

Peter Kropotkin: from the point of view of its practical realisation—1879

The Anarchist Idea

ON October 12, 1879, the Jura Federation (the anarchist section of the First International in French-speaking Switzerland) held its annual meeting at La Chaux-de-Fonds. A discussion on the practical application of anarchist theory concluded with a report given by a Russian delegate from Geneva called 'Alexei Levashov'. This was Peter Kropotkin.

Kropotkin had first visited Switzerland in 1872, when he became an anarchist under the influence of the leaders of the Jura Federation. He returned to Russia and was active in the populist movement until his arrest in 1874. In 1876 he escaped from prison and left Russia, settling eventually in Switzerland. He wrote for Guillaume's Bulletin of the Jura Federation and then for Brousse's Avant-Garde until both papers ceased publication in 1878. In February 1879 he began a new paper, Le Révolté, which became the unofficial organ of the Jura Federation.

When Kropotkin went to the meeting at La Chaux-de-Fonds, he was 36 years old and had been married for a year. He was writing the series of articles in Le Révolté which was later published in the book Paroles d'un Révolté (Paris, 1885), and he was becoming the leading anarchist intellectual in Switzerland, which was then the centre of the European anarchist movement. This was why he was chosen to conclude the discussion at the meeting, though it is interesting that he was still using his revolutionary pseudonym.

His report—The Anarchist Idea from the point of view of its Practical Realisation—was printed in Le Révolté on November 1, 1879, and was published as a pamphlet with the same title (Geneva, 1879). Max Nettlau described it as the 'first statement of anarchist communist ideas made by Kropotkin' in his Bibliographie de l'Anarchie (Brussels, 1897, p. 73). He gave a German translation of it in his history of anarchism up to 1880, Der Anarchismus von Proudhon zu Kropotkin (Berlin, 1927, pp. 289-293). The French text has recently been reprinted in the historical anthology of anarchism, Ni Dieu ni Maître (Paris, 1965, pp. 335-337). The report is summarised in George Woodcock's and Ivan Avakumovic's biography of Kropotkin, The Anarchist Prince (London, 1950, pp. 175-176), but it has never been published in this country before.

1. An attentive study of the present economic and political situation leads us to the conviction that Europe is moving rapidly towards a revolution; that this revolution will not be confined to a single country but, breaking out in some place, will spread—as in 1848—to the neighbouring countries, and will embrace more or less the whole of Europe; and that, while taking different forms among different peoples according to the historical stage they have reached and according to the local conditions, it will nevertheless have a generally distinctive character—it will not be merely political, but will be an economic revolution as well and above all.

2. The economic revolution may take different forms and have different degrees of intensity among different peoples. But it is important that, whatever its form may be, socialists of all countries, taking advantage of the disorganisation of the authorities during the revolutionary period, should apply all their strength to bring about on a vast scale the transformation of the property system by the expropriation pure and simple of the present holders of the large landed estates, of the instruments of labour, and of capital of every kind, and by the seizure of all such capital by the cultivators, the workers' organisations, and the agricultural and municipal communes. The task of expropriation must be carried out by the workers themselves in the towns and the countryside. To hope that any government can undertake it would be a profound error; for history teaches us that governments, even when they emerge from revolutions, have never done more than give legal sanction to revolutionary deeds which have already been carried out, and even then the people has had to put up a long struggle with these governments to force assent to revolutionary measures which were loudly claimed during periods of ferment. Besides, a measure of such importance would remain a dead letter if it were not freely put into effect in each commune, in each district, by those who are actually involved.

3. The expropriation and communalisation of social capital must be accomplished everywhere where this becomes possible and as soon as the possibility emerges, without inquiring whether the whole or the greater part of Europe

**Without
equality there
is no social
justice
and without
social justice
there is no
morality
P.K.**



or of a particular country is ready to accept the ideas of collectivism. The disadvantages which might result from a partial realisation of collectivism will be largely compensated for by the advantages. That the deed has been done in a certain place, will become the most powerful way of propagating the idea, and the most powerful motive for setting in motion places where the workers, being little prepared to accept the ideas of collectivism, might still hesitate to proceed with expropriation. Besides, it would be idle to discuss whether it is necessary or not to wait until the ideas of collectivism are accepted by the majority of a nation before putting them into practice, for it is certain that, except where there is a government prepared to shoot the people down, the doctrinaire socialists will not prevent expropriation taking place in districts which are most advanced in their socialist education, even though the great mass of the country is still lying inert.

4. Once the deed of expropriation is accomplished, and the strength of capitalist resistance broken, there will inevitably arise after a certain period of fumbling a new form of organisation of production and exchange, limited at first but later widespread; and this form will correspond much more to

popular aspirations and to the demands of life and of mutual relations than to any theory—however beautiful it may be—which is worked out either by the thought and imagination of reformers or by the labours of any kind of legislative body. However, we think we shall not be mistaken in foreseeing even today that the bases of this new organisation will be—at least in the Latin countries—the free federation of producer groups and the free federation of communes and of groups of independent communes.

5. If the revolution immediately puts expropriation into effect, it will gain an inner strength which will enable it to resist the attempts to form a government which would try to stifle it, as well as the attacks which may be made on it from outside. But even if the revolution were defeated, or expropriation were not extended as we foresee, a popular rising begun on this basis would render mankind the great service that it would hasten the coming of the social revolution. In bringing—like all revolutions—a certain immediate improvement in the lot of the proletariat, even if it were defeated, it would make impossible

any other rising in the future which did not take as its point of departure the expropriation of the few for the benefit of all. A further explosion would therefore inevitably bring about the end of capitalist exploitation, and consequently economic and political equality, work for all, solidarity, and freedom.

6. For the revolution to bring all the fruits which the proletariat has the right to expect, after centuries of increasing struggles and holocausts of sacrificed victims, it is necessary that the revolutionary period should last several years, so that the propagation of new ideas is not confined solely to the great intellectual centres but penetrates to the most isolated hamlets, so as to overcome the inertia which is inevitably shown by the masses before they fling themselves towards a fundamental reorganisation of society, and so that, finally, the new ideas should have time to receive their ultimate development which is necessary to the real progress of mankind. So, far from seeking to set up immediately in place of the overthrown authority a new authority which, being born at the beginning of the revolution when ideas are only just beginning to awake, would be fatally conservative by its very nature; far from seeking to create an authority which, representing the first stage of the revolution,

could only hamper the free development of the later stages, and would tend to immobilise and circumscribe it fatally—it is the duty of socialists to prevent the creation of every new government, and to awaken on the contrary the strength of the people, destroying the old system and at the same time creating a new organisation of society.

7. Such being our conception of the next revolution and the end which we intend to achieve, it is clear that, during the preparatory period we are in today, we must concentrate all our efforts on a wide propagation of the ideas of expropriation and collectivism. Instead of pushing these principles into a corner of our brains, so as to go and talk to the people only about questions of politics as mentioned above—which would hope to prepare minds for a largely political revolution, generally obliterating its economic character, the only thing which could give it necessary strength—we must on the contrary at all times and in all circumstances explain these principles widely, demonstrate their practical importance, prove their necessity; we must make every effort to prepare the popular mind for the acceptance of these ideas which, strange as they may seem at first to those who are imbued with political and economic prejudices, soon become an incontestable truth to those who discuss them in good faith, a truth now confirmed by science, a truth often admitted even by those who are publicly fighting it.

Working in this way, without letting ourselves be dazzled by the momentary and often artificial success of political parties, we are working for the infiltration of our ideas into the masses; we are imperceptibly bringing about a change of opinion favourable to our ideas; we are gathering the necessary people for a wide propagation of these ideas during the period of ferment we are moving towards; and we know by the experience of human history that it is precisely during periods of ferment, when the transmission and transformation of ideas is brought about with a speed unknown in periods of tranquillity, that the principles of expropriation and collectivism can spread in great waves and inspire the great masses of the people to put these principles into practice.

8. For the revolution to last several years and to bear its fruits, it is absolutely necessary that the next revolution should not be confined only to the large towns; the rising for expropriation must be brought about above all in the countryside. It is therefore necessary—without relying on the revolutionary impulse which might in a period of ferment be able to radiate from the towns into the villages—to prepare the ground in the countryside already from today.

As a provisional measure and as an experiment, the Jura Sections should adopt the task of undertaking in the villages around the towns a programme of propaganda following the line of the expropriation of the land by the rural communes. Attempts in this direction have been made already, and we can state that they have borne more fruit than might have been expected in the beginning. Experience will demonstrate what the best method to follow and what the means of spreading this propaganda may be. However difficult the start is, it must be made without delay. In addition, we cannot recommend too highly a study of the peasant risings in Italy and of the revolutionary propaganda which is being carried

out today in the villages of Spain.

9. When recommending that we should concentrate our efforts on a wide propagation in every way of the ideas of expropriation, we do not mean by this that we should neglect opportunities of carrying out agitation on all the questions of national life which are raised around us. On the contrary, we think that socialists must take advantage of all opportunities which may lead to an economic agitation; and we are convinced that each agitation, begun on the basis of the struggle of the exploited against the exploiters, however circumscribed its sphere of action, the ends proposed, and the ideas advanced may be to begin with, may become a fruitful source of socialist agitation if it does not fall into the hands of ambitious intriguers. It would therefore be useful for the Sections not to pass proudly by the various questions which concern the workers in their districts, for the sole reason that these questions have only very little to do with socialism. On the contrary, taking part in all questions and taking advantage of the interest which they arouse, we could work to spread agitation to a wider extent and, staying on the practical basis of the question, seek to enlarge theoretical conceptions and awaken the spirit of independence and rebellion in those who are interested in the agitation which is produced. This participation is all the more necessary because it presents a unique method of fighting the false opinions which are spread by the bourgeoisie at every opportunity of this kind, and of preventing the workers' agitation being directed—thanks to the tactics employed by the ambitious—along a path absolutely contrary to the workers' interests.

10. The efforts of the anarchists having the tendency of shaking the State in all its parts, we do not see the usefulness of forming ourselves into a political party which would endeavour to insert itself into the machinery of government in the hope of one day taking its share of the legacy of the present governmental system. We think that the best method of shaking this edifice would be to stir up the economic struggle. But we also think that it would still be useful to keep an eye on all the actions and exploits of our rulers, to make a careful study of those political questions which interest the working people, and to take advantage of every favourable opportunity to point out the incapacity, hypocrisy and class egoism of present governments, as well as the vicious and harmful character of the governmental system. Let us make war on the State and its representatives, not in order to take a place in their councils, as the political parties do, but in order to shake the strength which they use against the aspirations of the workers, and to speed their inevitable downfall.

11. Persuaded that the method of organisation which will come about in the near future—at least in the Latin countries—will be the commune, independent of the State, abolishing in itself the representative system and bringing about the expropriation of the first priorities—the instruments of labour, and the capital of use to the community—we think it necessary to carry out a series of study of the collectivist commune, and to discuss the part which the anarchists can play in the struggle which is now taking place, on the political and economic fronts, between the communes and the State.

(translation by Nicolas Walter)

How to Live Without Taxes

It was on January 1, 1943, that I quit my job at a dairy in Denver where 900 cows were milked daily. (In a sense I was 'social worker' to the mean cows, for they found that a pacifist handled them better.) On that date a withholding would be collected. I went to Albuquerque and worked on a farm, there being no collection of taxes from small farms until 1950. After the first year I turned in a report of my earnings on a tax report with the notation that I would refuse to pay them because as an anarchist and a pacifist I did not believe in paying taxes for the upkeep of the State, especially for war purposes. I was then working for a man worth 90 million. He fired me, saying that I would be arrested and he would be disgraced. I got jobs on other farms and was not arrested.

The tax office paid no attention to my refusal until in 1949 when I moved to Phoenix and the head tax man, who was a Quaker, called me in and told me

that I would be prosecuted unless I paid my tax. By this time I owed about \$190 taxes each year. In March and on August 6 I picketed the tax office boasting that I had openly refused to pay my taxes since 1943. Each year I was arrested with warnings of the penalty of five years. I told them to go ahead. Crowds came to tear up my signs and threatening to beat me up but I kept on.

Then in 1953 I moved to New York City and continued my picketing there. I was called in three times by the T-men from Washington who repeated about the penalties I would receive if I kept on. My Autobiography was published in 1954 and a tax man came from Washington to the printer to confiscate the books, but as I owed the printer he could not take them. Each year I picketed and fasted for as many days as it was years since we threw the bomb at Hiroshima. Crowds came around to beat me up, and I was questioned each year by different tax men.

In 1961 I moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, and told the tax department of my arrival and commenced to picket them. Tax officials came to question me at the Joe Hill House of Hospitality where I housed and fed transients and said they would not confiscate any of the furnishings as I was doing a good work. This year I picketed and my wife and I fasted for 21 days. I was called in on orders from Washington to check up on my open defiance of the law. I owed about \$1,500, and the last time that I owed anything was in 1961 when they gave me a bill of \$51.01. According to law if a man wilfully refuses to turn in a report of earnings, lies about his income, or refuses to pay he can be imprisoned and/or fined. Several radicals have done three months for refusal to tell of their income, but as yet for those who openly refuse and make a report they have not done anything. It depends upon each local office as to the amount of harassment given. If I would present

a large bill when purchasing anything in a store the tax man could take my change if he was nearby, but he couldn't reach in my pocket and take it. They could also garnishee my wages if they knew where I worked.

In Phoenix the tax man came to an Army captain farmer where I worked and asked what I had coming. The farmer replied that it was \$5, so he asked for it. The farmer told me about it and said it was out of his pocket and the next day he would pay me before the tax man got there. So the next day the tax man said to the farmer: 'What has Hennacy got coming?' 'Nothing,' replied the farmer. 'How come?' queried the tax man. 'Because I paid him,' replied the farmer. 'Why?' asked the tax man. 'So you wouldn't get it,' said the farmer. 'You are as bad as Hennacy,' the tax man told him. For a score of times the farmer paid me in advance until he wore out the tax man.

Here I get nearly everything free from the merchants so there is little that I have to pay in taxes. The local sales tax goes to pay for the state government, which of course helps pay for the hangman. This cannot be helped. However I have fasted and picketed from 10 to

45 days when executions have been pending and have helped to obstruct the death penalty.

There is a tax on telephone service that goes entirely for the war in Vietnam. Those who refuse to pay this tax are reported to the tax office, but to date the phone service has not been disconnected or any prosecutions made by the tax man. I do not have a phone. If I make a local call for a dime this is not taxed. There is a special tax on liquor, tobacco and medicine, but as I do not use these products I pay no tax on them.

Some tax refusers do not pay their taxes but if they have a bank account it is taken from the bank, with extra charges. I barely get enough donations to pay the rent and utilities for my house, so keep nothing in the bank. I turn in a report to the tax office, not because they have a right to it, but as a courtesy to my enemy, the State. Last year I privately printed my Autobiography brought up to date. At the price of \$3 I do not make enough on it to be taxable. If the book was printed by a regular publisher the tax man could deduct my royalties and apply it to what I owe them. AMMON HENNACY.

HORRORS

HUMAN DOCUMENTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN BRITAIN by Royston Pike. Allen & Unwin. 52/6 cloth; 25/- paper.

'More commonly, suffering breaks people, crushes them, and is simply unilluminating.' (Saul Bellow.)

THIS is an appalling document. It consists largely of a series of Reports and Findings by various Commissions on the condition of working people in Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Editor, Royston Pike, allows, the men, women and children who lived through the Industrial Revolution, to describe their experiences in their own words; and as he remarks, 'most of the pages . . . are bespattered with blood.'

The British have an unfortunate addiction to cruelty to children. Is it too far-fetched to suppose that the taste for this addiction may have been born during the first two decades of that century? Opportunities were infinite—restraints almost unknown. Indeed, the despatch of 80 young orphans, in two locked wagons, on a four day journey from London to Nottingham, where they were 'apprenticed' to work, literally as slaves, for 14 years, recalls some of the worst episodes of the Nazi terror. It should be remembered, too, that the sale of children between the ages of five and ten was commonplace. A doctor reporting on conditions in Sheffield writes: ' . . . diarrhoea, extreme emaciation, together with all the usual symptoms of pulmonary consumption, at length carry them off, but not until they have lingered through months and even years of suffering, incapable of working so as to support either themselves or their families.'

What is almost as shocking is the attitude of even the more enlightened employers; Robert Owen, though expressing a preference for older children, actually employed boys and girls of ten in his factory, for a working day of 12 hours. Oddly ambiguous, too, the phrases that keep recurring in these ghastly and ghostly pages—the compulsive concern with the lamentably low moral condition of the women, combined, of course, with an 'utter absence of grace and feminine manners', etc., etc. This might seem comical, in a pathetic sort of way, if it were not for the context.

'Chained, belted, harnessed, like dogs in a go-cart—black, saturated with wet, and more than half naked—crawling upon their hands and feet, and dragging

their heavy loads behind them—they present an appearance indescribably disgusting and unnatural.' (The English—are they human?)

There were very few exceptions to the general conspiracy of indifference and these came more or less haphazardly from a handful of individuals—Michael Sadler, Tory MP, or Lord Ashley, also a Tory, who had happened to read reports in *The Times* from Sadler's Committee; and, of course, William Cobbett. Mr. Pike does not attempt to link this catalogue of horrors with the rise of the Chartist movement and it is true that this ground has already been well covered. But there is surely some scope for further studies in the field of what one might call the Emasculation of the Masses—specifically, the new race of Factory Workers. From these obedient slaves, dumbly suffering and dying from exhaustion in the factories, one could perhaps trace a direct line, right down to their great-grandsons, going blindly to an equally pointless and brutish death at Passchendaele and the Somme. Of course, the numbers who died in the War were far greater, their 'sacrifice' far more spectacular: the slaves had become citizens. In both cases, the factory owners—and the politicians—died safely in their beds, no doubt fortified by all available church comforts. In both cases, too, the victims have been forgotten.

Was there then, no pity? No poetry at all in the making of the Black Country? Strangely, the Reports themselves sometimes surprise us, and by their curious insight, illumine for a moment the surrounding misery and gloom. Here, in conclusion, is a fragment from a Report by R. H. Horne, sub-commissioner, March 14, 1843: 'Wolverhampton, Sunday. Walked about the town, streets and outskirts, during church-time. Lots of children seen in groups at the end of courts, alleys, and narrow streets—playing, or sitting upon the edge of the common dirt-heap of the place, like a row of sparrows and very much of that colour, all chirruping away. . . . Boys fighting; bad language and bloody noses. Girls playing with continual screams and squeaks of delight, or jumping from the mounds of dirt, dung, and rubbish-heaps. . . . Adults seated smoking, with an air of lazy vacancy—they did not know what to do with their leisure or with themselves. One group of five adults very decently dressed; they were leaning over the rails of a pig-sty, all looking down upon the pigs, as if in deep and silent meditation—with the pigs' snouts just visible, all pointing up to the meditative faces, expecting something to come of it. . . .'

D.M.

REMEMBERING THE WAR—

WHEN THE RED mountain ashes started withering . . . when the gossamer sent its first tender threads . . . when all the roofs of the various towns were wet in the morning by the approaching autumn . . . he hit hard! Exactly at 5.45 in the morning, on the first day of September which was a Friday in 1939, the year of disaster.

He wore Wellington boots and a brown uniform with a leather belt. From a bloodily coloured red piece of cloth stared a sick white full moon in the centre of which swam a black heathenish sunwheel called swastika. He who had become a moulting 'Führer'—a house-painter without a nationality, with a pikeman's moustache and a dishevelled demagogue's fringe—raised his madman's voice in order to slaver: 'From 5.45 a.m. we are shooting back—!'

The mere barking of this hound had lasted for six years. But now he was about to bite, to set forth to his huge run amok: across the Rivers Meuse, Scheldt and the Rhine . . . from Finland to the Black Sea . . . legions of motor fitters, bakers, students, roofers, workmen, hair-dressers, gardeners, blacksmiths, bee-masters, jewellers, waiters and surveyors overflowed Europe—all of them under the collective designation of 'Landers'. A field-gray coloured restless and dazzled mass: 'The best soldier all over the world'. Culprits and victims all together united in one body.

'FINAL VICTORY' cried the gazettes. And: 'HOLY DUTY. RESCUE OF THE OCCIDENT' howled the wireless sets, surnamed 'Goebbels' Muzzles'. Forward, go ahead, ahead, sang the youngsters from Bavaria and Baden on the dusty roads between Bromberg and Brest. For those who followed suit only the machine guns sang their deadly song. In the gravel-pits at the outskirts of eastern towns. And the name of an insignificant village in Western Poland haunted the world as an apocalyptic ghost: AUSCHWITZ!

The mixture of hatred and greediness and megalomania, accumulated in the rotten brain of the brown Braunauer, grew into unexpected dimensions. It seemed as though his annihilating rage did not know any limits. And it really did not: Ruthenian birchen woods of extraordinary splendour and the peaceful stillness of Flemish windmills burst in the shrieking of grenades. Noble fronts—Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism of by-gone ages; crashed in Warsaw, Rotterdam, Leningrad and Dresden. Spoilt the infinite yellow of Ukrainian sunflower fields. The distant blue of the

Carpathian Mountains. The white of the temples in ancient Hellas. Tolstoy's and Chopin's graves robbed! Fire-brands raised all over Europe. The groaning of the burnt increased in an accusing chorus. Desperately screamed the sites of the fire-brands into the silent and pitiless sky: AUSCHWITZ, screamed the chorus. And BELSEN, COVENTRY and DACHAU, EL ALAMEIN and FLOESBURG, GLEIWITZ, LIDICE, MONTE CASSINO, OURADOUR, STALINGRAD, WARSAW -- BERLIN.

And then, after a rest, when all people thought that the concert was over—HIROSHIMA. Europe's ruins were overgrown by wormwood and dandelion. Only the fellow in the brown and leather-belted battledress could not see this any more. With precisely the last glow of his almost burnt down war torch reduced to a small heap of stinking ashes, he had silently stolen away. To Hell—to Valhalla of mass criminals. Pestilential stench competed with the smell of elder-blossoms over Europe's rubble. And the smell of the elder-blossoms won.

However: far off in America lives a man who again already plays with the fire. As a pretended guardian of occidental culture a Texan farmer swings his napalm torch. He does not wear Wellington boots. Just sometimes when he is on leave—back at home on his ranch. Otherwise he displays a manner of noble decency. But, despite his precious necktie—there a certain thing inciting comparison. It just needs to alter names—and the direction is plain. Put Vietcong for Bolsheviks, nerve gas for cyclone B, strategic villages for concentration camps and escalation for war—and there you are. Not quite, you say? No, not quite so. Of course not. The SS-men did not wear green berets.

The so-called 'free world' has again to be defended. A subtle slogan just like 'Coca-Cola', put into circulation by eager people beating up for recruits. But it is a deadly 'propagandistic' campaign pushed forward by that boss. In spite of its asthmatic character there are numberless people of yellow, black and white skin perishing each day. And unless they have perished they will perhaps be patched together again on board of the HELGOLAND. For this is our game again, too. Obviously things don't get along without us. The Germans to the front. Whether this be a certain Congo-Müller for a change or a small nitrogen plant out of the IG-Farben family, well—and for this time an innocent little hospital ship will do—to begin

with. In a 'moral' and 'humanitarian' way a helping hand is offered to the lonesome man there in the White House in order to keep the flame burning. Anything done beyond that is passed over in silence, is demented and modestly covered by a screen of blue smoke -- (PEOPLE'S CHANCELLOR brand). Humanitarian behaviour means to be active as a human being for mankind's prosperity. So Lyndon B. Johnson's German handymen are about to revitalize humanly and morally the inhumanity of the dirty war in Vietnam? Useless. A bombed village of rice farmers stays a bombed village of rice farmers. The torn body of a child, a youth tortured to death, a mother who has gone mad from sorrow and despair, an old man poisoned by 'harmless' gas, a GI in the minefield calling for his mother . . . everything remains what it is—despite all those beautiful words. And: even aiding and abetting the murderers is punishable.

The Far East is not so far any longer. Haiphong—Hanover? It is but a stone's throw distant. How damned easy for a sparklet to flit over. Some time at an unexpected instant. When you sit and have your coffee in the morning, when you are about to pluck some copper-coloured roses for the vase beside the TV set or when lolling about comfortably in your bed and drowsily winking at the alarm-clock in order to turn over once more to the other side. At five forty-five in the morning. H.R.

Freedom is Indivisible

FREQUENTLY one is asked why FREEDOM gives up so much space to syndicalism, or to obscenity cases, or to the rights of homosexuals, or to hostel dwellers under oppression. One is rather delighted to find that the ever-present space problem of FREEDOM is solved if only by the excessive coverage of distasteful items! However one is led to believe that this is merely an optical illusion, in the way that the reds and greens (whichever one happens to dislike) leap out of a wallpaper or carpet pattern and cause perpetual offence.

The solution is, on the face of it, simple, one discards as one does the financial/parliamentary/women's/sporting

(delete where inapplicable) sections of the newspaper one finds non-interesting and reads the rest. However with FREEDOM the case is sometimes more violently put. Why should we workers have to worry about the fucking intellectuals' problems about censorship? Why should we intellectuals worry about the workers' struggle? With such a small paper one is inclined to resent the limited space being given over to topics which have for us only an academic or limited interest.

However one finds the problem posing itself in more acute forms. An example from another field calls it to mind. During the war a conscientious objector

of my acquaintance expostulated about being cooped up in prison with 'a lot of criminals'. The trouble with you, mate,' a mail-bag philosopher replied, 'is you broke a different law.' It was recently said that some homeless hostel residents resented being even mentally associated with homeless down-and-outs, regardless of the fact that basically their problems were the same.

This is not to pull the problem down to the level of Marxism-for-infants. 'Basically comrades these are all facets of the class struggles and proletarians and intellectuals must unite together.' There are, of course, differences between us (that's what anarchism is about).

The Marxist interpretation of history has placed prime importance upon economic freedom. The example of Soviet Russia has shown the fallacy of

this and the unimportance of economic freedom alone. Britain's development has placed much importance on democratic freedom, we can see how big business and state socialism between them have encroached on this.

The simple fact is that freedom is indivisible. Freedom to work is useless without economic freedom and the freedom to strike. Freedom of expression is useless without freedom to publish. Freedom to demonstrate is useless without freedom to abolish rulers. Freedom of speech is useless without freedom to broadcast your ideas. Freedom to think is useless without freedom to act.

But because we have not or do not want all the freedoms is no reason for not agitating for as many as we can get. Freedom is probably not an obtainable absolute but this should not prevent us

working to bring it as near as possible, each of us in his own field, in co-operation with others or ploughing his own lonely furrow.

Eugene Debs, the American Socialist, once said, 'While there is a lower class I am in it. While there is a criminal element, I am of it. While there is a soul in jail I am not free.' If this high-toned thinking is not to your taste, it was said by Martin Niemöller, a German pastor, speaking of the advent of Hitler, 'When he arrested the Communists, I stood by, for I was not a Communist; when he took away the trade-unionists, I did nothing for I was not in a Union; when they rounded up the Jews, I said nothing for I was not a Jew. But when they came for me, there was nobody left to help me.'

JACK ROBINSON.

Alienation

THE WORD 'alienation' has, over the last few years, become increasingly fashionable. It appears in books and articles by Freudian and Marxist revisionists, sociologists and existentialist philosophers. It is applied to all aspects of human culture. Its meaning has become more and more imprecise. Surprisingly, however, the subject has been both brought out into the open and, to a large degree, brought down to earth in Hungary.

For the first time, a completely scientific and empirical study was reported in the November, 1965, issue of the literary monthly *Kortárs* about alienation among Hungarian workers under 'socialism'. Until fairly recently, the concept of alienation was confined to philosophical circles; but lately a few American sociologists began bringing the concept closer to the realities of working-class life. They began examining the actual conditions and attitudes of modern industrial society. During the last couple of years the pattern in Hungary has followed the American. (The discussion in Poland, with the recent publication of a book by Professor Adam Schaff, still seems to be in an early stage.)

In Hungary, three distinct views have emerged: one, that there can be no alienation under 'socialism' (actually bureaucratic State Capitalism); two, that the presence of alienation within 'socialism' is only a remnant of the past and, three, that in fact 'socialism' creates new forms of alienation. The latter was the majority view of the participants of a one-day conference of Hungarian philosophers.

Obviously, then, alienation—in spite of its fashionableness among existentialists, neo-Freudians, Marxist-revisionists and the like—is well worth our consideration if we are going to try and understand just a few of the problems of modern industrial capitalism and 'socialism'.

What does 'alienation' mean? What are its origins?

In a lengthy article in *New Society* (27.2.64), Norman MacKenzie discusses various aspects of alienation in considerable detail. 'Strictly speaking,' he says, 'alienation means estrangement; to alienate means to transfer something to the ownership of another.' Alienation means 'loss'. And, continues MacKenzie: 'Whether I use the concept to examine the relationship between a worker and his employer (economic), a man and his Party (political), a man and other men (psychological), or a man and his god (religious), I am, it is argued, analyzing essentially the same phenomenon—the way in which individuals lose some part of their human identity to objects outside of themselves. This process, it is said, is not unique to our age, but it has become peculiarly acute in mass industrial societies, accounting for much of our present discontents, denying modern man the full use of his human capacities and the ability to enjoy life.' Philosophically, he argues, the question of alienation presented itself as the separation of subject and object; the distinction between the 'I' (ego), which seeks to control its own fate, and the 'me' which is moulded by and meaningful only in relation to others.

In this discussion, however, I shall concern myself primarily with the concept of alienation as used by the early Marx (and the modern Hungarians), Marcuse and Erich Fromm. Although both psychological and philosophical, their approach is more down-to-earth than that of many psychologists and existentialists.

Originally, the word alienation was used to denote an insane person; but in the last century, first Hegel and then the young Marx referred to alienation not as insanity, but as a form of 'self-estrangement'. Marx claimed to have brought Hegel 'down to earth', by locating alienation in the labour process. These arguments he first formulated in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* in 1844, and then, with Engels, in *The German Ideology* in 1846.

Hegel, in Marx's view, understood that Man creates himself in a historical process, of which the motive force is human labour or the practical activity of men living in society. But in Marx's opinion, Hegel only conceived labour as the activity of pure spirit. For him, the historical process was a movement of abstract categories, of which individuals were merely playthings. Moreover, in opposition to Hegel's deification of the State, Marx regarded it as a transitional, external power dominating society. As a form of alienation.

In his 1844 Manuscripts, Marx claimed that private property is the product, the necessary result, of alienated labour, of the external relation of the worker to Nature and to himself. This alienation shows itself in the process of production. The more the worker expends himself in work, says Marx in a well-known passage, the more powerful becomes the world of objects which he creates in face of himself, and the poorer he himself becomes in his inner life, the less he becomes to himself. The worker puts his life into the object, and his life then belongs no longer to him but to the object. The greater his activity, therefore, the less he possesses. What is embodied in the product of his labour is no longer his. The greater this product is, therefore, the more he himself is

'DIVISION OF LABOUR'

Very early on in primitive communist society there arose what economists term 'the division of labour' or division of tasks. This first arose as a division based on sex. Later, this division developed with the break-up of the family and tribal group, with '... the separation of society into individual families opposed to one another...' and '... given simultaneously the distribution, and indeed the unequal distribution (both quantitatively and qualitatively), of labour and its products, hence property...

This division of labour, says Marx, implies a contradiction between the interest of the separate individual and the communal interest of all individuals. It is the genesis of domination of Man over Man and alienation—estrangement.

This 'division of labour', however, this alienation, 'this crystallization of social activity, this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing naught to our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up to now,' says Marx. This 'estrangement' can, in Marx's view, only be abolished so long as it has become an 'intolerable' power over men. But it must have rendered the vast mass of humanity propertyless and, at the same time, given rise to conditions—on a world scale—wherein wealth can be produced in abundance in order to supply all human needs and wants. Such



diminished. The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, but that it exists outside of him, independently, and alien to him; and that it stands opposed to him as an autonomous power, on its own existence. The life which he has given to the object sets itself against him as an alien and hostile force.

'A direct consequence of the alienation of Man from the product of his labour, from his life activity, is that Man is alienated from other men. When Man confronts himself he confronts other men. What is true of Man's relationship to his work and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men, to their labour and to the objects of their labour.'

Marx then mentions a concept—'domination'—which Marcuse takes up, and further develops, over a hundred years later. In another well-known passage from the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx asserts that (within property society) '... all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated lot; they estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labour process...' A view also emphasised by William Morris in his *Useful Work Versus Useless Toil and Art and Socialism*, and touched upon very briefly by Oscar Wilde in the earlier paragraphs of his *Soul Of Man Under Socialism*.

In *The German Ideology*, Marx develops his ideas on alienation, and in his notes on *Pre-capitalist Economic Formations* where he discusses both alienation and domination.

were the views of the young Marx on alienation.

As he grew older, Marx no longer used such terms as 'alienation', 'estrangement', 'self-estrangement' or 'domination'—except in a very brief passage in his notes on pre-capitalist formations. In his latter writings, say some of his more libertarian apologists, he took the moral and philosophical ideas and ideals, acquired in his youth, more or less for granted. As he grew older, however, he became increasingly authoritarian and intolerant; as have most of his alleged followers of the traditional 'left-wing' parties. All the same, we should not belittle his efforts in attempting to bring Hegel 'down to earth' by locating alienation in the labour process.

Marx-influenced William Morris. How much so is a matter of debate. He was also influenced by anarchism as well. All the same, a great deal of Morris' writings are a condemnation of alienation and domination (even if he did not popularise the words) and a demand for a free, non-alienated society. I do not, however, intend to discuss Morris' contributions to socialist or anarchist thought here, but instead mention first Erich Fromm and then Herbert Marcuse, both of whom have re-discovered—and developed—the concept of alienation in more recent times. Both have, in fact, deliberately gone out of their way to discuss alienation—and to popularise the word itself. Their, and no doubt others', efforts seem to be bearing fruit in the most unlikely places!

Writing in 1942, Fromm discusses in great detail the evolution of modern industrial society, its emergence from Feudalism, the character structure of the men that brought it about—and those who have been nurtured and conditioned by it—in *The Fear Of Freedom*.

Although Man has reached a remark-

able degree of mastery over Nature, argues Fromm, society as a whole is not in control of those very forces it has created. The rationality of the system of production in its technical aspects is accompanied by the irrationality of our system in its social aspects. Man has built his world. 'But he has become estranged from the product of his own hands, he is not really the master any more of the world he has built; on the contrary, this man-made world has become his master, before whom he bows down, whom he tries to placate or manipulate as best he can. The work of his own hands has become his god. He seems to be driven by self-interest, but in reality his total Self with all its concrete potentialities has become an instrument for the purposes of the very machine his hands have built. He keeps up the illusion of being the centre of the world, and yet he is pervaded by an intense sense of insignificance and powerlessness which his ancestors once consciously felt towards God.'

In Fromm's view, modern man's feeling of isolation and powerlessness is increased still further by the character which all human relationships today have assumed. 'The concrete relationship of one individual to another,' he continues, 'has lost its direct and human character and has assumed a spirit of manipulation and instrumentality. In all social and personal relations the laws of the market are the rule. It is obvious that the relationship between competitors has to be based on mutual human indifference.' This also affects the relationship between employer and employee. In fact, the word 'employer' itself betrays the whole story! The owner of the means of production, of capital, employs a human being in exactly the same way as he 'employs' a machine. He buys a factory, raw materials and human labour-power—and then puts them all to work. The worker is purely a means to an end. The relationship between a businessman and his customer is very much the same. Moreover, the attitude towards work in modern industrial society has the same quality of what Fromm terms 'instrumentality'. In contrast to the medieval artisan, the modern capitalist manufacturer is not primarily interested in what he—or more correctly, his workers—produces. '... he produces essentially in order to make a profit from his capital investment, and what he produces depends essentially on the market which promises that the investment of capital in a certain branch will prove to be profitable.'

INITIATIVE RESTRICTED

This buyer-seller relationship affects not only economic activities, but all the relationships between men. All social relationships have this character of alienation. They, in fact, assume the character of relations between things.

It is Fromm's case, however, that the most devastating instance of this alienation, this 'spirit of instrumentality', is the individual's relationship to his own Self, his whole being. It may appear that men sell commodities, that the labourer sells his 'physical energy'. But this is not all. He really sells himself; his image, his personality. 'This personality should be pleasing, but besides that its possessor should meet a number of requirements: he should have energy, initiative, this, that, or the other, as his particular position may require.' For, as with any other commodity, it is the market which decides the value of these human qualities and attributes.

The development of Big Business, of what both Fromm and the orthodox Marxist-communists call the 'monopolistic phase of capitalism', has tended to weaken the individual Self, or what Wilde terms 'Individualism'. Says Fromm: 'The individual's feeling of powerlessness and aloneness has increased... his possibilities for individual economic achievement have narrowed down.' The concentration and centralization of capital has restricted the possibilities for individual initiative, courage and responsibility. Today, both in the so-called private enterprise West and in the spurious 'socialist' East, an enormous, though secret, power over the whole of society is exercised by relatively small groups. It makes very little difference whether the country is 'democratic' or 'totalitarian'. This, naturally, weighs most heavily on the worker.

In the old days, at least, the worker knew who the boss was; he often knew him personally. Despite inequalities and unequal social status, there was a 'face-to-face' relationship between employee and employer. Today, the worker in an office, factory or plant which employs thousands is in a completely different position. The boss has now become an abstract figure, the 'management', an anonymous power, or a government bureaucrat. The individual worker has become insignificant and even more alienated than he was in Marx's day. In Fromm's view, this situation

THE YOUNG MARX ON ALIENATION

In what does this alienation of labour consist? First, that the work is external to the worker, that it is not a part of his nature, that consequently he does not fulfil himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery, not of well-being, does not develop freely a physical and mental energy, but is physically exhausted and mentally debased. The worker therefore feels himself at home only during his leisure, whereas at work he feels homeless. His work is not voluntary but imposed, forced labour. It is not the satisfaction of a need, but only a means for satisfying other needs. Its alien character is clearly shown by the fact that as soon as there is no physical or other compulsion it is avoided like the plague. Finally, the alienated character of work for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his work but work for someone else, that in work he does not belong to himself but to another person.

Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of human fantasy, of the human brain and heart, reacts independently, that is, as an alien activity of gods or devils, upon the individual, so the activity of the worker is not his spontaneous activity. It is another's activity, and a loss of his own spontaneity.

—From Marx's 'Economic and Political Manuscripts (1844)'

has been partly balanced by Trade Union activity. The Unions, he feels, have helped to improve the worker's economic position, and have also given him a feeling of collective strength. But he is forced to admit, however, that many Unions have also grown large and often bureaucratic, like industry. There is very little democracy or room for individual initiative in many of them. Of the member, he says: 'He pays his dues and votes from time to time, but here again he is a small cog in a large machine.' This trend has accelerated enormously since Fromm wrote *Fear Of Freedom*. In a very interesting chapter on Trade Union bureaucracy in T. Cliff and C. Barker's *Incomes Policy, Legislation And Shop Stewards* (published in May), they rightly observe that '... the Trade Union bureaucracy, rising above the rank-and-file membership of the Unions, and feeling that it belongs to a group with a higher social status, hardly ever thinks of going back to the rank-and-file. To this degree it is alienated from those it supposedly represents.' In fact, most Trade Union leaders are not concerned with the problems of alienation (in any form). Why should they be anyway? They no longer work in a factory or car assembly plant!

AN ECONOMIC ATOM

In 1956, in *The Sane Society* (a less satisfactory book, in some respects, than *Fear Of Freedom*), Erich Fromm returns to the problem of alienation in modern industrial society. He does this, he says, because the concept alienation seems to him to touch upon the deepest level of modern personality; and because it is the most appropriate if one is concerned with the interaction between the contemporary socio-economic structure and the character-structure of the individual in our society.

'Alienation in 1956, in modern society, has become almost total. It pervades the relationship of Man to his work, to the things that he consumes, that he does, to the State, to his fellow man, and, above all, to himself. Man has created a world of man-made things as it has never existed before. He has built a complicated social machine to administer the technical machine that he has constructed and developed. And yet this whole creation stands above him. He now confronts himself with his own forces embodied in things he has created, alienated from himself. He has lost the ownership of his Self, of himself.'

What has happened to the worker? asks Fromm.

He has become an economic atom that dances to the tune of atomistic management. Fromm quotes J. J. Gillespie as saying that 'Work is becoming more repetitive and thoughtless as the planners, the micromotionists, and the scientific managers further strip the worker of his right to think and move freely. Life is being denied; need to control, creativeness, curiosity, and independent thought are being balked, and the result, the inevitable result, is flight or fight on the part of the worker, apathy or destructiveness, psychic regression.'

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AT WHOSE EXPENSE?

SOON after I started this series, I was reproached by a fellow syndicalist for allegedly having written off the working-class as a revolutionary instrument—this was because I said that it may well be that the working-class, certainly the white working-class, is no longer the most exploited stratum within our society. Homeless, gypsies, old age pensioners, prisoners.

Two days later, in another journal, I read an article by a comrade who should know better, who took exception to the fact that I had said that many people earn livings at the expense of their fellow workers; on a misconstruction of which he then proceeded to build a farrago of nonsense which allegedly represented my views. It ought not to be necessary to prove either point since in both cases evidence lay in the article.

To the first, I started by instancing the police, whom he immediately said were not workers; but had I asked to define workers, he would have said all who are employed and work by hand or by brain for a boss. He said, after I had continued with prison officers, soldiers, munitions workers and others, that of course one must make up one's mind as to whom one considers workers, those who do not do anything useful or do harm being excluded. But if the definition of a worker is purely the subjective views of the anarchist movement, then quite frankly it bears no relationship to the traditional view of anarcho-syndicalists, and the term might well be better dropped.

Police, soldiers and so forth are, in point of fact, workers who earn their living at the expense of other workers; so too are those who advertize shoddy goods knowing them to be shoddy; those salesmen who talk people they know cannot afford goods into buying these, and so forth; those people who work for stockbrokers to play the market (indeed the stockbroker may well be employed); those who do the spying out that precedes take-over bids — often throwing other workers out of work.

The NAB official who refuses money to a hungry family is as much a worker as the kinder one who might give it (though, since he has a senior breathing down his neck, he may not), as are those who maintain the hostels for the homeless with King Hill-type conditions, and very often quite liberal-minded ones at that.

It is no condemnation of them personally to say they are caught up in the system, it is impossible not to be. I work now in a bookshop—though not for a fat salary by any definition. In all sorts of instances I see that the normal trade rooks the customer, and that my pay is therefore at the expense of others. Before this I worked at OXFAM, a less obnoxious way of earning one's crust than most, but since many of the policies of the top executives cut down possible efficiency for the sake of respectability, and since the radicals who resist this have to make compromises, to continue doing so even here one did things one knew were less efficient than they might be and therefore from OXFAM at the

expense of one's fellow man.

Years ago there was a song about the man, the dreadful man, who watered the workers beer, no doubt a capitalist took the decision, but a worker no doubt did it or helped. Now perhaps this is peripheral, but adulteration is a commonplace, and many are employed in more positively harmful tasks. Cigarette workers understandably object to the publication of the full facts of the relationship between smoking and lung cancer, they continue to work at the expense of their fellow workers' health. Car workers favour the closing of public transport and the proliferation of more cars and more giant roads, destroying the food-producing fields of the country-side, they work at the expense of their fellows' lives.

One cannot say this is their fault, but one must take cognizance of this fact and realize that in agitating for a changed society there are now enormous numbers of working-class vested interests in the preservation of the existing system.

The Revolutionary Left during the war assumed that Capitalism would be so exhausted from the war, would have so boosted production during the war beyond peacetime needs, and would have shown its defects to such an extent, that the war would be followed by fundamental worldwide social change. When all that did in fact follow, the war was an extension of Stalinist-tyranny into Europe and East Asia, and of social-democrat treachery in the West; many were immediately disillusioned, others

assumed that this was merely an interim stage and that the pseudo-socialists would soon dig their own grave, playing on the historical scene the same role as Kerensky.

This failed, and yet others were to leave the movement in disillusion, particularly since this was a period in which more facts became known of Stalinist concentration camps than had ever previously been known, particularly since the social-reformists were even more timid than they had been expected to be. It was at this time when revolutionaries first, in any numbers, began to look at the implications of such analysis of the new class society as those of Simone Weil, Bruno Rizzi, Ure; this was the time of Orwell's 1984, and of Macdonald's *The Root is Man*.

Many of those who did stay and were then to be found round the anarchist movement (and I confess I was one) were then prepared to be dogmatic that the Stalinist and Fascist regimes had been so able to condition their slaves that it was impossible to consider revolution as being again a viable concept in those countries. It was obvious that the whole tendency of state reformism was to mirror this in the West and, though undoubtedly we had not yet this degree of despotism, and undoubtedly there were in the West remnants of an older and less efficient (therefore less oppressive) class system, we nevertheless for the most part believed that the position would soon be the same.

For these there was still, no doubt, reason to fight the state but the fight was defensive; we might quote Macdonald who, whereas Trotsky said that if there was a new ruling class one had to accept socialism had ended as an Utopia and confine oneself to minimal defensive demands, argued instead that no doubt we had ended as an Utopia—'so, what

was wrong with Utopia?—it was time to take another look at the ideas of the Utopians'. But those who were as optimistic as Macdonald in the first place were apt not to last the course and to slide over into liberalism. The rest of us, however much we may have scorned this—as all other theories of Trotsky's—were in fact not so far removed therefrom.

Hungary changed this. There had, of course, been East Berlin, there had been Vorkuta, there was in the West Montgomery; but it was Hungary that once again put revolution back on the map.

No doubt there are still those who would wish to cut the revolutionary perspectives out of anarchism; the Permanent (lack of) Protest-ers 'ye have always with you'; but their view is as it was in the early days of the anarchist movement, just pessimist belief that revolutionaries are inevitably captured by new elites (in so far as certain revolutionary techniques are not themselves egalitarian these do indeed promote new ruling classes); such preserves of the pessimist are by no means the same as Dwight Macdonald's carefully reasoned theories argued from novel factors observed in world-wide social developments.

Since Hungary we have seen in this country a remarkable upsurge of political militancy—whereas a writer in *FREEDOM* in 1956 could say students are, of course, not noted for their radicalism, no one would say this now. The anarchist movement now numbers more groups than it used to number members, and if any say that not all the groups are active, the reply is you should have seen the members. On the Bomb, on Apartheid, on the Homeless, on Land for the Gypsies, people have come to use DA and to popularize essentially anarchist means of struggle far outside the anarchist movement. L.O.



ALIENATION

Continued from page 5

Fromm then discusses alienation in relation to the manager. The manager, very much like the worker, deals with impersonal giants. And here Fromm introduces an important aspect of alienation in modern, 'mature' capitalism. That of *bureaucratization*. Both Big Business and government administration, he observes, are conducted by bureaucracy—by bureaucrats. (Trade Union bureaucracy has already been mentioned.) 'Bureaucrats,' he continues, 'are specialists in the administration of things and of men.' Moreover, due to the bigness and centralization of the apparatus to be administered, the bureaucrats' relationship to people is one of complete alienation. Relationships are completely—or almost completely—impersonal. This is not due to some inherent wickedness of the bureaucrats. It is a symptom of the ineluctable development, and evolution, of capitalist society. 'Since the vastness of the organization and the extreme division of labour prevents any single individual from seeing the whole, since there is no organic, spontaneous co-operation between various individuals or groups within industry, the managing bureaucrats are necessary; without them the enterprise would collapse in a short time, since nobody would know the secret which makes it function.' In countries such as America or Britain, bureaucracy, although increasing all the time, is as yet not absolute. In Soviet Russia it is. And so has it been in Poland and Hungary. Absolute bureaucracy means absolute alienation.

Before leaving the concept of alienation in our society, Fromm touches upon the process of consumption. For consumption under industrial capitalism is as alienated as the productive process. In our society, unlike in previous ones, we acquire almost everything that we require for our sustenance through the medium of money. And, as Fromm points out, money means labour in abstract form. If a person has sufficient money, he can purchase anything he requires—whether he has worked for that money or not. In his view, the truly human way of acquiring a thing would be

through individual effort qualitatively commensurate with what a person needed.

What do we do with things after we have purchased them? Do we, in fact, even need much of what we have acquired?

Quite often we acquire things in order to just have them, to possess them, to own them, because it is 'the thing' status-wise. Society has conditioned us to 'want' a new car, TV, washing machine, suite of furniture, every year or so, not because the new is necessarily better than the one we already have (it usually isn't!), but because we are pressurised to demand it. Indeed, modern industrial capitalism is so organised that it would 'collapse' if we did not behave thus. As Vance Packard has so ably demonstrated in his *Waste Makers* and *Hidden Persuaders*, we are now slaves of the Admen.

Today, then, we consume as we produce, without any concrete relatedness to the objects with which we deal. All this results in a situation where we are never really satisfied. Our craving for consumption has lost all connection with our real needs. Consumption has become merely an end in itself; not a means to greater happiness. Consumption has become compulsive. Our gods today are no longer Jehovah or Allah but Ford or Hotpoint! Moreover, this alienated attitude toward consumption affects our whole existence. It increases our passivity. To a large extent, we have become 'watchers' and 'listeners' rather than 'doers'. We still 'do' things, make things, have hobbies; but in the main we 'consume' TV programmes, films, sport, newspapers and magazines, 'pop' art, even the countryside that we rush past at 70 m.p.h. Alienated consumption permeates our whole existence, resulting in total self-estrangement. In Fromm's view, this total alienation is inherent in the socio-economic structure of modern capitalism.

At about the same time that Fromm wrote *The Sane Society* Herbert Marcuse wrote *Eros And Civilization*. Although he does not explicitly say so, Marcuse attempts to read Marx into Freud. He wants to resurrect the 'explosive' aspects of Freud's theories, although if Freud were alive today he would not probably recognise his own theories as interpreted by Marcuse. Here, however, I am primarily concerned with his observations

on alienation rather than, say, the oedipus complex.

The performance principle (that is the prevailing historical form of the reality principle), which is that of an acquisitive and antagonistic society in the process of constant expansion, says Marcuse, presupposes a long development during which organised domination has been increasingly rationalised. Under such conditions, therefore, the mode and scope of satisfaction for the vast majority is determined by their own labour—but their labour is work for an apparatus which they do not control; which operates as an independent power to which individuals must submit. And, says Marcuse, echoing Marx, 'it becomes the more alien the more specialised the division of labour becomes.' Indeed, 'Men do not live their own lives but perform pre-established functions. While they work, they do not fulfil their own needs and faculties but work in alienation. Work has now become general, and so have the restrictions placed upon the libido: labour time, which is the largest part of the individual's life time, is painful time, for alienated labour is absence of gratification, negation of the pleasure principle. Libido is diverted for socially useful performances in which the individual works for himself only in so far as he works for the apparatus, engaged in activities that mostly do not coincide with his own faculties and desires.'

Alienation of labour is almost complete, says Marcuse. The mechanics of the factory assembly line, the routine of the office, the 'ritual' of buying and selling, all are freed from any connection with real human potentialities. Work relations have become to a large extent relations between persons as exchangeable things, objects of scientific management and efficiency experts. Individuality is literally in name only. Even so-called competition tends to be reduced to prearranged varieties in producing gadgets, wrappings, flavours, or colours, he argues. 'Beneath this illusory surface, the whole work-world and its recreation have become a system of animate and inanimate things—all equally subject to administration.' Unfortunately, however, much of the individual's awareness of the prevailing domination and alienation is blunted by the manipulated restriction on his consciousness, of his Self. With this decline in genuine consciousness, with the control of information from above, with the absorption of the individual into mass communication, real knowledge is confined. Today, the average individual does not really know what is going on. It is Marcuse's argument that Man no longer realises himself in labour; that his life has become an instrument of this labour; that his work and its products have assumed a form and power independent of him as an individual. But the liberation from this state of affairs, he says, seems to require, not the arrest of alienation, but its consummation, not its reactivation, but its complete abolition. The more external to the individual the labour becomes, the less does it involve him in the realm of necessity.

All the technological progress of

modern society has not eliminated the necessity of alienated labour, says Marcuse. The necessity of working mechanically, unpleasurably, in a manner that does not represent individual self-realisation, still remains. Progressive alienation, however, *does* increase the potential of freedom.

'Relieved from the requirements of domination, the quantitative reduction in labour time and energy leads to a qualitative change in human existence: the free rather than the labour time determines its content. The expanding realm of freedom becomes truly a realm of play—of the free play of individual faculties. Thus liberated, they will generate new forms of realisation and of discovering the world, which in turn will reshape the realm of necessity, the struggle for existence. . . . To the degree to which the struggle for existence becomes co-operation for the free development and fulfilment of individual needs, repressive reason gives way to a new rationality of gratification in which reason and happiness converge,' says Marcuse optimistically.

In these brief notes I have attempted to convey the concept of alienation as viewed by Marx in the middle of the last century, and then by Fromm and Marcuse one hundred years after.

Marx brought Hegel 'down to earth' by locating alienation in the labour process; Fromm demonstrated how alienation in production led to powerlessness and a feeling of isolation; how individual relationships lead to a spirit of manipulation and instrumentality, and how alienated production also presupposes alienated consumption; and Marcuse, arguing that alienation of labour is almost complete, evidences how it permeates the whole of society by blunting and restricting our consciousness, and confining our real knowledge of society.

And society itself? What is it really like today?

It is still a capitalist society. It is still a society of conflicting and warring socio-economic classes. But it is very much different from the *laissez faire*, every-man-for-himself capitalism of the 19th century. Competition, as Marcuse pointed out, has largely given way to prearranged varieties of the same. Indeed, productive forces have become ever larger. Production today is dominated by giant trusts and combines. One important aspect of alienation, mentioned particularly by Fromm, is bureaucratization. Society has become increasingly bureaucratic. This applies both to State and non-State institutions. The State, however, has become far more powerful in all countries. Here in Britain, for example, the State, national and local, accounts for over 40% of the Gross National Product and employs over 25% of the labour force. Administratively, its tentacles spread far and wide, affecting all our lives.

How have these developments of increasing bureaucratization and deepening alienation affected the masses?

It has, as Fromm says, diminished and restricted initiative and responsibility. This we can see today in what we call the 'couldn't-care-less' attitude towards

work and society in general. Because of alienation, work has lost all meaning. Indeed, life itself has lost all meaning for the majority. So, today, very many people retreat into a kind of private dream world. Community life, particularly in big cities, has largely disappeared.

INCREASE IN STRIKES

All this, however, has not made people entirely passive. In Britain, for example, there has been an enormous increase in strikes in industry. These, however, are very much different than they were before the war. Previously, they were almost always official (that is before Trade Union officials became part of the Establishment), whilst now they are generally unofficial. They usually involved large numbers of workers and lasted a long time, sometimes months on end. Today, strikes generally involve small groups and often last only a day or less. Like society itself, they have become localised, fragmented—almost private affairs. 'The growing number of strikes in Britain,' says Cliff and Barker in *Incomes Policy, Legislation and Shop Stewards*, 'express the worker's rebellion against this subordination, this mutilation, limitation and alienation of his own creativity, only too clearly.' And: 'Even in strikes for monetary causes, the rebellion against the basic alienation is never far from the surface.' In the so-called Communist countries, we have seen much the same thing. Strikes and 'rebellion' are illegal in these 'Workers' States', but although less frequent, they occur—and are usually far more violent and explosive. However, as in the West, dissatisfaction and opposition to powerlessness, meaninglessness, estrangement, i.e. alienation, usually takes the form of apathy, lethargy and restlessness. An illustration from the Hungarian weekly *Elet Es Irodalom* (Life and Literature) shows what I mean. In the Csepel Iron and Metal Works, in 1964 alone, more than one-third (11,638) of the total number of workers employed left their job. And of those who left, 62% were under thirty years of age and had been working there less than one year. Said one writer to the paper hopefully: 'Probably somewhere else they'll treat me as a human being.'

These, then, are just some of the aspects, some of the problems, of alienation in modern industrial society. Is there a solution? There is; and, of course, the simple one is: abolish our present society and establish a free society. But it is not quite as simple as that. People have become conditioned to our present way of life. To shout from a soapbox 'Overthrow the system!' is the negation of the very responsibility and freedom that we desire. Education for freedom, for a non-alienated society, will be a long and very difficult task; but I agree with Marcuse that probably progressive alienation itself will increase the potential for freedom. Unlike the 'scientific' socialists who claim that their Utopia is inevitable, I am, however, optimistic that we shall ultimately see a New Dawn. Despite the onward rush to '1984', history, I think, is on our side. I hope so!

PETER E. NEWELL.