

World Food Situation

Underlines Degeneration of Socialist Thought

HERE are some scattered observations involving the feeding of ordinary people in different parts of the world. The universal food shortage is terrible enough. But in another way the indifference of men—especially those who claim to believe in what used to be called the "brotherhood of mankind"—is scarcely less terrible or sinister. Let us look at the world.

News Chronicle report (28/12/46): "Rome, Friday. Carrying banners saying: 'We don't want to die of Hunger' and 'We're hungry, give us food', housewives in the seaport of Bari sacked shops to-day in a demonstration against the high cost of living. Police in light tanks fired at the rioting crowd, killing one and injuring 14. Reinforcements of troops and armoured cars have been sent to the town."

The old, old story; they asked for bread and got—butts.

Robert Root, *Worldover Press* correspondent in Berlin (27/12/46),

MEETINGS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

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SOCIALIST PARTY OF G.T. BRITAIN

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CHOOSE
SOCIALISM OR ANARCHISM?"

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describes the hunger of school children in Germany. If a hot daily lunch cannot be provided very soon without cutting rations in return, one American official says "it is inevitable that there will be a tremendous wave of sickness and epidemics this winter. The children are obviously underweight and undernourished and will not be able to withstand the rigours of the oncoming cold weather. In my work in the schools I have noticed an alarming increase in the number of cases of children who have broken out with an ugly-looking and irritating skin disease due to malnutrition."

Root goes on to remark that one bad effect on morals has been the stimulation of food thefts. "In some areas, half the delinquencies among school children have been such thefts. In the Kreuzberg district, 62 per cent. of the delinquencies were of this type in the first six months of the year."

51,850 children, or 40 per cent. of the children in the United States' sector of Berlin, are without shoes. Almost as many are completely without winter clothing.

"Two fishermen made a catch of 100 stones of sprats at Folkestone yesterday. But there were no buyers and the whole boatload was dumped back into the sea."

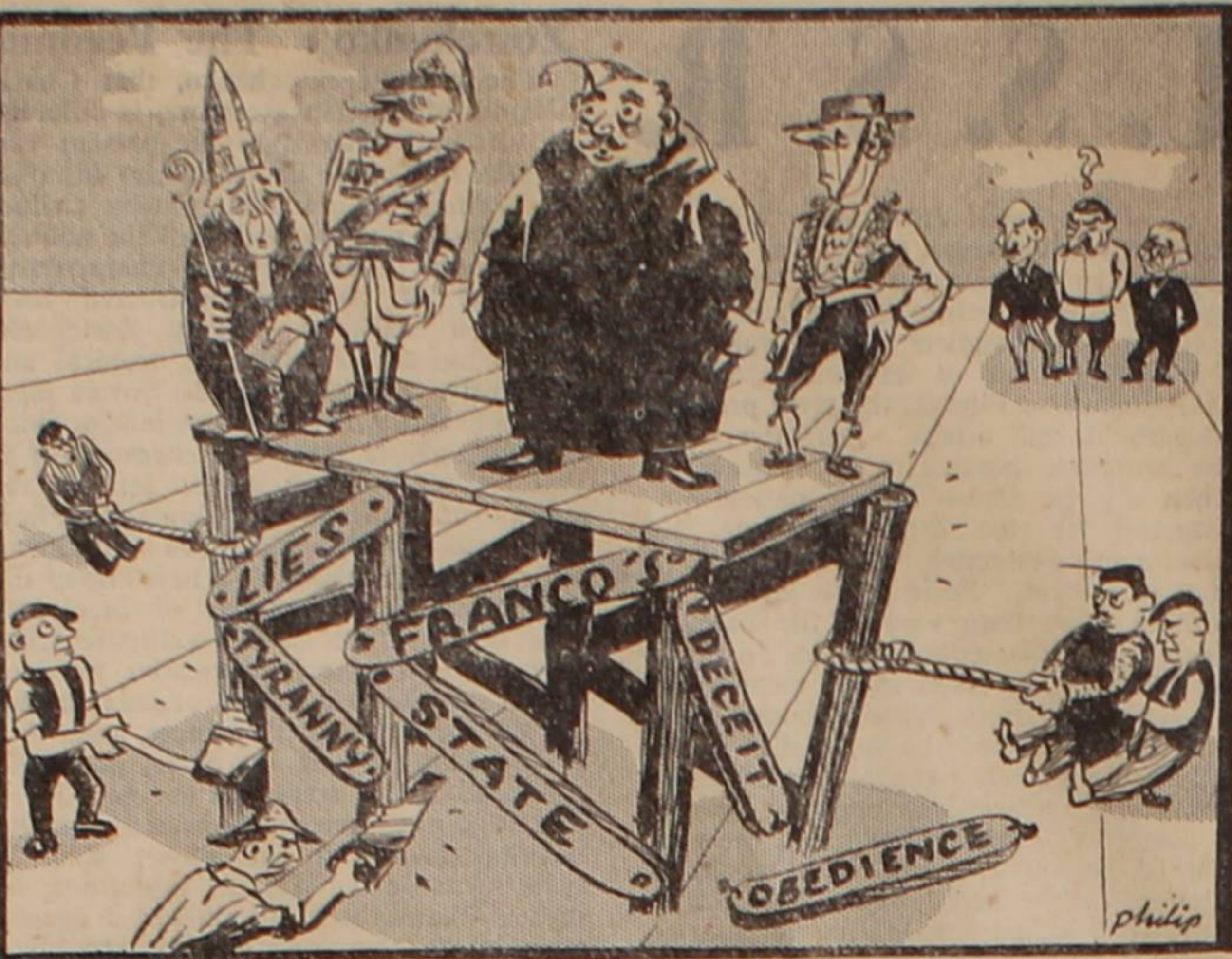
News Chronicle, 28/12/46.

Now it is gratifying to know that the food situation in this country is improving, even if one knows that the prime cause of malnutrition here is the inability to buy what food is available, so that increased supplies from abroad only filter through to those most in need if they cause the price of food to be lowered. But con-

gratulation on the score of this increase is out of place in view of the news from Germany and Italy, not to mention the almost permanent famine conditions among Indians and Chinese, or among the native population of S. Africa.

Once again the destruction of fishermen's catches shows that the market economy of capitalism lies at the root of the famines of to-day. But this has been pointed out too often in this paper to require elaboration here. What we are concerned with is an ethical aspect of preventable misery which is too often overlooked.

Socialism, by its very name, affirms the feeling of kinship with one's fellow men, and it is this feeling, this direct apprehension, which underlies socialist internationalism. The anti-militarist tradition, once common to the whole of socialist thought, but now upheld almost solely by Anarchists (and not, alas, by all of those who describe themselves thus), was erected on the knowledge that it was wrong for men to engage in the mindless mass destruction of their fellows. There is an element of intellectual casuistry in the conceptions of "progressive" and "reactionary" wars, which led Marx and some of his followers to take the German side in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Such niceties may apparently suit the immediate programme of politics, but they are alien to the ethical traditions of socialism. The great American socialist, Eugene V. Debs declared: "While there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free," and he was affirming the sense of kinship with other men—all other men—which is basic to the original socialist



HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

conceptions. Charles James Fox, the Whig leader of Pitt's time, exposed the same feeling when he said on seeing a man driven to Tyburn to be hanged, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." The anarchist insistence on international solidarity represents the strongest statement of this feeling.

Unfortunately, the liberals abandoned universal kinship in favour of national loyalty long ago, and the socialists have now followed them and surpassed them in rapid nationalism. Almost the only other body which maintains the feeling of practical human solidarity is the Quakers, who explicitly keep free from politics.

Throughout the period of European starvation, socialists have been most careful, on the rare occasions when they have advocated mitigating the lot of the starving "ex-enemies", most careful to insist that they do not do so for humanitarian reasons. Mass starvation breeds epidemics, they point out; and our troops may be infected. Indeed the sickness may spread over here. Self-interest demands, therefore, they declare, that Germans and others should be main-

tained just above the danger line. These are their arguments when they are in favour of humane measures. But much more often they ignore the famines, remarking that "they have no reason to love the Germans."

The collapse of Socialist Internationalism in 1914, and the increasing development of Socialist Nationalism since, shows the degeneration of socialist thought since Debs' time. Significant of the general trend, the "Communist International" (which was neither Communist nor international) never had even a spark of ethical feeling, and its theoreticians denied any such as "bourgeois illusions". The lack of this warmth of feeling, only too starkly shown by the socialists of to-day, is mainly responsible for the emptiness, the disillusionment, the impotence of political socialism. But for people with revolutionary conceptions, for anarchists, for anyone with any depth of humanity, such warmth is an integral part of their make-up. For such people Debs' words have never had such poignancy and relevance as they have to-day.

PERSECUTION OF ACCUSED SOLDIER

One of the three corporals standing trial at Port Said for conspiracy to mutiny in connection with the military strikes in Egypt, Corporal J. C. Saunders stated in his evidence that he had been brutally treated when under investigation and awaiting court martial. After the meeting of soldiers which was the subject of the charge, Saunders and some sixty other N.C.O.'s were put on board the tanker *Victory*, under guard. Then, said Saunders, "I was refused water and forbidden to go to the latrine. We had no food for 19 hours and no blankets." The next day he and some others were released, but he was subsequently re-arrested, and placed in solitary confinement for 29 days in a cell measuring six feet by four feet by eight feet.

This is merely one of the barbarities which are continually practiced in the army against men who dare to defy the authorities on any point. Men are continually being kept under such conditions, and it is this which has been responsible more than anything else for the continual risings in army detention camps.

The army legal system has nothing to do with justice. A man who has not even been tried is treated as badly as one who is found guilty. The whole system is quite evidently based on nothing but the value of terror and revenge in maintaining discipline.

ABBOTT.

Monks Threaten Strike

Monks of a monastery outside Farnham have threatened to strike unless their demands for more pay are satisfied. The monks say that the 8d. to 1s. 4d. a day which they receive is only sufficient for bread.—(Reuter).

FIRST REACTIONS

FIRST reactions to FREEDOM in its new 'get up' have been generally favourable. Some readers have told us that the contents of the paper was of a high standard and that we have succeeded in using the extra space to give more variety to the paper. The more critical readers have complained that the paper was too cramped. This is a criticism which the Editorial Board also had to make when they saw the first copies from the Press. It was in part due to a technical hitch whereby the column length was reduced by nearly an inch, but also because too much small type was used (readers may be interested to know that the last issue contained 30,000 words, or the equivalent of a 80-page book). We have attempted to remedy this fault in the layout and hope to have the general approval of our readers with the current number of FREEDOM.

The extra costs of producing the new FREEDOM have not yet been worked out, but as we have told our readers, they will

exceed £10 per issue, and we rely on the solidarity of all comrades and sympathisers to meet these new liabilities. Contributions to the Press Fund to date have been disappointing, and but for two large donations would have been disastrous! But we are confident most of our readers will want us to continue with the enlarged paper, and that their contributions large and small will make up our next Press Fund list a much more impressive one. Send your contributions NOW, and at the same time let us have your views about FREEDOM and your suggestions.

PRESS FUND

1st-10th January:

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Freedom

Vol. 8 No. 2

18th January, 1947

Twopence

"It is in seeking the good of others, in embracing a great and expansive sphere of action, in forgetting our own individual interests, that we find our true element."

WILLIAM GODWIN.

THIS "DISARMAMENT" FARCE

OUR politicians have become very modest now that the war is over. No longer has war been fought to end wars and establish freedom and plenty all over the world. Starvation is accepted as a natural post-war phenomenon and even the meagre and inefficient help of UNRRA has been stopped. Future wars are openly discussed and the most daring plans merely consist of controlling and limiting armaments and armies.

No one talks now of abolishing war, but merely of reforming it, and the reforms suggested are part of the political game, a means for weaker nations to wage a demagogic struggle against the stronger. For example, Russia can play the role of the innocent lamb threatened by the American big bad wolf who does not wish to give up the secret of the atomic bomb which Russia claims to ignore.

It is easy to make capital out of the unwillingness of the United States to abandon the production of atomic bombs, but no one can seriously suggest that, in a world where the possibility of war is not ruled out, a country can voluntarily weaken herself by giving up some of her weapons.

Disarmament would only be possible in a world where absolute confidence existed amongst nations, in other words, where there are no possibilities for war. But in a world filled with suspicion, political and imperialist competition and nationalist rivalries, to talk of disarmament is pure hypocrisy. It is no use vituperating against the selfishness of the United States; in a world where might is right the attitude of America is a logical one.

ANARCHIST DIRECT ACTION

AMONG FRENCH PRINTERS

Last week-end the only papers available in Paris were the anarchist *Libertaire* and the Trotskyist *Verité*. This was due to the breaking out into the open of a long-standing dispute over wages increases. The machine-minders, who have, as the *Manchester Guardian* puts it, "a long-established anarchist tradition", decided that they had waited long enough for a consideration of the workers' demands for a 25% increase in wages, and started a go-slow campaign, which, significantly enough, began in the printing works of the Communist papers, *L'Humanité* and *Ce Soir*. The movement spread to the other papers, and, in retaliation the National Federation of the Press, the employers' organisation, decided to declare a lock-out.

The fact that the go-slow movement should have taken place in defiance of official C.G.T. policy and should have been directed against the Communist papers first of all, shows that the printing workers are becoming steadily more discontented with the official leadership and are returning to their traditional syndicalist attitude towards workers' action.

American Imperialists Stake their Claims

In an article in our last issue, George Woodcock pointed out how the American imperialists are attempting, with considerable success, to transform the Pacific into a closely guarded American lake. Since that article was written, what can be described as official confirmation for this view has

MILITANT SQUATTERS

A fine example of persistence in squatting has been given by a family in Southend. These people, William Clarke, his wife and two children, moved into a corporation requisitioned flat some time ago. Proceedings were taken against them, and a county court order for eviction was obtained. Accordingly they moved out of the flat in question, but immediately squatted in another empty flat some way off. This place is also council requisitioned but in order to eject the Clarkes the council will have to go through another entirely new county court case to obtain their eviction.

A really enterprising squatter could keep himself provided with homes by this method for an almost indefinite period, so long as there were empty flats available and in the long run the patience of the authorities might well be worn down by a series of court cases. It yet remains to be seen whether the family in question intend to carry on in this manner.

is to be really effective, would mean the power of any nation to thoroughly inspect not only war plants, but also factories and laboratories, and in fact, any house or building of another nation. This can be attempted in the case of a defeated nation, but countries like Russia, the U.S.A. and Britain would never agree to it.

But even supposing that inspection were possible, it would be useless unless sanctions could be applied to those countries violating their agreements. And who is to apply sanctions when a Great Power has a right of veto against them?

Shades of Goering

All this talk about disarmament is a pure farce. The politicians who make it are fully resolved that any plan for disarmament will not weaken the strength of their own country. All of them could subscribe to the words Goering uttered in the dock at Nuremberg: "You may well talk of honour in business but, when the interests of a nation are at stake, there can be no talk of morality." When a State has an opportunity to increase its strength by taking advantage of the weakness of another state, do you really think it would miss it out of the stupid con-

sideration of keeping the promises given? It is the duty of a statesman to take advantage of that situation for the good of his country." This is not criticism; it is a simple statement of facts. The whole of history is there to confirm it. Unfortunately politicians are only capable of such sincerity in the shadow of the gallows, when their political career is at an end.

To believe that plans for international disarmament will stop war is pure nonsense. Armaments are not the cause of war; they are merely a symptom of a society which cannot live at peace. This is a result of the capitalist system, but to abolish capitalism alone would not eradicate the causes of war. Wars existed before the birth of capitalism and the first country of the world to destroy the old capitalist system—Soviet Russia, has created one of the most powerful armies in the world. A class society voluntarily rules over the majority has always needed an army and has waged wars whether under private or state capitalism.

Short of abolishing the class society, that is to say the State, there is no means of abolishing war. And war can only be total war. It is useless to have illusions about it. It may be that

atom bombs will not be used in the next war for strategic reasons, just as poison gas was not used in this war, but of one thing we can be sure—bacterial warfare, poison gas, long-range rockets will be used in spite of all international laws and agreements when it becomes expedient to do so.

The problem of war is not one of treaties signed over green tables. In the words of Herbert Read:

"There is no problem which leads so inevitably to anarchism. Peace is anarchy. Government is force; force is repression and repression leads to a reaction, to a psychosis of power, which in its turn involves the individual in destructive impulses and the nations in war. War, therefore, will exist so long as the state exists. Only a non-governmental society can offer those economic, ethical and psychological conditions under which the emergence of a pacific mentality is possible. We fight because we are too tightly swathed in bonds—because we live in a condition of social slavery and of moral inhibition. Not until these bonds are loosed will the desire to create finally triumph over the desire to destroy. We must be at peace with ourselves before we can be at peace with one another."

LONDON'S HAULAGE STRIKE DEMANDS MET, MEN RETURN

ON the 6th January, began the strike of road haulage workers, which has now spread so far that it involves more than 20,000 men, not only in London, but also in various provincial towns, including Leeds, Liverpool, Coventry, Oxford, Reading, Bristol and Cambridge.

The strike is unofficial, and has been carried on against the advice of the unions, and against the threats of the government to use all their powers to break it. But the fact that the rank and file are solidly behind the strike and that it is not organised by any committee of a few agitators was shown by what took place at the delegate meeting on Sunday, 12th January, at Stratford Town Hall. There the union leaders were due to address a select conference of delegates, but the meeting was invaded by the rank-and-file, hundreds of drivers

entered the hall, hundreds more filled the stairs and the street outside, and the meeting, at which the fate of the strike was to be decided, was turned into one where the workers for once had the controlling voice. In spite of the appeals of Deakin, the Transport and General Workers' Union leader, who endeavoured to persuade the men to return to work, it was decided by an overwhelming majority to continue the strike, in defiance of the hostility of the union leaders and the threats of the government to use troops for strike breaking.

The Reasons For The Strike

The reasons for this strike, which has now assumed such proportions that it is the largest transport strike since 1926, are set out in the following statement, which was issued by the committee on the 10th January, and which has been ignored by most of the capitalist press.

"We are anxious that the public should be acquainted with the reasons that have prompted the drivers to disregard the advice of their unions and withdraw their labour. They are not confident that they will get an impartial hearing at the meeting of the Central Wages Board to be held on Monday, as at the previous meeting the independent chairman indicated the way he would vote before the workers cast their vote for or against the operatives' proposals. Thus the unions were forced to secure the employers' proposals although they were not acceptable, the alternative being to reject the owners' offers and make a further application with its attendant delays.

"The main grievance is the cumulative week which allows an owner to work his men ten hours a day for four days, eight hours on the fifth, and to stand off on the sixth day, thus losing the one and a half hours' overtime they should have been paid on the first four days. The conditions granted by the employers in their last proposals affect only one in one thousand drivers, and the three additional days' holiday are considered by the men as an insult."

"With respect to the Manus, Noumea, Espiritu Santo, Guadalcanal and other sites of American bases on islands mandated to or claimed by other nations, full title should be given to the United States because of our chain of security."

"The United States must not permit its Pacific bases to lapse back into the state of unpreparedness as in the case of Guam and Wake prior to the present war."

Months Of Delay

The strike was scheduled to take place on the Monday before Christmas, but the men decided to carry on work, because they did not wish to cause any unnecessary inconvenience to the members of the public. After that, however, they decided that the nine months they had been waiting for an improvement in conditions must be brought to an end, and when the drivers in East London began to come out, the strike spread rapidly, and was taken up throughout London with enthusiasm. The result has been an almost complete tie-up at the Docks and the railway goods depots, the paralysing of the big markets, and the suspension of most of the London carrier services. On the other hand, the strikers have specifically avoided interfering with essential services, such as taking supplies to hospitals, and providing for such essential food requirements as bread and milk.

The methods with which we have become familiar during the tenure of the Labour government have been used against the strikers. Statements by government departments and articles in the capitalist press have tried to stir up feeling against them by exploiting the fact that food services will be interfered with. The public, however, are becoming used to this kind of thing, and, while very many people have indeed been put to considerable inconvenience, there has been much less evident hostility towards the strikers than on previous occasions. The fact is, probably, that most workers are beginning to feel the pinch nowadays so much that they have a greater solidarity for men who are ready to strike for better conditions.

Government Bad Faith

Threats having failed, the Government has brought in soldiers to break the strike, just as it did during the dock strike. The threat was first made on the 10th, but it was then announced that the authorities would wait until the decisions of the conference on the 12th. But the authorities, while they have not actually used soldiers for transport before Monday, took advantage of the interval to get their men and lorries together, and actually to establish camps at various parts of

London, so that the soldiers could start to work on the Monday morning. This kind of bad faith undoubtedly has had an effect in embittering the workers.

Market Workers Walk Out

Meanwhile, considerable solidarity is coming from men in other industries. The porters at Covent Garden, Smithfield, Billingsgate and other markets have refused to work while soldiers are engaged in transport from the market and actually walked out of the market as the troops went in. It is also possible that passenger transport men, including London busmen, may act in sympathy. A statement from the busmen, printed in *The Star*, 11/1/47, pointed out that they were becoming discontented because they had waited seven months for satisfaction or even proper consideration of their claim for a five day week of 40 hours instead of an unregulated 48-hour week.

The strike of the road transport drivers shows the distrust for the government which is rising among the workers in general. It is very significant that these men are employed by the industry which is next on the list to be nationalised. But they have evidently now so little faith in the benefits that nationalisation will bring them, that they prefer to gain them for themselves by direct action, in defiance of bosses, unions and the state.

The Growth Of Discontent

Such incidents as this and the Stratford go-slow campaign, coupled with the lessening enthusiasm among the workers for the closed shop, seem to show that there is growing up a very considerable force of opinion in many industries that the present so-called labour movement is totally unsatisfactory, and that the time has come for the rank and file to play its full part in industrial activities. The action of the drivers in seizing the delegate meeting last Sunday and turning it into a general meeting of the aggrieved men is only one sign of this new consciousness of the need for direct action among the workers to-day, discontented and disillusioned as they are becoming with the mountebanks who pretend to represent them in the government and the T.U. executives.

THE BIG CITY

Londoners are said to be proud of their city. Have they, in fact, anything to be proud of? Is the nature of the biggest city in the world such that we should hope to see its continued growth and expansion, even in a free society? Or is it symptomatic only of a centralised governmental society, doomed to destruction whatever the future holds for us?

months. Which is rather disconcerting when one discovers that, in proportion, there are two and a half times as many policemen in the Metropolitan area as in the provinces—and that the cost per cop is more, without their being, in fact, any more efficient! (Not that I want them to be!) But this in spite of the fact that one in every sixty-five to seventy Londoners has (in Inner London) been to prison at some time or another. Our Capital can boast of five prisons, carrying a constant population of about 6,000 men and women (excluding prison officials).

Did I say they were not efficient? The Report of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis for the year 1945 gives the following illuminating figures:—Out of a grand total of 128,954 "indicable" crimes, 31,690 were cleared up, a percentage of 24.6. This proportion has not varied more than a few per cent. over a number of years, although the total of crimes committed is constantly increasing. In 1945 had 25,150 more than 1944, for instance. So if you are thinking of cracking a crib in London, the chances are three-to-one that you will get away with it!

"Keep Death Off The Road!"
The work of the police, as we well know, is not confined to criminal investigation, however. The policeman's lot is not a happy one when he has to deal with the killed and maimed on London's roads. During the war, with road transport con-

siderably thinner than before, and despite military convoys, etc., the casualty rate fell sharply (in 1943 they were less than half those for 1939), but now they are beginning to show an increase again, particularly noticeable since June, 1945, when the basic petrol ration again became available.

Every twelve hours throughout October, 1946, there was a screech of brakes on a London road and a human being was killed. Every forty minutes the screech of brakes announced the maiming, or at least the scarring, of another human being, man, woman or child (10 children killed, 473 injured). Perhaps these figures are not surprising when one considers the weight of traffic, though. In any one daylight hour, 6,000 vehicles can pass Hyde Park Corner (more at peak hours). The London Passenger Transport Board employs an army of 83,610 persons concerned expressly with the job of carrying Londoners from one side of their city to the other—and back again. Passenger journeys in 1945 totalled 3,658,236,000, nearly twice the entire population of the earth. Passenger miles travelled totalled 9,805,501,000—over 41,000 times the distance to the moon! How many potentially productive man-hours these astronomical figures betray as being wasted on useless, crowded, frustrating travel, I leave to a real mathematician to work out! And these leave out the suburban train services of the main line companies, who daily bring passengers into town from anything up to 50 miles out!

Culture

My space is beginning to run short, but we must, for a moment, look at the opportunities for education and cultural advancement the world's richest city offers its children. In Greater London there are 10,000 children who will receive nothing but elementary education, and to show how elementary it is, here is a table showing attainment among 2,000 children from 48 London County Council Schools chosen as normal and representative (i.e., free from slum or "problem" bias):—

Up to class standard.....44%

BARRACKS FOR CIVILIANS

One year behind27%
Two years behind17%
Three or more years behind11%
This enquiry was taken among children on their last year at school—so that 11% of children leaving school at 14 years old may be said to be only at the standard expected at 11 years old. Only 3.9 per cent. of London children before the war found their way into secondary schools—
(Continued on page 3)

FREEDOM

18th January, 1947

NATIONALISATION BEGINS

On the 1st January, the nationalisation of the mines took place officially in the same manner as under capitalism, they will begin to see there is a wide difference between nationalisation and real workers' control.

The union leaders are already beginning to show their own attitude towards the workers under the new arrangement. They are using nationalisation as a further excuse to impose their own discipline over the workers. Edwin Hall, general secretary of the Lancashire area of the National Union of Mine-workers, made a speech at the vesting ceremony in his area in which he violently attacked strikes and absenteeism, describing them as "enablers", and declaring "we are past the days of settling disputes by withdrawing our labour." He further expressed the typically totalitarian approach of the modern trade union official by saying that "the industry matters more than any individual or group of individuals."

Already, moreover, the union leaders are pressing hard for a closed shop in the mines, which will help to prevent the rise of a really militant body among the mine workers. And there has been talk of a bargain for the unions to abjure strikes in return for an improvement in negotiating machinery. This has since been denied very violently by Arthur Horner, but—

Generally speaking, the miners seem to regard the changeover with almost complete apathy. Otherwise, how can one explain the fact that the two days following the Christmas holidays, the record absenteeism, reaching as high as 50-60 per cent. in some pits? It is clear that the enthusiasm for nationalisation which was whipped up among the miners during the war has very much died down, and that they realise how little change this will mean in their actual material position. Already they are beginning to see, in the lack of any real workers' representation or control, a side to the bargain they have made with their own leaders. This feeling of "being had" must have been increased for many miners by the evident self-satisfaction with which some of the owners have been led up the garden by their own leaders. This feeling of "being had" must have been increased for many miners by the evident self-satisfaction with which some of the owners have been led up the garden by their own leaders.

But what of the men who have a real and first-hand knowledge of mining, the colliers themselves? All their dreams of workers' control have been dashed to the ground in this nationalisation scheme, where they do not have any even nominal say in the questions of production. A few trade union bosses play some part in the activities of the coal boards, but the actual men at the face have no say. For them it is merely changing an old boss for a new one. The coal-owners were among the most ruthless of capitalist employers, and the miners may think that the state cannot be other than an improvement. However, when they find themselves driven in the same way by the same

officials, and treated as mere employees in just the same manner as under capitalism, they will begin to see there is a wide difference between nationalisation and real workers' control.

The union leaders are already beginning to show their own attitude towards the workers under the new arrangement. They are using nationalisation as a further excuse to impose their own discipline over the workers. Edwin Hall, general secretary of the Lancashire area of the National Union of Mine-workers, made a speech at the vesting ceremony in his area in which he violently attacked strikes and absenteeism, describing them as "enablers", and declaring "we are past the days of settling disputes by withdrawing our labour." He further expressed the typically totalitarian approach of the modern trade union official by saying that "the industry matters more than any individual or group of individuals."

Already, moreover, the union leaders are pressing hard for a closed shop in the mines, which will help to prevent the rise of a really militant body among the mine workers. And there has been talk of a bargain for the unions to abjure strikes in return for an improvement in negotiating machinery. This has since been denied very violently by Arthur Horner, but—

Generally speaking, the miners seem to regard the changeover with almost complete apathy. Otherwise, how can one explain the fact that the two days following the Christmas holidays, the record absenteeism, reaching as high as 50-60 per cent. in some pits? It is clear that the enthusiasm for nationalisation which was whipped up among the miners during the war has very much died down, and that they realise how little change this will mean in their actual material position. Already they are beginning to see, in the lack of any real workers' representation or control, a side to the bargain they have made with their own leaders. This feeling of "being had" must have been increased for many miners by the evident self-satisfaction with which some of the owners have been led up the garden by their own leaders. This feeling of "being had" must have been increased for many miners by the evident self-satisfaction with which some of the owners have been led up the garden by their own leaders.

But what of the men who have a real and first-hand knowledge of mining, the colliers themselves? All their dreams of workers' control have been dashed to the ground in this nationalisation scheme, where they do not have any even nominal say in the questions of production. A few trade union bosses play some part in the activities of the coal boards, but the actual men at the face have no say. For them it is merely changing an old boss for a new one. The coal-owners were among the most ruthless of capitalist employers, and the miners may think that the state cannot be other than an improvement. However, when they find themselves driven in the same way by the same

become the property of the nation.

All employed at the pits will then become the servants of the State. Will the change help the country? The answer is 'Yes', but it can only do so with your help. . . . I ask you to serve the State to the utmost of your power."

This is hardly the speech of a man suffering from ruin as the result of expropriation. He sounds as though he has plenty to be pleased about. And what pleases a man like this is not likely to please the workers.

Undoubtedly, nationalisation will be a bitter experience for the miners. They will find themselves indeed "servants of the State", and very far from being their own masters. But we can hope the old militancy of the colliers will live on, and bring them back to the revolutionary ideas of workers' control which had a great influence on miners at the beginning of the present century.

Rail Shopmen Go Slow

A slow working campaign among the railway locomotive repair men at the L.N.E.R. Depot at Stratford has already caused considerable discomfort to the railway company, and threatens to involve railway workers on a much wider scale.

The dispute began as long ago as the 4th November, when the 290 shopmen presented their wages claim for an increase of 30/- to their basic weekly rate of £4.17s. 6d. They asked to meet L.N.E.R. officials to discuss the matter. On the 18th November, after the meeting had taken place, the L.N.E.R. replied that a matter raised wider issues, and promised a reply at a later date. The men announced their dissatisfaction, and threatened to impose an embargo on all overtime, including Sunday work. No further reply being received from the railway company, the men imposed their embargo on the 25th November, and began to work slow.

The effect very soon became apparent, and the railway company had to cut its train services from Liverpool Street to the north. Meanwhile, the company's officials tried to use the union officials to end the strike. The officials of

The first practical signs of a sell-out by the Labour Government of their T.U.C. allies on the question of the closed shop has come in the form of a recent ruling by the Postmaster General, who has rejected a claim by the National Union of Post Office Workers for an exclusive right to negotiate on behalf of post office staff.

This decision follows hard on the abandonment of the closed shop position by Bevan, Isaacs and Morrison when the resistance of the Willsons nurses aroused such a storm of protest against the enforcement of the closed shop in industry. In this issue the unions are being even more totalitarian than the government dare to show itself. We have no doubt that the cabinet regards the closed shop as a very useful aid to its schemes for imposing a complete organisation of industrial discipline. But fortunately there is still enough power in strongly expressed

Seamen Disown Leaders

Discontent with union leaders has come to a head among Merseyside sailors, and at two recent meetings in the area, one attended by 500 seamen and one by 150, resolutions have been passed demanding the resignation of officials of the National Union of Seamen, on the grounds that they have denied members their democratic right of appeal under the union rules.

PLATO, it is said, asserted as desirable a city of not more than 5,000 inhabitants. In more modern times the great French architect-planner, Le Corbusier, laid down 3,000,000 as a limit. Greater London had a population in 1937 of 8,655,000—about one-fifth of the entire population of Great Britain. Are there any who to-day can defend, either on practical grounds or any other, the existence of this monstrous desert of bricks and mortar, this plague-spot on the green and pleasant face of England, this internment of sink and smoke and dirt and noise? Are there any who can live in it and not be dehumanized, robotized, reduced in stature and dignity from the human level to something less than human—at least to some extent?

Do I exaggerate? Do I look with a jaundiced eye at the greatest city in the world? Because I look forward to a new society, am I unduly prejudiced against the city in which I was born—this brave capital of the greatest empire the world has ever known—the empire on which the sun never sets?

I don't think so. London is an institution based on a lie. Her grandeur a myth, her prosperity a thin facade, her culture non-existent, she is the ugly offspring of an abominable social order, doomed, like Babylon, to crash in dust and ashes and vanish from the memory of man.

But let us, if you are dubious, look at the conditions which exist within these

acres. Remember, to begin with, that Inner London alone stretches from Acton in the West to Plumstead in the South East (16 miles), and from Holloway in the North to Streatham in the South (11 miles), but that Greater London is vaster than that, covering 693 sq. miles. The population of Greater London is 8,655,000—about one-fifth of the entire population of Great Britain. Are there any who to-day can defend, either on practical grounds or any other, the existence of this monstrous desert of bricks and mortar, this plague-spot on the green and pleasant face of England, this internment of sink and smoke and dirt and noise? Are there any who can live in it and not be dehumanized, robotized, reduced in stature and dignity from the human level to something less than human—at least to some extent?

What Hopes for Homes?

The most pressing problem facing the metropolis today is—how to house its citizens? And it is easy to blame the war and the bombing for the housing shortage. But what was the position before the war? In each of the last pre-war years, an official census discovered between 14,000 and 15,000 homeless men, women and children every night. In 1931, 540,000 persons in Inner London were living at a rate of more than two per room, 60,000 Londoners were living in 20,000 basements condemned as unfit for habitation. Families were crowded into as many as ten to a room. Here is an instance of a house in South London—"In the basement are four rooms, in which live three families numbering sixteen persons. On the ground floor are four rooms—on a bathroom—holding three families, who number eighteen persons. On the first floor five rooms, some of them small, contain sixteen persons in three families. The three small attics, each occupied by thirteen persons in two families. We have not finished. In the garage lives a family of nine."

It has been estimated that Britain needs now something like 1,000,000 dwellings to satisfactorily house everybody. If we remember the exceptional losses through bombing London has sustained compared with the rest of the country, 1,000,000 dwellings is not a very high figure. These are needed for the Metropolitan area. At the height of the pre-war building boom, 80,000 houses a year were going up in that area. At that rate it will take over 30 years merely to catch up with arrears of to-day—and every year 10,000 houses in London become more than 100 years old, obsolete and decrepit—another 300,000 houses to catch up with, as well as increases in population. In last 32 years we have had, not one, but two world wars.

Health, Wealth and Happiness

And what does slum dwelling and overcrowding do to the unfortunate denizens of the jungles of London's "black boroughs"? It kills them off. Comparison of the death rates of these boroughs with the general death rate for the rest of London, tells us that 2,700 Londoners die every year because they commit the indiscretion of living on (or below) the poverty-line. The whole of London, too, enjoys a higher death rate (by 30 per cent. in 1930) than that among dwellers in small towns and the country. From the "Social Index" disease of Tuberculosis. Four thousand of my fellow citizens cough and spit their lives away in Inner London every year.

Yes, it is dangerous to be ill in London, in spite of our 145 Voluntary Hospitals. 35 per cent. of these are perpetually hampered by debt, incidence, and, in view of that fact, one has to admire that they do a very good job in patching up the ever-ailing Londoner. It's a pity their annual budgets can't be so hampered by Borough Council regulations that the injured man can be left to bleed to death because he happens to be 70 yards on the wrong side of a borough boundary. . . . But there's always one corner to describe it is "accidental death."

"Your Police Are Wonderful"

London has been treated to several "Crime Waves" during the past few weeks. This quotation, and most of the facts I quote for pre-war London, are from "Metropolitan Man", by Robert Sinclair (Allen and Unwin), to whom—my gratitude.

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PROGRESS IN SEXUAL IDEAS

Present Law A Fundamental Stumbling-Block

IT is often assumed that an apparent progress in the field of ideas represents an actual progress, and nowhere more fallaciously than in the realm of sexual ideas. Public opinion may advance, but the unseen and too often unrecognized framework which the law imposes on conduct substantially checks any widespread application of broader ideas. Thus, more and more people to-day regard as unnatural the lag period between sexual maturity at puberty and the actual beginning of heterosexual experience. An increasing body of opinion regards the repression or denial of adolescent sex life as the prime breeding ground for a subversive attitude, both politically and socially, in adult life. This is not the place to go in detail into all the evils that spring from this denial of life; it must suffice to note that probably the bulk of progressive opinion in this country regards it as unnatural to defer sexual life for from five to ten (or even more) years after arriving at puberty. Man alone among the animals—or, at least, civilized man—practices this unnatural restraint. Almost everyone who observes life with an uninhibited and unprejudiced eye can recall within their own experiences cases in which the repression of adolescent sexual urges has had deleterious, if not tragic, results.

Repression Founded in Law

Yet, this repression is backed up by law, for it is a misdemeanour to have sexual intercourse with a girl under sixteen. Quite recently a woman was sent to prison for two years for permitting an offence (sic) against a girl under 16. The girl in question was her daughter. The woman herself may be assumed to have rejected conventional ideas of morality, for she was unmarried herself and had five children, not all of them by the same man. The chairman of the court described the mother's offence as "incredible". In the newspaper reports there is indication that the girl was asked her opinion, nor any suggestion that she was unwilling. The fact that a girl under sixteen should engage in sexual behaviour is regarded by the law as a punishable wrong. She is now being "taken care of"—which probably means being sent to a reform school for three years.

Now this case underlines the real position quite clearly. One may think adolescent repression productive of endless misery and even crime, one may feel glad when one sees adolescents enjoying a happy and carefree sexual life; but one advocates such a life, such a remedy, only at peril; for adolescent sexual life is not merely conventionally "wrong"; it is legally a crime.

A Legal Principle Reversed

But the law also reverses one of its principles in such sexual cases, showing that it attaches particular importance to the enforcement of adolescent continence. The *News Chronicle* reported the above case on January 4th; on

January 6th, two days later, it carried a special article headed "If You Refuse to Save a Life". This article explained the law regarding altruistic behaviour. Two men had stood on a bridge over the river Colne and watched a boy drown in four feet of water. The coroner explained that they had committed no crime, for no one is in law bound to intervene for the purpose of saving lives in danger. "Your social duty may be obvious, but failure in it has never been made punishable by law." (The article points out, however, that "a person who refuses to assist the police in making an arrest when called upon, and who is not prevented by infirmity, can be indicted for a Common Law misdemeanour".)

Now this attitude towards altruism does not apply where a person has a special responsibility such as the care of a child, and it is this fact, no doubt, which brings this particular mother into the law's net. Yet obviously the moral position is the same whether family relationships exist or not. According to the law, this mother should have prevented her daughter from engaging in sexual activity, for the offence established that she had warned her "of the dangers of associating with men at her age".

The law thus underwrites the whole of reactionary sexual attitudes when they inculcate into girls a fear of sexual activity and a conviction that it is wrong. Every thinking person knows what havoc and misery this attitude creates, how it ruins many marriages from the start, and lays the foundations for much ill-health in later life for women. But the law is the law.

Breeding Irresponsibility

Leaving aside the question of the desirability or otherwise of adolescent sexual activity, the whole legal attitude towards the duties of parents is destructive. Below the age of sixteen, a court does not consider a child's opinion; regardless of the child's wish, it is the legal duty of parents to enforce a certain code of behaviour. If the child engages in certain activities, it is the parents whom the law brings to book. Inevitably such a position inculcates irresponsibility in a child. Nobody behaves responsibly if they are not treated as responsible beings. This does not mean that children should be indicted for legal offences, as happens in the Soviet Union. But it does mean that a child should be free to conduct its sexual life as responsibly as its parents—whom the law doesn't interfere with. The sexual life of children is sufficiently thorny and beset by incomprehensible miseries without the law hardening these difficulties into statutory codes of behaviour.

It has not been the purpose of this article to suggest remedies; if those who hold progressive ideas in the field of sex realize that they have in the legal system their most formidable adversary; if something has been done to destroy the illusion that advances in "public opinion" of themselves effect changes, the writer will be well satisfied.

ANARCHIST.

Land Notes

Land Tenure in the Colonies

Government and Property

SEVERAL weeks ago I was lent a book to read, and like most people who are given books to read irrespective of whether they have either the time or the inclination to read them, I put it down and did not touch it. The book in question is "Land Tenure in the Colonies" by V. Liversage (stamped as "Colonial Office Library") and I am glad that I did manage, even if belatedly, to read it. The question of land tenure is or should be, of interest to people who themselves may have no practical interest in, or connection with, the land, for the reason given by the writer of this book in his preface. The forms of land tenure are closely related to and in fact form one aspect of social institutions in general. A close correlation will be found everywhere between contemporary social and political institutions and land tenures. Feudal society, democracy, aristocracy and modern totalitarianism each stamp their impress upon the forms of tenure.

Written, as indeed one would expect a book sponsored by the Colonial Office to be written, from the orthodox bureaucratic standpoint and having that complacent naivety towards alien cultures which is

one of the more charming characteristics of Englishmen, the book nevertheless contains much interesting information on the history of land tenure, not only in the colonies (as its title would imply) but also briefly in many other countries as well. For the purpose of this note, however, statement is sometimes rather staggering, as when he refers to the singularly brutal and ruthless conquest of India by the British, and the book ends with a statement by a professional economist, he tends to look upon human beings, and especially coloured ones, merely as units, even if admitted that the British took over the land of the natives and made it an economic plan, and when, as will happen now and then, "natives" show a deplorable lack of understanding of the benefits of capitalism and modern values, in general, the writer seems to be both surprised and shocked—quite genuinely so.

Speaking of the fundamental basis of peasant economy under Capitalism, he almost unbelievably indebtedness, he tells us that, "It is frequently necessary for him (the peasant) to borrow in order to live. This, of course, is no reason at all (1); it is tantamount to the proposition that the peasant must borrow to live beyond

his income and, moreover, there is an ever-present temptation to borrow in order to maintain a preconceived standard of living." It is, of course, quite true that, even if you and your children are likely to starve, it is not "economical", in the capitalist sense, to borrow money to help them keep alive. It is also possible that in such circumstances one might conceive of a standard of living somewhat higher than one's present one and be tempted to try and achieve it by "uneconomic" means. Even our economist might be tempted to forego his "principles" if he were hungry enough. The uneconomic and barbaric attitude of some Javanese peasants is also very disturbing. "A Javanese has a repugnance to the formation of any sort of capital. A man of the people is willing to sacrifice all his earnings except what is strictly necessary to procure himself some luxury, and first among these is repose." Obviously, a very regrettable state of affairs showing that apparently there are still some parts of the world on which the full light of civilisation has not yet fallen. Again, speaking of the advantages of a certain form of labour tenancy in Kenya, we are told "employers who have sufficient unutilized land can obtain labour on more advantageous terms, owing to the incidental advantages enjoyed by the tenant. A supply of women and child labour is made available on the spot. Any advantages that may accrue to the employer are, however, more than offset by the fact that the worker is of course merely 'incidental', especially when his wife and kids can be compelled by economic pressure to work also for next to nothing. And the inevitable question whether it is in the best interests of 'economies' for employers to have land that they don't utilize."

But if you manage to ignore the attitude of mind pervading the above quotations, you will find much interesting information in this book concerning primitive and feudal forms of land tenure, including the important fact that it is only quite recently, since the capitalist era, that land has been regarded as a commodity, like any other, to be bought or sold by an individual as at his sole discretion he may think fit. The remedies for the present state of affairs that the book offers are author would delight the heart of James Burnham, and one is forced again to realise that no modifications or "developments" of our present society can offer any solution to the problem of land tenure—nor for that matter, to most other social "problems."

Food and Trade

In Notes of this type it is difficult to avoid a perhaps unduly large number of quotations, but at the risk of being told that I cannot think of something original to say, I should like to finish off with a quote from a long letter in *The Farmer Weekly* (8/11/46) because it puts fairly well a point I am always making. Here it is:

"Likewise, it might be said of to-day, that we are keeping our standard of living low by failing to make the fullest use of our agricultural resources, and by expending vast amounts of money on the production of manufactured goods which we so often import from abroad. It is true that food that could be produced here. Clearly there is a danger that the whole of the elaborate process of foreign trade is designed to benefit the traders only, as distinct from the manufacturers and their workers and food producers."

G. V.

TEACHERS ATTACK GOVERNMENT POLICY

The recent conferences of various teachers' organisations have shown a very strong spirit of discontent with the present state of the teaching profession and with the educational policy of the government. Particular criticism was levelled at the proposals for dividing children into three groups for the purpose of the secondary educational groups at the secondary level. A speaker at the conference of the Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools pointed out the evils of trying to force children into predetermined vocations, and said:

"Are the children of eleven who come to us of three fundamental differing types, or is there a hangover from the past to train children to be members of particular classes of society with particular economic functions? To what extent is this vocationalism perpetuated in current curricula in order to aid administrative convenience?"

Similar complaints were made at the North of England Education Conference, where delegates described the new policy as "not Socialist, but National Socialist."

The recent attempts by a number of local authorities to force teachers to accept the closed shop and become members of a single recognised union also came in for a great deal of criticism. The Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools, which contains 90% of the teachers in the grades it covers, protested against such attempts, and recommended teachers to refuse to give information when approached with such requests. They went on to proclaim their belief in the voluntary organisation of all teachers in their appropriate associations.

A similar protest was made at the conference of the National Union of Women Teachers. This conference also brought forward once again the demand for equal pay for women teachers, and further registered the complaint that in modern secondary schools there was a real discrimination against girls in that the opportunities they were offered were considerably less than those given to boys. Further complaints were made of the inadequate staffing of schools, and of the fact that new secondary schools, and also of the bad feeding arrangements for children who had meals in schools.

Generally speaking, while one may disagree with much of the transactions of the various teachers' conferences, the fact remains that they show a great many teachers have a real interest in the actual conduct of their profession and are anxious to gain as great a part in its control as possible, while their attitude on the closed shop issue shows an independence which has seemed lacking in so many other workers' organisations.

The General Strike in Naples

ON two occasions during 1946 the Italian people have gone to the polls for the general elections and the local elections. From the results we can draw certain very definite conclusions. The Republic, which has replaced the Monarchy but which has left untouched the former state of affairs, is becoming daily more unpopular because it has shown itself impotent with regard to the more immediate national, as well as international, problems. The Municipal elections have already shown that no party in Italy can claim to represent the Italian people and take over the running of the country unaided; nor even can the two Left wing parties jointly. As a result, in many towns and villages in Italy, the election of Municipal Councils has proved a difficult task, because all the possible combinations of the different blocs of the Right and Left, did not succeed in giving an absolute majority to either of the blocs. It is not surprising therefore that in Naples, where the Socialists and Communists presented joint nomination lists, and had the largest number of votes, there should be a Monarchist-Common-Man (neo fascist party) administration. The dishonest methods used at elections are generally known. In Italy to the usual intrigues is added the disgraceful exploitation of the people's hunger and their national or traditional sentiments. For instance, Togliatti, the Communist leader, played the Trieste card very cunningly. He returned from Yugoslavia just at the time of the municipal elections and made the sensational statement that Tito was prepared to give Trieste to Italy. So that this news should appear as a Communist victory, it was said that the negotiations with Tito had been conducted secretly, unknown even to the fellow traveller Foreign Secretary, Nenni. And, of course, the Communist party in Naples (Unita) carried the news exclusively! For their part the Monarchists tried to spread a rumour about the death of Victor Emmanuel III, because the death of a king in exile deeply moves people who cannot free themselves from feelings of adulation for a Royal House!

But all these electoral intrigues neither hoodwink nor interest anybody any longer, and the feeling of disgust at such tactics is reflected in the 50% abstention at the elections in S. Italy.

Material Conditions in Naples

In spite of all the promises of the politicians, the Italian people find themselves, at the beginning of 1947, in such terrible material conditions that it is to be feared that this winter will prove

the most difficult so far experienced. Rations, already reduced to a minimum, are difficult to obtain. And there is the continuous threat of a further reduction in the bread ration of 240 grams (1 lb.), while the prices of unrationed foods increase daily. Unemployment is on the increase and there is no relationship between wages and the cost of living. In the past few months all who have been able to obtain on the ration cards is 300 gr. of sugar a month, the bread ration and an emergency supplementary



This little Neapolitan boy spends his day begging in order to supplement the family budget. Two-thirds of the children of school age in Naples do not go to school.

ration of 1 lb. of macaroni, decreed by the authorities to keep the people quiet. The unemployed man, then, in order to live is obliged to beg for food, or even in the black market, because the pittance he gets is totally inadequate to maintain life.

The bad economic situation, the ever-growing uncertainty of obtaining work (factories have been obliged to reduce their output because power is cut off both for industrial and private use two days a week) keeps the people in a continuous state of agitation, which may have serious repercussions.

For the moment this agitation is limited to strikes. A general strike was declared in Naples and lasted from the 17th to the 19th of December. It succeeded in completely immobilizing the city as well as the suburbs. All public and private services were at a standstill, and all shops (with the exception of food stores), factories and workshops were closed down. The strike succeeded in winning the support of all the different parties. The demands were so obvious and modest that not even the reactionary elements dared to oppose it.

The demands were firstly, that Naples should not be excluded from the distribution of rationed goods; secondly, that the prices of goods should be checked and should not be higher than the prevailing prices in Rome; thirdly, that some monetary assistance should be given to the unemployed and the ex-servicemen. How impossible the material conditions in Naples are can be gathered from the fact that during the strike measures were taken to prevent the "export" of potatoes to other parts of Italy and to fix the maximum price at 42 lire a kilo, or 5d. per lb.!

The Camera del Lavoro (Communist dominated) organized and directed this strike and many people tried to explain it as a lightning protest by the workers against the installing of a Neofascist-Common-Man Municipal Council. However this may be, one cannot feel comforted by the results of the strike. Whilst the workers have to make up for the work days lost during the strike, the authorities have promised that we shall have our rations, that prices will be kept down and that some small relief will be given to the ex-servicemen. But these are measures which do not in any way improve the terrible conditions in which the people are living. And these sporadic strikes in different parts (the latest is at Bari) will not solve our difficulties. A solution is only possible through revolutionary measures, radical reforms, the suppression of the privileges which in many parts of Southern Italy retain a feudal character.

All these measures are included in the electoral programmes of the various parties but forgotten once their most vocal exponents have won their seats in Parliament or on the local Council.

GIOVANNA BERNERI

New Oil Intrigues

TWO new international oil deals, concluded on Boxing Day, give an indication of the possibility of changed Anglo-American policy in the Near East. They show that, in spite of the great paralyzing of reducing the influence of capitalism, the large oil corporations, and no doubt many other capitalist bodies, can still carry out policies which have undoubtedly political implications, and involve their respective governments, willingly or unwillingly, in new imperialist adventures and changes of policy.

The principal participants in the new deals are the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and a number of American organisations, of which the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company are the principal. The first deal is between these two organisations and the Anglo-Iranian Company, by which the American companies agree to purchase large quantities of Persian crude oil from the British company over a period of twenty years, and to investigate the possibility of a pipe line to the Mediterranean. By the second agreement these American companies acquire a substantial interest in the potentially rich American concessions in Saudi Arabia, with the proposal to build a second pipe line from Arabia to the Mediterranean.

These new agreements will undoubtedly prove beneficial to both American and British imperialism. The Americans are anxious to maintain their ascendancy as the great oil providers in the Far East and also in parts of Europe. But their own wells are rapidly drying up, and their production is at present hardly sufficient for internal requirements. So they must obtain their oil for trading elsewhere, and have consequently come to the rich fields of Arabia. With this economic interest in the Middle East, there naturally ensued a political interest, and no doubt the Americans will take a much more active interest in influencing Middle East affairs in the near future.

But, of course, all the advantages of the deal are naturally not with the British. The Americans gain the raw materials for maintaining their spread economic imperialism, and buttress their control of the Far East by gaining a good half-share in the control of the Middle East. From now on any attack by the Russians on American interests in the Far East is outflanked by the emergence of America as a significant power in Persia and the Arab countries.

For British imperialists the new deals are, in the near run at least, very advantageous. Middle East oil

is of vital importance in fulfilling British military and industrial requirements, and for this reason it is vital that the British control over Southern Persia should be maintained. Moreover, British interests in this area are further complicated and strengthened by the fact that through Persia lies the only practicable route by which Russian imperialism could approach India and the other British spheres of influence in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, to have implicated America heavily in the Persian gulf provides an additional deterrent to Russian penetration, which has retreated considerably in Persia of recent months. A further element of practical business policy is that the Anglo-Iranian Company have neither the means of refining all their output nor adequate means of getting it all away from the area, so that to sell it to American companies which will refine it is a gain in dollar exchange.

A further important factor in this agreement lies in the fact that the projected pipe lines will end in Palestine. This will give American imperialism a direct interest in Palestine politics, and as the Economist puts it somewhat smugly, "it will certainly help in persuading the American public that there is something to be said against the Zionists." It is a fairly safe bet that within a few weeks there will be a marked change in the American attitude towards Palestine, accompanied by a considerable whitewashing of British government policy in that area.

The first thing to be noticed is the revival of British economic imperialism. The diminution of interest payments from abroad, which in pre-war years made up for the lower level of exports than imports, has created a large adverse balance of imports over exports, and in order to make up for this the British producers are striving for, and for the present gaining, largely increased markets for ex-

How long British and American interests will rub along amicably in the Near East is difficult to say. At present, and for a long time ahead, they can help each other out economically in this area, and they are also united by the common threat of Russia, which both desire very strongly to keep away from active influence over India, the Suez Canal area or the Eastern Mediterranean. The Persian Gulf has, indeed, become a king-pin in present-day power politics and any political events that occur in that area should be watched carefully for the ulterior imperialist motives they may disguise.

Where Races Mingle

Why Governments, in their own interests, always try to segregate prisoners of war as long as possible from their own people, can be seen clearly enough from the results of the mingling of people of two theoretically hostile nations. An example of this was shown recently in the case of a young farm labourer, who appeared recently before a tribunal for conscientious objectors. The man in question said that his work on the land had brought him into contact with men of other nations, whom he found to be similar to Englishmen. As a result of this experience, he said, "I could no more bring myself to fight them than I could to fight British people."

Undoubtedly, such working with German and Italian prisoners has opened the eyes of many people in a very similar manner, and made them realise that the fundamental interests of the workers of all lands are the same and that their alleged differences are merely fictitious created by their leaders. It is one of the many ways in which the state unwillingly works against its own interests.

Incidentally, the conscientious objector in question was turned down by the tribunal, to whom human solidarity seemed no real reason for refusing to fight!

LIBERTARIAN.

LIBERATION OF AN ITALIAN VILLAGE

L'Adunata dei Refrattari (4/1/47) quotes from a Rome dispatch by the American Overseas News Agency giving another example of what liberation has meant for some people. According to a statement made by the mayor of the village of Esperia (Frosinone) "Out of a population of 2,500, 700 women have been assaulted, that is to say almost the whole female population of the village; all have been contaminated, some have died, others are dying. Of these women, many are young, others very young, and become in their turn propagators of the disease. To all this, must be added the problem of the children born as a result of these assaults. Apparently Moroccan troops are officially blamed, but the Adunata points out that they are no worse than others and concludes "this is an old story; conquering armies can call themselves what they will, but even when they call themselves democrats and liberators they still wreak havoc on the conquered peoples in one way or another."

LIBERTARIAN.

18th January, 1947

THERE is a tendency among left-wing circles to-day to regard the British Empire as finished, as completely on its last legs and likely to decline into nothing in the very near future. It is, indeed, true that Britain no longer holds the great double sway of colonial and trading imperialism she maintained before 1914 and even, to a great extent, between 1918 and 1939. The dollar has ousted sterling from its pre-eminent position in world finance, British investments in foreign countries have been sold out to provide credit abroad during the war years, many British colonies have been devastated and much of the British merchant navy has been sunk in hostilities. These factors, together with the more rapid powers of expansion of the American export industry and the penetration of American power into the Far East, have tended to give the British Empire an aspect of pale sickness besides the formidable growth of American imperialism.

But the indications from day to day show that British imperialism is in fact far from down and out, and that under a government of the theoretically anti-imperialist Labour Party it is rapidly adapting itself to changed world circumstances in such a way that we can be sure there's still more life in the old dog than we would prefer to admit. The British Empire may have entered on its age of decline, but it is still a good way off its real fall. If historical analogies are of any value, it might be remembered that the Roman Empire was a good four centuries on its decline. The tempo of historical events has increased in our own day, but the fact remains that the British Empire is still showing signs of life which tend to lessen the hopes of its disintegration in any near future.

The first thing to be noticed is the revival of British economic imperialism. The diminution of interest payments from abroad, which in pre-war years made up for the lower level of exports than imports, has created a large adverse balance of imports over exports, and in order to make up for this the British producers are striving for, and for the present gaining, largely increased markets for ex-

How long British and American interests will rub along amicably in the Near East is difficult to say. At present, and for a long time ahead, they can help each other out economically in this area, and they are also united by the common threat of Russia, which both desire very strongly to keep away from active influence over India, the Suez Canal area or the Eastern Mediterranean. The Persian Gulf has, indeed, become a king-pin in present-day power politics and any political events that occur in that area should be watched carefully for the ulterior imperialist motives they may disguise.

Behind Indian Political Circus

While Indian politicians struggle for power, and intrigue to divide up the limited amount of spoils that the British government propose to hand over to them as a pretence of independence, the Indian people continue to struggle in a condition of life that seems almost beyond endurance. This has been revealed very emphatically during discussions that have been held recently between representatives of various departments and organisations on the problem of plantations labour.

An article in the Manchester Guardian recently, from a correspondent in India, gave something of the background to these discussions, and the following passage is sufficient to show, without any other comment, what imperialism has meant to the Indian people.

"The tea industry alone employs nearly 1,000,000 workers, while the coffee and rubber estates employ 165,000. Forty-five per cent of the tea workers are women and 15 per cent children. Though the system of indenture has been abolished in practice, the workers enjoy little freedom of movement and association. In-

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Bulgarian Press Campaign

The suppression of free opinion has been carried a stage further by the Communist government of Bulgaria, which has recently suppressed permanently the newspaper Zname, organ of the Democrat Party.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM TODAY

port goods. Exports are nearly £300,000,000 up on 1939, and the gap between exports and imports is already about £60,000,000 less than it was before the war. That this increase is not wholly due to increased prices is shown by the fact that 39% more workers are employed on export trade than in 1939.

Britain Fights For Markets

The result of this increase in trade has radically altered the British economic relationship towards various parts of the world. Instead of being primarily an imperialism based on property holdings throughout the world, British imperialism is being increasingly based on markets. While before the war Britain had an adverse trade balance with all parts of the world except Africa, its own peculiar trade province, now there are favourable balances with Africa, the whole of Europe, Asia and Australia. All these are markets which the British imperialists will be forced to defend, at the expense of home consumption of goods and at the eventual risk of war, if their interests are vitally threatened.

In addition to striving for new markets, the British are also endeavouring to gain once more the world ascendancy in merchant shipbuilding and shipping. This objective also has been partially achieved. On the 30th September last, British shipyards had under construction nearly two million tons of shipping, or about 52% of the world total. The next country, America, had less than a fifth of this quantity of shipping on the stocks. Of this total, no less than 1,488,000 tons are for British shipping lines, and in this respect also Britain is far ahead of the rest of the world, since France and America, the next countries, are each adding less than 300,000 tons to their merchant marine. It therefore seems as though, even if the British capitalists cannot rival America in trading returns, they intend to carry as much of the goods as possible, and get their rake-off in this way.

The Colonial Situation

In the more direct forms of imperialism, involving political and economic domination of subject countries, the situation of Britain has improved in some areas and dwindled in others. In the Far East, American imperialism has pushed the British almost completely out of the picture; recent figures published by the Chinese government show that America exports ten times as much goods to that country as Britain does. In India, British

speculation of the tea estates is extremely infrequent—once every two years—and the recruiting officials do not meet the workers without their employers' agents being present.

"Absenteeism is considerable—25 per cent in Assam and 30 per cent in Bengal. Malaria, hookworm, and malnutrition are among the causes. The highest average monthly cash earnings according to latest reports, are 21 shillings for a man, 13 for a woman, and six for a child. Certain concessions are given in addition such as land for cultivation, free housing, medical relief, maternity benefits and clothing and food at under cost price, and eight shillings monthly.

"The committee governing the lower price at which food is sold to the workers formed the conclusion that 'the real wages of low-paid plantation workers have gone down since the beginning of the war.' The committee also commented adversely on the overcrowding in single roomed tenements, in which eight to ten persons were living. Sanitation is equally unsatisfactory—90 per cent of North Indian plantations have failed to provide lavatories, the incidence of hookworm being consequently extremely high."

Manchester Guardian, 10/1/1947.

National independence can mean nothing to these people, for it will only give them new masters in the same conditions of exploitation. The only satisfactory struggle for colonial peoples, if they will only realise it, is that which means an end to native as well as foreign masters, and ends such disgusting exploitation for ever by returning the land to the people.

These minerals in many cases are needed urgently both by Russia and the U.S.A. Bauxite, for example, is essential for aluminium; aluminium is essential for both wartime and peacetime production. On the eve of the war, Russia was producing only 130,000 metric tons per year, an amount far below her needs. The U.S. was

producing only 238,000 tons, only a fraction of the amount required. France was the largest producer, with 505,000 tons—one reason, if hardly mentioned, why both Russian and American industry watch French political trends with keen interest.

It happens that in the early days of the war, new bauxite deposits were discovered in Yugoslavia, already a heavy producer. Hungary is also a large producer, turning out some 25,000 tons in 1938. You'd never know that the problem of Trieste had anything to do with these facts, but very definitely it does. And so does the future of German industry, since Balkan countries, lacking electric power and technical experience, usually shipped the ore to Germany for refinement.

Turkey has the Straits, a bone of contention for wartime strategy. But there's more in Turkey than meets the eye. That country is the largest producer of chromium, needed for steel alloys and a multitude of other industrial uses. While the Russians turn out 129,000 tons a year, Turkey's production is 151,000—for the Soviet expanding economy a tempting consideration. But the United States is the world's greatest importer, and gets much of its chromium from the Turks.

Imperial Russia between 1500 and 1917 expanded its territory from 425,000 to 8,723,000 square miles. Under the Soviet system, so critical of western imperialism, expansionism has been thriving with a vitality worthy of the Czars. It has been slowed up, but the pressure still continues, partly because Russian economy is in bad shape. Production has suffered mainly from the war, but not a little also from unrest, graft, and a widespread discontent which official spokesmen no longer try to conceal. Witness the remarkable statement of the Soviet Finance Minister, Arseny G. Zverev, on October 16th, in a months-late budget speech: "Unless moral deterioration is checked, the Soviet financial system threatens to become unmanageable."

Free enterprise, so-called, is insisted upon by America, while the Russians adhere to a rigid state monopoly. The two systems can hardly be integrated. Where they do not meet, the basic conflict does not show; but now, in Europe and elsewhere, the two are meeting, and each is striving for the advantage. Thus the Soviets are out of the Bretton Woods agreements; they fear, as did the American Bankers' Association, managed currencies on a world-scale. And in Russia's case, the U.S.S.R. can export enough gold to cover their import purchases, and naturally prefer monetary agreements tied to the yellow metal.

These differences are the real causes of conflict and danger, not the old and overstressed differences in political ideas. The question we have to answer is not the common one, "Can democracy exist beside communism?" but rather, "Can the commercial drives of East and West be adapted to each other without war?" The freeing of the Danube for trade through a late concession by Russia is perhaps a portent of a new accommodation. At least, it goes to the roots of the issue, which is chiefly a race for goods, raw materials, and (once Russia satisfies more of her basic consumer needs) world markets.

America's aim, of course, is rehabilitation, but it is hardly unadulterated. Senator Elbert Thomas put it clearly in *The American Magazine*: "While our policy of dollar democracy aids our foreign policy, it is not a bald business of buying friends. It represents a valiant effort by America to assist Allies badly hit by the war back to their feet, so that they can prosper, enjoy democracy—and buy our products."

This dual programme is neatly tied up in our loans. We offered Norway \$50,000,000 to restore that country's economy, but attached a condition—all goods from the U.S. must be carried in American ships. Her merchant shipping, that although the government dared not refuse, and put all pressure on reluctant Norwegian opinion, it was able to get acceptance through the Oslo parliament only by a margin of three votes.

Decisions on foreign loans are largely in the hands of the National Advisory Council on International Financial and Monetary Problems. The State Department's representative on this body is the Under-Secretary, William L. Clayton. In a recent press interview he declared that "the time has come when the United States should give greater support to foreign investments of its nationals in strategic minerals that are in short supply domestically." He mentioned bauxite, manganese, tin, chromium, copper, petroleum and high grade iron ores. "Uranium, the raw material of atom bombs," he said, "might be included."

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cause a financial and employment crisis in Egypt which will give the British an opportunity to re-establish their domination in another and less direct way.

State Capitalism In Colonies

Within the British colonies themselves, a process of consolidation is going on. A recent circular issued by the Colonial Office to all Colonial Governments is significant; it recommends the introduction of legislation vesting all mining rights in the Crown, as distinct from the old system in many colonies by which such rights were vested in the native tribes. This new move is significant: of a tendency for British colonial imperialism to become centralised, either directly in the hands of the state or in those of large corporations. This tendency is also to be seen in the fusion of the Malaysian states, with the elimination of what remains of local autonomy, in the virtual control of the Malaysian rubber and tin industries by the British government agencies, and in the recent decision to conduct the expansion of the East African earth run pipeline through the United Africa Company, with the likelihood of its later being taken over by state agencies.

Small individual capitalist concerns in the colonies tend to become absorbed, or to fade out of existence, and there is a general attack being mounted on the individual native cultivators. In East Africa, since before the war, there has been in operation an iniquitous system of pooling trade with native growers and collectors of jungle products. This was started with the ostensible purpose of eliminating the bad effects of competitive trading, but it has resulted in considerably lowering the position of the native who trades with the pool. The pool is administered by the government and the big trading concerns, and it has always attempted to give the lowest possible price, which, backed by the fact that it has an almost monopolistic control of the market, has forced the natives to accept steadily worsening terms.

In West Africa, the land is mostly held by native proprietors, who have been struggling for years against the domination

of the buying organisations of the big cocoa combines in England. Now they have gained a nominal victory, in that the trading organisations will be run on a more co-operative basis, with native representation and partial control. But the large trading concerns have already begun to circumvent this situation. The Unilever combine, for instance, has now opened large concessions in the Belgian Congo, where no such law of native ownership exists, and is operating them by direct labour. The climate of the Congo is apparently suitable for growing the same products as Nigeria and the Gold Coast, and it is likely that British concerns will do their best to undermine the native growers of the British colonies by increasing their trade with the Congo.

A similar picture of increasing power for the state and the large trade monopolies can be seen in almost every colony, and it is clear that the British imperialists are doing their best to consolidate their economic and political power so as to impose on the colonies a totalitarian organisation that will counter native attempts at independence.

The British Empire is fighting hard for its existence, and looks like living on for a good many years yet. But always, in the background, there is the shadow of American imperialism, which controls so many of the purse strings. How far does the British Empire in fact exist as an independent entity? How far does it exist as a proxy for American imperialism, which cannot bite off all the world in one mouthful? It is clear that the British rulers have succeeded in retaining more independence than at one time seemed likely, but whether the British Empire will in the long run avoid being absorbed into ascendant American imperialism is another and more doubtful question.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

Indian Mine Strike

Six thousand miners at the Jharia coal mine in the Province of Bihar went on strike for improved conditions.

Economic Competition & War

(The following article appeared in *Worldover Press*, 11/12/46, from the pen of the editor, Devere Allen. It draws attention to the solid materialist economic factors which underlie the surface appearances of diplomacy. That economic competition is the main cause of wars has been the contention of *Freedom* and its predecessors throughout the recent war. We print this article in order to show that this is no mere doctrinaire bee in the bonnet of anarchist and socialist anti-militarists. It is the sober conclusion of any realist who honestly looks below the superficial slogans and national loyalties of the political press.—Eds.)

World War I began at Sarajevo. World War II began at Danzig. Draw a line between the two, extend it north and south, and you have a sort of economic slit trench between the commercial strategies of East and West. Russia needs goods and trade no less than Britain and America. The ideological conflicts are easier to resolve than the commercial competition, which resembles with striking fidelity the struggle between two old-time capitalist imperialisms.

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British Anarchists TOM KEELL

Sixty years ago, in 1886, Kropotkin gathered around him a few devoted comrades and started *Freedom*. To-day, it is one of the longest-lived papers in our movement. Yet how many realize what a struggle it means to keep a paper alive, what hard, unremitting work, what self-sacrifice, and what, after all, ill-deserved criticism falls on those who give all their scanty leisure and money to keep the paper alive! It is safe to claim that *Freedom* that no paper of the "left" has ever had more unpaid workers, whose names are not merely forgotten, but were never generally known. Nearly all the former ones are now dead and remembered by few, for the Anarchist movement of today is not only composed of new and young comrades, but of entirely new elements.

Of the little-known who helped to keep *Freedom* going through its most eventful and best-written years was certainly Tom Keell. Keell, who was the line-lighter, he could never be induced to go on the platform, although he possessed a very keen sense of humour and a wealth of spontaneous illustrations and stories with which to underline his points. For years he wrote one of the most characteristic features of the old *Freedom*, the "Notes". These dealt with the events of the day and were always trenchant, often witty—but never signed. Indeed his name is scarcely mentioned except as printer and publisher.

For years the entire work of editing, producing and printing the paper, even to the dispatching, fell entirely on him, making his working day often 14 or 15 hours. Only those who knew him well know how goodhumouredly and uncomplainingly he worked. He knew what all comrades should know—that the movement depends on the individual effort, and that the movement is not a machine, but a living thing.

Despite all this work, he felt it was not enough, and that we should have a

weekly paper as well as the monthly *Freedom*, and a few devoted comrades, for industrial matters, for at that time—some years before the 1914 war—there was great industrial unrest. In this way, he started the *Voice of Labour*. After a useful but arduous career it had to be dropped, not due to Keell, but to lack of energy on the part of the comrades, who failed in their selling efforts and did not always renew their subscriptions when due. *Freedom* meanwhile kept an even way, always in debt, the printer, editor and publisher always the chief sufferer.

Then came the war of 1914. Keell and some of the comrades organized themselves into a "No-Conscription League" and carried on a vigorous anti-war campaign. To add to the difficulties, Keell was prosecuted, and Tom Keell and his companion Lilian Wolfe were arrested and tried. Keell got six months, comrade Wolfe three months. The comrades kept *Freedom* going whilst they were in prison, but as soon as he was out, Keell was back again in harness, carrying on the fight with the same courage and vigour. The war had scattered the movement and scattered the comrades. To add to the difficulties there was internal dissension on the war issue which split the movement into two distinct sections. It was the acid test, especially for a man like Keell. He was on the one side, and the other side was the comrades, and like all of us who knew him, he loved and respected him. But Kropotkin supported the war, and with him went Tcherkesov and several others of the old members of the *Freedom* Group.

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BOOK REVIEWS "Tenement Town"

LIVING IN TENEMENTS. By L. E. WHITE. Jason Press, 2/6. "Tenement Town" is the fictitious name which has been given to a rehousing estate built some ten years ago as part of the L.C.C. slum-clearance programme. And bearing "Tenement Town" as its title, an interesting little book by L. E. White has recently been published, telling of the lives of the people on the estate and the work of a small group of social workers amongst them.

Built on "an island site bounded by three railway lines and a cemetery", the estate was designed with little understanding of the needs of the folk who were to live upon it. Physically segregated from the existing local community, and socially outcast from it, the inhabitants of "Tenement Town", without shops, cinema, pub or communal centre, were soon longing nostalgically for the comparative richness of social life of the fish-shops and pubs of the slum districts they had left.

In 1941, to this breeding ground of apathy, ill-health, and conflict came a group of social workers, the members of the Pacific Service Unit, whose members sought to express their resistance to war

in social work, directed towards building a society of which war and injustice could not arise.

This book is the record of the efforts of these pacifists to create among the people of "Tenement Town" the social relations which would be the basis of responsibility and initiative and neighbourliness. It tells of the attempts to form a community association and a youth club, attempts which succeeded in spite of initial apathy and hostility.

It tells too of the survey which the Unit made, inviting the criticisms and suggestions of the people of the estate. Resulting from the survey came many criticisms of the badly-planned, slum-like blocks of flats, and constructive suggestions for improvement, with a widely expressed desire for a community centre.

One hopes that this book, "the sober record of the survey and the development of the needs of the folk who were to live upon it," will be a stimulus to the existing local community, and socially outcast from it, the inhabitants of "Tenement Town", without shops, cinema, pub or communal centre, were soon longing nostalgically for the comparative richness of social life of the fish-shops and pubs of the slum districts they had left.

Freedom Press

George Woodcock: ANARCHY OR CHAOS? 2/6; NEW LIFE TO THE LAND 6d.; RAILWAYS AND SOCIETY 3d.; HOMES OR HOWELS? 6d.; ANARCHISM AND MORALITY 2d.; WHAT IS ANARCHISM? 1d.

Peter Kropotkin: THE STATE, ITS HISTORIC ROLE 1/2; THE WAGES SYSTEM 3d.; REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT 3d.; SELECTIONS FROM HIS WRITINGS 8/6 [Chosen by Herbert Read].

Ernest Malatesta: ANARCHY 3d.; VOTE WHAT FOR? 1d.

Herbert Read: THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANARCHISM 1/2; THE EDUCATION OF FREE MEN 1/2.

William Godwin: SELECTIONS FROM POLITICAL JUSTICE 3d.; ON LAW 1d.

M. L. Berneri: WORKERS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA 1/2.

C. Berneri: KROPOTKIN—HIS FEDERAL IDEAS 2/6.

Alexander Berkman: A.B.C. OF ANARCHISM 1/2.

John Hewston: ITALY AFTER MUSSOLINI 6d.; ILL-HEALTH, POVERTY AND THE STATE, Cloth 2/6, Paper 1/2.

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FATE OF LITERATURE IN

NOBODY would actually deny in Russia that literature is there considered as being a very important institution destined to participate in the work of government. Thus, recently, the editorial of the *Literary Gazette* of Moscow reproduced under the date of the 24th August, 1946, the resolution of the Central Committee of the Party according to which the responsible contributors to the reviews *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* "have forgotten the conceptions of Lenin following which our reviews, whether they are scientific or artistic, cannot be apolitical. They have forgotten that our reviews constitute a powerful means of the Soviet state working for the education of Soviet men, in particular the young, and should therefore take for directive that which constitutes the vital basis of the Soviet regime: its politics." It is always necessary to have in mind this essential consideration when one examines the latest changes which have taken place in the Russian literary world.

It is true that the subordination of literature to the governmental necessities of Soviet power has been established gradually; the liberty to create among

Acting in the true spirit of Anarchism, he threw open the columns of *Freedom* to those who, by supporting the war, had gone back on their splendid careers as Anarchist propagandists, men who undid a lifetime's work in a week. Keell was no speaker; but as a clear logical thinker endowed with courage and sincerity he was not quite alone, for Malatesta contributed some of the best articles he ever wrote for *Freedom* in answer to Kropotkin, Jean Grave and others who supported the war.

History has since proved how right Keell was, and has strengthened the anti-militarist position of Anarchism. One feels proud that the same anti-militarist attitude has been maintained by *Freedom* to-day, and was carried on throughout the 1939 war by its predecessor *War Commentary*, in the spirit that goes back to the heroic days of Anarchist pioneering.

In my long experience of the movement I know of few men who did more quiet hard work, or who were so completely indifferent to praise or blame, or yet so free of personal feeling. Keell was always ready to help others, and his position of editor being always open for all to call and ask for advice. It was always wise and safe advice that they got, as comrades who called on him from all parts of the world can testify. Tom Keell has passed into history, but the work for which he laid the foundation must be carried on. No better or more fitting memorial to his work could be raised than to make the paper *Freedom*, to which he devoted his greater part of his life, a weekly paper on a sound financial basis. It can be done, so, comrades let it be done.

In conclusion, if these brief sketches have succeeded in lifting the veil of undeserved obscurity from some of the pioneers of Anarchism in England, I shall be satisfied. And among them, I mean the least is he whom I am proud to have known as a comrade and a friend—the man Tom Keell.

MAT KAVANAGH.

How Should Homes be Built

HOMES FOR THE PEOPLE: How modern building technique can provide high standard dwellings quickly; how they could be planned and built; what they could look like; and how we can get them. By a committee of The Association of Building Technicians. (Capital Economy only provides commodities if there is a market for them, and design and materials are strongly influenced by costs, patent rights, and many other arbitrary restricting factors. One of the tasks of an organized working-class revolutionary movement is to en-

visage the concrete problems which will face each industry when the market economy and the profit system are abolished, and production is directed towards supplying the needs of all. Surveys of sound and heat insulation, drainage and refuse disposal, site-planning, costs. Altogether it is a thoroughly practical survey, and the fact that the authors seem to think education of public opinion is all that is needed in order to get rational building does not detract from its value. A series of admirable illustrations are provided, each one of which illustrates the points made in the text.

J. H.

Nevertheless, this little book on the problem of building does a good deal to fill the gap as far as this very important question is concerned. Compiled by a committee of technicians, it yet remains free from that remoteness from the realities of everyday problems which all too often characterizes the technical approach. The Association of Building Technicians declared in 1940 that "the technician's job is to clarify the technical possibilities so that the people's demands can become more precise and lead to action", and this is the spirit in which the book is written.

From the outset it avoids that spurious practicality which consists in meeting administrative difficulties halfway, what is demanded is a technically practicable. The Ministry of Health's overcrowding standards as laid down in the Overcrowding Act of 1936 are strongly criticised. "The standard adopted was roughly two people to each room, including living rooms. Children under 10 counted as half and babies not at all. So four children under 10 could sleep in one room. There could be added a couple of babies and it would still not be overcrowded! A family of nine, including a baby, could occupy a two-bedroom house without overcrowding!" The committee's own motto are much more in line with human needs.

A similar attitude is adopted towards rents. "Must finance be the governing factor in determining the standard of our future housing? We answer with an emphatic 'No!' We do not want to waste a single penny, but we want every penny that is necessary for decency and health—yes, and comfort and beauty—for

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never ceased to function; as for the individual liberty of writers, it was no more respected than that of other citizens.

The Purge Begins

In 1929 two astounding expulsions shook the Soviet literary world: Boris Piliak and Zamiatine, renowned writers, were forced to leave the Pan-Russian Association of Writers. Piliak was reproached for the publication in Berlin of a novel entitled *Asiavoy*; in this he allowed to appear a too marked sympathy for the idealism of the militants in the first epoch of the Revolution. As for Zamiatine, he had allowed to be published in a Russian review in Prague some fragments from his Utopian romance, "We others"; in this he depicted life in a centralised state society which was completely regulated. After these incidents there was let loose a polemical dispute around the theory of "social commands", according to which the writer should work on subjects which were fixed for him by the state. At first this theory was combated not only by the "Fellow Travellers", but also by Communist writers like Gladkov (author of *Green and Red*).

Later, the movement of the Proletarian (Proletarian Culture), created by Bogdanov, one of the oldest Bolshevik militants, was combated in a lively manner by the two chiefs of the Russian revolution, Lenin and Trotsky. Bogdanov and his adepts thought that the proletariat, in order to become the dominant class, should create its own culture. But this thinker insisted on the fact that according to his conception culture should not be controlled by the Communist Party.

This situation lasted until 1932, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party resolved to dissolve the organizations of proletarian writers and to group all literateurs in a single association; that of Soviet Writers.

From that time ceased the existence of the literature of the Five-year Plan and commenced the literature from above, the epoch of "socialist realism".

It is now a well-known fact that a great part of the Russian population, and notably the peasants subjected to collectivisation in the Ukraine and White Russia, awaited the arrival of the Germans in the hope of seeing a change in their hard destiny. In other social strata the hostility towards the regime was no less negligible. But the savage conduct of the German occupation troops and their openly published contempt towards the native populations—a contempt based in the domain of theory on the racist delirium—had the immediate effect of bringing forth a sincere patriotism in the Russian government.

In the month of May, 1924, took place a conference convoked by the Press Department of the Communist Party, which elaborated a resolution that served later as the basis of the resolution adopted in 1925 by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party; it is necessary to note that this Bureau refused to recognise the supremacy of proletarian and Communist literature. This resolution governed the fate of Soviet literature until 1929.

It was an epoch of literary liberty which was, however, only of a relative kind, since the preliminary censorship of books

Official Attitude During The War

What was the attitude of the government towards literature during the war? From the beginning the bodies charged (Continued on page 7)

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U.S.S.R.

(Continued from page 6)

with repression began by causing the disappearance of numerous writers who were already in exile before the war; it is thus that the most complete mystery surrounds the disappearance of the celebrated poet Mandelstam, of Piliak, the great producer Meyerhold, and others. But later, when the situation became very critical and when all the forces of the nation were absorbed by the armed struggle, the government pretended to allow something of a loose rein. Besides, the writers did nothing more than express the patriotic sentiments of the country; those in power had thus every reason to let them alone. As for the writers, certain among them doubtless nourished the hope that at the end of this gigantic struggle the authorities would make concessions opening the way to democracy; they believed that the contact of Russia with the West would be salutary in the sense that the U.S.S.R. could no longer retain its totalitarian regime. This opinion was held not only by Russians who were not political fanatics, but equally by numerous political and literary personalities in Europe and America.

The recent attack of the Central Committee of the Communist Party against Akmatova and Zostchenko marks the commencement of a new turn in the literary politics of the Kremlin. The poetess Akmatova was already patriotic and anti-German during the first world war; she was with the Whites during the war of 1914-15; at this moment such an attitude could be useful to the Russian government; also, Akmatova has many times been classed as a "celebrated poetess"—it is necessary to remember that already before the first world conflict the critics had accorded her that distinction. If to-day she is put in the rank of a "drawing-room poetess" propagating "art for art's sake", according to what is said in the government press, it is simply due to a new volte-face of the government. Akmatova has committed the crime of not understanding, or at least of having the air of not understanding, the patriotic line of the government.

It was itself only a manoeuvre, and that this line could change.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS—LABOUR VERSION

Mr. Charles Dukes—"Charlie" to trade unionists all over Britain—once earned 4s. a week as a part-time in a Lancashire forge. To-day he becomes a barman.

At his home in Amersham, Bucks, to-day he looked back over a life which has led him, after years of manual labour and strenuous trade union work, to the most powerful position in the union movement and now to a seat in the House of Lords.

What title shall I take?" he said. "Well, I think it will just be Lord Dukes. There doesn't seem much sense in covering up your own name when it is fairly well known."

The name of Charles Dukes has been well known among trade unionists for some 40 years.

"Now," he says, "I'm going back to Westminster as a peer. I am looking forward to getting back to political life, and to helping the party I helped to build into a government."

"There used to be a great deal of criticism of the House of Lords among Socialists. You never seem to hear it nowadays."

"We have moved away from the idea of abolishing the Lords. In the last century the House of Lords has restored its prestige."

"There are a great number of men there now with splendid records in public life and very high qualifications, and it seems to me that most of the work is being carried on by that type rather than by those who are merely there through heredity."

Mr. Dukes says he does not object even to the hereditary principle. "I've an open mind," he says.

Evening Standard, 1/1/47.

SEEING THE LIGHT

The 1,700 miners at Whithorn Colliery, South Shields, will not take part in the New Year celebrations to mark the nationalization of their industry.

Mr. J. E. Edmondson, secretary of the Mardens Miners' Lodge, which represents the workers at the colliery, said yesterday: "We have taken this action because we are disappointed with the Coal Board membership."

In the man, they are the same persons who were responsible for the former chaotic conditions in the industry. The play has been changed but not the cast."

Daily Mirror, 1/1/47.

HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN

The New Year went out in a blaze of glory on the Stock Exchange. Investors and speculators alike were optimistic on immediate 1947 prospects.

All round reports of record order books and a boom in the market for industrial shares, but the fuel shortage threat is a real one.

Oil shares enjoyed another blaze of activity, Shell and Burmah taking up the running in the group of 3s. 13d. while Iranian touched 6s. Johannesburg speculation in O.F.S. gold shares revived strongly, putting St. Helena up 6s. 3d., while prediesels and Offits were 3s. 13d. up. Lloyds' discounting was 9d. up.

Best in industrials were gains of 2s. 6d. in London Brick, 1s. in Lever and Harrolds, 1s. 6d. in Gammages, and 2s. 10d. in Cossor on reports of new radio developments.

Celanese went ahead with a rise of 1s. 6d. after knocking off the dividend, and

Evening Standard, 1/1/47.

Zostchenko: The Pessimist

The case of Zostchenko, that Charlie Chaplin of Russian literature, is different; he was and remains to the present very popular in Russia; he has always described the ordinary man and his passive attitude towards the revolution and all the political convulsions. He uses the characteristic language of that half-instructed man. Under a mask of naivety Zostchenko allows himself to adopt an ironical and pessimistic attitude towards Soviet man. Fundamentally, it is this pessimism which is held against him; it is because of it that he serves as a target for all the arrows of contemporary literary policy.

But this attack against two well-known writers merely announces a new line of the government in the matter of literature; henceforth writers should extricate from their heads the torch of creative freedom which they have dared to acquire during the war. At present they must, according to the government, be put back into their capacities at the service of the new Five-year Plan and become permeated with the essential idea that the Soviet state is again menaced by Western capitalism; in such a situation it is not allowed to accord attention to other ideas and thoughts than those formulated by the state.

The resolution of the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Writers of the 4th Sept., published in the *Literary Gazette* of the same date, accuses the writer Petro Panch of having elaborated a "theory" on the "right of the writer to commit errors." The resolution says on this subject: "This theory opens the door for the penetration into literature of foreign influences."

The Writer Who Dared To Inquire

Another important point in the discussion arose in the case of Pannorov (author of the well-known novel *Broushi*) who presumed to pose the question: Who is the real architect of our victory? The fact of already having established this query was sufficient for the official critic to slate the insolent inquirer, for this would have meant to discussing the fundamental dogma of the role of the Party and its leader in the organisation of the triumph.

To this must be added the numerous resolutions stigmatising writers and poets guilty of "bowing too low" before western literature; in this there is a kind of preparation for the war against the spirit of the west.

The alarm sounded by the authorities has immediately borne its fruits; everywhere there is a quasi-unanimity of thinkers who are ready to confess, repent and recognize their own faults, at the same time as pointing out those of their colleagues.

The literary and political conditions under which these men must live are such that people can only condemn their conduct. In their case the Russian proverb rests true: Do not strike a beaten man.

I. M.

Through the Press

AMERICAN JUSTICE

Two Negro boys both fourteen years old have been sentenced to hang in Jackson, chief city of Mississippi State—having been indicted, tried and convicted on the same day.

According to their defence lawyer, a confession that they shot their way out of the hands of their employer, a farmer, was not outside the goal were demanding that the boys be turned over to them.

After the boys, James Adams and Robert Truesdale, were sentenced to death, Mr. W. D. Coleman, their lawyer, appealed to Mississippi Supreme Court. The appeal was dismissed.

At their trial both boys pleaded not guilty, but were given little opportunity to defend themselves.

When the jury was being chosen one jurymen jumped up shouting: "I say kill them. I say hang them."

He was discharged, but the Judge overruled a defence motion that the rest of the jury be dismissed.

Daily Mirror, 1/1/47.

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Whitehall Meddles in Medicine

Considerable comment has been caused in the press recently by the action of the Ministry of Food in cancelling an allowance of 2 ozs. extra butter per day granted by a local food office on the application of the patient's doctor, after consultation with a surgeon and a dietitian. The man had an incurable fatal disease, and the doctor applied for the