

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

Vol. 12, No. 25

August 18th, 1951

Threepence

WEST PLAN TO HOLD UP DELEGATES TO BERLIN YOUTH RALLY FAILS

Is This Democracy?

THAT politicians believe in freedom simply as a slogan but fear it as a reality is a fact which we have been demonstrating for years. The World Youth Rally organised by the Communists, and which ends to-morrow after two weeks of bread and circuses, is yet another example of the way politicians panic when faced with the possibility of their youth being corrupted by the "other side". But it is also an example of the lack of imagination and the real stupidity of the politicians and their advisers. Every effort was made by them to prevent the many thousands of "delegates" of the Western Countries from reaching the Russian sector where the rally has been held. Different methods were used, but all were ineffective in stopping those who wanted to go from going, though they have probably been effective in making a strong impression on the minds of the young people concerned as to the hypocrisy of the democracies who don't practise what they preach, and of making them less critical of what they have seen in the Russian dominated zone of Germany, than they might otherwise have been.

The West German Government just closed its frontier with the East zone—yet thousands of young Germans from the West have found a way of getting into the East zone (incidentally, the East zone authorities forbade any delegates to the rally from entering the West zone. Needless to say in the first week a quarter of a million have tasted the pleasures of such forbidden fruits and have seen something

of the West zone!). The British authorities with the hypocrisy which is already too well known allowed the 1,600 delegates from these islands to embark but then obviously connived with the authorities in other countries to try and prevent them from reaching their destination. The result was a lot of bad feeling, plenty of "anti-democratic" propaganda for the Communists to exploit, and in the end most of them reached Berlin. The *Daily Worker* which thrives on such incidents (and there can be no doubt that such incidents help to keep together minority movements such as the British C.P. not to mention the fact that used in Russia they help to make the people put up with their conditions—it is always the question of the lesser or greater evil), and the extravagant language used in reporting the vicissitudes of the British delegation's journey must be read to be believed. For instance the adventures of the delegates held up in Austria are referred to as "the Saga of Innsbruck" and there are lyrical descriptions of the "graceful yellow-painted funnels of the Batory" the Polish liner which picked up 900 of the stranded delegates at Dunkirk.

There has been pointed criticism in some sections of the Press of the democracies' handling of the Berlin business. One columnist, Richard Crossman, who is also a politician, writing in the *Sunday Pictorial* suggests that though "what's done cannot be mended", "the important

thing is to learn the lesson of the Berlin fiasco". How naive such people are! What Mr. Crossman has to realise is that the permanent officials and governments have no faith in the good sense of the common people—or they wouldn't want to govern their lives from "the womb to the tomb". It is true that people's lives have been so conditioned that they are often not equipped to assume any kind of responsibility. But left alone, (one can draw on so many examples to prove this), man is able to act with intelligence and responsibility, even if at first he is rather like a man dazzled by the bright light of day after years spent in a black dungeon.

But governments do not want people to think for themselves, in spite of what Mr. Morrison wrote in *Pravda*. Therefore we can assure Mr. Crossman that no "lesson will be learned" by those in authority. All one can expect is that they might handle such a situation in a less clumsy way next time, or even be less hypocritical about things and follow their friends on the other side of the Atlantic and just refuse delegates permission to leave the country! (And they could always point out to the Communists that they are only following Stalin's footsteps in wanting their people to be protected from corrupting and evil influences!)

LIBERTARIAN.

MERSEYSIDE DOCKERS TO FORM STEVEDORE CO-OPERATIVE

SOME time ago, tired of making profits for other people, the dockers of Grimsby formed their own Stevedore Co-operative.

We are very pleased to see that the dockers on Merseyside are planning a similar venture. The *Portworkers' Clarion*, organ of the Merseyside Portworkers' Committee, reports:

"On June 8 a number of dockers on the Merseyside met to consider setting up a Co-operative Stevedores' Society on the Merseyside. Details of the method of forming such a Society were given by Mr. Arthur Hemstock, Secretary of the Co-operative Production Federation, who also gave details of the Grimsby Dockers' Co-operative.

"The plan was received with great enthusiasm and a temporary committee was elected to publicise the scheme. The Committee held its first meeting on Friday, June 22, and decided to hold a series of dockside meetings to explain the scheme and to organise a Mass Meeting in Picton Hall.

"The secretary of the temporary committee is Councillor Howell James, secretary of the Liverpool Co-operative Party. Councillor Chris. Kelly was elected chairman.

"By forming a Dockers' Co-operative Co-Partnership Society the dockers of Merseyside can own and control a Stevedore Company; can elect their own Management Committee; can share all the profits as they think fit, and will therefore obtain the full benefits of their own labour."

Science and Agriculture

IN his presidential address to the section on agriculture at the meeting of the British Association last week, Dr. E. M. Crowther is reported as saying: "In many parts of the world agricultural pioneers, who were now often the officers of agricultural departments, research institutes, or corporations, were trying to forecast how soils and crops would behave under new agricultural systems, for which there was little or no local traditional experience."

Dr. Crowther went on to state that it was axiomatic that new developments must safeguard soil fertility, or better still, increase it. It might have been hoped, on reading the published summary of his address, that he would go on to warn against the process of centralised planning in agriculture, and would make a plea for the closest co-operation between agricultural scientists and the farmers and peasants who actually work the land. But he appears to have had no such criticism of centralisation in mind for he is reported as declaring that "it was essential that field experimental work should not be wasted on matters of purely local and temporary concern, but should be planned to make the fullest use of and to provide the best raw materials for investigations in other branches of agricultural science."

Evolution of Technical Advances

Now the great technical revolutions in agriculture in the England of the seventeenth and eighteenth century were made by wealthy and enlightened landowners who were also practical farmers themselves. And the technical innovations which they demonstrated became accepted into general practice because farmers themselves understood them and were able to apply them.

The "scientific" modern large-scale innovations in agriculture, by contrast, have had no such roots in practical farming. The extensive cultivation of the middle west of America by the large farming syndicates, using large-

scale mechanical aids, resulted in loss of top-soil, in the formidable problem of soil erosion, and the creation of dust-bowls. In Russia, centralised planning, in the guise of the five-year plans for the collectivisation of agriculture, took no account of the slow evolutionary skill of the peasant, and it is said that the loss of that skill in husbandry is in part responsible for the poor technical yield of centralised agricultural planning.

English farming has been ruined by economic factors, but so far, the soil of this country has not been destroyed by ill-advised large-scale agriculture. The actual working of the land is still largely in the hands of the men who know it and who instinctively keep it in good heart and reject methods which take no account of the conservation of soil.

Work of the Spanish Peasants

It is surely significant that the most successful sudden improvement in farming yields of recent times was unaffected by centralised planning. Before the revolution of 1936, the Spanish anarchist syndicalists discussed problems of fertility, of irrigation, of methods for improving seeds and stock with the peasants themselves in thousands of villages. New ideas were thus grasped by the men who already knew the land—knew its potentialities and its deficiencies. When the revolution came, they were able immediately to apply improvements which resulted in immediate increases in yield and permanently improved the land.

Farmers and peasants cannot be approached by centralised methods. The slower and more fundamental method of decentralised dissemination of new ideas and experimental methods are essential if the menace of soil erosion is to be checked and agriculture improved. It is just on those questions of "purely local concern" that the accent needs to be placed. And science will begin to help mankind when it ceases to make itself a weapon for centralisers and planners.

CHILD MURDERS

THE recent cases of murder of children has called forth an immense amount of newspaper publicity and sensational newspaper articles. In its turn this publicity has made the question of child murder a subject for everyday conversation and, for many parents, of increased anxiety. Not infrequently this anxiety is then passed on to the children themselves. One child recently told the writer that "strange men strangle little girls", and went on to ask, "what does 'murder' mean?" It transpired that an adult had used this sensational matter as a further means of instilling anxiety in order to exact obedience—a process which can be observed every day, and which is productive of most far-reaching harm.

Murder and sexual activities against children must inevitably produce horror and anxiety. But it is clear to an impartial observer that society's reaction to these crimes only consists of these responses in a superficial conventional way. It is easy to see that they sell the newspapers and that the avid way in which they are read tells of other unavowed and less respectable emotions. In brief, the way such murders are read and discussed is not normal. Normal people do not respond to horror and tragedy with half-concealed avidity and superficial comment. The enormous horrors of Belsen and Buchenwald, of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, called forth a similar abnormal response. It is the reaction of people without contact with reality.

Remedies

If the response of the newspaper readers is superficial and unreal, so also are the remedies put forward. The law, of course, knows only one remedy: the alleged deterrent effect of capital punishment. But the general response to the problem of what to do about child murder is on an even lower level.

An impartial observer—and it needs little knowledge of psychology to recognise that this means one who does not need to project on to the criminal the energy with which he represses his own sadistic impulses—the impartial observer immediately sees that the violation and murder of children is an extraordinary and abnormal act. It is natural to love and cherish children: it is absolutely foreign to normal human impulses to harm them. Hence it could not be more obvious that people who murder children in this way are mentally abnormal: and it follows that there must be causes and that these can be investigated, that we are dealing with a psycho-pathological problem and that powerful emotional responses and denunciations are quite out of place. And, let it be added, those who are able to take such an adult view of the problems are exactly those people who react in a normal deep way to the actual tragedy—not those who lasciviously read their newspaper and then fall back into casually lascivious righteousness.

The Prophylaxis of Sexual Crime

Yet even the reasonable, fairly well-adjusted people who approach the problem in an adult way also show, often enough, an abnormal element in their response. For the problem is of much greater magnitude than that of psychiatric assessment of sadism in individual cases. It does not need a display of statistics to show that child murder is always with us: so many for each five-year period, no doubt with rises and falls due to this or that external influence. And this fact, taken in conjunction with the abnormal

"If you wish to emancipate yourselves, set not your hope on any help from this life or the next: help yourselves!"

KROPOTKIN

response of society generally, indicates clearly enough that there are factors in our society which make abnormal sexual crimes inevitable, if sporadic, events. And it is surely clear enough that the sensational prurient interest these crimes provoke indicates that the impulses which lead on to sadistic crimes exist in virtually everyone.

We cannot to-day be satisfied with "explanations" entailing expressions like "wickedness", unless we extend such abusive condemnation from the emotionally sick criminal to the whole of society. And then move on to the problem of improving our society so that such abnormal impulses shall not be fostered.

Those who are honest with themselves and possess some insight into their own thoughts and actions will not require much argument to convince them that the problems of sexual crime are connected with the sexual repression involved in the frustration of normal sexual impulses in infancy, childhood and youth. The lascivious superficial response, the anxiety, and the quite unsuitable use of such abnormal threats to children all come from the same source. And everybody knows that this is true.

Yet the same newspaper which denounces in over-righteous terms the child murderer may well carry another article denouncing attempts at sexual enlightenment in schools. It is evident that a radical approach to this problem requires a much clearer grasp of the whole problem of the social rôle of sexual repression. Still more important is the need for insight into the positive values of a natural living out of the sexual impulses in development. An article in the next issue of *Freedom* will discuss this aspect more closely.

J.H.

Is Science British?

WE often hear it said that "science knows no frontiers", and that the conception of nationality is unscientific, so that we cannot help thinking that there was something rather odd about the Duke of Edinburgh's presidential address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Edinburgh last week, which he devoted to a survey of the British contribution to science and technology during the last hundred years. The Duke who, (although he springs from the same good German stock as his wife's family), was, before being British, the "Greek" son of a "Dane", ought surely to realise that nationality is not very important. His great-great-grandfather, who organised the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851 knew this, and his exhibition was not a "Festival of Britain" but, a "great Peace Festival . . . which united all the nations of the earth."

To talk about the British contribution to science, is like talking of the contribution to philosophy of men with brown hair, and it led the Duke to talk about, for instance, the motor car, without referring to its inventors, and psychology without mentioning its greatest pioneers. We laugh at the way the Soviet authorities claim every invention and discovery under the sun as the work of Russians, but this is only the final result of applying nationalistic pride to human achievement.

In a vote of thanks to the Duke he was told how inspiring his address had been, and would continue to be for his listeners. We find inspiring, not the words of the Ducal president of a scientific body, but these words of an anonymous journalist which appeared in the *Daily Mirror*, (hardly a scientific journal), during the war:

"Whether we wish it or not, an indelible pattern of unity has been woven into the society of mankind."

There is not an area of activity in which this cannot be illustrated. An American soldier, wounded on a battlefield in the Far East, owes his life to the Japanese scientist, Kitasato, who isolated the bacillus of tetanus.

A Russian soldier, saved by a blood transfusion, is indebted to Landsteiner, an Austrian.

In peace, as in war, we are all of us the beneficiaries of contributions to knowledge made by every nation in the world.

Our children are guarded from diphtheria by what a Japanese and a German did . . . From birth to death they are surrounded by an invisible host—the spirits of men who never thought in terms of flags or boundary lines, and who never served a lesser loyalty than the welfare of mankind."

*Queen Victoria, in her diary for 1851.

REFUGEES IN GERMANY

IT appears that since the war, four and a half million refugees have been settled into more or less normal life in Germany—a staggering figure. But it also appears that there are yet another five million who have yet to be settled. These figures are taken from the correspondence columns of the *Times*, and it seems that these five millions are increasing at the rate of 200,000 every year in the form of refugees from Eastern Germany.

It is needless to stress the difficulties of absorbing such numbers into the social pattern of a disorganised economy such as post-war Germany presents. Especially since the political tensions between East and West make the "screening" of such refugees a necessary operation.

The important aspect to grasp seems to us the fact that the problem of the existence of masses of refugees is itself a product of the political tensions and rivalries between states and between ideologies. Since this tension has increased rather than diminished since the war, and since every international incident—e.g., Korea—produces yet more millions of homeless refugees, it seems inevitable that the problem will increase rather than gradually solve itself.

If men and women realised more imaginatively the dreadfulness of the refugees' state, they would concern themselves more radically with the reorganisation of the society and its economic structure, of which the mass refugee problem is a product.

BOOK REVIEWS

Shall the Desert Bloom?

"MEN AGAINST THE DESERT", by
Richie Calder. (Allen & Unwin, 12/6)

MR. RITCHIE CALDER is well-known as a popular writer on scientific topics, an occupation which is often sneered at by the specialists, though it is hard to see why. He is writing here about a subject which is not only fascinating in itself but, in view of all the warnings we keep hearing about the exhaustion of the soil's fertility and the difficulty of feeding the world's population, is of great general importance.

He went, last year, at the request of Unesco to the deserts of North Africa and the Middle East from Algiers to Persia to tell the story of what has been achieved and what is planned, to bring great barren areas back into cultivation. His journey was interesting too as an experiment in mass-enlightenment, for his reports were followed stage by stage by 15,000 schools in this country and were published in 40 newspapers in 32 countries. (Readers may remember the series in the *News Chronicle* and the dramatic photographs by Mr. Raymond Kleboe of *Picture Post*, which illustrate this book.)

He began his enquiry with the historian's question: Where did Hannibal get his elephants?

"If he got them from Asia . . . how did he transport them? If they were marched from Asia, then the deserts of the Middle East could not have been what they are to-day. If, on the other hand, they were a tamed version of the African species brought from Central Africa, then the Sahara could not have been what it is to-day—elephants could not have traversed the distances between the oases. Or if he brought them from Central Africa up the Nile Valley, then the Libyan and Western deserts must have been different. Lastly, if he found them in North Africa, then what is now desert must have been forest and jungle."

"So whatever answers I get to this question, the simple one is: The deserts were different." And in fact they were different, as Mr. Calder found. Hannibal got his elephants, he was told, from the valley of the Guir in the Sahara which was full of forests until the inhabitants cut down the trees, just as the Crusaders cut down the trees in Palestine, and the Libyans after the last war cut down the million trees planted by the Italian colonists, and the goats of Cyprus nibble away the vegetation, and for lack of alternative fuel for their fires and fodder for their animals, the Bedouins destroy the incipient vegetation of the desert.

Mesopotamia in the days of Haroun-al-Raschid had forty million inhabitants, eight times the population it supports today. The birthplace of Omar Khayyam in Persia once held a million and a half people and is now a village of fifteen thousand. The ancient civilisations have left beneath the sand huge systems of irrigation destroyed by wars between rival empires and between pastoralists and nomads. The Persians built horizontal underground wells up to thirty miles long, with shafts down to a thousand feet deep. The Nabateans raised mounds of pebbles which are still to be seen covered with dust, like pimples in the desert landscape. "They were there to trap the dew . . . The cold pebbles in the morning condensed the moisture out of the atmosphere and it seeped through the pile of pebbles into the good earth below. In these mounds were planted fig trees and olives and there is some evidence of bigger trees. But, in any event, the desert, by this device was turned into groves."

People often say that the climate must have changed in the desert lands, but there is no evidence of this. It simply means that the old inhabitants knew how to conserve the rain which did fall in the violent storms of the short wet season in wells, reservoirs, dams and underground cisterns. Under the Sahara there are vast natural reservoirs which can be tapped with deep wells. At the oasis of Gafsa even to-day, Mr. Calder reports, "are great olive groves, citrus orchards, apricot gardens, fields of wheat and barley, market gardens with endless varieties of vegetables, and every square foot of it depends on irrigation. There are natural springs, artesian gushers and wells from which water has to be pumped."

Mr. Calder gives an account of all the efforts being made in these countries to reclaim desert land; the geological study of soils and search for water, (his book includes photographs of sand transformed into fertile soil in only two years), the work on plant species which will first hold the sand together and then form humus and retain water, the breeding of farm stock suited to the deserts ecology, the bringing back into use of the ancient storage systems, the attempts to sow seeds from the air and the experiments in the use of lenses to focus the sun's rays and use this solar energy for driving pumps and dynamos. But political considerations continually prevent the work of reclaiming the desert. *Freedom* has commented recently upon the Israel-Jordan disputes which prevent the development of the Lowdermily Scheme for the Jordan Valley. As the *Listener* says, "The record of the work done by scientists of many nationalities is impressive, but it does not appear that their efforts are matched by any sense of urgency on the part of the governments concerned."

In Tunisia, M. Charles Saumagne, a lonely pioneer of desert reclamation, said to Mr. Calder: "Tell me that there are in the world ten men who believe that the desert can be made to blossom—ten men who believe that we can redeem the stupidities of mankind—and I shall die happy."

AN INDIAN TEACHER
IN JAPAN

EAST OF HOME by Santha Rama Rau.
(Gollancz, 16/-).

WE have already mentioned the American edition of this book. (See "An Indian Teacher in Japan," *Freedom*, 3/2/51).

Miss Rau is the daughter of an Indian diplomat, Sir Benegal Rau, who went with her father, first to Japan where he was ambassador, and then to China, Siam, Indo-China and Indonesia. In Japan she saw that the smart diplomatic circles concerned with the "democratisation" of the country rarely met the Japanese, so she got a job at a "free" school run with courage and devotion by Mr. & Mrs. Hani. In China she witnessed the last days of the Kuomintang dictatorship of Chiang-Kai-Shek. She saw Indo-China in the shadow of the futile struggle between the French and the Vietnamese. Her picture of Indonesia is from a Balinese village in a series of witty and tender conversations with the simple and happy islanders, though there is a distant background of the sterile politics of imperialism and nationalism.

Miss Rau's book is delicate and profound, a contrast to the breathless accounts of the Far East by hurrying journalists.

"Remember us," an old Japanese woman advised her, "not as nationals, nor even necessarily as friends, but only as people."

KICKS AND HA'PENCE

by HERBERT READ

The Village
Hall

The number of village halls established during the past twenty years is not known to me, though possibly the statistics are available. In any case, they are a new feature of country life, and a significant one. Their rise corresponds to the decline of the social influence of the Church; also, perhaps, to a shift in economic wealth—the rich are no longer so rich and the poor are no longer so poor. I know that there have been agencies (Carnegie Foundations, etc.) which have artificially stimulated this development, but fundamentally it has been a spontaneous growth, made possible by mutual aid. Take the case of my own village. It consists of about twenty-five households, with a few outlying farms. There is a church, but the nearest pub is two miles away. The possibility of erecting a village hall was mooted two or three years ago. A meeting was summoned in the only place available—an upper barn or granary which had formerly been used as a Protestant Sunday School, a Catholic Chapel, and an apple store. The stables beneath provided the characteristic odour. The meeting decided to launch the scheme with a whist drive. Excitement began to mount and

the next move was a jumble sale, which realised the unexpected sum of £64. Throughout the following winter activities never ceased—more whist drives and socials, and on the Fifth of November even the children took their spontaneous part, parading a Guy on a pony and raising ten shillings. It was time to take the plunge. The local landowner was approached and a site in the village was given free. The committee began to look for a suitable building—an army hut in good conditions which could be re-erected on the site. Eventually it was found, approved by the local authorities, and bought. Next the site had to be cleared and levelled: it was done voluntarily by the men of the village in the summer evenings, after a hard day's work in the fields. Stones for the foundations were collected by one of the farmers from a quarry on his land. The landowner lent a mason to supervise the mixing of the cement and the laying of a course of brickwork. Then the hall, in sections, was delivered and the men of the village erected it (small as it is, the village luckily includes a skilled joiner). But what we then had was merely a bleak shell: it had to be painted, and, worst snag of all, it had to be provided with a floor. Anxious meetings followed, for timber is controlled, and extremely expensive. But the timber was found and the floor was laid by the joiner. The last touches were given to the building and its surroundings, the roadman trimmed the road, the village green was mown by the blind quarryman (who also mows the churchyard, rings the bells and looks after his own cow and garden), and everything was now ready for the Opening Fête (this foreign word, along with bazaar and gymkhana, persists in the country). It was a "splendid occasion". There were speeches, of course; there was also a sale of work, and sports, and a concert given by the children, and a final whist drive—altogether another £100 was raised. There is still a debt—quite a substantial one—but with a Hall in their possession, the village feels secure. Now there will be, not only whist drives and socials, but dances and the mobile cinema. There is even talk of an opera.

Is this small beer to you? The Village Pump used to be a symbol of all that was parochial and self-centred. Is the Village Hall its present equivalent? Or is it, as I would suggest, a point of light in a dark world? A community of a

hundred souls, unaided by national, state or local government, has brought into being, by its own spontaneous efforts, a centre for its communal life. It stands on the hill-side, a grey hut without any architectural graces, but it will weather into the landscape, and the villagers will use it and enjoy it because it was their own creation. It "has brought the village together", they say. They mean that their lives will be happier, their activities will have a focus, their minds socially creative. Multiply this little event a thousandfold, and something like a social revolution will have taken place. But, of course, it can only take place in small communities. The problem is very different in a city. But even in a city it can be solved, as the Peckham Health Centre demonstrated. Can be solved, and yet the Peckham Health Centre has closed its doors. Its failure was a social tragedy, and what we want to know is whether such a tragic failure is inherent in city life, or merely the result of economic pressures which could have been avoided. A city can build a useless feature like the Dome of Discovery, but it cannot maintain a Home of Social Health. That is the paradox of an urban civilization.

World
Government

A conference on a very impressive scale is being prepared by the all-party Parliamentary Group for World Government. It will open in London on September 24th, and be continued in Cardiff, Edinburgh, Birmingham and Glasgow. Many fine speeches will be made and glowing sentiments will warm hearts chilled by the fear of atomic war. It is desirable that "men of vision and goodwill with a sense of the realities of the age we live in" should be enabled "to have a free discussion of the measures which might be taken to realise the just hopes or aspirations of the common peoples of all nations for a world of peace and plenty". To people imbued with a governmental conception of society, it would seem that a World Government with absolute power over all people on the face of the earth is the only effective way of achieving the just hopes and aspirations, etc. One cannot doubt the sincerity and independence of men like Lord Boyd Orr and Mr. Clement Davies, who are the leaders of this movement. But there are two questions that must be asked: Are their ideals realisable, and if realisable, are they desirable? I am not very concerned about the first question: if means can be found to persuade the U.S.S.R., China, Spain, the Argentine, Mexico, the United States and Mr. Winston Churchill to surrender their sovereignties to an international government, then one miracle might give birth to another—an international government, might succeed in establishing a world of peace and plenty (I assume, of course, that the process of persuasion would in itself be "peaceful"). But what I find a little disturbing is the thought of such a concentration of power in relatively few hands. Would even our supermen have the nerves to stand the strain? Or would power absolute beyond any tyrant's dream be accompanied by corruption beyond the devil's own conception? But it is "the only way", say these advocates of World Government, and their logic seems unanswerable. But suppose we reverse the process of thought; suppose we say, instead of World Government, NO GOVERNMENT AT ALL? We shall be told that that ideal is also impractical, un-realizable. So in the end we are left with two projects of immense scope and significance each under the suspicion of being utterly idealistic, and we must make our choice. The difference is, that whilst people are accustomed to think along lines of the concentration and centralisation of Power, towards an ideal of authoritarian control, they are not used to thinking along lines of the dissipation and decentralisation of Power, towards an ideal of mutual aid. The choice is really between a few million village halls and one world government.

"Man has little to gain from liberty unless that liberty includes the liberty to control what he produces."

W. R. EMERSON.

REGIONAL
RENAISSANCE

BRITAIN DISCOVERS HERSELF by
Denys Val Baker. (Christopher
Johnson, 9/6).

THIS book provides an introductory survey of what the author calls the "regional renaissance" in Britain. He says that "the essence of regionalism is decentralization, independence, self-determination; on-the-spot decisions, personal responsibility and action." He covers a very wide field, showing that these are to some extent the characteristics of present-day literature, art, drama, music, broadcasting, education, the crafts and industry. He sets forth arguments in favour of such development, and suggests one or two useful distinctions, as for example that between regionalism and sentimental ruralism. The book is sketchy (but it does not claim to be much more), one feels sometimes that the author is making bricks without enough straw, and the case is not always as plausibly put as it could have been; but it is simply written, the material is handily organised, and it should help those who want a general view of the subject before giving part of it closer attention. L.A.

AUTUMN READING

Forthcoming Books—2

The painter Paul Nash, instead of making notes and sketches for his pictures, used to take photographs, and Faber & Faber are publishing a collection of these in *The Fertile Image* (25/-). From Nash's studies of tree-trunks, stones and objects *trouvés*, emerge, they believe "something like a new consideration of landscape". Another artist who looks around with a curious and appreciative eye is Miss Barbara Jones who has written and illustrated *The Unsophisticated Arts*, an excursion into the traditional vernacular art of Britain. (Architectural Press, 25/-).

If you were ever ensnared by D'Arcy Thompson's celebrated book on the mathematical aspect of biological forms, *Growth and Form*, or if you have gazed like us in bewildered delight at the exhibition with that title at the I.C.A. Gallery in Dover Street, you will want to see *Aspects of Form*, (Lund Humphries, 21/-), a symposium on form in nature and art, edited by Mr. L. L. Whyte, (who contributed the foreword to the new *Freedom* Press publication *Art & The Evolution of Man*). The publishers claim that "One conclusion suggested by these essays is that form plays a decisive role in man's relation to his environment, and therefore holds a key position in man's understanding of nature and himself."

If all this is too much for you, don't despair. Turn to Ronald Searle's new book of drawings, *Back to the Slaughterhouse*, (MacDonald, 6/-).

People are at last beginning to discover that the most interesting part of London, the richest in traditional and historical associations, and in the diversity and humanity of its people is the neglected "East End". It is also the most civilised part of London: "They have made the pedestrian crossings near Stratford church the most democratic in London: the pedestrian need not even raise his eyes from his newspaper while he saunters across this busy road. The phenomenon is worth studying in comparison with the atmosphere in which well-dressed people scurry for their lives in Kensington Gore", says Mr. Robert Sinclair in his recently published *East London*, (Robert Hale's "County Books",

15/-). Mr. Sinclair's book which surveys the area from Aldgate Pump out to Barking and Dagenham and Ilford, is a sociological and topographical masterpiece. Another recent book, Mr. A. B. Levy's *East End Story* (Constellation Books, 9/6), is a modest but detailed and touching exploration of Jewish life in Stepney. We are saving up both these books for a comprehensive review with Miss Millicent Rose's forthcoming *The East End of London*, (Cresset Press, 30/-), the emphasis of which is on architectural, artistic and theatrical aspects of East London, and, to judge from Miss Rose's magazine articles, it will be as fascinating as Mr. Sinclair's book.

A number of books on social and industrial psychology have been announced, some of which sound especially interesting from our standpoint. They include *The Human Group*, a theory of social behaviour based on the lives of small groups, by George C. Homans, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, about 25/-); *Psychology & The Industrial Worker*, by E. G. Chambers, (Cambridge University Press, 10/6); *The Changing Culture of a Factory*, by Elliott Jacques, (Tavistock Publications, 28/-), which we shall review shortly; and *The Psychology of Pierre Janet*, by Elton Mayo, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, about 9/6). Pierre Janet's studies of social and industrial psychology were quoted in Camille Berneri's *Il Lavoro Attraente*, an abridged translation of which appeared in *Freedom* during 1947. Messrs. Routledge have also announced an abridged version at 9/6 of Susan Isaacs' *Social Development in Young Children*, edited by Dorothy May, "in the hope that it will be of use to young mothers and others who are concerned with children."

Finally, a note on *Freedom* Press publications. We have given up in despair the announcing of publishing dates—readers are aware of our difficulties and lack of money. But Tony Gibson's *Youth for Freedom* is actually in the press and will be found worth waiting for. We will then be publishing Philip Sansom's *The Workers' Next Step*, and a pamphlet by Simone Weil, *Reflections on War*.

FREEDOM PRESS

M. BAKUNIN:
Marxism, Freedom and the State—
paper 2/6, cloth 5/-

HERBERT READ:
Art and the Evolution of Man—4/-
Existentialism, Marxism and
Anarchism—3/6
Poetry and Anarchism, cloth 5/-,
paper 2/6

The Philosophy of Anarchism—
boards 2/6, paper 1/-

The Education of Free Men—1/-
GEORGE WOOD COCK:
Anarchy or Chaos?—2/6, cloth 4/6
New Life to the Land—6d.
Railways and Society—3d.
Homes orhovels?—6d.
What is Anarchism?—1d.
The Basis of Communal Living—
1/-

ALEXANDER BERKMAN:
A.B.C. of Anarchism—1/-

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Ill-health, Poverty and the State—
cloth 2/6, paper 1/-

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The State: Its Historic Role—1/-
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Organised Vengeance Called Justice
—2d.

M. L. BERNERI:
Workers in Stalin's Russia—1/-

F. A. RIDLEY:
The Roman Catholic Church and
the Modern Age—2d.

Marie Louise Berneri Memorial
Committee publications:
Marie Louise Berneri, 1918-1949:
A Tribute—cloth 5/-
Journey Through Utopia—
cloth 16/- (U.S.A. \$2.50)

27, Red Lion Street,
London, W.C.1.

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

The Grapes of Wrath

John Steinbeck 2/6
Penguin edition of the celebrated
novel of the "Arkies" and "Okies"
trekking west from the dust-bowl
to pick fruit in California.

Men Against the Desert

Ritchie Calder 12/6
A journey through the deserts of
N. Africa and the Middle East.

The World Scene from the Libertarian
Point of View

A symposium from America. 2/6

The Arts, No. 2

We have obtained a few copies of
this beautifully printed folio pub-
lished at 10/- in 1947 because of
the special interest of Ben Nicholson's
article, "The Anarchism of
Camille Pissarro."

Physician, Heal Thyself

G. Scott Williamson 5/-
A study of needs and means.

Animal Farm

George Orwell 1/6
"No parable was written since
Gulliver's Travels equal in profound-
ity and mordant satire to *Animal*
Farm."—Arthur Koestler.

... Obtainable from

27 red lion st, london,
W.C.1

THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED

"What the heart of man is able to conceive, the hand of man is strong enough to perform."

—WILLIAM GODWIN.

IN the radio programme "In Town To-night" recently, we were introduced to the Trinidad All-Steel Percussion Orchestra which is touring this country. At carnival time in Trinidad bands used to play in the torchlight processions celebrating the abolition of slavery. But the bands were banned, and as a substitute, bamboo drums were devised. In 1934 these too were forbidden by law, so drums made from dustbins were invented. These evolved into instruments made from petrol cans bent in such a way that each can play several notes, and this is what the ten indefatigable members of TASPO play. The sound is round and mellow and of course, rhythmic.

Another recent radio programme told us the story of Grandma Moses the American painter. She is a farmer's wife who as a relaxation from work in the fields used to make embroideries which she exhibited at the local County Fair. As she grew old arthritis crippled her fingers and she tried woollen tapestries with less detailed work, but soon she could not manipulate her needles, and so, at seventy-seven she began to paint country scenes and childhood reminiscences. To-day, at ninety, she is still painting and her work is sought after all over the world.

The Trinidad drummers had to express themselves in music, Grandma Moses had to find an outlet for her creative energy, so they found a way, in spite of legal prohibition in one case, and physical disability in the other.

In these days when, as Eddie Shaw declares, we are oppressed, suppressed, repressed and depressed, it is as well to take heed of TASPO and Mrs. Moses, people who knew what they wanted to do, and did it, instead of, in the words of Mr. Priestley's Jess Oakroyd, "dreaming of what might, but never will be".

Anarchism begins with the individual and until we can get satisfaction in our individual activities, we cannot hope to revolutionise our social environment. When people are determined to live their own lives they will not be willing to suffer the frustrations and irrelevancies of authority and politics.

That is why we enjoy reporting such things as the people who build their own houses, or their own village hall, or the Africans who build their own school, not because we think they are solving social problems, nor because they are doing "the authorities." work for them, but because they are developing that lost initiative which renders the authorities superfluous and points the way to the displacement of authority in general by the free association of self-assertive people.

This self-determination, self-regulation, "self-control"—the ultimate decentralisation is what we mean by anarchy.

For Use or For Profit?

The whole nature of our productive system is illustrated in the headlines to a report in the *Manchester Guardian* last week, which read:

POTATOES ALMOST UNOBTAINABLE
UNECONOMIC TO LIFT

HEAR HEAR

Mr. Shinwell, the Minister of Defence, told a large audience at Crimdon Park, the miners' seaside resort, near West Hartlepool, that beauty queens were much more important than small arms and munitions.

—*Manchester Guardian*, 7/8/51.

AMERICAN MINORITIES THE MEXICAN AMERICANS

"There will always be hewers of wood and drawers of water . . ."
—President of a Southwest Irrigation Monopoly.

IF the Jews and the Negroes are the most vocal and the best organised of the American minorities, the Mexican Americans must be considered as being at the bottom of the list. He is "The Forgotten Mexican". Even statistics as to his numbers are inexact although there are most probably about 3,000,000 Mexican Americans in the United States to-day.

1.

SOME GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

The Mexicans are a people of the Southwest, the old Mexican borderlands. Nine-tenths of all Mexicans live in the 5 border states of Texas (1,500,000); Arizona (120,000); New Mexico (250,000); California (750,000) and Colorado (90,000). There is a sprinkling of Mexicans outside this area in some of the industrial towns of the mid-west but the major Mexican populations are: Los Angeles (around 400,000), after Mexico City itself the second Mexican City in the world; El Paso (58,291) 57% of the population and San Antonio (82,373) 36% of the population. Moreover, in these States they are concentrated in particular areas giving them the majority over huge territories. It was this predominance in fact that insured the late entry of Arizona and New Mexico (as the last States admitted) to the union. Their admission was held up until the Anglo-Saxons could be assured their political control.

The whole story of the "adoption" of these citizens into the family of nations making up the U.S. would be tragic were it not so comic. This whole vast territory, comprising about one-quarter the total area of the U.S., was simply stolen one fine day back in '48 by manifest destiny and the American Army under the command of Generals Taylor and Scott (who entered Mexico City after a pleasant sea voyage). By this cheap war America gained Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Utah, Nevada and parts of Colorado, Wyoming and Oklahoma. Almost as cheap a "purchase" as the purchase of the Louisiana Territory or Alaska!

Immediately, building on the exploitative systems of Mexican land holdings (huge estates, mission exploitation of

Indians, typical patterns of garrison-peon land settlement) a crowd of adventurers started pushing into the new territory. Fabulous land swindles (hundreds of thousands of acres being sold in one case for \$11 in California a man purchased "swampland" from the State for a few cents an acre after having had himself pulled around a huge territory all day long in a boat towed by a team of horses), the usual Railroad Land Grant swindles, various packed court decisions (in one case one pirate gained water rights in two successive court cases using exactly the opposite legal theory; by these and by many other methods (fantastic even for America) the Anglo-Saxons slowly pushed the Mexican American (solemnly protected by exact treaty provisions) into his rightful role: a new Negro for the new West.

2.

NATIONAL WAR-CLASS WAR

The old Mexican settlements, especially those in New Mexico and Arizona, containing yet to-day some of the oldest (and most primitive) towns in the U.S., were

WET-BACKS TO BE DRIED

President Truman has signed a bill authorizing the importation of Mexican farm labourers. The bill was a highly controversial measure and was strongly opposed by the A.F. of L., which has some semblance of organization among farm labourers. Instead of organizing the wet-backs, the union officials have been trying to co-operate with immigration authorities in deporting them.

Under the present bill farmers will be allowed to take Mexican labourers from reception centres to farms. The labourers would be restricted to areas certified by the Secretary of Labour as having shortages of domestic help. Employers would pay up to \$15 for moving workers to reception centres, as well as the cost of transporting them to the farms. Nothing is said about whether or not the bosses will be forced to pay the Mexicans decent wages for their services. They probably won't be unless the erstwhile organize and make them do it.

—*Industrial Worker* (Chicago), 20/7/51.

THE SENATOR WHO WAS EATEN BY HIS CONSTITUENTS

A VERY instructive story was reported throughout the British Press last week. It told of "suspicion mounting in the lobbies of the French Senate that M. Victor Biaka Boda, member for the Ivory Coast, had been eaten by his constituents". His two wives were said to have lodged a complaint, and the bones had been found. Most of the British newspapers reported the item as it stood. Only (to my knowledge) the *Daily Express*, on this occasion, did a little research and discovered that the "suspicion" had started off as a joke in the Paris weekly *Aux Ecoutés* on Jan. 12, 1951 (a year after M. Boda's disappearance), and gradually the rumour had grown and grown in the columns of first American, then French, and now British newspapers.

The moral of the story as regards the Press need hardly be pointed . . . and one is tempted to hark back to the Moscow Trials, when at the trial of Rakovsky the Russian police dug up an old copy of *Punch* which had caricatured a party Rakovsky had given at the Russian Embassy in the early twenties, burlesquing it in the style of the Brechtian Ballads, starting "Rakovsky gives a party, I tell you it was fun", and ending with the fatal words: "Und thinks long life to Trotsky, Als ruling Tsar."

It seems that the Press of the Free West is not far off the mentality of the Moscow judges who were horrified at the damning evidence so seriously presented against Rakovsky. . . .

But we might also look at another aspect of it. When you read the story it sounds a joke. It has a tang of humour about it. It can well be understood what *Aux Ecoutés* was driving at. There seems to be something slightly odd about the fact that a member's constituents could so far forget their duties of citizenship as to eat their parliamentary representative. Imagine if it happened here . . . ("Minister Increases Food Ration" could be read both ways . . .) What the point behind the joke is, however, is that the whole parliamentary system is a sham, and the French pretence of granting parliamentary rights in its colonies is in fact itself a joke. They know full well they are not really giving anything away when they grant Parliamentary privileges, and so as an insurance against the future, when native peoples become evolved to the point of demanding autonomy, they grant in advance the right to send a mouthpiece to the Palais-Bourbon even to the most primitive peoples whom obviously they have no intention of allowing to influence French laws.

*If it happened in Russia, of course, "Pravda" would inevitably come out with its stock-cri, "Fascist cannibals . . ."

The result is that when as a result primarily of their own labours and efforts and adaptation to an era in advance of that in which they had been living, the peoples are able to make demands, they are airily told that all these demands have been theirs for years . . . they can send a member to the Chamber of Deputies and what more could be asked. Obviously in the case of many backward tribes, such as this one in the Ivory Coast, the right of vote, insofar as they exist (restricted as a rule to key men in the tribes) mean nothing whatsoever, being so far removed from the customs and habits of the people, and serving only as a safety-valve—and the whole thing is regarded with rather tolerant humour in the Metropolis.

But it is not only a few backward tribes that are affected: the French Empire extends its tentacles amongst people who were civilised when Paris did not exist, and all these peoples, from one part of the globe to another, are denied any rights except that of being citizens of the *Union Française*, which is really apparently, only a bit of a joke. . . .

France hangs on to little parts of India, when the overwhelming whole has become at least politically independent; it fights for its existence in Indo-China, draining away thousands of young men's lives, who are dying for France that yesterday was honouring the present Communist enemy Ho Chi Minh, and to-morrow might well be "Communist" itself . . . It suppresses the conscious aspirations of the Arabs in North Africa and the intelligent Negro in Central Africa, reducing them all to the common level of "citizenship" by which millions vote for one or two representatives who can sit in a parliament along with members elected by sleepy little constituencies in the heart of the French countryside. The conscious aim of French imperialism is clearly seen in all this, but the Frenchman is too witty to be completely taken in by it, and so you get the humour implicit in the story of the senator who was eaten by his constituents.

There is nothing to be said against a good joke, but it has its social and economic background too (surely the jokes about Scotch meanness come from the impoverishment of Scotland by the landlords that for generation upon generation made the ordinary folk count their pennies in a way that seemed strange to the English visitor?). And so, apart from the way in which the Press took up the story, the incident is an illuminating reflection on French Imperialism. Only we hope no British or Russian Imperialist will feel too smug about it.

INTERNATIONALIST.

set up as frontier and garrison posts to protect the Mexican headland from Indians and the more dangerous British and French. The local Indians, especially after several disillusioning experiences with the conquistadores couldn't see the sense of it all and began to turn the whole area into a battlefield. On Mexicans and Anglo-Saxons alike, the Apaches declared eternal and successful warfare, succeeding in making whole settlement areas uninhabitable for decades at a time. So persistent were they that this whole borderland territory was soon known in the heartland as *tierras de guerra*. War lands they have remained.

In a certain real sense the Mexican-American war has not ended. Until just a few years ago Mexican school maps showed the borderland territory as Mexican. From the early Californian Robin Hoods like Joaquin Murietta of the immediate post-war period through Cortina, Magon and Pancho Villa, through the zoot-suit riots of 1943, a pattern of desperados, raids, lynchings, strikes, vigilantes, segregation, persecution and discrimination has claimed its victims in the thousands and tens of thousands. "From 1908 to 1925, the whole border was aflame once again, as revolution engulfed Mexico. No-one knows how many American and Mexican civilians were killed along the border in these years, but the estimates, according to Dr. Webb, range from 500 to 5,000 . . . In an article in *World's Work*, George Marvin reported that, "the killing of Mexicans . . . through the border region in these last four years is almost incredible . . . some Rangers have degenerated into common man-killers. There is no penalty for killing, for no jury along the border would ever convict a white man for shooting a Mexican . . ." Carey McWilliams: *North From Mexico*.

3.

THE SITUATION TO-DAY

Economically the Mexicans are the Negroes of the Southwest. And if socially they are not as submerged as the Negroes of the South, they are socially and economically not as advanced as the Negro of the North.

From 1900 to 1930 a vast new Mexican migration into the U.S. has taken place. It is estimated that upwards of 1,000,000 Mexicans have settled in the U.S. in that period. The depression reversed this tide but the war and post-war boom have accelerated it to-day, and since they appear on relief rolls from time to time and as the *N.Y. Times* of May 20, 1951, so charitably headlined it:

"MEXICANS CALLED T.B. THREAT IN U.S.—CALIFORNIA HEALTH OFFICER SEES SOURCE OF INFECTION EXTENDING OVER HALF OF THE STATES", Mexicans have again become "a minority problem." America first became aware of the

Mexicans rather accidentally. In the middle thirties John Steinbeck wrote *The Grapes of Wrath*, about an American phenomena: the hundreds of thousands of *Okies* and *Arkies* driven off their depression and dustbowl and tractor levelled farms into California and a desperate search for a livelihood: picking crops. But when the *Okies* and *Arkies* got there they found the Mexicans. The Mexicans had found the Japanese. The Japanese the Chinese and the Hindoos. And Portuguese, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, Italians: any kind of cheap immigrant unorganised labour that could be pushed around, was unprotected and forced by the triple jeopardy of its obviously alien status to accept on literal pain of starvation, deportation, vigilante violence, whatever was offered it, any such labour was welcome at the miserable shacks and sheds and cardboard towns (perhaps the worst in the country) where "temporary" living quarters were to be found. Cheap, migrant, labour was what was wanted for these vast "Factories in the Fields", the ultimate capitalist rationalisation of agriculture.

Posters and handbills advertising for five times the number of men needed were sent all over the Southwest, translated into Spanish and sent into Mexico. The hewers of wood and the drawers of water descend into the money-lined San Joaquin and Imperial Valleys. The swift refrigeration cars carry the oranges and grapefruits, lettuce and artichokes from Los Angeles County (the richest agricultural county in the country) to the great cities of the East. The very tracks of the Monster Southern Pacific and the Santa Fé Railway built by the Chinese coolie labour of the '70's and '80's are now kept in tip-top shape by Mexican gangbans living in the deserts, working in high temperatures, below the American scale and with zero prospect of advancement to skilled work. "No white man would take orders from a Mexican."

Chopping cotton all over the Rio Grande Valley "400,000 labourers alone will be needed for this year's crop." And as ex-Vice President John Nance Garner stated "Farming is not a profitable industry, and in order to make money you have to have cheap labour" (quoted in *Look* of March 27, 1951).

SOME MORTAL STATISTICS

- "Each year 31 out of 100,000 Anglo-American Texans die of T.B.; during the same year, 209 out of every 100,000 Latins . . . die of the disease. San Antonio, more than half Mexican, has the highest T.B. rate in the nation."—(*Look*).
- "He said that among Mexican aliens the rate of active T.B. was 1.2 per 1,000, almost double the rate of the country's overall population." (*N.Y. Times*, May 19, 1951.)
- "Cities with Latin population are regularly ravaged by diphtheria and infant diarrhoea. In 5 years in San Antonio, infant diarrhoea killed 920 babies—865 of them Latin. In Donna, a predominantly Spanish-speaking

(Continued on page 4)

Another Experiment Ends

IT was reported in last week's *Reynold's News* (12/8/51) that:

A group of sub-normal "misfit" children who found happiness in the Regent's Park, London, home of Miss Herta Loewy have been sent back to their homes.

For the big Regency house, where so many of these backward children have been nursed back to health and normalcy, has been put up for sale.

This means the end of an outstanding social experiment by a courageous woman.

There are 30,000 so-called "ineducable" children for whom there are no schools, and fewer than 150 occupation centres.

No individual effort has had a more startling success than that of Miss Loewy, who has devoted her life to the study of the problem.

For children like six-year-old Netta, with a twisted spine and unable to speak, who was discharged from hospital as a "hopeless case," is now able to talk, play and laugh. The closing of the home means an end to hope to her.

Miss Loewy published the result of her study and observation of "sub-normal" children in "The Retarded Child—a Guide for Parents" (Staples Press, 1949, 3/6). At that time she was working in Manchester in private homes and was hoping to be able to open a clinic "for children whose parents cannot afford a specialised teacher". It is tragic that this clinic should have to end so soon.

What is Miss Loewy's method? She says, (*Reynold's News*, 24/6/51):

SOVIET-ZONE EDUCATION

A final word on education in Eastern Germany, the subject of a long article in our issue of 4/8/51 and of the quotation from *The Times Educational Supplement* in our last issue, comes from a correspondent to that journal who writes: " . . . if you wish every member of a population to think alike you dare not teach them to think for themselves."

"The first stage in my method is observation. Quite often the character of the child changes completely—or, rather, the true character of the child emerges and the superstructure created by his environment and his inhibitions disappears. The classification alters and the child appears much nearer the norm."

And Prof. Max Neuburger sums it up thus, (*Evening News*, 10/8/49):

"By her methods, the spirit of the child becomes attached to the teacher; the relationship of teacher to child is not one of authority but of friendship. In this way the child, at first utterly insecure, becomes safe, confident, independent."

Do They Understand?

CONFUSION among the Trotskyists: The widow of their assassinated leader has resigned from the executive committee of the Trotskyist organisation. *La Vérité* of June 21st published some extracts from Natalie Trotsky's letter, which contained the following lines:

"Obsessed by old and out-dated formulae, you continue to consider the Stalinist state as a workers' state. I cannot, and will not follow you on this point."

"You now consider that the states of Eastern Europe over which Stalinism has established its dominion during or since the war are also 'workers' states'. This is the equivalent of saying that Stalinism has filled a revolutionary socialist rôle. I cannot, and will not follow you on this point."

"It is impossible for me to follow you on the question of Tito's régime in Yugoslavia. This bureaucracy is nothing but a replica, in a new guise, of the old Stalinist bureaucracy."

"You continue to extol the defence of the Stalinist State and to pledge the whole movement to this. You now support the armies of Stalinism in the war in which the crucified people of Korea are submerged. I cannot and will not follow you on this point."

—*Contacts Littéraires et Sociales*, No. 10, June, 1951.

POMP AND PRIVILEGE

The Case of Mr. John Lewis, M.P.

I DISTINCTLY remember stirring speeches by Labour politicians in the old days, when they used to say that when they had the power they would most certainly tackle the question of privilege. . . . I am sure that socialist audiences who cheered these statements once did not know exactly what our present lords and masters meant by it, but nobody can deny that they have "tackled the question of privilege" in one sense of the phrase, at least.

Constantly we hear of cases of Parliamentary privilege being asserted, and the latest of the cases, that of Mr. John Lewis, seems practically incredible. If anyone cares to read the report of the incident in which he was involved, the pomposity and self-importance of the average M.P. stands out so clearly that one can see why in spite of all the late nights and discipline of the Whips, the "public minded" are induced to run for office, and hang on to it as long as possible. Mr. Lewis, at the time (it was such a clear-cut incident that he climbed down after the Committee report), seemed to imagine that because he was on his way to the House, he could not be expected to wait in a line with other cars on the road in circumstances which did not involve anything more than ordinary traffic direction.

But the many instances of privilege go farther still than that, and it seems—as was recently pointed out by an M.P.—that you could say far more against the King, with impunity, than against the Speaker or the Chairman of Ways and Means. There is naturally a reason for it. The Commons spent generations fighting the privileges of the King: in doing so they raised their own against him. Nowadays no King would dream of stepping outside the limits laid down for him, and he need have no real anxiety about his privileges, such as are left. The Commons are not now assert-

ing their privileges against the King above them, but against the People "below".

Compare a case of a Conservative M.P. recently, who—sent to Parliament, one presumes, to defend the interests of his constituents—asked why the police did not prosecute a wounded ex-Serviceman who parked his admittedly somewhat shabby car constantly near the front entrance of the honourable gentleman's London flat. This is a very clear instance of how Parliamentary privilege is now used against the People. In fact, to-day the "representatives" are a class apart from the population and owing to the party system, the fact that they are elected means less and less every year.

Those who may use their psychological powers upon the make-up of M.P.s might think, as a generalisation, that Labour M.P.s might be touchier on the question of their privileges than Tories—hence many of the recent cases—but this approach falls to pieces when one considers that the party system is destroying the class element in politics so far as the Labour Party is concerned. A gentleman like Mr. Lewis is from the angle of his position in society and status at the bank, quite as much at home on one side of the House as another. It is quite impossible to tell the difference between M.P.s nowadays, except that a few of working-class origin on the Labour side, now getting very much on in years, can be distinguished from the smart lawyers on both sides, and form a diminishing element in the socialist ranks.

The fact is, however, that all M.P.s are aware of a growing disdain for Parliamentarism. The only thing that has saved it in the last generation has, in fact, been the The only thing that has saved it in the last generation has, in fact, been the attack upon Parliamentary methods by Fascists and Communists (who have not, however, objected to using same themselves). The belief that perhaps, after all, the alternative to parliamentarism was dictatorship and that the former was the lesser of the two evils, has been a life-saver for M.P.s and their privileges. Few people to-day really believe it to be the case, for Parliament has shown how easy it is to vote dictatorial powers. When a Minister says, for instance, that direction of labour will never be applied *except by vote of Parliament*—knowing full well he can always crack the whip and get the vote whenever he wants it—he is giving a very clear picture to the thinking as to just what democracy really means.

The expression of ideas as to an alternative to both parliamentarism and dictatorship is something that is bound to involve allegations of breeches of privilege. Hence the very need to be so touchy, both about asserting privilege, and about using it to bolster up one's own importance. But there is, of course, an answer to these charges. A very simple answer. The Commons themselves thought of it in their struggles with the King. They refused to vote taxes—and we, after all, are the mugs who actually pay them. It would be so much easier for us.

A.M.

THROUGH THE PRESS

IS IT?

A record was broken in Paris this morning when France entered the twenty-eighth day without a Government. The previous longest interval was 27 days in 1949 and, of course, the current one is not yet finished.

It is a melancholy form of progress.
—*Manchester Guardian*, 7/8/51.

WHAT A HOPE

Mr. Setty, of Sanderstead, Surrey, has organised a "lifts" scheme in his area, with windscreen stickers for motorists and cards for bona-fide pedestrians.

He wants to make it national. "Think what a good impression it would make," he said yesterday, "if a chap got a lift to work in a lord's car."

"It would help to bring workers and bosses together and save a lot of strikes and unrest."

BLASPHEMY!

Normally, when I reach the City, I go at once to St. Ethelburga's—Without-the-Wall, a church whose saintly, cloistered dignity epitomises the quiet charity with which financiers take your money. But, this time, I went to another church—St. Dalton-Beyond-the-Pale.

St. Dalton, you will remember, was martyred because he made a joke about the Stock Exchange. No one objects to jokes, as such, about the Stock Exchange. The trouble with St. Dalton's joke was that it was clean.

—*Tribune*, 10/8/51.

HOUSING: IN THE DARK

Housing authorities were surprised to-day by a Southern Electricity Board statement that the Board cannot connect new buildings with the electricity supply.

A Board spokesman said to-day: "Due to a cut in the Treasury allowance to the Board of capital expenditure we cannot supply any new council houses, private homes or factories."

"Existing contracts, some of which are for a year ahead, will be carried out, and buildings erected for the defence programme will be an exception."

He said the ban would last until there was a relaxation of the restriction on capital expenditure.

—*The Star*, 11/8/51.

ANARCHIST SUMMER SCHOOL, GLASGOW, 25th & 26th AUGUST

Lectures Will Include:

Eddie Shaw: "Anarchism and the Ego".
James Raeside: "Anarchism and the Politicians".
Tony Gibson: "Anti-Militarism and the Anarchist Movement".

★

Correction:

Last week we announced the cost of Bed and Breakfast as 12/6 a night. This should read as 12/6 for the two nights.

If you have not yet notified your intention of coming, write at once to:

John Gaffney, 18 Finnieston Street, Glasgow, C.3.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS A Practical Proposal

COMRADES,

Freedom has, for some time now, been a weekly, and thus doubled the work for editors, contributors, and for those who assist in the despatch of copies to subscribers.

It appears to me, there is a big effort being made "behind the scenes" but very little endeavour on the stage itself.

My suggestion is that all militant comrades allot two or three hours each week to selling *Freedom* at one of the several stations in London or the provinces. It is quite possible on the first occasion that no copies will be sold, but, it is my belief, that with perseverance on the part of the seller matters will gradually improve until one is well-known at this particular spot. It is some consolation in these instances to remember that the time has not been ill-spent since it has some advertising value. If there are a dozen comrades in London alone, prepared to undertake this work I should guess that half a million more people will know there is an Anarchist Weekly Paper.

"FREEDOM" NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT: (1) More New Readers (2) More Contributions to the Special Appeal

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

The Minister of Works told a questioner in Parliament on July 23 that since 1945, the Government had erected for use by staff in the London area fourteen offices which provide 1.1 million square feet of accommodation at a cost of £25 millions. Private developers had built and leased to the Government 21 offices, providing 1.3 million square feet at a capital cost of about £4.8 millions.

Sixteen offices were being built with a total area of 900,000 square feet by the Government, and nineteen with a total area of 1.1 million square feet by private developers for lease to the Government. The total expenditure on these offices to the end of June amounted to about £3.3 millions and £4.15 millions respectively.

—*The People*, 29/7/51.

On a board outside the Ambassadors Theatre, London, appear these extracts from the dramatic critics' notices of the play now running there:

"A most immoral play."—*The Tailor*.

"Something not to be missed."—*Church Times*.

The work will often be a trial of patience and it is well not to be over-optimistic.

Bearing in mind these points, will all comrades interested enough to increase the sale of *Freedom*, contact

me c/o Freedom Press, stating which Station or pitch can be covered?

JOHN BISHOP.

[Our correspondent is one of our most persistent and successful sellers—EDS.]

What is Capitalism?

DEAR SIR,

Libertarian will have it that the evils of capitalism come from the fact that capitalist economy is operated by bad men. A silly letter, he says, "is a reflexion on the person who wrote it, just as (an inhuman system) is a reflexion on those who operate it." But I don't think you can make the comparison that way, and I think it shows a misunderstanding of capitalist economy—or any other economy—if you try to do so.

If I write a silly letter, that is a reflexion on me, because if I hadn't been so silly the letter would not have been written. That is something which I have done, and, you may say, I should have known better. But the capitalist system is not something which I have produced; nor is it something which I operate, as I might operate a business or a racket. I may be an inhuman person, and I may operate an inhuman racket—peddling opium to school children, perhaps, or any other you like. But the inhumanity of the system (if you want to talk that way) would be something different, and it would not make any difference to that whether I were inhuman or decent.

Nor would it make much difference if you said that the inhumanity of capitalism is a reflexion, not upon any individual, but upon the capitalist class. The capitalist class has not produced capitalism. You could not talk of the capitalist class at all except where there is capitalism. And whatever it produces, it produces within that economy and through the institutions of that economy: money, credit, trade, wage labour and the rest. Nor would it be true to say that the people whom you may call "capitalists" at the present time "operate" or control those institutions. Business men may control certain enterprises—though there are limits to what they can do in this respect. They may decide on the policy which the firm is to follow for the coming year, for instance. But that control, so far as it operates at all, operates through capitalist institutions—market policies, loans and so on. And it would be nonsense to speak of controlling capitalism in any similar way. Capitalism is not a firm and is not a business and nobody controls it. It would be a hopeless confusion if anyone thought that the capitalist class ran capitalism in the way in which the directors may run a business.

So again the point is that if you want to say that capitalism is inhuman, this cannot mean that capitalists are inhuman. They may be or they may not, but that is a different question and it has nothing to do with the inhumanity of the system. So if you want to show the inhumanity of the system, then I think you are going

right off the path if you start saying that it is controlled by robbers and brigands, or if you say that those who operate it are inhuman and immoral.

And if you say some such thing as, "Only an immoral person would operate such a system", then I think that is a confusion, because no persons operate the system; not in any sense that could cast either reflexion or credit upon them. No doubt *Libertarian* wants to say that any decent person will come out in opposition to the system, or perhaps that he will try to have nothing to do with it. Perhaps that is so. But again I think these are separate issues.

In the latest number of *Freedom* (Aug. 11th, 1951) *Libertarian* seems to make the same sort of confusion in what he says about the state and politics. He suggests that the Anarchist view is that all politicians are "rascals". But this can only make it harder to see what the objections to the state and to political institutions are. And I do not believe that the Anarchist case can depend on whether as a matter of fact politicians are rascals or whether they are not. *Libertarian* says "rascals" with an eye on the censor, I suppose. But the idea seems to be that politicians are in a class with, say, swindlers and embezzlers. Some of them may be that. But the state and politics would be just as objectionable if they were not. Politics as we find it is a dirty game. But that is not why the state is an evil institution. If politicians were all upright humanitarians it would be worse. It may be that any system would be objectionable if it were "operated" by inhuman people and rascals. And you have said nothing distinctive about capitalism or about the state if you say that that is what is the trouble with them.

I am, Sir, etc.,

Swansea, Aug. 12. TOM TEMPLE.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

OPEN-AIR MEETINGS at HYDE PARK
Every Sunday at 3.30 p.m.

INDOOR MEETINGS
Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.
at the PORCUPINE (corner Charing Cross Road at St. Newport Street, next Leicester Sq. Underground Stn.)

These Meetings are suspended for the Summer months. They will re-commence in SEPTEMBER.
Watch this column for future Announcements.

NORTH-EAST LONDON DISCUSSION MEETINGS IN EAST HAM

at 7.30.
SEPT. 4—(at Woodford) SOCIAL EVENING—Eric Lewis: "A TRIBUTE TO SPAIN"

Enquiries c/o Freedom Press

SOUTH LONDON

Meetings suspended for the time being. Readers interested in possible future activities, please contact S. E. Parker, c/o Freedom Press.

GLASGOW

OUTDOOR MEETINGS at MAXWELL STREET
Every Sunday at 7 p.m.
With John Gaffney, Frank Leech, Jimmy Raeside, Eddie Shaw

KINGSTON

Any Comrades interested in forming a Group in the KINGSTON area, are invited to write to Freedom Press.

FREEDOM

The Anarchist Weekly

Postal Subscription Rates
12 months 17/- (U.S.A. \$3.00)
6 months 8/6 (U.S.A. \$1.50)
3 months 4/6 (U.S.A. \$0.75)

Special Subscription Rates for 2 copies
12 months 27/- (U.S.A. \$4.50)
6 months 13/6 (U.S.A. \$2.25)

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