be a new spirit in Benchi—perhaps it is a truly community spirit, brought about by the knowledge that their improved standard of living has been achieved by the community acting in a co-operative way for the common good.

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In Columbia

Presidential Plums

THREE years ago, Lieutenant-General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla was just another Colombian army officer, living in a modest, rented house and drawing his army pay. In June, 1953, he brought off a swift, military *coup*, and became President of Colombia.

There is a current story amongst Colombians which concerns the President and a rancher whose prize bulls he was admiring. Eventually he offered to buy one but the rancher insisted that he could not possibly accept money from the President of the Republic, and said that he would present him with a bull as a gift. Rojas declined to accept a gift, so the rancher suggested he would sell him a bull for one peso. The President handed him a 5 peso note, but the rancher said he had no change. "That's all right," said Rojas, "Just give me me four more bulls."

Last week President Rojas (who is now a multi-millionaire), owned at least nine ranches and tens of thousands of cattle. He has a ready market for his beef, for he supplies the nation's army commissaries, which not only cater for the troops but sell to civilians also.

Rojas has a luxurious estate at Mel-

gar, and in the last three years millions of government pesos have gone to improving the road which links it with the capital, Bogotá. Millions more have been spent on a railway spur from Melgar to the nearest trunk-line.

One of the President's ranches, recently acquired for 500,000 pesos was part of a large estate in Gamarra. He purchased the whole estate and re-sold the poorer half of it to an agency of the Government—for 500,000 pesos.

Near Berastegui there is a large 17,000 acre ranch which Rojas bought a short while ago in an auction—he was the only bidder. Originally the judge in charge of the sale insisted that the bidding should commence at 2,500,000 pesos. He was sacked. His successor lowered the starting price to 1,700,000, and it was purchased by Rojas at that price. The estimated worth of the estate is 8,000,000 pesos.

President Rojas appears to have combined public enterprises and private enterprise with singular success. In another three years he will probably bring the entire cattle business under the control of the President—then it will almost be a nationalised industry!

BOOK REVIEW

WHO RULES AMERICA?

THE POWER ELITE by C. Wright Mills. Oxford. 36s.

WHO does rule America? Who makes the big decisions that affect the lives of millions? Where is the seat of power?

To these questions one may expect one of three answers. The first answer is the official one, the answer of "public relations", of the propaganda machine. America—it runs—is a Democracy, *demos*—the people, *kratos*—strength. It is the People who rule through the agency of their elected representatives. Every adult (except for some unfortunate negroes who cannot pass a property, tax, or educational test) can vote to elect Congress, and the nation's father-figure, the President. Since it is these representatives who make the big decisions, the ultimate power must rest with the People.

The second answer is less naive: it is the theory of government used by the apologists of the *status quo*. Briefly, it is accepted that the first explanation is inadequate and it is admitted that within the society there are organisations that wield great power but are patently controlled by small groups of men not answerable to the people or any significant section of them. The "military" and "big business" are two obvious examples. But, say the sociologists, there is a complex interaction of forces (impressive phrase!) which results in equilibrium. Every force which is trying to satisfy some interest is balanced by other forces working for their interests.

When this theory is measured against the existing situation, its weaknesses are at once apparent: for the strength of any force is quite unrelated to the number of individuals that force may be said to represent. For instance: the Unions, prior to the 1930's, were infinitely weaker than the business interests ranged against them; there is no balancing power on the side of the exploited negroes of the South; the power of the politicians who in theory control, is insufficient to balance that of the military, particularly when this latter faction, as has been happening increasingly since 1945, is supported by business interests. This is not to say, of course, that the lesser powers have no influence on the greater, but that there is a semi-permanent dominance of some groups over others which is unjustifiable on the grounds of democratic theory and invalidates the "equilibrium" theory.

The third answer is that put forward by C. Wright Mills in this book. He sets out to show that there is in America a power elite of men who make all the decisions of national importance. He deliberately avoids the word "class" to describe the elite: for if, he says, the term "ruling class" were used instead of "power elite" it would suggest that one economic section of society (a "class") exercised supreme power by political means ("rule"), whereas in fact the situation is more complex. This answer absorbs, so to speak, the various oligarchic theories—the liberal who would say that it is the politicians who rule: the Marxist that "Wall Street" or "big business" rules; and some that the Pentagon rules. In fact the elite is composed of all three elements, the power of each growing or diminishing with the years.

"In the long peace of the nineteenth century, the military were not in the high councils of state, not of the political directorate, and neither were the economic men—they made raids upon the state but they did not join its directorate. During the 'thirties, the political man was ascendant. Now the military and the corporate [i.e. big business] men are in top positions."

Although each group is so powerful they are still inter-dependent. Thus in times of economic depression the men of business require the help of the popularly-supported politicians; to-day the requirements of economic imperialism (disguised as international mutual aid) and the permanent state of war preparation ensures that the politicians are dependent on commerce and the military. A natural development from this dependence is the emergence of people who may be said to belong to two groups. Thus a general may become a director of an important corporation (viz. General MacArthur is chairman of Remington Rand, General Doolittle is a vice-president of Shell Oil, and Generals Bradley,

Ridgway, Bedell-Smith (to name only a few) are now all in business concerns). As *Business Week*—an influential journal—said (9/8/52): "In business circles the word has gone out: Get yourself a general. What branch of the government spends the most money? The military. Who, even more than a five-per center is an expert on red tape? A general or an admiral. So make him Chairman of the Board."

It was soon realised that it was to the mutual advantage of both groups that there should be permanent preparation for war. Firstly, since weapons can be considered to be always obsolescent due to continual military research the arms manufacturers are kept continuously busy, which pleases the business interests. Secondly, the military is pleased because (a) they have large sums of money at their disposal, which means increasing power and (b) the shibboleth of security can be invoked to prevent the public knowing too much and for silencing critics (vide the case of Professor Oppenheimer).

The decline of the importance of the politicians is particularly apparent when one examines the careers of the political directorate in America. Mr. Mills maintains that there are approximately 50 men who may be said to be able to make executive decisions of national importance. Of these 50 (in May '53) only 3 had spent most of their lives in contending for and occupying elected political office. The great majority of the 50 were representatives of business. The genuine career-politician has been relegated to the middle levels of power, either in Congress or in the governmental bureaucracy through the patronage system.

As I hope I have shown this book has much to interest those who wish to know more about the mechanism of

power in America to-day. It is a long book and, like many sociological works coming from America, it would be improved with more style and less statistics. We are told for instance, that the industrial corporations "use their powers . . . on the political front, for example in their large rôle in the political sphere"! And are also given the useless statistics that the typical general of 1900 died "on the average at the age of seventy-seven". However, Mr. Mills' wordiness and statistics are only minor irritations. What is of more importance is the full and well-documented development of his thesis on the power elite. He surveys the entire field of wealth and power in order to show in whose hands he considers the real power rests; from the "old families", the socialites, and café society to the rich, big business, the politicians, and the military.

Each sector of wealth or power comes under Mr. Mills' angry scrutiny and although this anger is usually sublimated into the amassing of facts, he does allow it to show its head now and again. In discussing the group he terms "the celebrities"—the film and TV stars, the

sportsmen and the Broadway queens, he says:

"The professional, male and female, is the crowning result of the star system of a society that makes a fetish of competition. In America, this system is carried to the point where a man who can knock a small white ball into a series of holes in the ground with more efficiency and skill than anyone else thereby gains social access to the President of the United States".

The book makes depressing reading. Where, one asks, is the place for the non-conforming individual in this jungle of wealth and power? Can there be a place for him in a society where the competition in the accumulation of useless goods, in the pursuit of leisure which is not rest, have become more important than useful work or genuine recreation? For the mass of people pleasure is becoming mere distraction: until, in T. S. Eliot's words, they are "distracted from distraction". And distracted from the real to the superficial problems of living. As more and more individual responsibility is delegated to "authority" so power steadily accumulates at the top. Is a mass society in the making? M.G.W.

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The Tradition of Workers' Control — 13

The Tradition Survives

Labour Nationalisation

THE 1945-51 Labour Government's nationalisation measures were constructed according to the canons of managerial socialism which Morrison and Citrine had adumbrated in the 1930's. Industrial Democracy was equated with joint consultation and managerial prerogatives were left unchallenged. All the nationalisation statutes stipulated that one of the qualifications for appointment to the new public boards was experience in labour organisation but this provision merely implied that a number of the 'safer' Trade Union officials could be offered top-level jobs in the industries: 'responsible' labour leaders were not to be barred from entering the managerial class!

It is now clear that nationalisation has not been the panacea that its advocates predicted: the status of the workers has not been materially altered by the change from private to State ownership. In some respects conditions have improved, in others deteriorated; but the workers are still alienated from the instruments of production; they remain an inferior class within the productive process.

Inevitably there has been, within Labour-Socialist circles, a reaction to this situation. On the right-wing, nationalisation has been soft-pedalled; on the left-wing, criticisms have been made of the administrative set-up. Generally speaking, however, these criticisms have been oddly defensive in tone, while the positive proposals reveal an extreme naivety. Typical has been the demand voiced by several unions, notably the N.U.R., for more trade unionists on the public boards: as if a few extra Citrines and Bowmans would make all the difference! The term 'workers' control' has been bandied about but there has been little evidence that the word-spinners understood what they were talking about: it remains only an expression of discontent, not a positive demand. G. D. H. Cole, forlornly hoping for a revival of guild doctrines, has made some trenchant criticisms of the public corporations and some Fabian-like proposals for achieving the end to which he devoted his early years. But his words have been treated as no more than an echo from a distant past. The new generation of Fabian intellectuals simply shake their heads: such nonsense is not for them. Like Hugh Clegg, they make a gesture of sympathy and turn to more 'practical' matters. Workers' control might be satisfactory in a small-scale society but is not a realistic alternative for a society such as ours⁶⁷.

The U.P.W.

At the present times, therefore, workers' control, in the sense that I have been using the term, remains an aspiration of 'the socialist sects'. The single exception is perhaps the Union of Post

Office Workers. This union, formed by amalgamation in 1920 largely owing to the inspiration of the Guild Socialists, still adheres officially to the guild objective which was written into its constitution in 1922. Alone among the larger unions, it has conducted a battle against the socialism of the public corporation. In the 1930's and again in the immediate post-war years, it made proposals for 'joint control' (Union and State) of the service as a step towards the ultimate aim. As the union with the longest experience of nationalisation, one might have thought that our Labour-Socialists, who pride themselves on their 'empiricism', would have taken some notice. Instead, the T.U.C. looked askance at this inconvenient demand and, discouraged perhaps by lack of support from the Post Office Engineers, the U.P.W. have not pressed the matter again.

C.P. Opportunism

Of 'the socialist sects', the two that have shown most sympathy towards the concept are the I.L.P. and the anarchists. The British Communist Party—more truly a sect than either—has not been included. The C.P. attitude towards workers' control, like its attitude to all things save the Moscow party line, has been notoriously ambiguous. In its early years the C.P. attracted to its ranks a number of prominent ex-syndicalists and, as a consequence, included 'workers' control' as one of its slogans. With the development of managerial socialism in the Soviet Union, however, the party began to change its tune. In the early 1930's the slogan was still used but it was given a new interpretation. Instead of implying the control by the workers of the enterprises in which they worked, it was taken to mean control of industry by the workers as a class. In this way the slogan was given a collectivist twist which it had not possessed before and, of course, in practice the Communists understood by workers' control of industry, the control of industry by the self-styled party of the working class—the Bolshevik mandarins themselves. In Britain such opportunism has led nowhere and the C.P. can offer in its 'British Road to Socialism' nothing better on this subject than the demand for more 'workers' representatives' on management boards.

The I.L.P. and Workers' Control

The I.L.P. advocacy of workers' control, in contrast has been much more sincere, especially since the party ceased to be a force in the political arena. In the early 1920's the Guild Socialists almost but not quite succeeded in writing guild objectives into the I.L.P. programme. After the party had disaffiliated from the Labour Party, its 'revolutionary' tendencies became more marked. The clearest statement of its new position was made perhaps at its Jubilee Conference in 1943. The acid test

of socialisation, the party declared, was whether control was in the hands of the workers. Workers' control was 'the only final and lasting solution to the anarchy of capitalist industry' and this was to be achieved through representative committees of workers on a local, area and national basis. All management and administrative staff were to be elected, subject to technical qualifications, by the workers themselves and paid only as much as ordinary workers.

Since the war, the I.L.P., along with radical elements for the Common Wealth organisation, have devoted a good deal of attention to the question, especially in relation to the theory of the managerial revolution. In an effort to rally support for the idea, these elements formed The League for Workers' Control in 1951 but the new movement proved abortive⁶⁸.

Anarcho-Syndicalism

It is the anarchists, however, who have proved most faithful to the syndicalist tradition. Despite the differences between them and the 'pure' syndicalists in the pre-1914 period, it is the anarchists with their uncompromising hostility to 'political action' who can best lay claim to be the heirs of William Morris and James Connolly. On the international plane, anarcho-syndicalism as a distinct social theory was first formulated at the Congress of Revolutionary Syndicalists at Berlin in 1922 and since that date it has been perhaps the most coherent of the tendencies within the wider anarchist movement. In Britain the revival of anarchist thought during the Spanish Civil War was largely inspired by the activities of anarcho-syndicalists in Catalonia. Since 1945 considerable efforts have been made by British anarchists to propagate the theory of revolutionary industrial unionism. The small dissident anarchist group which was known as the Anarchist Federation transformed itself into the Syndicalist Workers' Federation, while certain numbers of the larger group centering round *Freedom* were responsible for the production of the paper *The Syndicalist*, 1952-3, and a number of pamphlets re-stating the anarcho-syndicalist position, the most notable of which was Philip Sansom's *Syndicalism: The Workers' Next Step*, 1951.

It cannot be claimed that these efforts have been rewarded by any marked revival of interest in workers' control on the part of the industrial workers and clearly a new step forwards will not come until the idea ceases to be confined to a few, relatively insignificant, groups. But at least the efforts provide evidence that the tradition dating from the Owenites is still alive in this country. In this matter, as in so many others, the anarchists remain guardians of the libertarian aspirations which moved the first rebels against the slavery inherent in the capitalist mode of production.

G.N.O.

67. See H. Clegg: *Industrial Democracy & Nationalisation*, 1951. 68. Its publications included: *Workers' Control in the Modern World* by Don Bannister and *Industry & Democracy* by the former Guild Socialist, Maurice Reckitt.

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Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY
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A Day That Inspired the World

Continued from p. 1

As we write, not only Franco's representative in Belgrave Square entertaining some 2,000 guests to celebrate the uprising (we think the list of names would make interesting reading!) but the B.B.C. TV service has included in its Monday-night Panorama an interview with two people who supported the resistance to the uprising (that they, Stephen Spender and Claud Cockburn, and their interviewer, Malcolm Muggeridge, talked a lot of tripe on the subject, is beside the point). It is perhaps less surprising that Franco should celebrate the anniversary since he emerged as the victor. What our younger friends should pause to reflect on is that twenty years after, a date which is, after all, that of the beginning of a defeat, should be still remembered, not only by anarchists, but by people whose ideas have become difficult to define with the passing of the years.

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FOR the Spenders, after twenty years, (time enough surely to become better acquainted with the facts of the struggle in Spain in its first phase), the significance of the "civil war" was that it represented the first serious resistance to the spread of fascism (which he seems to consider a phenomenon beginning in Germany in 1933, with "the persecution of the Jews" apparently ignoring Mussolini's caste-oil régime against recalcitrant Italians which anti-dates Hitler's by a decade). We believe that when in fact July, 1936, in Spain is studied by the historians the resistance to the military uprising will emerge not as "a struggle by the legal government of Spain", not as "a struggle between democracy and fascism" (which were the propaganda slogans adopted by the anti-Franco protagonists at the time, from the liberal-conservatives à la Duchess of Atholl viz. the Newstatesmanites to the Communists), but as something more far-reaching, more daring, in that it aimed at the realisation of concepts outside the ken of government. The spirit of July, 1936, we believe, was the social revolution, at least for a sizeable minority of the population, and for a majority of those who were prepared to act when challenged by the military uprising. (Note that in face of the practical achievements during the first weeks of the struggle not even such hardened politicians as Caballero or Companys could deny that a social revolution had taken place in so-called Republican Spain).

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THE significance of July, 1936, was not the negative rôle attributed to the workers at the barricades by our respectable democrats. For the Spanish workers were not so much interested in saving the government from being overthrown by a bunch of rebellious generals as in using the situation created by them to evolve a new way of life. The generals by their action had withdrawn from the government its power. Industrialists and managers had abandoned the factories, and the landowners without force to support the "legality" of their ownership of the land had no authority. The government had no power however many decrees it might sign. Yet the needs of the community had to be satisfied just the same. And in so far as the workers, without the technicians (many of whom joined forces with Franco) succeeded in maintaining the social services and feeding the population, they pro-

PEOPLE AND IDEAS PAINT & ANARCHY

"The writer of the article 'Housing and Human Needs' (FREEDOM, 30/6/1956), suggests that a local authority is wrong to insist that the tenants of its council houses do not change the colour of their houses to something different from that of all their neighbours. Surely he is tumbling over backwards in trying to prove how anarchistic he is, and in doing so only reaches the reductio ad absurdum of anarchy and finds himself obliged to praise chaos. What possible virtue is there in ruining the appearance of a street for the sake of somebody's whim? These rules are not an infringement of the tenant's freedom, they are simply a condition of tenancy which he accepts in renting the house . . ."

—READER'S LETTER.

★

THE case in point was that of a man who was given notice to quit his council house at Warrington because he painted it cream when all the rest of the estate was painted red. The Manchester Guardian which reported the instance did not make it clear whether it was the structure of the houses as a whole which was red (imagine the whole estate red—it indicates, shall we say, a certain bloody-mindedness on the part of the Borough Council), or, as is more likely, the windows, doors, gutters, rain-water pipes and so on which were red; which again seems to indicate a lack of understanding of how paint should be used, for apart from any aesthetic considerations it is almost always better to use a light paint on window frames, on account of its greater reflection of light. The tenant, Mr. Mulhall, a farm worker, said he just couldn't stand the colour, and as soon as he moved in, set about repainting the house. The Town Clerk said that his council took action because the repainting clashed with the rest of the estate and because it was done without permission.

If we assume that neither Mr. Mulhall nor the Borough Engineer are among the eight per cent. of mankind who are colour-blind, and if we assume further that there are objective standards by which these things can be judged, then one or the other of them is right. If Mr. Mulhall is right the moral argument against him collapses and he is the bringer of a new decorative enlightenment to Warrington (though I would have preferred white to cream!). If the Council is right then the tenant should still be allowed his cream paint firstly as an affirmation of human values, since a farm worker with six children would not repaint his house at his own expense unless the colour really was driving him round the bend. We can pay too high a price even for civic liberty, that most neglected of amenities. Secondly because, as my friend Giancarlo de Carlo says, the house is Man's affirmation in space, his most intimate environment which he must attack to make it his own. Thirdly because, if there is ever again to be that common and vernacular idiom in architecture and design which was the glory of past societies, it has to grow with its roots in the instincts and basic structure of the society that adopts it and 'breathes into it the animating spirit of popular

sanction'. We have to pay attention, as Mr. J. M. Richards says to what people themselves want, not to what we think they ought to want:

"We may despise what they want. We may think they should be educated to want something different, or at least to know they could have something different if they wished, instead of their choice being limited by their ignorance of the alternatives; but we can only progress democratically at a speed which does not outpace the slow growth of public understanding, in particular its assimilation of social and technical change."

★

BUT could the Council be right anyway? We all know groups of buildings whose visual harmony has been ruined by someone's self-assertive individualism—a house in a Georgian or Regency terrace for example, painted to the meticulously determined centreline of the party wall, through the middle of columns, pilasters and pediments, in some colour contrasting with that of the rest, with a brutal disregard of the unity of design of the whole. But the facades of the usual run of modern small houses are not part of some formally conceived elevation. They are either of the ubiquitous semi-detached variety whose visual unity, if they have any, is not much affected by paint, or they are in short terraces which are repetitive rather than unified. It could be claimed that variegated decorative treatment would spoil the look of such a row of houses, but one could also take as an example a town like Clifden in Connemara (and Mr. Mulhall is an Irishman), the beauty of which comes from variety of colour-wash which the occupants have given to the tight and continuous street elevations of their houses, with, cheek-by-jowl, browns, ochres, creams, pinks and oatmeal colours and the window surrounds picked out in white, black or dark brown. The instinctive feeling for colour and variety is the heritage of a people whose decorative urges have not been atrophied by industrial society and by leaving things to the landlord or the borough surveyor. Even the alleged mysteries of architectural proportion are not foreign to the people of the west of Ireland. J. M. Synge wrote of the Kerry peasantry that they

"would discuss for hours the proportions of a new building—how high a house should be if it was a certain length, with so many rafters in order that it might look well . . ."

Nothing, you might say, is going to give the council tenants of Warrington the unsophisticated vision of the Irish peasantry, who are losing it themselves anyway; and you would be right. But this is not surprising when whatever feeling for colour which they have is kept in abeyance by municipal edicts. And if the freedom of the paint-pot results in something horrible you have to put up with it and set about the visual education of their children.

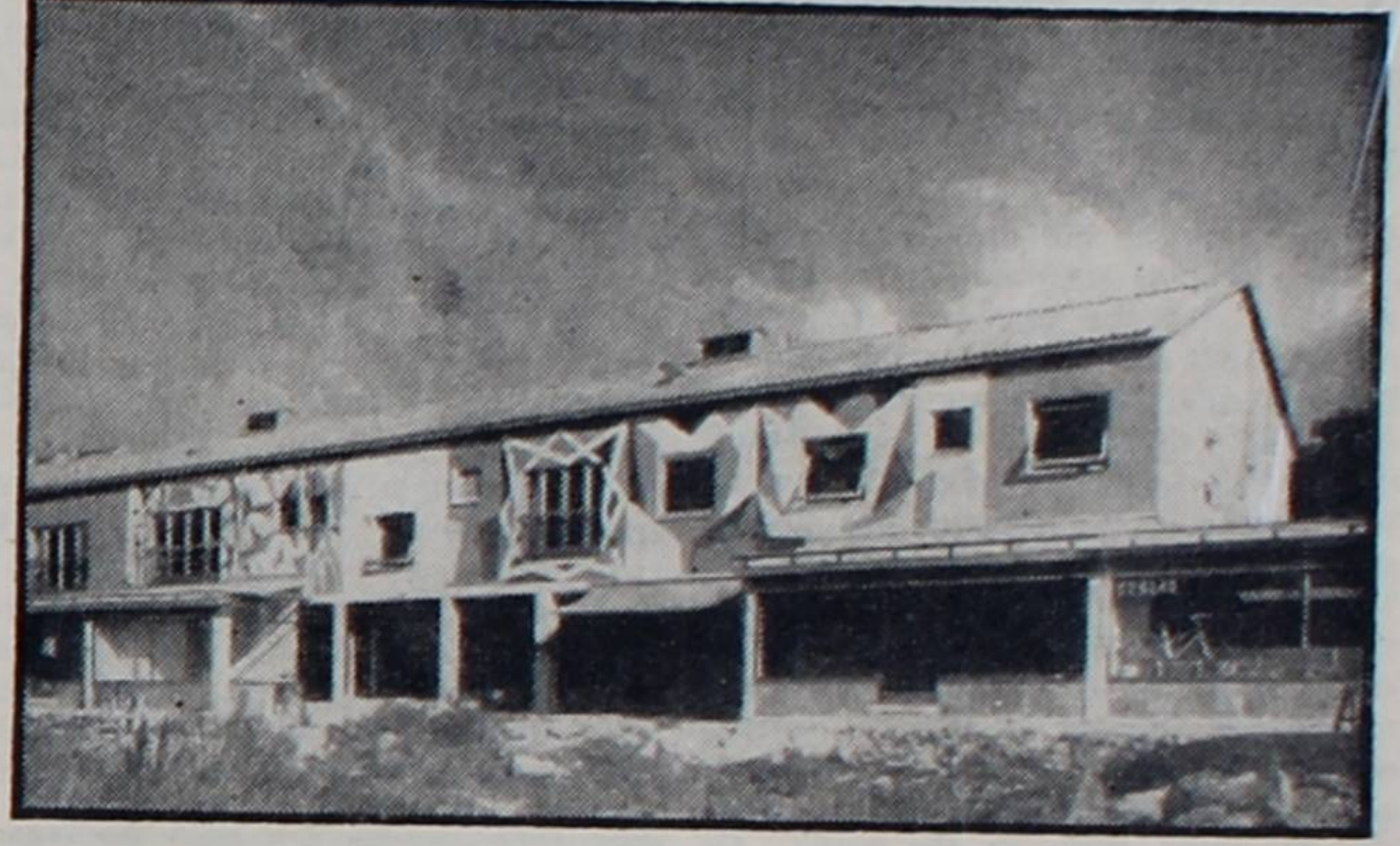
Mr. Lionel Brett once made this point very clear when he said:

"I do not see how we can preach visual education one day and practise visual

sanction' the next. If we are aiming at a visually educated democracy there is only one way, and that is to teach people to use their eyes and then accept their judgment however much we disapprove of it. With power goes responsibility and if we bestow the first we must not withhold the second."

★

IN Sweden, at a new housing estate called Arsta, south of Stockholm, the architects, Erik and Tore Ahlsén, wanting the tenants to take an interest and a pride in the buildings, "have permitted and encouraged anyone who wished to lend a hand in decorating the facades in their own fashion with brightly coloured distemper. The lead was taken by an artist. At first people stood around and scoffed as they watched him daubing on the colours".⁴ Then one or two, and then others joined in, and our photograph shows the result. Two friends of mine have visited these buildings. One says that they are charming and amusing, the other says that they are awful. But whether outsiders like it or not, the social result which the



Arsta, Sweden: 'The architects permitted and encouraged anyone who wished to lend a hand in decorating the facades in their own fashion . . .'

Ahlsén brothers were after has certainly been achieved, and one can imagine the heated debate among the tenants before they decide to repaint the whole place a subdued grey!

There at least were people who realised that if the tenants were to take interest and pride in their surroundings, it was necessary for them to 'attack' their environment. In this country, the Central Housing Advisory Committee in its report on *The Appearance of Housing Estates*, very sensibly concludes that:

"Unnecessary restrictions, or those which are not seen by the tenant to be necessary, have the effect of discouraging his initiative and interest. . . . It may well be that a tenant's taste in such matters, for example, as porches or trellis screens, may not be that of the Housing Committee or of the Council's officers, and that such things may at times detract somewhat from the original harmony of the architect's design. It should however, be recognised that if the tenant's activities are too frequently met by pro-

hibition it is likely to produce indifference and apathy, and that the greater a tenant's freedom in this respect the greater is likely to be his pride and interest in the appearance of his house and garden".⁵

Take the front door. Here is a place where the tenant or his wife, love to assert their individuality and their difference from the people next door. And yet one hears of members of the LCC architect's department driving through the Council's estates in a car with a plan on their knees, deciding, "this one yellow, that one red, and that one blue I think", when this decision above all should be made by the people who live in the houses. I believe that on some LCC estates it is, or at least a choice of colours is given to the tenant.

★

YOU may think this is all rather trivial. Local authorities are not generally tyrants. (The proportion of tenants who leave council houses each year as a result of notice to quit is about 0.1 per cent., or some 2,500 families out of a total of 2½ million tenancies,⁶ and hardly any of these were for the sin of painting the door-step or keeping pigeons). But here, as in everything else, we find the

day-to-day choice between libertarian and authoritarian solutions. Either we believe in seeking libertarian solutions, or we accept authoritarian ones because it is easier than trying out ways of making authority superfluous. I believe in the continual enlargement of the area of human freedom and responsibility. I believe like Kropotkin that the only cure for the abuse of freedom is more freedom.

Whether it is a matter of painting council houses or of dismembering the colonial empire, people should have freedom before they are 'ready' for it. That is the only way they will ever learn to use it and explore it, and to grow to the stature of free men.

C.W.

1. J. M. Richards: *The Castles on the Ground*.
2. J. M. Synge: *In Wicklow and West Kerry*.
3. Lionel Brett: speech at the R.I.B.A. 15/11/49.
4. E. de Maré, in the *Architectural Review*.
5. Report on *The Appearance of Housing Estates* (H.M.S.O. 1948).
6. Report on *Unsatisfactory Tenants* (H.M.S.O. 1955).

Letter from France

Money and the Press

PARIS, JUNE 30.

FOR two years or so Paris political circles—that is to say a few hundred persons who have come to confuse their own state of agitation with the life of the country—have been talking a great deal about the birth of a new daily paper. The well-informed declared that the new paper would have to be a revival of the old *Temps*, an austere sheet, which before the war was the mouth-piece of financial forces and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹

In other words the thing to do was to fight *le Monde*, a daily that was brought out at the liberation, whose publishers maintain a neutralist, pro-Soviet, and "progressive" policy. Some observers, no less well informed, made it clear that the intention of the proposed new paper was to provide "an intelligent Right", i.e. for employers and politicians who support order and authority, to be sure, but conscious of the problems of modern times and anxious to adapt itself to progress.

There is no lack of political and journalistic schemes at the nervous and incoherent crossroads that is the French capital. The announcement of the re-appearance of this great evening paper made little stir, even among that section of public opinion regarded as the most alert. If all the proposed new press ventures ever came to anything there would be more papers than readers. However, the matter was taken seriously when it

was learnt that journalists, technicians, and printing trade unions were being approached with a view to forming editorial, administrative, and compositors' working parties. These were indisputable signs of the firmness of the attempt and the existence of ample capital.

To start a daily requires considerable sums of money. At the liberation the resistance groups—or those who called themselves that—took possession of most of the printing works and proceeded to publish papers without worrying too much about commercial stability. Some lasted; others disappeared. Although a vast administration had been set up to direct the undertakings formerly owned by those companies or individuals who had collaborated with the occupying power, and although this provisional administration had favoured the groups who followed political friendships rather than the operation of commercial rules, the financial forces quickly got the upper hand again. In 1950 there were only a few second-line Paris dailies, all directly or indirectly subsidized, side by side with a few "battleships" like *le Parisien Libéré* (formerly the *Petit Parisien*), *le Figaro* (which had suspended publication during the war just in time to escape the laws dealing with collaborators), and *l'Aurore*, kept going by big industrialists like Boussac, the textile magnate. The organs of public opinion had for all practical purposes disappeared; neither the Social-Christians nor the Socialists

had been able to keep a Paris daily going. Among the evening papers *France-Soir*, *le Monde*, and *Paris-Press* (the last more or less under the wing of the first) were the only ones to carry on without dreading the day they would have to pay their bills. These survivors of the post-war storms represented the sum total of the efforts to start from scratch and were the result of a difficult adjustment.

To compete with them would require a considerable amount of money to enable the newcomer to last long enough to make a place for itself. The *Express*, a weekly favourable to Mendès-France, which was transformed into a daily during that politician's term as Prime Minister, has just had the bitter experience of failure in spite of considerable advertising support.²

Who was strong enough to start on such an adventure without the fear of coming to grief? We soon know. It was a group comprising Citroën, Michelin, and some oil companies—a group able to risk 1,000 million francs (the lowest figure that has been put forward) in an attempt to influence a fraction of public opinion.

In the spring *le Temps de Paris*, after a huge campaign of posters and handbills, came off the presses. *Le Monde* attacked it from the first day, describing it as a "business interests" paper.³ *France-Soir* did not even acknowledge its existence but had taken its precau-

Continued on p. 4

TWO PROBLEMS — ONE SOLUTION

U.S.S.R. Shortages — U.S.A. Gluts

IN the field of home policy the Soviet's main task is to step up production. Day in and day out this is driven home to the people; is even constantly dealt with where one would least expect to find it mentioned—on the pages of literary and art magazines. In America the USA government's job is precisely the opposite: to secure restriction of output. So far this lessening of output affects farming only, but having regard to the fact that agriculture is not only the basis but also to some extent a yardstick to measure a country's economy as a whole, it may be assumed that the time is not far distant when the ruling class will begin to talk of the need for reducing output in other branches of the nation's economy.

First and foremost, these two problems are indicative of the presence in each case of grave basic ills. In any healthy economic organism there can be no thought of a dearth of consumers' goods when production is going full blast. (It is asserted by the Soviet power that in the USSR there are no unemployed, that is to say that production there is driving full steam ahead). Neither does it make sense to tell us that a good harvest of wheat or maize can prove a calamity for the people of a country as, say, in North America.

The most superficial analysis of Soviet economy reveals the sheer impossibility of accumulating surpluses in the USSR. Anything like the customary economic calculations are alien to the Soviet. Kremlin rulers aim at something different. They think only of squandering the people's wealth on purely Party aims. In all lands, in all tongues, the propaganda of bolshevism is being carried on by the most diverse means. It demands the expenditure of vast sums. In the upshot the Russian worker and peasant have to foot the bill for all this. A further considerable slice of their production goes on the upkeep of the State apparatus, the most costly in the world. (It may be added parenthetically that the Bolsheviks have found new Party aims in the shape of promises to finance industrial development in backward countries of the East and in the offer to Col. Nasser to build his great dam. The Russian workers will have to meet the costs of all these huge schemes as well).

The Soviet power is completely uncontrolled. It is accountable to no one. It may throw away as much hard cash as it fancies. And it does. For this reason the first essential to secure the emergence of surpluses in the USSR would be to put an end to this uncontrolled wastage on an enormous scale of everything that is produced by the working masses. A second condition would be to have the workers allowed some say in what they turn out. Failing these two prime conditions, there will always be a shortage in this or that class of goods in the USSR. For no matter how hard the workers tear their guts out on the job, no matter how high the level of output may be stepped up, the Soviet will always find a place and possibility for "realizing"

all this stupendous output; in other words, will succeed in spending it all to the last crumb. And this is perfectly natural where purely Party objectives and tasks are accorded topmost priority.

'Over-production' in U.S.

In what concerns the American problem—the disaster of over-production—measures for the easement of this "disaster" must be sought in another direction from that of reaching output by bringing about, instead, an increase in the consumption of all goods. But this can only be done if market prices are lowered. Yet the Washington authorities lean in the opposite direction; they want to peg prices at their present high level. It would seem that it is worth while for the government to have a devalued dollar, this providing certain advantages in settling outstanding debts and in paying interest on obligations incurred. But what is worth while for governments isn't so for the people. What they need is cheap goods and not cheap dollars.

Cutting down output is not only an economic problem but one affecting all mankind, one concerning the general progress of the world. The great surplus of all possible kinds of goods for general consumption is the result of mechanisation in all fields of production. Machinery has enabled man to turn out more and more quickly and in ever greater quantities. The machine itself, however, is a product of the mind of man. It follows, therefore, that restriction of output is a blow at any further research work meant to advance techniques—an obstacle on the road to progress.

In spite of the fact that there are still people hostile to the machine, yet it has to be admitted that its function is to benefit Man, not to hurt him. Merely from the circumstances that people are killed daily on the streets by motor cars does not signify in the slightest that having motor cars is a bad thing. It is

not the car that is wrong but the man who happens to be driving it. The same goes for all other machines: many may suffer as the result of machines being used but this, again, is not the fault of the machine but of those who control their use. Given the right conditions, the machine can bring unlimited benefits to Man. It will do all the work for him, with the result that he can have sufficient leisure not only for rest but for following recreational pursuits and for giving himself time to think and meditate. For this reason setting obstacles to further technical advance is foolish, unreasonable, harmful.

Social Property

Where as in the past capitalism stood self-condemned by its inability to provide constant employment for all (and this dread spectre still overlooms the capitalist system), at the present time it stands self-condemned once again by

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constituting a handicap to progress, to that progress which has enabled it to flood the markets with all manner of wares within comparatively short time-limits. From this it follows that a change in production relationships is dictated not only by class interests but likewise by purely human needs. In order that mankind may surge forwards, soar higher on the wings of progress, it becomes essential that conditions be created wherein all cutting back of production will be regarded as utter vandalism.

Such conditions are extremely simple: the absence of either private or State property. Property must finally become in the reality of hard fact a genuinely social property, nor need it become so by either requisition or seizure, even on a legal basis. All should belong to all. In this respect an object lesson in the kind of social property meant is furnished by the former common pasturage of the old Russian villages or likewise by the wells yielding drinking water. It is practically impossible to conceive what disasters would befall if drinking wells were in the hands of a few individuals. In one case the owner of the well would wastefully pour out the water like a thriftless squanderer (as do the Bolsheviks with the output of their industries), while in the other case a high price would be set on the water so that few would be able to buy it. In the second instance the wells would fill to overflowing (over-production) at the very time when people were feeling the utmost need for water. And it is to be remembered that in the old Russian countryside there used never to be any quarrels as to how much grass any peasant's cow had eaten while it grazed; or any disputes concerning the amount of water any village woman had drawn from the well. They why cannot this be applied on a wider scale?

(The above article is from a recent issue of *Dielo Truda* (Labour's Cause), organ of the United Federation of Russian Labour Organizations in the USA and Canada. It has been translated for FREEDOM by Ivan Popovich).

(To be continued)

Summer School

To be held at the Malatesta Club, London, August Bank Holiday week-end (August 4-6).

This year's theme:

IS HISTORY ON OUR SIDE?

PROGRAMME

Saturday, August 4.

2.00 p.m. Informal gathering.
2.30 p.m. Lecture: F. A. RIDLEY
5.30 p.m. High tea
Social evening

8.00 p.m. Lunitas presents:
The Tuppenny Ha'penny Opera

Sunday, August 5.

11.00 a.m. Lecture:
ALEX COMFORT
1.30 p.m. Lunch
3.00 Open-air meeting in Hyde Park
7.30 p.m. Lecture:
JACK ROBINSON

Monday, August 6.

11.00 a.m. Lecture:
PHILIP SANSON
1.30 p.m. Lunch
COSTS

LECTURES: Admission 1s. per lecture, four for 2s. 6d.

MEALS: Must be ordered in advance. 2s. 6d. per meal.

Refreshments available at club prices on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

ACCOMMODATION: Free, unless hotels have to be used. *Must be booked in advance.*

All enquiries to Joan Sculthorpe, c/o Freedom Press.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED IN LONDON

THE attention of London comrades is drawn to our need of accommodation for the Summer School weekend.

Will comrades with beds available for the Saturday and Sunday nights

please let Joan Sculthorpe know, stating single or double accommodation for how many?

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS

Every Sunday at 7.30 at

THE MALATESTA CLUB,
32 Percy Street,
Tottenham Court Road, W.1.

JULY 22—Robert McKean on
ANARCHISM & THE I.W.W.

JULY 29—Donald Room on
ANARCHISM IN THE ENGLISH PROVINCES

INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS
Every Thursday at 8.15.

OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting

HYDE PARK

Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

MANETTE STREET

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Saturdays at 5.30 p.m.

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Letters to the Editors - and a Reply

Dear Comrades,

I have for a long time given up reading FREEDOM as I feel that it deals with an aspect of Anarchism with which I no longer associate myself. I consequently find it incompatible with my views on Anarchism to subscribe merely out of a sense of duty.

I am still an Anarchist, you need have no fears on that score, and I daresay I always shall be, but I do feel that I have outgrown the form of Anarchism which pre-occupies itself with economics and the class struggle.

The revolution remains for me an individual affair and I consider that it is only on a personal basis that it can be fought and won.

—LETTER TO THE EDITORS.

THE EDITORS' REPLY:

IT is always a matter for regret when valued comrades decide that they have "outgrown" some aspect of anarchism which is no longer compatible

with their changing views. But apart from this, we publish the above letter, together with our own view because we think that the objections raised are invalid. The points at issue seem to be:

1. Does FREEDOM give too much space to articles on economics and the "class struggle"?
2. Is an understanding of capitalism and a class-divided society still an important part of social change?
3. What is the rôle of the individual who considers that "it is only on a personal basis that the revolution can be fought and won"?

The first point is easily settled by a glance at FREEDOM over a period, where it will be found that a reasonable balance is generally maintained between articles covering "economics and the class struggle" and theoretical contributions on a variety of subjects such as world affairs, sex, psychology, sociology and the rôle of the individual in society. Needless to say, a converse view is sometimes levelled at us, namely that we are too theoretical and out of touch with the "day to day struggle of the working class".

Secondly, in our view, whatever social improvements have taken place, either through the welfare state or in times of "national prosperity" or through the protective trade unions, the anarchist analysis of capitalism as a dividing factor between peoples, individually, nationally and internationally, and as a system under which privilege and injustice always flourish, remains as valid as it was 100 years ago.

Problems such as the present changes in production techniques which render the worker superfluous may mean that different methods of struggle will have to be adopted to meet the changes, but the problem of division and inequality still remains.

If our ex-reader is implying that the "workers do not listen to us" this is another matter. But the chances of getting them to listen, accept and act are not going to be increased by a depletion of our numbers, or a withdrawal of support from people who are still prepared to carry on the work of propagating anarchism.

On the last point, strictly speaking, the revolution is always an "individual affair". That is, individuals become convinced of an idea and proceed to act in which ever way they consider to be necessary. This does not preclude action on a co-operative basis with others holding a similar view. The statement that the revolution can only be fought and won on a personal basis can be inter-

Money and the Press

Continued from p. 3

itions: it had rounded up every worthwhile "name" in Paris, from the extreme Left to the extreme Right, and put them under contract. The war of the sharks was on.

At the end of three months *le Temps de Paris* had a five-figure circulation in Paris. *France-Soir* had not lost one reader, nor had *Paris-Press* or *le Monde*. To the tune of a deficit of 5 million francs a day the reserve of 1,000 million francs was quickly exhausted. Already negotiations have been opened to secure the amalgamation of *Temps* with one or other of the competing dailies before complete collapse becomes the only prospect.

How can we explain this extraordinary failure? In the first place by the ability of the established papers and the strength of their resources. In the second place—and this is the interesting part of the affair—by the complete absence of a coherent policy on the part of *Temps*. There had been talk of an "intelligent Right"; but in fact the editorial team, recruited by offers of generous treatment, displayed a stupidity hard to credit. On the Algerian problem, readers were offered only the brayings of diehard colonialists; on the social problem they were regaled with the hoariest of reactionary arguments. When it came to international questions it was noticeable that Khrushchev's declarations were taken at their face value: the prospect of markets in the East prevailed over anti-Communist anxieties.

But is not a paper started and paid for by financial groups closely controlled by

its backers? Paradoxical though it may seem, this was not the case. Between the possibility of sacrificing 1,000 million francs and the ability to put across the bourgeois position the gulf remained unbridgable. The journalistic "brains" thought of the technical problems of format and inking, of posters and bonuses for street sellers, of datelines and foreign correspondents; but they had not thought of establishing a coherent policy.

No doubt the financial loss will not be too painful for the exponents of "free enterprise"; no doubt the contents of the other papers will not be much improved by it; but at least the experiment is significant since it shows that money does not necessarily produce ideas.

S. PARANE.

1 Occasionally *le Temps*, a "serious" paper, was the victim of its conservative reflexes. In 1937, at a time when the great wave of strikes had not completely calmed down, a stoppage of work occurred at the "Compteurs de Montrouge" as the result of a curious incident in which the central character was a cat, known as "Ginger" because of the colour of its fur. In reporting the strike *le Temps* had demanded the expulsion of a foreign agitator nicknamed "Ginger". It had taken a cat for a man.

2 The *Express* devoured only 250 to 300 million francs during the few months of its life as a daily.

3 *Le Monde*, which calls itself independent, nevertheless publishes large pages of bank advertising and for a long time has been the sole beneficiary of special dispatches from the Quai d'Orsay.