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Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Leadership is more likely to be assumed by the aggressive than by the able, and those who scramble to the top are more often motivated by their own inner torments than by any demand for their guidance."
 —BERGEN EVANS.

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Threepence

HUNGARY

A TRIAL OF STRENGTH

SHOOTINGS, deportations, starvation—all are availing Janos Kadar nothing in his attempts to crush the spirit of the Hungarian people. Conscious now of their own strength, demonstrating that they can survive by organising their own social life, the Hungarians have refused to knuckle under in spite of everything Kadar has been able to throw at them.

As we go to press the country is locked in another general strike—the workers' answer to Kadar's attempts to crush the workers' councils. These councils are the only effective social institutions in Hungary to-day, and the only organisations claiming the loyalty of the people. And rightly so—for they are the people.

Over the last fortnight the councils have emerged—as always when the people take action for themselves—and now stand facing Kadar in a trial of strength. At his disposal are some policemen, and the Soviet occupying forces. That's all. None of his orders are obeyed, none of his pronouncements worth the paper they are written on. He is a discredited quisling blustering like an impotent wind at a brick wall.

Recognising that every day that passes brings more strength and prestige to the workers' councils, Kadar has ordered their dissolution and has arrested many members—particularly of the central workers' council in Budapest. Many arrests have been prevented, however, by the workers facing the police and the Soviet tanks and refusing to allow their comrades to be taken away.

By announcing a state of siege throughout the whole country, Kadar has declared that anyone found with arms in his or her possession will be taken before a summary court-martial, and under military law the sentence for the offence is death.

The Russians have long since given up any pretence of acting with any kind of decency in Hungary. Their blatant kidnapping of Imre Nagy, after agreeing with the Yugo-

slavs to give him safe conduct if he came out of the Yugoslav Embassy, showed that they have no concern with what the world thinks of them—or of their new-found friendly relations with Tito. They are concerned with one thing only: to clamp down their tyranny again upon the Hungarian people.

But they have backed a loser this time. And the longer the struggle goes on, the more dangerous does it become for the Kremlin, for the more likelihood is there of solidarity being expressed in the satellite countries.

For the first time, last Monday, the call went out from the Hungarian workers' councils for general strikes in other countries as protests against the 'anti-worker activities' of the Kadar régime. We are ashamed to say that the call fell on deaf ears in the West, but such a call could be answered by the workers of Poland, and then, why not, by workers in East Germany and Rumania. The Hungarians have clearly seen that their true allies are not the governments of the West, in spite of the hostility towards Russia, but the workers.

The Western governments are not given to encouraging workers' revolutions, even against 'enemy' governments. For all governments have one principle in common: the workers must be kept down. The British and American authorities would far rather deal with Khrushchev or Kadar than with workers' councils whose very existence could be an encouragement to the creation of similar councils here. And British bourgeois sympathy for the Hungarians would quickly wane if workers here began to take revolutionary action to aid them.

Similarly the Russian leaders are scared stiff of the possibilities of revolt spreading throughout their empire. And it could, as reports of unrest there show. With international support, the Hungarians can win. Without it, they can still win—but at what a ghastly cost, as the Russian courts martial go into action.

Still the Hungarians have the strength. As long as they keep the economy of the country in their hands they cannot be defeated. They may be shot, but they can't be made to work.

Seething Satellites

SPARKS from the fires of Hungary are flying in the Eastern European satellites of the Soviet Empire—and they are falling on dry, inflammable material. From Bulgaria and Rumania, from East Germany and Esthonia, come reports and rumours of student demonstrations, workers' protests or military disaffection.

Even from Russia itself there filters out reports of a discontent coming ever more to the surface, as students begin to demand some of the 'democratisation' they have been hearing about, and unsubstantiated rumours reach us of miners striking in the Donbas coalfields.

There is necessarily, under the prevailing circumstances of strict censorship, much speculation in these reports, but best possible confirmation of some of them comes through the condemnation of the rebellious spirits published in the official press or uttered over the official radio. The examples of Poland and Hungary are providing the men in the Kremlin with some revolutionary lessons they had long forgotten, but now they are remembering how contagious rebellion can be when conditions are right for it.

And conditions in Bulgaria and Rumania are not so different from those in Hungary. So Mr. Khrush-

chev is taking steps in an attempt to ensure that there will be no second Hungary in any other satellite state. How successful he is will depend to a large extent on how well he can keep his grip on the Russian people themselves.

Mr. Khrushchev is a very worried man. He is likely to get more and more worried as time goes on.

RUMANIA

ACCORDING to what *The Observer* calls 'a circumstantial report reaching London from a highly-placed source in Bucharest', it had been the Russian leaders' intention to use Rumanian troops in Hungary. This would have been a grim repetition of history and a particularly cynical tactic on the part of the Russians, for Rumanian troops had taken a prominent part in crushing the Hungarian Communist revolution in 1919.

It is an indication of the utter corruption of the Russian leaders that they thought—if indeed they did—of using Rumanian troops against the Hungarian people. Unfortunately for Khrushchev and company, however, the Rumanians have believed all the propaganda about the friendship of the peoples of the Socialist Bloc, and they weren't kidded by the stories of the fascist counter-revolution in Hungary. In fact they were ready to have a go themselves against Russian domination.

According to the 'highly-placed source in Bucharest' Mr. Khrushchev flew to Bucharest just before the Russians began their all-out attack on Hungary on November 4th, and called on the Rumanian Government to give its troops for this sinister purpose.

But Mr. Gheorghiu-Dej, Rumanian Communist Party's secretary, and his colleagues in the Rumanian puppet government who have taken up an unswervingly pro-Soviet position throughout the crisis, had reluctantly to tell Mr. Khrushchev that their Army could not be relied upon for such an operation, both because of the large Hungarian minority within its ranks and because of the general appeal of the Hungarian movement. There would be serious danger that the trouble, far from being extinguished, might spread to Rumania if the use of Rumanian troops were attempted.

Khrushchev took the hint, and not only flew back to Moscow in a temper, but gave orders for the Rumanian army to be disarmed.

Even before the Khrushchev visit, Soviet forces in Rumania had been increased considerably beyond the normal garrison of two divisions. Now further

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NOT NASSER BUT STRYDOM

Hitler of the African Continent

IT seems that tyranny has to be on a large scale and carried out by political opponents before the public conscience is roused into protest or sympathy. Newspapers in this country are loudly outspoken in their condemnation of events in Hungary and funds are being raised on a nation-wide scale for famine relief and aid generally for the Hungarian people.

Middle class ladies, students and a number of unlikely organisations are suddenly on the side of a revolutionary people without, we suggest, understanding very much about it, but because they have been told the uprising in Hungary is against "communism".

It is right that refugees from a tyrannical Government should be selves to the falseness of the motives given aid but do not let us blind our- of a large number of people in this country. We wonder what the reaction would be if the workers' councils in Hungary developed into a national movement with the aim of abolishing all Governments and not just the Kremlin stooges. We are sure that the present supporters of all religious and political persuasions would be in favour of restoring "law and order".

In the meantime pious speeches will continue to belch from Parliament and other places in defence of freedom, while we, who are concerned with the freedom of all people, wait in vain for an equally vigorous attack on the recent behaviour of the South African Government. One hundred and forty people have been arrested throughout South Africa and thrown into jail to await trial on a charge of

'treason, sedition and offences under the Suppression of Communism Act and the Riotous Assemblies Act.'

Little information has reached this country about the charges or the people arrested except that over half are of Indian origin and that a number of well known people are among the accused including Mr. Lee Warden, Native Member of Parliament for Cape Western; Professor Mathews, Acting Principal of the African University of Fort Hare and Rev. D. C. Thompson, who was associated with Torch Commando.

The Crime of Opposition

Few informed people will accept the validity of the charges (with the possible exception of the South African Whites who have to justify their own position) made by the psychopathic Strydom and his followers. Already, to his credit, Canon Collins has issued a public statement on behalf of Christian Action:

'Let no one be deceived by the sweeping charges of treason against these men and women, whose only crime is that of opposition to racial intolerance.'

Information given to us by South Africans resident in this country endorses this view. Freedom of speech is not only suppressed, but Africans are not even permitted elementary freedom of movement. Passes are necessary before the African is allowed to move from one part of a city to another; "tens

STRYDOM EXPELS JEWISH LEADER

A Jewish critic of the Strydom racial policies has been told to get out of South Africa by January 15. He is Dr. Andre Ungar, rabbi at Port Elizabeth.

In Johannesburg yesterday, 3,000 people attended a meeting to protest against the arrest of 40 treason suspects. Detective mixed with the crowd, taking photographs.

News Chronicle, 10/12/56.

of thousands are jailed for not having the right papers in their pockets". Even some of the whites are not free from the tyranny. The editorial, in the new publication *Africa South* (published in South Africa) states that:

Under the Group Areas Act, even White South Africans are to be ordered to leave their homes and uproot their communities and live where the Government instructs them to.

Not that the Whites would have objected to the act had it only been applicable to Africans. A spokesman of the Whites in Paarl is quoted as saying, when commenting on the Act:

When the Minister of the Interior explained the Group Areas Act to us, he did not tell us that we would be the ones to have to move.

Maybe in their own self interest, the Whites who are subject to Government legislation, might make a protest. But the price of opposition is high in South Africa, and few people have been willing to pay it so far. Racialism dies hard, and it will only be those who are convinced of the immorality of the Nationalists' policies, and willing to take the consequences of saying so, who will find the courage to stand out against South African totalitarianism.

But the Government is strong and can legislate against any measure which might threaten its power. Africans and Coloured are, for all practical purposes, disfranchised although 'allowed' to vote on a separate electoral roll for white representatives. It is obvious that since these representatives are in the minority their voices can carry little weight in Parliament even if they are willing to jeopardize their poli-

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German Rearmament: Profits for Britain

THERE is good news for the British armament manufacturers this week from Western Germany. Herr Franz Josef Strauss, the Federal Minister of Defence has announced that:

"there would be no slackening in the West German rearmament effort and that present plans would be pushed ahead without any regards to the coming Federal election and the unpopularity of conscription among young people... some orders (for equipment) were under close consideration and (the Minister) believed that important orders would be placed with British firms. He did not envisage German production of much heavy equipment... for a long time to come." Herr Strauss, like Eden, who said some time ago that Germany must take her share of military commitments so as not to be in a position to compete unfairly in the markets of the world with Britain, is unconcerned with the fact that there are thousands of young people in Germany who have actively opposed conscription.

There will be plenty of support however, from former members of the Waffen S.S., and a decision has been taken by the Federal Government that all members up to the previous rank of full Colonel, are eligible for enlistment as regulars. Who better to whip recruits into submission than the "ex"-Nazis?

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A Study of Social Bias in Presumed Intelligence

DURING this century the idea of "intelligence" as a measurable attribute to the individual (like height, weight and pigmentation), has steadily grown. Binet's early work on the testing of children's intelligence, as distinct from their level of school attainment, was a sensible and productive field of investigation. Undoubtedly it is of some use in education and in vocational guidance to have some measure of an individual's abilities as distinct from the previous use to which such abilities may have been put. Economic and social inequalities have always meant that the intelligent children of the poor have had less opportunity to get the education and the occupations which their abilities merit, than those children of the rich and socially well-connected who may be fundamentally stupid. To some extent, therefore, the concept of a measurable intelligence has assisted in a move towards greater equality of opportunity in education and in occupation. It has also been of great help in clinical and social medicine in identifying and caring for the not inconsiderable portion of the population who are born with various degrees of mental defect. In the rural village of pre-industrial Britain, the "village idiot" was a member of the community with his recognized rights to proper maintenance and care; but in the later urban jungle the individual whose only crime was a low natural endowment of mental ability, more often was lumped into the workhouse or prison to rot there along with the insane, diseased, criminal, and other types of "social derelicts".

What is now of interest, however, is how the technique of measuring

intelligence has acquired a social bias. This is more easily demonstrated than explained. Let us consider first the Weckster Bellvue test, which was designed to test the intelligence of adolescents and adults. It is an American test, but has been modified for use in Britain and is widely used here. Let us see how intelligent the reader is.

Question: "Why should we keep from bad company?"

Specimen answers:

(a) [We] usually follow in their footsteps.

(b) [They] will get you into trouble.

(c) So we wouldn't be picked up.

And which alternative would you give? Which do you think is the most intelligent reason for avoiding "bad company"? (a) Scores 2 credits, (b) scores 1 credit, (c) scores zero! So if you think yourself such a weak-minded fool that you must necessarily follow in the footsteps of your associates you are rated most highly in intelligence—but if you take a more realistic view of the world you may score zero.

Try another:

Question: "Why should people pay taxes?"

Specimen Answers:

(a) To support government.

(b) For upkeep of institutions of all kinds.

(c) So that other people can make more money.

Here of course the cynical but somewhat realistic answer scores zero, concern for the upkeep of social services scores only 1, but support for the government scores 2. At this rate anarchists can never hope to be rated well on intelligence.

Try another.

Question: "Why are laws necessary?"

Specimen Answers:

(a) Life is so complex that laws are necessary to live amicably.

(b) To govern people—keep them in control.

(c) To make people obey—they make me obey.

Here I leave it to the reader to add the appropriate scoring as he will now have seen what kind of social orientation is implied in the Weckster Bellvue idea of "intelligence".

It is instructive to consider the question of general knowledge considered as a measure of intelligence. The first question on the list is of

course "Who is the Prime Minister?" next comes "Who was Prime Minister before him?" The present writer was present at a certain University department when the doctor in charge rebuked a student for scoring question 2 as correct when the subject answered "Winston Churchill" on the grounds that it should have been "Attlee". A little discussion of recent political history ensued before the doctor realized that she would have scored zero on the most elementary question of the test! It just happened that she, like many other highly intelligent people, really did not care much about who followed who in Downing Street.

This test is not entirely biased by its social orientation; it contains many items such as arithmetical reasoning and logical deduction from pictures which, taken all together, are a fair test of general mental ability; but such is the selection of the verbal material that it is highly

weighted on the side of middle-class social conformity and academic education. The Binet test which is commonly given to children, is a somewhat fairer measure of intelligence, since it does not penalize deviations from orthodoxy so heavily, but it too is biased in favour of the child who is familiar with the language and the concepts of an educated middle-class home.

If then you are at any time submitted to the ordeal of a Weckster Bellvue, or similar intelligence test, whether for job-selection, or magistrate's order for medical report, or otherwise, remember the golden rule. Imagine that you have the social orientation of a policeman and the vocabulary of a schoolmaster (a public school one—not those drill sergeants in charge of the Secondary Moderns). Answer accordingly and you will get a high I.Q. Above all—remember not to be too clever. G.

Indignity of Labour

IN the most primitive societies, and in what may be called a state of nature, work is an activity dictated by need and satisfying it directly. It can then be described as a biological activity, and can be assumed to be psychologically healthy, because there is a clear and unbroken link between motive and fulfilment, and because any peril and effort it involves is accepted as the will of spirits and gods which are for the primitive the natural order of things.

As societies become more complex and sophisticated, work still retains its healthy character when its object is no longer exclusively, or even principally, the satisfaction of primary needs, but the pleasure of giving and of eliciting friendliness, gratitude and admiration. It is still healthy, from a psychological, though perhaps not from an ethical point of view, when the product of one's work is exchanged for a service of another product according to the will of the two persons concerned, with no pressure of urgency or competition.

When, however, what is exchanged or sold, is not the product of one's work, but work itself, one's physical and mental energies, one's time and availability; the conditions which make work a healthy and natural activity are no longer there. An element of compulsion enters which does violence to the individual's physiological make-up, and is not inherent in the connection between him

and his habitat, but operates from an alien human will.

Because this will is accidental and gratuitous, with no necessity for its exercise, it is felt and resented as an attain to freedom. Submission to another person's will makes work unethical and indistinguishable from slavery. Work is unnatural when not wanted by the worker himself, but performed by him under threat of imprisonment, physical pain or death. Under the capitalist dispensation this threat is disguised but not abolished, since no natural resources can be acceded to without submission to an alien will.

The few references to slavery and the exercise of the mechanical arts which we find in the writings of Western antiquity (Republic, VI, 495E; Gorgias, IX, 512 B, C, Ecclesiasticus, chapter 39) clearly testify to the degrading character attached to work in societies so organized as to allow some of their members not to do any work and thereby live better than the others. The thoughtful accepted degradation (for others) without qualms as the natural and rightful consequence of inferior birth or capture through war. The same causes of the same degradation are still operative to-day, although work, as submission to an alien will, is no longer openly despised. Three main reasons account for this change, namely: that the alien will acts in a most indirect, intricate and impersonal way; that feelings of nobility and freedom are no longer clear nor much cared for; and that submission has been found to work more smoothly and effectively by not being presented for what it really is. Yet practically everybody still looks on work as something to be avoided if possible, looks for jobs in which he will tell others rather than be told himself what to do, and accepts a ruling and leisure class fundamentally because he hopes to be a member of it himself or vicariously enjoys in imagination their freedom from compulsion.

Selling one's labour is in a sense more degrading than working under threat of blows, torture and death, because these constitute a negation of freedom in terms of the body rather than of the spirit. With the removal of the threat, the slave would be a free man, and would do his best not to fall under the same threat again. But he who sells his labour, according to all appearances, renounces his freedom out of his own free will; he goes and looks himself for a master when he has none. Appearances do not correspond to the real state of affairs, but to the extent that they are upheld and acted upon as if they did correspond, the worker disqualifies himself for the dignity of freedom. The feeling that he has renounced it voluntarily is very real, and he takes pains to appreciate it again with a clear conscience.

those things which he himself considered to be important.

THE PLEASURES OF TRAVEL

A FRIEND of mine who recently made a trip to New York returned to this country in a state of considerable excitement. He said that throughout his stay in America he had not met anyone who approved of McCarthy, nor had he found a single person who was in favour of Capitalism for its own sake. This was not all; he proclaimed at some length that all the Americans he had met were essentially liberal-minded, fond of children, enjoyed their work, read copiously, bathed at least every other day, hated tinned foods, seldom went to the cinema, tolerated their neighbours, considered culture of the utmost value, distrusted all politicians and were one hundred per cent. in favour of those things which he himself thought important.

Curiously enough another friend of mine happened to visit Russia a short while ago, and was tremendously enthusiastic about the people he had met. He stated with genuine fervour that he had been unable to find so much as a single trace of Stalinism anywhere. He also mentioned that none of the Russians he had met (he speaks the language fluently), were really convinced that the Soviet method was the real answer; all of them were socially-minded, fond of children, enjoyed their work, read copiously, bathed at least every other day, enjoyed tinned foods, occasionally went to the cinema, liked their neighbours, considered art to be of great value, distrusted most politicians and were in favour of

There can certainly be no question that travel is the best way to cultivate one's knowledge of the opinions and attitudes of the peoples of other countries. Everyone has their own point of view, and the best way to reach an understanding of it is to go and find out what it is—at first hand. No longer can it be said that the trouble with going abroad is that there are so many awful foreigners when you get there; a new approach is now being adopted. A general feeling of friendliness towards those of other nations is the order of the day.

This can be observed throughout the world almost anywhere one goes. The warm-hearted acceptance of British nationals in the far-flung corners of the earth; the universal acceptance of the American with his dollars; the overwhelming pleasure at the presence of the Russian with his splendid new ideas.

What a wealth of exciting experiences lie in store for the would-be traveller. Wherever he cares to go he can usually be sure of a warm welcome. In Cyprus or Hungary, Algeria or Egypt, Malaya or Iraq, Kenya or Syria.

For those of a more nervous disposition one can recommend a visit to Patagonia or Lapland—or the South Pole. S.B.

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The Truth versus the Party

IF we return again and again to the discussion of the role of the intellectual in the social and economic development of society it would be wrong to conclude from our insistence that we pin our hopes for the future on an intellectual elite. The Social revolution, anarchist, socialist or in whatever way it manifests itself, must be made by the people. But it seems to us that the intellectual climate, in which such movements for revolutionary change are born, must be provided by the writer, the poet, the philosopher, the artist—in a word, by all those members of the community who are today called the "intellectuals".

Just as the land workers provide the food to sustain human life, so the intellectuals provide food for the mind. We may criticise the former for the poor quality of the crops they produce, but are realistic enough to refrain from suggesting that they should stop growing them! So with the intellectuals. We are the first to attack them for the quality of the "spiritual" food they provide but the last to criticize their *function*, their place in the development of society. The bitter criticism of our intellectuals, which we regularly express in these columns, is a measure of our awareness of both the harm they do as well as the contribution they could make, to the free society to which everyone, everywhere in the world to-day, is paying lip-service.

★

THAT the word "freedom" is on the lips of every politician, every reactionary and every tyrant; that we use the word when our children are conscripted and the independence of peoples is trampled on by the armed Forces from both sides of the Iron Curtain—such a distortion of man's most treasured commodity has been facilitated and even assisted, or connived at, by the overwhelming majority of intellectuals who in return for a privileged place in society have surrendered their independence and their integrity.

No one in the West, apart from the Communists, has any doubts as to the subservience of Russian intellectuals to the dictates of the régime. But because the written word in the West is not controlled by the State and writers and artists are not organised in Trade Unions and there is no official ban on the flow of ideas between nations, it is assumed that our intellectuals are independent. But this is far from the truth. In the "democracies" conformity is achieved by the unofficial agencies of the States in the form of economic and social pressures, and the occasionally permitted "heretical" outbursts are invariably counter-balanced by the solid voice of orthodoxy. And in general terms the intelligentsia of the West are as committed to the black and white struggle of "communism versus democracy" as are their counterparts in Russia. That they believe in the "line" they put forward is not enough. After all, the same can be said of the Russian writers who in an open letter recently published in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* with the title "See all the Truth" were asking their French critics to believe that the Red Army were the saviours of the Hungarian people!

"It seems to us that in these difficult moments, you have believed the calumnies, the lies and the ill-disposed reports which have been circulated in France on the friends of our country. It was just at the time when you published your statement against us, calling for the 'triumph of truth', that Soviet soldiers, sacrificing their lives, saved tens and

FOR four days, from October 24 to 28, the CGT Force Ouvrière held its congress, the fourth since the split of 1948. There were some 1,200 delegates assembled, that is to say a relatively direct and exact representation of the "base". And as speakers of every leaning were able to explain themselves freely it is possible to study this congress as a valid sample of a sector of the working-class movement. To place this sector we must point out that French wage-earners are affiliated in the proportion of 10 per cent. to the Communist-controlled CGT, comprising about 1½ million workers, the CFTC (a Christian trade-union body) 900,000, and the CGT-FO 800,000. These figures are approximate because each body has a tendency to exaggerate its total strength. And let us add that there are in addition two "independent" bodies (one controlled by "Gaullists", the other in the hands of former "Vichy" elements, but both weak in numbers and without fighting spirit), a confederation of staffs and technicians, without counting various autonomous federations of which the most important is that of education, which comprises the powerful teachers' union of nearly 100,000 members.

"Force Ouvrière" has a strong influence among the civil servants and numerous bastions in the public services (the post office, for example) but has not been able up to the present to gain a firm footing in private industry. It is weak among the miners, the metal workers, and in building, textiles, chemical products, ports, and transport. This first conclusion largely explains its general orientation and spirit. The civil servants

perhaps even hundreds of thousands of lives from the fury of fascist terror."

(Among the signatories of this letter is the writer M. Cholokhov who Silone, according to *France Observateur*, "holds in high esteem by reason of the 'great literary and human value of his writings and for his courageous participation in the 20th Congress of the C.P. of the Soviet Union'.")

The views as expressed by the Russian writers may sound incredible to the writers of the West. But one must also recognise that their views appear equally incredible to their Russian colleagues! Yet they both base their appeal on the "truth": the French writers call for the "triumph of truth" the Russians want them to "See all the Truth". Can either of them see the truth in the circumstances?

★

ON this subject the Italian writer Ignazio Silone has recently made what amounts to a confession in a long article in the Paris weekly *Express* (Dec. 7): *Invitation a un Examen de Conscience*. He writes:

Another serious question which I want to raise and see debated, concerns intellectuals particularly. Can we still associate the cause of human truth, which should in spite of everything remain our principal concern, with that of a Party, of a State, of a class, and have full confidence in them on principle, as if they could not, by their very nature, fail in their "mission"? Can we still attach more weight to considerations of tactics, strategy, patriotism, organisations, than to the deep impulse which forces us to recognise factual truth before all else?

If I use the plural in asking this question, I can assure you that it is not for rhetorical effect. The question concerns me too, and even most intimately, as well as all my friends who have not drawn a line between their work as writers and a constant feeling of social responsibility. What should one do? Perhaps it is known that due to a number of unfortunate circumstances of life, I have already been obliged to change my residence several times, but I have never tried to find lodgings in the Ivory Tower, though I have heard it said that it is mild and pleasant there. No, I do not feel at all gifted to sing on my own. But the ways of committing oneself (*l'engagement*), and above all the spirit in which one does so need to be re-examined.

And in his concluding remarks he declares:

It is time we dispensed with intermediaries in our contacts with truth and with the people. Perhaps this is our greatest duty now, after the Hungarian lesson. We must learn from the people their truths and let them know ours.

Snapshot of a Trade Union Congress

are not inclined to throw themselves into strikes and prefer negotiations, pressure, proceedings. And the weight of their votes in confederal decisions traditionally comes down on the side of moderation. The wage-earners of the public services are more active and readier for a fight. That is why in the Paris region the transport workers—bus and underground—have frequently had recourse to action. It is the same with the postmen and railwaymen, the first having been in at the start of the general strike of August, 1953.

Among the unions in private industry tendencies vary with each corporation and region, but also according to the proportion affiliated. For example, the textile industry, powerful enough in the north of the country and influenced by socialist tradition, is reformist and collaborationist, whereas the metal industry, where militants are less numerous and have a daily struggle to assert themselves in the face of the management and the CGT members, shows a fighting spirit, a will to organize, and a desire to intervene that are quite remarkable. In spite of its reduced numbers, its relative youth, and the poverty of its means, the *Fédération des Metaux FO* is beyond doubt one of the live French union organizations whose staffs are not atrophied. In the summer of 1955 it was the branches at Nantes and Saint-Nazaire who set going an energetic strike with excellent results, not only for the shipyard workers who led it but for the whole of the rudely awakened industry.

These few indications enable us to understand the atmosphere of a "Force Ouvrière" congress. To complete them, however, it is necessary to point out that between congresses, which are held every two years, the confederation is controlled by an executive elected by congress and by a confederal bureau of nine members, appointed by the National Confederal Committee composed of representatives of each federation and departmental union. It is in the CCN that the different tendencies confront each other on every present problem.

The Bureau, whose secretary-general is Robert Bothereau—a pupil of Jouhaux and a pale enough disciple of him, even in the field of political appearances—comprises several undistinguished union officials (Ventejol, Rose Etienne, Tribié, Veillon) and three rather curious personages: Lafond, Lebourre, and Richard. The first two, Lafond and Lebourre, were elected thanks to the support of opposition elements, formerly autonomous and libertarian. But they very quickly ceased to be controlled by those they represent (who have no other organiza-

tion available in a position to keep a grip on their representatives) and have become simple adventurers skilled in carrying out politico-social trapeze acts. Lafond and Lebourre, after having been pro-American, wildly enthusiastic "Europeanists", and supporters of direct action, are to-day embroiled in "operations" the plainest of which amount to support of Lacoste's policy in North Africa. As for Richard, who was co-opted on to the Confederal Bureau because he was secretary of the Federation of Engineers and Technicians, he is a specialist in liaisons outside the unions, the latest being that made in favour of "Labourism".

The secretary's report presented by Robert Bothereau established a definite balance sheet: increased wages, the obtaining of three weeks' annual holiday, and the success of FO in the Social Security elections. This same report advocated that the French body should remain inside the CISL, although the latter came in for lively criticism for having, against the advice of FO, recognized the UGTA (an illegal Algerian body) and admitted it as a member of the Trade Union International. Finally the secretary's report reaffirmed the impossibility of any alliance, under whatever form, with the CGT of Benoit-Frachen or with any of its subsidiaries.

The discussion of the secretary's report traditionally provides an opportunity for delegates to allay their consciences and to criticize the "federal line" in whole or in part. The debate was dull—and of a lower standard than those of previous congresses. The impression emerged again and again that the heart of the problems was being deliberately ignored. This was the case, on all the evidence, in the Algerian question. Of course, different opinions were expressed to the platform, but they were only reflexions of what could be read in the daily or weekly press, without drawing on social facts, working-class positions, or social prospects. In reality there was not a study in common of an international crisis from the trade-union angle but a clash between citizens of different opinions on the occasion of a trade-union congress. Feelings and passions, propaganda and reactions, contradicted each other regardless of all preliminary working-class documentation.

So one saw the Algiers delegation (32 members), who came by air, representing unions to whom subscriptions had been paid three days before the congress was held, indulging in chauvinist and colonialist demonstrations. And one could conclude that the various North African union militants, who at other times did

their best to talk objectively and examine issues sensibly, had rallied the colonialist group through a reaction of fear or under the influence of threats bandied about in Algeria itself.

The solidarity of the civil servants, the lack of courage of the secretary-general, the appeal to patriotic feeling, and the delegates' being badly informed ensured that the motion put to the national confederal committee of Amiens last summer was abandoned in favour of a resolution demanding "pacification" first, "negotiation" afterwards—and by a majority of 9,500 to 2,200.

But while a policy of force was thus laid down, the motions on Tunisia and Morocco (where the French government's actions resulted in a wave of xenophobia, the massacre of settlers, and anti-French demonstrations) asked—after the pathetic interventions of the threatened civil servants—that the authority of Paris should protect French agents working in the two former protectorates. To put it bluntly, although one applauded the gesture of the French pilots of Air Atlas for their part in abducting the five leaders of the Algerian National Liberation Front, one was indignant at the consequences of this police action on the fate of the "comrades" of Rabat and Tunis. Work that out if you can!

Another example of the superficial nature of the attitudes taken; there was, several times, the question of the danger of the Poujadist movement; and many were the speakers who congratulated themselves on seeing the movement disintegrated or stopped. But few were the contributions recalling that the problem was of the order of society and that the political aspect of Poujadism corresponds to a question that remains unanswered: how to clean out commercial channels choked by 300,000 or 400,000 superfluous middlemen?

The only debate of any value—even though the question was left open—was the one that developed around what working-class tactics were to be used—direct action or negotiation. The majority of the working delegates recalled that in Aug. 1953, is in Oct. 1955, it was the strikes that had put an end to management stubbornness and government paralysis in the matter of wages. Robert Bothereau contented himself with saying that there was no conflict between the two methods. In theory the reply is valid. But it would not be so in practice if the choice of means depended on a calm analysis of what could be gained, since too often it results in a tendency to somnolence and a refusal to face responsibilities.

S. PARANE.

EAST GERMANY

Ulbricht's Party Depressed

OPPOSITE number of the *Daily Worker* for German communists is *Neues Deutschland* or *New Germany*. It has just published to the Party membership the report issued by the Political Bureau. The statement is a fortnight overdue: just the usual Party inefficiency. Chief points in this apology for the East German Communist Party are as follows.

There is abject recognition of the leading rôle of the Soviet Party among all other communist Parties and workers' parties. The "workers' parties" referred to are the communist parties in the satellite States where the communists are still too ashamed to call their parties by the same name as the mother party of the conquering nation. In East Germany the communists have labelled their organization the "Socialist Unity Party". Whom this title deceives it would be impossible to say.

Comrade Schirdewan Speaks

Delivering the report in his capacity of chief of cadres, Comrade Schirdewan gave the assurance that imperialism would never succeed in using the principle of the national independence of the peoples against the German Communist Party in the way it had done in Hungary's case. (All the evidence to the contrary, the official "line" is that Western Imperialism alone has caused the present blood-letting in that unhappy land. Eastern Imperialism is not even conceived of—except secretly—as being almost the sole cause of the revolt).

Schirdewan thanked his Party's "Polish friends" for their interest in the matter, but rejected as false the assumption that

Polish forms and methods might be advantageously introduced into the East Zone of Germany to secure the construction of socialism.

More Self-criticism

None the less, he counselled the comrades to begin a searching criticism along creative lines of specific developments in other countries and to extract therefrom whatever could be usefully taken over and what ideas ought to be thrown out.

Ideological shocks suffered in the ranks of the East German communists were dealt with in great detail. Members are overwhelmed, beaten off-course, by various "depressional phenomena". There has been a "flaring up of hostile discussions". So the call goes forth to close the ranks. "We may not permit any struggle of views to be misused so as to lay open our ranks to an onrush of reactionary, bourgeois influences." It was admitted that—to use the Party jargon—the clear ideological front between Marxist-Leninist ideology and bourgeois ideology was being blurred by opportunistic outlooks, liberalistic distortions, and by the denial of Leninist standards in the conduct of Party affairs.

Deviations Creeping In

Deviations of this kind were creeping in on tip-toe. One could now read scores of articles by Polish and Hungarian intellectuals which aimed at imposing upon the Kremlin-loyal Socialist Unity Party of East Germany a new representation of world affairs based on the foundation of an ideological co-existence with bourgeois ideologies.

The speaker apologized on behalf of

the politbureau for its having been unable to provide information on everything that had been happening in Poland and Hungary. Nevertheless, he ambiguously added, they had been quick to sense the threatening aspect of the manner in which the errors had been corrected. . . . Which is another way of saying that they deplored the wholesale massacre of working men in Budapest and the destruction to the amount of one hundred million pounds sterling of housing and other property.

Geographically speaking, the communist comrades in East Germany are in a spot. Should the workers still controlled by them rise in revolt a second time escape is cut off for the "leaders". (Exactly as FREEDOM forecast some time ago, Rakosi made his get-away to Moscow. He dare not show his face in Hungary).

Satellite Stalinists can slip across the Soviet border into humiliating safety. Not so Ulbricht and his fellows. They'd have to signal a Soviet naval vessel to take them away.

Cult of Individuals Still Alive

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of 29 November gave a fair account of this report, heading it "Depression in Ulbricht's Party". In France the communists call their party Thorez's Party, doing so officially—especially on recruiting forms. In England Gollan's Goons and Pollitt's Poppets are still unofficial titles for the C.P.G.B.

Professor of Marxism in Jail

Since the above-mentioned Politbureau meeting the communists have arrested certain of their own number. *The Daily*

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