

Freedom

ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

Under the pretext of respect for God, respect for man is banished.

KROPOTKIN

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Threepence

STINKING FISH!

TWO thousand five hundred years ago Aesop the slave told the story of the two crabs. They both walked sideways, one on its Left side and one on its Right. Consequently each thought that he alone was going forwards while the other was in reverse. One day the Left-handed crab chided the Right-handed one pointing out that it looked very awkward and was quite unlike the way the rest of the world walked. "Indeed," replied the

other crab, "I walk as well as I can and I'm sure I'm on the Right road. If you would like me to do it a different way I wish you would set me an example, and show me the proper way because I have always noticed that you walk sideways yourself."

THE party leaders have been getting very active lately, sharpening their claws for the electoral battle. The Labour Party has published its policy in the pamphlet "Labour Believes in Britain" which has been followed by the Conservative statement "The Right Road for Britain". Herbert Morrison got very crabby about this. "The miserable little things," he said, "would not publish their programme until they had seen ours." And since the theme-song of "The Right Road" is "Anything you can do, I can do better," his crabishness is understandable. But due to their habit of walking sideways, our political crabs cannot see that the Right road and the Left road are one and the same; they see, in their opposite numbers, the faults which are so glaring in themselves.

Mr. R. A. Butler, one of the builders of the Right road (subject of course to the approval of the Grand Lobster himself) observes that: "Policy making presents the politician with many temptations. It is so easy to give way to the natural desire to be all things to all men, to disregard unwelcome facts and to tell people only what they obviously want to hear." He was thinking of course about the Labour programme, but anyone not walking sideways can see that it applies most forcibly to that of the Conservatives. And when the

Once Upon a Time...

"WE know what to expect when the Tories are in power; corruption at home, aggression to cover it abroad; the trickery of tariff juggles; patriotism and imperialism by the imperial pint; dear food for the million and cheap labour for the millionaire... The party of the rich against the poor, of the upper classes and their dependants against the masses, of the lucky, the wealthy, the happy and the strong against the left-out and shut-out millions of the weak and poor." (in his honest youth).

Chief Crayfish of the Left, bristling with indignation, says that the Tory policy statement is "one of the most dishonest documents that I have ever read. There seem to be increases for everybody, but nothing as to how they are going to find the money or who is going to find it," anyone not walking around in a shell is bound to draw the same conclusions about "Labour Believes in Britain".

ABRAHAM LINCOLN is reputed to have said "You can fool some of the people all the time and you can fool all the people some of the time but you can't fool all the people all the

Can We Take The Party Programmes Seriously?

time." But since Lincoln's day the politicians have become more audacious and ambitious. They are trying to prove him wrong. For the Tories, no longer content with the support of some of the people—the privileged ones—now seek to fool the ranks of organised labour: "The Conservative Party supports the Trade Union movement... we hold the view that the Trade Union movement is absolutely essential to the proper working of our economy and of our industrial life." And the Labour Party which has hitherto been content to fool the industrial workers, and the public-school socialists, now woos the middle class and praises its "responsibility and forbearance."

Everyone knows that the Conservative Party is the party of monopoly and big business, but now we learn from "The Right Road" that "It would help small traders and manufacturers to carry on their independent economic existence in fair competition with one another, with large trading and manufacturing concerns and with the Co-operative Movement". Indeed the Tory solicitude for the Co-ops is so great that it warns them that "their interests are as much threatened as those of other traders by specious plans for further nationalisation". In the name of the "small man" are given re-assurance and congratulations in "Labour Believes in Britain". "We believe in the right to strike" said Churchill at Wolverhampton. "We cannot have strikes," said Attlee at Durham.

What conclusion is any thinking person to draw from all this contemptible deceit and duplicity? As the Irish say, "The only difference between them is that they're the same". Can we take seriously the pretensions and high-minded platitudes of these confidence-tricksters? If they tried their three-card trick at a race meeting we would think it an insult to our intelligence. Are we to tolerate their ridiculous audacity in spheres where our lives and happiness are in their hands?

FOOD CAPITALISM CREATES SHORTAGE

CHRONIC undernourishment, punctuated by periods of outright famine, has been the permanent accompaniment of existence for the great mass of workers in every country during recorded history. In the past this has been regarded as inevitable, part of the natural order of things—"The poor ye have always with you" remarked the founder of one of the most influential religious systems. Indeed, many social thinkers have held that it is the function of religion to inculcate resignation and make their poverty acceptable to the poor.

In our time there has been a certain change in attitude towards these conditions. To-day, official estimates recognize famine and gross under-nutrition as afflicting 50 per cent. of the world's population—a thousand million individuals; but—this fact is no longer either acceptable or accepted. The nutrition of one's neighbour is a matter that has stirred what is called the "conscience of the world".

Such advances in self-consciousness have characterized some of the major revolutions in thought of past epochs, and it is possible that the present widespread concern for food supplies may exert more than an incidental influence on the social revolution of the future.

Social Factors

World food production—and its distribution—involves many technical problems which are outside the scope of people not directly concerned in agriculture. But the problem has general aspects which concern everyone, and if we are to alter the pace or the direction of events we must have some grasp of the general issues. Lord Boyd-Orr is reported as saying recently that "the greatest problem to-day was that of adjusting political and economic to the tremendous advances made by science. There was no difficulty about producing enough food for the present population of the world, or even twice that number, but the problem was could politics and economics arrange that the food that was produced, was dispersed and consumed in the countries that needed it?" The chief obstacles in the way of agriculturists grappling with the technical problems of ensuring that everyone gets enough to eat are not only of climate and crops, tractors and fertilizers, but are social factors which place rational agriculture in fetters. Solutions which

are technically feasible are blocked in practice by the market economy, the monetary stimulus to production, the whole social apparatus with which a capitalist society seeks to order the production and distribution of goods. If this is true, we cannot leave the search for solutions solely in the hands of the agriculturists; a social duty devolves on us to remove these social fetters.

The fact that the conscience of the world has been only recently stirred about world famine leads many people to think that the problem is itself a modern one, but this is not so. Between 1066 and the Black Death in 1348 wheat yields in Britain fell from 12 bushels per acre to 6 bushels. During the same period the population doubled. It seems likely that the appalling mortality of the Black Death was prepared by this relative fall in productivity. Since then there has been a rise from the average mediaeval figure of 10 bushels per acre to 34 bushels in 1939-44. Kropotkin, in his influential book *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, was able to point to the possibility of much higher yields, and his figures have been borne out by such record yields as 131 bushels per acre.

Soil Erosion—A Social Problem

Agronomists regard the increasing loss of productivity of large areas of the world through soil erosion as a more important problem for mankind than the national rivalries and wars of the future. Soil erosion is now a matter for popular discussion in such large circulation periodicals as *Picture Post*. But in these discussions one hears much about the technical solutions advanced—the construction of huge dams and irrigation schemes, contour ploughing, the seeding of derelict land by aeroplane, and other means employed in such grandiose schemes as the reclamation of the Tennessee Valley. But what one does not hear about are the social causes of soil erosion.

I would like to approach these causes in a slightly roundabout manner.

It is often said that the soil of England is insufficient to support the population, but a glance at the figures will show that this is a misconception. In 1866 there were 18,000,000 acres of arable land under cultivation. In 1938 this figure had dropped to 8,780,000—rather less than half. The same trend can be seen from another angle: In 1870 the land fed 26,000,000 people; in 1914, only 16,000,000. Much of this fall occurred in the latter half of the nineteenth century; in 1850, three quarters of the wheat we consumed was home grown, but by 1880 this figure had fallen to only one third.

The reason for all this was the sudden flooding of the world market with American wheat. It not only disorganised arable farming in Britain and contributed to the loss of labour from the land known as the Rural Exodus, but also cut away the European market for Russian wheat and was thus responsible in part for the Russian famines of the eighties and nineties.

How did American wheat capture the market? In capitalist economy there is but one way to do that: by underselling its competitors. American producers were able to do that because land prices and rents were low in the Middle West, and because vast areas could be worked with machinery, thereby reducing labour costs far below anything possible to the small-field farming of Britain.

(Continued on page 4)

Power Blocs & the Trades Unions

THE line-up in the struggle for power between the world's two great power blocs is now being extended from the political plane on to the industrial. That is, if we can still regard the Trades Unions as industrial and not political.

In this country, the Unions always managed to maintain an apparently non-political character until the Labour Party's advent to power in 1945. They had always been regarded as the industrial wing of the Labour movement, with the Party itself as the political wing. This flying machine was to carry the worker heavenwards into the Socialist community, where the boss brought you tea in the morning and you really could eat the pie in the sky.

Alas, for the earth-bound worker! As the "Workers' Party" grew stronger in the political struggle, helped by the political levy, and soared to the heights of power, so the industrial wing flapped after it, caught the power bug—and left the worker behind. And left its industrial character behind, too.

When Labour was in opposition, the T.U.C. could be as rebellious as its essentially respectable leaders could make it. The Labour politicians themselves were not quite so forgetful of their Socialist principles then, after all, and the Capitalist Government could be denounced with fire and fury. But with the triumph of the politicians, it fell to the industrial leaders to bear the whole burden of the pretence. The Labour Government had to recognise its "responsibility to the whole country"; the T.U.C. had to pretend to represent the workers on its own.

Playing the Political Game

It is a pretence that has miserably failed. The Unions could not hide—did not want to—their political allegiance. It became perfectly obvious to all but the

most hypnotised reformist that the T.U.C. was more concerned with playing its part as junior partner in the State than with defending the economic and industrial interests of the organised workers. Today we hear the leader of the biggest union in the world, Arthur Deakin, not only defending such actions as putting troops in the Docks, but resisting his own union's resolutions demanding a higher standard of living.

To-day the political State is also economic boss and because of their political allegiances the industrial workers' leaders are part of the same set-up, inevitably playing the political game.

This sort of background exists in every country. In the so-called "Socialist" States it is no more than expected, but in the great American democracy it is just as noticeable—American Trades Union leaders believe in free capitalist enterprise! Since they are leaders, of course, that is understandable, for, just as lawyers have a vested interest in crime, T.U. leaders have a vested interest in the continuance of the class-divided society in which they can rise to privileged positions. And those positions are more securely held if the holders accept the predominant political atmosphere of the State for which they play so important a part.

This all sounds very cynical, and obviously expresses the belief that T.U. leaders are out to feather their own nests. Cynical it may seem—but is it not the truth? Whatever the degree of honesty and sincerity with which the politician sets out on his career—and the union official is in the same category—he will

end up pompous, reactionary—and well breeched. Lord Ammon of the Dock Labour Board is a prize example of this species; for years a "humble postman", until he went into the union business.

Political Blocs

In view of all this, the recent history of the World Federation of Trades Unions is not surprising. As we reminded readers in our last issue, in January of this year the dissension within its ranks between union leaders from the Eastern and Western power blocs led to the British and American delegates walking out, followed by Western European spokesmen. Stooges of the Russian cause were left with the remainder of the organisation and its name, and they have recently held a conference in Marseilles where they let it be known that places were still available for trades unionists from the Western powers who rejected the leadership of their official leaders. In other words, more stooges were welcome.

Now the officials of Western T.U.'s are replying. It has been announced that a new T.U. International is to be formed in opposition to the Stalinist dominated W.F.T.U., and, in the words of an American labour leader, is prepared to do "battle for the soul of the workers of Europe."

So now we can see the Trades Unions coming of age in their political development. Not merely do they represent a political force internally, but they have entered into the field of international politics. No longer are they concerned with the economic and working interests of their members but, just like politicians, policemen and priests, they are worried about our souls. How touching!

Leaders in this new move are Arthur Deakin, Jim Carey of the C.I.O., Léon

Jouhaux (French *Force Ouvriere*) and Pastori, of the Italian Christian Democrats. Naturally the Benelux and other Western Union countries will be represented, to say nothing of countries like Peron's Argentina.

As far as numbers go, the W.F.T.U. claim 65 million workers, and the Western International about 45 million. And this is the really fantastic part of the business. These two handfuls of "leaders" actually claim to represent these millions of working men, who have no control over them even on the internal issues in their various countries and have never been consulted on any international attitudes.

In point of fact, of course, none of these organisations have any international attitude that can be of any use to the workers. Both sections are tied up with the nationalism and patriotism of their own particular ideologies, and are concerned with playing their parts in the conflict between East and West loyally—not to the workers but to their States.

Internationalism

Nobody is more aware than the Anarchist of the desperate need for an international organisation of the working class. Our only defence against war is the international solidarity of the workers; our chief means of preventing intervention in an uprising in one country is that same solidarity. But neither of the two organisations which will shortly be snarling at each other as they fight for our souls can be even remotely connected with any such revolutionary thoughts.

It still remains for workers to begin again to build the internationalism that once terrified Europe's bourgeoisie, but has vanished in the wake of two World Wars. It will not be found under the banner of either Western or Eastern capi-

talist States, but in a conception of freedom from capitalism and States.

It is difficult enough for workers to build non-political industrial organisations within their countries, but the rebirth of Syndicalism may have a good chance in the light of recent experiences. From that it would be a logical step to co-operate with similar movements in other countries, but the task is tremendous—which makes it all the more worth-while.

Meanwhile we take a clear stand against the trickeries of official Trade Union politics. We stand for a real internationalism on behalf of the workers themselves, not of nationalist States—for through the unofficial, anti-patriotic actions of the working class lies the only hope for a world free from power rivalry with its inevitable outcome—war. P. S.

CULTURE AND RELIGION-2

Mr. Eliot defines culture as "a way of life of a particular people living in a particular place", and, on another page, as "a peculiar way of thinking, feeling and behaving". It is the "pattern of the society as a whole" and it is "the creation of the society as a whole". But he agrees that it is not a conscious creation—it is in some sense an unconscious phenomenon and cannot be deliberately produced by education or political action.

Culture & Religion

Culture must therefore be distinguished from the cultivated taste of an individual, as well as from the culture of a professional group or separate class within a society. Again, it is misleading to identify culture with any of its specific manifestations—it is just as much a question of good manners and good cooking as of great architecture and immortal poetry. Nevertheless there is one quality that, in Mr. Eliot's opinion, has characterised all cultures. "No culture," he asserts, "has appeared or developed except together with a religion: according to the point of view of the observer, the culture will appear to be the product of the religion, or the religion the product of the culture."

At this point Mr. Eliot joins forces with Professor Weidlé, but he is more precise in his definitions. He takes great pains to define this "togetherness" of religion and culture. He warns us several times not to make the mistake which Matthew Arnold made and assume that culture is something more comprehensive than religion. Equally we must avoid the error of regarding religion and culture as two separate things between which there is a relation—which is as bad as the alternative error of identifying religion and culture. Such descriptive statements miss the essential point, and though he is "aware of the tenuity of employing such an exalted term", Mr. Eliot cannot think of any other which would so well convey his intention as the word *incarnation*; the culture of a society is the incarnation of its religion.

But there are still further qualifications to be made. Mr. Eliot, like Professor Weidlé, assumes that there are religions of "partial truth" and people with "a truer light", "higher" religions and "lower" religions, and if we should be compelled by the objective evidence to admit that a religion of partial truth, such as Buddhism, is incarnated in a culture superior to our own, the explanation lies in the fact that our culture is not really Christian. But surely a Buddhist might say that the culture of India or China is in our view inferior to our own, that is only because it is not really Buddhist. If we are to have what might be called a science of comparative culture, then we must have too a science of comparative religion; and all that the scientists would be able to conclude is that while culture is generally found in association with religion, there is no evidence to show that one type of religion is more productive of culture than another. There is one way of life (comprising religion and art and every other kind of cultural manifestation) and there is another way of life (equally comprising all these things), and the only objective test of their worth would seem to be the degree of happiness generated by each way of life—Bentham's sensible test of the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Christian Society

I agree with Mr. Eliot on so many essential points that it is only a feeling of hopeless bafflement compels me to confess my scepticism on the issue which he obviously regards as the most important of all. If I do not misunderstand him, he assumes that our European destiny is to work out a pattern of culture ordained nearly two thousand years ago. I am genuinely anxious to understand the Christian sociologist on this point. I agree with Professor Weidlé in thinking that Christian culture reached its perfection in the Middle Ages—in the Christian society of Saint Louis, for example. It is surely not very realistic to suggest that we should try to re-establish the cultural pattern of the thirteenth century; but at the same time

THE second part of Herbert Read's broadcast review of *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* by T. S. Eliot, and *The Dilemma of the Arts* by Wladimir Weidlé, is of especial interest to Anarchists. Here Herbert Read discusses the question of equality, and attacks the doctrine of an élite within society.

The first part appeared in the last issue of *Freedom* (23/7/49), copies of which are still available.

any incarnation of the Christian faith would seem to imply a society far more like the feudal societies of the Middle Ages than anything we have experienced in modern history. If that kind of medievalism is not in Mr. Eliot's mind, then he must envisage a very different kind of society—a society different from that of the thirteenth century no less than from our present society. But a *different* society—a society different from the Christian society of the Middle Ages—would seem to imply the incarnation of a *different* religion. That, obviously, is not what Mr. Eliot or any orthodox Christian would admit as a possibility.

"Elites"

That Mr. Eliot does—at any rate in broad outlines—seek to restore a past order to correspond with a past stage in religious evolution is shown by his treatment of the question of *élites*. This fashionable word hides the social phenomenon more realistically known as a dominant or privileged class. Admittedly, a culture is never uniform in its manifestation: the fact that people are variously endowed at birth with genius or talent means that if a society is to benefit to the full from its membership, it must allow its best brains, its wisest minds, to rise to positions of influence in the public service. It would seem, from what might be called the biological point of view, that the best system would be one that allowed this talent to rise freely to the top, like cream on milk. That is the system known in politics as "equality of opportunity". Mr. Eliot is opposed to it, with a somewhat surprising violence. He argues that it "is an ideal which can only be fully realised when the institution of the family is no longer respected, and when parental control and responsibility passes to the State." Any system which puts such a policy into effect, Mr. Eliot thinks, "must see that no advantages of family fortune, no advantages due to the foresight, the self-sacrifice or the ambition of parents are allowed to obtain for any child or young person an education which places them in a position to

him to be entitled." I should have thought that the family, in Mr. Eliot's no less than in my own view, was bound together by something more spiritual than self-interest. I should also have thought that our recent experiences in war and in peace had shown not merely the danger, but even the impossibility, of relying on an élite produced by privileged education. When a nation is at the end of its tether, it is not education that counts, but something which would usually be called "character", and which is just as likely to be found in Wigan or in Stepney as in Eton or Oxford.

Equality

Mr. Eliot is contemptuous of the doctrine of egalitarianism; he thinks it leads to licentiousness and irresponsibility. I do not think he has given due consideration to what might be called the *mystique* of the doctrine. Some Christians argue that this mystique is implied in the Fatherhood of God, in the Brotherhood of Man; I am not in a position to substantiate their theology. I take my evidence from the natural sciences and history, and this evidence suggests to me that the highest achievements of man, moral and material, are due to the impulse of mutual aid. There is, of course, an individualistic, one-way expression of this impulse—we then call it sympathy or charity. But the higher form of its expression is mutual, an "I-Thou" dialogue, a sinking of differences, an exercise of humility. To the extent that this relationship prevails in a society we have that social unity, that "peculiar way of thinking, feeling and behaving", which generates and transmits a culture. It is this unconscious and instinctive sense of social communion which underlies the whole of the religious, artistic and social development of man from the dawn of civilisation.

At this point I can imagine Professor Weidlé and Mr. Eliot, in the unlikely event that they were listening to me, getting a little impatient. But we have admitted all that, they might say, indeed,

it is the very substance of our thesis. But no. It is the substance of their thesis so long as they write in the abstract, and so long as they speak of the past. But when it comes to the present, by which I mean the past hundred years or so, they become illogical. To be logical they should say that during the past hundred years or so there has developed in Western Europe a particular way of life involving practices and experiences almost totally different from any that have hitherto been characteristic of human communities. Science has resulted, not only in a mechanised civilisation, but in materialistic beliefs about the origin of the world and the destiny of mankind. In conformity with this profound revolution in our ways of thinking, feeling and behaving (Mr. Eliot's definition of a culture, you remember), a new type of art has sprung into existence, as expressive of our modern way of life as the art of the past was of the way of life in the Stone Age, or in Ancient Rome, or in the Christian communities of the Middle Ages.

Modern Art

It follows from this line of argument—which, I submit—is the only logical line, that we cannot hold the modern artist responsible for the art which we don't like. Professor Weidlé does not like the

art of Picasso and Léger; he has a nostalgic reverence for the art of Titian, Correggio and Raphael. What he cannot see, or will not admit, is that Picasso and Léger are doing for our society, for our way of life, exactly what Titian, Correggio and Raphael did for theirs. And in my opinion they are doing their job just as effectively as the artists of the Renaissance. From the strictly artistic point of view there is no dilemma: the artist cannot escape the way of life into which he is born. He must accept it and make the best of it.

Professor Weidlé has an apocalyptic vision of the artist's loneliness in the modern world—of his agony in a faithless, irreligious society. This may be true of a few artists like Rouault and Claudel, particularly admired by Professor Weidlé, who are completely out of sympathy with the modern age. It is not true of artists like Picasso and Léger, or, to give an English example, Henry Moore. I am not suggesting for a moment that these artists are complacently satisfied with our way of life; Picasso has expressed his strong disapproval of that way of life by joining the Communist Party. I would say that most modern artists are fully aware of the disintegrated nature of the societies in which they live, and they yearn for an "abiding fraternity of souls". But most of them realise that such a fraternity is not brought into existence by wishful thinking, by nostalgic conversions, by any form of contracting out of our social responsibilities. A deep sense of community will be created in the fields and the workshops; it requires in the first place an economic revolution, and those who oppose such a revolution on the basis of traditional conceptions of religion and society, are merely hindering the rebirth of a culture whose death they so eloquently lament.

London's Poor

MAYHEW'S LONDON, edited by Peter Quennell (Pilot Press, 21/-)



FOR many years Henry Mayhew has been little more than a name in the memories of a relatively restricted number of students of the Victorian era; yet his most important work, a great pioneer into the then almost unknown territory of sociology, entitled *London Labour and the London Poor*, is the lineal, but not always recognised, ancestor of the more celebrated surveys of the lot of the working man which were later carried out by men like Charles Booth.

Mayhew was a journalist and a miscellaneous author, with a leaning towards philanthropy, and a rather vague conviction that there must be something fundamentally wrong with the kind of society which produced the terrible contrasts and injustices he saw daily around him. In the height of Victorian prosperity, he saw the rottenness of the foundations on which that wealth and good-living were built up, and set himself the task of making a vast and comprehensive survey of the way in which the poor of London lived in the 1850's and 1860's. Many such surveys have since been made, have served their useful purpose, and have fallen into justified obscurity because the information they gave was merely factual and had, outside its own period, a restricted interest only for the research worker. But Mayhew differed from these other surveyors of the same ground since he was not only a statistician with a fine and patient faculty of gaining information, but also a man with a broad and tolerant interest in human beings of every kind. The result was that his survey was filled with brilliant sketches of the lives and characters of the working men and the really destitute poor of London, sketches in which literary vividness and human insight are combined to a surprising degree. The fine independence of nineteenth century London costers, the misery of those social derelicts who scraped a starvation living by gathering dog dung from the streets for sale to tanners or by grubbing old iron and other rubbish out of the tidal mud of the Thames, are admirably shown, while the patience of this indefatigable interviewer of the humble and downtrodden is shown by the vast variety of almost fantastic trades which he covers in his survey.

Mayhew's work has long been out of print, and Peter Quennell has done an excellent work of selection by compressing the most interesting parts of the 1861 edition into a single volume. It is an indispensable book for those interested in the development of sociology as a genuine field science, or in the background of nineteenth century English history, while the more general reader will find much of interest in its sympathetic portrayal of the real life of the poor in an era when the impact of the industrial revolution was still at its height and the fortunes of a few were being built up on the misery of the great army of wage slaves created by the break-up of the old peasant society of agricultural England.

A.M.

G.W.

HEINE, MARX AND BAKUNIN

Heine: A Biography, by Francois Fejtó (Allan Wingate, 18/-).

UNFORTUNATELY, one cannot recommend this biography of Heine, since there is a certain amount of truth in the allegation by one of his many adversaries that "the foreign cult for Heine was based on a misunderstanding, inasmuch as they took him more seriously than he had taken himself": Mr. Fejtó is a striking case in point, since he endeavours to retell many of Heine's autobiographical sketches in a manner which painfully proves that he has missed the point of much of his irony, which is rather too keen-edged for anyone attempting a study from a Marxist angle, and anxious to read as much as possible into Heine's acquaintanceship with Marx.

One could have wished that more had been written regarding Heine's relationship with the German intellectuals of his day, since it has importance for us inso-

far as the modern deification of Marx (and denigration or distortion of his opponents) has become as essential a part of the Marxist religion as the life and times of Jesus has become of Christianity. Just as it might be interesting to know more about the Pharisees—who despite one sectarian's unfortunate experiences, were probably not all hypocrites (any more than the Samaritans were all helpful)—it might be useful to have the reverse side of the picture of Marxist folklore. Amongst Heine's own autobiographical and contemporary sketches—which it is much to be hoped will one day make their appearance in a decent English translation—the German demagogic revolutionaries of his day are very well depicted.

Heine nailed these "Doctors of Revolution" to the pillar as effectively as he did the reactionaries; and he was met with lifelong slanders, backbiting and the most contemptible vilification. It is interesting for Anarchists to note that when Marx and his associates displaced the Republicans as the revolutionary party in Germany, the same tactics of character-assassination and intrigue were used against Bakunin, in the struggle in the International many years later.

In the nineteenth century, Bakunin's name had a place in working-class imagination that could not be so easily displaced; with the decline of libertarian thought after the First World War many writers attempted to soil his reputation, beginning with the discovery of the "Bakunin Confession" (his plea to the Tsar for mercy when incarcerated in his dungeons) which incriminated nobody and (if authentic) proves little but commonsense expediency, and culminating with a number of books setting out to prove Bakunin's "anti-Semitism". Max Nomad went so far as to compare Bakunin with Hitler, and Jaroslavsky (Stalinist Russian writer of *History of Russian Anarchism*) to "explain" this by the fact that Bakunin was, after all, a Russian nobleman in his origins and naturally possessed the prejudices of his class which not even his renunciation of it could exorcise. But they overlook the same references as Bakunin's amongst the Jewish intellectuals (as Heine, Marx and Engels) who, not forcing the Hitler race theory, dismissed Judaism as a religion and, without believing in Christianity, underwent the act of baptism "as a passport to

European culture", only this meaningless ceremony being sufficient to make them German citizens. They constantly denounced the obscurantism and superstition of the Ghetto or accused their opponents of being still steeped in its ignorance; Mr. Fejtó, with the consciousness of Hitlerism which could not exist one hundred years ago, says "one could compose a vicious anti-Semitic pamphlet from (Heine's) writings," exactly the same charge against the Jewish bourgeois Heine as against the Russian aristocrat Bakunin. Bakunin had renounced his background entirely, and the alleged "anti-Semitism" which some modern writers see in him (as in Heine) is that current amongst the German-Jewish free-thinkers (with whom he mixed in the days of his association with Marx) who had no inhibitions about their opposition to Judaism in the days before fascist anti-Semitism had decreed it to be a "race" instead of a religion. In view of the steady acceptance of the Nomad-Jaroslavsky theory recently, this needs to be pointed out more clearly, and nothing would make it plainer than the prose works of Heine.

Perhaps, too, they would afford a striking contrast with his countless would-be imitators, a motley variety ranging from Benjamin Disraeli (whose philosophic Judaic-Christianity expressed in many of his novels such as *Tancred* and also on the floor of the Commons, is directly cribbed from one phase of Heine) to an entire German Marxist school which did its best to imitate his flashing wit and often spent on utterly insignificant opponents. The last of them was possibly Leon Trotsky (who, like Lenin, was far more German in his outlook than Russian) whose bitter sectarianism and completely Olympian attitude to the masses was modelled on Heine's style, the aloofness of which cost him the crown of Russian Communism and the opportunity of building an Opposition. For Heine was not after political power.

But Heine still reads fresh and topical a hundred years after, even after suffering at the hands of translators with as little understanding as Mr. Fejtó, and the reader is advised to find one of the few worthy translations—*Works of Prose of Heinrich Heine*—a very abridged "reader" covering a small fraction of his writings (published a few years back by Secker & Warburg).

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FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

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AN OLD FRENCH TRADITION

THE *New Statesman & Nation* recently (9/7/49) published an article with the somewhat strange title "A Meditation on Being Beaten Up" by a Mr. Robert Payne. The writer happened to be passing through St. Germain des Près in Paris on July 1st at 5 p.m. when about 400 students who had just finished their *bachot* examinations were showing their feelings by singing and shouting and dancing in the middle of the streets, and not unnaturally holding up the traffic in the process. Then the police vans arrived and in Mr. Payne's words: "vans arrived. Their tyres screamed, and their sirens screamed louder. There was a panic among the students, for the police cars drove straight at them—I still cannot understand why none of the students were run down . . . The police cars came to a stop. The police jumped out with truncheons, revolvers at their sides, and their faces set for murder—the ugliest brood of Frenchmen I have ever seen. They simply threw themselves at isolated

and defenceless groups of students, hurled them on to the pavement, cursed them in the foulest language, and then frog-marched those who were in their power to the police vans. After about four quite obviously innocent students had been clubbed and thrown into the car, I took out a piece of paper and began to take down the numbers on the collars of the more brutal policemen."

The next three minutes were eventful for Mr. Payne and he has a vivid recollection of them.

"Three policemen charged me, swore at me, threatened to 'kick my arse right the way through', and then in unison decided to give me a lesson. Evidently, even in France, one should not take down numbers on collars. I remember five terrific blows on the side of my head, and then the whole of the Boulevard St. Germain began wheeling like a futurist painting. I was frog-marched to the van. I remember thinking: In the van it will be all right, it will be quite calm and probably very hot, for it was a hot day. But this is not at all the technique. The moment you are thrown into the van the beating begins again, and there are very well-fed policemen waiting to club you at the moment you are thrown in.

Eventually when the van was stuffed full with victims they were driven to the police station. "The guardroom was filled with brutal, coarse-faced clowns who played dominoes, swore, waited for orders, and refused to answer any questions of the prisoners except with threats . . . There was no longer physical brutality; but the psychological brutality remained—threats, silence, the long wait before the names and the charges are written in the dossier. When it came to my turn to be examined, I was asked who I was. I said I was a professor, their faces fell, almost on their knees they asked me to leave."

Mr. Payne was lucky, since he escaped the traditional *passage à tabac* (beatings with truncheons) with which the French Police defend the law. And Mr. Payne is obviously naive when he attributes this police violence to the bad example given by the Nazi occupation forces. And in a subsequent issue, a correspondent rightly points out that this kind of treatment existed long before the war and quotes from personal experience in 1938 when he had left his passport behind at his hotel only five minutes walk from the police station.

But these are minor incidents in a long history of police brutality, and readers of this column may recall that *Freedom* revealed a number of cases including one in which the victim died as a result of the beating-up he received at police headquarters.

In France everybody knows what it means to fall into the hands of the police. In hospitals doctors and nurses often have their victims as patients. Besides our contemporary *Le Libertaire* (which recently published a courageous editorial denouncing police violence), few voices are raised in protest. When one discusses these matters with Frenchmen they shrug their shoulders adding, "Nothing

can be done. Everyone knows about it, but we can do nothing to stop it."

In Paris the visitor immediately feels the power of the police. They are everywhere; van-loads of them seem to be on the move wherever one turns; police posts are to be found in the most unexpected places, and when one sees them

close-up with their revolvers at their sides and white truncheons (and at demonstrations some carry Tommy guns) one feels that the police rule Paris. And are there really no men of goodwill to support the Anarchists in demanding that police brutality shall cease in France?

LIBERTARIAN.

Atom Bomb Statistics

PEACE NEWS (22/7/49) quotes from a lecture given in Bristol by Dr. Daniel Posin, Professor of Physics at N. Dakota State College in which he stated that it is now estimated that the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima accounted for 35,000 men, women and children who perished leaving no trace; 25,000 whose bodies were found a mile off; 75,000 who died of flash-burn three miles off, and a further 20,000 affected by Gama rays who died of fever and sickness lasting not longer than 10 days.

That is a total of 155,000 compared with the figure of 60,000 given by John Hersey in that memorable piece of journalism, *Hiroshima* (Penguin Books).

But Hiroshima was an example of the atom bomb in its infancy, for as Dr. Posin pointed out, "Since then the Bikini Mushroom has been produced and now it was known that a body of water could be made to ascend 20,000 feet from its river bed and to disappear as a cloud in the sky. But it was an atomic cloud that perhaps 75 miles away would shed its fine spray, contaminating man, woman and child and food and water with the merciless Gama rays."

And having taken in the full significance of this we cannot repress the somewhat sad reflection that the average per-

son thinks of an anarchist as a desperate individual with a smoking bomb in his right hand and of the Government as a peace-loving father protecting him from the anarchist's home-made bomb!

MORE POLITICAL DEATH SENTENCES

One day it is Greek rebels being sentenced to death. Another day it is the Spanish underground fighters. Now from Beirut comes the news that twelve alleged members of the National Syrian party have been sentenced to death by a military tribunal for participating in a revolt against the state.

Fifty-three others were sentenced to prison terms ranging from three years to life in a mass trial which was one of the biggest ever to be held in Lebanon.

It appears that the party advocated a greater Syria, under the leadership of its head, Antoun Saadeh, who was captured on July 7, tried secretly and executed within twenty-four hours.

Those sentenced were charged with participating in raids early this month on five police stations in an attempt to capture arms and ammunition.

Member of New Zealand Community Arrested

RAYMOND ERNEST HANSEN was arrested on the 6th July on a three months' warrant of commitment. This was issued on account of an unpaid fine of £100 imposed by the Ngarawahia Magistrate's Court on June 9th, 1948, in connection with an action taken by the Taxation Department.

Raymond Hansen is one of a group known as *Beavills Community*. The fine was not paid as the Community is of the opinion that the prosecution and the penalty were not justified. Similarly Raymond Hansen felt that he could not assist the police to effect his arrest, and in order to take him from the Community premises it was necessary for the constable to drag him in a limp condition from the Community buildings to the police car on the roadside.

The prosecution was for failure to make an individual return of income! Hansen submitted that he could not make the

returns demanded by the Taxation Dept. as there was no division of income, property or shares among members of the Community. The Dept. refused to accept a Community return showing all members as joint participants and all children as joint responsibility. Since May, 1948, when it became apparent that no arrangements could be agreed upon between the Community and the Dept., the Community has voluntarily foregone drawing Family Benefits and other Social Security allowances to which all persons in New Zealand are normally entitled. There are fourteen in the Community and economic life is maintained by the production of honey and the running of a farmers' welding service.

Taupiri, N.Z. DAN H. HANSEN, P.S.—Thanks for continuing to send *Freedom*. We put it on the tray of free literature which we keep for customers to the welding works, when we have finished with it.

THROUGH THE PRESS

IGNORANCE IS BLISS

The colonel, a lively man in the early forties, says that on the whole they seem to have enjoyed their expedition to the docks.

He has found no instance of any soldiers resenting being put on to this work.

This officer reports, merely as a matter of observation, that, of each successive batch of conscripts he receives, about six per cent. are "not all there" and twenty-five per cent. "cannot read a newspaper."

Daily Graphic, 20/7/49.

So the government which through its educational system keeps children ignorant, through its military system exploits that ignorance.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Practically no one I have met intends, as a result of Army experience, to join the Territorials or have anything whatsoever to do with the Army.

Letter in Leader Magazine, 30/7/49.

SUPPLY . . .

"The suffering of little children" can always be counted on to move the warm heart of the British people. That is why Socialist Britain is one of the few countries where schoolmasters are able to "equip them in facing the trials of a brutal world" by thrashing them with a cane imported, manufactured and sold (purchase tax included) by a private enterprise closely linked with a Society for the Retention of Corporal Punishment in Schools.

Letter in Tribune, 22/7/49.

AND DEMAND

We are constantly reading of the need to discipline our children, yet a parent who believes in discipline finds it impossible to buy a cane.

In the last two days I have visited 20 shops unsuccessfully. I was told in some shops: "We do not find it worth our while to stock canes; there is not the demand for them."

Letter in News Chronicle, 25/7/49.

THE CAMERA DOES NOT LIE

The south side of Oxford Street is a dead loss for walkies. Once Master Mind himself snapped a spiv there. Usually spivs love being photographed, but this one turned out to be a plain-clothes man. "Thanks," he says, pleased-like. "Now just you come along to Bow Street. I've got a summons for you." I paid my fine, all nice and friendly, and blow me down if he doesn't come trotting along to the studio two days later to order his snaps. "Gawd," he says, "I never knew I looked such a miserable bastard!"

Interview with a "Walkie Cameraman", *Leader Magazine, 30/7/49.*

DEPT. OF CONJECTURE

What do we think human life is about? And how do we propose to put our thinking into action? It is not a bad idea to imagine a man from Mars, a woman from Venus, or an angel, if you like, arriving with an earnest curiosity about this planet and then see how some of our most cherished institutions such as customs barriers, frontiers, currency restrictions, the Berlin Corridor, licensing laws, censorship, prisons, armies, working in offices, divorce, probate and admiralty—our whole experiment in gracious dying—sound when patiently explained in such circumstances.

Horizon, July 1949.

THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD

WHEN we consider the question of education the emphasis is usually laid upon the necessity of giving the child a free environment, and the state educational system is condemned for its repressive authoritarian atmosphere. The environment considered desirable is one which gives a great measure of sexual freedom, and involves voluntary attendances at classes, and the complete absence of subservience to authorities. It is obvious that this environment can only be achieved in a privately run school. Private schools mean high fees that put them out of reach of all but a minority of parents. For how many parents can afford to pay for the education of their children twice over? It would be of help if those parents who did not wish to avail themselves of the state schools could refrain from paying in taxation for their share of the cost of the system so as to make it easier for them to support private schools. But would any government agree to this? More likely, the progressive schools are allowed to remain open only because they are inaccessible to the majority of people. Is the problem of education then insoluble, for the anarchist? A successful insurrection requires a body of freedom needing people such as are unlikely to come out of our state schools at present.

Progressive teachers in state schools, although perhaps unable to turn out natural anarchists, could do much to see that the adolescent leaves them, more tolerant, broad-minded and less likely to become a victim of the authoritarian stiff-stomached brigade. Although teachers are tied down to a curriculum designed to provide technological training only, there is much they could do if they realise that they are one of the main spearheads in the attack on authoritarianism. The following ideas put into practice in a New Zealand school, could be adapted by progressive teachers in our state schools and so neutralise some of the worst effects of the present system. The teacher must

base his work consciously on the welfare of the child and not (subconsciously) on the perpetuation of the present social system. The welfare of the child should be the first consideration. The public demand for matriculation, etc., as a qualification for professional employment, the parents' desire for their children to become wage slaves as soon as possible, a certain amount of intellectual snobbery, and the employers' desire for large numbers of wage slaves, all these tend to obscure the real educational interests of the child.

EDUCATION

The welfare of the child throughout life consists in his ability to adjust himself to a rapidly changing world and to take his share in the control of his environment. This is the essential characteristic of life, correspondence with environment physical and social.

The life of a community of human beings is expressed in a complex of activities which may be grouped into:—

(a) Activities directed towards survival of the individual, group, or race, i.e., economic.

(b) Activities directed towards self-fulfilment, games, hobbies, scientific research, art, philosophy, i.e., the emphasis is no longer economic.

But there should be no fundamental distinction between education for work, and education for leisure. Leisure time should be as fully occupied as work time, differing only in the relative freedom from external compulsion, giving greater opportunities for self expression.

Factors to be considered are:—

(1) The health of the child and the dangers of competitive examinations because of the nervous strain they entail.

(2) Every child should have a thorough knowledge of his own language as the chief medium of thought and communi-

cation, including a knowledge of the precise meaning of words, so that he can readily detect fallacies arising from the clumsy and inexact use of words.

(3) He should be able to detect the difference between scientific and rationalizing arguments. The first seeks the truth, the other justifies an attitude.

(4) Every child should have a thorough course in recent and contemporary world history, and should examine the present state of the world and the implications of nationalistic philosophies.

(5) The racial bias that originates in commercial rivalries should be counteracted and he should understand how easily the idea of private advantage may be associated in peoples minds with ideas of national honour, national obligations, and patriotism.

(6) The child should know how news is collected, censored, sub-edited and published. He should appreciate the importance of public opinion, and how it is influenced by such modern instruments of propaganda as press, radio and cinema.

This should lead to an understanding of our social environment, but that is not enough; the child must realise that industrial and social institutions that are found to be dangerous can be changed so that they express the human objectives of the people. Studies should be designed to express the significance and achievements of human life. The natural urge to self expression should not be degraded to the level of a competitive market, but we should encourage instead, disinterested effort, co-operation, mutual help and a happier atmosphere in which there is no place for fear or envy. The ultimate aim should be to organise the school for serious work and the employment of leisure in such a way that every child following his own bent and expressing his particular talent is able consciously to further the co-operative ends of the school which would become a civilised community in itself.

HAROLD SCULTHORPE.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Le Libertaire in Court

To add to the increasing financial problems of publishing an Anarchist paper in France, *Le Libertaire* was recently heavily fined for its articles on the miners strikes which took place in France some months ago. *Le Libertaire* reports an amusing incident during the case when the public prosecutor reproached our comrade Joyeux for ignoring the limits placed on the press by the laws. The President of the Court turned to him and remarked, "But Mr. Prosecutor, they are anarchists and against the laws."

Reds Everywhere

Some sections of the American public must see Red even in their dreams! It now appears that the Senate Judiciary Committee have secret testimony to the effect that Communists dominate the United Nations Secretariat with the support of the Secretary General, Trygve Lie. So a new investigation can be expected at any moment now.

World Citizen Davis Takes a Rest

At a Press Conference, Garry Davis said that he planned to retire from active work in the world government movement, for a few months, in order to have some time for "study and meditation". He said that his International Secretariat of World Citizens had now been constituted as a non-profit organization under French law. He added that he had received letters from more than 250,000 people in seventy-six countries expressing support for world government.

Whether one agrees with Davis or not (and one hopes that his meditation will be to good effect), his achievements in one year are an example to those chicken-hearted would-be propagandists (even among the anarchists) who do nothing because "what can one chap do on his own. Now if only we had a large organization, etc. . . ." It is not the organization but the will to do something which counts every time!

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LEWIS MUMFORD ATTACKS THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT'S WAR POLICY

IN a letter to the *New York Herald Tribune* for July 16th, Lewis Mumford attacks the war policy of the American Government. We print here parts of Mumford's very long letter (in a drastically abridged form) since they form a most telling indictment of the coming war. We feel it essential to point out, however, that he by no means condemns war altogether, but demands instead that it be conducted "sanely" and with due regard for morals. This part of Mumford's letter seems to us notably weak, and in striking contrast to the main burden of his argument—that indiscriminate death-dealing is indefensible and demoralizing to the murderers. In omitting these passages, however, we are anxious to avoid giving the impression that Mumford's position is the same as that of *Freedom*. Anarchists may owe much to his researches in the social field, but they cannot follow him into liberalistic argumentation about humanizing war.

REAR Admiral Daniel V. Gallery's article in the recent *Saturday Evening Post* attacking our current plans for conducting war mainly by atomic weapons has opened up an issue on which an ominous silence has so far prevailed. There is a special burden on every thinking citizen to realize for himself and to bring home to his fellow citizens the implications of Admiral Gallery's sound contentions. For the fact is that, under habits of silence, rules of secrecy, and something closely approximating a discreet reign of terror, the American people have been committed by their elected officers and their military leaders to a doctrine of war that is utterly repulsive to our own American principles, to the decent opinions of mankind and to the traditions of civilization.

Genocide

The policy to which the American people are now committed by the responsible officers of our government can be put in a few words. By our concentration on atomic weapons and similar airborne agents, we have publicly announced, in effect, that in any large struggle with an enemy power we shall abandon the methods of war and resort to the wholesale extermination of enemy populations. The exact term for this method of attack is genocide: a crime against humanity which in the United Nations we piously profess to abhor. The familiar phrase by which we conceal from ourselves the implications of this policy is "total war"; but as a matter of fact, it shows a contempt for human life and for the principles upon which civilization has been slowly built, a contempt more unrestrained and brutal than the most execrated conquerors in history, an Attila or a Genghis Khan, ever showed; so that it is, in fact, a denial of the formalized and regulated aggressions of warfare and an acceptance of the Fascist principle of treating the enemy, not as fellow human beings, but as vermin.

The decision to resort to genocide was made, under pressure of war, without public debate of any kind.

Obliteration

The occasion for the change was due to the hope, publicly expressed by Winston Churchill, that the overwhelming application of "saturation" or "obliteration" bombing to German cities might force the surrender of the Fascist powers without even the necessity of making direct contact with the enemy's military forces. As it turned out, that hope proved a complete illusion in Germany, if not in Japan.

When this method was first put into practice by the English, a small but vocal section of the British public repudiated this conversion to the doctrine of effecting a quick and easy victory through genocide, originally advanced by the Fascist Italian General Douhet; but the British at least had the partial justification that they were only retaliating for similar attacks that the Fascists had made against them.

Meetings and Announcements

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS: CENTRAL LONDON

OPEN AIR meetings will be held in Hyde Park on alternate Sundays, coinciding with the publication fortnight of *FREEDOM*. From 3 p.m. to 6. Speakers, support for the platform and literature sellers will be equally welcome.

HAMPSTEAD

Weekly discussion meetings are held every Wednesday at: 5, Villas-on-the-Heath, Vale of Health, Hampstead, N.W.3. Evenings at 7.30. All welcome.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP

Outdoor Meetings MAXWELL STREET. every Sunday at 7 p.m., Frank Leech, John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw.

But hardly a voice was lifted in the United States when we dropped our orthodox method of "pin-point" bombing on military targets for the attempted destruction and demoralization of the enemy's entire urban population; and even to-day a full sense of what was involved in this decision has not, apparently, struck home to any large part of our citizens, even the clergy.

Actually, however, our leaders had broken the most sacred and essential of all human taboos: the taboo against the wanton, random killing of one's fellow men.

Apathy

If we are honest with ourselves we must admit, as more than one Air Force pilot who served in Germany has pointed out to me, that strategic bombing differs from genocide as practised in a Nazi extermination camp, not in the results achieved, but only in the fact that those who, under military orders, performed the act still ran a risk to their own lives, had no personal contact with their victims, and did not as a rule derive any positive sadistic enjoyment from the extermination itself. Perhaps one of the reasons for our abnormal apathy towards this subject is that an examination of our conduct would draw on ourselves an almost unbearable load of guilt.

But as we know, the bomb is more than a super-explosive; the most deadly effects of the bomb, when used in quantities, would come not from blast and heat but from the contamination of water and air; and theoretically this and other similar weapons of genocide are capable of wiping out all human life, possibly all life of any sort, over a continental area. Once we have released ourselves from the taboo against the random massacre of the enemy, there are no lengths to which, in the fear and hate and agony of war, we might not let our leaders go; indeed, since genocide has become our accepted policy, we have lost the possibility of effective civilian control even in peace time; and our Congress blindly votes appropriations for unspecified weapons in unspecified amounts to be used for unspecified purposes.

Already, by our concentration upon secret weapons of genocide, we have produced a contagion of hate, fear and suspicion in our own country that threatens to paralyze our social life and even to deprive our government of the services of some of its ablest and most patriotic citizens. In the end, the very techniques we have adopted to provide security against a Russian counter-attack, by the same means will bring about in our own country every curb on freedom and democracy that the Russian dictatorship has adopted; indeed, many of them are already quietly, and not so quietly, in operation.

Illusions

But even from the lowest standpoint of expediency, the position we have taken is fatally wrong. As we should know from our experience with Germany, it is far easier to start a war than to end one; and the more completely we destroy the supporting physical structure of civilization, and the morale and self-respect and human confidence of the survivors, the more difficult it is to bring a war to an end.

Disaster

Even if the initial assault on the enemy were completely successful, the final effect would be disastrous. Just as our preparations for such a war have already involved us in a steady strangulation of democratic controls, so the actual execution of this policy would leave us, not with a world saved for peace and democracy and world co-operation, but with a world filled with paranoids, criminals and corpses, to say nothing of millions of human beings, poisoned by our own moral nihilism and hatefulness, whose inhibitions against random killing we should have completely destroyed.

There is all the difference in the world between resorting to atomic bombing as a last resort, in limited retaliation for similar acts committed by the enemy, and resorting in the first instance to the wholesale use of extermination alone. By following the latter programme we have committed ourselves, with muddled justifications and with unseemly moral blindness, to a policy which undermines the elementary principles on which human society itself rests. This policy has already had sinister consequences on our national life, turning our own government progressively into the very image of the ruthless dictatorship we properly despise and fear; and its further consequences will be even more tragic, unless we have the humility to confess the depths of the sins we have already committed, and the far more extensive depravities, indeed the utterly unpardonable sins, we are ready to commit.

Without this self-examination, as a nation, we shall probably continue to lack that insight to change our mind, or the courage to reverse our position. If this should be true, the illusions of pride and power will bring about our national suicide: for in the act of exterminating the enemy we shall kill all that is human in ourselves. LEWIS MUMFORD.

Where Do We Stand on Religion? ARE WE FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE?

BY coincidence we have received within a week of each other, two letters on the subject of religion, presenting opposite views.

The first says:

"The attitude of many British Libertarians towards religion is far too severe. In view of the relative smallness of the Libertarian movements of the World, except in a few places such as Spain, it seems very unwise to antagonise possible support from people who have religious feelings.

"There is no doubt, of course, that the Roman Catholic Church in such countries as Italy and Spain is a real obstacle to progress; mainly because of its attitude towards such things as birth control, but in Great Britain attacking Christianity is something in the nature of flogging a dead horse."

The second says:

"For my part I cannot regard anti-clericalism as 'flogging a dead horse'. It is centuries since the R.C. Church has had the power in the Western world that it has to-day, when with the open allegiance of all Western States, and the secret sympathy of the Protestant Churches, it has assumed the function of ideological spearhead of the anti-Russian bloc."

★

It has always been a mystery to us as to how anyone who has embraced anarchist ideas can find it possible to cling to Christianity or to any other religious faith. "If God really existed", said Bakunin, "it would be necessary to abolish him", and this was not said with any spirit of wise-cracking. It expresses, tersely and concisely, the true anarchist attitude towards domination and the rejection of authority, whether secular or divine, material or mental. Just as it is necessary for men to destroy the man-made tyranny of governmental states, so it is necessary to abolish the equally man-made tyranny of a God who presumes to judge us and to lay down moral codes to which we must adhere.

The essence of religion lies in humility, servility, and a denial of humanity. Which of us has not shuddered at passing "Sisters of Mercy" in the street? These black-clad, walking symbols of self-denial seem to sum up the withering of the body and the restriction of the mind which surrender to anti-humanism demands. As anarchists we take our stand on the side of humanity against the death-dealing influence of both State and church, believing that men and women find their full nature only when free from restriction from any direction. Our bodies bloom healthier used in all natural ways, our minds flourish in open-minded knowledge, our personalities are enriched in freedom. The restrictive obscurantism of religious morality can only fossilise us in the name of homage to a higher being.

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"Christianity in England," says our first correspondent, "is now almost incapable of doing harm, while it may do good,

therefore let us show a truly Anarchist tolerance towards it."

In countries where the Church is a political dominant, anti-clericalism often takes the form of attacks on the reputations of individual priests. This we think is wrong. The discovery, for instance, of a priest's secret sex-life is to be welcomed, not from the mud-slinging point of view, but because it shows that the bonds the Church seeks to impose on its followers are so contrary to human needs that they are not strong enough to bind all of even its own members.

But in England the task is a subtler one, and Christianity can work its insidious poison in quiet ways as well as noisy. We do not ignore the sects who "do good" in opposition to the official church leadership, but we cannot be tolerant of the fact that they act from the wrong motives; that their driving force is not their belief in their own nature, but their belief that "God works through them".

As atheists we reject both the idea of God and the idea that free men have any need of any focal point of worship. Most of all we reject the institutionalised church, but if individuals find consolation in a private belief—well, let them. But don't let any of us imagine that it will further the cause of human emancipation, by substituting a heavenly father for an earthly tyrant still leaves the human being underneath—and looking something less than human.

'FREEDOM' AND THE DOCK STRIKE

WE wish to protest, in passing, on the lack of consideration shown to "Freedom's" publishing dates shown by the London dockers and the Government. Too late for our issue of July 9th came the news of the invoking of the Emergency Powers Act, and on the very day that our last issue appeared the dockers announced that they were going back to work.

Our production difficulties (because we are poor) force us to have the last material for the paper written five days before publication. In events like strikes, the situation can radically alter within five days, so that our contributors and Editors have always to try to think in advance. That is why "Freedom" often does not deal with topical matters, and why, when it does, it has to deal with broad issues and is sometimes vague and non-committal.

Our headline, therefore, in our last issue ("Support the Dockers!") was already out-of-date when it appeared, and we have been severely criticised by some comrades for not stating our position on the lock-out in the issue before. But what can we do?

There is something that you—as readers and supporters of "Freedom"—can do. Raise "Freedom's" circulation and raise the Press Fund! If we had the means we could be on the right spot at the right time. As things are, we shall continue to give of our best to the movement with the materials at our disposal.

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FOOD: THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SOIL

(Continued from page 1)
Destroying Fertility

But the same process which enabled American land syndicates to disrupt European agriculture also succeeded in destroying the soil of America. Considerations of cheapness made it the practice to plough the virgin soils and sow and reap crop after crop on them. Poorer and poorer yields resulted as the soil was progressively exhausted. But the virgin lands were extensive and the exhausted fields were simply abandoned, the farm syndicates moving on to more virgin land. In this way enormous areas of soil were impoverished.

Now exhausted soil will not even grow the covering of vegetation necessary to hold the soil and keep back the surface waters. The result was that the surface soil was blown away, and the bare rock exposed. A dust-bowl had been created. The social effects of this method of farming are described in such vivid books as the *Grapes of Wrath*, by John Steinbeck.

To destroy soil by wasteful methods is easy, cheap, and quick. To repair the damage is so costly in painstaking labour and the expenditure of vast amounts of capital that it can only be undertaken by a body like the State. But even the State can only undertake the repair of the land in a small way, because the huge capital outlay takes years to show any return of interest. What is important to realize is that the methods of agriculture which destroyed the soil of America (incidentally disorganizing agriculture elsewhere) was dictated by economic considerations of costs and markets, and the

remedy is crippled by the same economic considerations.

Soil erosion is not peculiar to America. It also menaces agriculture in Africa, Europe and the Soviet Union.

"Solutions"

Bearing all this in mind, we can now look at some of the so-called solutions put forward by political organizations. To a detached observer it seems obvious that social life should be grounded in a stable agriculture. Everyone is aware of the deadening effect of the top-heavy urban social structure such as we have in Britain to-day. But how often has one heard self-styled practical men, including Marxist socialists, declare that it is "uneconomic" for Britain to be self-supporting in food, because, they say "it can be so much more cheaply produced abroad". They forget that such cheapness arises from purely capitalist reasons, of a kind that one would have thought would have

little attraction for socialists—cheap rents, cheap labour, and often enough restrictive methods of production. The increased living standards for "backward peoples" which socialists demand would destroy the basis for cheap centres of production.

One must beware such "practical" proposals. It is useless to put forward solutions which envisage the continuance of the capitalist methods of production and distribution, and capitalist modes of thought with their belief in the inevitability of poverty and competition. Goods are only produced under capitalism if there is a prospect of selling them (i.e. a market). This is as true of food as of other commodities, and official marketing organizations express themselves as actually afraid of large crop yields because of the fall in prices on the world market which an "excess" of food produces. Hence the extraordinary spectacle of food being destroyed and subsidies being paid to farmers to restrict production.

From the consumers point of view such a mode of production is fantastic. Those who are most in need—the needy can't buy—are unable to provide the purchasing power which constitutes a market, the necessary capitalist stimulus to production. They only provide a market when they have money and cease to be needy. Hence those who stand most in need of food are unable to buy it, and so are unable to provide the very stimulus required by capitalist economy.

It is, therefore, hardly a fantastic claim of the anarchists that the food problem is insoluble without the destruction of the capitalist mode of economy.

J. H.

ANARCHIST SUMMER SCHOOL

THE Summer School, which has now become a regular annual event, was held this year at Liverpool, and was attended by comrades from all parts of the country. A fuller report of the lectures and discussions will appear in the next issue of *Freedom*. A large crowd attended an open air meeting in the centre of Liverpool on Sunday evening and heard Mat Kavanagh, Frank Leech and Philip Sansom speak.