

"Man's legal rights are everywhere in collision with man's natural rights . . . the only sacred right of property is the natural right of the working-man to the product, which is the creation of his labour. The legal right of the capitalist to rent and interest and profit is the absolute denial of the natural right of labour."

ALBERT PARSONS

Let the Floggers Put Their Own House in Order!

THE SICK SOCIETY

INDIVIDUAL VIOLENCE REFLECTS THE VIOLENCE OF GOVERNMENTS

CRIMINALS and their activities affect only a small fraction of the community, though one might be pardoned for imagining—after perusing the daily, nightly and Sunday press of recent weeks—that crime was a daily problem for everyone. That the newspapers play up the crime wave for all it is worth is unquestionably a fact, but it is a fact which has an unregarded side; why is there such an avid public demand for such trifling and sordid news? We shall have occasion to return to this question later.

But first it may be asked, "Why should anarchists concern themselves with these matters at all? What have they to do with the problems of the social revolution? Have the workers any interest in the behaviour of the underworld?" We are quite certain that these are problems which have a profound interest to the anarchist movement—indeed for anyone who takes a sincere interest in the social environment. Nor are they problems which have not bearing on the social revolution. Crime is not something which springs from the wickedness of individuals, it is a symptom of social sickness which touches every member of society. And the measures which "society" takes to control the criminal activity in its midst, whether these be the actual penalties incorporated into the statute book or the so-called demands of "people in general", provide an insight into the nature of society itself which no one who desires to change society for the better can afford to ignore. It is this fact that gives significance to the renewed demand for the re-introduction of flogging, though such a measure would be applicable to only a fraction of the crimes committed. (The Cadogan Committee of 1938 studied the 440 persons who had been imprisoned for robbery with violence over a ten-year period—1921 to 1930—only 142 of whom were flogged.)

The Anarchist Attitude

Before considering the recent debates on crime and flogging, however, it may be well to make our own position clear. Anarchists hold the same general position on corporal punishment as that we took on capital punishment. We are less concerned with the question of whether flogging is effective as a deterrent, than with the nature of flogging itself. It is a brutal and base thing to flog a man. The act of flogging requires the services of a brute to administer the lash, or else it brutalises a less harsh nature who undertakes it against his feelings. Then there are all the trappings: the fastening of the malefactor to the tripod; the dipping of the birch twigs in brine; the doctor who examines the victim before and during the punishment and gives his opinion as to whether he is "fit" to receive or continue it—these modern refinements make the procedure even more morally abnormal than the mediaeval and renaissance

torture chambers. For anarchists there can be no nice weighing up of "pros" and "cons"—the whole business is revolting and indecent, utterly repugnant to normal and humane individuals. And we are not afraid to assert that a society which includes such barbarities in its official life can only be corrupt itself and be still further corrupted by their continued perpetration.

Debates in the Legislature

Let it be said that the debates on the question were on a much higher plane than much that passes in the councils of our rulers. And the

(Continued on page 4)

H-BOMB MAKES THEM MORE DETERMINED—Say U.S. Tax Resisters

SAYING that President Truman's decision to go ahead with the production of the hydrogen bomb makes them even more determined than before to refuse to finance war preparation, 27 men and 19 women in scattered parts of the United States announced on March 15th, their refusal to pay income taxes. They released the following statement through the Tax Refusal Committee of *Peacemakers*, a national pacifist movement with headquarters in New York City:

"War is to us abhorrent. The wholesale and systematic burning or blasting to bits of men, women and children is the most hideous barbarism committed by men since the world began. No declaration of war or other government pressures can shake our determination to have no part in such unspeakable atrocities."

"Preparing for such atrocities is equally abhorrent. Those who help build atomic bombs, germ sprays, or biological weapons share the same responsibility as those

who drop the bombs or cast the deadly sprays. Hence, we are determined as far as possible to stop our part of bomb building and other armament construction."

"To-day is the deadline for payment of 1949 income taxes. Unitedly we affirm our determination to refuse to pay taxes which are levied for the purpose of carrying on war. President Truman's decision to begin the manufacture of the hydrogen bomb makes us even more determined than

before to refuse to finance armaments. Building this newest and most terrible weapon is further indication of the extreme depths of moral degradation into which our nation has sunk."

"Some of us feel that because the major activity of the federal government is war, we must refuse the total amount of the income taxes we owe. Others of us feel we must refuse to pay the proportion which corresponds to the percentage of the national budget now allocated to war preparation."

"We can do little to obstruct the manufacture of war weapons in other countries, but we feel morally compelled to resist such manufacture here in every way we can. We call on all people, both in the United States and other lands, to consider this course of action and join us."

VICTIMISATION

By DOCKERS' UNION —Dockers Act

AS a result of supporting last year's big strike in the London Docks, three dockers, members of the unofficial Port Workers' Committee, have been expelled from their union, the Transport and General.

In reply to this officious action by the union, 1,200 dockers (at the time of writing) have started a ban on overtime, this ban to last until April 14th, when the men's appeal will be heard.

The call to action (or, to be more accurate, inaction) was made by the Port Workers' Committee at a meeting attended by only 300 dockers, but the fact that on the first day of the ban four times that number stopped work at 5 p.m., when the normal working day ends, shows that the unofficial committee commands considerable support in dockland.

This is only to be expected, since the committee is made up of working dockers who are not, like official Union leaders, making a career of their representation which inevitably leads them away from the workers along paths of class collaboration.

It may be thought that, since the three expelled men are plainly out of sympathy with the official union, they should not mind being "dismissed", but the fact of course is that the docks are closed shops, and in order to qualify for the de-casualisation scheme, a paid-up union card must be shown. Thus, the union is striking at a man's living by expelling him.

In point of fact, this is a slack period just now, which means that the employers will not be so worried at an overtime ban as they would be at a busy time. (Probably the union anticipated trouble, so waited until now before expelling the three.) On the other hand, the ban may mean shift work for more dockers, since there are said to be 3,000 more on the books than are actually necessary for the work in hand at the moment.

PORTUGAL—the Jesuit State

DOWN in Algarve, the "Southern Riviera" of Portugal, I met on a hill-side near Monchique an ancient and patriarchal shepherd: I asked him, with my Portuguese companion as interpreter, "How much do you earn in one month?" "90 escudos," [22s. 6d. at the present exchange] replied the old man. "And would you like to leave your employer for a better job?" "No, no, no," said the shepherd, with alarm in his voice. With his 90 escudos he would get a space on the floor in a stone hut and one meal a day of potatoes and vegetables, but to him 'loyalty', conservatism and fear of the unknown were more powerful than unending drudgery and a near-starvation diet.

This beautiful, unfrequented south coast of Portugal faces Africa, far away across the Mediterranean, and many Portuguese, poor peasants and labourers, have been willing to attempt the crossing illegally in open boats in the hope of finding a new life on a new continent. To discourage such unpatriotic enterprises the government has established armed coast-guards along the length of the coast. It was a Portuguese who told me the story of a recent clash between would-be emigrants and coastguards: the patrol had caught sight, at dawn, of a boat pulling out to sea at a desolate part of the Algarve coast. Intercepted and beached, the boat's crew were placed under arrest and taken to the nearby patrol post. There, while waiting the arrival of police officials from the nearest town, it transpired that one of the 'refugees' was a brother of one of the coastguards. A heated conversation ensued, with recriminations and justifications flying from one party to the other . . . When the police finally arrived they found the post abandoned, the boat gone with its crew—and all the coastguards. On the beach were neatly laid the guards' uniforms, their rifles piled together nearby.

All over Portugal the people would appear to be as eager as these coastguards to escape the regime under which they

live, yet as unwilling as the shepherd to take the initial step: after all, a boat is not always handy. It is perhaps the misfortune of the Portuguese to-day that they are fundamentally easy-going, unambitious, peace- and comfort-loving. Dictator Salazar, the shrewdest autocrat alive to-day, takes full advantage of these characteristics. He is careful never to provoke a potential opposition into active rebellion. Although military training is still compulsory for all, and students must join a Jesuit-military youth organisation, the uniforms of conscripts and the Fascist Youth are rarer nowadays in the streets of Lisbon than before the war. Although the press is effectively censored and held firmly beneath the thumb of the regime, a token opposition of more or less feeble-minded liberals is permitted. If an intellectual, a writer or poet, expresses open disapproval of the dictatorship he is rarely dumped into gaol: Salazar prefers to see that he experiences every difficulty in keeping a job, that his publishers are quietly intimidated, that all government-controlled employment (teaching, radio, journalism, etc.) is firmly closed to him. A few unfortunate students, without influence or prestige, may get their heads broken by police batons if they have the temerity to indulge in political demonstrations, but on the whole Salazar is wise enough to keep his fascist-trained strong men out of sight and his army in barracks.

Salazar prefers to rule from behind the scenes. Leading a hermit-like existence, refusing any kind of social existence, cut off from the world around him, he is a pure example of the dedicated Jesuit—a strange and efficient throwback to the Middle Ages. His power over the army is absolute; through him, the Catholic Church has an iron grip on the personal lives of the people, with schools and universities closely controlled by the priesthood. This, combined with a Church-controlled State censorship of the Press and publishing ensures that no liberal, let alone revolutionary, thought shall be

available to anyone. (Even *Time* magazine is considered sufficiently dangerous to warrant its being firmly banned from sale in Portugal.)

Agitation against the restrictive nature of the regime was powerful enough recently, despite all deterrents, to persuade Salazar to an experiment in political 'liberalisation'. A General Election was to be permitted, and censorship of the press withdrawn. For a few wild weeks every newspaper and review in the country not financed from State funds seemed to have joined the opposition, which, under the leadership of an ancient liberal, General Norton, put up candidates for election. Salazar decided immediately that things were getting out of hand: censorship was clamped down again, and a few days before the balloting was to start the army made a show of strength in parades throughout the country, whilst contingents of hired bully-boys scrawled slogans of 'Viva Salazar' on the sidewalks, intimidated meetings of opposition groups and prepared to stand guard over the polling booths. The result was all that could have been desired: Norton's party (the only opposition group allowed by Salazar) withdrew from the election and the country was effectively returned to the straitjacket from which it had secured a brief period of liberty (whilst remaining confined, to be sure, within the walls of the asylum).

It is pointless to talk of potential revolutionary consciousness in a State which possesses all the qualities of a mediaeval feudal Catholic monarchy. This country can boast of an illiteracy rate of about 70% (the highest in Europe), schooling being non-existent for a great proportion of the poorest classes and rigidly Church-controlled for those who are able to attend. Pay scales also are among the lowest in Europe, and there is no attempt by the administration to fix any kind of scale linking pay to the cost of living. Since trade unions or professional associations are, of course, illegal, the rocketing cost of living since 1939 has reduced a

large section of the workers to the most miserable penury. I know of no experience more depressing than the voyage from Lisbon down through the southern provinces—through beautiful country, and through some of the most sordidly pathetic villages in the world: charming clusters of little white houses when viewed at a distance which reveal themselves on closer inspection as filthy streets and slums, inhabited by poverty-stricken, resigned, aimless people.

It seems certain that no concerted action can be expected from the people whilst the country is politically and financially propped up by Britain and America. And the last thing our noble socialist government would want is a revolutionary change in Portugal: the British are deeply entrenched in the country, controlling a great part of the national economy through their monopoly of important sections of Portuguese industry—wine, engineering construction and public utilities, for instance. Labour is cheap and obedient, profits are high, and a fascist Portugal at the gateway of the Mediterranean provides an effective stooge in the defence of our Imperial interests. So, while the provinces rot away, the Casino at Estoril may well continue for some time yet to rake in the excess money of the cosmopolitan assortment of ex-Kings, wine barons, high-class whores and exiled Nazis who find Portugal a good country to live in.

As I have said, it is useless to discuss revolutionary possibilities in a country where even the most elementary principles of equality of the sexes are unthinkable; where a young woman would not dare to go alone to a cafe without risking her reputation, where married women are confined to a dreary routine of domestic administration and female company, where, even among the 'educated' classes, artistic and literary consciousness is expressed by a colour-plate of the Virgin Mary on the wall and a Bible on the table.

SIMON WATSON TAYLOR.

Lisbon, March 20th, 1950.

AMERICANISM

PROFESSOR LASKI'S book was published nearly a year ago, and my only excuse for the lateness of this review is that it reached me on the eve of one of my own visits to the United States, and that it is nearly half-a-million words in length—nearly eight hundred very solidly printed pages. Owing to my absence I did not hear what kind of reception it had in this country, but I doubt if it was adequate. For it is a very fine and important book. America has inspired several good books, generally written by Europeans, but I would put Laski's book with the best of these—that is to say, with De Tocqueville and Bryce. It has not got the amazing prophetic quality of *Democracy in America*, nor the same eye for significant detail, but De Tocqueville was a pioneer, and every observation was news. And he had less to cope with—less history, less civilisation, fewer contradictions and complexities. Laski's book is very long, but it is amazingly unified and comprehensive. It deals not only with the traditional and historical aspects of American civilisation, but also gives a clear account of the present political institutions, federal, state and local. There are chapters on American business enterprise, American labour, religion, education and culture. The minority problems are treated realistically (they "require a new America for their solution... America will not go forward to the solution of these grave and growing issues until its citizens have displaced the business man as the idol to be worshipped in its market places"). There are further chapters on America as a World Power, on the professions, on the press, cinema and radio, and a final chapter on "Americanism as a Principle of Civilisation".

If there is a central argument in this book, it is expressed in the following sentence: "I have argued here that in the main realms of American thought the sense of openness and expansion diminishes, and that, with its diminution, there emerges the scepticism, even the pessimism, which men reveal when they measure the distance between the promise for which they had hoped and the reality which they had found to be possible."

Herbert Read here reviews three books, one of them by Harold Laski, whose recent death deprives the reformist labour movement of one of its most brilliant thinkers. Laski was a Marxist and a reformist; on neither count were his views likely to be sympathetic to anarchists. But he was a reformist partly because he could not accept the dogmatic and bigoted attitude of Marx and his followers. And he was continuously concerned with the preservation of individual freedom in the face of the increasing authority of the modern state. Thus it was Laski who brought Kropotkin's *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article up to date for the later editions. And when the four anarchists associated with *Freedom* were arrested and charged with sedition (while his Labour Party colleague Herbert Morrison was at the Home Office), Laski was a ready supporter of the Freedom Press Defence Committee, and afterwards of the Freedom Defence Committee which it developed into. If we shared few of his opinions, we could wish that more of his Labour associates had his paradoxical belief in individual freedom.

This idea is expanded in a concluding paragraph to the chapter on American culture, and as this is perhaps the most significant passage in the whole book I will quote it in full:

The crisis of American culture is the outcome of the fact that those values [the values originally expressed in the American constitution] are in such obvious decay. Whatever the avenues they opened in the past, their application now evokes in most forms of thought a sense of inadequacy and frustration. They prevent growth; thereby, they belittle man. They are prohibitions against the emergence of those productive relations in society which enable its members to feel that whatever is accessible of wellbeing they can both explore and use. By the very fact that expansion of well-being has become a threat to the supremacy of the business-man, he is compelled to frustrate that expansion; and when he so acts, he frustrates simultaneously the expansion of culture too. For it is no accident that the great ages in the history of culture are also the ages in which the consciousness of culture is most widely shared. Once more the right to share is rigidly limited by a profit-making system which must impose its discipline ever more stringently as its central objective becomes ever more difficult; the whole of civilised life is bound to be sacrificed to a part of it; and both the quest for happiness and the search for beauty will be sacrificed to its claims. The curse of Midas has been heaped upon the business-man in the United States, and he has sought, out of fear, in his turn, to impose its narrowing obligations upon the society he dominates. That is why a fundamental change is needed in the direction of American life; for nothing is more fatal to the greatness of a culture than impotence to translate the mind of man from the relation of past tradition to the relation of emerging creativeness.

The agent of such a change should, of course, be the labour movement, but at the end of his acute analysis

THE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY by Harold J. Laski.
(Allen & Unwin, 25/-.)

AN INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES AND POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES by John Taylor. With an Introduction by Prof. R. F. Nichols. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 35/-.)

PIONEERS OF AMERICAN FREEDOM by Rudolf Rocker. (Rocker Publications Committee, 2101 South Gramercy Place, Los Angeles 7, Calif.)

of American labour, Laski is not in a very hopeful mood, and the only course he can recommend is the bankrupt one of indirect political action. Direct productive action does not enter into his picture of the future—in fact, the whole of the co-operative movement, which is not without its significance in the United States, is ignored. But if it is essential, as Laski argues, for the labour movement "to take up the work of re-stating, in twentieth-century terms, that problem of freedom which Jefferson saw so clearly in the first American Revolution and Lincoln so supremely in the second," then American labour must do something better than imitate the tactics of the British Labour Party, which has nothing better to offer than a timid version of the totalitarian state. The whole of this national

political party game is totally inconsistent with the libertarian ideals of Jefferson and John Taylor.

The republication of Taylor's classical treatise comes very opportunely. First published one hundred and thirty-five years ago, it is one of the basic documents of American political theory. John Taylor was a lawyer by education but a plain Virginia farmer by preference. His treatise is in the eighteenth century tradition of political thought, but directed to the practical problems of a new democracy. Taylor's main concern is to design checks on authority, and his views on the corrupting influence of power anticipate Acton's in vigorous expression:

The Republican and federal parties of the United States are evidently clambering towards the system for consigning a nation to the constant spoliation of a successive authority, more aggravating to vicious passions, because more unsettled than monarchy itself. Far from correcting the abuses with which they charge each other, their leaders, trusting to the pernicious doctrine of confidence and authority, will convert their mutual abuses into mutual precedents. Neither parties nor individuals will voluntarily diminish power in their own hands, however pernicious they have declared it to be in the hands of others, because if they are vicious, they are willing to abuse it, if virtuous, they presumptuously confide in their own moderation; therefore abuses can never be corrected, where confidence and authority have subverted national principles.

As authority generates the same effects upon all men, the men are not blameable, because it is obvious from the constancy of the effects, that the force of authority is irresistible by human nature.

Which is precisely the anarchist point of view!

★

Comrade Rocker's book is to be welcomed as a supplement and in many respects a corrective to Laski's. In the first part he covers much the same ground (Jefferson, Emerson, Thoreau, and Lincoln), but deals more fully with William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips (he does not mention Taylor). In the second part of his book he deals with American radicals none of whom is as much as mentioned by Laski—Josiah Warren, Stephen Pearl Andrews, Lysander Spooner, William B. Greene, and Benjamin Tucker. He emphasizes the strong individualistic trend in American anarchism. "They all agree on the point that man be given the full reward of his labour and recognise in this right the economic basis of all personal liberty. They all regard the free competition of individual and social forces as something inherent in human nature, which if suppressed will inevitably lead to the destruction of the social equilibrium. They answered the socialists of other schools who saw in free competition one of the destructive elements of capitalistic society that the evil lies in the fact that to-day we have too little rather than too much competition, since the power of monopoly has made competition impossible. Starting from this viewpoint, they rejected fundamentally every communistic solution of the social problem and opposed just as intensely the ideas of state socialism as the tendencies of Kropotkin and communistic anarchism. This is particularly true of Tucker and his circle." This throws a new light on American anarchism and explains why it has never had much appeal to the corresponding European movement. The American anarchists were all "one hundred per cent. American" by descent, and "influenced in their intellectual development much more by the principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence than by those of any of any of the representatives of libertarian socialism in Europe." This is not altogether true of contemporary American anarchism, and with a figure like Randolph Bourne libertarian thought in the United States enters into the main current. H.R.

Socialist Malthusians—2

I SHALL describe the work of such social reformers as Francis Place and Richard Carlile in a subsequent article, and attempt to assess its importance in the history of the struggle for social emancipation. In the concluding section of the present article I shall briefly indicate some general consideration to serve as background to the subject.

We have seen that Julian Huxley, among many other modern observers, stresses the need for a reduction in the world's present population, or at the least a stabilisation at to-day's level. On the other hand, the governments of the world show grave alarm at what they regard as a fall in the rate of increase, and offer all manner of incentives to large families with a view to increasing their nation's numbers.

Now even very primitive cultures, and all developed civilisations of antiquity, adopted methods of population control. They made attempts—sometimes rational, sometimes merely magical—at conception control, or what we now call Birth Control. But they relied chiefly upon abortion and infanticide to maintain a stable population level. There can be no doubt that in so doing they were actuated by concern for the social good—in a strictly Malthusian way, for the social group suffers if the number of mouths out-runs the available food supply. The point to be stressed here is that such behaviour is responsible behaviour; it seeks to modify human affairs for the social good.

An extreme example is provided by the Eskimos, a people who live permanently on the edge of starvation, and for whom food getting is a continual pre-occupation of the most active, strong and resourceful members of the group. Eskimos often die of starvation, and Robert Flaherty tells us that this was the fate of Nanook, despite his wonderful hunting skill, two years after the making of the beautiful and moving film *Nanook of the North* (1921). Not merely do Eskimos practice infanticide and abortion, but in time of

hardship the older people, feeling that they are more of a burden than an asset to the group, ask to be left in a closed-in ice igloo to die quietly without food. Such behaviour may seem extraordinary to us, and difficult to understand; but that it testifies to a higher standard of social consciousness than we possess can hardly be disputed.

The purpose of this digression is to point the contrast between primitive social responsibility, and the attitude of modern governments and of the Roman Catholic Church. It is irresponsible for the State to adopt an expansionist population policy; and the enforcing of such a policy is only possible where people have become long inured to having no control over their own lives so that they make little effort to limit fertility or births.

Actually, of course, the peoples of the world always show themselves far more enlightened and responsible than their rulers. The admittedly high, though incalculable, abortion rate testifies to this; and shows that women are determined to take a responsible attitude towards their undesired and therefore undesirable pregnancies even though an irresponsible government makes their action criminal, and thereby drives them to clandestine and dangerous methods.

If the State sometimes condemns and never encourages rational Birth Control, what of the Roman Church which always condemns it? In everyone's experience there are those feckless couples whose large and annually increasing families bring ever deepening poverty, and effectively block any possibility of purposeful activity in their lives. Who is surprised to find that such families are generally Roman Catholic, consoled by the priest but forbidden the obvious and socially desirable remedy? Small wonder that the Roman Church has always extolled the virtues of poverty, when their prohibitions prevent one method of partial escape from its toils. Birth Control, the Catholics declare, is unnatural and therefore hateful to God, for the purpose of

sexual intercourse is the procreation of children and not the "mere" gratification of pleasure. One can only ask, as Reich and the sex-economists asked, "if Nature is so strict and wise why has it created a sexual apparatus which impels to sexual intercourse not only when one wants children, but on an average two or three thousand times in the period of sexual life?"

The perpetual search of primitive people, and of the masses to-day (despite the State and the Church) for means to prevent intercourse being followed by pregnancy, except when a child is consciously desired, is animated by a sense of social and individual responsibility. Those reformers who sought to place effective and satisfactory methods of achieving this end in the hands of every individual, of whatever class, were animated by a similar responsible zeal for the welfare of society. The next article will describe their work. J.H.

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APRIL 13th, 1949

On this date our comrade, and one of FREEDOM PRESS'S most active members died after a short illness at the age of 31. To commemorate the first anniversary of Marie Louise Berneri's death, our Committee has published a small volume of tributes by a number of friends who had known her intimately and who had admired those personal qualities which endeared her to all who met her.

This volume, which bears the title "Marie Louise Berneri, 1918-1949—A Tribute" is of 51 pages bound in grey cloth, and includes 14 photographs. We feel that those who knew her will cherish this little book, while it will help those for whom Marie Louise Berneri is but a name, to know and appreciate a vital and inspiring personality.

A charge of five shillings is being made for the volume, copies of which may be obtained from the Committee or through FREEDOM PRESS.

Marie Louise Berneri Memorial Committee, 27 Red Lion Street
London, W.C.1

VICTORY for BIRTH CONTROL PIONEERS in ITALY

MORE than a year ago, our comrades Cesare Zaccaria and Giovanna Berneri, authors of a pamphlet entitled *Controllo delle Nascite* (Birth Control) and editors of the monthly anarchist review *Volonta* published in Naples, were denounced to the police authorities by a priest for an infringement of the law in publishing this pamphlet (which explains the different methods of birth control). Our comrades were charged under Article 553 of the Fascist laws dealing with the family. Their case was not heard until early last month, and the delay is perhaps a reflection of the embarrassment of the authorities in having to prosecute in a case which evoked considerable interest and sympathy for the defendants and the views they expressed in the offending publication.

The trial was the first of its kind in Italy and the result was awaited with unusual interest since the law under which our comrades were charged is one which has been carried forward from the

Mussolini era (when the government's policy was to encourage women to have as many children as possible in order to eventually raise the population of Italy to the 70 million mark) and which has little meaning to-day in view of Italy's non-existent Empire and her physical inability to demand "lebensraum" backed by armed threats. The magistrates, in acquitting our comrades, were obviously influenced by these considerations but also

by the fact that since the offending pamphlet was published, numerous articles on birth control have appeared in the Italian Press. One Italian weekly, *Il Mondo* (in its second year of publication and one of the most intelligent politico-literary publications we have read) published a whole page article (4/3/50) with the title "Freedom from too many children", in which the writer makes out a strong case for the wide-

spread dissemination of birth control propaganda in Italy. As he rightly observes, in this as in other things there exist social injustices which must be remedied. The rich in Italy have for a long time been using birth control appliances in spite of the laws and the Catholic Church. "The poor, the illiterates and the ignorant neither know that conception can be avoided nor how, and to them the only alternatives are chastity or

the large family." And the writer quite openly puts forward the proposal that a Birth Control League should be formed in Italy to carry out a large-scale campaign; to open clinics and publish informative pamphlets. He suggests that the initiative to be more effective should be taken in the first instance by a group of women.

So, at long last, in one of Europe's Catholic strongholds, what the writer William Vogt calls the Fifth Freedom (freedom from too many children) is being discussed in the open. And our anarchist comrades Giovanna Berneri and Cesare Zaccaria, following in the steps of other anarchist pioneers in birth control like Emma Goldman, by their courageous stand, and the widespread interest their case has aroused throughout the country, have been largely responsible for this growing birth control "consciousness" in Italy, the success of which would deal a severe blow to the Catholics' stranglehold on the Italian women in particular, and on the social progress of the Italian people in general.

Freedom sends greetings and congratulations to our two comrades.

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

More Victims for Franco

ACCORDING to *Il Libertario* (Milan, 22/3/50) two more members of the anarcho-syndicalist C.N.T. (National Confederation of Labour) have faced Franco's firing squad, this time at Montjuich, where some forty years ago the anarchist educationist Francisco Ferrer met a similar fate at the instigation of the Catholic Church. The names of the two men were Manuel Sabater Llopert and Saturnino Culebras.

employed, and those living on public relief, form an appallingly high percentage of the whole population; and their misery, particularly when they are also expellees, is often dreadful. There were things in the Lübeck expellee camp at sight of which neither my wife nor I could restrain our tears. The small circle of the rich is no less selfish than in any other country . . .

A technical charge of depriving the victims of their civil rights was successfully prosecuted against Sheriff John W. Lynch, aged 38, of Dade County, and Deputy Sheriff William Hartline, aged 55. Another deputy sheriff and seven other accused were acquitted.

Government witnesses declared that the sheriff raided a party at the home of Mrs. Mamie Clay and seized the negroes, only to turn them over to a mob of more than 50 members of the Ku Klux Klan.

The sheriff and the deputies were accused of standing idly by while the mob burned a fiery cross, the traditional emblem of Klan terrorism, and then flogged the victims.

One victim testified that he appealed for protection directly to the sheriff, who turned and walked away.

The only offence the negroes had committed apparently was that they had attended what the sheriff called a "wild party".

A negro charged with raping a white woman can, if found guilty (and assuming that he has not been lynched in the meantime by white mobsters) be hanged. The maximum sentence for the above crime was one year's imprisonment and a fine of £375 which has been deferred pending appeals.

In Lafayette (Alabama) two white policemen, charged with first degree murder by beating a negro of 18 years of age to death, were recently acquitted by an all-white jury. After deliberating an hour and twenty minutes, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty. It was greeted by a burst of applause from the crowded courtroom. The two officers had admitted beating the negro prisoner, but said they did it after he drew a knife as they tried to get him into a cell.

Perhaps the crime for which this boy was arrested will give an idea of what a dangerous and violent character he was: he was accused of letting the air out of a tyre on the policemen's squad car!

LIBERTARIAN.

THROUGH THE PRESS

WHAT FOR?

Mr. Churchill and President Truman are among 28 people proposed for the Nobel peace prize this year.

Evening News, 2802/50.

GAD, SIR!

Lieut.-General Sir Arthur Smith, who formerly commanded the British forces in India and Pakistan, in a vigorous address, said he did not think it could be said that the nation was very happy and the reason was that God's laws were being defied.

There could be no dignity of work or worship of God so long as there was a body of opinion which declared that there should be five days of labour and two days in which to enjoy oneself, instead of six days of labour and the seventh day spent remembering God.

Surrey Comet, Feb. 1950.

WHY BOTHER?

The new Parliament, with the smallest Government majority for a century, started its work with the Gilbertian situation that the Government was on the look-out for a good reason for resigning, or forcing a new election while the Opposition was seeking ways and means of keeping it in office, staving off an election.

News Review, 9/3/50.

WESTMINSTER—THE INSIDE DOPE

What were we being called upon to vote about? I would anxiously ask my colleagues. And they wouldn't know. It was not their fault that they did not know, for correspondence takes up most of a Member's time. They belonged to a party and were prepared, by and large, to accept the advice of their party's leaders. But I had no party leaders, and I could not very well toss a coin to settle how I should vote. So I would sit, alone and lonely, in the library, until I found that my presence there so puzzled and distressed the policeman on duty that, instead I would go off to the lavatory and lock myself in until the vote was over.

—Vernon Bartlett in *The Listener*, 23/3/50.

... AND THE DOPE OUTSIDE

In a report to the Communist Party Executive in London yesterday, Mr. Harry Pollitt, general secretary, said: "The great issues will be settled not in the arena of this reactionary Parliament but by workers' mass struggles in the factories and streets."

Observer, 5/3/50.

Quite right, Harry, but not the way you want it!

TOP RUHR JOBS FOR NAZIS

A Three-Power Allied draft law re-organising the mammoth steel and coal industries of the Ruhr allows two former Nazis to retain their dominant positions in these industries, Allied officials said to-day. They are Heinrich Kost, chairman of the management board of the coal industry and a member of the Nazi Party for 11 years; and Heinrich Dinkelbach, for more than 30 years the financial strategist of Vereinigte Stahl, Germany's largest steel trust, and a financial contributor to Hitler's S.S. He is now the head of the steel industry.

News Chronicle, 18/3/50.

RED ON THE MAP

At a Press conference, Major-General E. O. Herbert, Director of the T.A., explained that a detailed plan has been drawn up showing where every N.S. man is marked on the map with a red spot.

Daily Mirror, 21/3/50.

GERMANY REVISITED

MR. VICTOR GOLLANCZ, writing in the *Manchester Guardian* (23/3/50) has some interesting things to say about his recent visit to Germany, in view of the many conflicting reports that are published in the press regarding conditions and morale in that unhappy country.

Of the material conditions there are as everywhere the small propertied class "living in considerable luxury" and "a large propertyless one, whose condition varies, in the main, from hyper-Crippsian austerity to utter destitution. The un-

On the question of peace, war and nationalism, Mr. Gollancz writes: "As a result of newspaper reports, I had expected to find aggressive nationalism everywhere. I found hardly any anywhere. Of course it exists, and I cannot pretend that I sought out those politicians of the extreme Right and of the neo-Nazi parties who are attempting to recreate it. But I saw enough of ordinary people to be quite sure that the most notable thing about Germany to-day is the will to peace."

And he gives a number of examples, of meetings with young people in different parts of the country, in support of his view and concludes: "Now all this seems to me pretty remarkable. Think of recent German history: vile Nazi indoctrination for twelve years; a disastrous defeat; an entire nation proclaimed pariah; vast territories lost; the country divided; at least nine million expellees and refugees; the starvation after 1945; the utterly ruined cities; bombings and blowings-up, not just after victory but five years later. Was there ever more fertile ground for aggressiveness and bellicosity, and is it not rather extraordinary that one finds so little of it?"

AMERICAN JUSTICE

IN Rome (Georgia), two law officers were found guilty of surrendering a group of seven negroes to a mob of masked and robed Ku Klux Klan men who, to quote the *News of the World*, "flogged their helpless victims with leather straps."

INDO-CHINA The Ninety Years Struggle

PIERRE LOTI, the French novelist who often dipped his pen in the rich colours of the Far East, was revolted by the brutality of his own country's imperialist forces when they finally conquered Indo-China in the 1880's. In a letter to the newspaper *Figaro* he wrote, in 1883:

"The French, who have climbed on the walls of the fortress, shoot on them (the Annamites) from above, almost at the rifle's mouth, and slaughter them in masses . . . There was nobody else to be killed. Then the sailors left the fortress and went below. They threw themselves on the wounded. Those who panted with fear, hidden in holes; those who pretended to be dead, hidden under mats; those who lay with the death rattle in their throats, begging with outstretched hands for mercy, calling out their 'Han! Han!' with heartrending voices—these were killed by the sailors with bayonets, or their brains were smashed with the butts of rifles."

For ninety years, off and on, the French have been fighting in Indo-China. For all that time, they have exploited a rich land, paying incredibly low wages for hard work, reaping the profits of unmitigated possession. French rule has not been wholly bad, nor have the natives been wholly perfect. But if anyone needs reasons for the anti-foreign feeling of Asiatics, if anyone needs to be shown why Communism has found a foothold in this modern day, he can find all the evidence he could possibly desire in the general misery of the Indo-Chinese masses.

France did one thing, which from the imperialist viewpoint was a tactical error. She permitted many Indo-Chinese to settle within her borders. There are some 25,000 of them in France to-day. They have learned what a comparatively good life can be like, and some of them have gone back home to stir up demands for better conditions.

It is customary nowadays to blame

everything on the Communists among the native peoples. But back in 1930, France was having to fight a bitter war in order to keep nationalism down, and Communism then was playing a minor part. In one three-day period, 2,500 rebels were put under arrest; whole villages were wiped out from the air; there were ugly executions by the lopping off of heads.

DURING World War II, the natives organised a resistance movement which troubled the Japanese. The core of it was the Annamese League for Independence, or Viet Minh. Its leader, Dr. Ho Chi-Minh, a little man who looks like an ascetic philosopher, began to worry the French. He had been a Communist, but now declared himself simply a nationalist. His movement, naming the whole country Viet Nam, embraced ideas often indistinguishable from those of Communism, though his following was largely unsophisticated in the mass, and its top level composed of assorted radicals and liberals.

After the War, Charles de Gaulle came up with a plan for reform, which offered considerable native freedom. In 1946, Ho Chi-Minh went to Paris and signed an agreement, but it fell through and warfare was resumed. Now, at the start of a new year, France has granted a degree of independence to a limited Viet Nam, putting in power the pudgy former Emperor, Bao Dai, once a famous play-boy, more recently a sobered, courageous leader—though still called an impostor by the sulky Ho Chi-Minh, who is waging guerrilla warfare from the hills.

Things have been complicated because Indo-China is scarcely one country, and certainly not one people. It comprised the protectorates of Annam, Tonkin, Laos and Cambodia, with the ruling power in the hands of a Governor-General; and the colony of Cochinchina, directly administered from the French Foreign

Office. Many Cochinchinese didn't want to join the Annamese. They felt comparatively privileged in having a representative in the French Chamber of Deputies, though only French inhabitants could vote—a tiny fraction out of 3,800,000 people. Most of Indo-China's 23,000,000 have hitherto had not even so much as a fake voice in their own affairs. In this populous land, some 40,000 Frenchmen have resided here and there, but a fourth of these have been soldiers.

UNDER the agreement setting up Bao Dai's Viet Nam state, the local courts, finances, police, etc., will be run by the regime itself. France, however, will control foreign relations. It is hoped that this comparative freedom will gradually cause Ho Chi-Minh to lose prestige until the civil war wears itself out. There's a chance that it may work that way—if economic conditions are improved among the people.

Informed observers are united in the belief, however, that outside financial aid will be required. If it is given, say from the United States, care will have to be taken lest more money be poured down the same kind of drain that proved so futile in the case of Chiang Kai-shek. The test of France's new attitude will be less in faithfulness to the new political structure, than in its regulation of the French concerns operating in Viet Nam or running businesses by absentee ownership. In the past, these have made fabulous gains, while the natives, both the few industrial workers and the many farm labourers, have lived in wretched poverty. Into their dim, straining consciousnesses the idea has dawned that this need not forever be. You may worry about the political leadership they may turn to, but in their basic demands, can you possibly think them wrong?

(Worldover Press)

THREE OLD COMRADES

MANY of our readers, especially those of the older generation, will learn with sorrow of the deaths of three men who have been active in the anarchist movement since the beginning this century.

★

J. W. FLEMING, of Melbourne, Australia, has died at the age of 86. A frequent contributor to this paper in its early days, for over fifty years, he drew crowds to his meetings at the Yarra Bank, "Melbourne's most famous Sunday institution". "Chummy" Fleming was one of the earliest revolutionary propagandists in Australia and organised the first May Day procession there. He was already a veteran when, during the First World War, he addressed crowds of up to 100,000 at the anti-conscription rallies at the Yarra Bank. Year in, year out, and despite frequent visits to jail, he kept up his uncompromising agitation against the State and against the obscurantism of the Catholic Church.

★

CASSIUS V. COOK, of Los Angeles, died on March 1st, at the age of 70. He was secretary of the Rocker Publications Committee, set up to publish the works of Rudolf Rocker in America, and for years was associated with the anarchist and rationalist movements, with American support for the Spanish anarchists, and with the propaganda work of Emma Goldman, who described him as "a tower of strength".

★

HIPPOLYTE HAVEL died in New Jersey on March 10th at the age of 81. He was the founder and editor of the anarchist paper "The Social War", published in Chicago during the First World War, and of "The Road to Freedom" published in New York in the inter-war period.

★

We send our sympathy to the relatives and friends of these old comrades.

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THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS—3

We continue below, publication of translations of the resolutions passed at the recent International Anarchist Congress. (Previous articles in the series were in our issues of 21st January and 4th March.)

ANARCHIST POSITION ON WAR

SINCE long before the declaration of the Second World War, the most active of our groups and federations have been the victims of such persecution (imprisonment, concentration camps, etc.), that it was impossible for the anarchists when the declaration of war came, to attempt any widespread concerted action.

Seeking to avoid prison or death, or seeking to hasten the fall of the oppressing powers, some anarchists were led to participate, in an active or passive rôle, in the war. A few continue even today, after the conflict, to support the democracies under the pretext that the primary task is the reconstruction of society.

The International Anarchist Congress, recognising that individual and mass resistance to war, in all their forms, can create more fruitful possibilities in the future, draws the attention of militants and anarchist organisations to the interest which should be taken, in time of peace, in the study of the problem of non-participation in war, and to formulate, as much on an individual scale as on that of the groups, concrete attitudes in view of such an eventuality. Among the methods of struggle against war which merit the attention of anarchists, one might mention the general strike, sabotage, civil disobedience, certain forms of conscientious objection, etc.

The anarchists must avoid all confusion and declare themselves opposed to all war, however much it may pretend to be a democratic struggle against totalitarianism. They must not let this dissuade them, in the event of war, from continuing their independent struggle, uncompromisingly, with libertarian methods, against all forms of oppression.

Position Towards U.N.O. and Movements for a United States of Europe, European Federation, etc.

The anarchists denounce the myth of universal peace based on a pretence of union between States.

PROBLEMS OF THE REVOLUTION

The progressive over-throw of the foundations of present-day is in itself a

Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

INDOOR Lecture-Discussions every Sunday at 7.30 p.m. at the

Trade Union Club, Great Newport St., W.C.2 (near Leicester Square Station).

April 2nd Speaker: Michael Bass "RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY"

April 9th No Meeting

April 16th Speaker: Arnold Pomeranz "THE WORK OF WILHELM REICH"

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

INDOOR MEETINGS every Sunday at 7 p.m. at the

CENTRAL HALLS, 25 BATH STREET, GLASGOW.

Sunday, April 9th

Speaker: Albert Meltzer

on "ANARCHISM IN THREE REVOLUTIONS"

with Frank Leech, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw.

MERSEYSIDE ANARCHIST GROUP

OPEN DISCUSSION MEETINGS held fortnightly

PLEASE NOTE: NEXT MEETING

Sunday, April 9th, at 7.30 p.m.

Meetings fortnightly thereafter.

Enquiries: Ring Royal 4669

COLNE & NELSON DISTRICT

Discussion Group to be held fortnightly.

Sunday, April 9th—No Meeting.

Sunday, April 23rd, at 3.0 p.m.

at Twisters and Drawers Club,

Cambridge Street, Colne (Lancs.)

HAMPSTEAD

Discussion Meetings are held every Tuesday at 8 p.m. prompt.

at 5, Villas-on-the-Heath, Vale of Health, Hampstead, N.W.3

Tuesday, April 4th "COMMUNAL LIVING"

Discussion led by Sam Feneroff

Tuesday, April 11th "MARRIAGE AND SEXUAL FREEDOM"

Discussion led by Rita Milton

★ Out and About ★ Auntie's Ticket

MY aunt lives in a village on a branch line and goes to work by train to the next station. She comes home at night by a different route with my uncle, but in case she should need to return by train, she always gets a Cheap Day Return ticket, since it costs the same as the ordinary single fare. Now my aunt is quite well-disposed towards British Railways because her particular train is one of those friendly survivals of a more accommodating age (even though it swept away the level-crossing gates twice last year). The engine-driver sees my aunt coming over the village green on the way to the station, and waits for her if she should be late. But the other day the station master approached her with a problem. Evidently theirs was not one of those forgotten stations which Harry Tate used to depict in the music halls, nor was it like the *Far Twittering and Stations Beyond* which Emmett draws in the funny papers. The Official Eye was upon my aunt's station, and Headquarters were beginning to ask questions. What was happening to the other halves of the Cheap Day Returns?

George Woodcock in his pamphlet *Railways and Society* (F.P., 3d.) quotes the history of a railway ticket from an official publication:

"If you could follow that ticket after you have finally given it up, at the end of your journey, you would understand better why the ticket collectors had shown you so much attention, and if you were to examine your ticket carefully you would see that no two 'bites' made by the collectors' nippers are alike. These punches and impressions of which some hundred different kinds are in use, tell the story of your travels to the initiated."

He reminds us that "some 700,000,000 tickets are issued each year, so it will be seen how much work is involved in booking, clipping, collecting, sorting and auditing."

You will remember that during the war the railways used to ask us: "Is your journey really necessary?" (as though their trains made travelling a pleasure). But I'm inclined to ask the railways: "Is your labour really necessary? because it is rather appalling to think of the bother my aunt has caused them by not using the return halves of her sixpenny tickets, amongst all the seven-hundred million others. When I'm told that the railways are losing money I can hardly say I'm surprised, but when I hear that despite stringent economies the fares will have to go up, I'm inclined to say: 'Tell that to my aunt.'"

ABC OF AUTHORITY

(Continued)

K is for Knowledge. There is a tendency among people to accept the advice of "specialists", or people who know more about particular things than the rest of us. This tendency is not Authoritarian. The physician who says, "Do this or you will be ill," the engineer who says, "Do this or your bridge will fall down," or the mountain guide who says, "Do this or you will slip," is giving a warning which is not a threat, but a statement of the natural consequences of uninformed behaviour. He is guiding, not ruling the person he advises. Only when he threatens to cause unpleasant happenings himself if he is disobeyed, does he become a Boss. The magicians of primitive society are specialists, who advise other members of their society about what they believe to be the natural consequences of human activity, but their advice is not very useful because the basic assumptions of magic are false. Perhaps Authority began with Fantastic Authority, when religion was invented by magicians who realised that their ideas were untrue.

(To be continued)

Wanted: Revolutionary Vision

(Continued from page 1)

government must be allowed due praise for having stood firm on the abolition of flogging. But when one comes to examine their reasons one finds the same low standard of morals that always prevails among governments. Both the Lord Chancellor and Chuter Ede declared their willingness to reintroduce flogging if the crime statistics after a reasonable interval showed that its abolition had removed an effective deterrent. Neither was prepared to declare that flogging must go because it is a shameful business unworthy of a decent society. Only two speakers took this position—Lord Templewood and Lord Samuel. The Church came out of this debate very much better than they did out of the death penalty debate, the Archbishop of York making a most sympathetic declaration against flogging. But the judges—Lord Chief Justice Goddard and Lord Oaksey—revealed in their demand for the retention of some form of corporal punishment, the most brutal and reactionary aspects of the law. Impervious to humane considerations and such evidence as is available, they showed themselves inhuman, harsh and—ridiculous.

Lord Simon—it is the same old Sir John Simon, the apologist for German and Japanese fascism, who "proved" the General Strike illegal, and of whom Lloyd George said that "he had sat on the fence so long that the iron had entered into his soul"—Lord Simon said that the Cadogan Committee which unanimously advised the abolition of flogging in 1938, would have come to different conclusions to-day. But the *Evening Standard* interviewed the seven

who survive from the original ten. One (Sir Robert Hutchison) has changed his mind: the rest are emphatically against flogging still.

The Reformist Alternative

If Lord Templewood showed some grasp of the moral objections to corporal punishment, he also showed clearly the limitations of the progressive reformist attitude to crime. Stressing his unsentimental attitude he declared that, on the contrary, "the proposals for dealing with dangerous criminals that I made in 1938, when I was Home Secretary, and which have since been embodied in the Criminal Justice Act, make the law more and not less severe for hardened offenders." For instead of flogging, sentences are longer. Some of the floggers wanted to see shorter sentences, though not usually from sympathy with the prisoner, but from a desire to lessen the burden of prison staffs and to prevent more than one prisoner having to occupy a single cell. One prison chaplain wrote to the press demanding both flogging and longer sentences, and one of the noble lords opined that giving the prisoner remission of sentence for good conduct was wrong! (Any ex-prisoner knows that fear of the loss of remission is the most potent disciplinary weapon in prison, and will smile at these coroneted greenhorns.)

What of society itself? Is it so perfect that it can smugly assume the wickedness of criminals without once looking accusingly in the mirror? There are plenty of indications that society's interest in the criminal and his activities is far from being detached or enlightened. The overwhelming pre-

Post Office Workers and Political Rights

POST OFFICE workers have recently been granted the right to indulge in political activity "when they are not on duty, in uniform or on official premises."

In connection with this, we have had passed to us copies of a fairly lengthy correspondence which a Scottish comrade, H. T. Derrett, of Kilmarnock, Argyll, carried on with "Reynolds News" prior to the granting of this small piece of "dud liberty", as he calls it.

We have obviously had to cut down the correspondence, but are printing the salient points, and wish to congratulate our comrade on his initiative in putting up a fight on what may seem a minor issue, but we must remember that "the price of freedom is eternal vigilance", and our liberty can be whittled away in small pieces as easily as destroyed in the whole.

The correspondence went as follows:—

DERRETT to REYNOLDS NEWS, 18/1/50:

Roughly a quarter of a million workers are ordered by Post Office Memorandum P.13G, to observe that—

"An Officer of the Post Office in private life must not engage in political controversy, and must maintain a proper reticence in discussing public affairs."

Mark here the true Gestapo touch—"IN PRIVATE LIFE MUST NOT . . . AND MUST."

A request, then to Post Office employees to work for the return of a Labour, or any or no government at all is a direct incentive to rebellion.

A Labour Government is now in office and hopes to remain there. Let us then have deeds—not words.

I not only ask but demand the immediate annulment of Post Office Memorandum P.13G.

REYNOLDS NEWS to DERRETT, 19/1/50:

On the subject of P.O. Memo P.13G, I have checked with the Post Office and they say that this Memo makes no reference whatever to political activities, but I understand it is concerned with Post Office workers paying due regard to the confidential nature of their work in relation to the Official Secrets Act.

I shall be glad if you will check up on the position as you understand it and report back to me. It will be particularly helpful if you could let me have a look at the document on political activities from which you quote. We might then be able to use your letter in next week's *Reynolds News*.

DERRETT to REYNOLDS NEWS, 22/1/50:

As a Post Office employee (now retired) I personally signed the document in question, certifying that I had read and understood its contents, so that I may claim to know the facts.

Before signing and returning for transmission to Headquarters, I most carefully took a copy of the wording as given in my previous letter to you. The copy is accurate in every respect.

Can you induce the Official or other person you consulted, to provide a genuine P.13G. for your inspection? Obviously, from what I have said, I cannot.

P.13G. very probably does also contain instructions as to the Official Secrets

Act. I do not dispute that. I copied only that portion of the Memorandum which interested me.

One could sign the Official Secrets Act without loss of dignity, but not so the insulting and degrading order that one MUST SHUT UP IN PRIVATE LIFE and refrain from free expression of opinion on political and other public affairs. The order means exactly that.

The following week (5/2/50) "*Reynolds News*" published part of Derrett's original letter—omitting the references quoted above to the Gestapo and the Labour Party. They added a reply from Sydney R. Campion, Principal Information Officer, G.P.O.:—

There is no reference in P.13G. to political activities. Under present rules all Civil Servants are enjoined to maintain a reserve in political matters, but arising out of the Masterman Committee's report, the great majority will shortly be free to engage in all forms of political activity when they are not on duty, in uniform or on official premises.

DERRETT to REYNOLDS NEWS, 9/2/50:

I thank you for the insertion of my letter in your issue of 5th instant on the subject of P.O. P.13G. The reply which follows thereunder is either in the dominion of officialese error or that of diplomatic evasion. My extract from P.13G. as quoted is exactly as given in that Memorandum. The Principal Information Officer of the G.P.O. says there is no reference in this document to political activities. In blunt language then, one of us is lying. Who is to determine and pass judgment on this point? I cannot ask you to open your columns to lengthy dispute, though I imagine the Principal Information Officer would prefer to close down now with this crushing official pronouncement. Thus spake Zarathustra!

You were justified in your approach to the G.P.O. for verification of my statement, but that authority's pontifical words, in my opinion, leave much to be desired and questioned in the way of strict veracity. In passing, I note the Principal Information Officer's remark that "the great majority will shortly be free to engage in all forms of political activity when not on duty."

This surely means that they are NOT NOW free to do so. I may be dense, but this seems to me to amount to a clear admission of the correctness of my assertion that there is in existence now, an order (let it be on P.13G., or on Form L.B.W. or X.Y.Z.) which lays down that "IN PRIVATE LIFE (that is, "WHEN NOT ON DUTY") an Officer of the Post Office must not engage in political controversy and must maintain a proper reticence in discussing public affairs."

However, if this poor promised crumb masquerading as liberty, and which is to be thrown "to the majority" on some unspecified date by the gods now splitting hairs as to its size—if this mouldy morsel of dud liberty will satisfy the favoured majority, I feel I must still strive to advance the cause of the benighted minority to gain and enjoy a more filling and satisfying repast. The majority may then decide to come in and partake of the banquet.

Since the closure or the correspondence, political "rights" were granted to "the majority of" P.O. workers—just in time for the General Election!

Special Appeal

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