

## Conway Hall Debate

### 'Politics is Opium of People'

A lively debate was held at the Conway Hall, Central London, on Monday, January 20th, between CLIFFORD GROVES of the Socialist Party of Gt. Britain and TONY GIBSON, of the London Anarchist Group, on the motion—"Should The Working Class Choose Socialism or Anarchism?" J. Allen Skinner, who disagreed with both, was an able chairman.

Opening, GILFORD GROVES said the debate was not a dispute on tactics, but an argument on fundamentals, and therefore he considered it his duty to put forward the policy and principles of the S.P.G.B., which would lead to Socialism, whereas whatever the Anarchists dreamed about, it was nothing like what they would achieve by their means. The views of Anarchists could lead only to capitalism, bloodshed and terror.

The S.P.G.B., tracing the evils of present society to the system of private property, aimed, with the support of workers, to get control of government for the purpose of establishing Socialism. Parliament controls the machinery of the State (with all its armed force); therefore, since the workers cannot take industry by force, they must seize control of Parliament by voting in a majority of their representatives and by virtue of that majority, dispossess the capitalist class.

The S.P.G.B. (not to be confused with the "socialist" parties like the Labour Party, Communists, etc., whom they can attack better than the Anarchists) doesn't say, "Send us to power". The work of emancipation must be the work of the working class itself, who must understand the issue, and see the S.P.G.B. as an instrument of expropriation.

TONY GIBSON opened his argument by saying that while he would not berate

the S.P.G.B. for the antics of the Communists, etc., he did not intend to pay attention to any political party, since Anarchism was only a political theory inasmuch as it was anti-political, and Anarchism and Socialism do not present a parallel choice.

It was, he said, not true to say that acts in Whitehall, the Kremlin, or White House, Washington, could be the acts of the working class. The power of the workers does not lie in the political field but entirely in the practical and economic fields—literally in the hands of every worker. He was not an intellectual theoretician but a 20th century individual, and a lifetime spent in studying theories would not make a scrap of difference to the fact that change must come from the common people acting in accordance with their wants—irrespective of whether their acts square with political or religious theories.

The workers are more interested in football and racing than political theories, and don't and won't flock to public libraries to study them. The interested minority, on the other hand, find their refuge from reality in politics, which is far more amusing than football. "Politics," Tony Gibson asserted (after Charles Kingsley) "is the opium of the people!" On the other hand, the workers have seen enough attempted to choose it, for they know it too well!

"Anarchism, the will to live by free co-operation, instead of by servility, parasitism and exploitation, is a natural force within human society. Anarchism is the force by which humanity has managed to survive all the terrible tribulations that we know of, and Anarchism is the force by which we shall win through and achieve an equalitarian society."

In replying, CLIFFORD GROVES found it necessary to descend to broad comedy. The fact that Anarchists do not speak with one voice he found indicative of confusion of thought, and said they should agree with the Leninists as they believe in intellectual above the workers.

Anarchism, Groves continued, is 100 years out-of-date—it belongs only to a period of small economies. To-day, a general strike is impossible and direct action is ridiculous, as the employers are already locked out! The Anarchists know their abortive ideas can do nothing, and the growth of support for Anarchism during the war is only temporary, while their anti-democratic propaganda does a great disservice to the working class.

He quoted Malatesta (saying his words might have been used by Hitler!) and brought out (in true Socialist fashion) a card index of quotations (some taken out of context) from Stirner, Proudhon and Tucker.

## U.S. Farmers Fear Plenty

Freedom has devoted a good deal of space in the past to the discussion of the food situation. The basis of the theoretical approach on real life, and we have not been satisfied by explanations and "remedies" which ignore the fundamental laws of capitalist economy. It is idiotic to speak of production for human needs in a social and economic set-up based on production for sale, and sale at a profit. Once again the hard economic facts of our analysis.

In America farm products are so plentiful that the prices are rapidly falling, and farmers are getting alarmed about it—naturally enough, since their livelihoods are at stake. They remember only too well the ruinous slump in world food prices in 1930. Under a capitalist economy they can envisage only one "remedy"—restriction of output in order to keep prices up. Here is the Old Farmer's account of the matter, under the heading "Restriction of Production".

"The Department of Agriculture is now having to buy eggs which cannot be sold on the market at a guaranteed price of 1s. 9d. a dozen. The commodity Credit Corporation announces that it cannot buy any more wheat at present prices, although more and more is coming in from the farmers. Cotton prices in the Southern exchanges have slumped by more than four dollars a bale.

"In Congress, meanwhile, representatives of the farm bloc are becoming more and more insistent that Government subsidies for agriculture will have to be extended.

"Mr. Hope, Kansas, chairman of the House of Representatives Agricultural Committee, said his committee would meet Mr. Clinton Anderson, the Secretary of Agriculture, soon to discuss the need to restrict farm production and keep up prices. The committee also disclosed that it was gravely concerned over the possible effects of an international trade organization on the domestic price support programme. It would almost certainly rule out deliberate restriction of production, particularly if the Food and Agriculture

TONY GIBSON, while being interrupted several times by supporters of the opposition, drew attention to the wording of the motion, and wondered what happened when this scheme for seizing control of the state was put into operation, but the War Office, Air Ministry, etc., didn't like the orders issued by the new workers' government? What happened in Spain? Did Groves really think that Blimps of the Army, Navy, and Air Force would dance to the tune of the S.P.G.B.?

The armed forces are composed of workers in the main, and when sufficient numbers of them understand what it's all about, it won't be necessary to waste energy on parliamentary action to dissolve them! The orders won't have to come from Whitehall then! In the recent strike, ordinary workers showed themselves capable of organising without political theorising, and as the class struggle sharpens in Britain, they will come more and more to see the value of Anarchist methods against the combination of employers and Trade Unions in the State.

Should we choose Socialism or Anarchism? "No words of mine," said Gibson, "or anyone else, will determine that. The choice will be made by every worker, as mine was—by practical experience and common sense."

P.S.

## Anarchist Commentary

### Sex, Athletics and Reformism!

When sentencing the former world tennis champion, Tilden, to 9 months' imprisonment for homosexuality, the Californian judge remarked: "Your admitted practice is a thing we do not expect from great athletes." It is part of the whole conspiracy of obscurantism to represent sexual abnormality as the practice of sub-human creatures worthy of "decent men's contempt," and the judge's remark is so palpably silly that even the daily press here described it as "irrelevant".

Tilden was sentenced to 9 months' imprisonment. On his release he must see a psychiatrist, and for five years will be on probation, and the Court has ruled that during this time he must never be in the company of either male or female juveniles unaccompanied by their parents. Now this latter ruling illustrates a very serious danger which is inherent in a reformist attitude towards sexual customs. On the face of it, it might seem such a satisfactory and lenient to give a light sentence of nine months instead of the several years which would almost certainly have been imposed in this country. Long sentences are undoubtedly to be deplored and denounced. But the reformist, while agreeing with this, finds it necessary to see the administrative point of view as well, and thinks in terms of what is to

take the place of the penal servitude as a punishment or deterrent or reformatory measure—according to his point of view. For him, it is not enough just to scrap the vindictive sentence and just leave it at that; that would be "impractical". So he advocates just this sort of probation which has been imposed on Tilden.

Let us consider what it means in practice. If one's driving licence is suspended, it is easy enough to find an excuse for not driving if one's unknown acquaintances require it of one. But the position of a man who has to leave the company of juveniles if their parents are not present (and how many adolescents go about accompanied by their parents?) is quite intolerable. What excuse can he make? And one may be sure that the gossip—so common and so prurient in our society of sexual inhibitions—will make sure that everyone will in fact know the real reason. Such a probationary period will simply mean that he will move in a cloud of gully-fascinated whispers, more demoralizing than thorough-going ostracism.

When a homosexual comes out of gaol, he can be fairly confident that most of the people he will meet will be ignorant of his "past". The probationer, because of the social limitations imposed by the courts, will be compelled to inform any social milieu in which he moves of his sexual abnormality. It is almost certain that his ability to earn his living will be reduced because of unwillingness to employ him. In short his life will be intolerable, and if such reformist "leniency" becomes at all general, one expects that suicide will turn many a "reformed" punishment into death sentences. As in many other spheres "reforms" may be more cruel than the straightforward vindictiveness they supersede.

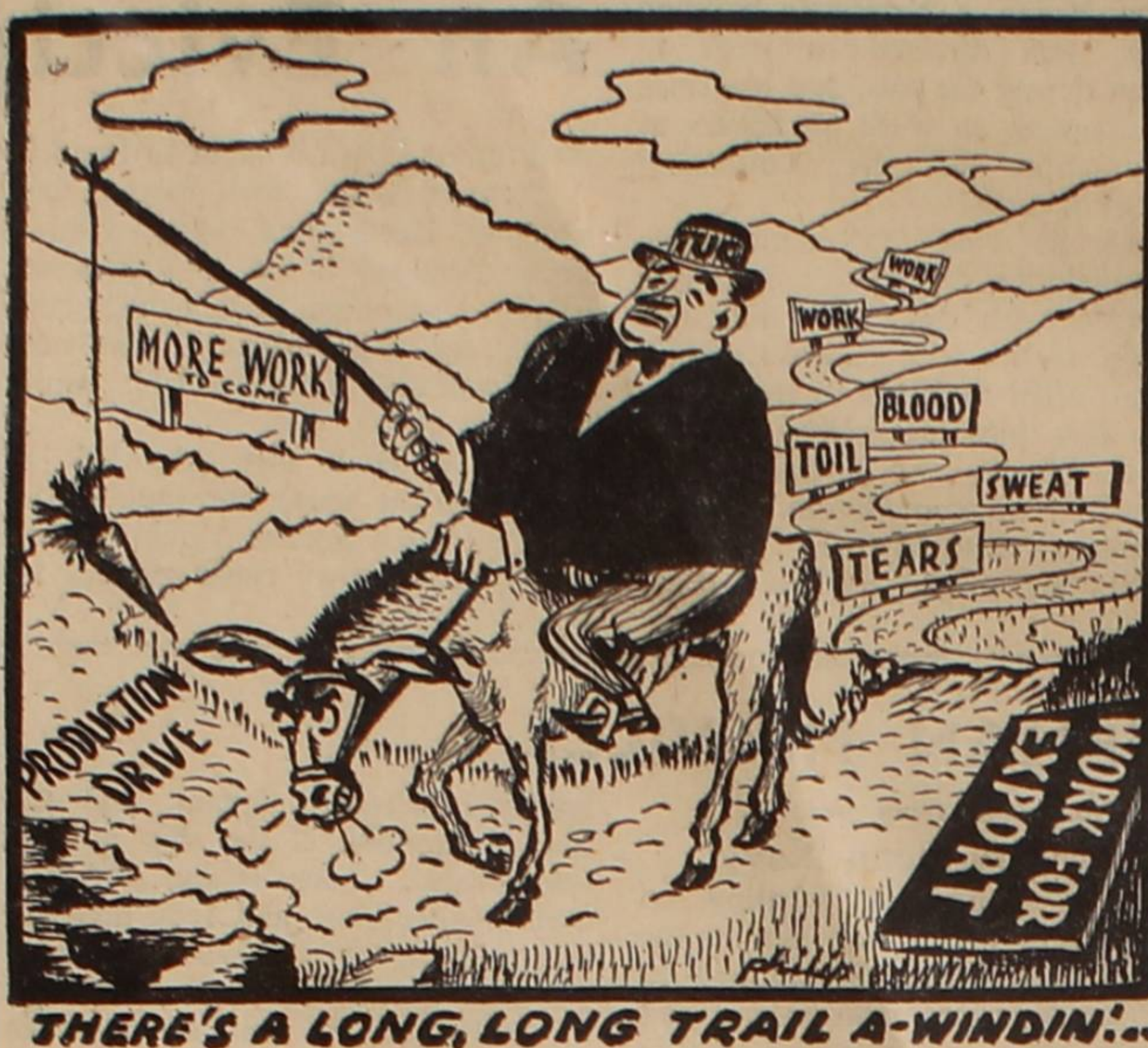
Organisation has any influence on its policy—and since American domestic prices tend to be higher than world prices, American farmers find it hard to see greater advantages in free trade than in individual protection. Now this clearly means that if the Food and Agriculture Organisation, for Sir John Orr is chairman, were able to affect world prices, there is bound to be opposition in some quarters. And inevitable the attempt to supply basic human needs and profits will break down. Once again, the market system, which is at the basis of capitalist production, the system whereby a food crop is only grown if there is a prospect of selling at a certain price, in absolute disregard of the necessity for such a crop from the point of view of human needs, is seen to be quite disastrous. If prices are kept up they are kept out of the reach of the poorest workers—who need the products most. Yet capitalism demands restriction and high prices. This is what the much bandied expression "Poverty in the midst of Plenty" actually means. To-day's famines are man-made—they stem from the capitalist mode of economy. It is no good blaming the American farmers, for they have to live; they too are in the grip of the prevailing economic system. Human need demands its abolition in favour of production for use.

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Printed by Express Printers, London, E.1, and published by Freedom Press, London, W.C.1

## FREEDOM



Haulage Strikers' Victory p. 3

The Red Scare p. 5

Letter from France p. 4

Books Reviews p. 6

Vol. 8 No. 3

1st February, 1947

Twopence

# Demand Amnesty for Deserters!

At the end of the war, Freedom was the first paper to advocate an immediate amnesty for all deserters, not only on the grounds of the elementary justice of such a procedure, but also because a failure to take this step would involve consequences which would be harmful, not only to the deserters themselves, but also to a society that forced these men into keeping themselves alive by furtive and anti-social means.

Our contentions have since been abundantly vindicated. Forced to live in hiding, without rations, without legal jobs, a great proportion of the deserters had only the alternatives of indulging in some kind of criminal activity or of giving themselves up to endure perhaps years of imprisonment or brutal detention for an action which they obviously did not regard as wrong. Naturally enough, most of the deserters elected to remain at large, and there is no doubt that their needs was one of the most important contributory factors to the recent crime wave.

We take no moralistic attitude towards "crime", nor do we in any way defend the property society which the criminal attacks. But there is no doubt that a perpetually criminal life is harmful to men, and wastes in a rather futile struggle abilities which are considered to be more constructive social ends. For the criminal's position is ultimately to blame, and in no instance so much as in that of the deserters, who are forced into their life by the existence of conscription and the refusal of the government to allow them to return to society as responsible and useful individuals.

### The Government Offer

At last, after eighteen months of hesitations and of refusals to grant an amnesty, the Minister of Defence has brought forward a scheme which even a right-wing paper like the *Evening Standard* describes as "a half-measure which is unlikely to yield effective results". All in fact that the government really says in this greatly publicised offer is that deserters who give themselves up by March 31st, will have this fact taken into consideration when their cases are being considered and that they will have their previous service restored for the purposes of the release scheme if they serve satisfactorily for a further 12 months.

The whole announcement has a vagueness about it that is certainly menacing and seems deliberate. There is no actual guarantee of clemency, and no sentence is named as being the maximum a deserter can expect if he gives himself up. Furthermore, most deserters have been forced to commit technical crimes of one sort or another in direct consequence of their illegal positions, and they will obviously fear that such acts will be brought against them in addition to the actual offence of desertion.

Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine an offer less likely to induce men to leave their present life and go back to imprisonment and at least a year of *Cramps* before they can hope for a release.

### Amnesty The Only Solution

The only solution to the present situation is in fact that of a complete and immediate amnesty for all deserters. The Government's answer to this is that it would give the men preferential treatment over those complying with their military obligations. To this we would answer that if the Minister for Defence had been for years on the run, without ration books or identity card, in perpetual fear of arrest, and forced to live by all kinds of furtive expedients, he would begin to think that these hunted men had already suffered enough, merely for having refused to continue their subjection to military conscription.

The government, as all governments do, is looking at the situation from the wrong end of the telescope. They see the fault in the individual, the wicked deserter who will not submit himself to military discipline and decided to try and live his own life. But the fault in fact lies in the state and its army which conscript and regiment men until they are unable to stand it any more and have to revolt against it. This is shown by the fact that in recent months the number of deserters in this country has actually increased by 5,000. This large number of men who were actually waiting for their discharges and knew that desertion would involve later demobilisation, actually felt the life of the army so impossible to bear that they had to embark on desertion, with all its unpleasant consequences.

But the sinister aspect of the Government's announcement is not only in its maintenance of a vindictive attitude towards "crime", nor do we in any way defend the property society which the criminal attacks. But there is no doubt that a perpetually criminal life is harmful to men, and wastes in a rather futile struggle abilities which are considered to be more constructive social ends. For the criminal's position is ultimately to blame, and in no instance so much as in that of the deserters, who are forced into their life by the existence of conscription and the refusal of the government to allow them to return to society as responsible and useful individuals.

The White Paper which has recently been issued on the National Joint Advisory Council, in an effort to promote more collaboration between the workers and employers, reveals, among other things, the imperialist nature of the aims of the Labour government, and the sacrifices which will be imposed on the people in order to maintain, at one and the same time, the swollen parasitical superstructure of the corporate state and the export level necessary to maintain the British position in the world of trade.

The paper begins with a boost of the "democratic nature of our industrial relations system", which is surely not particularly evident to those workers who have been forced to go on strike in order to obtain something like a fair recognition of their rights. Later it comments on the fewer strikes now than at the corresponding period after the last war, and attributes this to "the good sense and steadiness of the general body of the workers". This ignores the real cause of such a situation—the increasing willingness of the unions to act as part of the state machine and sabotage the workers' efforts to gain their demands by direct action.

But the most significant parts of the reports are those which deal with the economic situation of the country. The report begins by putting the situation in its bleakest light.

"During the war there was practically no production of consumer goods except the bare necessities of life; all building except for war purposes was stopped; no new plant and equipment was installed except for war purposes; repairs and replacements of existing plant and machinery were postponed; and public services were allowed to fall into disrepair, and no improvements were made. The country has six years' arrears of civilian work to catch up, in addition to repairing a vast amount of bomb damage and rebuilding blitzed areas."

Nevertheless, after this unconscious indictment of the folly of war, this admission that the victors find themselves much worse off than before the war (an admission reinforced by later references to financial indebtedness), the emphasis in the latter part of the report is placed throughout on the need to increase exports in order to meet payments abroad, to pay for imports and to pay off loans. The expensive imperialism involved in this is stated quite plainly in one sentence:

"The increase in the volume of our exports to 75 per cent. above the pre-war level means that we must increase substantially our share in the world's export trade."

In other words, the old capitalist scramble for markets is to be re-started by a Labour government, with all its consequences of international friction, leading eventually to crisis and war.

This emphasis on exports as the prime need to be fulfilled shows that the Labour government is still completely bound up in capitalist ideas. The most logical

those individual loyalties and solidarities which decent men and women show to each other in adversity, and which represent one of the most powerful forces for mutual aid within society. It is in making such demands on its subjects that government shows itself to be so fundamentally immoral and inhuman.

The only real solution to the problem of desertion is to remove it completely by ending militarism and the army. But since these things are not likely to cease within the next year or two, it seems to us more than ever necessary that we should press for an amnesty, which is an immediately practicable objective. When we first advocated this measure, in association with the Freedom Defence Committee, we were almost alone. Now many other people have come to add the justice of our attitude, and when a paper like the *Evening Standard* finds itself forced to write an editorial demanding an amnesty, it is evident that there is already a very large public opinion which desires an end to the continued vindictiveness of the Government towards deserters.

In every way you can, demand an amnesty for the deserters and for all other people who are now in prison or on the run as a result of the war. The most elementary justice demands this, but it is also the only practical way of solving a pressing social problem and restoring these men to useful and constructive lives.

It appears also in Alexander's final remarks: "The Government requests the co-operation of everyone, particularly friends, relatives and employers of these men in securing their surrender."

In other words, everyone who knows of a deserter is expected to lower himself into that most despicable function of informer, with the threat that if he does not he will be fined heavily or sent to prison. This kind of appeal is on no higher level than the appeal which the Nazis made to children to spy on their parents. It is a cynical attack on

step would surely be to ensure the greatest possible production for home consumption, and to do this the first thing would be to reconstruct agriculture in such a way that sufficient of the essential foods are produced in England. This can be done, as has been demonstrated by many agricultural scientists, but it has never been seriously attempted by our agricultural authorities. And the reason is clear. The importation of food provides export markets for our capitalists, who prefer to gain larger profits abroad than giving the workers in England the opportunity to buy goods here. The export policy clearly benefits only the capitalists, since they can gain uncontrolled prices abroad, and thus much prefer to export.

Meanwhile, the export policy plays into the hands of the ruling class in another way, in that it makes the increase in wages largely illusory, because there is little to buy for the extra money. According to this White Paper, the national income is at present £1,000,000,000 above the quantity of goods and services which are available for purchase. In other words, the government and the banks virtually get back this quantity of money as savings, without the people who earn it getting any concrete benefit.

A final significant section of the report deals with the number of workers on productive types of work. It reveals that nearly two million people are still in the forces or engaged in manufacturing goods for the forces, while another three million are employed in a miscellaneous category embracing "National Government service, local government service, N.F.S. and police, professional and personal services, entertainment and sport." In other words, five million people are engaged in non-productive functions; if one estimates that one million (a generous estimate) are engaged in socially useful functions, such as doctors, firemen, etc., there still remains four million people engaged in nothing more than buttressing the state and the capitalist structure. A fifth of the productive labour power of the country literally doing nothing useful!

By eliminating socially useless work, by abolishing capitalist restrictions over efficient methods of production, by achieving agricultural self-sufficiency, the present economic crisis would be largely solved. But these factors are dependent on another and even more urgent need; the abolition of capitalism and the state, and the replacement of compulsion, economic and physical, by the voluntary principle in social and industrial life. If the workers themselves controlled production, if they knew that their work was of all social value and would be used to improve the lives of themselves and their fellows throughout the world, they would rapidly achieve all the tasks that are necessary to repair the destructions of war and establish social justice.

But while men have to work for private or state capitalism, while financiers and labour bosses grow fat on their exploitation, they cannot be expected to work with enthusiasm, just to provide the exporting capitalists with a better share of the world's markets!

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## CRIPPS ATTACKS WORKERS' CONTROL

Stafford Cripps has offended even his own followers by his strictures on the capacity of the workers to manage their own industries. We have already noted in *Freedom* his speech of October 27th in Bristol, where he stated in his opinion the majority of the workers were not fitted to take over the control of industry. This speech aroused a protest on the part of the Bristol Trades Council, who asked Cripps to clarify his position. The letter he wrote in reply was received with indignation by the Trades Council, but it at least represents quite honestly what must be the attitude of the leaders of the Labour Party.

His first point was that "The Labour Party's policy is not syndicalist—it does not believe in workers' control as such". This is true enough—and we never thought otherwise. He then goes on to elaborate his theme that the workers are not fitted for management, that management demands long experience, and an apprenticeship, and that the workers are just not educated in the right way to be managers. This again is quite true—if one regards control of industry in the light of present systems of management. Obviously, very few workers are fitted to be managers in the present sense. But what is meant by workers' control is something that in fact has nothing in common with present day systems of management, which are wasteful and inefficient. Workers' control means the actual control of the work at the spot by men who do it, co-ordinating their functions by co-operative agreement. For this, managerial training would be worse than useless.

Nevertheless, we must give Cripps the credit for having represented the attitude of the Labour party with cynical candour. What is inconsistent is the attitude of people like the Bristol Trades Council, who fail to see that the Labour policy really means management from above and not workers' control. If they want the latter, they will not find it in the Labour Party, and the sooner they search elsewhere, the better.

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## The Big City-2

## Things to Come

How are the big cities to end? Will the agonies of city-dwellers during the last ten years be repeated again—multiplied a hundred-fold? Or will mankind freed by social revolution from the

chains of capitalism and government, go forward to build on the ruins of the old society an environment comparable with the aspirations and possibilities of humanity?

Anarchists think that only the best is good enough and surely the value of adequate housing, communal amenities and the sense of well-being known to those who feel they "belong" in a society is not to be measured in terms of pounds, shillings and pence. We do know the cost, in terms of mortality and deformity, of the present environment—let that be enough.

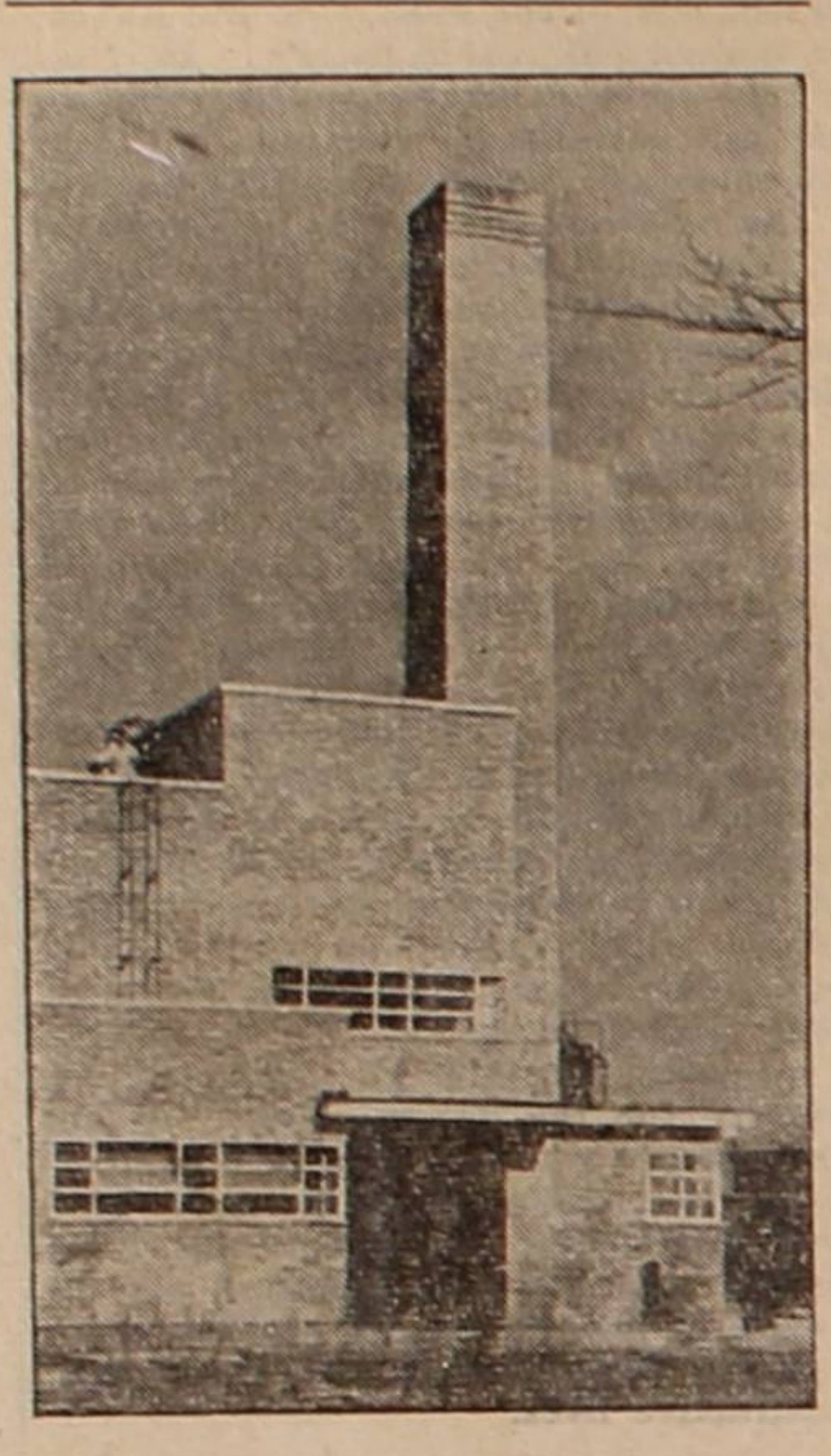
## Communal Living

Before passing on to a few of my own suggestions for making life pleasant in a free society, let me make perfectly clear the fact that I don't set myself up as a planner. I am merely indulging in a little imagining of what I might suggest to my local commune for its mutual benefit.

One of the finer aspects of a free society, as I see it, will be the greater integration between town and country. With the disappearance of competition between workers and wage-slavery in general, will also go the artificial distinctions between farm and industrial workers. The town community would have greater access to the land on which its food is grown. In times of harvest the man who has spent his life studying people and cities. Lewis Mumford, in *The Culture of Cities*, says:

"The cycle of the machine is now coming to an end. Mankind has learned much in the hard discipline and the shrewd, unflinching grasp of practical possibilities that the machine has provided during the last three centuries; but we can no more continue to live in the world of the machine than we could live successfully on the barren surface of the moon. Man is at last in a position to transcend the machine, and to create a new biological and social environment, in which the highest possibilities of human existence will be realised, not for the strong and the lucky alone, but for all co-operating and understanding groups, associations, and communities."

PHILIP SANSON.



Pit-head baths at Snowdon Colliery. These baths were built out of miners' own welfare fund and owe nothing to the owners.

## LUIGI BERTONI IS DEAD

We have learned with deep regret of the death of our Swiss comrade Louis Bertoni. Though few of us knew him personally we felt a particular attachment to him, as during the war years, when we were cut off from all anarchist activities, he kept in touch with us. The pamphlets he sent us throughout those years, wrapped in capitalist newspapers in order to avoid censorship, brought us great encouragement. Bertoni often translated articles from our paper adding a note of approval for our anti-war attitude. To the Swiss comrades who will carry on his work, and in particular to his life friend and comrade, Frigerio, we send the expression of our warmest sympathy.

## Luigi Bertoni Is Dead

OUR Swiss comrade Luigi Bertoni died on Sunday, 19th February, of an infectious flu. He would have been 73 on the 6th February of this year. With him disappears the last of the great survivors of the generation which came to anarchy at the beginning of our century.

Bertoni was born in Milan, where his father, of Ticinese origin, had settled down after going through quite a lot of adventures in the Italy of the Risorgimento. Bertoni spent all his youth in Northern Lombardy in a wild republican atmosphere. For his first intervention in public affairs he took part in the Ticinese revolution, a movement which had a federalist republican character and which failed in 1890 the population in Italian Switzerland. The uprising was crowned with success and Bertoni could have made his career in the wake of the winners; but he was not one of those who are interested in "success" as it is generally understood. He went instead to Geneva in order to improve his knowledge of French while exercising his trade as a printer.

He had only spent one year in Geneva when, on the 10th September, 1898, Lucchini killed the Empress Elizabeth of Austria on the Mont-Belair quay. This did not create a very favourable climate for the anarchist movement, but it was at that time that Bertoni began as an anarchist propagandist.

## Typographer and Prisoner

Bertoni had his first troubles with the Swiss police in 1900, regarding an Almanach which he had edited with Carlo Frigerio, a comrade who was to remain his faithful collaborator throughout his life. The proceedings had been instituted through the more or less direct intervention of the Italian government who took an unfavourable view of Bertoni's comments on Breschi's attempt against Umberto's life in 1900.

It is from this trial that the *Réveil* Anarchiste was created. Throughout its existence it has been published in French and Italian and had even, at one time, a German edition. From then onwards the history of Bertoni is the history of his paper which he edited and set himself, while continuing to earn his living as a

printer. The *Réveil* had a tormented life, and when Bertoni had to serve prison sentences the responsibility of publishing the paper fell in the hands of other comrades. There were numerous prosecutions, and the most famous one brought Bertoni before the Federal Court for justifying regicide, in connection with the attempt against Umberto's life mentioned above. Bertoni carried out his own defence and gained him Mussolini's admiration at the time when the latter was a revolutionary. A short article in the *Réveil* in 1902 caused a diplomatic break between Switzerland and Italy. Thanks to German intervention, relations were resumed but an addition was made to the Swiss penal code increasing penalties against anarchists. Bertoni was, of course, the first to be a victim of it.

## Diplomatic Incidents and Strikes

At the same time as he was engaged in anarchist propaganda Bertoni tried, with some of his friends, to shake the apathy of Swiss syndicates and to incite into them some of the energy which the French syndicates were showing at that time.

Geneva witnessed at that time a great number of strikes, some of them tragic, like the one of the tramway workers in 1902. Most of the time Bertoni had taken no part in them, but this did not prevent the local bourgeoisie from accusing him of being the instigator. Ferocious campaigns were started against him by the Canton's authorities. It is one of the privileges of this famous Swiss democracy that Swiss citizens can be expelled from one canton to another or simply segregated in the canton where they are born. Bertoni's case was brought before European opinion and people like Anatole France and Pressensé took his defence. The Swiss Government had to climb down and Bertoni continued to live in Geneva.

## Syndicalist and Anti-War

Though having taken part, with all his might, in the syndicalist struggle Bertoni showed always a great reserve as to the future of revolutionary syndicalism. Like Malatesta he did not think that syndicalism alone was enough.

arts and crafts, but for the production of consumer goods for general use, mass production, once the profit motive is removed, can produce goods of very high quality, if of standardised design, much more easily. In housing, for example, modern methods of production open up vistas unknown before which render even that tremendous problem not impossible to solve—and even uniformity can be avoided.

When tradesmen's pockets don't have to be considered, such measures as lining our roads with fruit trees instead of with purely ornamental (?) types, can be effected. In a sensibly-sized community no man would have to travel long distances to work. Factory districts need not be the dirty smoky areas they now are, and such communal services as hot water going to the entire neighbourhood from a few central boilers would save much individual consumption of fuel—keeping the air clean and enabling town dwellers to see the sun.

That many people besides social revolutionaries are ready for changes in our ways of life, is unnecessary to stress. To conclude, I want to quote some words of a man who has spent his lifetime studying people and cities. Lewis Mumford, in *The Culture of Cities*, says:

"The cycle of the machine is now coming to an end. Mankind has learned much in the hard discipline and the shrewd, unflinching grasp of practical possibilities that the machine has provided during the last three centuries; but we can no more continue to live in the world of the machine than we could live successfully on the barren surface of the moon. Man is at last in a position to transcend the machine, and to create a new biological and social environment, in which the highest possibilities of human existence will be realised, not for the strong and the lucky alone, but for all co-operating and understanding groups, associations, and communities."

PHILIP SANSON.

## Haulage Strikers Win Claims

THE haulage men who struck in London and other parts of England recently have been granted an almost complete victory by the findings of the Court of Inquiry, reached on the 23rd January.

At first it seemed as though they were going to be forced into the position of striking again, when the employers, having promised to consider their claims sympathetically, double-crossed them at the Central Wages Board and secured findings against the men. The attitude of the employers was further illustrated in the instances of a number of the smaller haulage firms, which took the cue from the general attitude of the employers and attempted to victimise some of the strikers.

However, it must have been clear to the Minister of Labour that the men would not stand for any such dishonest treatment, and he ordered an immediate Court of Inquiry. This court, having considered both sides of the case, has returned a verdict which grants almost every claim of the men. They are to have a 44-hour guaranteed week, which will be regulated so that they receive payment for overtime on any day in excess of the

regular day, whether they have worked a whole week or not. The only claim of the men's which was not granted will be that for a 12 day paid holiday. The Court upheld the employers' offer of 9 days.

This represents a 90% victory for the men. It still remains to be confirmed by the Central Wages Board, but the employers are unlikely to oppose it seriously, as they know this will inevitably involve a further strike, this time with a much greater public support than before.

This decision represents the most considerable victory for an unofficial strike in recent months. It also represents a direct setback to the government campaign against the shorter working week, and should do much to harden the resistance which is now growing up among the workers. The recent successes of the haulage workers and the railway shovellers may well represent the beginning of a militant campaign among the workers in general, in which the unions will find themselves replaced by *ad hoc* organisations of the workers themselves, such as strike committees and vigilance committees.

After a period of inactivity and indifference among the workers, we may well be at the beginning of a really important period when the working class will go forward and consolidate the recent gains in solidarity and in the experience of direct and spontaneous industrial action. What form their movement will take remains to be seen, but it will certainly be one in which those anarchists who are in industry will be able to play a useful part in imparting to it a direction and a revolutionary consciousness.

## In Brief

## CLOSED SHOP SACKINGS CONTINUE

The persecution of members of the National Passenger Transport Workers' Union continues. In Bristol a driver with 22 years' service has been dismissed by the Bristol Tramways Company because he refused to be forced into joining the Transport and General Workers' Union. Another Bristol driver with 27 years' service has also been sacked, and a Plymouth Brother in the same employment has been given two weeks to consider his position. An LPTB bus driver, with 27 years' exemplary service, has just been dismissed with a week's pay, for a similar refusal.

## MIDLAND BUS STRIKE

More trouble is blowing up in the road transport industry. This time it comes from the busmen in the Midlands, where there have been two strikes of drivers and conductors. 300 men struck at the Sutton Coldfield depot of the Midland Red Bus Company over the sacking of a fellow worker. Another 300 men, employees of the Crossville Motor Services, struck at Crewe over revised time schedules. Their strike affected a large area of Cheshire.

## STRIKES BEGIN IN NATIONALISED MINES

If the government and the trades union officials thought that nationalisation would automatically put an end to militant activity among the miners, they have been proved mistaken already, as has been shown by two recent strikes in the nationalised collieries.

One has taken place at the Sherburn Hill Colliery, County Durham, where some 1,100 men have struck over a wages dispute. The area office of the miners' union requested them to return to work, telling the old story of the need to support the nationalised industry, but the men, at their lodge meeting, decided unanimously to stay out.

Another strike has taken place at Hatfield Colliery, near Doncaster, where 2,000 men have been involved in a dispute centring round two major demands. Firstly, the men are demanding the right to elect their own representatives to the board of directors, and the appointment of unpopular officials. Secondly, they are asking for the revision of a regulation under the Essential Works Order, which states that men are refused a day's wage when a colliery is idle because of an industrial dispute, even if that dispute is not of their making.

A third strike took place in the Yorkshire Main Colliery, also near Doncaster, over transfers of men from one part of the colliery to another, with consequent loss of earnings. Some 3,000 men were affected.

## ARTISTS' CO-OPERATIVE

As advertised in a previous issue of FREEDOM, a federation of artists has been formed, based upon the necessity for mutual aid among artists of all kinds.

The aim of the federation, known as "Artists' Co-operative", is the establishment and encouragement of artists' groups loosely organised on a decentralised basis for the purpose of giving young and unknown artists the opportunity of exhibiting their work, playing their compositions or reading or even publishing their writings. From this it will be seen that the co-operative is not limited to artists in the graphic arts only.

By co-operative action, local activity, such as exhibitions, recitals and so forth, could be organised and some of the artificial barriers at present existing between the artist and the general public would be broken down. The problem of the individual artist, alone in an indifferent (or even hostile) society can only be tackled by the goodwill and support of like-minded people.

Workers in many spheres have learned lessons in organisation, and that decentralisation represents the only basis upon which individual integrity and initiative can be protected from interference by a central authority. In the Artists' Co-operative all groups will be autonomous, working out for themselves their best means of action, suitable to their own particular circumstances. Contact for information and encouragement will be maintained among all members, and, eventually, when suitable premises are available, some sort of centre for co-ordinated activity may be opened. But this, of course, depends upon many things—funds being not the least important.

Previous articles in FREEDOM have told of the federation of artists in France known as "Art Libre", and of the activity in London of the "Woolwich Group", now a member group of the Co-operative. We hope later to be able to publish encouraging news of this new venture. That such an effort is so much needed can easily be seen by the fact that exhibitions of artists' work are for the most part concentrated in a small, "select" area of the West End of London, and practically unknown in the suburbs. The demand for art is not dependent upon rich patrons for the purchase of their work, instead of being as integrated with society as are workers in other productive categories.

All those interested in the development of the Artists' Co-operative are invited to write to the present secretary—Daphne Henke, 85a, Beaconsfield Road, London, E.3.

P.S.

## GO SLOW SUCCEEDS

The go-slow campaign of the 290 L.N.E.R. railway shovellers at the Stratford repair shops has ended in success. This campaign has been on since last November, during which time the men have refused to do overtime on Sunday work, and have steadily worked slowly, until an accumulation of 250 unrepaired locomotives had piled up at the depot.

The railway company delayed negotiations continually, the union leaders tried to get the men to resume normal working, but the men were too cautious to be caught napping. They knew they had the advantage, and intended to keep it.

The Council decided to grant an increase of 33% in the basic rate, which, in actual cash terms, will mean an increase of 16/8 a week for skilled men and 10/6 a week for unskilled men. The men have accepted the offer, and have now returned to normal working.

The increase will apply, not only to the men at Stratford, but to all men working in similar repair shops on all the four main line railways, so that the determined action of these comparatively few workers has resulted in benefitting several thousands of men.

## Indians Teachers Strike

A large strike of Indian schoolteachers has begun, over the question of pay increases. About 5,000 teachers are affected, and a large proportion of the 10,000 students whom they teach have come out in sympathy with them and are refusing to attend classes until the teachers' claims are satisfied.

## Glasgow Dustmen Strike to Live (From Our Correspondent)

It is ironic that the 1,600 Glasgow binmen who have for years been collecting food for pigs now have to engage in a prolonged strike to win a sufficiency for themselves.

These men, working through the night at a most unpleasant and dirty job, are at the moment shovelling refuse around and sweeping the streets and byways of the Second City, at the end of a week's hard labour take home less than £4.

A binman with a wife and three children says that on £3 19s. 4d. his family is compelled for half the week to eat food worse than the refuse collected in some Glasgow districts. This is

shocking news to the Glasgow taxpayer, who provides the Corporation with cash and believed that these public employees were well treated.

The strike has also exposed that the sweepers and back-catchers do not get a clothing allowance. They do not get a bonus and the much-vaunted baths, where they exist at all, consist of two baths and three basins for over 2,000 men.

The demand of the binmen, far from being fantastic, is exceedingly moderate. They ask, and have been asking since April, 1946, for an increase of 13s. per week, which would mean that they could take home the princely sum of £4 12s. 4d. at the end of a 48-hour week of toil. The Corporation and the trade unions, through the Joint Industrial Council, have made the insulting offer of eighteen pence a week increase.

Their trade unions, into which they have been paying their ill-spared coppers for years for such a struggle as this, far from standing by the men, have declared the strike unofficial, have refused to benefit, and face these workers across the fence as enemies, although the T.U. officials still draw their comfortable salaries from the union funds.

The reaction of the Corporation has been ably stated by the Lord Provost, who told the strike committee that they refused to negotiate on local basis, the Labour and Progressives have called for the bowl of water and washed their delicate hands of the sordid business of arguing with their employees, passing the buck on to the J.I.C. for their decision.

The Joint Industrial Council is composed of Corporation representatives, T.U. officials (representing themselves), and occasionally a government official. It is not surprising that the Corporation refuses to negotiate with the binmen's committee, and the T.U. officials, diving into their J.I.C. hole, call on the men to return to work and observe the J.I.C. machinery.

The Corporation, this time on their own initiative, have to date taken three steps in the direction of their choice—refused permission for the strikers to make street collections—refused assistance to binmen's families from the Public Assistance Funds, refused to make any advance or loan from the binmen's superannuation fund.

These workers are standing solidly together. All sections of the Glasgow Cleansing Department are united to a man. They have a legitimate claim, and they know it. They have a sympathy from the people which is encouraging, but there is a hard fight ahead for them if they are to win a just reward.

While blue-collared strike breakers are noticeably absent in this strike, lined up against the strikers are three adversaries, the Employer, the T.U. officials, and Hunger.

Sixteen hundred hungry binmen here in Glasgow are in the forefront of a struggle against forces that are attempting to reduce them to subservience and degradation, and drive them to defeat. If they are defeated it will be because they with their families lack the simplest needs.

P.C.

disadvantages, is the medium-sized family farm. To urban socialists who envisage the agriculture of the future, in as far as they envisage agriculture at all, in terms of huge collective farms run by huge machinery tended by technicians, my statement will seem preposterous—and very reactionary. As some readers may think so too, I will elaborate and justify it, in my own eyes at least, in the next issue.

## ANARCHISM

## Interpretations

"If people do not understand that the true work of a popular revolution is to destroy the State, which is necessarily hierarchical, to endeavour to replace it by the free understanding of individuals, to create a free and temporary federation (always with a determined aim), if they do not understand the necessity of abolishing property and the right to acquire property, to sweep away elected government which has substituted itself for the free consent of all; if the people renounce the traditions of the liberty of the individual, of voluntary grouping and of voluntary rules of conduct; if they remain passive if not consenting to the abandonment of these traditions which have been the essence of all preceding popular movements and of all the institutions of popular creation; if they give up all these traditions and adopt that of imperial and universal Rome, then they will do no more for the Revolution; they should leave everything to the middle classes, ending by asking for a few concessions. Because the conception of a State is absolutely foreign to revolution; happily revolution understands nothing of statecraft, it does not know how to use it. It remains the people; it remains imbued with conceptions of what is called common right—conceptions based upon ideas of reciprocal justice between individuals, upon real facts, while the right of the State is based sometimes upon fictions, sometimes upon interpretation of words created at Rome and at Byzantium during a period of decomposition, to justify the exploitation and suppression of popular rights.

The people have tried at different times to become an influence in the State, to control it, to be served by it. They have never succeeded."

(KROPOTKIN.)

Revolutionary Studies.

Some planners, however, have after careful consideration of communal needs,

# Prices, Salaries & Power

SINCE the 2nd January, the French population has been interested in an experiment, attempted by the provisional government of Leon Blum, which consists of stemming the continual rise in prices by creating a current of lowering. In all the shops, cards or posters are stuck up: "5% reduction on all purchases". Some people are filled with enthusiasm by the measures imposed by the government, others are sceptical as to their efficacy.

The national press and the provincial newspapers have hastened to give technical explanations of the governmental manoeuvre. The partisans of traditional liberalism in Le Monde, the neo-liberals of Combat, the technicians of Le Populaire, and the specialists of l'Humanité, speak abundantly of inflation, of production, of prices, of salaries, without once readers understanding in the least.

But no newspaper of political tendency has in fact taken a position against the Blum experiment, hardly a single voice has been raised to condemn the financial measures taken by M. Philip. Nevertheless these decisions, taken with several days of intervals, are perfectly contradictory.

On the other hand, no organ of the press goes so far as to clarify the situation by speaking plainly: all the parties are agreed in following a policy for which the working class will bear the cost; each party, by singularly identical means, hopes to gain possession of the key positions in the economy and administration of the country.

The paradox of seeing a party beaten in the last elections, assuming power for several weeks, with the unanimous support of the Chamber, is only apparent. The two mammoth political life, the Communist Party and the MRP, find it a good thing to make the Socialist Party carry the weight of the unpopular decrees, while waiting to demand power, or a portion of power, after the election of the President of the Republic.

In launching its campaign to lower the cost of living, the Socialist government has partially frustrated this calculation. But the MRP and the Communists are in agreement now in proclaiming that an experiment of such extent cannot be made without their participation in a Popular-front government.

Let us recall the facts. At the end of December, 1946, the socialist government presented a remedy for the budgetary disequilibrium which threatens to ruin French credit. It attempted to decrease the salaries of bureaucrats, to reduce the funds allocated to the army, to suppress the subsidies to weak industries, to increase the prices of public services and monopolies—railways, transport, tobacco, posts and telegraphs,

gas and electricity, etc.

In fact, directly or indirectly, this was to increase the burden which rests on the shoulders of the working class, whose wages are blocked and who see each day the prices of basic commodities increased.

Communists and Popular Republicans agree in accepting the series of decrees, while formulating timid protests for one or other wronged social categories. In order to sustain the ardour of its followers and have ready a weapon of struggle, the Communist Party started the CGT moving to demand the revision of the collective agreements, due to expire at the end of 1946.

When the campaign in favour of the general lowering of prices by 5% was launched by means of official agencies and the radio, the Communists were caught napping. They began by making fun of the experiment, and contradicting all their arguments developed during their ministerial participation, declared that the price policy would not give results, that the workers should demand a living minimum, that is to say, an increase in wages. But their so long defended thesis was taken up by the socialists, masters of the means of expression of power, and the neo-Stalinist wing of the CGT resumes body and life to uphold the socialist plan.

The MRP, after having hesitated for several days, ranged itself on the socialist side and led the offensive in the sense of an enlarged government which would have a greater authority than the homogeneous socialist minority.

The financial problem, presented as social by all the candidates for power, resolved by common accord or by tacit acceptance, becomes in fact a new pretext for the MRP and the Communist Party in their struggle for power.

The volume of French production is now approaching, within a measurable distance, that of 1939. That obviously does not mean that the amount of commodities put into circulation is sufficient to cover the needs of the population.

Reconstruction, the rehabilitation of factories, the need to favour exports to procure exchange, divert an important mass of goods from internal consumption. On the other hand, the extension in number and power of the State services creates a non-productive sector which weighs heavily on the national economy.

The bad distribution of the means of purchase, the disequilibrium in the volume of buying power has provoked an unequal distribution of consumption goods and has allowed the black market to extend itself considerably.

In organizing severe rationing, the controlling production strictly the authorities would have been able, as has been done in several countries, to hinder the increase of black market

products and avoid its repercussions on the controlled market. The need to placate the peasant electorate has prevented both the "working-class" parties and the parties of the right from accepting this general discipline.

The producers avoided acting through the official food services, and addressed themselves to a comfortable-off clientele. Money each day lost its purchasing power. The enormous expenses of ministries without government solidarity, veritable milking cows for the parties, confused any attempt at accurate budgeting.

In these conditions, there is no political group which does not accept and does not anticipate maintaining for a certain number of years, the increased surrender of the production of the working class to the immediate compensation. But the presentation of sacrifices for consent, their distribution over a more or less great number of citizens, furnish numerous pretexts for different candidates to silence opposition and to help themselves in being carried to directive posts.

It is probable that we shall return, in France, to the free market, that is to say that the prices imposed by the Government will in fact be only the ratification of the prices demanded by the producers and the principal middlemen. If the present movement of lowering prices, which is real only in the sectors where there is an abundance and consequently where important stocks cannot be held up indefinitely, is maintained, it is because real reasons for healthier prices exist. On the other hand it is almost certain that food commodities will remain exactly on the level of the maximum purchasing power of the great mass of consumers.

The Monnet plan, which comprehends the utilisation of all resources of manpower, native, immigrant and colonial, to facilitate the industrial rehabilitation of France, is necessary to the USSR. It is difficult to attach a political label. It means in fact that the proletariat will pay.

The parties know this, and agree. Their sole point of difference is to know who will preside over the setting in motion of the plan, and who will hold the control levers, and to the profit of which imperialist bloc.

Three or four-party rule will only be a temporary solution, permitting the candidates for power to sap the influence of their rivals and reinforce their own in the most important spheres. A strong France is necessary to the USSR before launching its Communist Party in the assault on full power. A strong France is necessary for the partisans of a Western bloc and the Socialists are not the last to follow, or to tolerate the policy of aggrandisement of Thierry d'Ardenne in Indochina.

A pacific proletariat, working hard and content with little, is inimical to all parties.

S. PARANE.



## AUSTRIA Lacks Fuel, Food and Medicines

Men, women and children carry loads of wood on their backs from the famed Vienna woods for a little heat in the early freezing weather that heralds Austria's bitterest winter in history. Hospitals have virtually no heating fuel. Coal is not to be had, even on the black market. Electricity is turned off five hours a day. Lack of winter clothing, cold housing and food has led to growing mass discontent and so forced the government head, Leopold Figli, to plead with the Big Four occupying powers to send in relief shipments of coal, food and medicine before the expected cold winter brings accumulating disaster down on Austria.

While hospital beds are down to 2,500 for Vienna and 5,500 for the entire country, medicines and surgical instruments are lacking. Vienna's normally high tuberculosis rate is at its peak, with 31,000 active cases and more than 2,300 deaths from this cause in the first six months of 1946. Typhoid, diphtheria and infantile paralysis are increasing. Syphilis is 20 per cent. above last year.

With insufficient medicine, a severe housing shortage which forces many people to live in the same apartment, and consumption of food at 1,200 calories a day—slightly more than half the subsistence minimum—disease is destroying the workers. Adults are 15-20 pounds underweight, according to official statistics. Examination of 64,000 school children showed 65 per cent. under-nourished, 25 per cent. dangerously so. The future generation is paying for the war right now. Suicides in Vienna have reached "alarming proportions," police officials say. Whereas in September there were 46 suicides, in the last few days of October alone there were 50. A large percentage of suicides left letters explaining that they could not get food. In some cases, women left notes saying they could not support their children.

Worldover Press.

## EVENTS

THE post-war period has been marked by a wave of unrest, if not in Europe, at any rate in the Far East. As one writer has put it, "Asia is awakening and not all the force of imperialism can suppress this awakening of history" (though I confess that I don't understand what he means by "the onward march of history"). In Java the Dutch have learned these hard facts, in India the British and now the French are having their headaches in Indo-China, a country of 25 million inhabitants, one and a half times the area of France, which has been ruled by the French for some 75 years. Military operations in Indo-China have been in progress for nearly 3 weeks, and the end is nowhere in sight. The operations have been front page news in the French Press and we have already had an opportunity of seeing the "atrocity pictures" (such as the Illustrated *Nuit et Jour*), with a view presumably to working up "public opinion" feeling in France, the smooth embarkation of cannon fodder to put down these ungrateful natives. The *Libertaire* (23/1/47) publishes a letter detailing the present situation at Toulon where last week 8,000 troops embarked on the Ile de France. There was an imposing array of mobile guards at the port to deal with any incidents. One "patriotic" feeling was to prevent the gangway with blows from the guards' batons, and arrived on deck covered with blood. Apparently General de Lattre de Tassigny was called to use his authority to prevent widespread protests. That such precautions should be taken for the embarkation of only 8,000 is an indication of the feelings amongst the troops towards this colonial venture. But how many more will embark from Toulon during the coming weeks? According to the *New York Times* correspondent quoted by Paris *Combat* (25/1/47) "the Viet Nam forces are better organized than the French for guerrilla operations. About half a million men would be required to

quell the rebellion. The war can be prolonged indefinitely," and *Combat* adds that all foreign consulates in Indo-China recognize the determination of the Vietnamese to fight to the last.

A most informative background article, *The Story of Viet Nam* by George Padmore was published in the December issue of *Politics*. It is based on an interview with Ho Chi Minh, President of the new Asiatic Republic of Viet Nam, and contains the fundamental programme of Viet Nam which is briefly (1) to provide enough rice for the people so that there shall not be a repetition of the famine which last year took toll of two million lives; (2) to liquidate illiteracy which reaches almost 90%. The President blamed 75 years of French rule for this, and added that "before the country was subdued every citizen from the poorest to the highest had free access to educational facilities, everyone could read and write and there was an ancient culture"; (3) to establish democratic freedom.

## ILLITERACY IN PORTUGAL

The scourge of illiteracy is not limited to the colonies, however. The *I.W.M.A. Press Service* (Stockholm, 19/1/47) reproduces a letter which was published in *Acao Directa* of Rio de Janeiro, which gives a picture of the social and cultural conditions in Portugal. "Portugal is in fact a country of illiterates. The statistics maintain that 92% of the population cannot read, while the optimists put the figure at 75%. In many villages the cinema, radio and telephone are unknown." The writer adds that "social life is dominated by the priests". If one can generalize on the causes of illiteracy, it would appear that in Europe, at least, it is most marked in those countries in which life is dominated by the church: Spain, Italy, Eire, Portugal.

## SPLIT IN ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY

A serious split has at last occurred in the ranks of the Italian Socialist Party, during the recent congress held in Rome. On the one hand there are Nenni and Basso representing the section of the Party which favours fusion with the Communists. On the other are Saragat and Favarelli representing the Right wing of the new Party which is to be called "The Socialist Party of Workers, Italian section of the Workers' International" and Matteotti and Zagari, the Left Wing "autonomists". Sitting on the fence are those of the Centre with Pertini, editor of the *Avanti!*, Silone and the former Secretary General Lombardo. According to the *Paris Populaire* (19/1/47) the Centre is "reserving its judgment, though it appears to be in political sympathy with the 'autonomists'".

The principal cause of the split was over the attempts by Nenni's group to subordinate the party to the dictates of the C.P. Commenting on this, the *Anarchist Avanguardia dei Reformati* (New York, 18/1/47) points out that since the C.P. of the world are theoretically and politically appendages of the Russian Bolshevik Party, which in turn is the Soviet State, the split, in consequence represents a taking of position *vis a vis* the policy of the Russian Government.

But in the *Avanguardia* opinion there is little to choose between the fusionists and the anti-fusionists. The former play Russia's game; the latter appear to be the pawns of hegemonic interests and aspirations of the Anglo-American bloc. "The path which lead to the emancipation of man from the double tyranny of the State and of the Boss are to be found elsewhere—conclude *l'Avanguardia*—and to discover them one must reject at one and the same time both the demagoguery of the politicians who follow and serve Stalin and the politicians who follow and serve the intrigues of the upstarts of Wall Street and the City."

LIBERTARIAN.

## The Fate of the Port of Pola

IN February, one of civilization's great tragedies is to be repeated... the tragedy of a large number of people being forced to migrate from their homes, to start life again under the most adverse circumstances. I refer to the Istrian port of POLA... with the dicta of Paris has ceded to the totalitarian regime of Marshal Tito. As a direct result of this cession, over 28,000 of Pola's 31,000 inhabitants will have to leave their homes. For these people the future is indeed a bleak and cheerless prospect, the exodus will occur at the worst possible time...

For this is the time when the dread "Bora" (an icy cold wind that reaches very high velocities) blows over the Northern Adriatic, and travelling is difficult and dangerous. When they reach Italy, the prospect is far from pleasant; for Italy is already short of houses, and one needs a large amount of housing to cover twenty-eight thousand human beings. Unemployment, the ever-rising cost of life, the shortages of food and other necessities are more factors that will have to be faced by this new crop of "displaced persons".

In spite of all these hardships to be faced, these people are firm in their decision to leave their homes and attempt to build a new life in Italy... and the most deciding factor of all, is the natural emotion of "Fear". Fear of the rigours and the terror of the New Order as represented by the forces of Josip—Brodz—Tito.

One point of bitter irony in this situation is that a large number of these exiles are men who fought in the ranks of the partisan army of Tito, the National Liberation Army. After their long fight to free their homes from the Fascist and Nazi, they find that they are to be deprived of the right to live in peace in their own homes... it is to be wondered at that they should feel bitter and disillusioned.

This situation presents a rather puzzling contradiction; for the propaganda systems of the world have been telling the common regime of Marshal Tito as being a worker's paradise, with equality for all, a progressive, democratic republic. One of the people of Pola have seen, too, the gradual economic bankruptcy of the Istrian province, and the loss of their freedom. Notwithstanding the good harvest, the province is in a state of misery. It is rigorously forbidden to export agricultural produce over the Morgan Line. This has caused much damage, especially in the zone of Trieste, the natural market in which the retailers bought garden produce for urban consumption. The obligatory selling of grain, for low prices, to the co-operatives, has badly hit the peasants, but has enriched the party officials on the committee and co-operatives. The co-ops buy the wheat at 1,200 lire per quintal, then resell it at 1,900 lire. Many peasants are still waiting to be paid for wheat delivered long ago. The zone between the Adriatic and Citanova, destined to be internationalised, all the grain concentrated in the silos has been transported over the Queto River.

An example of the functioning of the co-ops shows clearly how much the "proletariat" benefits. A producer is paid 12 lire per kilo of pears, which the co-op then sells to the retailer at 18 lire. The retailers then have to pay 1 lira per kilo tax, and thus have to sell them at 22 lire. In this way the co-op takes seven lire on every kilo of pears sold.

## The Burden of Taxation

Over and above this, the peasants have to submit to a steady "taxing", and also to heavy taxation for all the myriad of party officials and functionaries have to be paid, and the large army must be fed, paid and armed. Even the identity card, that everyone must possess, is a burden. An identity card costs 120 lire, 20 lire for the card, and 100 lire tax (each card has five 20-lire stamps affixed).

The mines of the Arsa region produce only a fraction of the normal production, while equipment and gear is stripped from this zone and transferred to the Communists. Due to the incompetence of the communist administrators the mines at Sicchie had to be closed, after a disaster had caused severe damage to the tunnel. The Communist Party, which is now in power, is now using only skeleton staffs, many being closed down. Work in the important canning plants of Isola and Capodistria, is spasmodic, and limited to fish salting.

The currency problem in this zone is acute, for the Yugoslav authorities withdrew all the Italian currency, substituting it with an unbacked occupation currency. This currency that is valueless in the allied occupied area.

These conditions of oppression are causing the obvious results, underground resistance movements have been organised, publishing their own papers in an endeavour to combat the constant stream of communist propaganda emitted by the controlled press. An illegal radio station transmits daily, broadcasting uncensored news. Some reports say that on several occasions, fighting has occurred between the resistance movement and the Communist Party Army, the "Proletaria".

Such is life under the Progressive Democratic Republic. Is it, then, to be wondered at that the people of Pola have voluntarily accepted exile and hardship? Perhaps they are the lucky ones, for between Pola and the Queto River, and across to the Yugoslav frontier, is a zone in which live many hundreds of people who would accept the same exile, if they could. For them the only way to escape is to steal through the woods, at night, in the matter and to weaken any resistance they succeed in escaping with only their clothes that they wear. These are the refugees of present-day Europe.

BILL MANABRIDGE.

## The Tito Terror

In 1945 Pola was occupied by the forces of Marshal Tito, for a period of 45 days and nights. I particularly mention the nights for they were often worse than the days; emulating the Gestapo with its midnight arrests, during the nights the secret police made their raids. During this period of occupation the people of Pola suffered terror and repression, midnight arrests, mass deportations, the fear of the concentration camps, and the murders.

Nor have they forgotten the September—October period of 1943, during which the partisans of Tito's forces spread hate and murder through the Julian March. Over 600 people were massacred in the most barbaric and brutal manner.

There are many points of similarity between the regime of Tito, and the regimes of Hitler and Signor Mussolini. The same hysterical venom of the "Leader". It is oddly enough, Tito is still referred to as "Vodja" which was the term used to denote the Fuehrer. There is the same system of Party officials, the same constant menace of the secret police (the O.Z.N.A.), the same concentration camps, and the same conditions of inhuman brutality in these camps.

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THE ending of the war, and the development of rivalry and tension between Russia on the one hand and Anglo-American imperialism on the other, has resulted in a radical change in the governmental attitude towards the Communist party and its representatives. Two years ago they were still useful to the Governments, playing their part of jackals to the ruling class by persuading the workers to toil harder in the interests of the Allies. Communists everywhere were more royalist than the king, performing without hesitation any betrayal of the workers that might be necessary for the carrying on of the war. Now, however, the position has changed. The Communists have become suspect as the representatives of a potentially hostile imperialist power. They are regarded as representing the fifth column of Russia, and this is, of course, true enough, at least so far as the leading groups of the various parties are concerned. But the fact that the interests of Russia have led the Communist parties in some countries into pursuing a pseudo-revolutionary line has undoubtedly drawn in to them a number of quite sincere workers who really believe they are fighting for their own liberation.

## The Pseudo-Revolutionary Line

The changed role of the Communist parties has become more evident in the dominions than it has in England or America. While in England the Communists still carry on an equivocal policy of half-support for the Labour Government, and in America they give their support to the more totalitarian section of the Democratic Party, in the dominions they have found that the only way they can get any mass support is to pursue a pseudo-revolutionary line. In these countries they have found difficulty in gaining the petty-bourgeois core on which they rely in England and America, and are forced to make their basis among the more exploited workers. Consequently, in South

## Gravediggers Use Dynamite

People to-day have become somewhat indifferent to suffering because of the long spate of war atrocity stories. But there is something horrible about the brief item which appeared in the *News Chronicle* for Jan. 10th.

The cold weather spell had taken its toll of human victims in Germany and "Gravediggers in Hamburg, working under British sappers, were forced to-day to dynamite the rock-hard earth for digging, and the city crematorium worked a night-shift." It was during the warmer months of last year that hundreds of graves were prepared so that the earth could be dug out while it was still soft enough. Evidently the toll of lives has been heavier than was expected, even by the authorities, and their estimates were guarded secrets.

If one really thinks about this, and transfers the scene to, say, one's own town or village, and pictures the scene among surroundings with which one is familiar, the tragedy becomes very stark and real. It is therefore somewhat absurd for the same report to maintain that "It is doubtful whether any deaths can be attributed directly to the cold or to under-nourishment." Reports from all authoritative sources such as doctors and hospitals show that a large number of people, including children, have the symptoms of hunger oedema and that deaths due to starvation are very common.

This is just one more example of newspaper presentation calculated to mislead the naive reader, and to lull him into a false sense of not having any responsibility in the matter and to weaken any resistance to its regime by a policy that leads to a position where human beings starve.

T. W. B.

# THE NEW RED SCARE

Africa they exploit the grievances of the coloured workers and appear as their champions, in India they appeal to the more depressed sections of the population, in Burma they follow the at present popular nationalist line, and in Canada they try to build their support among the unskilled workers of foreign origin.

The result of these activities has been that the various governments in these dominions have begun to take action against the Communists. While they were stooges the C.P.s were tolerated; now that instructions from above tell them to change the line and pretend to be champions of the workers, they are being regarded as enemies, and the most flagrant means of suppression are being used against them.

Recent weeks have seen a whole series of attacks on the Communist Parties in various parts of the Empire, in which the most elementary rights of civil liberties have been attacked.

## Indian Police Terror

In India, on the 14th January, extensive raids were carried out on offices of the Communist party in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Benares and Lahore. The searches, conducted by hundreds of police officers, lasted for hours, documents were carried away, and many people were arrested—31 in Bombay alone. The raids were not restricted to Communist organisations alone. In Calcutta the offices of the peasant organisation, Kisan Sabha, were raided and its secretary arrested, and in Bombay similar action was taken in the offices of the All-India Students' Federation. There is some doubt as to the responsibility for these arrests; the Central Government attempts to shift the responsibility on to the Provincial Governments, but the fact remains that the raids took part at the same time in different provinces with a simultaneity which could hardly have sprung from individual initiative. What is really significant is that the Congress leaders obviously agreed that the raids were necessary. The ostensible purpose of the raids was to search for clues as to how the Communists obtained the information on which their weekly, *The People's Age*, based an article which revealed the Government's plans for suppressing an Indian rising should the Cabinet mission fail. It is, however, pointed out that the article was printed six months ago, and is obviously being used merely as an excuse to hamper the Communists' use of free speech or a free press.

In South Africa the opening stages have just commenced of the trial of eight Communists who are charged with sedition. The immediate charge refers to the recent strike of 50,000 miners in the Rand, an event which was caused, not by any agitation from Communists but by the universal discontent of the native workers with their conditions. In connection with this charge, it was revealed by the defending counsel that the Crown had actually refused to give any particulars before the trial, so that the defence was unable to subpoena the necessary witnesses. The prosecution then hinted at further charges in connection with military secrets, but these have not yet been revealed.

## The Canadian Spy Scare

The question of military secrets brings to mind the Canadian Red Scare in connection with the leakage

of information regarding the Atomic bomb. There a Royal Commission issued a report in which it named some 18 people as having been involved in giving away information. These people have since been brought for trial, and, although their cases were not dealt with at all fairly, five out of the fourteen already tried have so far been found not guilty. Nevertheless, their names still stand in the public report, and so far no effort has been made to compensate them. The conduct of the trials has come in for some very severe criticism, not only from Stalinist sources, but even from Conservatives and Liberal supporters of the government. The *Toronto Star*, a newspaper supporting the Government, stated:

"It is true that nobody was beaten up in the spy investigation, but people were held incommunicado, deprived of legal advice and of communication with their friends, and examined without the benefit of counsel."

The Conservative leader, John Diefenbaker, went so far as to accuse the Government of sweeping away Magna Carta, Habeas Corpus and the Bills of Rights.

All these instances show that the Communists are likely to be in for a thin time with the various Anglo-American governments in the near future. As the tension with Russia grows, so they will find themselves among the persecuted minorities.

We hold no brief for the Communists as such. We know that if they had the power they would be even more ruthless; that no anarchist, for instance, would be allowed to raise his voice. We know also that when real revolutionary groups have been framed and persecuted on a number of occasions in recent years, the Communists have not only given them no

support, but have even helped to attack them.

## Freedom Must Be Defended

But it is the whole question of freedom of speech and action with which we are concerned. Whatever our disagreements, we must protest against the withdrawal of these rights from any group. For once the right to persecute for political action has been granted, it can be extended into any field. To-day the Communists are being persecuted because they are playing at revolution in the interests of the Russian government. But if their persecution is allowed to continue, it will only give the governments a justification to persecute any genuine working class movement that arises. No doubt the ruling classes will do that in any case. But there is no reason for us to help them by standing by and tacitly conceding the principle of persecution in the case of the Communists.

The worker who has seen the Communist party in action at close quarters is unlikely to fall into the error of thinking them revolutionaries merely because they are persecuted as a result of a gang war between two sections of his enemies. But he will realise that the tolerance of police persecution and judicial terror in any circumstances can lead only to his own eventual harm.

## Back To Pre-war Waste

A sign of return to the classic pre-war methods of waste in the midst of want was given by a recent Reuter message from Palestine, which stated that three hundred cases of grapefruit and oranges, intended for Britain, are in danger of rotting because shipping has not been made available for their transport. Ships can be found to take unwilling soldiers to the Far East, but not to transport food when half Europe is starving.

## Middle East Notes

# Co-operative Ownership

ONE of the interesting features of Jewish settlement in Palestine is the co-operative movement in industry and agriculture. A great deal of emphasis has been placed on the latter by Zionist propagandists rather overshadowing the fact that a very small percentage of the Jewish population is associated with agriculture, and furthermore that these farm communities are dependent upon outside support and financial aid (similar to the pacifist land communities in England). Industrial collectivism is of more interest to us: to take the example of the 'bus companies, which I have noticed most particularly. The Jewish 'bus companies are co-operatively owned by the "employees" and could be termed an example of syndicalism in practice, since the 'bus drivers have their own co-operative blocks of flats, and operate their own company, pooling the profits.

Where it differs from our conception of anarcho-syndicalism, is in the fact that they pool the profits. Transport—strained by the war, existent political unrest, and incredibly difficult road travel—is at a premium; 'bus drivers (there are no conductors, as all 'buses are single-deck and the entrance is next to the driver, who collects fares) consequently make a very high amount; it is computed at £100 a month. It shows what enormous profits are made by shareholders, if drivers can make so much when the boss is eliminated.

Instead of the high profits going to the dealers in stocks and shares, profits in

the Jewish 'bus companies in Palestine go to the men who do the work. This, although an advance, is not by any means ideal, and indeed causes a great deal of dissatisfaction as people in less flourishing industries pay high fares for what is in present conditions bad service, with 'buses crowded to suffocation and leaving queues to brave the elements of extreme heat and cold. It is in fact co-operative capitalism, which characterises most of the communally-owned enterprises here. Syndicalism cannot take proper root while capitalism remains, and genuine workers' control all round will come not by monopoly co-operatives, but by the abolition of the monetary system.

This (which would be the anarcho-syndicalist method) would leave each industry run by the workers in that industry, but on behalf of the community as a whole. One would work in one's own industry according to one's capacity, and take from the pool of others' services according to one's need.

It is interesting to know, however, of an advance over private capitalism, even if the monopoly co-operatives have been denounced locally (with some justification) by users, as "the economic terrorists of the city"; their administration is far more efficient than monopoly capitalism of the L.P.T.B. style would be, as is evidenced by the fact that the Jerusalem Electricity Corporation, practically unaffected by the war or disturbances, is completely unable to give proper services and the supply of light fails in Jerusalem continually, the involuntary "black-out" of various

## Anti-Indian Trends in South Africa

The Transvaal Congress of the National Party in Pretoria, Union of South Africa, has gone on record against the issuance of further trading licences to Indians, in favour of the curtailment of existing licences, and for a ban on all Indians trading in European areas. Europeans trading with Indians were labelled, by a resolution which was adopted, as traitors to the European population.

W.P.

## S. African Committee Denounces Race Discrimination

Smuts' recent pronouncements are by no means endorsed by all white South Africans. *Worldover Press* reports a statement recently issued by the Institute of Race Relations' Executive Committee, and remarks that "The warning and appeal, in moderate language... shows the wide gap between official protestations that all is well in the Union, and the sober, non-partisan concern of citizens who have long studied actual conditions."

The Race Relations Institute's statement declares:

"For some time past, those of us who are in contact with the natives have observed in them a growing feeling of frustration. This feeling, common to educated and uneducated alike, found expression in the miners' strike and in the decision, taken in the midst of the strike, of the Native Representative Council to adjourn indefinitely. In our view these are serious symptoms of mounting discontent among the natives with the conditions under which they live and work. 'The natives are well aware that these conditions have been condemned by all thoughtful opinion, and that many Europeans like ourselves regard them as morally indefensible. Time and again, and especially during the war, there has been a promise of better things to come, but such promises still await fulfilment in any substantial degree.'

CONFERENCE OF C.P.

The tenth annual conference of the Palestine Communist Party was held at the Jewish Centre, Tel-Aviv from the 30th November to the 2nd December last, when it announced that the Party's Hebrew weekly *Kol Ha'am* (Voice of the people) would become a daily as from the 1st January. Several resolutions and good wishes were announced from Communist Parties all over the world—demonstrating the unity of the "workers' parties" claimed the chairman—but, significantly, none came from the Arab Communist Parties in Palestine and elsewhere. Nor from the C.P. of the Soviet Union, which sat on the fence.

Exactly what the Polish Army in the Middle East is doing is a matter in which your guess is as good as mine. The streets of Jerusalem are full of Polish soldiers and a poor mathematician like me cannot hope to work out the ratio of officers to men. Apart from that, it is obvious from some of the extremes of age one sees that many are either too young or too old to have been in the war. What happened was that when the Poles arrived in Palestine camps, the Polish Army put whole families in uniform to get as many "on the strength" as possible, and young boys and old men hardly able to walk got into

## George Woodcock writes on the Author of "Moby Dick"

There are a number of socially conscious writers in the English language who have been comparatively neglected by the left-wing, probably because their approach is somewhat too humanly radical for the political "revolutionary" with his own orthodoxy, and one of the most interesting of these is certainly Herman Melville, the American novelist of the nineteenth century from whose works we can gain so vivid a picture of many parts of the world in that century.

There is a tendency nowadays, in our disgust with present-day horrors, to look back with a certain nostalgia on the nineteenth century. It is true, there were no atomic bombs, and wars were certainly not so deadly. But, then as now, people were starved, died of plagues, and became victims of the inhumanity of other men. Indeed, while the more sensational forms of massacre were less prevalent, the daily grinding down of the poor was even more severe than it is to-day, in England at least. And the reading of Melville's books will give a salutary correction to any idea we may chance to entertain that in all ways the nineteenth century was better than our own. The only thing to be said for that era is that it certainly produced a far wider consciousness of the need for freedom than is evident in our own day; if terrible things happened to the poor, there were men in plenty

## HERMAN MELVILLE

who rose up to denounce them, of whom Melville was one. To-day only a few voices are raised in protest against the most terrible of injustices. We are worse off than the last century, not from any change in the quality of our rulers, who have always the same aims and methods, but from a serious deterioration in the number and quality of our rebels. The fascination of material progress has led them away from the true function of the rebel, the continual extension of the consciousness and the concrete reality of freedom.

Melville stands out even among his nineteenth century fellows precisely because of his disregard for the attractions of the material progress which led so many writers even then to think that the trend of civilisation was automatically set for the millennium.

He was born of a typical American middle-class family; his father had been a merchant who went bankrupt, and Melville's adolescence was spent in a shabby-genteel poverty that gave him a violent desire to leave home as early as possible. In 1837, at the age of seventeen, he went to New York, and shipped as a boy on board one of the merchant sailing ships bound for

Liverpool. Twelve years afterwards he wrote of his experiences on this voyage in "Redburn", his fourth book, which gives really vivid descriptions of the terrible, ill-fed, dangerous and tyrannical life of sailors on board the ships of that period, of the life of the poor in Liverpool in that heyday of the Industrial Revolution, and of the conditions under which five hundred emigrants were packed in the unhealthy holds of his ship on the return voyage to America. All the horrors of this exploitation are, as William Plomer has said, "presented with the massiveness, the humanity, and the passion of a Daumier". If you want to feel at its worst the evil indifference to human life of the early industrial era, read the chapter in which he describes the woman and her children whom he literally saw die of starvation in a Liverpool cellar.

Book Reviews

### In The South Seas

Returning to America, Melville went in for school teaching, for free-lance reporting, but he found the atmosphere of New England stifling, and once more went away to sea, this time on a whaler bound for the South Seas. In those days the whaling ships were the most despised of all by sailors, and a good sailor would never travel in them, partly because of the dangers of hunting the whale, partly because of the foulness of the work of stripping and rendering the blubber, but perhaps most of all because the ships would sometimes cruise for four or five years before turning home, and would often go for many months without touching land. Melville decided to desert his whaling ship, and left it at an island in the Marquesas, where he found himself in a valley inhabited by a cannibal tribe, the Typees, among whom he dwelt for four months, living the primitive life as if he were one of them. Of this period he later wrote a book, *Typee*, which remains probably the best work ever written on the primitive culture of the South Seas before it was destroyed by the impact of 'white' civilisation.

Eventually he escaped from Typee, on board an Australian whaler. Here he became involved in a mutiny against the bad conditions on board the ship, and when it arrived at Tahiti was imprisoned there. But the conditions of his confinement were lax, and he was able to mix with the Tahitians, and observe the way in which their life had changed from its subjection to the activities of the French occupying forces and the European missionaries. In another book, *Omoo*, he described these experiences, and exposed the activities of the white men, particularly the missionaries, in this area. This book created a great sensation, as it was the first book to criticise the activities of the missionaries on the grounds that they destroyed the true cultures of the natives and merely plunged them into the difficulties of a civilisation for which they were not adapted. He was subjected to the most violent attacks from the churches, who accused him of being a liar, and of all kinds of immorality, merely because he contended that the tribal sexual customs were sound and much healthier than the hypocrisy introduced into Tahitian life by a token adherence to Christian morals. Time, however, has proved Melville right, and any responsible anthropologist to-day would support his contentions.

(Continued on page 7)

## MILLER ON WAR

MURDER THE MURDERER by HENRY MILLER. Delphic Press, 3/6.

Henry Miller is one of those writers who, while maintaining an aloofness from actual participation in the social struggle, have nevertheless contrived to write and think in such a way that their books are social criticisms of the utmost explosive power. And this, perhaps naturally, has been most evident when they have not been writing on any specific or open social topic. The obscurity of Miller's early books, with its effect of awakening and shocking those who are socially unconscious, the violent and unanswerable picture of American civilisation in *The Tropic of Cancer*, the portraits of middle-class failure in *The Tropic of Cancer*, and such character sketches of the derelicts of social chaos as *Max*, all represent in one form or another attacks of a most uncompromising nature on our whole modern culture. Miller is not a great political thinker, partly because he has no ambitions in that direction, but he is a writer whose work often reaches greatness, and there have been few more remorselessly effective attacks on the evils of American life than the vivid chapters in which he described what he saw of

American capitalism from the inside during the years when he worked as an employment manager for a telephone agency in New York. English readers will remember with perhaps a more direct pleasure the fragment, *Via Natchez*, in which Miller pours out his contempt on the Special Branch detectives whom he encountered on an unsuccessful attempt to enter England.

*Murder the Murderer* differs from these passages in being a pamphlet written with a definite didactic object, and for this reason its wings are somewhat clipped. We miss the rich imaginary power of his other books, and the philosophical tranquility of *The Colossus of Maroussi* has been replaced by the heat of indignation. But it is a good thing to see Miller angry. He puts his case with such a burning irony, that the sheer folly of war is exposed in all its madness. It is not an elaborate or well-digested political treatise. It is the expression in excellent writing of ordinary common sense about war—and it is surprising how devastating common sense can be when it is allowed to have its head. Miller enthusiasts will welcome this addition to the few books he has published in England, and those who still believe in war might be recommended to read it to realise once again just how mad, from the point of view of any common man, the last war really was.

G. W.

## The End of Socialism

THE END OF SOCIALISM by DONALD McIL. JOHNSON. Christopher Johnson, 8/6.

THIS is a study of Socialism in action by one who describes himself as a Radical Liberal. The first three-quarters of the book analyse the existing situation and in the last quarter we are given the author's solution. The main object of the book is, I think, to demonstrate the essentially totalitarian nature of state socialism, that the threat of fascism in this country comes, not so much from the capitalist class as such, but from the relatively new and increasingly powerful class of labour and trade union bureaucrats. (James Burnham's "Managerial Revolution" is, as one would expect, frequently quoted in this connection.) "The British Labour Party," Mr. Johnson writes, "has differed conspicuously from all other parties that have preceded it through the last 250 years of the active

working of the British constitution as regards the rigidity and ferocity—of its party discipline." And he gives The Standing Orders of the Parliamentary Labour Party which, I admit, I had never read, and which I found most instructive. The writer elaborates his thesis by a study of Soviet Russia where he shows that socialism, far from not existing in Russia as some maintain, has there reached its logical development, and he makes several comparisons between the first few years of the Russian Revolution and the present political trends under the Labour Government; the most interesting of which, in the light of recent developments, is perhaps the place of Trade Unionism in the Socialist (i.e., authoritarian) state.

All this, of course, is not new to most readers of *Freedom*, but the book would be of value to put into the hands of those who still believe in "Labour" since the quotations themselves are mostly from socialist writers and particularly from Laski, who, as Secretary of National Executive Committee, occupies a very powerful position in the Labour Party.

The last part of the book is a plea for a return to what amounts to traditional Liberalism despite the author's new and up-to-date amendments, and it is symptomatic of the superficiality of much of his thought that, while condemning authoritarianism, socialism "planning", he

### CORRECTIONS

Two errors appeared in our book reviews in the last issue. "Talent Town" by L. White (Jason Press, 2/6) was wrongly printed as "Living in Tenements". The price of "Homes for the People", by a committee of Building Technicians (Paul Elek, London) is 7/6, NOT 2/6.

## Freedom Press

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27 Red Lion Street  
Holborn, W.C.1

J. H.

1st February, 1947

John Mavin, a Newcastle building worker, was directed to work in London during the war, and has since been carrying on work on houses as an employee of the Tottenham Borough Council.

When he came to London, no accommodation was given to him, and he went, with his wife and five children, to live with relatives. Since the war, other members of the family which gave him hospitality returned from the Forces, and he had to seek alternative accommodation. None was offered him by the Borough Council, his employers, for whose

## An Eviction Scandal

work he had been brought to London. Accordingly, he took matters into his own hands, and squatted in a bomb-damaged house in Rangemoor Road, Tottenham, which had been empty for four years. There were three habitable rooms, and his family occupied these.

The Council then decided to requisition the house, and obtained an eviction order against Mavin. They told him that they could provide no

alternative accommodation, as he was a Newcastle man, in spite of the fact that he had been directed to come to London for building work during the war. They offered him accommodation in the workhouse instead.

Mavin, finding no other accommodation, returned to the house after he had been evicted. Now the Council has obtained another eviction order, and it looks as though the family will be finally forced to leave the house.

## HERMAN MELVILLE

(Continued from page 6)

### The American Navy

After a period of whaling on another ship, which took him to the coast of Japan, Melville shipped on board an American man-of-war, and from this experience he wrote another book, *White-Jacket*, which remains one of the best surviving descriptions of the kind of regimented and cramped life of naval men in the 1840's, a life which has not changed a great deal to our own day. Melville satirises the officers bitterly, and exposes the injustice of naval discipline. Indeed, his exposure of the flogging system, then in practice in the American navy, was so eloquent that it shocked the whole country, and forced the American government to abandon this practice. Apart from this, *White-Jacket* is filled with anti-militarist sentiment, and contains many pointed references to the folly of war.

So far I have mentioned only those books of Melville's which described his experiences. But he wrote several other really great works, of which the most celebrated and the best is undoubtedly *Moby Dick*, the greatest of all sea stories, written in magnificent English prose, dealing with the insane pursuit of a white whale by an un-

balanced whaling captain, and the final destruction of the ship by this same whale. There is also *Mardi*, a curious allegorical and semi-mystical story, in one part of which Melville conducts a satirical journey through the world of his time and, among other things, exposes the evils of England in the industrial revolution and the bitter oppression of the working class, as well as the rapaciousness of British imperialism and the injustices meted out to the negroes in America.

### A Man Out Of His Time

After the end of his sea voyages, Melville settled down to write his series of great books. But he was a man out of his time, and his ideas ran against the grain in the America of his age. His books sold in small editions, and he was always in debt to his publishers. His neighbours distrusted him, as he said, because he was "too radical", and even his one close literary friend, Nathaniel Hawthorne, found his ideas disgusting. Finally, after journeying to Europe and Palestine, he retired in disgust from the literary world, and his last three decades were spent as an obscure official in New York.

## QUIET COMFORT WITHOUT UNDUE LUXURY—I

Arising from the King's wish to avoid undue expense in the arrangement of the tour, it was decided that the most practical plan would be for the Royal party and their entourage to have a fully-equipped special train which could be used not only as a means of locomotion but as an hotel and office.

And so the matter was set afoot. It was settled that fourteen coaches would be necessary.

The saloons are made of steel, and the exterior colour scheme is cream and gold. The wood paneling inside is all drawn from Empire products—and as far as possible from African timber—and even the asbestos used for insulation on the back of the exterior panels comes from stocks bought from South Africa during the war.

Irrespective of the weather outside, the passengers will breathe conditioned air, change fifteen times an hour, behind sealed safety glass windows. Draughts, noise and dust will be excluded. Temperature may be adjusted to taste by means of a selector switch, and will be kept constant by specially-designed thermostats.

Great care has been taken to eliminate noise as far as possible. On the recreative side the note is one of quiet comfort, without undue luxury or lavishness. There is ample provision for radio and for gramophone music—with cunningly-devised expedients to eliminate interference and vibration.

The environment in which the Royal party will live will be tasteful but sumptuous, in keeping with present-day taste.

Illustrated, 18/1/47.

## QUIET COMFORT WITHOUT UNDUE LUXURY—2

Pleading guilty to stealing 2s. worth of coal from an L.N.E.R. dump, Albert Webber, of Lambeth-street, Southend, told Southend Bench to-day: "I have had no coal in the house for four weeks. The children were blue with cold. I have lost one with pneumonia when warm might have saved her, and I did not want another death on my hands." Webber, a £5-a-week labourer, was fined £1.

Evening News, 17/1/47.

### CONCESSION

Flogging as a punishment in Palestine will in future be administered only to youths of sixteen, it is officially announced. Previously youths up to eighteen could be flogged.

Daily Mirror, 23/1/47.

## Through the Press

### KEEPING THEM FIT

M.P.'s reassembling tomorrow will be able to keep fit during the arduous session ahead.

Pressure of legislation makes frequent late sittings a certainty, and few will have time for golf, squash, or other recreation. The newly-equipped gymnasium has been made available for members of both houses and journalists. Open from nine in the morning until the House rises, it offers escape from the boredom of an all-night debate. And M.P.'s who feel thwarted can work off their enthusiasm with Indian clubs, punch bags, boxing gloves or fencing. There is a sun-ray lamp, too.

But what will happen should members be caught in the gymnasium when the division bells go? For it is a long way from the lobbies. Will they appear in shorts and sweater? In the past more than one M.P. has voted in pyjamas and dressing gown.

### FRIENDLY TIPS

The whole force of the Whips' Office—the Chief and eight Junior Whips—are combined with the secretaries of the Parliamentary Socialist Party and of Socialist headquarters in a campaign to so-called a dispute between the political and industrial sections of the Government.

The social rooms of the House of Commons were invaded yesterday by these officials, who button-holed Socialist M.P.'s and gave the "friendly tips" not to raise industrial questions in the House.

Evening Standard, 22/1/47.

### WHILE HUMANS STARVE

Bags of peanuts are being flown across the Atlantic for the elephants in Bertram Mills circus . . . and more are coming. The circus, which has been in London published the story that the elephants in circus in London were so afflicted with fibrositis that they were unable to raise their trunks in salute. Two of them were even able to feed themselves.

One story suggested that the elephants post-war diet might have something to do with it, especially the lack of their

### SHADES OF THE NAZIS

Miss Ellen Wilkinson's statement that the school leaving age will be raised to 15 on April 1 next has not, I understand, met with unanimous approval among her Ministerial colleagues.

It will mean that 390,000 potential recruits for industry will be retained at school.

The outstanding Cabinet realists are Attlee, Cripps and Dalton, and they are constantly bringing down to earth their starry-eyed Socialist colleagues.

They know that more production and increased exports to the hard currency countries is our only way out, and it will not surprise me if they decide they cannot spare this vital 390,000.

Sunday Express, 19/1/47.

### HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

While nations discuss the food crisis in Germany, little children in Kerkeade—half in Holland and half in Germany—have found a simple solution. For there, Dutch children, unaware of regulations, share their food with hungry German friends on the other side of the barbed wire boundary fence.

Daily Herald, 9/11/46.

### STUPID WASTE

There are, it is estimated, about 142,000 Poles now in this country. Of these, 76,000 are eligible to join the Resettlement Corps, and 45,000 have already been screened and found suitable for civilian work in this country.

But on January 3—the last date for which there are official figures—only 1,750 Poles altogether were actually employed in civilian trades and industries. In other words, from the point of view of the great output drive, there are at present in Britain 140,000 Polish consumers and fewer than 2,000 producers.

News Chronicle, 13/1/47.

### CAN'T GOD TELL HIM?

With "bell, book and candle" the ghost of Langley's 17th century almshouse may shortly be exorcised. To-night the Rev. T. D. Prentiss, Rector of Langley, was delving into dusty ecclesiastical records in his library to find procedure.

Daily Herald, 7/12/46.

## Letters to the Editors

## Freedom Defence Committee

DEAR SIR,

The Freedom Defence Committee was founded in 1945 to deal with cases of the infringement of the civil liberties of any citizens within the British Empire, and since its foundation it has intervened successfully in a considerable number of cases, which have been duly reported in its Bulletin. The impression that the need for such a committee has ceased with the advent of peace is an illusion: on the contrary, new cases are brought to our attention almost daily. But this impression has been responsible for a crippling decrease in our resources, and unless immediate support is forthcoming, we must close down. At the end of 1946 we had a deficit of about £50. We need an immediate sum of £250 if we are to maintain an office and a typist-organiser, and in order to carry on efficiently we need a regular income of at least £500 per annum. This sum is ridiculously small in relation to the value of the work we are doing. You have not space for a recitation of all the cases of unjust imprisonment, excessive sentences, racial discrimination and other infringements of elementary civil liberties which we have handled in the past, but we would be glad to supply any of your readers who may be willing to support us with such information. We need five hundred regular subscribers at a guinea a year: even more urgently we need the lump sum already mentioned (£250) to enable us to pay our debts and keep our office open. Subscriptions should be sent to:—The Treasurer, Freedom Defence Committee, 8, Endsleigh Gardens, London, W.C.1.

Yours faithfully,  
HERBERT READ, Chairman.  
GEORGE ORWELL, Vice-Chairman.  
GEORGE WOODCOCK, Secretary.  
H. B. GIBSON, Treasurer.

## ● SOLIDARITY FROM AMERICAN COMRADES

Our winter activities in San Francisco have begun again and at an entertainment held there on November 16th, a big crowd of American youngsters intervened to solidarize with our cause, and spur us to carry on until the time when they will take over in our stead. \$360.00 net were the receipts of the evening, and \$50.00 were assigned to *Freedom*, in order that it be able to continue the wonderful work already begun, except for a few things with which we do not agree (for instance, the occasional collaboration with M.P.'s). For the rest, we are very enthusiastic and, against all the adversities and obstacles (which at times are discouraging), we admire your perseverance and enjoy reading the paper. With our sincerest wishes for all of you.

For the Italian Libertarian Group, A.M.

(The solidarity of Italian comrades in America has always been a very welcome factor in keeping *Freedom Press* going. We are not, however, conscious of collaborating with M.P.'s, and we wonder if the comrades have in mind the activities of the *Freedom Defence Committee*. This is not an Anarchist committee, although many Anarchist comrades work for it, there being many others who are not Anarchists also working for it. The F.D.C. has sometimes been assisted by members of parliament who have asked ministers of state pertinent questions regarding conditions in prison and similar matters regarding government practice. The practical work of the committee on behalf of individual victims of state repression has been materially assisted thereby; but it is not suggested that this constitutes specifically Anarchist activity. —E.N.S.)

## Freedom Bookshop

London readers of *Freedom* and their friends are cordially invited to inspect our selection of books, pamphlets and periodicals. Our shop is open Monday—Saturday, from 10 a.m.—6 p.m., and being in the centre of London is easily reached. We are one minute from Red Lion Square or Theobalds Road, and five minutes from Holborn Tube Station.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL BIOLOGY By Alan Dale 15/-

Please send all orders to FREEDOM BOOKSHOP, 27, RED LION STREET, LONDON - W.C.1

## Importance of Social Biology

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL BIOLOGY. ALAN DALE. Heinemann, 15/-.

Ignorance of the elements of biology is not regarded as something to be regretted to-day; indeed it is not uncommon to hear people—who are in other respects not ill-informed—come very near to boasting their ignorance of the function of, say, the liver. Nowhere is this parade of ignorance so common as among political discussion, and it is therefore gratifying to see the words "Social Biology" on a title page, even if the contents fail to implement its promise.

The writer is at his best in the earlier chapters, in which he discusses the concept of evolution. He manages to convey the immense complexity of the subject, and shows how a particular phenomenon is the resultant of a great many forces, many of them mutually antagonistic. The same multiplicity of forces are at work in social spheres, and the understanding requires more than a simple following up of one or two of the components.

In the chapters on "Man and his health", the effect of bad economic conditions as a factor in disease are noted, but they are not given nearly the prominence which their fundamental position demands. The writer, like so many popularizers, seems to think mainly in terms of curing instead of preventing. He quotes J. D. Bernal on the poverty of funds for medical research: "If we con-

sider that for lack of medical research thousands of people are dying unnecessarily every year and millions are suffering from disease, the condition of medical research in this country is not only a disgrace but a crime". While this is no doubt true enough, a work on *Social Biology*, should have stressed the far more important economic factors which provide the basic soil for ill-health and premature death and make them among the most striking and characteristic features of capitalist society.

It is encouraging to see Kropotkin's work on mutual aid accorded some recognition in the chapter on social life among animals. "One of the early and most vehement advocates of this view was the Russian, Prince Peter Kropotkin, who went so far as to say that mutual aid was a universal law of nature, and the most important factor in evolution. Very little was known of the behaviour of the smaller invertebrates in his day, but he confidently predicted that 'we must be prepared to learn some day, from the study of microscopical pond life, facts of unconscious mutual support, even from the life of micro-organisms'. Such facts are now gradually being brought to light, particularly through the work of Professor Allee and his associates in America ("Animal Aggregation" and "Social Life of Animals")."

Despite this, the writer seems to regard human development (in from half a million to one million years of life as

*homo sapiens*) to be one of continuous progress. His vision of future progress appears to get no further than a World Federation of nations and many of his ideas, notably those pertaining to the family, are in the main reactionary. Indeed, the social ideas expressed are often quite incoherent. Thus in discussing venereal disease, it is quite rightly pointed out that "by directed in biology, people must be enabled to realise that it is simply another infectious disease, and that it need not be more sinful or shameful to be attacked by syphilis than by typhoid." But the writer goes on to describe "promiscuousness" (whatever this curious word means) as the cause of the persistence of venereal diseases, without a word on the social phenomenon of prostitution as the other aspect of marriage and the principal pool of venereal infection. When we are told that, in regard to promiscuity (that word again!), "the advent of cheap and easily obtained contraceptives has removed, for the intelligent person, one of the strongest deterrents" one begins to despair that even a thorough knowledge of biology has not dispelled some of the obscurantist cobwebs from the author's mind!

Not all the social thinking in this uneven book is on the low level, but in general one can say that on the biological side it is an excellent account for the layman, but on the social side it is distinctly weak.

J. H.