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# Freedom

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## NOT VERY GRAND OPERA AT BLACKPOOL

# T.U.C. Toe the Line

THIS year's Trade Union Congress was held in the Opera House at Blackpool. And how well the singers knew their parts—and sang according to the score!

There are many great operas that improve with familiarity. The annual show the T.U.C. present, a tragic-comic spectacle, is not of these. It grows stale with repetition, boring in its sameness, while the stiff old actors gyrate like puppets through their uninspired parts.

What can one write about this year's performance? It was precisely what was expected—no "shocks", no "rows"—what arguments there were, were reduced to unreality because each side was merely plugging its own political line, without regard for the well-being or interests—or even opinions—of those they were supposed to represent.

The main function of the Congress was to establish the loyalty of the Trade Union movement to the Labour Government—a loyalty which had never been in question apart from the handful of stooges who give their loyalty to the Russian Government.

We look in vain for any signs that the Trade Union leaders feel any loyalty for the working class—of this country, even, let alone on the international plane, for although Mr. Deakin, boss of the Transport and General Workers, was able to sneer at "Pollitt's Puppets", he has shown himself to be so completely one of Attlee's puppets that it is merely a matter of the pot calling the kettle black. And, indeed, as far as the exchanges between the loyal Labourites and the loyal Stalinists went, the only thing that emerged was the poverty of both their positions.

On a resolution expressing concern at the intensified competition in rearmament, and asking the Government for a renewed initiative for seeking the end of the cold war, for example, it became a mere slanging match in which the supporters of the East and the West protested the peaceful desires of their particular masters and deplored the aggressions of the others.

The resolution had been moved by Bob Edwards of the Chemical Workers, who, when replying at the end, pointed out how each speaker had tried to apportion blame for international tension on one side or the other. "I don't think we make much progress by that," he said—and then proceeded to do just that himself! Edwards, like so many people sincerely appalled at the prospects of another war, found himself most embarrassed by the support of the Communists.

Congress, of course, supported rearmament and all the other preparations for war. In resolution after resolution, the slightest criticism of the policies of

the West—on the rearmament of Germany and Japan, trade with the East, co-operation with the World Federation of Trade Unions—brought forth the wrath of the platform, and a heavy defeat on the card vote.

Now, we do not have to say at this stage that we have no sympathy either with the aims or the tactics of the Stalinists. We know, and have frequently stated in these columns, that all the policies and trickeries of the C.P. and its many joint organisations are subservient to the foreign policy of the Kremlin. But nobody with the interests of the common people at heart can accept the antics of the T.U.C. or of the Labour Party—even in their arguments against the Stalinists.

For the T.U.C. and the Labour Government maintain the necessity of rearmament and all it entails—and in his speech to Congress, Mr. Gaitskell, Chancellor of the Exchequer, outlined just what it entails.

We must practice restraint in wage demands, even though prices continue to rise—and they will rise, prophesied Mr. Gaitskell, all through 1952. We have got to produce and export more and consume and import less. In short, the policy, as expressed by Hermann Goering, of "Guns Before Butter".

That this policy should be accepted—and not only accepted but violently defended—by delegates from the organisations of productive workers, is a measure of the depths to which "socialist" and trade-union thought has sunk. Now even

the "Bevanites", whose criticism of the Government's war policy is mild enough, can be castigated as playing into the Russians' hands and thereby automatically defeated.

The almost hysterical opposition to criticism, the patriotic attitude of "our country right or wrong", the development of totalitarian techniques for control of standards of living—and of thought—these are necessities for a State on a war economy. That the trade unions should so easily accept it all is indeed proof that, as we have so often claimed, the unions are to-day part of the State.

It also proves the futility of "working within the unions". Those sincere unionists who—in ever-decreasing numbers—are still to be found, are finding the steam-roller tactics of the General Council and the discredited association of the Communists, too much for them.

There is only one thing for the workers to do: to write the unions off as a dead loss and to start again from scratch to build industrial organisations to realise, not government policies but workers' interests. The present policies, as accepted by the T.U.C., of rearmament and its attendant sacrifices—amounting to real poverty—are suicidal. The preparation is not to prevent war, but to win it when it comes—and as has been demonstrated so often, "whoever wins a war, the workers always lose."

Instead of Grand Opera, we have been given, at Blackpool, an exhibition by frightened men whistling in the dark. Let the curtain come down on the final act of this comedy of errors; let us, the audience, sweep the stage clear, and begin ourselves to play a part in the shaping of our destinies.

P.S.

## Tito's "Left" Admirers

TITO is right back in the news again. Not because the Cominform have mounted a new attack or from any sensational new turn of events within Yugoslavia—but because the Left have taken him up in a big way. Zilliacus in the *New Statesman* and Jennie Lee in the *Tribune* add their squeaks to the roar of Aneurin Bevan in the *Evening Standard*.

In earlier articles we have contrasted the openly non-moral, purely power political motives of the right, with the more sickly attempts of the left to give a moral gloss to the allies whom they deem expedient to sell to the public. The present advocacy of Bevan and Jennie Lee

and Zilliacus and the lesser supporters of Tito amply bear out our contention. They shed more light on the morality of the left than on the Yugoslav dictator.

### Tito's Personality

The Bevans are at pains to stress Tito's personal quality, his charm, his open-mindedness, his memories of partisan struggles. And also his physical fitness. There is something ludicrous about this sort of thing. One does not judge rulers by whether they are nice men and look healthy and athletic. Stalin's admirers—for example, Bernard Shaw—spoke of his geniality and breadth of outlook. For others he is "the best-dressed man in the Soviet Union". Even Hitler had admirers who stressed similar points, though Goering had more.

Tito's case parallels that of Mussolini's early admirers who incorporated athletic ability and horsemanship among the gifts he brought to the Italian people.

There have undoubtedly been nice men in politics, but the fact is irrelevant. The relationship of ruled to rulers is the basic issue. The tyrants of the Italian renaissance may gain posterity's praise as patrons of the arts, but that did not excuse them in the eyes of those they impoverished or executed.

### "Popular Support"

Nor is personal popularity—that vague term—of much value. It is everyday experience that the state of public excitement and of the sense of prosperity or other fulfilment condition the esteem in which a ruler is held. Churchill's career illustrates the point many times over. People accessible to patriotic emotion no doubt feel warm to Tito because of his struggle with Moscow.

But Mussolini was also popular in just the same way that Churchill was popular and for the same superficial reasons. Yet in the end he was overthrown. In history wicked men have often been popular, good men often hated. Such superficial attitudes are irrelevant—except to publicists of the Left.

## Britain Takes the Next Step in PERSIAN OIL DISPUTE

THE announcement by the Persian Prime Minister, Mr. Mossadig, that a note would be sent to the British Government (via Mr. Harriman in New York) informing them that unless the oil talks are resumed within fifteen days, the British Staff still remaining in Abadan will be expelled, has badly misfired, and the note will probably never be sent. There appears to be a growing opposition in the Persian Parliament to the Government's handling of the oil nationalisation, and the British Government has produced another trick that it had until now carefully kept up its sleeve: economic strangulation. Until there is a settlement of the oil question (1) Persia is deprived of the right to convert its sterling balances into dollars, (2) no country will be allowed to make any payment in sterling to Persia without authority of the British Treasury, (3) the export of essential goods from Gt. Britain to Persia is to be discontinued.

These measures have been taken in order "to limit the harm which has been caused to the United Kingdom economy by the actions of the Persian Government." Mr. Oscar Hobson, City Editor, of the *News Chronicle* describes these measures as leaving it "in no doubt that the Government is determined to use every legal and economic weapon at its disposal to bring Persia to due recognition of the fact that (contrary to widespread belief) even in international dealings honesty is the best policy".

This seems to us an extraordinary interpretation from this normally outspoken economist. For the British Government's action, coupled with the announcement, on the same day, that the World Bank (of which Mr. Hugh Gaitskell is a director) has postponed its investigations of Iranian conditions which might have resulted in a loan "until the situation is clarified",\* shows the extent of the British stranglehold on Persia's economy. It would further explain the reason why the British Government insist on market-

\*Also postponed until the "situation is clarified" is the loan to Persia by the Export-Import Bank of \$25 million, negotiations for which had reached an advanced stage.

ing all the oil produced by the Persian nationalised industry.

Persia's "privilege" to convert sterling balances dates back to 1947 and is contained in a "Memorandum of Understanding" entered into between the Bank of England and the official Persian Bank, the Bank Melli, whereby it was agreed that dollars would be available to buy goods from America *only* where the goods were unobtainable from Great Britain under "equal terms". In 1950 British exports to Persia totalled thirty million pounds. The corresponding figure for American exports has not been published.

We have no illusions that Messrs. Mossadig & Co. are a lot of blue-eyed innocents, but to try and whitewash British policy in Persia and to imply, as does Mr. Hobson, that Great Britain stands for honesty in international dealings is sheer nonsense. By having to wash their dirty linen in public, the Persian and British Governments (with American big business probably chuckling away in a corner just biding its time and watching for where it can drive in a little stars-and-stripes wedge without making it too obvious) have clearly demonstrated the pattern of modern Imperialism. Not the Rhodes and bible-punching missionaries' kind but the fifth column and economic variety, which is more suitable to our times, and cheaper to operate.

LIBERTARIAN.

not like intransigents; they actually prefer those who turn their coats from expediency to the revolutionists who speak the truth at all times, whether "convenient" or not.

### Moral Wash

But we, too, should not fall too far into indignation. It is right to denounce outrages: but it is well to remember that for the mass of people a "kindly" dictator is almost as oppressive. The history of Yugoslavia, after all, is the history of government—the wresting of power and initiative from the hands of those who ought to wield it—every man, woman, and child in the country.

## Important Announcement

WE have sent out this week several hundred subscription renewal reminders to readers, many of whom are accustomed to renewing in December. To avoid confusion we wish to point out that with FREEDOM having been published as a weekly since May we have had to make a corresponding adjustment to subscriptions, and those normally due for renewal at the end of December became due on August 25th.

May we take this opportunity of asking readers who receive a reminder to give it their early attention? With increased postal charges, printing and stationery—not to mention our very limited free time, they will be assisting us by not waiting to receive a further reminder before replying. And should any not wish to receive further copies (which we hope will

not be the case!) a note to that effect will be appreciated. Unlike other journals we do not stop sending our paper as soon as the subscription has expired. But there is a limit even with us, and a few readers have in fact received a reminder marked "FINAL NOTICE". In these cases the present issue is the last one they will receive unless we hear from them in the meantime. (And we repeat that we have never refused to send FREEDOM to any reader who writes to tell us that he wants to read the paper but cannot afford to pay a subscription. But if such readers cannot even write to tell us this, we can only assume that they have either moved from the address to which we send the paper, or are not interested.)

FREEDOM's economic stability—in these days of complete instability in the prices of raw materials and

Continued on p. 4

## REACTION IN JAPAN

### BACKGROUND TO THE PEACE TREATY

(from a correspondent) Tokyo, 5/9/51.

THE 'reactionisation' of Japan is proceeding rapidly since the release of the 'purged' war leaders this summer.

The old leaders of Japan are resuming their activities to rule the country at their will, just as they did before 1945. Five years of occupation did not change anything except the increase of Communists. Cynically speaking, these five years have been a mere vacation for the old leaders who got tired during the war. During the years of occupation they conserved their strength in their villas. Of course, they may not have foreseen their present situation at the time when they were purged by MacArthur. But the changed

international situation has brought unexpected fortune into their hands.

They seek a chance to amend the constitution which was set up by the order of MacArthur, and to rebuild the army, the navy, and even the air force. They intend to prohibit the right of general strike and to abolish all the 'progressive' laws set up under the Allied Forces. (The laws relating to local administration, the redistribution of land, the prohibiting of monopolies, etc.) They may soon succeed, for at present their interests accord with the interests of American imperialism. But perhaps their dream will not come true, for Asia is not the Asia of the old days, even if Japan is becoming once again the Japan of the old days.

MASAMICHI OSAWA.

JACK ISAACS ON LITERATURE AND LIFE IN THE 20th CENTURY

THE AGE OF ANXIETY

We reproduce below extracts from the second of six lectures by Mr. J. Isaacs which were broadcast last year by the B.B.C. under the title *An Assessment of Twentieth-Century Literature*. They have recently been published as a book which is reviewed on this page.

DEATH has forced his attentions on our century with increasing insistence. Freud, in his analysis of the "death-wish", has suggested that mankind is "half in love with easeful Death," and in so far as the "death-wish" is in conflict with the "life-force" it has become a potent ingredient in the anxiety of the age. Worse than death even is death in life. Where the nineteenth century feared that spiritual death which comes from the loss of religious faith, the twentieth century fears that death in life which is the loss of sexual potency. The fundamental anxiety of mankind about the atomic bombs is not the fate of those who are lucky enough to be killed, but the sterilization of those who survive. The most ominous official statement I have ever read is the reassuring advice of the Atomic Energy Commission: "Persons exposed to radiation should refrain from begetting offspring for a period of two to three months." With such material for nightmare, is it surprising that the poet and the novelist should suffer from terror-dreams, and that literature, when it does not report such fears directly, should present them in symbolical or allegorical forms?

THE civilisation which is breaking down is a civilisation of great cities, vast, proliferating cities. And that is why some of the best of modern novels have taken the city as an image of man, in all his richness and variety. It's an ancient image, the image of despair and disintegration in Isaiah and Jeremiah. Proust calls on its ancient associations, when he writes of the Cities of the Plain, Sodom and Gomorrah. As a pervasive symbol it is the city of Dublin in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. In Alfred Döblin's *Alexanderplatz* it is Berlin. In Elias Canetti's great novel *Auto da Fé* it is the city of Vienna, and more than a hundred years ago, in a poem that has suddenly become very modern, Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote that:

*Hell is a city much like London,  
A populous and smoky city.*

The ancient Hebrew prophets, the modern poet and novelist, and the modern sociologist, all agree in this

identification. In Lewis Mumford's fine book *The Culture of Cities*, published here in 1938, there is a terrible and prophetic chapter which he calls *A Brief Outline of Hell*. It deals with the creation of terror and anxiety in the inhabitants of what he calls "Megalopolis", the giant city of Western civilisation, before it becomes "Nekropolis", the ruined city of the dead. He quotes Ruskin on London, and "the appointed destiny of a large average of our population to die like rats in a drain, either by trap or poison." He sees Joyce's Leopold Bloom as a mind "regurgitating the contents of the newspaper and the advertisements, living in a hell of unfulfilled desires, vague wishes, enfeebling anxieties: a dissociated mind in a disintegrated city; perhaps the normal mind of the world metropolis." As an informed sociologist, he calls this the normal mind of the city-dweller, and forestalls the critic who considers the modern novelist morbid and pessimistic and squalid in his insistence on selected parts of the city life. What is the normal life of the city? Is it the elegant salon, the genteel suburb, the factory, the office, the stadium, the university, the evening institute, the museum and art gallery, the music-hall, the greyhound track or the church? Is it the thieves' kitchen, the café, the beer-garden, the milk-bar or the corner house, or is it the lying-in hospital or the lay-out parlour, the brothel, the public lavatory, the prison, or the sewer?

FRANZ KAFKA . . . died in 1924, but he foreshadows the human situation in the 'thirties and the 'forties. *The Castle* appeared in English in 1930 and *The Trial* in 1937. There is something uncannily prophetic in *The Trial*, the black storm-trooper uniforms of the guards, and the last words of the hero as he is shot. "Like a dog," he says, and we find something ominous in the arrest in the first chapter: "without doing anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning," and in the callous, ruthless intrusion of the warders on the privacy of the individual. When Kafka wrote this, it was a huge joke, a preposterous situation, and Mr. Max Brod,

the literary executor who refused to burn the manuscripts, recalls how Kafka's friends were in agonies of laughter at the first reading of this chapter, and how Kafka himself was too overcome with laughter to continue. But in 1933 it was no longer a laughing matter, and Mr. Alex Comfort in his novel *On This Side Nothing* epitomises the age of anxiety in one sentence: "I saw the same fear in her face that I should have felt if a stranger called at night, the world-wide twentieth-century fear which one sees wherever one knocks unexpectedly at any door."

"I LIKE to read detective and mystery stories," says Miss Gertrude Stein. So does everybody. From bishop down to barrow boy, everybody reads thrillers. If the allegory is the escape-form of the Age of Anxiety, the thriller is scapegoat of the Age of Violence, loaded with all its sins. Once again we have "The Tale of Terror" as a popular and universal form. . . . The torture chambers of the Gothic novel, the underground passages and clanking chains, the bandits and secret tribunals are the equivalent of our gangsters and third-degrees, our Gestapos and interrogations, our purges and gas chambers. The Gothic ruins correspond to the ruins of battle and bombing and atomic warfare. In 1794 appeared two books representing the eternal division within the thrillers: Mrs. Anne Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is still a readable book, but as a thriller it now seems as ludicrously childish as perhaps our

own political "raw head and bloody bones" will appear to the grimmer and more accomplished torturers of the future. Its romantic terrors are more like women screaming at mice, though Mr. Graham Greene is not ashamed to use their technique. But William Godwin's book grows in stature with the passing of time. It is a psychological thriller with a political motive—to depict "things as they are", to show how "the spirit and character of the government intrudes itself into every rank of society", and to display "the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man". It appeared at the moment when Pitt's Gestapo arrested the members of the London Corresponding Society and imprisoned them in the Tower on a charge of treason. "Terror was the order of the day," Godwin said, and he was just as apprehensive of arrest as Wordsworth was later. *Caleb Williams* showed terror exercised by an individual in the spirit of the Government, not yet terror organised by the State. Mrs. Shelley dedicated her *Frankenstein* to him, and received his condemnation, which is the condemnation of the commercial thriller of to-day, and of that abomination "the story of pure deception". "Your personages are mere abstractions," he wrote to her, "the lines and points of a mathematical diagram, and not men and women. If A crosses B, and C falls upon D, who can weep for that?"

NOWADAYS, the tale of terror has proliferated in every direction. There is the political tale of terror,

Gerald Heard's fantasies, Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, and George Orwell's *1984*. There is the religious tale of terror in Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* and *The Power and the Glory*, the scientific thriller in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and *Ape and Essence*, the ethical, the existentialist, the philosophical, the plain detective thriller, and the "tough" novel, and towering above them all in popularity, the sexual tale of terror, *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*. The pressure of civilisation and the mechanism of publicity have dulled our responses so that we need greater and greater stimulus, we call "for madder music and for stronger wine". The art of public relations has dulled the sense of private relations, and exaggerated words may be used for exaggerated deeds. The Commissioner of Police announced recently that "Murder, wounding and sexual offences keep up at a disquieting rate," and for the rest of the world England is still the country of Jack the Ripper. The tale of terror is simultaneously the sadistic tale, and has the same divisions, political, scientific, sexual sadism, sadism as a fine art, and some disturbed people have even detected religious sadism in *The Cocktail Party*. The Gothic novel lured the reader with its beckoning titles promising only excitement and suspense. The title of the modern tale of terror is like a tout catering for jaded and impotent tastes. I know of nothing more symptomatic than the title of a book I have not read: *Kiss the Blood Off My Hands*.

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SIX LECTURES ON 20th CENTURY LITERATURE

AN ASSESSMENT OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERATURE by J. Isaacs. (Secker & Warburg, 8/6)

OF the thousands who listened to Mr. Isaacs' six broadcast lectures on 20th-century literature last year, there must have been many who wanted a permanent record in order to make a

note of, and read for themselves some of the books he mentioned and compare their opinion with his, and many who wondered whether the lectures were as good on paper as they seemed in the persuasive and sonorous voice of their author.

They will not be disappointed in this volume. Mr. Isaacs is a university lecturer on "English Literature", but there is on trace of the classroom about these talks which breathe the enthusiasm of someone who knows and loves what he is discussing. For this reason it is foolish to complain about the writers he doesn't mention or the aspects of literature which he does not discuss. He is addressing not students of writing, but readers and potential readers of books.

"What is so remarkable about the twentieth century," says Mr. Isaacs in his opening lecture, "and what marks it off from previous centuries, is the intense awareness it has of its own process, and its innumerable attempts to describe what is happening, while it is happening," and he shows how the "new psychoanalysis has altered the writer's task, his method, and his product. The theme of the second lecture can be gauged from the extracts quoted on this page. Among the drawings of Albert Dürer, Mr. Isaacs tells us, is a self-portrait in the nude which he sent to his doctor, with an inscription on it: "There, where my finger is pointing, the spot coloured yellow, that's where it hurts." "It seems," Mr. Isaacs declares, "as though all the sensitive writers of to-day are displaying themselves in the nude, saying urgently, on behalf of humanity, as great writers have always done, 'That's where it hurts.'"

The third lecture, discussing the way in which the novel has become in this century the dominant form of literature, illustrates the development of the impressionistic technique of the "stream of consciousness". Having examined the texture of the modern novel, the author turns in the following lecture to its structure, ". . . the shapes of novels, why they have those shapes: how and why the philosophical and other problems of the age have forced those shapes upon them, and how, in turn, the novel helps in confronting and exploring the problems of human destiny."

The fifth lecture traces in interesting detail the rebirth of poetic drama, in the two spheres, the religious and the political, in which most of the verse plays of the last two decades have been written. The final lecture is a panoramic survey which concludes by lamenting the present shortage of critical magazines and periodicals to keep the writer and the reader in touch with each other, to encourage new writers and rescue them from isolation, "to blow away the false and to maintain standards," and, not so much to sell books, but to make them worth buying.

Mr. Isaacs pleads above all for continual experimental writing. "There must be no hardening of the arteries, no following of the safe line . . . without experiment the age is dead." This is a stimulating book, and whether you are an avid reader anxious to compare notes with a perceptive critic, or a puzzled wanderer in the world of books, anxious to discover what contemporary writers are after, what makes them tick, you will find it rewarding and enlightening.

The Liberation of Sexual Aspirations

IN the preceding articles, an attempt has been made to describe the life of a primitive people who, in contrast to our society, adopt a natural and sex-affirmative attitude towards their children from infancy to adult life. Necessarily such a presentation has been sketchy, but those who would like to fill in the details are referred to Malinowski's book, *The Sexual Life of Savages* (Routledge, 1929).

The sex-negative attitude is so widespread that it is necessary to stress the significance of Malinowski's study. It shows that free development and satisfaction of sexual needs from the earliest years of life reveals no inherent biological complications. The starting point for this series of articles was the existence of child murder and the pathological response of our society to them. The following brief summary of Malinowski's findings (by Wilhelm Reich: *The Function of the Orgasm*, 1942, p. 201) indicates their relevancy to contemporary social problems.

"Children in the Trobriand Islands know no sex repression and no sexual secrecy. Their sex life is allowed to

develop naturally, freely and unhampered through every stage of life, with full satisfaction. The children engage freely in the sexual activities which correspond to their age. Nonetheless, or rather, just for this reason, the society of the Trobrianders knew, in the third decade of our century, no sexual perversions, no functional psychosis, no sex murder: they have no word for theft; homosexuality, and masturbation, to them, mean nothing but an unnatural and imperfect means of sexual gratification, a sign of a disturbed capacity to reach normal satisfaction. To the children of the Trobrianders, the strict, obsessional training for excremental control which undermines the civilisation of the white race, is unknown. The Trobrianders, therefore are spontaneously clean, orderly, social without compulsion, intelligent and industrious. The socially accepted form of sexual life is spontaneous monogamy without compulsion, a relationship which can be dissolved without difficulties; thus there is no promiscuity."

Authoritarian Basis of Social Neurosis

The same writer then goes on to stress a point of great social importance. "At the time when Malinowski made his studies of the Trobriand Islanders, there was living a few miles away, on the Amphlett Islands, a tribe of patriarchal authoritarian family organisation. The people inhabiting these islands were already showing all the traits of the European neurotic, such as distrust, anxiety, neuroses, perversion, suicide, etc. . . ." the difference just mentioned, between the matriarchal, free organisation of the Trobriand Islanders and the patriarchal, authoritarian one on the Amphlett Islands, has more weight from a mental hygiene point of view than the most intricate and seemingly exact graphs of our academic world. This difference signifies: *The determining factor of the mental health of a population is the condition of its natural love life.*

If we are honest it is impossible to escape the conclusion from Malinowski's work on the one hand and the misery and sexual abnormalities of our own society on the other. It is easy, no doubt, to point out that the society of the Trobrianders is a simple one based on agriculture and fishing, whereas ours is a highly complex economy. And there are those (for example, Freud, in his later years, and J. D. Unwin) who contended that the repression of sexuality was necessary for culture to develop. These arguments cannot here be explored further—except perhaps to point out that if the development of civilisation be taken to include the development of modern weapons and the

manifestation of child murder, then it is time to wonder whether "civilisation" is a reward worth the repression of natural sexual impulses.

Actually, however, such objections do not in fact brush away the importance of Malinowski's study. Nor do they side-step the conclusions regarding sexual misery which a direct study of our own society compels. The simple fact is that every natural feeling urges that our society radically alter its attitudes to sex in general and to the sexual needs and activities of children and adolescents in particular. There can be no real doubt that the capacity for love and the capacity for fullness in life and work go hand in hand. (The credit for the full working out of this relationship goes to Wilhelm Reich, and the reader who wishes to pursue further studies is referred to his work, especially *The Function of the Orgasm* and *The Sexual Revolution*.) From a revolutionary and social point of view the recognition of these facts is of the greatest possible importance.

A Social Objective

It was suggested in an earlier article that the ability, which we now possess, to understand something of the mechanism whereby the sex-negative attitude of society leads to the development of individual unhappiness; the brutal suppression of natural impulses in children and the consequent destruction of natural family affection; the mass misery and apathy; the general incapacity for creative activity and productive work—ability to comprehend these processes enables us to see the ways to combat problems of our time which before seemed overwhelming and unapproachable.

The problem itself—that of replacing a socially sex-negative attitude by sex-affirmation is, of course, enormous. But the social work of tackling it is not impossible. It requires work in all activities regarding the upbringing of children, in establishing facilities for contraception and the removal of other barriers to sexual fulfilment. And, not least, it requires that continuous pressure by individuals which gradually alters the outlook of society in general.

An enormous task, undoubtedly. But whereas authoritarian concepts demand all the time that men and women should disregard and suppress natural desires and aspirations, the task we envisage is in line with natural desires, natural strivings. Whereas a structure founded on the continuous denial of human function—as our society is—must forever be unstable, the establishment of a social environment for free development has the consent and the whole-hearted, undivided, energy of human functioning.

J.H.

COMMENT

CONFIDENCE TRICK

LEAVING the radio switched on after one of those engaging little Sunday morning musical programmes, I found myself being introduced to a Reverend Aloysius Something-or-other, and was about to switch off, when I heard what seemed to me to be a strange line being put across.

The reverend gentleman was referring to the strength to be gained by a close association with Jesus Christ, and of the self-confidence that was engendered through the partnership. He went on to attack those who always greeted you by commenting on how poorly you were looking and said that he supposed it made them feel better if somebody else felt bad.

Now this is simple enough psychology, but what rather intrigued me was the double-think inherent in what he was saying. For surely the righteous get a great kick out of telling others what miserable sinners they are? The whole basis of much preaching is that we are all lost souls—and although the preacher always joins in that chant about "We have all done what we should not have done, and not done what we should have done," it is tacitly understood that he, the man of God, is blameless in this respect. Not that he would admit it, but I'll bet he thinks it!

Well, what is this but telling others they are not so good, in order to make

yourself feel better? What is the point of a parson's preaching if he does not believe that the congregation is bad and he is good? If the congregation is already virtuous there is no point in telling them to stop sinning, and if he is no better than they, it is damned cheek to be preaching anyway!

The self-confidence point was an interesting one too, for surely the religious attitude demands humility in your relationship with God. And humility does not exactly engender self-confidence in the face of somebody who is almighty unless—and here is the appeal to expediency—unless he is on your side. But the Lord God is a jealous God, and will not accept any terms of co-partnership or any of that equality nonsense—if you join forces with him (sorry, Him), it has to be understood that he is the boss and you do as you are told. Not only that, but you worship him for telling you.

This can hardly be said to make for confidence, which surely means confidence in yourself, not in Jehovah, the Pope, Stalin, Frankie Sinatra, King George, the Holy Ghost or any other religious leader.

This is where the Anarchists are on much safer ground when they preach about self-confidence. They really mean "no leaders", neither secular nor divine—confidence in yourself.

P.

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## INSECURITY AND THE CRUMBLING OF SOCIETY

THE quotations from Mr. Isaacs' book, printed on the opposite page, epitomize a number of significant aspects of our society which have received some consideration in the pages of FREEDOM in recent months. By a significant coincidence his title, *The Age of Anxiety*, is the same as the concluding words of last week's editorial. There can be no gainsaying the fact that more and more people are coming consciously to realise the insistence in contemporary life of the sense of insecurity.

Fifty years ago, the socialist movement concerned itself almost exclusively—William Morris and some of the anarchists were far-seeing exceptions—with the material, the economic ills of society, or, more exactly, of the working-class. Mr. Isaacs shows that even a slight amelioration of poverty serves to uncover the even more far-reaching sense of insecurity, and that this sense extends beyond the economically depressed class into all sectors of society. His study further shows that anxiety has no rational boundaries: it underlies the literature of all countries in the twentieth-century: it is international.

Fifty years ago everyone could denounce poverty. But in the contemporary literature of sadism and terror there is an ominous element of *fascination*. We no longer see a simple struggle between potential plenty and material want: instead we have the spectacle of a world half in love with the fascination of terror. It seems that here we touch the fringe of the great problem of why men put up with a world of misery, the paralysing apathy of our time.

The age of anxiety as an objective concept gives some insight into several direct problems. Why is life to-day somehow obstructed in achievement? Not the specialised achievements along particular lines which are stressed in panegyrics on progress, but the general sense of achievement of something worth-while, the sense of satisfaction, of fulfilment in life. We long for *enrichment of life*: in what ways can we work to secure it?

Anarchism has long insisted on the general proposition that *freedom is the necessary pre-requisite for responsibility*. We may now see some of the more specific aspects of this question.

Mr. Isaacs quotes Lewis Mumford on the disintegrating effect of large cities. The aim for the future must clearly be for more simplicity: smaller social units; less specialisation in work; less, not more, division of labour.

In education one can sense the same underlying struggle against anxiety. The anarchist, Francesco Ferrer fought against the religious control of education to free children's minds from the anxiety inseparable from the religious standpoint. To-day, Herbert Read urges the unfolding of children's capacities and an aesthetic, life-embracing replacement of moral exhortation. On the same general line, A. S. Neill aims to achieve a natural emotional development with emotional security and the consequent ability to achieve adult responsibility as its goal. Then there was the Peckham Experiment.

Mr. Isaacs refers to Freud's antithesis of the life-force (*eros*) and the death-wish (*thanatos*), but his earlier formulation of an antithesis between the life-force (sexuality) and anxiety is even more forceful in our age where sexual fulfilment is consistently blocked. Here the work of Reich seems fully to com-

prehend the contemporary scene where the more cerebral Bertrand Russell only scratches the surface.

Literature perhaps is not everything. We cannot forget the material frustrations summed-up in the word 'poverty'. And we do not therefore in any way relax our struggle against capitalist economy on the one hand and the social institution of government, on the other. But that literature reflects more than the ideology of the ruling-class cannot now be doubted. Kafka and Proust and Joyce reflect the crumbling of our age, and it is perhaps significant that Mr. Isaacs goes back to Godwin in considering the causes.

Many years before the French Revolution, Voltaire and Rousseau and the Encyclopaedists demonstrated a similar interior crumbling, and we may be reaching the end of a process of which the typical writers of the age of anxiety were the prophets. The specific problems which FREEDOM tries to ventilate may be the foundation-stones for the new society.

# The Peasant and the State in Eastern Europe—I

(By an East European correspondent)

TO the average town-dweller in Western Europe, the East European peasant was for many years a person who, accompanied by a large family all in picturesque folk-dress, walked to church on Sundays and who at elections always voted for the most reactionary party. The Marxists went even further until 1917; they considered the peasants to be so backward and so full of petty bourgeois ideas as to be almost lost to socialism which, according to them, only a class-conscious proletariat could bring about. This ignorance of the peasantry was also fostered by the daily press which to-day, for example, devotes far more space to the fate of a Catholic bishop or of a Communist minister purged by Moscow than to the plight of millions of peasants.

The area between the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black Sea has been divided in the past 150 years mainly between the Austrian, Turkish and Russian Empires. Its population speaking different languages and enjoying a low standard of living was composed chiefly of peasants who tilled the land owned mostly by nobles and the Catholic Church and in wartime provided the

necessary cannon-fodder for their respective rulers. As the decades passed, the bureaucratization of these three empires progressed and it was the toil of the peasants which in the absence of a numerous working-class, financed the growth of the State apparatus.

The result was that peasant rebellions broke out periodically and were only suppressed by powerful punitive expeditions as in the case of the Pugachev insurrection in Russia. In South-East Europe, the Serb peasants were the first Balkan people to drive out the Turkish oppressors (1804-13), although unlike the Rumanians they lacked a local aristocracy and unlike the Greeks did not possess a native bourgeoisie to "lead" them. What positive work the peasants together with artisans could do even then was clearly shown during the Reformation when in the area known to-day as Czecho-Slovakia they established a number of libertarian communities based on mutual aid which flourished until destroyed by the Habsburgs.

The end of the First World War saw the destruction of these three empires and their replacement by States based on the principle of nationality while at the same time the land reform everywhere

turned millions of peasants into proprietors. The extent of this reform varied from country to country. In Poland and Hungary, thousands of acres remained in the hands of the nobility and of the Catholic Church; in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, nearly 90 per cent. of peasant households owned their own land by the "thirties". This measure was passed partly because many of the nobles were opponents of the new national States and partly due to the fear of the Bolsheviks who in their struggle for power found it to their advantage to adopt in 1917 and the next few years the slogan "Land to the peasants", first used by the Anarchists and Social Revolutionaries during the 1905 revolution against the Tzar. By such promises the Communists were able to win the support of many Russian peasants only to deceive them later by dragging millions into collective farms run by party bureaucrats.

The nineteen-twenties also saw all over Europe the rapid growth of consumers' co-operatives and the formation of agrarian parties, both of which won a great deal of support in many of the States. The former by ameliorating their standard of living and thereby proving the value of combination for certain specific purposes, the latter by claiming for the peasants the right to govern all these countries since they were the most numerous class of society and the producers of foodstuffs without which the urban population could not exist for long. Although these parties contained a number of idealists who lived in the villages and worked sincerely for the good of the people, their leadership contained everywhere numerous careerists and demagogues who used their talents, their peasant origin and the agrarian movement to further their own interests just as in Western Europe the labour movement was a fertile ground for budding politicians like Mussolini and Laval as well as for those who remained in the orthodox Socialist parties.

Governments were entered after spending a few months in prison, political pacts were made with both reactionaries and the underground Communist parties, elections were fought and boycotted, fiery resolutions passed, but since the peasant parties were seldom in power they managed to conserve much support in the countryside. Nevertheless, their popularity was successfully challenged by the clerical parties in Slovenia and Slovakia while in some parts of Rumania the Fascist and anti-semitic Iron Guard won in the "thirties" considerable popularity among peasants who were in debt to the local Jewish merchants and moneylenders.

There was little else the peasant could do. His work kept him busy for many hours except in winter. The growth of the town population in the interwar period and the demands from Western Europe as well as competition from overseas often forced him to change from arable to mixed farming and to grow industrial crops. All this took time and engrossed his attention.

The drift to the towns, too, had an important influence on the villagers. Many young peasants driven by the lack of sufficient land in the neighbourhood or attracted by the prospects of an easier life in urban districts, went there. In most cases they were easily absorbed as navvies, semi-skilled workers, apprentices, policemen and NCO's in the armed forces. Some, through sheer perseverance, luck or cunning, managed to reach a higher position in society by becoming shopkeepers, merchants, etc.

Yet they were not the only ones who settled in the towns. The absence of public schools as in England and the fact that secondary and university education was usually very cheap or free for the poor in Eastern Europe, allowed a large number of sons of peasants to study. Unfortunately, law always attracted many more than agronomy and the result was that their knowledge was seldom put to the true benefit of those who toiled so hard to pay for their maintenance while they studied. Afterwards they would become lawyers and officials since their incomes and jobs did not always correspond to what they considered their talents and the value of their work, many joined the totalitarian movements of the period. Others would supplement their earnings by acting for their clients and families in the villages and thereby divert into peaceful channels any action arising out of discontent.

(In the next article we shall deal with the East European peasants under Hitler and Stalin.)

## EXTREME MEASURES

(1)  
The United States Navy is conscripting a number of chaplains because not enough have volunteered.  
—Daily Herald, 22/8/51.

(2)  
And should instructor or embryo field-marshal find themselves too much for one another there is a succinct section in the new Army Drill annual on "Funeral Exercises with the Pistol..."  
—News Chronicle, 23/8/51.

## Nazis & Anarchists in Germany Today

(Continued from our issue of 1/9/51)

A FORMER inmate of Buchenwald gave a lift to two Persian students and myself along a stretch of Autobahn. He told us how those who were in Buchenwald at its liberation still know each other and hold an annual gathering. He also said, "Many Nazis over again."

During the Democratic war against Nazism, it was, as the anarchists pointed out at the time, not the Nazis but the German workers who suffered. The factory areas where the workers lived were bombed flat and the ruins machine-gunned; the middle-class suburbs where the Nazis lived were ignored by air attackers. Rations went down to a pound of bread a day, and after invasion to a pound of bread a week and then nothing; the Nazis were able to buy lorry-loads of food on the black market.

Since the war, living space in the bombed towns has been rationed to seven square metres per person, not including houses requisitioned by the occupying armies; the Nazis' houses, from which the occupying armies have now removed and into which the former inhabitants have naturally returned, are still officially requisitioned and un-rationed. And now, "Many Nazis over again."

Over fifty members of the National Socialist Workers' Party, it appears, are now members of the Federal Parliament in Bonn, mostly of the government party, and many high officials are also ex-Nazis. But there is no evidence that they are less democratic politicians or less efficient officials than the rest, and I fail to understand why the ex-Buchenwalder was grumbling, unless he had thought Democracy and Nazism to be fundamentally different.

Nobody I met volunteered information about the Socialist Reich Party, the re-viving Nazi Party which has interested the British press lately; but one German told me about it in answer to a question. Remer, the figurehead of the Party, was the Colonel commanding Hitler's body-guard, until he uncovered a conspiracy of generals to assassinate Hitler, and was made a full General as a reward. "They have 16 per cent. of the seats in the Lower Saxony Parliament," said my informant, "and the reason for their success is that the Adenauer régime is every bit as reactionary as Remer himself."

The effective ruler in Western Germany is said to be Cardinal Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, who is consulted at every major move by members of the Christian Democrat Government. "And when there is nothing else," said the Archbishop once, "we will defend God's Law with weapons."

Embarrassing allies for Cardinal Frings in advocating weapons to defend

### "THIS LAND IS OURS"

POLICE and citizen deputies are tonight guarding a Red Indian camp in South-Eastern Utah, where disturbances broke out after a three-day "squaw dance".

Two policemen had tried to arrest a man for selling wine to the Navajos, but they were surrounded and hustled out of camp.

An interpreter said afterwards that during the "squaw dance" the Indians kept repeating: "This land is ours and it is time we take it back, by force if necessary."

For many years Indians and whites have been in dispute over grazing lands.  
News Chronicle, 8/9/51.

"God's Law" (though they themselves would not doubt put another name to it) are anarchists! At least, they described themselves shortly after the last war as "the only Anarchist organisation in Germany," but I understand they have now dropped the name "anarchist". Their argument is that since revolutionaries may exist openly in the West and not in the East, the next stage in the revolution must be a victory of the Western over the Eastern Governments! They have a beautifully produced little magazine, *Die Freie Gesellschaft*, which appears to be thriving.

The anti-militarist German anarchist movement (which I, of course, looked at much more closely) does not seem so healthy. Except perhaps in Hamburg, the comrades were all anarchists well before 1933, and have a habit of recalling the mass revolutionary movements in Germany of the nineteen-twenties and comparing them with the general apathy

in Germany to-day. This has resulted in disillusion and disappointment (a meeting of fifty in an industrial town, which would have been considered good in England, so disappointed its organisers that they held no more meetings), and now only a handful of German comrades continue to work for the revolution.

Our comrade W.F. continues to write for anarchist newspapers all over the world, and a small duplicated newspaper, *Befreiung*, is published by a tiny group still existing in Mülheim. The *Befreiung* group also organises the collection of funds to be sent in the form of food parcels to the anarchists imprisoned in the Russian Zone (see FREEDOM, 11/8/51). Obviously, the relief organisation is not limited to Mülheim, and equally obviously it would not be wise to print an account of its workings; but I have seen receipts for food parcels.

In Hamburg there is a youth club, the *Jugendföderation* (Federation of Youth) founded by anarchists. It has about 200 members, divided according to age into four groups, called Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, from the days of the week on which they meet. I was in Hamburg during the holiday period when meetings were suspended, but a meeting of the oldest group, Thursday, was called especially to meet me and ask questions about England.

These young people, numbering about forty, called and ran the meeting themselves, without any "guidance" or other interference from adult "chairmen" and what-have-you, such as one expects to find in most youth clubs. For an hour they asked me about evening schools, conditions of employment for apprentices, youth organisations, motor-cycles, and jazz. Then we danced to their own band, who made up in vigour and volume what they lacked in skill and tunefulness. Our chief object, the whole evening, was to enjoy ourselves; and we succeeded.

This free youth club is, like a free school, a worthwhile venture in itself, whether it makes a good vehicle for anarchist propaganda or not. (It is in fact the direct descendant of the pioneer free schools, the *Gemeinschaftsschule*. But some few of its members do lean to anarchist views, and here in Hamburg, I feel, is the possible beginning of a new, vigorous, German movement.

D.R.

### PARADISE LOST

UNDER the headline "Making A Hell Out of Paradise", we referred recently to the transfer of the Cocos Islands in the Indian Ocean—the "Paradise Islands", where there are no police, prisons or taxes—to Australia for development as an air base.

The Governor of Singapore stated on 27th August that efforts were being made to charter a special ship for 833 of the 1,170 inhabitants who wish to emigrate to North Borneo.

He said that he was fully satisfied that the islanders realised that they could make their own choice as to whether they emigrated or stayed. The islanders were reported to want to emigrate because they considered the islands overpopulated. He pointed out, however, that there was no surplus manpower.

The acting Australian Commissioner for Singapore and Malaya, who accompanied him on a tour of the islands said that some of the islanders were looking forward to increased contact with the outside world as a result of the development of the aerodrome.

The majority, however, have evidently made their feelings clear.

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# Road Transport: The Spoilt Princess

IN a previous group of articles in this series, I dealt with Housing as the Cinderella of our civilisation. To pursue the allegory, Transport is the spoilt princess. Houses that were none too good to live in a hundred years ago are still in use, but the people living in them may travel about by the latest means known to modern science. I once spent a night in a Yorkshire house—to get into the kitchen-cum-living-room you had to come in by the front door, right through the bedroom used by the son of the house and his wife. If you were a little late and they were in bed you can imagine how it was. The night before he had probably spent in Karachi or Mexico City, as he was the pilot of a long-distance plane, the last word in speed and design. . . . I gather, too, that many firms will fit a radio into the cars they sell free of charge, but how many landlords will even repair the cistern until you stop the rent and bring the "sanitary man" into the argument?

The invention of the automobile coincided with a big upward swing in capitalism, and the use of motor-driven vehicles was promoted by a vast number of firms in the great industrial boom that is typified in the rise of people like Ford, Morris, etc. No effort has been spared to push the latest and best models, but while the motor industry has expanded and every means of transport democratised and technically improved beyond measure, the road system has suffered the same neglect as the housing situation. They have not been neglected to the same extent for, of course, the needs of military traffic always come first and foremost in the present system of things, but basically the roads of this country have not changed a great deal from the days when Dick Turpin rode to York.

Indeed, I might go farther and point out that in order to take an article like this to the most advanced paper of the twentieth century, I must drive along a road fashioned by the Romans in their march for the river to Ware! (Even at that the road is a little better than some of the narrow winding streets, still cobbled, which may have been quite useful when a coach-and-pair drove along every four hours or so but are now chock-a-block with buses, cars and mini-motor cycles.)

Is there any need to wonder at the traffic chaos of to-day? The motor industry has expanded by virtue of the profit system and not according to whether the means were available to utilise it safely. The remedy, of course, is simple enough: most of our houses need to come down and our roads to be rebuilt, and what better than to do both

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Continued from p. 1

production costs—depends mainly on our subscription list, and from the response to the present batch of subscription reminders which we have sent out, we shall have a good idea of our chances of continuing as a weekly. Therefore, reader, though you may not agree with our point of view, yet you may think FREEDOM is doing a worthwhile job, and you can express this opinion by renewing your subscription promptly.

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at once? Is it so difficult? In fact, far greater achievements have been done during the war when military necessity required it of the authorities. In the name of imperial aggrandisement and military requirements they have transformed barren rocks into flourishing town (Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Aden). Why cannot such a transformation take place at home? The fact is that the authorities have got into the state of mind where—as I said regarding Housing—they feel the roads "must see our civilisation out". It is obvious that the war crisis has no real bearing on the issue—if it is impossible to tackle such problems before the atomic destruction, is there much hope it will be tackled after? The truth is that we cannot afford both wars and civilisation, and sooner or later one or the other will go. In the meantime it is the obvious necessities of the latter that are going down the drain steadily, and as there is less interest in maintaining the obvious necessities than the profitable products, things like housing and roads go by the board first of all.

Death on the roads is often compared with war casualties in its scope and extent, and I sometimes wonder whether this is not a slightly subtle method of toning down the horrors of war. In point of fact, who can say that the road casualties are not really casualties of war, or at any rate, war preparations? There must be commercial traffic, there is bound to be a certain amount of private traffic even with such schemes for its limitation as petrol rationing, so dear to the Whitehall bureaucrat (and which the conditioned British public immediately think of as soon as there is a crisis in Persia, although the rest of Europe has neither concessions in Persia nor petrol rationing). With this traffic on roads built for horse carriage ways there are bound to be casualties, since politicians prefer to play at toy soldiers than to carry out properly the functions of society which Government has usurped.

I seem to remember an old objection to anarchism was the sort of chaos resultant on the roads if everyone could get hold of a car and drive it whenever he liked. Capitalism, rightly and properly, it was maintained, limited the use of a car to those who could afford it, and if in a free society you could get hold of a car whenever you felt like it, what would be the state of the roads? The objection has disappeared recently, now that it can be so easily answered. In those days there was no real yardstick to go by—but now we have seen it is possible in fact for everybody to drive a car provided the lay-out of the roads is altered a little. It is not necessary to go to a free society to find the proof, for in any country where a spot of healthy neutrality, or less readiness to rush into the making of history, has caused a little more prosperity than we in our virtue enjoy, such a position has almost been reached not by free distri-

bution but by the hire purchase system, for transport as the spoilt princess demands complete financial enslavement. People here are surprised to see films depicting workers in the United States—who produce so much wealth—going to work by car. It is really much more odd to go to Oxford and see streams and streams of workers on bicycles pouring out along the Cowley Road after making Morris cars all day.

We know to-day that the free availability of vehicles in a libertarian society is far from being an impossibility, that the real traffic chaos exists here and now and should capitalism continue, even withstanding the military destruction it brings on itself, such chaos can only become worse.

Of course, the reconstruction of the towns is not enough, and one must grant that there will be road accidents while there is traffic in its present form. It might be that in some autonomous sections of a free society an altogether simpler form of life would do without motor transport altogether. This is probably not likely to be the case everywhere, and here we must face the question of road accidents.

We certainly know from our present experience that the State cannot prevent them. The passing of laws is not in reality a preventative, for if it were there would be perfect harmony everywhere. We have laws enough, but the extent to which they are obeyed is another matter, and the solution—as can be plainly seen to-day does not lie with increasing or strengthening the police but plainly and simply with greater care and consideration. But how can this be achieved? The authorities seem to think

it will be done by large posters distracting our attention from the road, urging us to pay more heed to where we are going. Perhaps they do some good—who can tell?—and it may be that some motorists who read that Waltham Cross "likes its children living" sets out deliberately not to kill any of its children, an undoubtedly praiseworthy conversion, although one may doubt if such special pleading is really necessary in most cases.

The truth of the matter is that capitalism in its wisdom limiting the use of a car to those who can afford it, places a premium on lack of courtesy and consideration. Not only are we all engaged in a mad competitive rush which insidiously stamps its character on its participants, but refusal to give way, determination to get ahead, the spirit of devil-take-the-hindmost and f\*\*\*-you-Jack-I'm-alright, while being the worst attitude a motorist can have, is also one of the few means by which he can get a car in the first place! You can, it is true, get it in other ways, you might work hard enough, you might save hard enough, you might have a stroke of luck, you might get something like a war gratuity. . . . but if you have got the above virtues of free enterprise there is no "might" about it, you will ride by car and it will be the fastest, the biggest, the worst sort of thing you could be entrusted with.

The atmosphere of a free society would bring a different spirit. There can be no doubt about it, and indeed even a lessening of commercialism and industrialism would bring about a corresponding degree of friendliness and co-operation everywhere, which naturally finds its expression on the roads, too.

I have found since riding a motorcycle an amount of mutual aid amongst the motor-cycling fraternity (for all the hard things that are said about them) that is amazingly encouraging to anyone who has been stating the anarchist case for years and sometimes getting the feeling, as we all do at times, that the seed is falling on stony ground. The people who straight-away stop to give a hand when it seems to be needed may not have heard of anarchism (before!) but they are usually ready for freedom, they have grown out of political tutelage and their mutual aid and co-operation shows it. The type of spontaneous association exists to an even greater degree amongst pedal cyclists, whose opposition to regimentation is something of great worth against the governmentalisation of the present world.

There can be no effective revolutionary substitute for industrial action to achieve workers' control but this is one part of the components of a free society, which also demands decentralisation if it is to achieve liberation from the State (which cannot co-exist with workers' control). Tendencies to decentralisation, therefore, are tendencies towards the transitional period towards the free society. I do not really think that all those youngsters who will be streaming out to the country this week-end on their bicycles are so far removed from the achievement of a Stateless society as most of them probably think they are.

A.M.

## PRESS FREEDOM IN U.S.

THE U.S. attorney-general J. Howard McGrath expressed opposition to any form of censorship of American newspapers in the present emergency, reports *World Press News*.

Secretary of Commerce Charles Sawyer said that in the current situation it seemed desirable to exercise some restraint on "our normal tendency as Americans to tell everything we know."

For this purpose he suggested a voluntary security code among publishers to prevent vital defence information from reaching "our potential enemies."

In a statement on Administration policy, the attorney-general said there would be no implied, no disguised, no direct and no indirect censorship of the American Press.

We wonder how he squares this with the banning from the mails of the radical pacifist paper *Alternative*, reported recently in *Freedom*. Is this not "indirect censorship"?

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

OPEN-AIR MEETINGS at HYDE PARK  
Every Sunday at 3.30 p.m.  
INDOOR MEETINGS  
Recommend:  
SUNDAY, 23rd SEPTEMBER  
NOTE: New Meeting Place:  
BIRD IN HAND,  
Long Acre, W.C.  
(2 mins. Leicester Sq. Underground Station)

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.  
Admission Free—Free Discussion  
SEPT. 23—Mat Kavanagh on  
THE PRINCIPLES OF ANARCHISM  
SEPT. 30—Tony Gibson on  
WORK IN A FREE SOCIETY

### NORTH-EAST LONDON DISCUSSION MEETINGS IN EAST HAM at 7.30

SEPT. 19—Edgar Priddy  
THE ABC OF ANARCHISM  
Enquiries c/o *Freedom Press*

### SOUTH LONDON

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

### GLASGOW

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

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## Letter to the Editor Anarchism & Pacifism

AS Philip Sansom rightly says in his answer to R. Wheeler in the last issue of *FREEDOM*, the argument of violence versus non-violence as a means of revolution could go on for ever—nevertheless, aware of such a possibility, I would like to make a few comments upon the matter.

It seems to me that Sansom confuses pacifists with what Ethel Mannin once aptly termed "pathifists". There is a great difference between a revolutionary pacifist such as Bart de Ligt and the "I support world government and police forces" type of pacifist that preponderates in this country. The revolutionary pacifist accepts all the means of revolution advocated by his "violet" comrades—strikes, sabotage, go-slow, civil disobedience, etc.—except the use of violence as a means of defence. In fact, his attitude is similar to that of the

Christian who—as the old free-thought argument runs, denies 999 gods out of a thousand, but gets all hot and bothered because the atheist denies the odd one.

Surely there can be no question of imposing anarchy? The very definition of the word itself specifically repudiates all forms of man-made impositions. But there is a fundamental difference between subjecting people to one's will and refusing to be subjected oneself. A pacifist—as an absolute resister of violence—is logically bound to refuse his support to a government which pursues a policy or way (if he is an anarchist also, he, of course, refuses his support to any government) since he considers such a subjecting of his will to those of the people who comprise the government as wrong.

This refusal of co-operation on the part of the pacifist would hardly be considered by him as an act of imposition. Similarly, the anarchist advocate of workers' control considers that the exploitation and subjection of the worker by the capitalist is also wrong and suggests that the workers take control of the means of production (they need not occupy the factories since they are already in them), thus withdrawing their support from the employing class and, necessarily in contemporary society, from the state. The distinction between the pacifist who refuses to support the government in its war-like enterprises and the anarchist who refuses to support the capitalist seems to me to be one without a difference. The anarchist certainly has no intention of subjecting the capitalist as a man to his will, but he most emphatically refuses to let the capitalist in his function as a capitalist subject others to his will. If necessary, I think that anarchism does not preclude the use of violence as a means of defence against such subjection. Such violence would be liberative in the sense that constituted resistance to a subjugating external authority. The type of violence that anarchists repudiate is the invasive, the institutionalised, permanent and constraining violence that is the state.

I consider, however, that there is possibly a danger in thinking of workers' militias as a separate body of men charged with the defence of the revolution. Like all bodies constituted as a separate entity apart from the masses, such a type of militia would tend to think of itself as superior to the rest of man and give itself "saviour-attributes". As Voltairine de Cleyre puts it in her *Anarchism and American Traditions*:

"The logic of anarchism is that the least objectionable form of armed force is that which springs up voluntarily, like the minute-men of Massachusetts, and disbands as soon as the occasion which called it into being is past: that the really desirable thing is that all men . . . should be at peace."

Let us beware that the workers' militias we support do not evolve into regular armies as did the red guards into the Red Army and the workers' militias of Spain into a "People's Army".  
London. S. E. PARKER.

## The Bread Madness of Pont d'Esprit

THE strange affliction that has overtaken the little village of Pont d'Esprit is terribly near to us. It did not take place somewhere in the heart of Africa but in an average township of our nearest neighbour. It did not happen somewhere far from our daily lives, but somewhere the average tourist from these shores could reach in a day or two. In the middle of the twentieth century, one of the perils of the Middle Ages has stretched out and claimed its victims, and although the official enquiry is still to be held, the lesson to be learned is apparent.

In the superstitious priest-ridden Middle Ages, the scourge of this terrifying madness and convulsions was put down to supernatural causes. In those times they looked on all ills as ordained by God, and they therefore assigned the madness to the care of St. Anthony, and having done so all research into the problem was heresy. In the meantime, they went on putting the contaminated bread into their mouths. There is no doubt at all from scientific research that the disease comes from a blight on the rye bread. The poisoning caused in certain districts by the ergot that diseases the seed of rye in moist seasons having been shown to be the cause, it became a simple matter to examine the flour.

While it may be asked in amazement how even lacking scientific evidence simple observation did not point out the fact years ago, we must allow for the superstitions of the Middle Ages, which from some reports still exist—there are still those in Pont d'Esprit who rushed first to the priest to confess their sins instead of rushing to the baker to cancel their bread.

What is, however, the important point is that one superstition has been substituted for another. In the Middle Ages, the Church was indispensable; in the Modern Times it is the State. Then you could not get educated, married, or buried without the intervention of the Church; to-day without the interference of the State.

France has suffered much to free itself of the tyranny of the monks, and though to-day the bourgeoisie who drove out the Church are looking to Rome for political reasons, as an alternative to Moscow and because Washington doesn't trust them enough, there is little likelihood of the dreadful plague of madness and death being entrusted to the care of St. Anthony once again. Instead, according to the new superstition, all is entrusted to the State. The condition of flour is approved by State inspectors, who have the task (one which is so obviously in this case a primary care of the community) to ascertain that disease-ridden flour is not used. At the same time, as State officials, they have the task of collecting taxes. It is stated in the Press reports that in order to avoid the taxes peasants have been selling rye without submitting it to the responsible officials. This is perfectly natural and understandable, and quite obviously no peasant would deliberately sell fungus-stricken rye knowing the results of ergotism, but the result is that not only does it avoid taxation but also it avoids inspection. As the State has the two functions—to tax the commodity and to inspect it—in order to dodge one they have to dodge the other.

In this way there has been sold not only inferior rye but diseased rye, and the result is a village where a disease of the Middle Ages returns, and normal people turn into raving lunatics as a result of the poison they have put into their mouths.

Is the answer more laws or less? All the laws possible to safeguard the standard of food are already in effect. Is it really true that the State is the only organisation that can tackle such problems? To ask that question to-day is rather like standing up in the Middle Ages and claiming that St. Anthony could be superseded by an analytical chemist.

INTERNATIONALIST.