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Freedom

ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

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Threepence

"The art of Government is
the organisation of idola-
tory."

George Bernard SHAW

On the Eve of the Sheffield "Peace Congress"

PEACE and the WOLVES

THE Sheffield Peace Congress and the discussions going on in the United Nations serve to direct attention not merely to the desirability of peace but to the means necessary to achieve it. We would like to stress the idea of achieving peace, rather than that of "preserving" it. The peoples of the great powers are too apt to congratulate themselves on enjoying peace (even if in ever briefer intervals) when they themselves are not directly involved in a declared war. They too often forget that war has been continuous in some part of the world for the past forty or more years. They do not even consider it a state of war when a government wages continuous war on its people by means of a secret police, forced labour, concentration camps and the like. This situation may be termed "peace" by some; but it is certainly not a condition which anarchists desire to preserve. Nor do we think that any honest, humane persons would regard our feelings as destructive of desirable conditions.

We have often enough indicated our hostility towards war. We have sufficiently stressed, too, our disbelief in the possibility of destroying totalitarian tyranny by going to war. And, finally, we have also made clear our attitude towards totalitarian regimes, such as those of the Cominform Empire; for we do not focus our attention on the struggle between the Russian government and its satellites, on the one hand, and the Anglo-American group on the other. For us the main struggle here is the struggle between the totalitarian governments and the populations they oppress. In a less acute form this same struggle exists between democratic governments and their subjects. Our sympathies lie with the ruled against the rulers. Whatever the political rivalries of the powers, we stress the common interest of the peoples of the

world against all who exploit them and deprive them of the opportunity to organise their own lives.

THE DISARMAMENT ISSUE

This bald statement must serve as a background for our attitude towards the Sheffield Peace Congress. First and foremost, of course, is the fact that it is a Communist outfit. This means that whatever ends it seems to serve, its real purpose is to advance the foreign policy of Russia. It is only necessary to recall the "People's Convention" which the British Communist Party organised in the winter of 1940-41 when Russia was allied to Nazi Germany and the British Communist Party was consequently opposed to the war. The People's Convention demanded a negotiated peace, sought to mobilise all sentimental anti-war opinion, with all the familiar trappings of petitions and public statements by prominent intellectuals, preferably non-Communists. Six months later Hitler invaded Russia, the British Communists became pro-war overnight and the People's Convention was dropped, leaving its sentimental pacifist adherents looking, and perhaps feeling, very foolish.

It is needless to indicate that the same purpose underlies the Sheffield outfit.

ATTLEE'S BROADSIDE

In the circumstances, most that Attlee had to say about the Congress was perfectly justified. He stressed the obvious fact that the Cominform countries which represent themselves as peaceful, are in fact about as peaceful as Hitler and Goebbels. He might have been more modest about the peace-loving intentions of the Democratic powers—we have often stressed that all governmental regimes resort to war, and derive certain important benefits from war. For he could have gone on to point out that the Democracies are not able to organise Peace Congresses inside the Cominform countries and denounce their rulers as warmongers.

The Daily Worker's reply to Attlee was interesting. They sought to give the impression of a point by point examination of his speech. But they wholly omitted to mention or discuss Silone's anecdote of the open contempt for truthfulness expressed by the old Comintern, which Attlee tellingly recounted. He also punctured the democratic façade of elected delegates. "It was announced in a Viennese paper that the Austrian delegates would be elected at a meeting to be held on Oct. 21st. Sounds alright, doesn't it? However, as early as Oct. 5th application was

made for visas for sixteen named delegates. The results of the 'election' were known sixteen days before." The Daily Worker made no mention of this.

"HUMANISING WAR"

They scored a point over Attlee's statement that "You cannot humanise war, you cannot draw up a set of 'Queensberry rules' which will rid it of its horrors. The only answer is to root out war itself, war and the causes which make it." The Daily Worker rightly points out that this contradicts the Hague Convention, which seeks to humanise war, and the Nuremberg Trials which condemned many Germans for waging war in complete disregard of the laws and customs of war."

On the other hand it could be said that Attlee was truthful, and merely let the cat out of the bag; for the fact is that in war, it is not rules, but policy and expediency which determines the choice of military method. This was the basis for our denunciation of the Nuremberg trials—which Russia and the Communists, be it remembered, declared to be altogether too mild.

Mr. Attlee said of the Sheffield Congress that it was "an appeal by the wolves to get the sheep to demonstrate against the use of shepherds and sheep-dogs." In this he gets near the knuckle, perhaps nearer than he intended, for though we regard the Communists and their dupes as properly compared to wolves and sheep, we find the rest apt in a sense he did not intend. For if the sheep should avoid the wolves, they also have much to gain by freeing themselves from shepherds who fleece them and sell them as mutton.

THE REALITY BEHIND THE BATTLE OF WORDS

Let us, however, pierce to the core of the matter. The fact is that the Western Powers have decided to re-arm against Russia. The purpose of the Stockholm Peace Petition and its offshoot at Sheffield is explicitly to limit armaments. Such congresses are held, however, exclusively outside Russia and the Cominform countries. Attlee and Truman seek to strengthen the armed power of Democracies; Stalin and the Peace Congresses seek to weaken it. Stated thus bluntly it is clear that the Congress has nothing to do with peace—and, let us state, Anglo-American re-armament has nothing to do with it, either.

REALISM IN PEACE

Once again we face the question of the past fifty years—how does it come about that no-one desires war, yet it

has been an almost continuous shadow over our generation? It is obvious, as Attlee pointed out, that one does not need a petition to know that men and women desire peace. And to anarchists, at least, it is obvious that one does not get what one wants by signing on a dotted line, still less when it is such a crooked line as the Communists provide.

Those who oppose war used to think that it was as simple as just acting out one's desire for peace and refusing to support war or its preparation. But new problems appeared after the first world war. There was not much difference between the political structure of Imperial Germany of the Kaiser and the British Empire. But there was an undoubted difference between the democracies and the Nazis, sufficient to puzzle the one-time anti-militarist left into support for the second war. Now difference between the Russian type of dictatorship and the democracies is still

enough to complicate the anti-war question.

Hence opposition to Allied re-armament, by itself, manifestly strengthens the "other side", and is repugnant to all but irresponsibles and religious cranks. Especially so since the same opposition cannot be openly canvassed behind the Iron Curtain. It is clear, therefore, that something more is needed. The difficulty lies in the fact that initiative does not lie with the people whose interests are at one—the common people all the world over. Instead it lies with governments, who know of no other way than that of building up armies and bombs. Whose interests demand that initiative should remain with an oligarchy whether socialist or capitalist, and not with the people at large.

Is it necessary to remind our readers once more how that the various wars

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The Church on GAMBLING & SEX

THE Church, ostensibly so occupied with the spiritual welfare of its flock, can when necessary, show a practical turn of mind, as has been indicated recently in the publication of a report defining the attitude of the Church to Gambling and Sex.

Of the fields of gambling mentioned, namely: Horse Racing, Greyhound Racing, Football Pools and the Stock Exchange, two of them were treated with some leniency by the Church, and it is not without significance that these are the two "sports" patronised by the higher income groups. Of horse racing, the report says, "Betting should be limited to what takes place on the course. When a man watches a race on which he has made a bet there is some recreational value." And of the Stock Exchange the only comment was, "According to information, the Stock Exchange does not countenance the gambling contract. Speculation may often be irresponsible but is not gambling."

It cannot be denied that workers also bet on horses, but how many of them can afford to take a day off from work to carry out their betting on the course? Horse racing is largely in fact, even now, a recreation for the rich, and if gambling was confined only to the course it would become completely so, and as such would get little interference from the Church.

The plea put forward in the report allowing a loop-hole for the Stock Exchange gamblers hardly needs a comment. The Stock Exchange, is an institution

developed by the rich for the benefit of the rich, and I doubt if any worker, even if he knew how it functioned, could afford the 'irresponsible speculation' allowed to the few, and sanctioned by the Church.

On the question of the workers' Stock Exchange (the football pools), however, the Church has more definite views. "They would be better prohibited," they say, but with that realistic frame of mind often displayed by the pillars of the Church when it suits them, they suggest that otherwise, "the aim should be to reduce the amount to be won by any entrant, and the number of pool firm employees." And we see that it is the "lower strata" of society who are again the losers. The worker who speculates his 1/- a week on the pools has his chance of winning reduced, while, of course, the Directors of the Pools retain their fortunes.

Now for Anarchists, the question here is not whether gambling constitutes a social evil or not. We know that any competitive monetary system is bound to have bad repercussions, and that gambling for money is only one aspect of such a system; but we also know that its evils cannot be eliminated by doing away with some forms of gambling whilst others remain intact, or for that matter solve anything by merely abolishing gambling. The trouble is that the members of this Church Commission, quite apart from their unhealthy doctrines, belong to and are supported by the privileged class, and will see to it that God and his representatives will justify any actions which consolidate that class.

The Old Morality

The section of the report dealing with sexuality, if taken at face value offers a little more hope. It makes a statement to the effect that men and women in love are the concern of the Church, and that the clergy must endeavour to answer questions put to them as simply and clearly as possible. What they do not seem to realise is that they themselves create sexual problems. If the Christian Church had not laid down standards of morality, girls would not have to ask "how far is it right to go when I am out with my boy friend?" They would follow their natural impulses without feeling guilty, and would have no embarrassment when consulting a doctor about birth-control methods.

Whatever new methods the Church has cooked up to give itself a firmer hold, we can be quite certain that sexuality to it still means life-long monogamous marriage, and that it will continue to resist any extension of our freedom in these matters.

R.M.

Two Honest T.U. Officials

"TRADE unions have become just efficient machines and completely out of touch with the floor of the workshop."

This statement did not fall from the lips of an anarchist, or an irate rank-and-file trade unionist. It was the considered verdict of a man who has been for ten years an official of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Mr. William Sheppard of Bristol. Mr. Sheppard was a member of the General Council of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, and together

with another official, V. C. Wilkins, area officer for the engineering and chemical group of the T.G.W.U., Bristol, has resigned his office.

There is a body of opinion in the Anarchist and Syndicalist movements which maintains that it is possible to push our ideas through the trade unions. In the experience of the two above-mentioned officials, it is not even possible any longer to push the basic ideas of trade unionism through the trade unions!

We are always wiring into T.U. officials for the fact that they are more interested in the job than the meaning behind it. Let us, then, not hesitate to applaud the action of two men who have sacrificed the former because it no longer expressed the latter, and hope that their undoubted organising ability and apparent integrity may still be put at the disposal of the working class movement through an attempt to create a real rank and file movement.

POLITICAL PROCESSION BAN EXTENDED

Scotland Yard announced last week that the order banning political processions in London, which expires at midnight to-night will be extended for a further three months.

LAND CHANGES IN EUROPE

IN Hungary land operations are reported going through a new stage. Within a few years the great landed estates were broken up into small peasant plots, often of about 5 acres, then these put into "collectives" and now the collectives are being combined into even larger units than the old latifundia. Economy of operation is offered as the reason. At the same time it turns these land workers into large groups of state employees, working here and there over large areas, much like "land-factory" workers, and with none of the "attachment for the soil" that provided so much of the emotional impetus for expropriating the big land-owner and creating small peasant plots. They are wage-earners again, the state replacing their former tyrant.

★

This reported change in land operation in Hungary follows in general the pattern worked out more slowly in Russia, though with great loss of life and production in its process of collectivization. In efforts to ally the Russian people with "western democracy" against Stalin, such as the leading article in *This Week* supplement to various Sunday papers for October 1st, much emphasis is placed on the prospect of making Russia once again a land of small privately-owned farms.

The late P. G. Maximov, trained in Russia as an agronomist, stressed that this viewpoint accounted in a substantial degree for the complete failure of most efforts to stir up the Russian people; those seeking to do so usually talked about going back to small farms, while those working the land in Russia knew that this reversion was technically impossible now, because of the farming methods and the equipment which was useable only for working large areas and useless for working small farms.

Industrial Worker (U.S.A.)

Understanding Spain

THE SPANISH LABYRINTH
by Gerald Brenan. (Cambridge University Press, 25/-)

THERE are few books of which we can say that they are the book on their subject, especially when the book is on Spain, of which so much has been written in the last thirteen years. But certainly it can be said of *The Spanish Labyrinth* which was first published in 1943 though it was written during and immediately after the Spanish War, and which now appears in a welcome new edition.

The book which is subtitled "An account of the social and political background of the Civil War," is in three parts. The first begins with the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1874 when "the First Republic fell without a shot being fired to defend it" and Alfonso XII was brought from the military academy at Sandhurst, and ends with the fall of his son in 1931 when the dictator Primo de Rivera fled to Paris where his last days "were passed between the Church and the brothel". The second and largest part of the book describes "the condition of the working classes" with chapters on the Agrarian Question, the Anarchists, the Anarcho-Syndicalists, the Carlists and the Socialists. In the final part the author resumes his historical narrative from the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931 to the Popular Front, with an epilogue on the Civil War. In a new preface he describes to what extent his opinions have altered since its first appearance, but says that "if I were to rewrite this book to-morrow, I should not do so very differently." The volume concludes with a long bibliography.

When the first edition of *The Spanish Labyrinth* was published, Marie Louise Berneri reviewed it at length in Volume 3 of *Now*, and her essay on the book explained why it is of such importance and value from our standpoint. In it she wrote:

"Brenan's book is made interesting and penetrating by his sympathy for the subject he has treated. He loves Spain and the Spaniards and has a particular understanding of the Spanish peasants among whom he lived so long, not as a tourist but as one of them, sharing their houses, their food, their talk, their songs and dances. An historian should attempt to experience in imagination the feelings and reactions of the people he describes, and he is able to do this only if he can, so to speak, put himself in their place. Brenan is extremely gifted in that respect. He has dealt with his subject not only as a scholar but also as an artist and a psychologist. This has enabled him to understand actions which, not being a revolutionary himself, he cannot approve, such as the burning of churches, the throwing of bombs, the killing of priests, the expropriation of landlords and many other acts of revolt of the Spanish workers. He sees these facts in their right perspective and makes fun of the reactionaries who, at the slightest movement of revolt among the masses, are prepared to see the whole working class as a mob of criminals. He effectively debunks atrocity stories, a task which, unfortunately, historians are not often willing to undertake, particularly when these stories are used to discredit national or class enemies . . ."

"Parts of the *Spanish Labyrinth* are of particular interest to anarchists and I should like to deal with them at length at the risk of giving them a prominence which they do not attain in the book itself. The first point of interest to

Anarchists is the relation between anarchism and the communalist movement in Spain. Spain resembles Europe of the Middle Ages, when communes had a great deal of autonomy and when each member played an active rôle in the running of the communities. Unlike the communes in Mediaeval Germany, France and Italy, which flourished mostly in the towns and were composed of artisans and merchants, the communes in Spain existed mostly in the countryside and were composed of peasants, herdsmen and shepherds. There were also communes of fishermen on the coast. Provincial and municipal feeling was therefore very strong and every town was the centre of an intense social life. This autonomy of the towns and villages allowed the full development of the people's initiative and rendered them far more individualistic than other nations, though at the same time developing the instinct of mutual aid which has elsewhere been atrophied by the growth of the state.

"It is difficult to understand Spain if one has not read *Mutual Aid*, and, indeed, some of the pages of the *Spanish Labyrinth* would form a valuable supplement to Kropotkin's work.

"The theories of the anarchists, and of Bakunin and Kropotkin in particular, are based on the belief that men are bound together by the instinct of mutual aid, that they can live happily and peacefully in a free society. Bakunin, through his natural sympathy for the peasants, Kropotkin, through his study of the life of animals, of primitive societies and the Middle Ages, had both reached the conclusion that men are able to live happily and show their social and creative abilities in a society free from any central and authoritarian government."

"These anarchist theories correspond to the experiences of the Spanish people. Wherever they were free to organise themselves independently, they had improved their lot, but when the central government of Madrid through the landlords, the petty bureaucrats, the police and the army, interfered with their lives, it always brought them oppression and poverty. The Socialist Party with its distrust of the social instincts of men, with its belief in a central, all-wise authority, went against the age-long experience of the Spanish workers and peasants. It demanded from them the surrender of the liberties they had fought hard to preserve through centuries and for that reason never acquired the influence which the anarchist movement attained.

"Another cause for the rapid and extensive growth of the anarchist movement in Spain was, according to Brenan, the intense religious feelings of the people, particularly the peasants. This may at first seem paradoxical. The anarchists in Spain, perhaps more than in any other country, bitterly attacked religion and the Church. They issued hundreds of books and pamphlets denouncing the fallacy of religion and the corruption of the Church; they even went as far as burning churches and killing priests. Brenan does not ignore this, but he distinguishes between the Christian beliefs of the Spanish masses and their intense dislike of the Church, and one must admit that his interpretation of the relation between religion and anarchism is very convincing.

"He describes the Spaniards, and in particular, the peasants, as a very religious people. By religion he does not mean, of course, belief in and submission to the Church, but a faith in spiritual values, in the need for men to reform themselves, in the fraternity which should exist among all men. At the beginning

SHOOTING AN ELEPHANT, and other essays by George Orwell. (Secker & Warburg, 10/-)

THIS posthumous volume is a collection of George Orwell's essays originally contributed to seven magazines and many readers will welcome their appearance in permanent form. The well-known story which gives the volume its title, and *A Hanging* are autobiographical, describing two incidents in Orwell's life as a policeman in Burma in the early 1920's. *How the Poor Die* (which appeared in *Now* 6) is an account of his experiences in a Paris hospital in 1929.



of the XIXth century, a general decay of religious faith took place, but religion had meant so much to the poor that they were left with the hunger for something to replace it and this could only be one of the political doctrines, anarchism or socialism. Anarchism by its insistence on brotherhood between men, on the necessity for a faith came nearer to the Christian ideas of the Spanish peasant than the dry, soulless, materialistic theories of the Marxists. The Spanish peasants took literally the frequent allusions in the scriptures to the wickedness of the rich; the Church, of course, could not admit this . . . Brenan suggests that the anger of the Spanish anarchists against the Church is the anger of an intensely religious people who feel that they have been deserted and deceived.

"Brenan foresaw that his interpretation would give rise to many criticisms (from the anarchists and even more from religious people), and he says, 'It may be thought that I have stressed too much the religious element because Spanish Anarchism is after all a political doctrine. But the aims of the anarchists were always so much wider and their teachings more personal than anything which can be included under the word politics. To individuals they offered a way of life: Anarchism had to be lived as well as worked for.' This is a very important point. The anarchists do not aim only at changing the government or the system; they aim also at changing the people's mode of thinking and living, which has been warped by years of oppression.

"Whatever the cause of this attitude, whether religious or otherwise, it is important to stress it. Anarchists are always accused of having a negative creed but critics overlook that anarchism through its attempts to render men better even under the present system is in fact doing some positive and very useful work. Brenan has seen this very clearly and he refuses to judge the anarchists through their material achievements alone. Their rôle, he says, should be judged not in political terms but in moral ones, a fact which is almost universally ignored.

"I must say, however, a few words of disagreement with Brenan's conclusions. Though he admits that the arbiters of Spain's destiny must be the worker and the peasant, he believes that a government (of the real kind, of course) must control Spain. He does not say where a good government can be found. He declares that a government in Spain should not depend on the Church, the army or the landlords; as on the other hand he does not seem to believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat (which he rightly condemns in Russia) it is difficult to see why he rejects so firmly the anarchist solution. He also advocates strongly the collectivisation of the land, but seems to expect that a "sensible government" could carry it out, when history shows that no government in Spain was ever prepared to go against the interests of the landlords."

M. L. Berneri's discussion of the book ended with these words:

"Brenan, who lived so long in Spain, seems to have been influenced by its communal institutions, and has written his book in the spirit of the craftsmen of the Middle Ages. Like them, he has produced his *chef-d'œuvre* which is the test of his love for his art and his respect for his fellow men for whom the book is written. *The Spanish Labyrinth* has been created with that painstaking and disinterested love which characterises all lasting works."

ERRATA

In George Woodcock's review entitled *Creating Delinquents*, in the issue of *Freedom* of October 14th, two serious misprints occurred.

The last sentence of the second paragraph should read: " . . . Dr. Comfort's essay, with its emphasis on the criminal potentialities of the state itself, understanding criminal as anti-social; . . ."

And in the next paragraph: " . . . Comfort does make a convincing case for his thesis of the mutual dependence of criminality and . . ."

Essays by George Orwell

In *Lear*, *Tolstoy* and *the Fool* he examines a forgotten pamphlet on Shakespeare in which Tolstoy announces that Shakespeare, far from being a genius, was not even "an average author", who always aroused in him "an irresistible repulsion and tedium". In demonstrating the fallacy of Tolstoy's theory of art and of the attitude of which it is a product, Orwell suggests convincingly that Tolstoy's particular aversion to *King Lear* was because the predicament and tragedy of *Lear* is a mirror of that of Tolstoy himself—they both thought that renunciation was a path to happiness.

Politics vs. Literature, an examination of *Gulliver's Travels* is one of Orwell's most important pieces of literary criticism, and is of special interest at the moment since there has been a lot of rather superficial comparison of Orwell and Swift based presumably on their both having satirised humans with animals, and their both having a strong sense of smell. He points out in discussing Swift, something which most people agree with in theory, but not so many in practice—that it is possible to admire a writer's work while detesting his opinions. "The durability of *Gulliver's Travels* goes to show that, if the force of belief is behind it, a worldview which only just passes the test of sanity is sufficient to produce a great work of art."

The essay on *Politics and the English Language* is an attack on the language used by politicians and administrators. Political language, he shows, by its vagueness, its euphemism and its use of ready-made phrases is designed to be incomprehensible.

"In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the

dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of political parties. . . . When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink. In our age there is no such thing as 'keeping out of politics'. All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia."

The latest essay in the volume is *Reflections on Gandhi*, a review of Gandhi's autobiographical volume *The Story of my Experiments with Truth*. Orwell wrote this in 1949 and in some respects it indicates the change in his attitude since his polemics during the war against those who did not support it. Then he wrote (*Horizon*, Sept., 1943), "There is indeed a sort of apocalyptic truth in the statement of the German radio that the teachings of Hitler and Gandhi are the same," but in this essay he says, "I have never been able to feel much liking for Gandhi, but I do not feel sure that as a political thinker he was wrong in the main, nor do I believe that his life was a failure," and he concludes, characteristically, "but regarded simply as a politician, and compared with the other leading political figures of our time, how clean a smell he has managed to leave behind!"

In *The Prevention of Literature* Orwell maintains that:

" . . . the conscious enemies of liberty are those to whom liberty ought to mean most. The big public do not care

(Continued on page 3)

Bernard Shaw

DURING his lifetime Bernard Shaw's opinions were always expressed in a way which allowed of them not being taken seriously, least of all his political opinions. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that this side of him has received little attention in his obituaries. No doubt, however, a certain piety has been involved also; for Shaw's admiration for Stalin and Mussolini are unacceptable to the propaganda of the last fifteen years, and to admiration for a great writer, and a great man. They are, moreover, very difficult to explain, since Shaw himself was kindly and genial and human in a way which he never allowed to appear in his published writings; to call him a Fascist—or a Communist—would be quite absurd.

Yet Shaw's influence over the last two generations has been enormous, and this curious paradox is therefore of corresponding importance. J. B. Priestley has written that Shaw never quite believed that concentration camps existed or that the free expression of opinion might lead to one's extinction at the hands of the State. This may well be true, for in the preface to one of his later plays of the thirties, he made the incredible statement that Mussolini and Stalin were the only two statesmen in Europe who owed their position solely to their efficiency. And he added that if they ceased to merit eminence by losing that efficiency, they could be sacked at a minute's notice! The departure from truth here is immense, almost astronomical; but from his other writings and his life it is obvious that Shaw did not deliberately write down lies, knowing them to be lies. What then is the explanation?

A pointer is to be found in the fact that his friend and colleague and teacher in the Fabian Society, Sydney Webb, also expressed admiration for Soviet Russia, and wrote with his wife a gigantic book about it. Shaw says somewhere that he read Marx seventeen years before Lenin did—a measure of the length of time over which his political experience stretched. But his early conversion to Socialism was through the works of Henry George. Moreover, Shaw knew William Morris and Kropotkin, so that the political opinions he held were chosen from a wide knowledge of the differing trends in late nineteenth century socialism. He became one of the leaders of Fabianism, that curious brand of socialist revisionism which proved so immensely influential for all its quiet and unspectacular methods.

Shaw's Fabianism held democracy in contempt both on grounds of the futility of nose counting, and on its demonstrably unsatisfactory results. He adhered to an oligarchic socialism, in which men's affairs were directed by an élite of intellectuals (Lenin expressed similar views at the beginning of the century). But he also had a great admiration for power, and expressed it in his *Caesar* and *Cleopatra* with its extraordinary whitewashing of Caesarism. Later, *King Magnus*, in *The Apple Cart* (1929), was to show his conception of beneficent autocracy. The reverse of this medal was a certain contempt for the general population, which Shaw never seems to have sought to explain in terms of their lack

of responsibility for the direction of their lives under governmental forms of social organisation. He saw, and said, that freedom implied responsibility, and that was why most people were scared stiff of it. But he accepted this as an immutable fact which justified an oligarchical administration. It seems it was because they wielded such power that Shaw admired Mussolini and Stalin, and to justify his political beliefs, he had to persuade himself that they were also well-intentioned. That he was able to gloss over Matteotti and the Bolshevik purges is a measure of the self-deception which even outstanding minds can achieve.

Many of the obituaries have written that Shaw's political opinions were revolutionary when he originally stated them and fired the imagination of youth fifty years ago. But they go on to say that the fact that they no longer fire the imagination is a measure of his success as a propagandist, since most of the things he advocated have become part of our daily life. This view is especially popular among adherents of the Labour Party. In my opinion, the reverse is truer. The Fabian aims of sixty years ago have indeed become accomplished facts. At the time they were originally advanced Shaw and the Webbs and the rest ridiculed the "Utopian" revolutionists and anarchists, and put forward their gradualist solutions as the way to achieve a decent society. Now that their programme is largely achieved, can one truthfully say that we have a better society in any qualitative sense? The answer can only be no, and hence Fabian ideas, as a solution to the problems which revolutionists concern themselves with, can be said to have failed in the test of practical experience.

Here again, we come back to the question of Shaw's and the Webbs' admiration for Stalin. They saw and recognised that the Soviet system represented Fabian Socialism in practice; hence their emotional commitment to a creed to which they had devoted their lives made them insist—even against the most manifest evidence—that it was a success.

Shaw's biographers have touched on certain other aspects of his character and outlook which are obviously of importance—notably his puritanism and the curious sexlessness that pervades his work. (A very interesting study of the recurrence of a situation of reversed sadism in which women triumphantly trampled on men in his plays was recently published.) These, too, doubtless contribute to the understanding of this strange paradox of a most kindly man extending admiration to totalitarian dictators. Here it is enough to say that the narrowness which is discernible in Shaw, makes his writings in the last resort unsatisfactory and unsatisfying, is also characteristic of socialism as it has evolved since the split with anarchism in the first international. If one compares Shaw's political writing with that of, say Kropotkin, or even of William Morris, one is conscious of a lack of breadth, of concern for the real verities of life. The socialism he espoused, and which has been so successful politically, shows the same narrowness and hollowness, missing the warmth of human life and aspirations.

ANARCHIST.

From our stock . . .

The Anarchist Prince, a biography of Peter Kropotkin, by George Woodcock & Ivan Avacumovic . . . 21/-

★

<i>Shooting an Elephant</i>	George Orwell	10/-
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4,000 Spanish Refugees have disappeared in Russia

The Coal Mines of Sardinia

From an Italian Correspondent.

IN order to understand many aspects of the social, economic and political life of Italy, one might take as an example the problem of the mines, which though not having the same importance as other industrial groups, nevertheless reproduces in an extreme and clearer manner, the same pattern of selfish interests and lack of logic.

The principal Italian coal mines are situated in Sardinia (Sulcis) and in 1949 the 10,000 miners engaged in this area produced one million tons of coal. During the same period 9 million tons were imported. The quality of the coal mined at Sulcis is of a low grade and its uses in industry are limited. Its calorific value is 6000/6800 compared with the 7800/8300 calories developed by English coal, and costs more than the imported coal.

Working conditions are bad. The average wages of a surface worker are about 670 lire (7/-) a day and of miners 700 lire (7/6). The cost of living for a family of four persons (and Sardinian families are large) is in the region of 1000 lire (not allowing for any meat in their diet), plus rent, light, taxes and clothes. The surrounding districts are poor, for Sardinia is a country where productivity is low and much of the land is given over to pasture. Hygienic conditions are primitive partly due to the mentality of both the managements and the Italian workers, who are accustomed not to consider social services at their place of work an important social problem. Furthermore the industry is weighed down by a bureaucracy of 3,000 employees.

The mines have always been kept going (as is the case in all Italian heavy industry) by State subsidies and preferences. Under fascism this unsatisfactory situation was explained away on the grounds of national prestige and an "Imperial" policy. To-day, it is continued for the reasons of "social necessity" and the fight against unemployment.

Immediately after the war the situation was aggravated for a number of reasons: the deplorable condition of the machinery, the general economic situation and foreign competition. But thanks largely to the favourable political situation the controlling groups have been able to overcome the crisis and once more to soak the Treasury, helped along as well by ERP and the American policy of indiscriminate subsidies.

But the now familiar argument used to suppress criticism has been that it was "necessary to prevent the social situation from worsening and from playing into the hands of the Communists". And so the Government pays up and the shareholders

pocket a large part of the subsidies. The trade unions and left parties, for their part (and for demagogic reasons) attack the government for its meanness, naturally adding that the money is not being properly spent to-day, whereas if they had a say in the spending it would be done in the right way!

AT present some 3500 workers and employees at Sulcis are being threatened with the sack on the grounds that the organisation is not in a position to bear the cost of employing a number of workers who are for the most part idle. This is true; but the reason for their idleness is that the coal that is mined is difficult to market for the reasons stated above. The Government now promises to intervene by the creation of an internal market and has suggested that it will propose the construction of a power coal with Italian manufactures (thereby, in giving preference to inferior quality coal, more prosperous industries will be depressed); that it will reduce coal imports; that it will "recommend" that railways, public, state and privately owned factories should use national coal and will put a brake on the use of diesel as an alternative to coal. The Government also proposes the construction of a power station costing two million pounds, which will absorb 1,500,000 tons of national coal per annum, and will take steps to increase the output of the Sulcis mines from one million tons of coal per annum to three million tons. The programme would take some three years for its realisation.

Thus, around a bankrupt enterprise, new interests are once again created which, because they depend on an initially false position, will be always on the brink of bankruptcy and will repeat *ad infinitum* the situation existing in the mines.

IN fact, instead of attempting to boost these mines, the logical approach should be their gradual elimination. The money—largely ERP money—which will be spent on new machinery should instead be spent on financing public works (schools, homes, aqueducts, roads, all of which are needed in the island) during the interim period whilst manpower is being absorbed in newly-created worthwhile industries.

But such a programme naturally meets with opposition from the groups interested in maintaining the existing situation. It is quite clear that whatever measures are taken these groups want to avoid solving the problem or changing the miserable conditions of the workers.

ORWELL AND RELIGION

(Continued from page 2)

about the matter one way or the other. They are not in favour of persecuting the heretic, and they will not exert themselves to defend him. They are at once too sane and too stupid to acquire the totalitarian outlook. The direct conscious attack on intellectual decency comes from the intellectuals themselves.

"... literature is doomed if liberty of thought perishes. Not only is it doomed in any country which retains a totalitarian structure; but any writer who adopts the totalitarian outlook, who finds excuses for persecution and the falsification of reality, thereby destroys himself as a writer. There is no way out of this. No tirades against 'individualism' and 'the ivory tower', no pious platitudes to the effect that 'true individuality is only attained through identification with the community, can get over the fact that a bought mind is a spoilt mind.'"

Second Thoughts on James Burnham is a detailed examination of the ideas of the author of *The Managerial Revolution* and *The Machiavellians*, the former big brain of American Trotskyism (and now the No. 1 Anti-Communist of the United States). Orwell concludes that the basis of Burnham's approach is not logic, but the worship of power and success, and it would be difficult not to agree, even though some of Orwell's own arguments in this essay seem to spring from his sense of outrage at Burnham's ever having believed that an Axis victory was possible in the last war, rather than from dispassionate analysis.

The volume concludes with nine of the little articles that George Orwell used to write in *Tribune* in the column *As I Please*. They are an illustration of how well he wrote, even on the most trivial occasions. There are not many writers who are so consistently interesting, even when they are also infuriating. It is very much to be hoped that the publishers will make a further collection of those of his magazine articles which have not been included in the present volume or in *Critical Essays* (1946), for example: *Why I Write* (from *Gangrel*), *Marrakech* (New Writing), *Catastrophic Gradualism* (Com-

monwealth Review and Politics) and *Notes on Nationalism* (Polemical). They might very well be reprinted with the now unobtainable *The English People* (Collins) and the title essay from *Inside The Whale* (Gollancz).

One theme of the articles in *Shooting an Elephant* which is not discussed elsewhere in Orwell's writings is the discussion of "sainthood" and the religious attitude of renunciation and non-attachment which occurs in his examination of Tolstoy, Swift and Gandhi, and which puts the issue so clearly that it is worth quoting at length.

In writing of Gandhi, he says:

"In this yogi-ridden age, it is too readily assumed that 'non-attachment' is not only better than a full acceptance of earthly life, but that the ordinary man only rejects it because it is too difficult: in other words, that the average human being is a failed saint... Many people genuinely do not wish to be saints, and it is probable that some who achieve or aspire to sainthood have never felt much temptation to be human beings. If one could follow it to its psychological roots, one would, I believe, find that the main motive for 'non-attachment' is a desire to escape from the pain of living, and above all from love, which, sexual or non-sexual, is hard work. But it is not necessary here to argue whether the other-worldly or the humanistic ideal is 'higher'. The point is that they are incompatible. One must choose between God and Man, and all 'radicals' and 'progressives', from the mildest Liberal to the most extreme Anarchist, have in effect chosen Man."

George Orwell believed in life. He prided himself on his lack of illusions but, unlike many writers, he did not seek to be a detached spectator. He wanted to participate and in this intense desire to do something about the issues which moved him, lay both his absurdities and his great qualities. In his honesty and compassion he was "prepared in the end to be defeated and broken up by life," which, he wrote in his last year, "is the inevitable price of fastening one's love upon other human beings."

C.W.

Former C.P. 'General' Challenges Party to Deny Statement

THERE was a time when the name "El Campesino" was on every loyal Communist's lips. He was a symbol of that courage and self-sacrifice which, we are told, were an inspiration to a whole people at war with the forces of Fascism; and such qualities are only to be found in Communists. El Campesino was the first Spanish Communist to rise from the ranks to be "General in the People's Army". He, Lister and Modesto, were described by a Communist-inspired publication (in 1940) as "three of the greatest and best-known" leaders of the Spanish People's Army, and Moscow recognised in El Campesino the "Tchapaiev of the Spanish War."

Such biographical details are necessary (and could be easily supplemented by reference to Communist publications of the Spanish War period) by way of introducing El Campesino to readers who did not follow events in Spain in 1936, and to recall his deeds to the faithful Party followers whose short memories (when expedient) are only too well known.

For, El Campesino is in the news again. His rôle is a less heroic one than when, as the story goes, he defied Franco's troops, who declared he had been killed by climbing onto the roof of a house encircled by the enemy on the Teruel front to show that he was alive and full of fight. In the five-hour battle that ensued he is said to have lost a thousand men but himself succeeded in escaping.

His New Rôle

To-day he is a former Communist whose experiences in Russia have destroyed his faith in the Stalinist regime. The book on which he is at present engaged, and to be published in Paris soon, promises to reveal some interesting facts about the Communists' rôle in Spain and conditions in Russia itself which, incidentally, will confirm many of the things the Anarchists said at the time and which the Communists denounced as "Trotsky-Fascist disruptive propaganda," etc.

A Paris daily paper has published three instalments from El Campesino's forthcoming book. The first deals with the story of what happened to the gold from the Bank of Spain. El Campesino has first-hand knowledge, since he was instructed by José Diaz, then Secretary General of the Spanish C.P. to arrange to collect the gold and load it on to lorries. The operation was undertaken by trusted Party members, many in the uniforms of Assault Guards, and in an hour the 7,800 cases of bars and coin were loaded onto 35 lorries, carrying indicators which led unsuspecting onlookers to believe that they were carrying explosives. On Oct. 28th, 1936, the cases were transferred to a ship bound for Odessa. Like so many contrite ex-Communists, El Campesino is "full of indignation against myself and all those responsible for the theft. I am convinced that José Diaz himself must have deeply regretted his part before his tragic death in Tiflis." But we are also asked to believe in El Campesino's "involuntary complicity" in the affair. Yet he tells us that a similar operation occurred in Catalonia this time under the

direction of a Communist battalion commander, Manolo. Six lorries loaded with gold were sent to France and, according to El Campesino, handed to Maurice Thorez, who is still leader of the French Communist Party. Other consignments of gold were sent to Thorez in this way and a further 2,500,000,000 francs were received by the French C.P. from Dr. Negrin (then Spanish premier) for the purchase of arms and for propaganda as well as funds for launching the pro-Communist daily *Ce Soir*. And that is only part of the story.

How right were the Anarchists when they pointed out that what arms were received by the Spanish workers from Russia and other sources had been paid for handsomely with hard gold. And how indignant were the "innocent" Communists and fellow travellers!

Spanish Communists in Russia

The defeat of the Spanish workers by Franco's army and the betrayal of their

revolutionary aspirations by such leaders as El Campesino, was accompanied by a mass exodus into France of Anarchists, Socialists, Communists who feared reprisals. El Campesino tells us that in France a committee of Communist leaders was created to "screen" those C.P.ers who were seeking asylum in Russia. Priority was given to three categories of "comrades": members of the N.K.V.D. (secret police organisation) who, it is interesting to note, were "mainly women"; well-known militants whose position was compromising; Spanish and foreign militants "who had given signs of lukewarmness during the civil war or who knew too much. Not having been able to liquidate them in Spain, as had been the case of a number of their friends, they were to be sent to Russia and made to disappear." The first contingent, under the direction of Togliatti, Modesto and Lister, left in April, 1939.

Altogether 3,961 Spanish refugees arrived in Russia in this way. They had been preceded by 1,700 children accompanied by 102 teachers.

El Campesino claims that of nearly 6,000 Spanish refugees in Russia, only 1,200 are still alive to-day, and challenges the Communists to disprove his figures.

Those 4,800 Spaniards who have disappeared or have died in Russia include two whom we have mentioned earlier: Diaz, Secretary of the Spanish C.P. and organiser of the transfer of the Spanish gold to Russia, and Manolo who was responsible for taking the four lorries from Catalonia to France and of handing them over to Thorez. Dead men tell no tales.

V.R.

Watering Down the American Anti-Aliens Ban

HAVING made themselves the laughing stock of the world with their ban on all Fascist and Communists entering the United States, the State Department has now had to back down and grant that nominal membership of a totalitarian party will not bar an alien from visiting the United States temporarily.

Think of how many of our own intellectuals and politicians who in their exuberant youth flirted with the Communist Party, would be banned if the McCarran Act was strictly enforced. And many of those erstwhile "progressives" are now more pro-American than the Americans.

Nor will the ban now apply to those who can show they belonged to a totalitarian organisation only in childhood, or under duress, but they must have a "good and legitimate reason" for visiting the United States.

And how will the State Department deal with such corrupters of youth as Winston Churchill, who declared that if he had been an Italian he would have worn a black shirt?

THE OPTIMIST

The cost of one hydrogen bomb could wipe out hunger, the cause of the world's disorder, the Indian delegate, Sir Benegal Rau, told the United Nations Political Committee. He was introducing a resolution asking the sixty United Nations members to spend less on arms and more on developing backward areas.

The speaker pointed out that "the cost of the equipment needed for the production of a single atomic bomb has been estimated at \$2,000 millions (£716 millions), the annual interest upon which, would more than suffice for the maintenance of the entire United Nations Organisation. The cost of an hydrogen bomb is said to be \$100 millions (£35,716,000), and such a bomb requires an atomic bomb to act as a trigger.

"It is obvious that a very small part of these astronomical sums now spent on destructive purposes could, if diverted to constructive purposes in the underdeveloped areas of the world, serve to wipe out the root-cause of all disorder."

IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION...

IT is reported officially that Denmark will issue a decree prohibiting any form of corporal punishment in schools.

... AND THE WRONG DIRECTION

An A.P. report from Manila (25/10/50) states that the Philippines' president, Elpidio Quirino has announced his government has just begun cracking down on subversives.

"I have been using my left hand too much," he said, "now I am using my strong right hand."

First step in the new policy was suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* for all persons suspected of insurrection and sedition.

FOR THE RECORD

THE cynicism and hypocrisy of the Communist leaders knows no bounds. Following the alleged attempted assassination of President Truman by Puerto Rican nationalists, the American Communist Party have issued a statement which is reproduced without comment by the *London Daily Worker* (3/11/50). It reads:

"Like all our fellow-Americans, we Communists were profoundly shocked by this afternoon's report," said the state-

FOREIGN COMMENTARY

ment, which was signed by William Foster, chairman, and Gus Hall, National Secretary of the party.

"As is well known, the Communist Party condemns and rejects assassinations and all acts of violence and terror. This can only be the act of terrorists, deranged men or agents provocateurs—a 1950 version of Van der Lubbe and the Reichstag fire frame-up."

The enormity of the lie is such that one finds it almost impossible to know where to start answering it. In fact, it is hardly worth answering if one just pauses a moment to think of the history of violence that characterises the rise to power of Stalin and his clique.

In case it might be said that the American Communists are speaking only for themselves and not for the doings of their masters in the Kremlin, we refer readers to the chapter *From Shanghai to San Quentin* from Jan Valtin's book *Out of the Night*, in which he describes his mission on behalf of the American Party to liquidate a "traitor". Valtin confessed: "I doubt if I'll make a good terrorist", to which the Party's man replies, "This is not a matter of terrorism. Acts of terrorism are components of a definite revolutionary offensive. Consider this execution an entirely internal affair." But, one might add, "It's violence just the same!"

WHITE MAN'S COUNTRY

HAROLD DIAS, who was born in Liverpool of an English mother and a West Indian father, has been told by the Immigration Department that he is not acceptable as an immigrant and he cannot stay in Australia.

Dias, who is 35, served in the Royal Navy and was in the Dunkirk evacuation. As we have often pointed out, there is no colour bar to fighting and dying for the Empire.

LIBERTARIAN.

Through the Press

NO JOKING MATTER

Warning "reactionaries" at home not to imagine that because Yugoslavia had asked America for a favour the screw would be put on her and the "old democracy" would return, Marshal Tito continued: "I am telling our reactionaries it is better for them to remain quiet like they were for some time before, because we do not joke when we are annoyed."

The Times, 31/10/50.

GORBALS STORY

An extraordinary suggestion has come from Gorbals Ward Committee. On the grounds that Glasgow's most infamous quarter has had too much publicity in plays, books and articles, the Committee wishes to change its name to Laurieston. One hesitates to describe the state of mind which could provoke such a suggestion. It is doubtful if any city in Western Europe could produce so concentrated an area of slum and misery as Gorbals.

Mrs. Alice Cullen, M.P. for Gorbals, has described in Parliament the conditions in her constituency—4,500 families live in one-roomed apartments, and nearly 10,000 in two apartment houses, many of them dilapidated, tumble-down, rat-infested buildings. Families of eight live in single rooms, and TB is naturally rife.

Public Opinion, 6/10/50.

PENALTY OF HONESTY

A statement issued by the general manager, Hulton Press, through the Press Association last night, said:

"Mr. Edward Hulton states with the deepest regret that, following a dispute about the handling of material about the Korean war, he has instructed Tom Hopkinson to relinquish the position of editor of *Picture Post*."

News Chronicle, 1/11/50.

Can it be because *Picture Post's* Korean articles told the truth?

Syndicalist Notebook

Jobs for T.U. Tories

AN appeal for safe parliamentary seats for Conservative trade unionists was made at the recent Tory Party Conference.

An ex-Royal Marine, Lieut.-Col. J. K. Cordeaux, wants to see a batch of T.U. Tories in the House to balance the number of ex-trade unionists among the Labour benches.

"Give us only a dozen such members," he exclaimed, "and our claim—and it is just—to speak in the best interests of trade unionism would be immeasurably strengthened."

The business of safe parliamentary seats is a wonderful racket, but we fancy the Conservative Party would much rather see those safe seats used to ensure that the representatives of big business get a voice in the Mother of Parliaments than representatives of the workers—be they never so Tory.

After all, if they get political power, they can make the workers do what they want. Or so they think. We maintain that, irrespective of which party is in power, the real strength lies in the hands of the workers. They produce the wealth of society and are its most essential members—as long as they remain pro-

ducers and do not become gas-bags in Westminster.

How about organising that strength for our own benefit instead of for the gas-bags and the financial interests they maintain?

TICKETED

FOLLOWING on the suggestions of the British Association for Commercial and Industrial Education (*Freedom*, last issue) that workers should get to know the boss better and vice versa, comes a *Daily Express* report on worker-boss relations in one U.S. factory:

"Workers at one of America's top TV firms will soon have to ask a machine instead of the boss for a rise."

"Harry Houston, who is in charge of the staff at Dumont Laboratories in Paterson, New Jersey, says to-day that he is going to use what he calls a statukl analyser, which sorts out automatically those workers best qualified for promotion."

"It is no use a candidate rehearsing a nice little speech for the mechanical boss; it knows everything about him already."

"Cards are fed into the machine list each man's qualifications, his scores in various intelligence tests, and even his hobbies."

"When a bigger and better job is available, Mr. Houston will just push a button. Out will come the machine's first, second and third choices for the vacancy."

"Only then will the human boss step in. Mr. Houston will make the final choice from numbers one, two and three."

Seems like the old expression "He's a card!" is becoming literally true!

STAYING PUT

"Some of the perturbed scientists," writes a Sunday newspaper, "feel that as a token of their loyalty they should surrender their passports and not go abroad." The day may not be far off when it will be thought suspicious to leave Abingdon. *Manchester Guardian*, 1/11/50.

DUMB OX FOR BRANDING

Hollywood's John Wayne, the tough guy who is always chasing cattle rustlers in the films, is going to devote his spare time to chasing Communists. He is boss of "Theatre for Freedom, Inc.", a group of entertainers pledged to mobilise actors and actresses for an "all-out offensive" against the Reds. First speech by crusader Wayne: "People in the performing arts must awake and rise to their civic responsibilities."

Daily Express, 11/10/50. He's been going to the pictures too much!

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)

November 12th Speaker: Sidney Parker "WAR OR REVOLUTION?"

November 19th Speaker: Tony Gibson "DOES POWER CORRUPT?"

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OPEN-AIR MEETINGS

Every Sunday at 3.30 Hampstead Whitestone Pond

Speakers: S. E. Parker, Jack Rubin, Philip Sansom

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

INDOOR MEETINGS EVERY SUNDAY AT 7 p.m. at the CENTRAL HALLS, 25 Bath Street.

with Frank Leach, John Geffney, Eddie Shaw, J. Raeside

COLNE & NELSON DISTRICT

Sunday, November 12th at 2.30 p.m. at CO-OP GUILD ROOM, COLNE

DEBATE "Communism Has Had Disastrous Results in Russia"

Anarchist: D. E. Pude

Communist: Hubert Smith

Sunday, November 19th at 2.30 p.m. at WEAVERS INSTITUTE, NELSON

JOINT ANTI-MILITARIST MEETING

with I.L.P., P.P.U. & S.W.F.

Speaker: Mat Kavanagh

Sunday, November 26th at 2.30 p.m. at Twisters and Drawers Club, Cambridge Street, Colne (Lancs.)

"The State and The Individual"

NORTH-EAST LONDON GROUP

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NOV. 14th Stanford Webb

"BOOK CENSORSHIP IN BRITAIN"

NOV. 28th "SUPERSTITION, MAN'S HERITAGE"

Final Words on a Controversy:

Social Credit & Anarchism

MANY years ago, I overheard my name mentioned as a thorough Anarchist. At that time I imagined Anarchists to be black-bearded men carrying bombs, so I wasn't exactly pleased. Then an intelligent artist friend explained true Anarchism to me, and I found that I had deserved the name. I took the trouble to study every angle of Anarchist theory I met, and I must say I pinned a lot of faith to those who taught those theories.

Side by side with all this, I was learning how to compete for a decent way of life for my offsprings. I learned that the strongest wins in a competitive society. Weak people inevitably go under, no matter how well-intentioned, or good, or how well-educated they may be. This led me via psychological studies to the idea that all so-called civilised societies are forced to compete for a share in the real wealth of the world, because the measurement of wealth is inaccurate... We know what a pint is, or a yard, or an ounce, but a penny, a shilling or a money pound has only mythical value.

This being so, it behoves us to understand how we have all been misled by that root of all evil, a false money system. Not one in a thousand even questions money. It is accepted like the weather, as if we had no control over it. Whereas, it is because a few people have enormous control over our money that we are all forced to compete for a share of it, in order to eat, be clothed and housed. Few people know that more than three-quarters of the money circulating in the world does not exist, except as a bank

entry; circulating as cheques and bills of trade. It is created and destroyed daily as banks think fit. Not, mark you, in relation to any increase or decrease of REAL wealth.

Any experiment of Anarchism is bound to fail until more people take the trouble to study money creation, and its enormous influence on daily life, politically, socially, individually, and collectively. Therefore, Mr. Editor, I beg you, do not be too ready to denounce Gladys Bing. She may be on the right track with her Social Credit theories.

(Mrs.) M. E. BAYLEY.

★

SIR, Your paper fails so sadly to be able to give any constructive comment on applied Anarchism with relation to current events because you have not yet seen the paramount importance of the money machine in the hands of government. You find yourselves ranged with the Socialist, Tory, Liberal and Communist papers in that you fail to put your finger on the cause of, say, the gas strike. You, like the others, cannot say that the gas strikers have kept their part of their contract; they have produced the agreed amount of gas and the Gas Board has paid the agreed amount of wages but that it is the government's taxation policy which has sapped the buying power from the agreed wage, so that the actual amount of wealth got by the gas workers in exchange for gas production is a diminishing and dissolving element. I submit that that is the way to comment on strikes, from the Anarchist viewpoint if you eventually hope to achieve the ownership of gas production by gas producers (which

Letters

entails the end of the wage system). Merely to moan and blame the other bloke only makes him fight harder and exploit your ignorance.

To take your last point. Of course, Social Crediters believe in private property: the private property that inheres in everyone's right to choose his own job, to own his own tools and the materials of his work. Without such ownership there can be no vestige of Choice in Living. You must remember Gilbert's song: "When everybody's somebody then no-one's anybody." When everybody has all the money he wants then money will cease to be a valuable commodity. That is Social Credit—and the ONLY way to Anarchism with a capital A.

GLADYS BING.

★

Editor's Note:

WE cannot continue to give space for Social Credit theories. They would have much more effect in the columns of paper whose readers believe in money.

We have taken the trouble to study money creation; we have seen the paramount importance of the money machine in the hands of government. We recognise the whole money, banking, taxation, financial, debt and wages systems to be colossal rackets and frauds, and that no free society, anarchist experiment, Choice in Living, social justice or human equality can survive in the same world as these systems.

That is why we have always advocated, not their reform, on however sound a basis, but their complete abolition.

Ending Unofficial Strikes

A Parson offers his advice

A CHRISTIAN gentleman, the Rev. Guy Howard, Vicar of St. Peter's, Cranley Gardens, from his comfortable home, writes a letter to his Parish Magazine condemning unofficial strike action. He is reported as saying:

"It is a constant source of amazement and amusement to my sardonic mind to note how anti-social Communists can be. They seem to have little compunction about making the unfortunate community as uncomfortable as they can."

"First there was the omnibus strike, then there was the printing strike, and lately there has been the gas strike. All were unauthorised, all of them unjustifiable."

"If the Minister of Labour, who was exceedingly dilatory over dealing with the gas strike, will not take measures to put an end to unofficial strikes, the British public should surely assert itself and demand that measures must be taken to protect them."

"Maybe it would be a good thing if the leaders of these unauthorised strikes could be ducked in a dirty duck pond until they decided to call the strike off."

"I could almost find it in my heart to be the founder of an anti-strike league, but that, perhaps, is going too far."

"But these unofficial strikes must be stopped, and stopped now—even though it may mean terms of imprisonment and even deportation—not to mention dosages of castor oil to make the leaders sick and

sorry." Most of us would agree that the Communists are anti-social, although it does not necessarily follow that all unofficial strikes are instigated by Communists. But are we to accept the drastic measures of deportation, imprisonment, castor oil and dirty duck ponds put forward by the Reverend Guy Howard to deal with strikers as Christian teachings?

FROM PAGE ONE

Peace & the Wolves

are fought between different line-ups among the powers; even that Russia can start on one side and end up on the other? Is it not clear that such temporary and mutable alliances do not safeguard peace. The underlying reality is that war and peace alike, governments and people are locked in permanent struggle, even if it is not conscious and open.

If therefore the peoples of the West wish to demonstrate their desire for peace they must do so in a way which will win them the support of the people of the Iron Curtain countries. If they do not do so, they will merely weaken themselves without avoiding war. Such support is not to be won through the intermediaries of governments. And since the capitalist system cannot now continue to exist without war—whether the State Capitalism of Russia or the so-called "free" capitalism of America—the way to peace does not lie through the continuance of such a system.

Hence the practical problems of securing peace involve the problems of bringing about that revolution which will place initiative, with both freedom and responsibility, in the hands of the people at large. Which will terminate the conception of government as a necessary tutelage and usher in an anarchist society.

THE HIDDEN FACTORS

But to express the matter thus simply is to neglect a most serious difficulty of operating a free society without government. It is much more serious than that for it saps the very desire for peace which everyone takes so readily for granted. The fact is that many men and women, however much they desire peace on the surface, actually secure greater fulfilment and self-realisation from war. It is not simply that wages are higher, that the material rewards are higher than those of peace. It is the emotional rewards, the heightened excitement, the sense of purpose, the need to live in the moment which may be our last, the relaxation of sexual prohibitions. In short, the realisation of these psychological factors favouring war, is yet another indictment of the "peace" which we earlier stated to be not fit to preserve. It makes the need for a form of society which brings fulfilment to its members even more necessary, even more certainly the practical prerequisite for real peace.

AMERICA SHOWS THE WAY

THE totalitarian trends within society to-day are gathering such force that in many instances they are no longer cloaked with the usual democratic hypocrisy.

The Stalinists, adept in the suppression of individual liberty, are fast being emulated by their American rivals.

Faced with the slow response to the rallying call for fighting men, America constitutionally prepares herself to deal with the problem. Lewis Hershey, the man in charge of conscription, complained that there were too many deferments and "everyone has the idea no-one can make a contribution unless the country uses him in his own peculiar profession, trade or speciality... I haven't seen a draft question yet in which the guy said he shot people for a living." In other words, boys, don't worry about not being able to adjust yourselves to the forces, because whatever your trade we will make sure that you learn how to shoot.

Since conscription starts at eighteen, a large percentage of manpower eligible for call-up is students, and since obviously they will take advantage of this to escape conscription, the "Selective Service" in collaboration with a group of specially appointed educators have decided that only those students who have reached a certain standard (specially set by the committee) at High school will be allowed deferment and a pass into college. Each year in college they must keep the same standard, otherwise they will be drafted, and if at the end of this period they still want to dodge the army they must take a job in the work for which they have

BAN ON U.S. COMMUNISTS "UNCONSTITUTIONAL"

EVEN the city of Los Angeles has (as many others) passed an ordinance compelling Communists—and other subversives—to register. Three registered in a month and the first one arrested was liberated by the Sheriff who declared the ordinance unconstitutional.

In some American cities the ordinance stipulates that all Communists must leave the city or be deported. The High Court declared this unconstitutional also.

No insane asylum is large enough to incarcerate the American politicians.

J. SCARCEIAUX.

Los Angeles, U.S.A.

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