

# Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

Vol. 11, No. 20

September 30th, 1950

Threepence

"The time to assert rights is when they are denied; the men to assert them are those to whom they are denied."

WENDELL PHILLIPS

## The First Casualty - YOUR LIBERTY

IT is an old saying that in war the first casualty is truth; in recent issues of *Freedom* we have shown that truthfulness is incompatible with either demagogic or totalitarian administration. For many years in politics, indeed, truth has been a permanent casualty, long since down for the count. Recent weeks have shown that the preliminary propaganda for war, the insistence on urgency, the necessity to be prepared, and so on, is already claiming an important victim—Civil Liberty.

When we speak of the "propaganda" of urgency, of preparedness, we do not, of course, imply that it is all spook, and that there is no danger of war. Anarchists have long pointed out that war is now an intrinsic part of class-divided and nation-divided society: that our society (and that includes the Russians as well as the European and Anglo-American society) cannot live without war and that therefore war is inevitable—if we continue to accept such a social pattern. We speak of "propaganda", without seeking to relieve the word of its association with falsity and deception, because of the governments' implied suggestion that if we recognise the urgency, if we begin to prepare in time, that war will not occur.

### The Paradox

The governments are all in the same paradoxical position. They are all defending "their way of life", the alleged political freedom of the West, just as the alleged economic freedom of the Soviet Union; but to defend it they insist that it is necessary to give it up. For decades now in Russia, the workers and peasants have been told that they "own and control" the land and the means of wealth production. But being encircled by capitalist enemies they cannot "yet" enjoy the fruits of ownership for it is necessary for "our country to be prepared, to be ceaselessly vigilant", etc., etc.

In the West, we denounce the denial of freedom in Russia, and extol "our way of life". But

### THE LACY CASE

TWENTY-two-year old Eugene Edward Lacy assaulted a jailer on the day before he was due for release from serving twelve months for receiving, and was, at Leeds Assizes, sentenced to 10 years penal servitude.

The Prison Officers Association issued a statement to the press this month, which announced that Lacy has been deprived of six months remission by a Visiting Committee of Magistrates in Durham Jail for making statements, during his trial before judge and jury, alleging that he had been beaten up by jailers.

Mr. W. F. R. Macartney (who was the author of *Walls have Mouths*), writing to the *Tribune* describes the Lacy case as a "national scandal" and points out that "the implications are terrifying, for at this rate of serial sentence Lacy may never be free."

"Anything that a defendant urges in his defence or in mitigation of sentence during a trial is privileged; except perjury or contempt of court. Lacy was not on oath when he said that he had been beaten up, and of course contempt of court does not arise. Furthermore, as he was on trial and had not started the sentence of ten years (remember that he'd completed his short sentence) it is difficult to see by what legal reason he became answerable to prison magistrates for something he said in open court and out of jail. An Assize is not a prison."

"We have no details of his trial by visiting magistrates. Who laid the information? Who covered the court? Who defended Lacy? Who were the witnesses? Did Lacy plead guilty? And finally, who was the Chairman of the Committee? In fact, what did happen behind the stone curtain of Durham Jail?

now that there is a threat that the Russians may impose "their way of life" on us, it becomes necessary, by the logic of government, to cut down on our free-

dom and make our political system a little bit more like the Russian.

In America, Senators are talking of setting up large concentration camps for the internment of all Communists. That is merely a proposal, perhaps. But the U.S. Government have, in fact, withdrawn the passports of about a hundred Communists or sympathisers, including Paul Robeson. This means that these people cannot leave the country. It is immaterial that no citizen of the Soviet Union may leave his country except on governmental business, and that the penalty for illegally

leaving Russia is death and the punishment of relatives. It is immaterial to say that Robeson and the others "asked for it" and only got what they deserve. The material point is that the freedom to move about at will is a basic freedom—is it not in the Atlantic Charter and other official declarations about human freedom and human rights?

And it is a freedom which becomes nonsense if it is denied to people who disagree with the government or even the majority. The whole strength of free political institutions (in so far as the term has ever had any reality) is in the ability of minority opinions to

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## FROM MONOPOLY TO MONOPOLY

LIMPING into the House of Commons on the arms of their friends, hobbling in on crutches, the sick, the halt and the lame among our Members of Parliament last week decided the fate of one of Britain's vital industries. Thousands of workers in the Iron and Steel trades will shortly be exploited by the State instead of by private bosses because of the dogged determination of six sick men.

Everybody knew that the voting on the Iron and Steel Act would be close. Such is the absurd position in Parliament with Labour's slender majority, that democracy is shown to be even more undemocratic than usual, and the dignity of the Mother of Parliaments has been somewhat sullied by the frantic whipping-up of members from sick beds, hospital wards, and even their constituencies, to rally maximum numbers for each side.

The Government won by 306 votes to 300, and honour was satisfied in a debate which we were assured was carried on with "British good humour and frequent laughter," but a stern fight for the true interests of the

nation nevertheless.

### A Fascist Bill

We have discussed the merits, or rather the demerits, of this nationalisation Bill in these columns before (13/11/48) when we described it as a framework for Fascism. This criticism we based on the similarity the structure of the industry will have with the arrangement for State control of essential industries in Nazi Germany. Not all the industry is to be State-owned, only about a hundred of the larger firms being taken over, and the industry is to continue on a competitive basis.

In the Steel industry the term "competitive" is a very relative one. The industry is one of the most monopolistic in Britain, and the British Iron and Steel Federation—the employers' association—has the whole business of supply and demand nicely balanced to keep prices profitably high.

The Tories have based their arguments against the Steel Act on the point that it is not in the interests of the country at this time of international crisis to do anything to disrupt the industry, so vital to Britain's rearmament. They have always been concerned that nothing should disrupt the "business as usual" functioning of the industry, for even during the last war the steel kings took good care to see that their profits were looked after before the needs of the war machine.

But the present Bill will not disrupt the production of iron and steel in this country very much. The separate identity of the firms is being maintained and in many cases the same management will remain in control. As we said nearly two years ago, the main differences will be that profits will go to the State instead of to private owners (except for the generous compensation) and that the State will have even greater facility for putting into operation its policy of guns before butter.

It is claimed by Labour Party spokesmen that the workers in the Iron and Steel trades are solidly in favour of nationalisation. This would rather indicate that all is not well internally in the

industry (although the owners boast it is freer from strikes than any other) since we cannot believe that the steel workers are ignorant of the effects of nationalisation in other industries.

### Workers Under Nationalisation

At the recent Trade Union Congress some mixed feelings on State control were expressed. The Economic Committee of the T.U.C. under chairman Lincoln Evans had spent three months investigating the pros and cons, and their attitude towards further nationalisation could only be described as "cautious". Now, when trade union leaders, who have declared the desirability of State control for years, begin to have doubts about it, it can be taken for granted that the rank and file are even less enthusiastic.

And, indeed, on what could enthusiasm be based? At the moment of writing there is a strike in progress in the gas industry, we have recently had a 50% bus strike in London passenger transport, the railway workers include thousands of the lowest paid in the country and sixteen miners have recently been fined, and imprisoned for non-payment of the fines, for taking part in an unofficial strike earlier this year. Only prompt direct action by their mates secured their speedy release.

None of which spells contentment among the workers in State-controlled industries. Quite the reverse, in fact. And from every point of view except that of the State controllers, nationalisation is found wanting.

The prices of the products or services of State industries have gone up since the various nomination days. Coal, gas, electricity, transport (passenger and freight), all are dearer than ever before, while the workers concerned are no better off either in their real wages or in the degree of responsibility for, and therefore control of, their industry.

All these industries have their schemes for joint consultation between workers and management. In all of them resentment is felt over the disparity of incomes between the management and workers, and in all of them frustration is increasing as the rank and file find no satisfaction in working in a supposed democracy which affords them no real say in the running of their jobs.

### Syndicalism

From several directions recently, the ideas of Syndicalism have been attacked. Can it be that the reactionaries and reformists, in seeing the growing disillusionment with nationalisation and the, as yet inarticulate, feeling for workers' control growing, realise that the next moves by the workers will be towards syndicalism?

There has been, as yet, no real evidence of a growth of syndicalist ideas, yet there are none so sensitive as the guilty and the fearful, and the renegades who to-day fill the Trade Union and Labour movements may hear rumblings unheard yet by others.

Be that as it may, however, the truth can come from strange quarters. In an article in *Reynolds News* by Ian Mikardo, M.P., he makes a statement with which no advocate of workers' control could argue:

"... you can make steel without the steelmasters, without the Iron and Steel Federation, without the Steel Board, without the Government, and certainly without the Opposition. But you can't make steel without steel workers." Steel workers, please note.

## BOGEY! BOGEY! Plotting Time is Here Again

WELL, comrades, it seems that we must shake the moth-balls out of our bombs and slink on down to our furtive cellars in the mysterious East End of London. We are being out-plotted!

We must defend—to the last drop of Fleet Street ink, if necessary—our traditional position as arch-conspirators. Are we to be dethroned from our positions as Kings of Conspirators by conspirators from King Street? Never let it be said that we succumb without a struggle. A cloak! A cloak! My fountain pen for a cloak!

Pause for breath . . .

IT really is rather amusing to see how conveniently "Red Plots" can be unearthed whenever there is a major strike. Everything, you see, is so perfectly marvellous in our island home that any unrest can only be attributed to outside; everybody is, at heart, so loyal to our Constitution and Government that they could only act against its interests (and for their own) if led astray by the cunning arguments of agitators.

I wonder if Mr. Isaacs, or Mr. Deakin, or any others who reveal dark plots, realise how damned insulting they are being to the workers? Not that they care, obviously, whether they insult the workers or not, but since their jobs (Isaacs' at any rate—Deakin's job is permanent) depend upon continuing support from the

workers in the shape of votes, they really should not antagonise the rank and file by so blatantly insulting their intelligence.

The attitude is exactly the same with regard to the Army. When some of us were prosecuted in 1945 it was for conspiracy to disaffect the Forces, and the attitude of the authorities was plainly that the heads of serving soldiers were empty vessels into which we only had to pour our propaganda for them to be disaffected. They get this impression, of course, because that is precisely what the authorities themselves do—but with this difference: that the authorities don't really care whether their propaganda is believed or not, they have the force to compel obedience. It is simpler all round if all the bunkum is believed, but not necessary.

In the industrial field, they have not (yet) the power to enforce just what they want. So deception, propaganda and bamboozle have to be the methods.

THE editorial in our last issue said that it began to be obvious that "Communism is now to be the bogey, the red-herring across every inconvenient trail." Only four days after that was written, and two days after the London bus strike began, the evening papers carried lurid headlines such as "M.I.5 UNEARTH RED PLOT"; "GRAVE WARNING"; and so on, the stories below the head-

lines full of vague accusations about mysterious workers' organisations meeting in secret in the East End (putting nothing on paper!) planning to disorganise essential services by fomenting industrial unrest. Mr. Isaacs made a grave statement to the House of Commons, threatening to take legislative measures against the Communists, and the people's representatives sat around pompously discussing how our boys in Korea are being sabotaged by a passenger bus strike in London.

We know well enough the rôle of the Communists in industry. Whereas during the war the Stalinists would label any worker defending the simplest of his trade union rights a "Trotsky-fascist", "saboteur", and so forth, now the party line demands support for strikes. We know that the C.P. line is dictated by the needs of the Kremlin. But we also know that as an influence among the workers of Britain the Commies have had it. All they can hope for now is to cash in on any action the workers themselves take—to play the rôle of the dung-cart after the Lord Mayor's Show.

And so the unearthing of Red Plots may dupe the middle-classes and the empty-heads, but the workers concerned in the struggle to maintain a living standard while prices are soaring and the unions are sleeping are not fooled. They are learning to be nobody's dupes. Neither Harry Pollitt's nor George Isaacs'. P.S.



# Does Your Mate Satisfy You?

I DOUBT if even the manufacturers of Arthur Godfrey would claim that Chesterfields can fulfil all the functions of a loving wife. But, they would probably claim so if they thought they could increase sales that way. Thousands of advertisements appear in the magazines and on the radio each day that are just ridiculous. The only difference is that the lies are a little more subtle.

But the most dangerous advertising isn't in the commercials or the paid advertisements. It comes by way of the commentators and columnists, the speech-makers and politicians, the schools and churches. It is the advertising which sells us America and the American Way.

This advertising is just as false—and unfortunately just as successful—as the commercial advertisements for particular brands of cigarettes, brassieres, and hair tonic.

Under certain circumstances we can still tell the difference between a cigarette and a human being (though millions buy Chesterfields simply because they like Arthur Bing, and whoever it is that the C stands for). But who can tell the difference between half a million people and a military objective? Who can tell the difference between a democracy and the United States (and of those who can, how many can distinguish between a worker's republic and the Soviet Union?) Who can tell that there is no difference between "being strong enough to defend the peace" and getting the equipment ready to destroy civilisation?

Actually it is not a fault of our intellects. Most of us know, when challenged, that Luckies are not kind to our throats, armies don't preserve the peace, and there is no kind of brassiere which will find us the right husband. Similarly, who really believes that the people of America have democratic control over the things which most affect our daily lives?

The trouble seems to be that we are used to following the Biggest Noise, used to doing what we are told, used to yielding to social pressure.

Seeing so much falseness in our society we can easily blame it on the Advertisers, the Militarists, Big Business, Hollywood—or any other Group external to ourselves. But the fault lies only partly there. The Advertisers couldn't sell their products by singing-commercials if we were not influenced by them. The Generals would have no one to lead to war if we did not yield to their propaganda—and if we had the guts to tell our neighbours that we were never going to fight in another war. A nation of mature people would bankrupt present Hollywood.

## Self-reliance Needed

As Emerson wrote (when the disease was less virulent):

"I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions" . . . and "a greater self-reliance . . . must

work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men."

Self-reliance is perhaps the virtue most lacking in our society to-day. If we trusted ourselves more we would trust our "leaders" (and advertisers) less. But such self-reliance is not easily come by. It is not apt to come for the first time in the crises of life—such as when we find ourselves subject to a conscription law.

The roots of our lack of selfhood run deep into our homes, schools, churches, and recreational habits. But probably no area is more important than that of our daily work. We are used to factories and offices where some persons make the decisions and others carry them out. There is an unnatural and enervating separation of brain work from hand work. Both parties suffer, though differently, from the separation. It is hard to know which is worse—to spend the day making "important statements" into the dictaphone or to be the typist who must write another man's letters.

The levelling of authority and the sharing of both executive and routine tasks are two important ways to foster the self-development of all members of a concern. But the problem runs deeper.

THIS article is reprinted from the American monthly *Alternative*. We apologise to non-American readers for some of the allusions which need fairly close acquaintance with the "American way of life" to fully appreciate, although most of us know that Chesterfields are cigarettes.

Besides the separation of hand from brain, of planners from doers, there is the separation of our daily work from our daily living. Our work tends to be meaningless activity in which we would take little interest except for the fact that it provides us cash. Correspondingly, the articles of our daily living are items in whose productions we have had no self-expression. They are articles that have been made by someone else (who is probably also turning them out without love, simply for pay) and which come to us solely because we have the cash to command them.

In other words, we sell our minds, our bodies, and the creative hours of our day in return for the cash with which to buy things that have been made by others who are similarly prostituting themselves. No

wonder the "highest standard of living in the world" brings us so much glitter and glutony, so little beauty and self-satisfaction. No wonder we have so little independence in any area of life. It would be surprising if we could surrender our initiative during the eight hours a day we are working and then recapture it after working hours.

We must insist on the social usefulness of our work. We would not knowingly accept a job of eating bodily poisons every day, just because the job paid well. It is equally disastrous to our emotional lives to spend eight hours a day doing socially harmful work—or even work that is uninteresting and socially useless. Oftentimes eight or ten friends will get together and complain of the work they are compelled to do at their jobs. These same persons could make at least a beginning at remedying things by forming a workers' co-operative to utilize their respective talents in useful, expressive work.

There is not space to discuss now the parallel development of recapturing a creative relationship to the things we use in our daily lives—instead of assuming that all our material needs can be fulfilled by cash purchases. But it should be made clear that we can learn to grow

# We must not compromise

THE anarchist movement, ideally, is a social revolutionary movement. That is, its main aim is to further the achievement of an anarchist society. To be effective its adherents must shape their actions in accordance with an anarchist orientation. It follows from this that anarchists, as anarchists, cannot take part, or expect their movement to take part in reformist endeavours to ameliorate the effects of capitalism. If an anarchist takes part in a strike for shorter hours or more wages he does so as an act of solidarity with his fellow workers, not because he thinks that it is a revolutionary act or even contains within itself a potentially revolutionary situation. A social revolution (as opposed to a political revolution, i.e. a change of government by a *coup d'état* on the part of some political party) aims at the transformation of the relationship of man to his fellows, destroying the boss-worker, ruler-ruled relationship, etc. It is a qualitative change, not a mere quantitative—and very often temporary—change such as results from a successful strike for shorter hours, bigger wage-packets, etc. As Alexander Berkman put it:

" . . . revolution is not a mere change of externals; it implies the complete dislocation of life, the shattering of domi-

nant tradition, the annihilation of accepted standards. The habitual, measured step of existence is interrupted, accustomed criteria become inoperative, former precedents are void. Existence is forced into uncharted channels, every action demands self-reliance; every detail for new, independent decision. The typical, the familiar have disappeared, dissolved is the coherence and interrelation of parts which formerly constituted one whole."

It is during such a period of the dissolution of the accepted and the annihilation of the dominant that we can expect the greatest progress of our ideas and the actions consequent upon their acceptance. The only value that strikes of an ameliorative—reformist—character have is that of teaching the workers the worth of solidarity. However, it could be plausibly contended that the sole result of the "immediate demands" attitude of the reformists and their disguised—sometimes innocent—allies the "practical" revolutionists has been to demoralize rather than revolutionize the workers. It has been—and still is—the so-called backward and peasant countries like Spain and Italy where the workers are most revolutionary; whereas those countries where the workers have achieved a great deal of the demands

of the immediate program of fifty years ago seem furthest from revolution. The ruling class of Britain, for instance, with its traditional shrewdness has come to realise that a healthy wage-slave is a damn sight more profitable than an unhealthy and consequently discontented one, hence the advent of the welfare state.

The reformist trade-unionist endeavour to improve the *status quo* is thus utterly incongruous with the revolutionary transformation of the social structure envisaged and worked for by the anarchist.

It is indeed absurd to expect that anarchy can be achieved, as it were, overnight by virtue of one revolutionary outbreak. The superstition of government has too strong a hold on the popular masses for them to be expected to become one hundred per cent. free from the taint of authority in a moment. But this does not mean that we should in any way dilute our ideas or compromise our principles by participating in reformist activities under the delusive impression that thereby we shall be practical. Even though perhaps several revolutionary uprisings will be necessary before the foundations of a free and classless society can be laid, it must be the task of the anarchist to agitate and act at all times in uncompromising accord with his ideals; to make them not simply intellectual conceptions to which he pays lip-service but an integral part of his existence. As the famous American anarchist monthly, *Mother Earth* wrote in its March 1909 issue:

"The pyramid of lies, fraud, exploitation, and suppression called modern society is built upon monopoly backed by violence. To destroy this body and soul-killing foundation of robbery and rule is the true purpose of progress; indeed 'tis the initial step towards a human civilization. Pandering to popular stupidity is not the means. Fear of offending delicate sensibilities will not accomplish the object. Begging alleviation of the powers that be will not prove a cure. Salvation lies on the road of persistent agitation; the bold breaking of icons; the complete unmasking of respectable fraud and emasculated reforms. The weakening of the authoritarian spirit; the corresponding strengthening of self-reliance; practical training in co-operative efforts, based on solidarity of interests; and direct action, individual and collective, in all phases of human endeavour—herein lies the hope of efficient achievement."

Let these brave words be our inspiration and it will not be our fault that the cause of anarchy fails; but let us remain week-end revolutionaries and coffee-house philosophers, or seek to bask in the fading rays of past activities, then we shall indeed deserve the epithets of our opponents.

GERMINAL.

## Film on S. Africa

MR. Michael Scott's film *Civilisation on Trial in South Africa* which was shown privately in London last week can be booked by any organisation with a 16 mm. projector, on application to the African Relations Council, 144, Southampton Row, W.C.1.

THE exhibition of drawings and cartoons by John Olday, described in an article in last Sunday's *Reynolds News* is open until October 31st, at 28A Tavistock Road, London, W.2 (near Westbourne Park Station), from 12 to 6 every day except Thursday.

## CITIES IN EVOLUTION by Patrick Geddes. (Williams and Norgate, 18/-)

"PATRICK GEDDES, though dead these eighteen years, is fast becoming a rallying centre for the best minds of this generation: his thought, like that of his old associate and friend, Kropotkin, will probably guide the future, since the mechanists and the Marxists, in the present hour of their triumph, demonstrate the failure of their philosophies to do justice to either life or the human spirit." These are the words of Lewis Mumford in the August *Architectural Review* in an important essay occasioned by the reappearance of Geddes' *Cities of Evolution*, first published in 1915.

This new edition of a pioneer work on sociology and town planning (prepared by the *Outlook Tower Association* of Edinburgh and the *Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction*), has been pruned of certain chapters which are no longer apposite, but has added to it thirty-two pages of illustrations from Geddes' *Cities and Town Planning Exhibition*, and several appendices, including one contributed by John Turner

and W. Keating Clay on his "thought diagrams".

In her introduction, Jaqueline Tyrwitt writes: "Perhaps it is only now—in the period following the second World War—that the time is really ripe for the reprinting of this book. Now that the almost contemporary works of Bergson and Kropotkin, friends to whom Geddes frequently refers, have become part of a normal education. Now that simultaneous thinking—a process that seemed almost magical when demonstrated by Geddes with the aid of his folded papers—has become insisted upon in the popular writings of every philosophical scientist. Now that sight from car and aeroplane, together with developments in cinematography and television, have made simultaneous vision a common human experience. Now that not only the work of the Peckham Health Centre, but almost every book published on popular psychology give overwhelming evidence of the profound effects of the opportunities available in the immediate environment upon the physical and mental development of the individual."

"Geddes desired to see created in his own time an environment in which man could express this simultaneity of his being: his one-ness with the social ideals,



the scientific developments and the physical conditions of his own time and place. He was certain that an urban environment could be created that would make clear the continuity of time through the lives of men, by means of an architectural expression of their aspirations and of the direct relationship of all methods of contemporary development—technical, scientific and artistic. He was equally convinced that the expression of these universal requirements could only become creatively effective when coloured, and modified by the individual characteristics of life and action conditioned by the environment of each particular city."

## THE COLOSSUS OF MAROUSSI, by Henry Miller (Penguin Books, 1/6).

THIS is a welcome addition to the Penguin series. Henry Miller is here at his best, if not at his most typical. The book, which was written in 1940, is a chronicle of his visit to Greece just before the war, but like many of the best "travel books", it is more concerned with the impact of what the author saw and experienced, upon himself, than with an objective description of the country.

It is evident that Miller's journey to Greece had a profound emotional and spiritual effect upon him which he describes in these words:

"I love those men, each and every one, for having revealed to me the true proportions of the human being. I love the soil in which they grew, the tree from which they sprang, the light in which they flourished, the goodness, the integrity, the charity which they emanated. They brought me face to face with myself, they cleansed me of hatred and jealousy and envy. And not least of all, they demonstrated by their own example that life could be lived magnificently on any scale, in any climate, under any conditions."

## From our stock . . .

Lowell Naeve's *A Field of Broken Stones* . . . . . 12/6

William Steig writes, "I was very much moved . . . It was very inspiring to me to see how our brutal and stupid social machine, for all its 'power', can be embarrassed and confounded and almost put to rout by single individuals who, having somehow avoided being paralyzed by our society, have the sense of life to insist on simple natural human rights."

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## Credo Quia Absurdum\*

\* "I believe what is absurd."—TERTULLIAN.

IT is rather difficult to see why the decision of the Pope to proclaim on November 1st the dogma of the Bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven, should have caused such a stir in religious and political circles. After all, it is no harder to swallow than other Christian teachings, and anyway, so we are told, most Catholics have believed it to be true for centuries.

The new dogma is however, in a way which is incomprehensible to rational people, timed to be an offensive in the cold war. The Rome correspondent of the *News Chronicle* writes that, "the Pope's decision will probably increase the religious fervour of Catholic working men, who are natural targets of Communist anti-Church propaganda. It is stressed by Catholic observers in Rome that every dogma proclamation tends to increase religious feeling among the Catholic masses."

There has been a lot of speculation as to the effect of the dogma upon the many "intellectual" converts to Catholicism of the last few years. The *New Statesman* says, "Ernest and able men and women, economists and other intellectuals, who have found in Rome a refuge from the intolerably bleak prospect presented by modern science, will be forced once again to examine the basis of their faith." But these people have already replaced reason by faith. Why should we suppose that just one more miracle would make any difference for them? The *News Chronicle* puts it this way: "The forthcoming proclamation may cause scepticism among scientists and intellectuals, especially among those about to be converted to Catholicism. This number, however, is regarded as negligible compared with the millions of Catholics whose faith is expected to be reinforced by this new call upon it."

The most interesting thing about the dogma is that the Pope's decision has been arrived at after he had conducted a poll of opinion among thousands of clergy during the past four years, with 95 per cent. of favourable replies. Dogmas, says the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, are "truths revealed by God." But we never knew until now that "God's truth" was revealed by a sort of Gallup Poll of the lowest common multiple of credulity.

More comical still is the attitude of the Church of England, which is bitterly hurt because it says that the Church of Rome has put one more obstacle in the way of a "Reunion of Christendom". (The Church of England objects because there is no authority in the Bible for the teaching of the bodily assumption of the Virgin.) But the Catholic Church has always made it plain that it is not prepared to meet any other Christian body half-way. "It is known that for Rome there is no other way towards this goal than the acceptance of the faithful teaching of the truth by the Catholic Church." As the *Freethinker* said recently, "the Church of England, in an endeavour to out-herod Herod, has taken the extraordinary and unprecedented step of telling the Roman Catholic Church what it ought and what it ought not to believe."

Most disgusted of all, however, is our friend A.M. who, when in the Holy Land, a few years ago, paid five piastres to see the actual tomb where Our Lady is buried. At least, that's what they told him then.

But Catholic readers should be warned; if they have any doubts as to whether when they reach heaven they will meet, among all the disembodied spirits (how do they recognise each other?) an actual middle-aged woman who died some time between A.D. 35 and A.D. 50; they should hasten to dispel these doubts before November 1st, when the Pope will dip his gold pen, with the carved angels, into the specially-made inkwell, or they will certainly be destined for the other place.

For ourselves, we are inclined to say of her, as Jesus did, according to the Bible (John 11, 4), "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"



# Repression and Inflation

SINCE I last wrote, there have been two developments which have had considerable effect on the political situation here. One is the Korean war, the other is the rapidly growing inflation. The main effect of the Korean war has been to give great impetus to the militarisation of our economy. Compulsory military training for eighteen-year-old youths is to be introduced as soon as possible, and no less than £(A)120,000,000 is to be provided in the coming budget for defence expenditure. The people are being told that they must economise on other things and not behave as if these were normal times. Life is to be put on a war footing. The economies to provide the money for defence are, of course, to be made at the expense of such secondary matters as Health, Housing and Education.

A conference between the Federal Government and the premiers of the six states has just been held at Canberra, and the premiers were flatly told that this was the position. They were all very much opposed to this policy, as amounting to starving State instrumentalities for the benefit of the Federal Power (Health, Education and Housing are largely State and not Federal responsibilities). But there is not much they can do about it, as the Federal Government has the last word in financial matters.

It cannot be said that there is any enthusiasm in this country for the Korean War. They had great difficulty in raising a volunteer force of a thousand men. But, of course, there is to-day no "economic conscription" as there

was in 1939. It is said, and I believe rightly, that 70% of the volunteers in that year joined the army because of their unemployment and poverty. To-day in Australia, instead of unemployment, there is such a shortage of labour that hundreds of thousands of Europeans are being brought in, and even then the gap is not filled. Wages are higher than they have ever been in all our history, and a young man would be a super-patriot to leave a comfortable job with a 40-hour week and good pay, to risk health and life in the mud of Korea. Consequently, they are not doing it.

On the other hand, except for the Stalinists and their dupes in the Australian "Peace" Council, there is no support for the North Koreans, and it is accepted that they are the "aggressors". People here do not want a war, but would not resist it if their government entered a big conflict. The Federal Parliament unanimously supported action in Korea.

## The Communists

Soviet Russia is becoming increasingly unpopular as also is the Communist Party. It is a sort of reciprocal action. Everything that Russia does of an aggressive or anti-democratic character reacts against the Communist Party, rightly regarded as its stooges, and everything that the Communists do in the way of political strikes or staging noisy demonstrations for "peace" and "democracy" is regarded, again rightly, as being done solely in the interests of Soviet Russia. The Communists are losing ground in the Trade Unions, and where they do hold on, it is largely due to the use of fraud and forgery in the union ballots. Another effect of the Korean War has been to deaden much of the opposition to the Communist Party Dissolution Bill. Many members of the Labour Party now feel that it ought to be allowed to pass, especially as the Government accepted many Labour amendments which had the effect of cutting out some of the worst features of the original Bill. The only bone of contention now is the "onus of proof" clause—the statement that a person declared to be a Communist must prove that he is not one—which Labour declares to be against the "principles and practices of British justice". But the Government has modified even this, so that now, if a person declared to be a Communist will go into the witness box and swear that he is not, the onus of proof will be on the Crown. Labour has so far refused to accept this as being sufficient amendment, and wants the onus in all cases to be on the Crown. But its opposition has been greatly weakened by the Korean War, and especially by the violent support which the Communists have given to the North Koreans. The Communists themselves and their activities are the main argument in favour of the anti-Communist Bill. They make the task of its opponents very difficult, and, what is worse, they are discrediting the whole cause of peace, anti-conscription and anti-militarism. The latter cause was already weak enough, but now it has to contend with misrepresentation as being Communist. The pacifists here only number a few hundreds and do not include any "prominent people" as is apparently the case in England. As I indicated above, it is my opinion that the Australian people will acquiesce in war if it comes. Between the two world wars there was plenty of militant anti-militarism, pacifism, and anti-capitalism in Australia. It is so no longer, the chief reason being that under a "peace-economy" Australians were poverty-stricken, unemployed and socially insecure, while under a war-economy they have been prosperous, fully-employed and socially secure. They lack the political consciousness to see behind all this, and are perhaps the most shortsightedly materialistic people in the world.

## Inflation

The second big development here has been the growing inflation. It is getting almost beyond control and threatens the whole economy. The chief remedy

proposed is to revalue the Australian pound to equate with the pound sterling. At present there is a difference of 25% which was put on at the time of the Depression in 1930, and has ever since, because it is advantageous to the primary producers—wheat farmers, graziers, sheep-station owners, etc. These are represented in Parliament by the Country Party, led by Mr. Fadden, the present treasurer in the Menzies-Fadden Coalition Govern-

## LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

ment. This Country Party is easily the most conservative, narrow-minded, reactionary party in Australia, faithfully representing the economic and political interests of the big squatters (large graziers) though, of course, many rural people vote for it under the impression that it stands for the farmers' interests. This party is bitterly opposed to revaluation, however urgently it is needed to prevent further inflation. But these "patriots" would rather have the whole country suffer than see their profits endangered. The Liberal Party (i.e., Conservatives), representing the manufacturers and financiers, want revaluation as the present rates benefit only the primary producers. The Labour

Party which is supposed to represent the workers has so far resisted revaluation, because it is afraid of losing the country vote, which it needs if it is to regain office. It was the country vote which put it out of office at the last elections when the Communist issue was to the fore.

Consequently, the political situation is now very interesting. Menzies has threatened a double dissolution if the Labour-dominated Senate again rejects the Anti-Communist Bill, and he would try to fight an election on that issue alone; if he could do so I have no doubt that he would gain a smashing victory—probably three to one—in the House of Representatives, and a working majority in the Senate. That is how unpopular the Communists are. On the other hand, if there is a crisis over revaluation, if he cannot arrest the inflation, and if there is an election in which that issue largely figures, then the Labour Party would be almost certain of an equally smashing victory—since the rapidly-rising prices are becoming a menace to everyone's pockets. The pocket being, as someone once remarked, the most sensitive and vulnerable organ of the citizen of a democracy.

K. J. KENAFICK.

Melbourne,

## SHOWING THEM WHO'S BOSS IN KOREA

"NOTHING is ultimately right nor wrong, neither justice nor dishonour, neither good nor bad. The pervasive sense of personal insecurity reaches deep down from the physical to the spiritual; the issues are obscured and clogged by doubts. Everyone here but a moron is groping for some kind of ethical reinforcement to the main and obvious issue, and even that is bedevilled by the confusion and vagueness in which the issue is being waged."

So says war correspondent James Cameron in an article "We Follow the Road to Hell" in *Picture Post* (16/9/50).

"What," he asks, "are we trying to do in Korea? Drive the Communists back to the 38th Parallel? That is most certainly not the idea of the South Korean army, which has just as strident ambitions about 'unifying the country' as the North Koreans. Do we proceed then, to the Manchurian border, and if so how do we persuade the inhabitants of Communist-held Korea that their land reforms and so on have really been a bad idea? Do we really suppose that we shall get any co-operation from the folk who, by that time, will have been chased from one end to another of their miserable country in what legally isn't, but which so demonstrably is, an American-Russian war?"

He continues: "By far the majority of Korea's thirty million inhabitants are minimum smallholders trying to rid themselves of landlordism; for the entire two thousand years of their recorded history they have been a homogeneous race, once cultured, now dwindled by years of misrule and colonisation to their present state. The past five years have probably been the worst of all, with the ponderous hand of Russia in the north, and in the south an American military government gradually giving place to a landlord's administration backed by four hundred million E.C.A. dollars—a poor deal for the Koreans, either way."

"The old cliché that you can't fight Communism with bullets seems to me applicable here, where, as is well-known, we haven't even got enough bullets. So far the United Nations, in the person of the United States, is telling the Koreans practically nothing, because it is telling Asia nothing, and the reason for that would seem to be that we have nothing to tell."

"Meanwhile," concludes *Picture Post's* correspondent, "the war goes on, gradually reducing itself to the lowest common denominator of brutality."

In fact, it seems that the war in Korea, like most wars, generates more enthusiasm amongst those furthest away from it than amongst those on the spot. It was reported on September 6th (*Daily Mail*) that the South Korean aim was to conscript 150,000 men. Voluntary enlistment was abandoned because only 10,000 came forward. And in North Korea labour troubles have resulted in the dismissal of Hoe Sung-taek, the Minister of Labour. Commenting on the announcement from Pyongyang radio, the *Manchester Guardian* (18/9/50) says: "The mass recruitment of an unwilling or only partly willing labour force must have given rise to widespread resentment. This, the North Korean Government obviously could not afford to allow to go on, and a scapegoat had to be found. The Minister of Labour, who was in charge of the recruitment drive, was the obvious sacrifice."

A nineteen-year-old conscript, Reginald Streeter, wrote home from Korea, "We have got to show them who is boss out here. Some of us will be killed, one way or another..." He was.

The *Sunday Pictorial* told its readers, "There are other Reginald Streeters who will die in that distant country. If their deaths can avert the loss of millions of young lives in a third world war, can we say that they died in vain?"

It may be comforting to be reconciled in advance, by the *Sunday Pictorial*, to the deaths of "other Reginald Streeters", but the suggestion that the present battles in Korea can in any way avert a third world war indicates either a complete ignorance of the causes of wars and the nature of the present one, or else a cynical contempt for the people who read it and for the "other Reginald Streeters" who are to be written off as our glorious dead in letting the world know "who is boss."

## HAPPY HONDURAS

IN British Honduras, prices have risen by 40% since devaluation, while wages have been kept stabilized.

The preferential tariff system has raised the costs of imports and reduced the prices for exports.

The only surgeon in the colony estimates that 80% of the 60,000 inhabitants have syphilis.

## Through the Press

### HORRIFIED

A girl prisoner smuggled a pair of black silk panties into a reformatory near Milan and rented them out to other girls on a daily basis. The nuns who look after the prisoners heard about the panties and, horrified, burned them publicly—whereupon all the prisoners mutinied and barricaded themselves in their cells for two days and nights.

*Sunday Pictorial*, 17/9/50.

### WAS IT RIGHT?

Was it right that one-half of the world should have too much food while the other half was dying of starvation, asked Mr. A. Ratnayake, Minister of Food and Agriculture in Ceylon, speaking at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference in Dublin yesterday.

Mr. Hanumanthaiya (India) said they had read in the newspapers of food being burned or thrown into the sea to create scarcities, and raise prices. If these conditions still prevailed, he asked the United States delegation and other countries responsible to desist and send their surpluses to needy countries.

Mr. A. P. Perera (Ceylon) said they could not accept the statement of the United States delegate that the amount of food destroyed was small.

*Manchester Guardian*, 11/9/50.

### DEFENDER OF DEMOCRACY

Contempt for any pretence at democracy has never been concealed by General MacArthur. He expressed it most freely when, as U.S. Army Chief of Staff, during the bitter struggles in the great depression of the early thirties, he broke and sabred ex-Servicemen hunger-marchers.

At this time he issued General Staff Training Manual No. 200-5 on citizenship, in which he said: "Democracy is the direct rule of the people and it has been repeatedly tried without success," and "Democracy results in mobocracy, demagogism, licence, agitation, discontent, anarchy."

—Letter in *Picture Post*, 16/9/50.

### SPARE THE ROD...

Foster-parents in children's homes controlled by the Essex County Council's Children's Committee have been told they may now use corporal punishment in exceptional cases of misconduct.

This punishment was abolished before the last war and has now been reintroduced following complaints by foster-parents that the behaviour of the older children is deteriorating.

*The Star*, 1/9/50.

### APPLAUSE FROM GALLERY

When Representative Rich told the House last week that what it needed most was a good psychiatrist, the gallery applauded so enthusiastically that the Speaker had to restrain them.

*Industrial Worker* (Chicago), 1/9/50.

### TAKING TO DRINK

Seven areas in Scotland changed from "dry" to "wet" during the period 1939-49 when, states the Scottish Home Rule Department, 11 polls were held under the Temperance (Scotland) Act.

*Manchester Guardian*, 21/9/50.

## If He Talks About 'Peace'—Call The Police!

AFTER wrangling for about two weeks on the question of the Anti-Communist Bill, it has now been passed by the American Senate, with a majority of 70-7. It is typical of the politicians' disregard of human rights that the opposition was based on tactical grounds rather than on the infringement of civil liberties.

The minority opinion was that the Bill, as suggested by McCarran, which included among other measures branding the basic aims of Communism as "criminal in intent" and the enforced registration of all communists, would drive the communists underground, thus making them a greater danger to the Government. Therefore they argued it would be better to leave self-confessed Communists alone and deal with potential spies in a time of emergency. As was to be expected, an agreement was reached with the bulk of the suggestions from both sides remaining intact.

It is obvious that the legislative powers that such a Bill can impose is going to affect those other groups in America who are unsympathetic to the U.S. Government but who are certainly not Communists. Already it is reported that "Various cities have been passing their own legislation, and in Birmingham, Alabama all peace organisations have been put under a ban. The local radio periodically makes an announcement that 'if anyone comes to your door and talks about peace, hold him and call the police'."

While we have little sympathy with the Communists who need no lessons in

the suppression of individual liberty, it is obvious that through the Bill nationalistic sentiments will be encouraged and used by the American Government as a weapon against labour disputes. It is a popular tactic, already in use in Australia, and there are danger signals that Britain will follow suit.

## "SELLING AMERICA" MEETS SALE RESISTANCE

SENATOR Benton from Connecticut, of the old advertising firm of Bowles and Benton has been arguing that the Americans haven't "sold" U.S.A. right, and that's why we have this unpleasantness in Korea.

A multi-billion dollar campaign, says the *Industrial Worker* (Chicago), has been conducted for Free Enterprise or whatever idea is supposed to get "sold" when Mr. Benton "sells" America. There have been a lot of free expensive samples dished out, too. Powerful connections have also been used, really pulling strings for Mr. Benton's side, so strong at times as to throw any carping local critics into the local hoosegow, or to die on the bleak penitentiary islands as in Greece.

Yet, as Senator Benton, an advertising man of great acumen, observes, the idea and plan or whatever it is, just doesn't seem to sell to the 94% of humanity that lives outside the borders of U.S.A.

After all that, isn't it about time to wonder if there couldn't be something wrong with the merchandise? That the social scheme that Mr. Benton wants to sell just doesn't appeal to the customers and perhaps is quite unsuited to their needs?

For instance, we sent a lot of food to countries where folks were starving. Sailors whom we believe, corroborated by newspaper reporters who are somewhat dubious perhaps, insist a lot of this food was wasted, thrown into harbours, because the merchandising agencies through which it was to go couldn't find how to sell it to hungry people who had no money. Exporting both our food and our economic scheme of things meant that the food got dumped into the harbours of the Pireaus and Shanghai.

Since, continues the *Industrial Worker*, there were simple souls among these starvelings who had old-fashioned ideas that the thing to do with surplus food was for the hungry to eat whether they had money or not, this American way didn't click. To police these people U.S.A. backed up Chiang Kai Shek and similar gentry elsewhere, who were also convinced that those so imprudent as to lack money should not be fed.

The population thus became divided into the submissive and the subversives. Since the submissives under this state of affairs tended to die quietly of starvation, the subversives became a hindrance to the salesmanship campaign.

## THE AMERICAN BOMBING OF BRITISH TROOPS

THE useless waste of life in time of war is always tragic, and the accident in Korea which led to the death of over a hundred British troops is no more or less appalling that the death of thousands of other soldiers. If the American airmen had bombed the Northern Koreans as was intended, the loss of lives would have been regarded by the British and Americans as a great victory. Such is the value placed on human life when it depends on which side men happen to find themselves before they can get any help or sympathy.

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## Men of Blood

(1)

HIS vocation as a soldier revealed itself at the outbreak of the South African war. "At that moment I knew, once and for all, that war was in my blood. I was determined to fight and I didn't mind who or what." . . . In fact, the General's military career was more like that of a knight errant, a brilliant amateur fighting for fighting's sake, than that of a modern professional soldier. "My soldiering," he says, "was without ambition." . . . In peace-time he tried to escape boredom by indulging in such substitutes for fighting as break-neck acrobatic games, "pig-sticking" and even duelling with cobras.

—Review of Gen. Sir A. Carton de Wiart's autobiography in *Times Literary Supplement*, 25/8/50.

(2)

WHETHER General Lewis B. Hershey, head of Selective Service, was just feeling out of sorts, or whether the recent UP dispatch in the *Los Angeles Times*, quoting a last month's Rotary Club address of his, was too fragmentary to be accurate, we'll probably never know, but whatever the explanation, the busy General's remarks are worth a passing notice.

The report quotes General Hershey directly:

"In the last war we had 7,000,000 killers and another 7,000,000 to back them up. But the killers are old now, 32 or 33 . . . many of them are used up, burned out, in spite of brilliant war records."

In indirect quotation, General Hershey is said to have pointed out that "peace-time killers are antisocial, but that now the armed forces need legalized killers to defend the free nations of the world."

Can it be that General Hershey doesn't like his work?

Back in 1943, when Selective Service was busy "processing" many thousands of young men every month, General Hershey went on record with another curious statement. In June of that year, he gave a House Appropriations Committee some discouraging facts about the draft, observing:

"When it appears that about a third of your rejections for white soldiers are for mental and nervous reasons, you take pause to wonder how you can run a successful war. Maybe we are all unfit for modern war."

Manas (Los Angeles), 9/8/50.

## Meetings and Announcements

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Lecture-Discussion Meetings are held

Every Sunday at 7.30 at

THE TRADE UNION CLUB,

Great Newport Street W.C.1,

(near Leicester Square Station)

October 1st Speaker: Albert Meltzer

"CAN WE BUILD A SYNDICALIST BRITAIN?"

October 8th Speaker: F. A. Ridley

"KOREA—THE 'SPAIN' OF THE THIRD WORLD WAR?"

October 15th Speaker: Philip Sansom

"CONSTRUCTIVE ANARCHY"

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### OPEN-AIR MEETINGS

Every Sunday at 3.30 at Regent's Park (near Zoo South Entrance)

Speakers:

Albert Meltzer, S. E. Parker, Jack Rubin, Philip Sansom

### GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

OUTDOOR MEETINGS every Sunday at

7 p.m. at

MAXWELL STREET

with

Frank Leech, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw, J. Raeside

### COLNE & NELSON DISTRICT

Discussion Group held fortnightly.

October 1st at 2.30 p.m.

at

Twisters and Drawers Club, Cambridge Street, Colne (Lancs.)

### NORTH-EAST LONDON GROUP

Discussion Meetings Fortnightly

7.30 p.m.

Enquiries c/o Freedom Press.

OCT. 3rd

"THE MYTH OF THE SUPERMAN"

OCT. 17th

Ted Mann  
"ANARCHISM AND EDUCATION"

## SOCIAL CREDIT PATH TO ANARCHISM?

SIR,

The letter from D.R. criticising my comments on "Is War Inevitable?" misses many points.

The first is that war is inevitable under any financial system which believes in maintaining a welfare state, a "fair share" standard of existence (not living), "full employment", a thing queerly called "collective ownership", high taxation and the rest of the totalitarian nightmare which Fabian socialism has now foisted upon us.

The second point is that the anarchists, however sound their idealist dreams, have little ethical (and therefore no economic) understanding of their own philosophy let alone anyone else's. Therefore, while proclaiming the beauty and joy of the uttermost brotherly love and individual liberty they see no way to the realisation of their dreams but up a path of revolution wherein both brotherly love and the other bloke's liberty go overboard.

The Social Credit case is that the anarchists are right in their desire to set men free from the shackles of all the power-mongers—whether these be enthroned in the Treasury-cum-International Bankers' parlour, in a Cabinet of power and money-drunk Ministers, or any executive committee of Trade Unionists, party politicians or company directors. But the Social Credit case is that anarchists have no earthly chance of taking a single step towards their goal while they neglect to understand the money machine with which mankind is kept enslaved. To inveigh against "capitalists' appropriation of the products of labour" is to denounce too many millions of the so-called working-class.

For in one way or another many workers are little capitalists in the sense that they use other people's labour and make a profit out of it. Inside the Debt System to make a profit out of somebody else is what every Trade Union worker is doing, either directly or obliquely, no less than every fishmonger or old clothes man.

Because of the anarchists' failure to understand the money machine all their curious experiments in "workers' control" and isolation in remote villages have proved either ridiculous or tragic failures. The late S. G. Hobson's Building Guild experiment was successful until the bank killed it with the power of money, i.e., debt.

The Social Credit case is that ownership of wealth is the inherent right of every citizen; that "workers' control" without responsibility to the community is a myth and that the Debt System now obtaining is designed to prevent any worker even owning his own back yard much less holding responsibility for running his own coalmine or shoe factory. Hence our State Boards of bankers' stooges who run our present "state-owned" industries under the system of nationalised capitalism which we now endure.

The freedom of every man inheres in his right to exercise choice in what he shall have and how he shall live (only under the law of the community's acquiescence). His effective demand of what he wants inheres in his having the cash in his hand to buy what he wants.

## "STOP WAR" CONFERENCE IN GLASGOW

WE have been notified of a forthcoming anti-war conference in Glasgow, to be held by the Stop War Committee. This is a committee formed of delegates from several organisations (listed below) and seems to have been wise enough to keep out the Communists.

We are pleased to draw readers' attention to this activity, since there is obviously a real need for a non-Stalinist peace organisation to rally the considerable amount of honest anti-militarist opinion in this country.

The Committee's own communication follows; and readers interested should get in touch with the Stop War Committee (Chairman: Annie D. Maxton), 48, Dundas Street, Glasgow, C.1.

### STOP WAR CONFERENCE.

THE peace forces indicated below, invite you to attend or to send delegates to the above Conference which has been called for the purpose of forming a large representative committee of those opposed to settling international disputes by resorting to WAR, and for rallying support to that committee.

The Conference will be held in St. Andrew's Mid Hall (Berkeley Street) on Saturday, 14th October, 1950, from 2.30 p.m. until 5.0 p.m.

The following resolution will be put to the Conference:—

That as the experience of the workers of all countries concerned in the First World War has shown, and as the subsequent experience of the Second World War has demonstrated, wars are futile, since otherwise it would not be necessary for the present preparations for a Third World War to be made. It will be found later that both of these past Wars were avoidable, therefore this Conference holds that a Third World War must not be allowed to occur.

This Conference disapproves of the war preparations that are now being made.

It pledges itself:—

- (1) To oppose all those agencies, wherever found, whose aim is to create war mentality.
- (2) Opposes conscription in principle and demands its abolition.
- (3) It appeals to all working-class and other organisations inspired by ideas of international well-being to stand against war and support opposition to war in all countries.

(Sgd.) ANNIE D. MAXTON,  
CATH. MARSHALL,  
ALEX. YOUNG.

### List of Organisations:

Fellowship of Reconciliation.  
Independent Labour Party.  
No Conscription League.  
Peace Pledge Union.  
United Socialist Movement.  
Women's International League.  
Workers' Open Forum.

FROM PAGE ONE

## As WE Think Fit!

be heard and to gain adherents if they are acceptable. Any curtailment of such freedom means that the government is the arbiter and the people are not free.

Again, it is immaterial that the Western idea of freedom is largely an illusion. It is an illusion which contains many hard-won gains, and in which many people believe. It is an illusion which Western governments claim to believe in; when they begin to limit political and civil liberty they expose the hypocrisy of government.

### Isaacs' Red Scare

So much for America, the country of the Chicago martyrs, of Sacco and Vanzetti, and of the Scotsboro' Negroes. But the same thing is on the move here. The government have not suddenly discovered that Communists are a "danger". For years now they have been a convenient scapegoat with which to discredit every unofficial strike. Their "sabotage" has served as an excuse to cover up many governmental and T.U.C. failures in industrial relations. For the Labour Government they serve the same purpose as the "Trotskyists" did in Russia, or the "Titoists" do in Central Europe. Their usefulness in this respect is enhanced by the fact that there is a speck of truth in the government allegations. For Communists are just vicarious patriots, with a "my country right or wrong" mentality not less strong than that of the officially encouraged patriotism. Only "their country" is the Soviet Union. When the government threatens to take legislative powers to "deal with"

the Red menace, they mean that they claim the right to interfere with a man's liberty if they dislike his opinions and can claim that those opinions constitute a threat to "security". Such powers would be a denial of civil liberty, for a man ought to have the right to propagate his ideas and the rest of us ought to have the right to accept those ideas or dismiss them as we think fit. As we think fit, not as the government does. For when a government claims powers under sedition acts or special defence regulations it is denying our right to choose and imposing its choice on us. Such a position is, in effect, totalitarian.

### Against Industrial Organisation

In fact, the situation is worse, for the government is not honest in its intentions. Isaacs says that there is in existence a permanent organisation of unofficial strike committees, an industrial alliance. If there is, it is only what the Shop Stewards movement was in 1914-1918. How many present members of the government were associated with Shop Stewards movement? If an unofficial industrial alliance exists, it does so because the official trade union movement so patently fails to fight for the interests of the workers. For Isaacs it is enough to label it Communist (and how they play into his hands with their visits to Warsaw) to make legal suppression appear desirable. Meanwhile, the Communists also gain the adherence of many unthinking malcontents.

Let us make it quite clear that we

have no sympathy with the Communists. The government found them acceptable allies when they acted as strike breakers during the war. The Communist ideology absolutely excludes freedom for the individual, and they have little right to squeal when the pinch comes to them. What concerns us is that the rights of minority opinion, however distasteful, should be safeguarded. And that the rights of other minorities should not be destroyed under cover of a drive against a "Red menace".

### Safeguarding Civil Liberty

How can civil liberties be safeguarded? Much can be done by individual M.P.'s, and by influential intellectuals. It is a sad fact that such people often show a much greater regard for civil liberty and the struggle to maintain it, than do the mass of workers or their organizations. In the past liberty has been often fought for by isolated individuals or small groups, and with results disproportionate to their apparent weakness. Civil liberty, however, rests on much more secure foundations if it is ingrained in the minds of the population at large. Governments are much more securely restrained by a widespread and active public opinion than by isolated but determined individuals in influential positions.

In the last resort however the struggle for civil liberty remains an individual one, for public opinion is made by individuals. What is needed is the desire for liberty and the determination to fight for it.

## Letters to the Editors . . .

Demand is the dynamic of supply, and the suppliers always have and always will leap to supply him. Hitherto, such supplies have only been possible by the investment of (1) investments of saved money or (2) the creation by banks of cheque-money out of an ink-pot. Both of these ways of financing industry have always borne the burden of a whole long chain of interest costs—not only on the money which financed the boot or shirt factory but on the gas, electricity, petrol, desks, typewriters, etc. Under Social Credit the ink-pot would be nationalised, and any band of anarchists who wanted to set up a building guild (after the manner of that suggested by Mr. Leslie Kirby—*Freedom*, Sept. 16th) would instruct their local banker to 'phone Cripps and order him to credit them with whatever figure written on a cheque they required to buy the tackle to start their building job. Their credentials—or collateral security—would be what all collateral security now is, namely, the skill and labour in the hands of the men to produce the real wealth: the houses. Without that chain of usury costs all prices would be payable by incomes earned under workers' own control. The wage system would have been superseded.

This letter is very long. But if readers are interested in making their vague anarchist aspirations into a living society the Social Credit money mechanism shows them how to do it—now.

And—the alternative is inevitable war.  
GLADYS BING.

[Mrs. Bing is quite right when she says that her letter is very long. In our desire to allow her enough rope to hang herself, we have left ourselves with no space to fully answer her. This we shall do in our next issue, although we don't think any anarchist could miss the self-contradictory nature of some of her own arguments and the lack of understanding of Anarchism exposed by others.—EDS.]

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### ESPERANTO AGAIN!

IT was with great astonishment that I read the article *Esperanto or Desperanto?* in *Freedom* of 2/9/50. The arguments which I read there are unworthy of an anarchist. (1) Comrade A.P., the author of this article deals with a subject which he does not know. He may understand English, German, Italian, etc., but unfortunately, he does not understand Esperanto. So how can he judge it "a soulless language"? Would you accept an article from me on the Hungarian language which I do not understand?

(2) It is naive and childish to say that he who would fraternise with a foreigner, needs to learn his language. Do you imagine that a worker is able to learn the nine languages which Comrade A.P. is so proud of knowing? Sympathy of the heart is not enough—the communication of thought is also of great importance.

(3) To mix up Esperanto with the theories of Generalissimo Stalin is ridiculous. To teach children to speak, to walk, to read and to write—is that also dictatorship? I would point out that the Great Joseph liquidated the esperantist movement in his empire, at the same time, more or less, as the anarchist movement.

(4) The Esperantist Congress which was held in Paris, was that of the bourgeois movement. The workers' movement (S.A.T.), is completely independent, and has held its congress at Turin. An important faction of the S.A.T. is anarchist. To criticise Esperanto under the pretext that the bourgeoisie use it and make stupid propaganda for it is just as ridiculous as travelling on foot under the pretext that imbeciles travel by train.

(5) "Even if there could be a shorter way to knowledge . . . what would be the use of life then?" This is a reactionary argument. One might as well say to the workers, "Why work shorter hours? Where would be the pleasure in life?"

I think myself that the revolutionary workers have everything to gain from the study of Esperanto which permits them, directly, and without central committees with interpreters (*m'est-ce pas A.P.*) to exchange ideas, to understand each other, and to prepare together for their common struggle.

Paris. R. BOURNAZEL.  
P.S.—I write in French, regretting that I am unable to write in Japanese. This would give work to an interpreter (A.P., for an example), and "There is not a longer or a shorter way to understand!"

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## ARE WE TOO LIGHT-HEARTED?

DEAR COMRADES,

Being an employee of a large Iron Foundry and therefore hearing the general talk among the men, I have come to the conclusion that most of my workmate's leisure time is given to sports.

While it is good for people to get a sufficient measure of healthy recreation and light-hearted pleasure, it is unwise to indulge in these to the exclusion of the development of a sound social sense.

G. LEAF.

## ANARCHIST MEETINGS IN CENTRAL LONDON

MEETINGS at the Trade Union Club, Great Newport Street, re-commence on Sunday, 1st Oct. These meetings (which are again to be held every Sunday at 7.30) became increasingly popular during the 1949/50 session, and a fairly regular crowd of people attended them, the Trade Union Club being readily accessible to people from all parts of London.

These meetings provide an opportunity for serious discussion of various aspects of anarchism and related topics after the lectures, and in addition to anarchist speakers we have been fortunate in having guest speakers who are well-known specialists in their own subjects, such as F. A. Ridley, Norman Haire, Charles Duff and Dora Russell. After the meetings there is always time for social contact over a drink or a cup of coffee, and we are particularly glad to make the acquaintance of people newly interested in the anarchist movement.

Details of the meetings are always published in advance in *Freedom*.

## PRESS FUND

Sept. 8th—Sept. 22nd:

London: G.O. 5/-; Anon\* 2/6; Douglas: M.C.\* 2/6; York: H.A.A. 4/6; Wooler: Mrs. R.\* 2/6; Peterborough: A.W. 5/-; Swansea: R.R. £2/16/0; London: J.R.B.\* 5/-; Fulham: W.E.D.\* 10/-; London: D.E.S.J. 1/6; London: A.M.\* 5/-; Callington: P.J. 3/2; Hall: M.A. 1/2; London: H.B.G. £1.

Total	£6 3 10
Previously acknowledged	£187 5 7
1950 TOTAL TO DATE	£193 9 5

\*After initials indicates contributors to the 5/- a month scheme proposed by a London reader.

## FREEDOM Anarchist Fortnightly Price 3d.

Postal Subscription Rates  
6 months 4/6 (U.S.A. \$1).  
12 months 8/6 (U.S.A. \$2).  
Special Subscription Rates for 2 copies  
6 months 7/6 (\$1.50).  
12 months 15/- (\$3).

Cheques, P.O.'s and Money Orders should be made out to FREEDOM PRESS, crossed a/c Payee, and addressed to the publishers.

FREEDOM PRESS  
27 Red Lion Street  
London, W.C.1 England  
Tel.: Chancery 8364.