

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"The art of government is the exclusive possession of quacks and frauds."  
—H. L. MENCKEN

## LIBERALS IN ORBIT

THE dialectic appears to be working. Perhaps not as Marx would have liked, but since his followers have hitched the class struggle to the political band-wagon, they can hardly be surprised if the inevitable process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis appears in political form.

If we regard the Conservative Party as the political expression of the capitalist class, and the Labour Party as that of the working class (created as it was to be the Parliamentary wing of the trades unions) and to accept these as thesis and antithesis, then it is logical to look for the emergence of the synthesis between the two.

Into this dialectic pigeonhole the Liberal Party fits very snugly. Pinching this from the Tories, that from Labour, the Liberals set out to have the best of both worlds and to appeal to the sizeable middle class chunk of voters who can, economically, identify themselves neither with the capitalists nor the workers.

Indeed, they can go further than that. They can appeal to Conservative minded workers and to radical-minded capitalists, like those millionaires who to-day, (for who knows what reasons?) support the Labour Party.

### Drift to the Middle

We have for many years been pointing to the drifting towards the middle which has been taking place in the policies of both the major parties. It is not easy now to see how much further they could drift without actual coalition—which both strenuously reject (as giving the game away).

The time is therefore ripe for an organisation which is frankly and openly of the middle and, by criticism of the other two shadow boxers, able to steal thunder from both.

This seems to us to be the explanation for the present resurgence of Liberalism—or rather of the Liberal Party, which is a different matter.

Trouble is, the Liberals can't put it just like that. They are out to cash in on the apathy which is disturbing the leaders of the Tory and Labour parties and therefore they have to sound some kind of clarion call to idealism. They have to be more pure-free-enterprising than the Tories and more pure-socialist than

the Labourites without appearing reactionary on the one hand or revolutionary on the other.

At the same time they want to appeal to the moderate, 'progressive' Tories who accept the Welfare State, and have a more enlightened attitude to hanging, flogging and penal reform, and also to the Labour Party supporters who have now given up ideas of further nationalisation.

### One Issue—Boredom

The Liberals want to be all things to all men, and there is at the moment only one issue on which all men are united—distrust and boredom with politics. From the fascists on the extreme right to the anarchists on the extreme left (accepting these placings for the sake of verbal economy) with all the range of political opinion in between, people are fed-up with politics.

Only the faithful or the job-hunters affect any enthusiasm. Only the press pretends that anybody outside of the M.P.s and party workers are really curious about the date of the general election.

The Liberals therefore are having to dream up a cause which they hope will pay off. And the ideal they are pinning to their mast-head is—Clean Up Politics! Bring New Blood into Parliament!

After a publicity boost that led us to expect great things, the *News Chronicle* published last week (16.4.59) an article by Robin Day, ex-ITN newscaster and latest of the Liberals' TV-personality candidates, telling us why he was 'going into the fight'.

Alas, though he talked a lot about red blood, Mr. Day went into battle with nothing more lethal than a pop-gun. Which, as it happens, is ade-

quate enough for the battle he has decided to fight.

Mr. Day does not get excited about what most people regard as the great issues of the day—although, to be fair, perhaps he will deal with those in later articles. But it seems that what has made him quit his job as newscaster (while not cutting himself off from earning a living in TV) is the decline of Parliament.

### Hot, Fresh Blood!

Criticising M.P.s like Angus Maude, Hartley Shawcross and Christopher Hollis for their negative

disgust and departure from politics, Robin Day says:

What makes me angry is that the two parties who have dominated Westminster for so long should be dragging the Parliamentary system into disrepute.

The tragic fact is that in Britain today, home of the mother of Parliaments, politics is a dirty word. It is fashionable to sneer at Parliament. . . .

Parliament needs a blood transfusion. But it must be good, hot, fresh blood.

Not from hardened Tory arteries. Nor from an anaemic Socialism. It must come from Liberals, who offer a modern-minded radical programme of their own. Invigorated by Jo Grimond's leadership, Liberals challenge the Socialist claim to be the only party of protest and reform.

Liberals fight to get more seats in Parliament.

They fight for a bigger voice at West-

minster for the millions who are sick and tired of the Tory-Socialist slanging match.

While at the week-end, Jo Grimond was addressing a policy-guiding conference of Young Liberals at Manchester, where he said:

"We have put it in a nutshell by saying that we intend to replace the Socialist party. But I want to make it plain once again that what we are really out to do is to create a new party based on Liberal principles which will satisfy the strain of Socialist idealism which is being smothered in the present Labour party."

An there, as Grimond says, it is in a nutshell. The Liberals are out to be a mass party again. Just as they were ousted by a radical Labour Party in the '20s and '30s, so they hope to oust the Labour and become the official Opposition (at least) in

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'As one loused-up llama to another, just do me a favour. For my next perishing reincarnation, put me down as a pigeon in Pekin.'

### New York Letter

## THE DULLES SMILE

A FEW days ago the papers ran a picture of Mr. Dulles as he arrived at the airport at Washington. He was operated on two years ago for cancer. The growth recurred and he had recently undergone that terminal therapeutic ordeal, irradiation. Two weeks later he was forced to cut short his vacation because of a new recurrence, and here he was on his way to his final hospital bed, his skin pressed death-like on his face, his eyes showing agony, smiling.

The captions called it a smile and I suppose this was Dulles' intent. The effect was a mediaeval grimace.

How does it happen that the customs of our society compel a man in agony and dying to smile? How can anyone become trained to this extent? The toll extracted from the infant John Foster was exorbitant if he sticks to the rules this closely.

Dishonesty, the discrepancy between feeling and the expression of feeling is taught to children and required of adults. A smile means you're warm-hearted (but you hate my guts); a smile means you're sincere (you tell yourself the same lies as you tell me); a smile means you're confident in your self, party, company, country, god. When you smile you're not afraid. The people can put their trust in you.

People who think in such terms are pompous. They know the ceremonies but not the facts of life.

A smile is the pomp of the body politic. The political, non-private man does not know this.

Smile means the face of a body in pleasure or tenderly recalling pleasure. There is no brave smile, no smiling through tears.

The infant of less than two months smiles when his intestines are disturbed by gas. Thereafter his smile is the smile of recognition of the person who feeds him. From about three months he smiles when his skin is pleasurable stimulated. From about 24 months his smile can be manipulated by parents and other training figures. Certain situations then demand a smile: the child has learned that a smile is appropriate and will fetch reward if given.

A large part of puritan upbringing is concerned with the manipulation of the smile. Who has not as a child experienced being angry and being confronted with an adult's wheedling smile? The untrammelled child has learned that a smile is ap-anger or his sorrow. The child undergoing corruption will acquiesce and feel his anger melt away as he smiles back to the adult. The anger does not melt. It is repressed.

As he grows up in a society of chronic smilers the need to smile becomes compelling. Hate and love become fused in a non-descript smile where the power to hate and the

power to love are both disturbed. A year ago some forty newspaper reporters were crammed in the spectators' seats of the death chamber in Sing Sing prison. A notorious murderer, "Killer" Burke, was to be electrocuted. It was said that during the ceremonies preceding his death Burke sat strapped in the chair, looking round the audience. When his gaze came to the detective who had arrested him he paused and "the flicker of a smile played upon his lips."

The smile is obligatory for salesmen. Politics or merchandise, everything goes with a smile. It is difficult to imagine a salesman with rotten teeth. *His smile would put you off.* Eisenhower's greatest asset is the famous Ike grin, the grin of the low I.Q. Truman before him had a well-known beam, and before that there was Roosevelt, or did he use false teeth? I forget.

In England where the practice of dentistry is greatly inferior to that in the U.S. the problems of a smile are likely to remain different.

In the popular arts, songs, photography, movies, the quantity of smiling appears to be compulsive. Yet things have not always been like this. Until very recently a portrait of a distinguished man, bishop, judge or statesman, showed always what must then have been a fashionable scowl, rather more appropriate than

a smile to the part played in public life.

Chief Justice Goddard was never caught posed smiling after a sentence to hanging or whipping.

I would guess that the relative absence of the smile among public figures in England, compared with those in the U.S., must be due to the predominance of an aristocratic ideal figure, neurotic, aching, inwardly defeated, engraved with duty, drilled by precept, stern, just and a bore—what you see in the eighteenth and nineteenth century portraits. The same idea is perpetuated among the moderns. Until 1939 the official "British" character encouraged among the non-ruling classes was the dull-witted Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit Bag sort, and the enormous success of this brain-washing-away is reflected by the characteristically "British" supine attitude to authority.

American democracy, far from its roots which survive intact in Britain, is the result of the Smile, Smile, Smile philosophy becoming adopted by the ruling classes as well as the non-ruling. An American who doesn't smile is in a pretty sad state.

President Eisenhower accepted the resignation of Dulles, announcing over the radio, "I personally believe he has filled his office with greater distinction and greater ability than any other man our country has known—a man of tremendous character and courage, intelligence and wisdom."

So be it with John Foster. He has paid a high price.

J.B.

### 'Freedom's' Smile!

#### PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 16

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Contributions received £382  
SURPLUS £62

April 10 to April 16

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Total ... 31 8 0  
Previously acknowledged ... 350 16 4  
1959 TOTAL TO DATE ... £382 4 4

GIFTS OF BOOKS: London: A.S.; London:  
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\*Indicates regular contributor.



PEOPLE AND IDEAS:

# Marie Louise Berneri and the Spanish Revolution

"To middle-aged liberals, the Spanish civil war, which ended twenty years ago, brings back memories of the strongest political emotions they probably felt in all their lives... Perhaps after twenty years, it is possible to tell the true story in an objective spirit."

—SEBASTIAN HAFFNER, (The Observer, 22/3/59).

"It is from an anarchist point of view and without being hampered by false loyalty or opportunist considerations, but also with modesty and comprehension that we should try to draw the lessons of the Spanish Revolution. I am convinced that our movement will be more demoralised and weakened by blind and uncritical admiration than by frank admission of past mistakes."

—M. L. BERNERI, (War Commentary, Mid-July, 1943).

TWO melancholy anniversaries of the past month are linked very intimately in our minds. It is twenty years since the war in Spain dragged to its end. It is ten years since Marie Louise Berneri, who was an editor of this paper for more than twelve years, died, tragically young. She was the daughter of the Italian anarchist Camillo Berneri, who was murdered in Barcelona in May 1937 when the Communists began the liquidation of the revolution, and of Giovanna Berneri who today edits the Italian review *Volontà*. Spain was the dividing line in her life between her childhood in the turbulent world of political exile and anti-Fascist agitation in Paris, and her adult life in this country. The activities of *Freedom Press* had revived in 1936 with the inception of the fortnightly *Spain and the World*, which had been discussed with Marie Louise and her father before the publication of the first issue.

The Spanish revolution gave birth to a great wave of political enthusiasm in Western Europe, much of it based upon illusory or deceptive interpretations of the issues involved. Marie Louise was too close to its actual events to be deceived. As the French anarchist S. Parane wrote after her death, "Like her father, she distinguished, with no illusions, between propaganda and actual achievements; she kept a human contact with the grandiose or pathetic efforts of a tortured people". And she herself wrote to V.R. in October, 1936,

"At present my heart is so perturbed by what is happening in Spain that I cannot feel like thinking of happy days of loving... It is the only topic of conversation... and Mother speaks of nothing else since her return. I was so hoping that she would come back full of optimism. Instead she cried on the journey back, and I found her very discouraged."

Her personal commitment to the Spaniards extended over the years, working for the colony of orphan children that *Spain and the World* sponsored at Llansa, and aiding the Spaniards who escaped to England after the fall of Madrid in 1939. Manuel Salgado writes:

"On April 4th, a group of us, mainly from the central zone of Spain, arrived in this country. We were morally and physically destroyed. To relate the vicissitudes of our journey would be long and out of place. Within a few days a comrade, whose name I forget, came to take us to the Freedom Press group's premises at 21 Frith Street, and it was there that I first saw Marie Louise who received us with unbounded happiness... From the very beginning she was at our disposal, and moved heaven and earth so that those of us who were still at the Salvation Army hostel should leave that place, and in fact, a number of us went to live at Frith Street."

She kept in touch with them for the rest of her life. In 1945 another group of about 100 Spaniards were brought to this country. They had spent the war in German forced labour brigades in France and were treated as prisoners of war. She visited them, organised relief parcels, and brought their plight to the attention of circles in a position to exert pressure

on the government. "In no small measure as a result of her work on their behalf, they were released either to stay in this country or to go back to France."

IN the second world war, as the events in Spain receded into the back of the minds of those whose involvement with its issues had been transient, Marie Louise went on seeking to establish their significance and to draw conclusions. In the summer of 1940 she discussed its history exhaustively, embodying the fruits of the discussion in a course of ten lectures which she gave to a small study circle at Enfield and later in London. Her examination of the literature and documentation which appeared over the years, from Kaminski's *Ceux de Barcelone* which she reviewed in *Spain and the World* in 1937, to Brennan's *Spanish Labyrinth* which she discussed at length in *Now* in 1944, testify to her continual search for factual truth about Spain. "More Documents on the Spanish Tragedy" and "How the History of the Spanish War is Written" are typical titles of her reviews in *War Commentary*, and in 1943 she sought to draw some conclusions in an article "Lessons of the Spanish Revolution". (This title was used after her death for Vernon Richards' book on the subject).

In introducing her article, Marie Louise commented on the reasons why the lessons had still to be drawn. The second world war itself was of course one reason why a deep and extensive study had not been made. The work of interpretation could best be done by Spaniards, but, apart from their well-known antipathy to writing history, she reminded us that

"most of them are without documents or newspaper files; many are not in a position to write in concentration camps or besieged by the difficulties of the exile. The Spanish anarchist militia organiser Cipriano Mera for example, who wrote extensive notes on his experiences during the revolution had those documents seized by the French authorities when he was trying to send them to America."

There was also the fact that all the

left-wing parties and factions—those who are more likely to seek in the Spanish experience lessons for their future struggles, had committed mistakes and compromised their principles.

"One can consider, of course, the attitude adopted by various parties towards Spain and the opinions expressed in articles and speeches. For the Liberals and Leftists, Spain was the first country in which the struggle between Fascism and Democracy broke out. They weep over the mistake of the non-intervention pact as they weep over Munich. They learn from Spain that no compromise can be made with fascism and that Hitler and Mussolini are not to be trusted. The lack of value of these conclusions is self-evident.

"The Communists never draw lessons—they justify and praise their own actions and slander their opponents. The Trotskyists point out correctly that it was a mistake on the part of the revolutionary movements to maintain the bourgeois state but claim that the formation of a workers' state would have saved the revolution.

"The anarchists have not drawn the lessons in any co-ordinated way but it is apparent that some refuse to admit the mistakes made by the Spanish anarchist movement and therefore all the lessons they draw are one-sided. They put all the blame for the defeat on the attitude of the Communist Party and Russian Intervention but refuse to recognise that since the anarchists were the strongest force in Spain they should have prevented the C.P. from taking power. Some Spanish, French and Italian anarchists have pointed out some of the mistakes of the Spanish comrades particularly during the course of the revolution itself."

It is of course, part of the strength of the critical position adopted by Marie Louise in her articles and by V.R. in his subsequent book that they cannot be accused of being wise after the event, since their criticism of the course followed by the leaders of the C.N.T. were first made in the columns of *Spain and the World* during the war itself. In the issue for 4/3/1938 for instance, which is filled with the proposals and counter-proposals of the C.N.T. and U.G.T. for

a common policy, Marie Louise pointed out the disastrous results of the C.N.T.'s first participation in the government, and that in the proposed 'unity pact' the social revolution, "—what is left of it—will disappear even further into the background". And on 25th March, 1939, after Barcelona had fallen, and just before the final collapse of resistance to Franco in central Spain, when the defenders of Madrid had finally risen against the Communist-dominated Government, they write in a joint editorial,

"... we cannot consider the final elimination of the Communists as victory for our comrades. Rather must we admit that their whole attitude (the C.N.T. more than the F.A.I.) in refusing to make public in Spain and the world at large the nefarious work being carried on by the Communists and other counter-revolutionary elements in general, for fear of breaking up the anti-fascist front, was a serious tactical mistake, partly responsible for the tragic situation in Spain."

IT has taken many years for the Communist version of the events in Spain to be discredited. The reminiscences of former Soviet agents and of former Spanish Communist leaders like Jesus Hernandez and El Campesino have confirmed for the general public the role Stalin played in destroying the revolution. But the public image is as confused as ever. A long article by Sebastian Haffner under the title "Spain—The Legend and the Reality" (*The Observer* 22/3/59) seeks to give an impression of the truth and explode the myths. In some respects he does. He exposes the fallacy of regarding the war as a straightforward struggle between 'democracy' and 'fascism'. He points out that on the day the revolution broke out, the Republican government of Martinez Barrio had attempted to make a deal with the fascists. He emphasises too that the role of the Communists was that of the grave-diggers of the revolution. But his article has some errors of fact and enormous errors of interpretation.

When he comes to the anarchists he makes this extraordinary statement:

"A trained Marxist observer, travelling in Catalonia and Aragon in August and September, 1936, noted with wonderment that the locally victorious anarchists had killed all the landowners, but had clear forgotten to divide their estates, or even to raise the wages of agricultural labourers."

It is hard to see what he means by a 'trained Marxist observer'. This must be the same kind of Marxist observation as the *Daily Worker's* recent headline "Dalai Lama Calls for China's Aid"! For the success of the peasant anarchist collectives in Catalonia and Aragon was so obvious and generally recognised, that in discussing the collectives in general, Marie Louise Berneri wrote:

"We shall not deal with the peasant collectives. Even bourgeois and Marxist writers willingly admit that the agricultural collectives were a great success but they hasten to assert that this proves that anarchism is only practicable in an agricultural, poorly developed country..."

In order to refute Mr. Haffner's 'trained Marxist observer' it is necessary to cite the descriptions by H. E. Kaminski, Augustin Soucy, Gaston Leval, and José Peirats, and to hope that a similar extended account of the Spanish collectives and of the collectivised industries in the towns will be made available in English.

On April 1st this year, Franco opened his mausoleum dedicated to the million dead of the Civil War, tunnelled out of a granite hillside by the forced labour of political prisoners over a period of sixteen years at a cost of £9 million. Franco declared that "the periods of peace that have followed the victory have witnessed the development of a policy guided by the highest feelings of unity and brotherhood between all Spaniards." What his policy has done is to build up a reservoir of hatred and resentment that will inevitably one day burst its dams. It is only the general fear of another period of bloodshed like that of 1936-9, that has kept Franco in power for twenty years. And when another generation is faced with the attempt to free itself, there is no guarantee that the mistakes and betrayals of those years will not be repeated. Marie Louise sought to understand them, not merely as a gesture of historical justice, but for the future.

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## The Dirt Under the Carpet

VISITORS to these shores often complain of British (and American) reporters who present ugly, isolated aspects of life in their countries as common, typical happenings. An article by Rhona Churchill in the *Daily Mail*, Feb. 7th, reporting on what the Duke of Edinburgh did not see on his tour of India, may well be an outstanding example of that kind of malicious, prejudiced or just plain stupid (whatever it is, there's money in it) journalism which is surely the quickest way to make an Indian (or a Maltese) cross. She wrote: "That is the India Prince Philip did not see—an India where cows and humans collapse and die of hunger, tuberculosis and cancer on the pavements of the main cities and passing humans show no more concern for their dying species than do passing sacred cows for theirs". Further: "India's hospitals will not admit the dying or those thought to be dying because they are more concerned with producing rosy statistics on patients cured than with easing the final agonies of a Hindu temporarily passing from this world."

But, as our visitors point out, it would be just as easy for them to rake out the muck from under the British (and American) carpet. Taking into account the fact that we enjoy far greater prosperity and have virtually no refugee problems, one might even suggest that our record, inasmuch as there is no excuse for it, is blacker than that of India. Let's take a look . . .

Peter Townsend wrote a book on "The Family Life of Old People" quite recently which would surely shock us all if politicians and parsons had not made us so shock-proof. Take a quotation that Rhona Churchill would lift out and headline in the "Calcutta Clarion", had she been born a Hindu: "... many (old people in Britain) have to manage on their own. For a variety of reasons, fear of being made to leave their homes, shyness, shame of their appearance and of their possessions, they put off visiting doctors or social workers and shrink from joining clubs. Day by day they deteriorate: maybe a neighbour sees a bottle of milk standing on the doorstep hours after it has been delivered, makes inquiries, and sends for an ambulance." No doubt

that is something else that Prince Philip is not allowed to see—unless he wants to join the Prince of Wales in the Bahamas.

What kind of "civilisation" is this where, as Townsend has so thoroughly brought to our notice, our old people starve and shiver rather than beg a bureaucratic charity which, taking the numbness away, might even increase their suffering—mentally if not physically? He calculated that 20-25 per cent. of the retired old people in his survey would have been entitled to supplementary assistance grants, usually one to fifteen shillings per week, had they applied for them. At least half of those getting assistance had not sought it for months or even years after retirement. He found that housing was more a preoccupation than income: many of the old peoples' houses being demolished under clearance schemes would be preserved and converted were they in wealthier boroughs, such as Hampstead or Chelsea.

About a year previous, the Sunderland Rural Council Medical Officer, having investigated the living standards of 1000 old age pensioners in N.E. Durham, said that none of them had bought a suit or a frock since retirement. It makes one a little suspicious of the "poor clergy" who, despite their £4 per week pensions, are reckoned to be in the last stages of destitution.

Another investigation, at Salford, covered 17,000 men and women over pensionable age and confirmed the findings of smaller sample investigations. Commenting on its findings, the *New Statesman* had this to say: "We still condemn many old people to sift cinders, to recover scraps of fuel and to eke out their days on bread, margarine, tea, potatoes and more bread . . . some local authorities should look a little more closely at the human suffering hidden beneath their welfare services . . . no answer has yet been given by the L.C.C. to charges made in this journal about the shocking conditions of homeless families in London." This is Britain in the days of prosperity, budget surpluses and 2d. off everything. This is Britain the land of plenty where millions of pounds are spent on advertis-

ing luxury goods that so many old people never touch.

Whilst our doctors agitate for even higher salaries our old people starve—and so provide more work for more doctors with higher salaries. In every town the new multiple stores, office blocks and public houses go up like mushrooms and the new hospital, planned since before the war, is once again kept on the drawing board to the tune of "We hope it will be possible to make a start in 1960"—this despite the conditions in some hospitals which reminds one of prisons.

There is no need for Mother Theresa (eulogized in Rhona Churchill's *Daily Mail* article) to go as far as Calcutta to help the sick and needy. She could be well employed in the British Isles, particularly in Ireland where, according to the secretary of the Limerick branch of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, "There is, unfortunately, a lot of child neglect . . ." including the case of a 6½-year-old girl locked up every night with a cow and a dog—and the three children who were found "walking through snow and slush . . . begging for money to buy food"—and the 10-year-old boy who slept in a hen-house to avoid beatings from his mother.

We haven't much to sing about in this land of stinking charity where a crippled old age pensioner can so justifiably write to a Sunday newspaper in these terms: "... pensioners do not want old left-off clothes or shoes, or old magazines or old books or old newspapers. Unfortunately, we already know the smell of them! We do not want to help the rich to get rid of their rubbish. We need increased pensions and the spending of them on our own."

It is high time we stopped producing our Rhona Churchills, with their illusory ideas about the British Way of Life, and put our own house in order. And, so far as helping people in other countries is concerned, we don't need to send out our reporters and missionaries so much as to cease exploiting these people the way we do by virtue of our control of their resources and lives.

Slough. ERNIE CROSSWELL.



## THOUGHT AND ACTION

IN the "Interview" we published in last week's issue of FREEDOM, Herbert Read declares that anarchists have never discussed adequately the problem of the "exact relationship between thought and action, between existence and essence". If we have read him correctly, for Herbert Read there is no problem. He rejects the idea that in every situation (historical, economic or social) in which we find ourselves our actions should be consistent with our thinking, for then

we must renounce society as it is, with its material comforts, its political security, and the cultural pleasures which it provides, and go away to some ideal paradise (if we can find one) to live a life fully consistent with anarchist principles.

And this renunciation of the "established social system" not only would not change the system, but, furthermore,

no-one would admire us for our Quixotism, nor would anyone be deeply influenced. People would say we were "wrong in the head" and nobody would bother about us.

Because "ideas are more important than action" Herbert Read believes that

We must find a place in the structure of existing society, take part in its activities and achieve functional unity in it so as to be able to affirm our ideal aims from that realistic position.

And he points out that so far, no government has threatened to send him to the stake "or even to prison".

On the contrary, I have been allowed to develop my anarchist principles in a society in which I count as a functional unity. I believe that in that way I have influenced a greater number of people towards anarchism than if I had taken on the way of social rejection.

★  
VERY few anarchists in this century have in fact advocated a renunciation of society. The advocates of communal living have sought not to escape from existing society but to find a simpler, more congenial and more economic way of dealing with the day to day material questions and chores of life. At the same time they believe that such experiments are not only invaluable for those who participate in them, but can also influence others with similar problems to seek solutions which are practical, though, from the point of view of existing society, unorthodox. For most communitarian anarchists such experiments are not ends in themselves, any more than the maintenance of life should be in a society in which all people have an equal right to the necessities of life (which of course is not the case to-day).

Agreeing then with Herbert Read that renunciation of society is not the solution for anarchists (and once again reminding him that it never has been!) who are, after all, seeking to change it, we suggest that the alternative to renunciation is not necessarily that of "find[ing] a place in the structure of existing society, etc. . . so as to be able to affirm our ideal aims from that realistic position".

In the first place Herbert Read is speaking from the privileged position of an established poet, critic and publisher living in a country where it is not, at present, embarrassing to anyone in power that philosophical anarchists and publicists should co-exist with free-enterprise capitalists, the State and government. Even accepting that this happy state of affairs, this apparent tolerance exists for each one of us, the fact remains that we cannot all become estab-

lished (that is successful) poets, critics and publishers.

This is not intended as a "personal" attack, but we think it essential to underline the point that though it is possible for a "socially conscious" factory worker to exert more influence on his fellow beings than a poet, the conditions under which he operates are quite different from those of the poet. Militant workers have lost their jobs and have been black-listed by all employers in the industry in which they could earn a living as a result of their militancy. Can the same be said of poets or writers whose political ideas are against the current (e.g., Wodehouse, Pound, Campbell, Read)? It is no argument to say that one judges the poet or writer on his merits, as a writer, irrespective of his political and social views unless the same criterion is applied to the militant worker in deciding whether to black-list him or not.

Furthermore, how many poets would change jobs with a factory worker, albeit an intelligent, imaginative and militant one, and vice versa?

Again, when it comes to the question of protesting against some palpable injustice, whether at home or abroad, letters to the press are signed, and public meetings addressed, by poets and politicians and not by socially conscious "peasants" and factory workers simply because we know that the former stand a better chance of having their letters accepted by Editors and of filling the halls than if the signatories and speakers were simply Tom, Dick or Harry who have, probably, more sincerity and militancy in their little fingers than all the "names" put together! (We say this from experience, conscious of our own opportunism in overloading the letters and the meetings with "names"!)

Why should this be but for reasons of status; reasons which have no relation either to intelligence or integrity,

★  
BUT apart from all these considerations, Herbert Read uses his exceptional situation to draw conclusions and make generalisations which, on reflection, should make him squirm!

Does he suggest, for instance, that the political refugees who left Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Franco Spain and Stalin's Empire in their hundreds of thousands were wrong "in renouncing society as it is"—or was—in their particular countries? Were the million Spanish refugees who crossed the Pyrenees expecting to find some "ideal paradise" on the other side? They were received, to quote Read's own words: \*

in a democratic country [France] not as heroes but as criminals. Indeed, as worse than criminals, for these are given at least decent shelter and adequate food. Our Spanish comrades were herded like animals in open compounds, surrounded by barbed-wire entanglements and armed guards, and deprived of the most elementary necessities of life. They were left to dig themselves holes in the sand, to dig futile shelters of sticks and rags, to scrounge for food, like abandoned dogs. . . .

Though thousands of them died in these camps, few of them returned to the society they had "renounced"; twenty years, almost to the week have passed since that mass exodus from Franco's Spain and still hundreds of thousands of Spanish men and women prefer exile (and one has to know Spaniards to understand what that word means for them) to the chance of being reunited with their families and friends and "finding a place in the structure of existing [for them, Franco's] society".

In the interview published last week, Read once again expresses his admiration for Camillo Berneri Berneri (father of our comrade, the late Marie Louise Berneri, to whom C.W. makes reference in his piece elsewhere in this issue) as one of the significant anarchist thinkers of our

\*Revolt! May 1st, 1939.

A FREQUENTLY heard quotation from Molière is that in which, during a discussion on literature, a character discovers to his amazement that he has been speaking "prose" all his life. Now that whole conferences are devoted to problems of "Communication" and many people regret the absence of "relationships", it is worth while recalling that all of us are here and now living in "communities". The people who are interested in founding new communities are not really doing anything so radically different, but rather exchanging the type of community they are in for one which they hope will be more satisfactory. However, the suburb, the factory, the boarding school, all have equal claims to the objective title "community", and the problems which beset people living in them are just as likely to crop up among people who go to live in a colony of their own.

Nevertheless, from time to time people get together with the idea that perhaps by choosing a particular set of companions, or by arranging parts of their social organisation in an unusual way, they may avoid some of the troubles which otherwise beset them, and live in a happier and more satisfactory way than before.

Just over a century ago, many groups in Europe began to think along such lines, for very diverse reasons. Most of them took the plunge, and emigrated to America to carry out their experiments. The wide open spaces and the comparative ease with which land could be obtained was one attraction, and the traditional American tolerance towards freer life, which in more recent times fallen into sorry straights, was another. The U.S.A. during the nineteenth century

time. Yet from 1925, when he and his family chose exile rather than "count as a functional unity" in Fascist Italy as a teacher (which meant taking an oath of loyalty to the régime rather in the same way as patriotic American teachers are expected to do nowadays), to the time of his death, in May, 1937 at the hands of Communist gunmen in Barcelona, Berneri was hunted from pillar to post, deported from every country in which he sought asylum, living clandestinely when he was not in one or other of the democratic prisons of Western Europe; "renouncing the material comforts" and certainly denied what Read calls, "political security", but in spite of everything managing to read and write and agitate. And in revolutionary Spain the "leaders" were anxious to offer him a privileged "place" in the new order. But instead he thought he could best contribute to the new order by being himself; which meant critical support of his comrades, and open denunciation of the Communists. An uncomfortable existence, and Berneri certainly courted reprisals by adopting such a position. Should he have compromised? That is, should he have remained silent? An awkward question indeed, for by what sophistry can Read in a situation such as presented itself in Spain in 1937, distinguish between *ideas* and *action*?

But perhaps at that time Read would not have posed the question. Did he not write, in 1938, in *Poetry & Anarchism*

We can understand and draw courage and resolution from the death of Garcia Lorca, who was shot by fascists at Granada in 1936. On the whole, an undisguised hatred of poets is preferable to the callous indifference of our own rulers. In England poets are not regarded as *dangerous* individuals—merely as a type that can be ignored. Give them a job in an office, and if they won't work let them starve. . . .

★  
IN 1959 for political reasons Franco is prepared to tolerate a dead Lorca but not a free press, while the British Government has long ago seen the advantages to be derived from using its living poets and artists as "invisible exports".

Perhaps the time has come, in this country at least, to mix a little *action* with the *ideas*!

## London Anarchist Group Sunday Lectures COMMUNITY LIVING

provides the most interesting examples of experiments in community living.

While the anarchist movement is showing a resurgent interest in communities, it seems quite interesting to review the problems they have faced in the past, not taking them in chronological order, but examining each problem separately.

It might be an acceptable paradox to say that the worst reason for founding a community, is the desire to live in a community! Certainly, those which had the greatest success from the practical point of view did not owe their beginning to idealist motives, but to practical necessity. Among these may be quoted the followers of George Rapp, a Pietist sect which followed its leader from Germany to America in 1805, and founded the Harmony Society on land north of Pittsburgh. They later moved to Indiana, and then again to Economy which is also near Pittsburgh. A similar group were the Zoarites, whose community in Ohio lasted from 1819 to 1898. At a rather later date we find colonies being set up by German Pietists at Aurora, Oregon and Bethel, Missouri, and by Swedist Pietists at Bishop Hill, Missouri. An effort which has rather more interest for libertarians, and which incidentally is still in existence is that of a group known as the Inspirationists of Amana, Iowa. They had had experience of living co-operatively even in Germany and on arriving in America, found that a communist community was the most practicable way of carrying on.

Turning from those for a moment, all the rest of the communities were formed by people who felt, either for religious, social or intellectual reasons that it was somehow the right way of life. Robert Owen held the belief, which most reformers and revolutionaries share to some extent, that what appears evil in man is purely the result of environment, and that in an ideal setting, human virtue would flourish unhindered. The result was a short-lived community founded at New Harmony in 1825. The Hopedale community, born in 1841 in Massachusetts was an attempt by a free-thinking Christian, Adin Ballou, to work out in practice his own ideas on how Christianity should be applied to everyday life. Two years later a John A. Collins began a community at Skaneateles, based on ethical ideas akin to liberal Christianity, but rejecting the formal idea of religion. The Northampton Association, and the most interesting of the American communities to be considered here, that of Brook Farm were formed simply by people who felt that capitalist society just was not good enough for them, and that in a community they would be free to lead lives closer to their own choosing. The last, and perhaps the most widely known American community was that of Oneida. Its foundation as will appear later, was due to a unique type of religious revelation. Turning to the English scene, the most important community

was at Whitway in Gloucestershire. It was formed by people of a Tolstoyan anarchist persuasion, who felt that the compromises involved in living in a capitalist society were too much to be borne.

The first problem to be faced by a community is that of ownership of property. It is worth remembering that most of the disputes which can arise around this are not due to the communiteers' attitude to property, but to that of society outside. However communist the community may be, the law will still poke its nose in, and in the case of an open dispute, will take the side of the less libertarian participant; and even though they may feel that in a rationally organised society there would be no conflicts over possession, they are still in the midst of an irrationally organised one.

There are three broad types of ownership that have been tried out: communism, in which all the property is held by the group as a whole; complete individualism in which each member owns and is responsible for his own affairs; and an intermediate form of collectivism, where perhaps the tools of a joint enterprise are owned by the community, and other effects individually. The religious communities mentioned first went in for complete communism. It was however, a communism of scarcity, and of patriarchal relationships within the group. That is quite interesting in view of the Marxist theory that socialism is a social order appropriate only to a highly developed industrial society. The work

Continued on p. 4

## People & Ideas

Continued from p. 2

If she had lived, there is no doubt that she would have followed her admirable book *Journey Through Utopia*, and her projected study of the unpublished writings of Sacco and Vanzetti, with just such an analysis, as the archives of the C.N.T. became available, of the Spanish revolution. So far as its political history is concerned, this has been done in *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*. But the revolution had its social history and its constructive achievements too, and, fascinated as she was by Gerald Brenan's study of the ancient communal institutions of the Spanish people, with its conclusion that "one has to recognise that the Spanish working-classes show a spontaneous talent for co-operation that exceeds anything that can be found today in any other European country", she had all the linguistic, literary, and intellectual talent for such a work. When it is eventually undertaken in English it will be due to her inspiration, and to her deep love and concern for the social revolution which ended in tragedy twenty years ago.

C.W.  
[An article by Marie Louise Berneri on The Spanish Social Revolution will appear in next week's FREEDOM].

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## To Nobody's Child — A Father

THE English Parliament has finally caught up with the facts of life in recognising that the father of a child, whether or not conceived in wedlock, is a father just the same. To quote the *Observer's* legal correspondent: "The law originally looked upon the bastard as a child of nobody; but, later, as the child of nobody except its mother". This immaculate conception of biology has undergone a further change through a clause in the Legitimacy Bill which gives each parent "equivalent rights to apply under the Guardianship of Infants Acts for custody of, or access to, their children", a change which, incidentally, was made in Scotland nearly thirty years ago. The Bill also makes it possible for a child to be legitimated should its parents subsequently marry.

In the past the mother of an illegitimate child was entitled to full control except in circumstances, where the law could, if negligence was proven, place the child in an institution or in the care of foster parents. Legally a woman could claim maintenance of a kind (and presumably still can) for her child if paternity could be proved (and if the father could be found!) The woman, however, who has, either by choice or accident, stepped out of bounds is not 'protected' by the law to anything like the same extent as a married woman with a child who for instance may be the "innocent" party in a divorce and can claim a third of her husband's income, which means that she and her child, or children, are entitled to be kept by the ex-husband. In other words the law relating to legal marriage lays down that the *man* is solely responsible for his ex-wife and child be he the "guilty" party. Thus we have another example of the partiality of the law in favour of those who keep within its bounds however unjust the results may be.

It will be interesting to see if the new status accorded to the fathers of illegitimate children will also give to the mother the same financial

legal rights which married women have, especially in those cases where the need might be greater.

### An Anarchist View

IN pointing to the defects of the law based as it is primarily on moral (and property) considerations in relation to the unmarried mother we do not therefore hold that a new law favouring them should be made or that any outside arbiter should interfere in the conduct between men, women and their children. While believing that there is a change in attitude generally to illegitimate children and that the law at least now recognises that the "love child" is a human being conceived in the same way as legitimate children, our purpose is to encourage a sense of responsibility between individuals whereby recourse to law will be rendered unnecessary.

## The Forgotten Men

TEN days ago four miners, two of them in their early twenties, died when the roof of the pit in which they were working collapsed. The tragedy has already been forgotten by most of us, but not by the miners many of whom live with the fear of sudden death throughout their working lives. At the time in an article, which was held over until further information about the mines was collected, we pointed to the obvious fact that in spite of improvements made in British Mines in the past years, these accidents, which could be avoided, continue to happen. We also suggested since new and cheaper form of power were being developed and there is now in this country a large surplus of coal, it would not be considered profitable to spend money improving mines which eventually would become obsolete even though such mines as are still in operation may be dangerous for the men who work in them.

This view is substantiated yet

It is our view (born out by our experience of unmarried anarchist parents) that when two responsible people decide to have a family, in the first place, married legal ties are not essential to the happiness of their children, secondly such parents do not find it necessary to call in the law to decide who shall be materially responsible for their children.

It seems to us that it is only decisions which are arrived at freely and jointly which make good relationships possible. Opposers of "free unions" argue that without marriage there would be very little stability since couples would have nothing to "hold them together", a view which cannot stand up to analysis. With the kind of rational parents we have been discussing responsibility does not suddenly cease because two people, for whatever reason, may decide to end their "marriage".

again by the decision made by the Ministry of Power to fuel the gas industry from sources other than coal. The essentials read as follows:

"The Gas Council's first experiment in shipping natural gas from America has been pronounced successful. A new load is on its way, and a further experimental trip will be made later this year.

Lord Mills will then have to decide whether to approve the council's plans to import natural gas on a large scale in specially built 30,000-ton tankers.

This is happening at a time when undistributed stocks of coal total nearly 22,000,000 tons. At the present rate of accumulation they will soon exceed the 22,000,000-ton limit which the Government said was 'about as much as can be financially and physically tolerated' in 1959.

By the end of October they could be near the 30,000,000 ton mark.

Between January and the beginning of April this year these stocks increased by 1.3 million tons. In the same period of last year they fell by nearly 9,000,000 tons."

## Community Living

Continued from p. 3

basis of these communes was usually agricultural, although some, including the Rappites and Inspirationists, had other types of productive activity as well. Most of these people held religious beliefs which laid emphasis on the virtues of hard work, humility, the acceptance of a lowly station of life, and love towards their fellow believers as a prelude to heaven. It seems clear that their communism worked because the demands which they made on it imposed no strains. They looked for no luxuries in the material sense, and had no visions of freedom among their fellows. This is not an insult to them. They had never enjoyed luxuries in their previous lives, and had voluntarily accepted a minority religious faith which left them with little energy for intellectual pursuits. In their communes they had found "freedom" from worldly cares and an escape from persecution by the State and established church, and undoubtedly found satisfaction in them, even if it was not the satisfaction which an anarchist would enjoy.

When non-religious groups attempted communism the result was quite different! The founders of New Harmony did not perhaps expect prosperity to fall from the sky into their community, but they did look forward to its pretty rapid success, and had much less intuitive idea of how to overcome the difficulties in their way than the stolid Pietist farmers. Owen's idea was that they should spend a preliminary period of three years living together and getting to know one another. However, things seemed to be so after seven months that he decided the time for complete communism had come. A resounding crash followed soon after, which can best be accounted for by the lack of homogeneity among the participants. They differed in nationality, social class, views on religion and views on society; and were only united in being followers of Owen, and in holding their property in common. The Whiteway

community started off under communism, but after only a few years the serious participants had to agree that their communism was encouraging lazy people to exploit the genuine colonists, and bringing to light not the best aspects of certain peoples' natures, but the worst. They decided to change over to an arrangement where each person was made responsible for the part of land, and the tools which he or she worked with. The development of the Whiteway Colony seems to have been more and more away from the idea of communism towards individual work, combined with friendly co-operation as a natural part of life in the colony. As an example of individualism pure and simple the experiment of the American anarchist Josiah Warren is outstanding. In the village of Modern Times the inhabitants practised mutual aid to the best of their capacities, and used internal labour notes as a means of exchange. It is interesting to notice that this is quite against one of the principles of European anarchism, for it is usually agreed, as Malatesta put it, that our aim is to get away from the idea of equal exchange. However, these principles did ensure that even if unwanted layabouts arrived on the community and brought it harmful publicity, they did not cause material hardship to the members of the colony.

It means that every possible stage between individual ownership and communism has been tried, every one has succeeded, and every one failed.

Perhaps even more important than the way in which people own their property, is what they do with it. The nature and amount of work expected from the members is another factor which has varied very greatly from community to community. The Pietist farmers worked on the land from dawn to dusk, and whatever other effects that had, it assured them of a sufficiency of food. As men-

tioned above, their religious faith placed an emphasis on hard, unpretentious work. As an antidote to these Christian work camps, one may consider the Brook Farm experiment. Its members were of very intellectual disposition, and like many intellectual communists, they had a strange feeling of awe towards manual work. However, they did have a go at it themselves, although they hoped not to have to put in too much. To prevent even this from becoming boring they took turns at the various occupations. This procedure served well enough, and although judged by outside standards it was inefficient, it satisfied the members. Whiteway had a particularly open form of organisation, and set no doctrinal tests before prospective colonists. It seemed to attract two general types of people. The first type might be called the "genuine colonists". They were prepared to work on the good earth for most of the day, enjoying a healthy life in the fresh air, and satisfied that direct production of food was the best possible occupation to which anyone could devote himself. The other type, although sincere in their own way, were not willing to attempt a fair share of the necessary work, and expected other people to provide for them. At first the genuine colonists were prepared to put up with the non-workers, thinking perhaps that a few months of healthy community life would cure them of the capitalist disease of laziness, but when time showed that the reverse was coming true, finding that they could exist without doing anything, they became more and more parasitical, and this eventually led to the abandonment of communism at Whiteway.

At first sight it seems as if everyone can be placed into one of two categories with regard to work. They either do it, or hold theories about it. The question is not quite so clear cut. One of the

## Liberals in Orbit

Continued from p. 1

the '60s, backed up by the votes of a new generation of suckers.

But what do the idealistic Liberals think will happen to their ideals, their individual freedom within the party (if any) if the party does achieve eminence and thus—responsibility? Will Liberal Whips behave differently? Would the party tolerate rebels and minority splits more than Labour? Would the leaders face loss of office for the sake of backbenchers' ideals?

We think that we *and the Liberals* know the answers to those questions.

### A Clarion Call

And there, as Grimond says, it is young Liberals discussed many questions like divorce, the licensing laws and the Wolfenden report. The keynote was caution, conference refusing to embrace anything so explosive as unilateral nuclear disarmament, the banning of the closed shop, divorce by consent (even after 3 years' separation) or the abolition of literary censorship.

These motions might all have lost the party votes. And that is a consideration before which even 1959 radicalism must be prepared to yield!

It appears that in the long run gas will work out cheaper than coal by "several pence per therm". Naturally miners are campaigning to force the Government to make the gas industry stick to coal and equally expected is the reaction of Tory M.P.s who want the Coal Board to cut costs by closing more pits.

The miners face real hardships, in and out of work, and although it may sound trite to say that in our present society, prosperous phases apart, they always will, we hold it to be irrefutable and hope to return to the subject with some practical suggestions which we do not suppose will be adopted by our Government but which we would like to think would be supported by the miners!

The conference did however approve a policy document (incidentally, by no means binding on anyone—purely unofficial, but advisory!) called 'New Orbits'.

Its main, *radical*, suggestions were for:

the repeal of the Sunday observance laws, the legalising of betting shops, the throwing open of the public schools to the people of the nation, the relaxation of the licensing laws, the throwing out of South Africa from the Commonwealth, and the conducting of trade union elections by secret ballot.

These are the ideas to introduce new blood into Parliament. In defence of legal betting shops, our good, fresh blood will run hot, and interest in politics find a new high level!

What a clarion call! Who are you kidding Mr. Day?

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Regular Sunday meetings now held at "Marquis of Granby" Public House, Rathbone Street (corner of Percy Street, Rathbone Place and Charlotte Street), 7.30 p.m.

APRIL 26.—Bonar Thompson on FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY (Benefit meeting)

### NEW YORK

MAY 1.—SPECIAL MAY DAY MEETING

Speakers:

VINCENT HICKEY,

Industrial Workers of the World.

SAM WEINER, Libertarian League.

Chairman: David Atkins. at 8.30 p.m.

MAY 8.—Sam Weiner on THE GROWTH OF THE MILITARY CASTE IN THE U.S.

MAY 15.—Vince Hickey on YOUTH AND SOCIAL CHANGE

MAY 22.—David Atkins of the "News and Letters" Group on ART AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

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