

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Truth is great and will prevail if left to herself—errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them."

—THOMAS JEFFERSON.

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Threepence

READING THE CHURCHILL-ATLEE SPEECHES BETWEEN THE LINES

"FREEDOM" still takes the view (regarded by some as old fashioned) that economic considerations lie behind most aspects of government policy. Any interpretation of political events which disregards the realities of the economic world seems to us highly romantic. Yet one finds that politicians, newspapers, historians and men in the street nearly always treat political moves as though they were motivated by ideals or superficially practical considerations or even 'what the public wants'. Is it surprising that no clear thread appears in such political commentary?

Last week Sir Winston Churchill made an important speech on foreign policy. He was followed and largely supported by Mr. Attlee. Churchill made no reference to economics, Attlee barely mentioned them: yet it is not too difficult to discern the economic framework underlying both these speeches. The basic though unmentioned theme was the economic relations and rivalry between Britain and America.

Britain and the American Markets

Since the war America has increasingly dominated markets in which Britain had a major share in the past, while the financial dictatorship of the dollar has exerted continuous pressure. Recently the American government has put out to contract several projects including aircraft and the building of a dam. British tenders, though favourably low, have been rejected in deference to pressure groups in the U.S.A. It is quite clear that American business interests are determined that British industry shall not exploit the American home market. Denied access to America, it follows that British export economy must look elsewhere, and the obvious source of trade is the Communist world of Russian satellites and China.

Churchill's speech is the official policy and he barely mentions anything of that sort. Indeed he stresses the desirability of British-American co-ordination in foreign policy. He does however make remarkably friendly remarks about

CONSCRIPTION AND THE CHRISTIANS

"THOU shalt not kill" may be a good enough commandment to chant from the pulpit to restrain sinners from practicing their base human nature, but in matters of State we have to be realistic.

At last, so thought some of the leaders of Christianity in this country at a recent meeting in Birmingham of the British Council of Churches.

They were discussing a resolution put to the Council by the Society of Friends (Quakers) which urged the Government to put an end to conscription. A statement from Mr. George Sutherland, executive member of the society, said the moral arguments against conscription were as strong as ever.

These arguments, said Mr. Sutherland, would be valid even if conscription prevented war, which it did not. Compulsory military training taught boys an attitude to evil and aggression which was "the exact opposite to the teaching of Christ."

The other Christian sects, however, were quite prepared to accept this opposite teaching to that of Christ, as long as they and their property were defended by unwilling conscripts of immature age in the struggle for . . . whatever it is they're struggling for.

The Dean of Chichester, the Very Reverend A. S. Duncan-Jones, said conscription has saved half Europe from aggression, and following his lead, the motion was defeated in the voting by 25 votes to 12.

Thus do the followers of the Prince of Love turn the other cheek!

Russia, and describes the change in Russian policy since Stalin's death as "the supreme event".

Mr. Noel Baker who followed Churchill for Labour, however, urged that as soon as hostilities cease in Korea Communist China be admitted to the United Nations.

Attlee's Speech

Next day, Mr. Attlee enlarged on this question still further, and it was he who allowed a fleeting glimpse of economic questions. He criticised the U.S. administration for being unable to resist pressure groups: "The Administration might wish to encourage our exports to the United States, but, as in the case of the Chief, Joseph Dam, influences frustrated the Administration's policy . . ." He also stressed the 'changes' in the Russian leadership (although, Malenkov, Molotov, Beria and the others have been in power for decades) and went on to discuss China. "We had a vital interest for peace in China. Our hopes of increasing our trade with the United States had been greatly lessened by

recent events. We might hope that the attitude would change, but it was not too hopeful just now. Trade, not aid, did not seem to have been accepted over there. We were constantly pressed not to trade with China, even in goods which were very remotely connected with the war effort. *We could not survive if we were to be restricted, unable to trade effectively with the United States. Cut off from China, and with all the difficulties of the Iron Curtain, and we had, therefore, as vital an interest as anybody in the settlement of this China affair. He was sure our American friends would recognize this.*"

This passage was the sole reference to economics in the whole of the speechifying yet it seems certain that it contains the core of the matter. Relations with America are cordial but economic rivalry is keen. Relations with the Russian world are hostile but not so much so that trade with it is undesired. Through it all runs the playing off of one power against another that characterizes all power politics and has been the special aim of the British Balance of Power idea of the history books. Churchill makes a diplomatic speech. Attlee with less responsibility and therefore greater freedom, dots the i's and crosses the t's. America, Russia and China, please note. That is the gist of it.

The A.E.U. Conference

ENGINEERS may be forgiven if they are a little sceptical of the discussions which took place at the recent conference of the National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union at Eastbourne.

They may remember that at last year's Conference it was agreed that the Union should press for a wage increase of £2 per week, and that if necessary they would resort to direct action to back up their claim. When it came to negotiation with the bosses, however, the union leaders made so abundantly clear the fact that they had no stomach for a fight that all the employers had to do was to stand their ground and compel the officials to accept their terms.

And instead of getting £2 a week increase, the engineering and ship-building workers got 7/6!

This year the revolutionaries are up to their same old tricks. The Committee has resolved that the Union shall make a claim for an increase of 15 per cent.—3s. in the pound and also that the Executive Council should forbid "as a policy" the working of overtime in all shops and departments where any men had been declared redundant.

On the wages issue, William Hutchinson spoke for the Executive Council, which was so lukewarm about the £2 increase last year, but thinks that a 15 per cent. increase this year is "reasonable, sensible, logical and practical, having regard to the rise in the cost of living." J.

Scott went on to say that the claim would also be based on increased productivity, wider profit margins and the increased skills of the engineers. It would be necessary to press constantly for higher wages as long as capitalism "based on production for profit, not for use" persisted.

The only question we should like to ask arising from that is, "Just what is the A.E.U. doing to work towards the ending of capitalism and the introduction of production for use not for profit?"

Nothing at all, of course. In fact the union is encouraging and perpetuating the profit motive by its attitude towards the differential. In a contradictory passage, Bro. Scott said that the A.E.U. was proud of having taken the initiative in the levelling up of the wages of lower-paid workers, but the time has come now to widen the differentials once again in order adequately to "recognise the skills in this industry."

In other words, presumably, in doing the opposite of something they were proud of doing, they are now ashamed. And so they should be, for the differential is a very effective weapon for the employers, a means of dividing the workers by the boss's own profit motive.

In engineering, as indeed in most of modern industry, it is team-work that gets the goods produced. Unless the labourer has the raw material in the right place at the right time the craftsman cannot process it; unless the maintenance man is up to the mark the operator cannot do her job effectively, unless the packers and the sweepers fit in the organisation properly the skilled men can be held up.

In insisting upon widening the differences in wage rates for different jobs in the same productive process the A.E.U. officials will be weakening the solidarity of their members—but perhaps that is just what they want!

One amusing part of the Conference was that where the delegates discussed "the need for developing the battle from below" and went on to wonder about how they could make their members aware of the necessity for a wage increase.

In view of the fact that for the last 13 years every union leadership has been concerned to hold their rank and file back and that, in particular, the engineers were in militant mood last year and ready to do battle for their increase but were restrained by their craven leaders, it is an impertinence for the leaders to feel doubtful about their membership now. Unless, of course, the leaders realise that they no longer have the confidence of the rank and file, who will look with suspicion upon any appearance of activity from above.

On the point about banning overtime where there is redundancy we can only say—it's about time. We were advocating this step a year ago. P.S.

ANGLO-SPANISH RELATIONS DEBATES

Let's All Be "Realists"!

THE reader of the *Manchester Guardian* and other National papers can be excused for not knowing that last Wednesday week the House of Commons gave two out of its eight hours sitting to a discussion on Anglo-Spanish Relations, for not a word was published though it takes up 39 printed columns in *Hansard*. The Conservative Member who was to raise the question failed to turn up, so that we do not know what points he intended to raise. Instead, the discussion was opened by a former Labour Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ernest Davies, who thought the moment inopportune for making approaches to Spain and thus appearing to condone the Fascist régime in that country and, in view of the "somewhat better atmosphere" existing between East and West, no action should be taken which might make agreement more difficult. However he went on to point out that if relations with Spain were not satisfactory it was Franco's fault. The present régime was founded on fascism, and the maintenance of the police State, and the speaker instanced recent cases of people being arrested in Barcelona and Madrid "for no other reason than that they were organising opposition to the existing régime". Mr. Davies also opposed the lifting of the ban on the sale of arms to Spain which the government had justified on economic grounds, and he proceeded to weigh up the economic gains against the moral issues and questions of principle. One somehow felt that Mr. Davies might have been able to see the economic argument if the amount had been large enough! However, in his concluding remarks he expressed the democratic point of view that it was in Spain that the first real fight against Fascism occurred and that we must keep alive the memory of this struggle in spite of its tragic defeat by Franco. Mr. Davies was followed by Air Commodore Harvey, Conservative and Deputy Chairman of the aircraft firm of Handley Page. He said he shared Mr. Davies's feelings about Franco but he thought that to

attack him in the House of Commons was the wrong way to get rid of him. And quickly the speaker passed on to more practical questions: armaments for Spain. And in his view the material being sent to Spain was not of very high quality or very modern. If one is going to sell the stuff to the Spaniard let us supply the right goods, so as to compete with the Americans who otherwise would pinch our market! He deprecated the Ministry of Supply's policy which prevented him from booking an order to send 25 Canberra jet aircraft to Spain, the more so as in his view the only way to make Franco see the virtues of democracy was by trading with Spain. The Air-Commodore was followed by Mr. John McGovern, former I.L.P. M.P. and practising Catholic. His rambling and repetitive speech lasting half an hour is impossible to summarise. One particularly revealing passage was his description of the police methods used in Spain:

" . . . There is a man in Barcelona called Mr. Pola, who is described as the friend of everybody. He never does any-

thing wrong. He is the head of the Franco secret political police. If a bill is posted up anywhere in Spain, for example, if the Catalonian nationalists demand a form of Home Rule—incidentally, under the régime there my hon. Friend the Member for South Ayrshire (Mr. Emrys Hughes) would be incarcerated as a nationalist in spite of his Socialism—all the people who have a political record are roped in.

Supposing, for example, I had been brought in. Mr. Pola would meet me and say, "Well, McGovern, we have brought you in. Bills have been stuck up and we want the utmost information about who did it. You must know something. There are a chair, sheets of paper, a pencil and a pen, a packet of cigarettes and some matches. Coffee will be brought in. I will come back in an hour. You write down anything you can think of that will help us."

He comes back in an hour and finds that I have written down nothing. I may know nothing or I am unwilling to write down anything. He says to me, "You cannot help us? There is nothing you know? I wish you could help us. You will not get away tonight. You will get away tomorrow. But do not be worried. Nothing will happen to you." These are indisputable facts. I obtained them from people I met at the British Embassy who had been through it all and who were crippled for life as a result.

These people have been taken downstairs, stripped and put in a chair with steel bars round it which are electrified. They had been pushed from side to side and rubber truncheons used on them to try to extract information from them. Rifle butts had been dropped on their insteps. In some cases the bones in men's feet were broken. They might have been rendered unconscious without any information having been obtained from them. The next day they would be brought up and put back in the chair, and Mr. Pola would come in and call out, "Who did this?" He would then begin to curse and swear and put on a show that he had warned people not to do this sort of thing. Then after Mr.

JUNE 2nd

Comrades interested in leaving London on the above date are notified that the London Anarchist Group are gathering at Liverpool Street Underground Station, Central Line (Booking Office) at 9 a.m. and will leave for Epping Forest by train.

Bring your own food.

RECOVERED

ONLY seven months after leaving a war-crimes jail ex-Field-Marshal Kesselring to-day became president of the West German ex-Servicemen's Stahlhelm (Steel Helmet) organisation.

He called for Western unity to resist the Russian threat, declaring that Moscow "peace moves" have not altered the situation.

Kesselring, jailed for a massacre of 335 Italians, was released by the British because he had cancer of the throat; he has now recovered.

The Individual and Society

AS a member of a society, I may try to ensure that conflicting preferences are adjusted in accordance with what I consider the right principle of priority; I may feel convinced, or think that I know, that certain desires and interests are intrinsically better than others, and on this ground alone try to ensure that they are given priority; for it seems sufficient that I should be convinced that they ought to have priority. If I follow to the end some positive principle of this kind, I will sometimes find myself overriding, or being overridden by, other members of the society, who have different principles, and therefore different preferences, from myself; and this difference may be irreconcilable by argument or by any appeal to some common accepted premiss. My opponent may then ask: "What right have you, or anyone else, to require me to conform to your principles and preferences?" and I may say the same to him. But if I take a step backwards to a principle of a less positive, more general kind, perhaps a common basis of argument can be found in common human needs. It is, in general, unnecessary to call for a decision as to whether food, shelter, and health are better than starvation, exposure, and disease. Only above this level of common need comes the sphere of choice, where there may be irreconcilable differences. But even here a common need can be found in which virtually all men are alike, simply as being men, as they are alike in requiring food; and if there is a common need, there is ground for a common principle. There is one preference which they might accept as common to them all, namely, their preference for living in that kind of society which they each prefer, whatever it may be. They each want to be allowed to do whatever it is they want to do, and they each want to be allowed to advocate that arrangement of society which they prefer, whatever this may be. Since men are largely alike, in spite of all other differences, in seeking for themselves the freedom to live as they prefer, the principle of freedom of choice is the only principle which can plausibly be made a universal basis of decision. Only such a higher-order principle could be held to be generally binding on anyone who has principles

and preferences of his own, and yet who must make decisions in concert. It provides that in the last resort political decisions are to be justified, not by the various ends or ideals which they may be supposed to serve, but by the relative freedom of choice which they allow to those whose lives are most affected by the decision.

A NEGATIVE CRITERION NECESSARY

In every issue, whatever one's own views, one must in the last resort calculate which of the various policies would entail a greater denial of the equal right of the persons involved to conduct their own lives as they choose within the area debated. And the denial of freedom of choice in any sphere can never be justified by the positive preferences of the majority; for the defeated minority will only share the preference for freedom of preference and not the positive preferences themselves. Any positive criterion of decision would sometimes involve using people as means towards ends which they do not accept, and so using them as if they were natural objects; and no one can consent to being used as a means in this way—or if he does freely consent, he is no longer being used as a means. If this negative criterion is followed, no frustration and defeat in politics need ever be complete frustration, since there is always one preference which is not frustrated, namely, the preference for being able to do whatever one chooses within limits set by the equal liberty of others to do whatever they choose; the losses would never be total losses and they would generally fall outside the sphere of common needs; for the only thing which matters alike to each and all of the persons involved is not any one of their positive preferences, but their freedom to follow these preferences as far as possible.

This is why the much lamented collapse of values and uncertainty of belief seems to me not a matter for lament at all. It opens the way to a purely empirical approach to politics, in which no one's needs, including his need of some relative freedom to do whatever he chooses, is sacrificed to someone else's conception of ultimate ends or of moral certitudes. Every undestructive ideal

which men have at any time pursued seems, in the study of history or of art, to have a certain value, merely because they have freely and strongly pursued it. The lesson of a museum, and of its variety, is that different men must always make, and then leave behind, different monuments and different societies; the museum gives the sum of the positive achievements, from which anyone must start again in a new situation. But the cost of the achievements in slavery and imitation is left outside the museum, as worthless and forgotten; one can therefore only try to extend the variety of achievement, and at the same time try to lessen its cost in slavery and imitation; and to do one is necessarily to do the other. One may believe, contrary to the evidence, that there existed in the past, in the long innocent centuries, some

stable societies of harmonious believers, secure in the satisfaction of their common needs, and one may ignore their cost in the suppressions and unsatisfied needs on their margin. But it is no longer easy, either in the study of history or in contemporary politics, to ignore the suppressions and unsatisfied needs on the edge of any secure society. Instability may therefore be accepted as unavoidable and as the one constant factor in politics other than the basic human needs. In this respect Machiavelli may now be thought a better guide than Plato.

The old idea of a stable society may appear not only an illusion, but also a wasteful and destructive illusion, when its costs in suppression are counted. There is surely ground for optimism here; a society which is always in anxious uncertainty about the ends of its actions, and recognises that its ends must always be uncertain, will be a free society, having no reason not to allow play for various individual preference. As its members gradually lose any uniform belief in a final goal or destination, they will more and more judge policies solely by their immediate cost in short human lives; they will see every decision as a temporary adjustment between actual needs, including the common need for freedom of choice above the level of subsistence. It seems to me therefore encouraging that there should be general chaos and uncertainty about fundamental values. Let there be no agreed western values, other than the absence of agreed values.

In this country, which has survived a long war with its empirical methods unchanged, there is surely no reason to listen to the propaganda of gloom and self-abasement; it is doubtful whether there has ever been in any society a greater respect for individuals and for

their common needs, including their need to follow whatever end they choose, and a greater indifference about the ultimate ends preferred, apart from some individual's preference of them. And this seems the most sure ground of loyalty among constantly changing people who must make decisions together.

—STUART HAMPSHIRE
in a broadcast last week on
The Nature of Political Decision.

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A Picasso-Like Controversy in Liverpool

COMPARABLE only with the storm aroused in Communist circles by Picasso's drawing of Stalin's head is the controversy at present raging in Liverpool over the 1000 guinea portrait of the Queen commissioned by the city's Art Committee and now on view at the Walker Art Gallery.

The critics say that apart from not being a likeness they felt that "the head was too small and the neck elongated" (it sounds as if they were looking at a picture of a giraffe). And they add the Queen looks bored. But the chairman of the Art Committee has declared that it is "a magnificent picture" and adds somewhat equivocally in view of the critics' reference to the bored expression that "he (the artist) has not quite got the likeness but it is so seldom you see a photograph of the Queen in repose."

The artist defends the long neck since he wanted "to emphasize the regal stance of the Queen when the portrait is put in the place for which it was commissioned—a high wall in the Town Hall" and he might have added as did Picasso of Stalin when criticised of the poor likeness that he had hardly seen his model. Picasso had never seen Stalin and poor Mr. Napper could only claim to have had one sitting by the Queen.

A VERY FINE CHARACTER

A MAID left her savings to her mistress in a will published yesterday.

Miss Mildred Rose Russell, of Clare House, West Malling, Kent, was for 15 years trusted personal maid to American-born Edwina Lady Peck.

Miss Russell died in London, and in her £3,323 will she left her bank balance to Lady Peck.

"She was a very fine character," said Lady Peck yesterday.

Sunday Express (17/5/53).

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KROPOTKIN, MARX AND

to use that unit. If man is to venture on the rebuilding of Society, he must take nothing for granted. The first question therefore is—With what unit does Nature build in the living world?³⁹

And the answer is, "the family." Note the very Kropotkin-like faith in natural laws and the application of the methods of physical sciences to the social sciences. The ontologism is well-rooted: man can change the periphery of his life, but he can't change its heart, the unit of Nature's building, the family.

Another contemporary who interests himself in these concepts is Richard Woltereck, a German biologist with considerable philosophic leanings. He is a confirmed monist, but there is what he calls "polar tensions" involved in the fusion of this monism.⁴⁰ Freedom—spontaneity and auto-plasticity—constitute an embryo in unconscious man; they develop into human freedom.⁴¹

Boldly these three exceptions remain the tested reality, that one flood of events surrounds anything at all substantially real: material and non-material, abiotic, organic, psychic, unconscious and conscious happenings. That all-included and absorbed human understanding, understood by the connection, is Nature—reality: cosmic, physical, chemistry, biology, finally physical reality. The psychic activity of man is also part of this one stream—"Nature"—although in special forms: science, techniques, culture, politics, history and art. They are—in the last analysis—produced not differently from the way the bird produces his song and his nest, or the tree its blossoms and fruit. Also, the dawning of consciousness—conscious thinking and acting—are natural processes in the animal kingdom—similar to conditioned reflexes, instinctive acts, and affects.⁴²

Flitting among all these people is Herbert Read; it becomes a real quandary to decide whether to take more seriously Sir Herbert's flirtation with a rigid monism or his marriage to Bergsonian dualism. (In the latter case, this amounts to taking anarchism at least back to Sorel; and in the former, the incorporation into anarchism of most of the bad points of Marx without any of the good.) At any rate, none of these lines of thought bode well for poor Kropotkin. These learned gentlemen would hang his philosophy with metaphysical trappings and plague it with creeping ontologism, thus adding to his already-numerous difficulties in dealing with the modern world. Thus far, anarchism has managed to evade mystical metaphysics fairly successfully. It has no gods; it would be absurd on the face of it to refer to someone as a "Kropotkinist" or a "Bakuninist". As James Guillaume said: "We are not Idealists; we are very sincere and very positive Materialists. There has never been

in the International, to our knowledge, but one metaphysician, but one 'abstractor of quintessence': it is the author of *Das Kapital*.⁴³

VII⁴⁴

The dialectical method seeks to accommodate itself to [the] fundamental features of reality. It must take them as the starting point and basis of its own procedure. If reality is ever-changing, concrete, full of novelty, fluent as a river, torn by oppositional forces, then dialectics, which strives to be a true reflection of reality in logical terms, must share the same characteristics.⁴⁵

All scientific investigation proceeds upon the basis that things are connected with each other in definite ways, that their changes exhibit a certain uniformity, regularity and lawfulness—and that therefore their interrelations, transitions into one another and laws of development can be ascertained and explained [my emphasis]. There have been sceptical and religious thinkers who denied that the world was rational . . . The science of logic must take as its starting point the unity of the subjective processes of thought with the processes of the external world. Nature cannot be unreasonable or reason contrary to nature . . . The material basis of this law lies in the actual interdependence of all things and in their reciprocal interactions.⁴⁶

It is not necessary to spell out the whole of Marxist ontologism, or what Max Eastman calls its "wish-fulfilling metaphysic." Eastman also points out how Marx subscribes thoroughly to the "spectator theory of knowledge."⁴⁷ Equally as well known as these unsavoury details of Marxism are the attempts by Eastman, James Burnham, Sidney Hook and others to amputate the dialectic from Marxism.⁴⁸ The subsequent political evolution of these gentlemen indicates how fraught with danger is Marxist "revisionism." Dewey's criticism of Greek logic would appear to apply equally as well to the attempts to meliorate the dialectic:

The more adequate that logic was in its own day, the less fitted is it to form the framework of present logical theory.⁴⁹ [The revision] is a marked advance. But up to a certain point [it] has increased confusion in logical theory as a whole, since no consistency of theory can be attained as long as the theory of antecedent subjects given ready-made to predication is retained.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ In the transition to the consideration of Marxism, it would be instructive to consider Kautsky, who began from nearly the same premises as did Kropotkin, paralleled his development for a good portion of the way, and then ended up diametrically opposite to him. However, this would entail at least one other paper.

⁴⁵ William F. Warde, *An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1953) p. 38.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴⁷ Max Eastman, *Marxism, Is It Science?* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1940) pp. 19-20.

⁴⁸ Hook's attempts to make a Deweyan out of Marx are particularly unfortunate, principally because they fall exactly into the prescription of Kropotkin: "But the question as to which of us is right, and which wrong, cannot be settled by means of Byzantine commentaries as to what or such a writer intended to say, or by talking about what agrees with the 'trilogy' of Hegel; most certainly not by continuing to use the dialectic method." (*Modern Science and Anarchism, op. cit.*, p. 79.)

⁴⁹ Dewey, *Logic, op. cit.*, p. 82.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

VI

So much for the philosophy of Kropotkin. Now, how are these ideas used in our own time? In recent years, perhaps their most important application in things physical has been in the fields of the psychology of group dynamics and that of the biological approach to sociology. And regardless of whether most important, the work in these fields spells out for us the current attitudes toward inquiry. Kropotkin's notions of vitality, unified growth, integration of heterogeneous life patterns, and others, are found—in a more-or-less altered form—in much work being carried on to-day. This is particularly apparent in the various theories drawing their inspiration from the non-directive approach to psychology. Accordingly, I shall consider a few instances of the recent work in these fields to see to what extent Dewey's admonitions to Kropotkin—outlined above—are being observed.

Trigant Burrow is a group psychologist who has done considerable theoretical and practical work on the need for unity in life and what he calls "the return to the organismic basis of life."³⁷ He is interested in the bases of consciousness, which he calls the preconscious, foundations in human biology, but this foundation comes to play quite a larger part in his scheme than bases are supposed to. The theory appears to me to resolve into several fundamental dualisms, the primary one being between symbols outside, and the "real" man within. This demarcation is known as the system of symbolic affects vs. that of integral feelings. He is not interested in inquiry but "adjustment."

Quite out of the realm of conventional academic theory is the "Peckham Experiment"—The Pioneer Health Centre, at Peckham, in South London. This heartening work, described by Drs. Pearse and Crocker,³⁸ was dedicated to the proposition of preserving health rather than treating illness, this in an atmosphere of the utmost freedom. Their results are nearly unbelievable, and the question naturally arises whether this was due to, or in spite of, their philosophy. Both Pearse and Crocker are biologists, and have violently disclaimed being anarchists; certainly they would with equal vigour disclaim being philosophers. Nevertheless, their statement of orientation is summed up like this:

Before beginning to build, it is necessary to know what bricks are to be used, or, in modern terms, what must be the unit of construction. Times and fashions change and with them the units of material construction. So, too, with the constructs of Society; man changes his institutions, his customs and the external circumstances of his life and, in a manner, his life with them. But Nature's laws are abiding. In the realms of Matter and Energy about which man has come to know so much, he accepts Nature's units of construction and works in obedience to her laws. In the realm of Living, he has yet to recognize the unit with which Nature works; and to learn

³⁷ Trigant Burrow, *The Biology of Human Conflict* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937) *passim*, particularly pp. 405-410. This is a thoroughly fascinating book, but the ordinary unilingual Anglo-American is disadvantaged by the fact that it is written entirely in Burrowese.

³⁸ Innes H. Pearse and Lucy H. Crocker, *The Peckham Experiment* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1947).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴⁰ Richard Woltereck, *Ontologie des Lebendigen* (Ferdinand Enke Verlag Stuttgart, 1940) p. 89. All paraphrases and quotations represent my own attempts at translation from the German of Woltereck.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, *passim*, n.b. p. 32.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁴³ James Guillaume, *L'Internationale* (Paris: Société Nouvelle de Librairie et d'Édition, 1907) Vol. II, p. 290. This passage trans. K. J. Kenafick.

COMMONSENSE AND ANARCHISM

"Professor Morris Ginsberg, Professor of Sociology at London University, said in a lecture in London yesterday on 'The Nature of Responsibility', that it was doubtful whether prison life could provide the conditions needed for genuine moral improvement or for effective psychiatric treatment of the mentally affected. Punishment had hardly been a successful institution and it was doubtful whether it could be made so. At best it was a mechanical and dangerous means of protection.

"The kind of punishments that have hitherto been tried have failed to secure reform and in the case of the graver crimes, even to deter. When this is more widely recognized, we shall cease to rely much on punishment for the maintenance of order. Dangerous criminals will have to be segregated. For the rest, society will concentrate on removing the conditions encouraging crime, and on the best means of ensuring a widely diffused sense of responsibility, independent of punishment."

★
VERY few people to-day would regard the opinions expressed above as extravagant or extreme. They represent a balanced, sober, and commonsense viewpoint. But their very moderation provokes certain reflections.

First of all they are expressed (*Manchester Guardian*, 14/5/53) from an academic chair of a University and carry therefore a certain weight. Yet views like these have been expressed in this country for seventy years and more by anarchists. Professor Ginsberg has not, we think, relied on evidence or special enquiries only recently made available. He has simply looked at prison and punishment and the concept of responsible citizens in a plain commonsense manner. Anar-

chists have in the past done the same thing and come to substantially similar conclusions. Yet even to-day anarchist opinions are regarded as extreme, unpractical, utopian. Does it need much pointing out that the utopians are those who in the rush of knowledge and commonsense still continue to use punishment and prisons and pretend that they are reformatory, deterrent, salutary, and what-have-you?

Any normal man or woman who has been in prison in this country looks back on the experience with a certain sense of unreality. There is so much in prison routine which is simply fantastic. The idleness, the waiting about, the pointless work, the absurd clothes, the Wackford Squeers kind of discipline. Even the attempts at reform are so absurd that the prisoner looks on them with amused indulgence. Libraries, hospitals, offices, factories give a certain sense of purpose, and fitness for purpose. What goes on in them makes sense in a way that prison wholly fails to achieve. Yet this is the institution seriously charged with dealing with a serious problem.

For the reform of an individual, everyone who has had any contact with such a problem knows that the question of inducing a sense of responsibility is essential. And it is essential to establish some sense of goodwill. Gradually harsher aspects of prison life have been mitigated in response to the general diffusion of ideas such as those of Professor Ginsberg above. But it is to be noted that the Prison Officers' Association last week protested against giving prisoners too much comfort in terms which show that the outdated conditions of the past remain the ideal for them, while simple progressive measures are viewed with hostility. Yet these are the men whom the "realists" in our society charge with the duty of operating a system ostensibly for the reclamation of criminals!

Prison officers are not, perhaps, a very intelligent body of men. They have poor pay but they have 'security' and a pension to look forward to; and for these they do a job which most people (not merely prisoners) would regard with some contempt. But the policy of prisons is determined by higher departments of the Civil Service, by men who are not supposed to be defective in intelligence or goodwill. As we have remarked, no intelligent person who has been in prison retains much respect for the organizers of those extraordinary communities, but the general public assumes that they are fit persons. A glimpse of the mentality of high-up prison management was given last week—also by the Court of Appeal.

A man sued the Home Office for the failure of the prison authorities to take reasonable care of him. He suffered a fractured skull when a fellow prisoner, described as a mental defective, attacked him. His original case failed, and now his appeal has failed also because there was no evidence before the Court to show that the attacker had shown signs of violence before.

The presiding Appeal Judge, Lord Justice Singleton, expressed however his "uneasy feeling that justice might not have been done . . . and something more than an uneasy feeling that whether justice had been done or not, it would not appear to have been done." The two other judges agreed.

These reflections arose because the material evidence, which included the prison reports on the attacking prisoner's behaviour, the police reports made at the time of the incident, and medical evidence, was refused by the Home Office who were also the defendants in the case, on the grounds of privilege, that their disclosure "would not be in the public interest". Yet such evidence seems likely to have been of great importance to the plaintiff, and it is difficult to avoid thinking that its

suppression was very convenient for the government department. At all events the judges made it quite clear that they regarded the action of the government in a very unfavourable light. Lord Justice Jenkins remarked that "although the plaintiff had not succeeded in fixing the defendants (the Home Office) with liability in the particular circumstances of the case, he could not regard the course of events on the day in question as reflecting any credit on the prison authorities in charge." There seems little doubt that the Home Office and the prison authorities behaved in a very shabby manner.

To sum up, therefore. We find that the moderate commonsense opinion now advocates an attitude towards criminals and punishment, and towards the idea of responsi-

bility, which differs very little from ideas expressed by anarchists for several generations and usually treated as merely utopian. We find low grade prison officials openly hostile to sensible reform, and prisons themselves fantastic and unreal institutions when compared with other institutions designed to fulfil a practical purpose. Finally, we find the highest government department involved severely reprimanded by judges of the Appeal Court for conduct which in a private individual would scarcely be regarded as honest.

Such behaviour in a government is scarcely unexpected to anarchists. Can one expect that in a reasonable time the anarchist viewpoint will come to seem, not utopian, but commonsense in this matter also?

The Policy of Neutrality

NEUTRALITY: GERMANY'S WAY TO PEACE by Stuart Morris (Peace News, 4d.)

THIS brief pamphlet, as its title implies, is an advocacy of the policy of neutrality as the only sensible one for Germany and for the world. With such a contention none of us is likely to disagree; clearly the interests of the German people, like those of every other country, lie outside the pattern of power politics which at present swings between the twin poles of the Kremlin and the Pentagon.

Where one must disagree with Stuart Morris is in his hope that German neutrality—and by implication the peace of the world—can be gained by governmental means. He talks of Britain, France, America and Russia mutually guaranteeing the neutrality of a reunited Germany, and hopefully suggests that "it is extremely unlikely that any outside power would provoke a certain world war by some deliberate act which infringed the neutrality of a disarmed Germany." The fact is, as history has shown often enough, that a power to whom a war has become necessary will

provoke it by any means that seems most convenient, and that, within the present world situation the sole—and I agree by not means inconsiderable—advantage for Germany of being neutral would be that her people would endure less devastation than if she were armed.

Ultimately the only way to peace is not a guarantee by governments, but a guarantee by peoples. The cannon fodder of America and Britain and Russia and France and of Germany itself, if they refused to fight, would provide the only sure promise of German and world neutrality. Stuart Morris suggests that we demand of the politicians "a period of, say, ten years in which the rival power blocs should cease their preparations for war against each other." When the American economy and the Russian internal power structure depend on a war atmosphere, it is unrealistic to imagine that any government can guarantee ten years free from war scares which are necessary for its own existence. Only the workers and the potential conscripts of Germany and other countries, by their individual and collective refusal to countenance war, can give us respite from anxiety, and final peace. G.W.

DEWEY - 3

My personal differences with Marxism stem from an extreme pragmatism, more so perhaps than Dewey's but still differing considerably from that of Eastman. The important thing is, *what is the dialectic used for?* Eastman's idea is that it is used as a surrogate for the mysticism of the church.⁵¹ This is probably true, but it is related as material to efficient cause in this notion of Burnham which appears to me to hit the nail precisely on the head:

The doctrine of "class truth" is the road of Plato's Philosopher-Kings, of prophets and Popes and Stalins. For all of them, also, a man must be among the anointed to know the truth. It leads in a human direction diametrically opposite to that of socialism, of a truly human society.⁵²

Dewey himself did not raise the objection so strongly on this point; he opposed otologism because it did not accord with modern methods of inquiry. But it is clear that if there is something "really real," and if it is at all knowable, then some people are going to know, others won't know, and the knowers will have the responsibility of interpreting The Word to the unknowing. It is the encouragement of thinking habits similar to these which has constituted a major force for the perversion of past revolutions. Nomad sees the contrast as between the intelligent and the uneducated, but this assumes that universal education would bring in its wake true democracy, which supposition doesn't bode well to prove out. It is the introduction of "crimethink," mysterious and authoritarian symbols and sanctions, superstitious holdovers from our animistic past, which provide the royal road to power for those anointed few. Nomad is, however, quite correct in approving Sebastien Faure's analysis of the principles of politics: "First—to get power by all means, even the vilest; and, second, to keep that power by all means, even the vilest." He is also not far wrong when he quotes the Abbé Siéyès as noting the inevitable transition from the slogan, "Save the revolution," to that of "Save the revolutionists."⁵³

Dewey's opposition to all of this is, of course, evident. Note should just be taken of two of his specific objections: Particularly unacceptable to me in the ideology of official Communism is its monistic and one-way philosophy of history . . . The thesis that all societies must exhibit a uniform, even if uneven, social development . . . can be accepted only by those who are either ignorant of history or who are so steeped in dogma that they cannot look at a fact without changing it to suit their special purposes.

⁵¹ Max Eastman, *Marx, Lenin and the Science of Revolution* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1926) *passim*. Similar ideas, but phrased in a somewhat more reactionary idiom, are found in his later book, *Marxism, Is It Science?*, *op. cit.* His move to the right was so rapid in those days that he found it necessary to rush into print before this book was published a notice stating: "I have to warn the reader that the following chapters were written while I still believed in that system of revolutionary engineering perfected by Lenin." (p. 215).

⁵² James Burnham, "Science and Style," in Leon Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1942) p. 198. It would appear that Burnham has fallen victim to his own predictions, if one is to judge from his despicable antics of recent years.

⁵³ *Apostles of Revolution, op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. 3-11.

From this monistic philosophy of history, there follows a uniform political practice and a uniform theory of revolutionary strategy and tactics.⁵⁴

Finally, in his critique of Trotsky's *Their Morals and Ours*, Dewey had this to say:

The belief that a law of history determines the particular way in which the struggle is to be carried on certainly seems to tend toward a fanatical and even mystical devotion to use of certain ways of conducting the class struggle to the exclusion of all other ways of conducting it . . . Orthodox Marxism shares with orthodox religionism and with traditional idealism the belief that human ends are interwoven into the very texture and structure of existence—a conception inherited presumably from its Hegelian origin.⁵⁵

A further consequence of Marxian ontologism—and probably the most serious one from the political point-of-view—is this: By applying outmoded physical science concepts to the social sciences, Marxists talk about "the nature of capitalism," "the essence of October," "internal contradictions in the very heart of bourgeois democracy," etc. Thus, such well-intentioned people as the Trotskyists (Socialist Workers' Party variety) are forced into saying that Russia is in essence a workers' state, but that it has been distorted by bureaucratic Stalinism (*i.e.*, it has had affixed to it attributes which do not accord with its nature). They become prisoners of their own "objective reality." The superstitious compulsion to imbue a mental construct with reality and plentitude necessarily leads to ineffectuality in dealing with the problems of everyday life. Marx's popularity in this respect may be attributed to this fact: "Commonsense" and folk psychology arrive at—on this level—precisely the same conclusion as does Marx by reason of his "scientism." Neither Marx—descended from Plato and Aristotle—nor the man in the street—descended from the Athenian man in the street—can live without the assurance that "things are real."

(VIII)

To sum up, then: We have discussed the conditions surrounding the enunciation of Kropotkin's philosophy, and the extent to which it is adaptable for modern use. It may, but does not have to assume an ontology. By a reconsideration of the concept "instinct," it was seen that Kropotkin is not on the level of some of his contemporaries who ascribed the phenomenon of people wanting to make money, *e.g.*, to a money-making instinct. We discussed some of the ways of thinking about and observing these "tendencies." The problem of what Kropotkin's questions mean was discussed, and also some of the implications of his answers to those questions. It became evident that Dewey would accept Kropotkin's treatment of these questions as Kropotkin himself thought about them—allowing for the disadvantages of living in the nineteenth century—but could not accept several pro-

⁵⁴ Dewey, "Why I Am Not a Communist," in *The Meaning of Marx*, ed. Sidney Hook (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1934) pp. 54-55.

⁵⁵ Dewey, "Means and Ends," in *New International*, IV (August, 1938) 233.

minent modifications of them. Finally, we saw—as was already well known—that Dewey couldn't possibly accept the Marxist formulations, and some of the implications which the Marxist approach to these questions of existence have.

We tend to take Dewey's "problems" in too narrow a sense. This is the perpetual shortcoming of the liberal-reformist philosophy espoused by Dewey himself. The central problems of our age are those which have the most gravely anti-social consequences. Wars become more frequent and more destructive, as does the boom-and-bust economic cycle. We have achieved success unapproached by the lower species in killing each other and making our fellow humans miserable. From an evolutionary point-of-view, this is bad—not only bad, but "worst"—and thus is the central problem. Reformism deals with the periphery of this problem. It attacks—often with great efficacy—issues of social security, race relations, unemployment compensation, etc., and says that it is working gradually toward the same thing that radicals want to achieve by revolution. But it doesn't attack, and specifically skirts the problem. Precisely because of its peripheral approach, reformism *can't* consider the intimate relationship between an economic system based on exploitation, authoritarian state machinery, power relationships of men over men and the omnipresent theatre of war, and can do nothing about it.

Reformism holds in common with Marxism what Dewey calls eschatological beliefs. This wish-fulfilling millennialism consists in this: the Marxist belief that on the day after the revolution, everything is going to be different, the "essence" of society will be altered, the world will be transformed into at least a potential "heaven-on-earth" (per Lenin, 1905); the reformist belief that on the day after a majority of socialists are elected to Parliament the same sort of millennium will occur. In either case, the words "revolution" and "reform" are used in a magical sense. There is always the better life just over the horizon. Thoroughgoing pragmatists, on the other (*i.e.* third) hand, put their faith in no millennia or panaceas, but solve each problem in accordance with the conditions accompanying its arising. To do this in our times, however, as I have shown, it is necessary to adopt a revolutionary attitude. Eschatology always has lead and apparently always will lead only to "pie in the sky."

If a person is going to be a radical and a Deweyan at the same time, then, it would appear that he can follow only one path: he must be a friend to all left-radicalism, constantly re-evaluating his methods and ideals, without prejudice as between schools of thought except for a never-ending vigilance against authoritarianism and elite-theories. He can thus agree with Lenin and Trotsky—honestly and not merely verbally—that that is moral and permissible which *really* leads to the liberation of mankind. Dewey is for the Permanent Revolution.

THE END

RICHARD DEHAAN.

OUR PAMPERED PRISONERS

THE recent conference of the prison officers trade union, at Winchester, showed that these gallant public servants have their working problems too.

We did not notice in the reports of their discussions any resolutions demanding workers' control of the prisons. (Since most of the work is done by the prisoners, anyway, perhaps that would not quite be appropriate!) Nor did we see any evidence that the prison officers look upon their work with any sense of vocation, or with any social ideas at all.

Rather were we confirmed in our opinion that the prison warden is an ignorant authoritarian, quite unsuitable for carrying out the task of rehabilitation which is supposed to be the function of our "houses of correction", but well suited to the character of prisons as they really are.

One of the grievances of the "screws" was that the prisons were understaffed. Sometimes at night in some of the prisons there is only one officer on duty to deal with over a thousand sleeping prisoners securely locked up in their cells. In some of our prisons during the day, outside duties—such as working parties, court and transfer escort—and leave and sick leave arrangements, so deplete the number of officers on supervisory duty inside the jail that some of the cleaners have "the run of the prison."

This is clearly a deplorable state of affairs. The ideal to be aimed at is surely one warden per prisoner. Then really efficient supervision could be carried out, with personal attention to all the niceties of the prison regulations. The prisoners would be happier, for they could not then be subjected to all the temptations (such as to get tobacco or to escape) that interfere with their reformation now, and the officers too could make sure that discipline was being properly maintained.

For the officers are, very properly of course, concerned at the moment that discipline may break down because of the revised diet introduced a year ago as "No. 2 Punishment Diet". The new menu is as follows:—

Breakfast: Pint of porridge, containing 3oz. oatmeal; 8oz. bread; ½oz. margarine; pint of cocoa containing 3oz. cocoa; and a fluid ounce of milk.

Dinner: 4oz. of bread; half-pint of soup, containing 3oz. split peas, 3oz. dried beans, 4oz. potatoes, 4oz. carrots and salt. There is also meat when it is in the normal diet.

Supper: 8oz. bread; ½oz. margarine; a pint of cocoa; and a fluid ounce of milk.

Now it is plain to anyone that this luxurious diet represents, not a deterrent to a prisoner, but a definite incitement to break prison regulations in order to win this prize of 3oz. of dried beans, etc. And we should not forget that these tasty dishes are served up every day for the period of punishment. Now who would not be delighted to enjoy this fascinating diet for a period of 14 or 28 days in a row?

The prison officers take this view too. It is "farcical", they say, to refer to this as a "Punishment Diet". For example, Mr. Roy Blow (Wandsworth) asked: "Does it in any way suggest discomfort, let alone punishment?" while Mr. Alfred Blade (Cardiff) maintained: "The only complaint I have had from a prisoner on punishment diet is that he did not have the 4oz. of carrots in his soup." Mr. Jack Pearce (Northallerton) said: "With this diet you just fatten them up."

The officers were all agreed that P.D.2. simply made the prisoners fat and lazy. What else could be expected from a diet predominantly starchy, with the lack of exercise and depressive apathy engendered by solitary confinement (for the gallant officers did not mention that essential part of the punishment routine)?

The attitude of the prison warders fits in well with that of all the good solid upholders of law and order who maintain that prisons are being made far too comfortable—that if they were made harder, not softer, lawbreakers would think twice before running the risk of getting sent to jail.

To deal with the officers' point of view is pretty hopeless. They are doing their jobs for money. They have been bought by the State to carry out its dirty work and it is only a certain type of person who would allow himself to be used in this way. It is significant that prison officers are nearly all ex-service N.C.O.'s and the position of authority over men and women denied all freedom and deprived of all privileges appeals only to those of an already sadistic or at least authoritarian mentality.

Those outside prisons who have the same attitude could perhaps cure themselves by the very simple process of having a spell inside—as a prisoner enjoying the comforts. It's not difficult to arrange, for Her Majesty is very hospitable.

Anglo-Spanish Relations Continued from p. 1

Pola had gone into another room and done a bit of shouting, the victim would be taken away by car and placed in a home, and would probably be a wreck for life. That is the result of the Franco régime.

I asked for permission to go to the Carcel Modelo Prison. I had an interpreter with me. I found that 750 people were at a concert. It was a public holiday and a holy day. The 750 people included fathers, brothers, sons and daughters of the prisoners. I found a most amazing attitude among those people. They rose from their seats and cheered the prison governor and the civil governor of the town. The whole thing was unnatural to me. I have never heard prisoners cheering their warders—even in Glasgow.

I was for two hours on the platform at the concert. Afterwards toys, made by the prisoners, and fruit and sweets were given out to the children present. I asked the governor of the prison how many prisoners he had there, and he said he had 2,250. I replied, "I have seen 750. I have been in the prison before, during the civil war, when the Communists held 600 anti-Fascists caught in Madrid, who had been criticising the Communist rule. The other prisoners are on a balcony behind an iron and steel grill. Could I see them?"

The governor was becoming uncomfortable. I told him there must be 1,500 I had not seen, and he replied, "You would be near dangerous men who were taken with bombs and machine guns in their possession." I said, "Surely they have no machine guns or bombs in their possession now. I am prepared to take the risk if you will allow me to see them." I also raised the matter with the civil governor, but I could not get in to these men. I decided that the whole thing was such a fake that I would withdraw from the prison. I left and made a statement at the end.

I saw a suit of clothes, belonging to a young man who had been beaten up, taken out of a safe in the Embassy in Barcelona by the British Press officer. It was a light suit soaked in the blood of this young man, who had died after he had been beaten up. These are things which I know have taken place in Spain.

But as to Anglo-Spanish relations, Mr. McGovern joins the realists:

"If in the present struggle for the defence of Western ideals we are prepared to compromise with dictators in Russia, Poland, Hungary, Roumania, Czechoslovakia, Albania and Eastern Germany, why should we stop when we come to Spain? As I have said, I loathe all dictators, but the way to consolidate a dictator is by attempting to overthrow him from outside. There must be a gradual loosening of the chains.

I think that if we were prepared to say to Spain in clear and unmistakable language that we are prepared to apply the Marshall Plan to her, to give her economic assistance, and to bring her into the United Nations on condition that a liberalising process is begun in Spain, and that Franco should show the way, such a declaration would do more towards changing the attitude of the Spanish people and the Spanish Administration towards this country than anything else. I say that because it would force the present régime, through popular opinion in unknown places, to make that change in order to give the people of Spain the peace and prosperity that they want."

For the Member of Cheadle, Mr. W. Shepherd there was "nothing to choose" between the contestants in the Civil War. The Spanish people are difficult material to handle as their "instincts... are not particularly democratic". Mr. Shepherd (who prided himself with having written more against Franco "than perhaps any other member of the Tory Party"—which is not saying a lot) added: "The Spaniard is probably the most anarchistic man in the whole of Europe. Their democratic tendencies are not pronounced". Other members who spoke in the debate were at pains to show that they were realists and not sentimental idealists in these matters. A few made a show of defending democracy and freedom, but this was not an easy task in view of their willingness to negotiate with other governments which if no worse than Franco's could hardly be described as liberal or democratic. In replying for the Government the Joint Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr.

League Against Capital Punishment

Another Successful London Meeting

IT is heartening to see that the recently formed League Against Capital Punishment, which was conceived in the heat of the Bentley affair, still retains its enthusiasm and support. Notwithstanding the morbidity of the subject under discussion, the second meeting, held last Wednesday, 13th May, had in common with the first an atmosphere of enthusiasm which can no doubt be put down to the youth and positive aims of the League, as well as to the diverse beliefs held by the competent panel of speakers.

The legal, moral and practical reasons for the abolition of the death penalty were put forward by PHILIP SANSOM, JEAN HENDERSON, VICTOR YATES, CANON CARPENTER, F. A. RIDLEY and a speaker from Norway.

PHILIP SANSOM, speaking first, dealt with the broad social implications of murder and the death penalty, making it clear that neither of these manifestations of a sick society could be considered isolated and outside the general social pattern. But the aim of the League was to eradicate the death penalty from the Statutes here and now and public opinion should be organised to that end.

JEAN HENDERSON followed, and was of the opinion, born out of her legal experience that, trials were conducted in a fair and just way according to law. Her opposition to the death penalty was based on moral grounds. No man should be judged when he is acting at his worst, she maintained, a sentiment that found a sympathetic echo in most of our minds. She went on to say that although we had

progressed from the days when petty theft was severely punished, property was still considered more valuable than persons.

The NORWEGIAN speaker who, for obvious reasons did not offer an opinion on the British judicial system, gave us facts and figures about the abolition of capital punishment in Norway which spoke for themselves. The last execution for a peace-time crime in his country took place eighty years ago, and capital punishment was finally abolished in 1902. No statistics are available before 1846 but since that date there has been a continuous decline in crime. The speaker put this down to the growing enlightenment of the people, a greater respect for human life, a higher standard of living and the greater efficiency of the police! Since the war and the invasion of Norway by the Germans, hanging was re-established for certain war crimes. It is not surprising to us that Norway with a record of 127 years free from war should have been sufficiently enlightened to abolish hanging. It is significant however, that a war should have brought in its train the desire for revenge. Let us hope that its significance is not lost on the Norwegian people.

VICTOR YATES, M.P., a consistent pacifist, spoke next. He gave us to believe that not a few people in the House of Commons were disturbed about the death penalty, and reminded us that the retrospective step of trying to re-introduce flogging had been overwhelmingly opposed in the House. Prisons, he be-

lieved were for the purposes of reform, not punishment.

CANON CARPENTER followed, and gave us a profound exposition of the Christian ethic. Man, he said, is an end in himself and not a means to an end. Given fallible man, he can behave under duress in an anti-social way, but his right as a person must be respected, and no community has the right to claim the final judgment. From the Christian standpoint, he believed that the death penalty was blasphemy and set a limit on the Grace of God.

FRANK RIDLEY ably summarised the contributions from the other speakers. He also pointed out that class distinction was inevitably a part of the law by virtue of the fact that most so-called criminals were products of the oppressed classes, and that the more economically sound rarely came into contact with conditions which would encourage them to break the law. Crimes, he said, were being created as fast as they were abolished, and the hangman was made a criminal in the course of his execution.

The meeting was concluded by questions and discussion and the chairman, Gerald Kingshott, read messages of sympathy from:— Victor Gollancz, Jennie Lee, Emrys Hughes, Christopher Hollis, John Rankin, Fenner Brockway, Walter Padley, Desmond Donnelly, Bessie Bradock, James Hudson, Lord Templewood, Wendy Hiller, Kathleen Lonsdale, Christopher Fry, Charles Duff, Sybil Thorn-dyke. R.M.

AMERICAN LETTER Brainwashing American P.O.W's

A CURRENT news item states that the U.S. Defence Department says P.O.W.'s suspected of having been misled by Communist propaganda would be sent for psychiatric treatment. A later item reports that twenty-two repatriated American prisoners of the Korean war, labelled "Propaganda victims", are being flown to a veteran's hospital in the eastern part of the United States. They will receive no television interviews, no \$100 a night hotel suites or lavish welcome home parties like their more normal comrades.

Now, maybe these fellows legitimately require psychiatric treatment and hospitalization. As is typical the whole operation is veiled in mystery. Only enough information is released to make one wonder if the Washington administration hasn't blindly stumbled onto a new mechanism for thought-control.

In lighthearted moments, many of us must have thought that anyone who falls for the Communist line is somewhat daft. But this new twist of the Federal government is serious business. To it the fact that P.O.W.'s are misled by Communist propaganda is sufficient reason to consider them mentally disturbed to the extent that they require hospitalization. Would it be too fantastic to view this as not being too far removed from the position that everyone who disagrees with the powers that be is a legitimate candidate for similar treatment?

I would submit that the U.S. government might well expand its rehabilitation programme for P.O.W propaganda victims to the point where its own totalitarianism might flourish without concentration camps and court trials for heresy. Instead, all the malcontents, reformers and other impractical people could be dis-

Nutting, also stressed the need for realistic policies. "Anyone in my position—he said—cannot determine their foreign relationships upon an ideological basis." Quite so. In fact we have always made this point when the politicians have tried to explain their actions by reference to high-sounding principles!

And the present policy of the Government is to encourage improved relations, for by so doing it "opens up a useful market for the export of goods... In the present economic circumstances of this country and of the world, we simply cannot afford to ignore any markets". There was no question of inviting Spain to join the North Atlantic Treaty countries, and the negotiations with America are that country's private concern "provided it is not at the expense of N.A.T.O. and that it does not raise the question of Spanish membership of N.A.T.O."

And with a House abounding with realists how better could Mr. Nutting sum up than with these final words:

"In short, our policy is to develop step by step, not on a basis of ideology, but on a basis of mutual profit and interest." R.

posed of by psychiatric boards and placed in mental hospitals. In place of fines and prison sentences, we would have indefinite hospitalization with psycho-therapeutic treatment, electric shock or pre-frontal lobotomy depending on the seriousness of the disease. Indeed, it would be a system quite similar to Russian re-orientation or re-indoctrination programmes, only the Russian crudeness and lack of subtlety would be superseded by refinement and pure science.

Let it be noted that I have the greatest respect for the psychiatric profession and most of its work but I think all psychiatrists, lay analysts, clinical psychologists and any others who purport to deal medically and scientifically with peoples' thoughts and ideas ought to be greatly disturbed by this basic moral question—one which Dr. Erich Fromm has dealt with and, I believe, admirably well. That is, is it to be the purpose of those devoting themselves to healing sick minds to help produce critical, yet appreciative individuals or to make mediocre, adjusted people i.e., contented cows. If it is their aim to be able and distinguished dairy farmers then, indeed, the forces of narrow conformity and entrenched power have gained a most potent ally and we may yet see a rehabilitation programme for propaganda victims of the Korean war expanded to a veritable dictatorship of the psychiatrists.

Newtonville, Mass. HAROLD BARCLAY.
May 3.

Readers write: MYSTICISM & ANARCHISM

I CAN well understand the bewilderment of your reader who thought he had picked up the *Catholic Herald* by mistake. After reading Giovanni Baldelli's article "Mysticism and Anarchism" I was beginning to wonder whether I had not made the same mistake myself.

The article is typical of theological and metaphysical writing in general. Its author has made great use of symbols without any discoverable reference, such as "God", "soul", and "spiritual forces"; and there is hardly an abstraction that he has not hypostatized. Having thus, in Ogden and Richards's memorable phrase, "peopled the universe with suprious entities", he then invites us to contemplate the verbal monsters he has manufactured inside his skull and to draw inferences about our conduct as anarchists from the behaviour of his private universe.

We should be wise to decline this invitation. Anarchism is pragmatical and empirical rather than speculative, and it does not need the dubious support of religion, morality, or philosophy since its validity as a theory depends only on its correspondence with observable facts and its ability to produce the results expected of it. "Results don't matter to the mystic", we are told. They matter very much to the anarchist.

London, N.W.6. EDWIN PEAKE.
May 13.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting
HYDE PARK
Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

INDOOR MEETINGS

At 9, Fitzroy Square, Warren Street, London, W.1.

MAY 26—Internationalist on EVIDENCE ON THE NON-EXISTENCE OF JESUS
JUNE 2—No Meeting.

The meetings will be held on TUESDAYS at 7.30 p.m.

NORTH-EAST LONDON

DISCUSSION MEETINGS IN EAST HAM

Alternate Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL

DISCUSSION MEETINGS at

101 Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool, 8.
Every Sunday at 8 p.m.

GLASGOW

OUTDOOR MEETINGS

from now until further notice at

MAXWELL STREET, Sundays at 7 p.m.

With John Gaffney, Eddie Shaw,

MANCHESTER LIBERTARIAN GROUP

Meetings at

LAND O' CAKES HOTEL
Gt. Ancoats Street, (by Daily Express)

at 7 p.m. on 2nd & 4th Sundays in every month. May 10, 24 June 14, 28, etc.

Enquiries to:

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