

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Of what use is freedom of thought, if it will not produce freedom of action?"

—SWIFT.

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Threepence

## ... AND NOW THERE ARE TWO

"The Executive Committee of the Communist Party [of Gt. Britain] conveyed to the Soviet people 'our deepest sense of solidarity with them in their bereavement.' The speeches of comrades Malenkov, Beria and Molotov 'proclaiming the Soviet Union's policy for peace among all peoples based on mutual trust' are of profound significance for the peoples of all countries, it said".

—Daily Worker, March 16, 1953.

"Nothing less than the foiling by the highest organ of the Party of a plot by Beria to seize power is seen here as the meaning of the decision stripping him of the powers which he obtained by various cunning manoeuvres . . . His removal may thus be considered as a triumph for the principle of civil rights being respected and the right of the Communist Party to supervise the work of every organ of the State, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs."

—Daily Worker, July 11, 1953.

★

THE removal of Beria from the ruling triumvirate in Russia is not a surprise. As we pointed out in FREEDOM following Stalin's death it was inevitable that in the struggle for power someone had to go. What was in doubt was who the victim would be. On the law of averages Secret Police chiefs in Russia seem to be "the worse risks", and poor Beria simply proves this rule once more, and for all we know has by now experienced the fate of his many victims.

This old Bolshevik, who only four months ago moved the adoption of a measure appointing Mr. Malenkov chairman of the Council of Ministers; who declared, (and we quote the *Daily Worker*, March 16), that "The C.P. and the whole Soviet people knew and respected Mr. Malenkov as a highly gifted pupil of Lenin and a colleague of Stalin"; this Mr. Beria who in his Stalin funeral oration declared:

"Our great leaders Lenin and Stalin have taught us to increase untiringly the vigilance of the

Party and the people against intrigues of enemies of the Soviet State. Let nobody think that the enemies of the Soviet Union can catch us unawares."

This Mr. Beria is now described by the Communist Party paper *Pravda* as:

"Beria, the people's enemy who has now been unmasked by various careerist machinations and who wormed himself into confidence and threaded his way to leadership.

First, his criminal, anti-Party and anti-State activity was deeply concealed and marked, but lately—having become impudent and letting himself go—Beria started to disclose his real face, the face of a criminal enemy of the Party and the Soviet peoples.

Such intensification of Beria's criminal activities can be explained by the general intensification of the undermining, anti-Soviet activities of international reactionary forces which are hostile to our State. International imperialism is becoming more active, and so are its agents.

How naïve are the communist stooges. Here is the *Daily Worker* of March 10, in an editorial "Hand of Peace": "Now that the Soviet leaders [Malenkov, Beria, Mototov] have spoken, there is no longer any excuse for waiting to see what the new Government will do. It will continue the glorious Stalin policy". And yet all the time Beria was a foreign agent, and in the words of *Pravda*, dutifully printed by the *Daily Worker* of July 11, 1953:

"Irrefutable facts prove that Beria lost the face of a Communist and changed into a bourgeois renegade and became an agent of international imperialism.

An adventurist and hireling of foreign imperialist forces, he hatched plans to grab the leadership of the Party and country with the aim of actually destroying the Communist Party and to change the policy elaborated by the Party by a capitulatory policy which would have brought about ultimately the restoration of capitalism."

Now either Stalin and the Communist leaders were blind idiots, or the accusations against Beria are as false as the accusations levelled at the doctors who last January were charged with attempting to poison Stalin & Co. (and who were cleared

of all charges in April). Our local Communist stooges can make their choice!

★

EXPERTS on Russian affairs have been making the usual speculations as to what the Beria purge means in terms of future Russian policy. Knowing very little of what happens among the hierarchy in the Kremlin we feel as competent as the "experts" to make our own speculations! What has taken place is a "palace revolution", a naked struggle for personal power,\* in which ideological and political differences play no significant part, though for public consumption such an impression must now be created. The *Pravda* statement declares that first Beria's "criminal, anti-party, and anti-State activity was deeply concealed and masked, but lately—having become impudent and letting himself go—Beria started to disclose his real face, the face of a criminal enemy of the party and the Soviet peoples." Yet it appears that the Russian people knew nothing about this impudent man's criminal activities until last Friday but now that they have been told they confirm his guilt with millions of anti-Beria resolutions, and without even giving

\*It may be pointed out to us that the *Pravda* statement clearly states that there was no one, whatever position he might hold, who was above the strict control of the Party, which must place under State control the activities of all organisations and persons in positions of responsibility. If that were true can they explain how Beria was able to hold so much power in his hands as to threaten the whole Soviet Union?

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## Who Pays the Lawyers in Murder Trials?

THE Home Secretary was asked in the House last week to what extent Christie who was found guilty of murdering his wife "has been allowed since his conviction to communicate with representatives of any newspaper, or with any persons other than officials and his legal advisers". This question was prompted by the publication in the *News Chronicle* of an alleged confession by Christie to a prison official that he had not only killed Mrs. Evans but also her child, for whose death Evans had been found guilty and hanged, and also the publication in the *Sunday Pictorial* of a series of sordid articles written by Christie about his life story. The Home Secretary's reply was that no facilities were offered Christie to communicate with the Press and that since the date of his conviction he had received no visits except from his "legal advisers". When asked "Would the Minister say whether it would be possible for the legal advisers to act as intermediaries with the Press" he replied: "The Hon. Member must hold his own opinions on that."

The *Sunday Pictorial* is at pains to show that the Christie "confessions" are genuine when it reproduces in facsimile a page of the manuscript in Christie's own hand. We must assume that this is not a forgery. When, in that case, did Christies write these confessions? It must have been either before his arrest or since. In the former case it would mean that he was directly or indirectly in contact with the *Sunday Pictorial*, perhaps at a time when he was being hunted by the police. On the other hand, the indications are that for a number of days prior to his arrest he was wandering aimlessly in London, sleeping in doss-houses and showing signs of not having regular meals. One feels that it is unlikely that he had the necessary facilities to sit down and write his life story. Or was he perhaps sheltered by some Press sleuth for a few days whilst he wrote his confessions?

If he wrote his life story in prison then

it is clear that this was only possible with the connivance of members of the prison staff.

These questions are raised because we think it high time something was done to expose the gutter press' vested interest in Murder. We agree with the views expressed by Emrys Hughes when he was told by the Home Secretary that no facilities were given to people convicted of murder to write articles for the press:

Mr. Hughes: Does the Minister not think that some reconsideration should be given to all these arrangements? Does he not think that this arrangement between the legal profession and the press for the exploitation of murder has gone to the extent that it needs to be tackled as an offence against social morality? Does he not think that this regular exploitation of murder has made a section of the British press earn the reputation of being the worst press in the world, and that the time has come when this should be a question for investigation?

Sir Hugh: No facilities are provided. The implications in your question are not for me.

An enquiry as to who paid the legal fees in the Christie case might be quite revealing.

R.

## ALL IN A WEEK-END'S FUN

CHICAGO, July 6 (U.P.)—

At least 254 persons were killed in traffic accidents in the United States during the Fourth of July week end, half of them in the last 14 hours of the holiday period when motorists were rushing to get home.

A survey showed to-day that 122 persons drowned during the period from Friday night through Sunday. Plane crashes killed three persons and 43 died in miscellaneous accidents. Fireworks killed one persons, and injured scores. The over-all total of violent deaths was 423.

## MCCARTHY: VATICAN STOOGES?

THE Vatican, like the Kremlin, has a vast army of devout stooges outside its precincts propagating the faith by whatever means are available to them in the various countries throughout the world. In "democratic" countries where they are in the minority, Catholics, like Communists, are very often well to the fore in the fight for civil liberties, especially if their own rights are threatened. When however, either of these two malignant groups are solely in power in any country their true nature is then revealed to us.

In America, where Catholics are still in the minority (although their support is rapidly increasing, and they are by far the most effective religious group) they play a very subtle game. It has been observed by reliable students of Catholicism that there is a special brand peculiar to America which was first frowned upon by the hierarchy in Rome, until its propaganda value was realised when it was immediately encouraged.

Hence in 1928 for example, when the Catholic Candidate Smith was canvassing for the Presidency he had this to say:—"I summarize my creed as an American Catholic. I believe in the worship of God according to the faith and practice of the Roman Catholic Church. I recognise no power in the institution of my Church to interfere with the operation of the Constitution or the enforcement of the law of the United States. I believe in the absolute freedom of conscience for all men and equality of all Churches . . . in the absolute separation of Church and State."

This statement not only contradicts every encyclical letter on religion, state, etc., written through the centuries up to the present by the Popes, but astonishes those people who have suffered under a Catholic domination in Europe. This policy has won for the Catholic Church in America a tremendous amount of power in the fields of entertainment,

education and politics and a great deal of co-operation from the predominantly Protestant community which up until the beginning of the first world war was viciously anti-Catholic.

The united front of Catholics and Protestants, historical bitter enemies, has largely been due to the Communist bogey in America, and is the reason why a Catholic like McCarthy has been allowed so much scope. His recent blunder however in appointing the ex-Marxist J. B. Mathews to Director of the Subcommittee of Investigations may prove that the Christian alliance may not be as firmly sealed as we would have thought. The appointment was made by McCarthy about three weeks ago, after which an article written by Mathews appeared in the *American Mercury*, a monthly journal which the *Manchester Guardian* Washington reporter describes as a "squalid expression of envenomed prejudice".

In this article Mathews attacks some of the American clergy and states "that the largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the United States today is composed of Protestant clergymen, and that at least seven thousand of them serve the Kremlin conspiracy". A rule applying to the members of the Investigations Committee that they must not write for outside publications while they are members is not applicable in this case, says McCarthy, because the article was written before Mathews was appointed.

One recalls the hundreds of cases of ex-Communists and fellow travellers who had hoped that their pasts had been well forgotten, and had to suffer the consequences of the McCarthy un-American label for their "sins". McCarthy's refusal to accept Mathew's resignation from the committee because he feels "he has no right of censorship over anyone" would be screamingly funny if it were

not the case that so many people have suffered as a result of his activities.

President Eisenhower's "attack" on McCarthyism forced on him by messages received at the White House from the "three great religious faiths protesting against the slurs on the clergy" by a member of the Investigations Committee, is calculated to allay the suspicions and the indignation of the Protestant element, but it will take more than a reprimand from the President to stop McCarthy. Since McCarthy has deemed it expedient to accept the resignation of his pal Mathews he has renewed his investigating activities with greater vigour in other directions, his latest victims being Allan Dulles, chief of the Central Intelligence Agency and A. P. Bundy of the same Agency.

No doubt, however, all the fuss will blow over as Catholics and Protestants alike are more afraid of the "Communist aesthetic creed" than of each other—at the moment. But perhaps a lesson can be learned from the event:

McCarthy must have known, since he sanctioned Mathews' appointment, that there would be repercussions from the strong Protestant element when the obviously anti-Protestant article appeared. Especially when we consider, as Alistair Cooke points out, that McCarthy has landed himself in the kind of trouble "as a Roman Catholic and a politician he has been most careful to avoid". It is therefore quite reasonable to deduce that religious prejudice was a stronger driving force on this occasion than political or economic gain, and it may also be a lesson to many of us who sometimes feel that Protestantism stands for greater freedom than Catholicism, that the only occasion in the black history of McCarthy's predominantly Protestant committee when any of them uttered a protest was when their own religious group was attacked.

R.M.

## THE PRICE OF COAL

AT the conference of the National Union of Mineworkers just concluded at Hastings, a resolution was passed calling for an investigation into the causes for the high price of coal to the consumer.

The miners claimed that they produce the coal at a cost of about 5s. per ton—but by the time it reaches the domestic consumer it costs £6 to £7 a ton.

### Price the Miners' Concern

Mr. D. R. Llewellyn, of Somerset, calling for an enquiry said that the high price was causing serious concern to millions.

"It is no use us saying the price of coal is no concern of ours," he said.

There was a misunderstanding with other workers over the price of coal. One way to end it was by lowering production costs. Another was by trying to end the gap between pithead prices and those to householders.

"The miners are as puzzled as anyone else about coal prices," said Mr. Llewellyn.

And certainly the tremendous discrepancy which exists should be not only the concern of the miners, but of all of us. Some of the delegates at Hastings blamed the middlemen, and clearly some pretty hefty profits are being piled up between the time when the coal leaves the pit-head and when it is finally shot

into the householder's cellar.

But the pit-head price is already £2 17s. 3d. a ton—a substantial increase on 5s.—and contributory factors to that increase are the compensation still being paid to the ex-owners and the salaries which have to be paid to the army of officials and job-holders who live on the backs of the miners—to say nothing of all their cars and the purchase and upkeep of all the mansions needed to house them.

### Produce for Need

Cut out the compensation and cut down the number of bureaucrats, and a noticeable difference in the price of coal will be effected. But then there will remain the middlemen—and the distributive trade is in the hands of private enterprise dealers whose only motive in carrying on their business is to make profit.

With the people who actually do the work in control of both production and distribution all the parasites could be dispensed with and coal would be produced to satisfy the needs of the community, instead of being just another money-making commodity produced by the blood and sweat of workers and rapidly being priced out of the reach of those who need it most in the interests of those who buy and sell but produce nothing.



## ANARCHISM & RESULTS

COMMENTING on my article on "Mysticism and anarchism" Edwin Peake wrote (FREEDOM, May 23rd) that "results matter very much to the anarchist" and that the "validity (of anarchism) as a theory depends only on its correspondence with observable facts and its ability to produce the results expected of it". Anarchist theory, in other words, would be a scientific theory to be tested accordingly by the scientific method, and no doubt Edwin Peake has good reasons to hold this opinion as I believe I have to hold a contrary one.

I hold that anarchism deals with values and not with facts, that it is ethical and not pragmatic, that it is a world-and-life-affirmation, and not a science as Marxism claims to be with its well-known scientific applications in Leninism and Stalinism. One reason for my opinion, to quote Albert Schweitzer, a curate and theologian now working in a forest hospital in Equatorial Africa, is that "if we take the world as it is, it is impossible to attribute to it a meaning in which the aims and objects of mankind and of individual men have a meaning also. Neither world-and-life-affirmation nor ethics can be founded on what our (scientific) knowledge of the world can tell us about the world".

As a challenge to our present civilization, as I assume anarchism purports to be, it would be strange if not fatal if it borrowed the standard by which to measure its own validity and value from the (un)-ethics of success on which this civilization is founded. A preoccupation with results, I am afraid, would prove infected from such (un)-ethics of success. Judging by results the Nazi theory ought to have been reputed valid as long as it proved successful. It proved unsuccessful in the end because people did not believe in its validity, and not vice versa.

Preoccupation with results could also vitiate anarchism with a distinction between ends and means, eagerness and haste in attaining ends may lead to judge of means mainly by their expediency or lead to making a hell of our present life for the sake of a future paradise.

With results becoming the primary concern of an anarchist movement its field of action would be carefully studied, and a strategy developed, its tactics constantly changing according to changing situations, and there would be little to distinguish it from a political party. We saw this happening in Spain, and it will inevitably happen again wherever an anarchist movement becomes a strong component of the social structure and has to be reckoned with by other social components as it has to reckon with them especially if the whole of society is caught in the grips of a revolutionary crisis. But it was generally agreed among observers that anarchist practice in Spain was no longer anarchist, and Garcia Pradas is now showing in a series of articles appearing in *España Libre* that anarchism and revolution could not and cannot go together. For revolutions are historical, and to be carried out or simply lived through, the choice of desirable results must be severely limited and subordinated to the necessity of physical survival. Anarchists in a revolutionary situation must think in terms of power or, at least, of human lives to be defended, and the means they will use to achieve survival will be strongly conditioned by the nature of the means

brought against them by their enemies.

Even without revolution, and unless the only results to be expected are through the efficacy of example, anarchism needs power to objectify and socialize itself, and the conquest or use of power, be it only the power of making itself known through a weekly paper, imposes objectives and achieves results that are not due to anarchism as a doctrine or a way of life. If not limiting itself to be a spiritual force, anarchism must be an historical force, and whatever result it will achieve will not be represented by its own line of force, but, to take the simplest case of only one other force in the field, by the diagonal of the parallelogram of which anarchism and the other force give the length of the sides. The point of this analogy is to show that pure anarchist results are an historical impossibility, and it is addressed to the widely cherished though never stated belief that anarchism could yield social and historical results of a kind it could only achieve if both history and society were a vacuum.

But beside result-minded anarchists we must acknowledge the existence of at least two other types, whether they call themselves anarchists or not. There is the religious type whose loyalty to the Kingdom of God make him an enemy of or a passive resistant to any kingdom of men, even when this kingdom of men is a church, and there is the unconscious natural type, the peasant of Spengler, who lives on the margin, beneath and beyond history, and whose deepest, unshakable aspiration is a world with no history.

As for militant anarchism itself I would say that its characteristics are a splendid aimlessness, "élan" instead of purpose, spontaneity instead of calculation, a somewhat ascetic transcendence

instead of gluttony for life, an aristocratic set of values instead of prosperity and practical improvements, ideal instead of programme, attitude instead of deed, noble and animal unreasonableness, the heart instead of reason, and truth to oneself even at the price of constant failure, even at the price of death.

Undoubtedly I have mainly Spanish anarchism in mind, and an idealised picture of it at that, but then Spanish anarchism was and still is the most militant, and I would have nothing in common with anarchism if I looked at it dispassionately and dissectingly with the eyes of a natural historian.

My picture, moreover, has many traits in common with that of the Spanish people and its history as idealised by Spanish essayists, particularly of the 98 generation. If Don Quixote is the typical embodiment of the Spanish "Geist" it is equally the embodiment of the Spanish type of anarchism, and Don-Quixotism is just the opposite of a philosophy of results. In his "Commentary" to the immortal book of Cervantes Miguel de Unamuno made it quite clear in spite of a straining of arguments here and there.

A picture of anarchism by an Englishman and from mainly English models will probably be totally different from mine, and the purpose of confronting them, together with many others, is to see whether they are only diverse or mutually contradictory. If they are really contradictory and incompatible, a new, more adequate, more embracing picture will have to be evolved which will be free from errors and one-sidedness and represent a valid synthesis of the truth and value of all competitors through a process very similar to that of "epistemic correlation" that F. S. C. Northrop has suggested for the solution of the conflict between East and West.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI.

### CINEMA

## GO HOME RUSSIANS!

"Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them."

—GEORGE ORWELL.

IT was a week after the East Berlin demonstrations that a "peace" organization held a showing of *The Condemned Village*. The film was made in East Germany and shows how West Germans forced the Americans to temporarily (?) give up the idea of building an airfield by a passive resistance campaign. Technically, the film was not very impressive; a minor irritation verging on the major was the showing of white sub-titles on white backgrounds, making them completely unintelligible. As in all propaganda films, the blacks and whites made the psychology and characterisation ludicrous. The Americans stalked around, one perpetually wore dark glasses like any childhood bogey man. The only bad German was, one gathered from a background of white tablecloth, yearning

to return to his estate in East Prussia, even the building contractors were decent enough to withdraw from the contract. The building workers, that revolutionary class showed absolute solidarity with the villagers in their campaign.

Of course everybody knows that a peace campaign means that we must hate all Americans, (some) Germans, (West-)misled, (some) English. American airfields in West Germany are bad. Russian airfields in East Germany are good (or geographically unnecessary). Popular demonstrations by building workers are good (in *The Condemned Village*), but in reality, in East Berlin, they are fascist-inspired.

This mental feat is common to all politicians. The shooting of Willi Goetting is an outrage, the executions in Malaya and Kenya are a political necessity.

It is good that people should resist tyranny but this myopic view that one side only is the bad cries aloud for a two dimensional film.

J.R.

## The Freedom to Read

[The declaration on the freedom to read grew out of an emergency conference held in New York State early in May by publishers and librarians, with Dr. Luther Evans, Librarian of Congress, in the chair. It was prepared by a committee consisting of Dr. Evans, Mr. Black and Mr. R. Downs, Mr. Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., president of Steuben Glass; Professor Harold Lasswell, of Yale Law School; Mr. William Dix, Librarian of Princeton University; Mr. John Cory, of New York Public Library; and Mr. Dan Lacy, managing director of the American Book Publishers Council. Other signatories include prominent publishers and librarians and members of the universities and the legal profession. Mr. Black and Mr. Downs have announced that they will seek endorsement by other citizen's groups throughout the United States].

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as libraries and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow-citizens.

We trust Americans to recognise propaganda, and to reject obscenity. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favour free enterprise in ideas and expression.

### Shadow of Fear

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure towards conformity is, perhaps, natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with stress.

Now, as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice, from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organised collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the reader to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free men will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

### Seven Propositions

We therefore affirm these propositions: 1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until his idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its

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## The Bolsheviks and the Peasant Problem

[In our article on the new policy in Hungary (FREEDOM 11/7/53) we drew a parallel with the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.) in Russia in 1921. The parallel is in fact so striking that we think it timely to reproduce the chapter on The Land from Marie Louise Berneri's book Workers in Stalin's Russia—EDITORS].

THE status of the Russian peasantry has been submitted to many drastic changes since the Revolution. The land passed successively from the hands of the State to those of the peasants and then back to the State again which has kept a more or less rigid control over it ever since.

Now practically the whole of Russian agriculture (90 per cent.) is organised for collective farming. It would be a mistake to believe, however, that Russian collectives have something in common with those created in Spain during the first period of the Revolution by the peasants themselves for their own benefit and that of their fellow workers in the cities. The agricultural collectives in the U.S.S.R. were, as their history shows, created by the State, and imposed by it for its own profit.

In 1917 the Russian peasant helped the industrial worker to overthrow the Tsarist régime, in the hope of conquering the land. It was divided into two categories before the revolution: the land owned by the big proprietors and the communal land which was divided amongst the members of the village every six, eight, ten or twelve years. The land claimed by the peasants in 1917 was that of the big landowners which they wanted to divide to increase the lot of each family holding and redistribute it periodically, according to the traditional practice of the Mir.

The first social-revolutionary government had to abide

by the desires of the peasants and agree to the distribution of the land. As Maynard, in *The Russian Peasant: and other Studies*, describes it, the initiative came from the peasants and the Government merely ratified an accomplished fact:

"After the November Revolution, the agrarian legislation of the new Government was a concession to this demand. The little group of Bolshevik and Left Social Revolutionary rulers gave the peasant *nag his head* (November 8th, 1917). It was a return to the dream of a 'black redistribution', which has danced in the village brain, at intervals, ever since the disappointment of the Emancipation decree. Live and dead stock was to be confiscated and distributed along with the land. Stud, cattle-breeding, and poultry farms were to become the property of the State".

"After the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly a further decree was promulgated. It explicitly abolished private property in land, mineral wealth, waters and forests (February 19th, 1918). It left the local Soviets to make the redistribution, and defined the aims as including the 'encouragement of collective farming' as the more advantageous system in point of labour-saving and productivity, at the expense of individual farming, with a view to transition to Socialist agriculture".

The State thus legalised the expropriation and redistribution of the land by the peasants. It did not however give its support to the Communal farms which had been created for the common use of the land and which would if they had been a success, have iced the peasants to put and work their holdings in common.

The Bolshevik Government instead of trying to spread collectivization of the land as it had decided in 1918, attempted on the contrary to stimulate private enter-

prise. The forced requisitions of grain which were extensively carried out during the period known as "war communism" had reduced agriculture to a state of bankruptcy. In order to remedy it the Government introduced the N.E.P., Russian contraction for *Novaya Ekonomicheskaya Politika* (New Economic Policy). It was adopted by the 10th Congress of the Party in 1921 and lasted until 1927. It relaxed Government control on agriculture, allowed the Mir to choose between individual and collective farming and admitted a certain amount of private initiative and profit. This return to capitalist economy is described by Maynard in the following words:

"This period was one in which the leasing of estates from poorer peasants and their cultivation by hired labour increased, and both these practices received official sanction in 1924 provided that the period of lease should not exceed twelve years. In 1927 the whole of the so-called socialised sector of agriculture, including both state-farms and lands tilled communally, amounted to no more than 3% of the whole."

The N.E.P.\* introduced inequalities, profiteering and exploitation of the poorer peasant by more privileged ones. But while it lasted production went up and agriculture partly recovered from the blow administered to

\*Lerin and Bukharin did not try to hide at the time the counter-revolutionary nature of the N.E.P. Their surprisingly frank comments recorded in the preface to *The Workers and Peasants of Russia*, by A. Souchy, are worth quoting:

Lerin said, in a speech made on October 17th, 1921: "Our new economic policy consists essentially in this, that we in this respect have been thoroughly defeated, let us retreat and DO EVERYTHING ALL OVER AGAIN, but more steadily. Communists cannot have the slightest doubt that we on the economic front have suffered an economic defeat, and a very serious defeat at that."

Bukharin frankly admitted that the N.E.P. was instituted by the Bolsheviks in order to maintain themselves in power: "the fact of the matter is that we are making economic concessions in order to avoid making political concessions".

Continued on p. 3



## WHAT NEW FACTOR IS REQUIRED?

IT has become a truism that while science has helped mankind to a vast increase in his ability to control natural forces, man has not yet learned to control science. Such platitudes are boring enough: but the atom bomb has made men's relationship to technical science appallingly clear to everyone. The twentieth century has been the age of wars, each one more devastating than the last, and each demonstrating that though our social and economic system seems to need wars, it does not know how to control them either. The atomic bomb differs from the "war-science" of the past however in two aspects. First, it has been used, and with sufficient success to make the temptation to use it again hard to resist. And secondly, that though its effects in radiation sickness on those who survive are recognized, there appear to be no clear methods of controlling this aspect of its use. The overall picture therefore is one that recalls Frankenstein in the disturbing vision of men handling forces which are far beyond their control.

Such is the situation of science in the service of war. But it will not do to be so horrified by the potentialities for destruction of the atom bomb that one fails to recognize that the same problem dominates every other sphere of that disordered human activity known as political economy. There can be no superficial solution to any of these problems of atomic war, the recurrence of war itself, economic poverty, and the political destruction of individual freedom. Each horrible aspect of our age may seem to present an insoluble problem when taken separately. Yet the growth of all such social issues into major shadows over mankind suggests that they are all connected together and that it may therefore be more profitable to seek to deal with all of them together rather than to single out the worst or the most pressing and attempt to mitigate them one by one.

For example, many people feel that the outlawing of the atomic bomb is the most important objective to be aimed at. Others may go further and see the bomb as the reason which finally puts war itself out of court, and therefore concern themselves with such mechanisms as the United Nations or World Government as a means of excluding war from international relations.

FREEDOM has always drawn attention to the interconnections between war and economy and has therefore pressed the need for a revolutionary approach to the social and economic systems which underlie wars and poverty alike. Approaching from another angle FREEDOM has also stressed the problem presented by the apathy of the masses and the psychological rewards which make wars acceptable to those who suffer most from them. Such an approach leads to the same kind of conclusion: that the problem of war cannot be treated in isolation but involves radical changes in the pattern of "peacetime" life also.

Then there is the issue of control. Who is to control the scientists? How can politicians be safely entrusted with powers which include the atom bomb? These are questions which occur to everyone, and not merely to anarchists. Again the solutions which are tried are as pitifully inadequate as the attempts at the international control of war. The official secrets act, the whole counter-espionage system which involves the "atom-spies" and the "government agents", all these

simply underline the inability of our society to control this problem. Far from men controlling governments, the governments of the West have utilized the atomic bomb to increase security measures which have in effect reduced civil liberty and civil checks on government activity. Instead of more, we have less control over governments than ever.

Now this discussion is not without its immediate topical relevance. It seems almost certain that the tensions set up within the Russian system by the death of the dictator are as great as we suggested both before and after Stalin's death. The struggle for power within the Party must be a factor in weakening central control itself and be partly responsible for the upsurge of pressure from below seen in the satellite countries and perhaps (though unreported) within Russia itself. The important question here is not whether Beria, or Malenkov, or Molotov, or Marshal Bulganin, or some entirely new figure will emerge as the dominant controlling figure: the importance of the present situation in Russia lies in the possibility that central control itself may collapse under the pressure of the millions of Russian workers and peasants, and those of the Russian satellite empire as well.

The new factor in such a situation is a very old factor indeed—the possibility of men and women as a mass entering the political scene and exerting their own influence upon events. Such influence is new in that it represents an entirely different approach from that of the politicians and governmental control. It is, in fact, the revolutionary factor, which offers some hope of breaking through the deadlock which besets all the major problems of wars and atom bombs, poverty and exploitation, apathy and dictatorship.

But this new factor the revolutionary action of a populace is not something which is good only for the Russians. While the Russian leaders fight for power or survival, social forces proceed in America towards the same centralizing, thought-suffocating police state, with Senator McCarthy as its prophet. Einstein has called on intellectuals to resist, but their resistance will be enormously encouraged and strengthened if it is supported by direct

## Bolsheviks & Peasant Problem

it by the policy of "war communism". During that period one can say, that the peasants, or more exactly the middle peasants, had a period of relative felicity and their level of life went up. The average wage at the time of the N.E.P. (1927), if bread is taken as a common unit of measurement, was 800 kilos compared with 170 kilos in 1935 after six years of collectivization. (Yvon: *L'U.R.S.S. telle qu'elle est*).

In 1927 however the N.E.P. was abandoned. Ostensibly it was in order to abolish the inequalities which the policy had created and the exploitation of the poorer peasants by the Kulaks (as the more prosperous peasants were called). In fact the Soviet leaders were not very much concerned with abolishing inequalities in the countryside, especially since they were encouraging greater inequalities in industry and in the Army. What they were concerned about was the carrying on of the Five Year Plan which they had just launched to industrialize the country. For this, capital was needed and the products of the land so as to be able to feed adequately the industrial workers and to produce industrial products which it could in turn sell to the peasants.

There were other materialistic reasons for the Government to favour land collectivization. A very important one was the inability of the State hitherto to collect taxes from the peasants. They had been able to avoid taxation to such an extent that they had actually improved their standard of life. This was a scandalous situation, the abolition of Tsardom had actually benefited the peasant! Maynard explains how this anomaly was created and how Stalin saw to it that it was abolished:

The improvement in the peasants' life "was in part due to the breaking up of point households and the increase in consuming units. In place of 16 million peasant households there were now 25. The increase was stimulated by fiscal arrangements which exempted the poorer households from taxation. The State generally lost something of its dues whenever a household was subdivided: and the attempt to collect dues

## Freedom to Read

Continued from p. 2

citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every non-conformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

### Making Books Available

2. Publishers and librarians do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral or aesthetic views as the sole standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one man can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

### Judged as a Book

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book solely on

intervention on the part of the American population in affairs.

These may be vague conceptions: necessarily so since the potentialities and activity of a mass of people who hold no initiative in ordinary political life cannot be clearly defined, still less predicted. Yet there is nothing vague about the effect of such intervention as the recent uprisings in the Eastern Zone so dramatically showed.

People in general are afraid of revolutionary action. Yet it is gradually coming to be seen as the factor that offers hope for our horrible world, and fear may well give place to welcome. It remains a duty to try and see that when resort is finally made to direct action that the opportunity for tackling problems in the And that the goal of placing the most radical way is not missed. lives of populations in their own hands as individuals is never lost sight of.

the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

A book should be judged as a book. No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free men can flourish which draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

### The Stuff of Life

4. The present laws dealing with obscenity should be vigorously enforced. Beyond that, there is no place in our society for extra-legal efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern literature is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent serious artists from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others. We deplore the catering to the immature, the retarded or the mal-adjusted taste. But those concerned with freedom have the responsibility of seeing to it that each individual book or publication, whatever its contents, price or method of distribution, is dealt with in accordance with due process of law.

### Labels

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterising the book or author as subversive or dangerous.

The idea of labelling supposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It supposes that each individual must be directed in making up his mind about the ideas he examines. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

### Contest Encroachments

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally

collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concepts of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

### Affirmative Responsibility

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality of thought and expression. But the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when expended on the trivial; it is frustrated when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for his purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defence of their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all bookmen the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

### A Lofty Claim

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalisations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of books. We do so because we believe that they are good, possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realise that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

## EXERCISES FOR POLITICIANS

RANGOON, JULY 8.

Hundreds of Buddhist pilgrims came here to-day to see a 41-year-old monk, who has been squatting motionless on a hard wooden table for four days in meditation. During that time he has taken no food or drink. His body has become as hard as stone, and he has lost the senses of touch, smell, and sight.

—Reuter.

from many millions of separate units must, in any event, have been administratively difficult. This is what Stalin meant when he told the Party in April, 1928, that the number of farms must be reduced. The substitution of a limited number of collective farms for a much larger number of households was at once a convenient administrative device, and a means of taxing a large number of persons who were exempted under the poverty law".

The Government also hoped that by introducing collectivization it would be able to increase the productivity of the land (it was to be severely disillusioned in that respect, during the following years) and therefore to increase exports. Another practical reason for the Government to favour collectivization was its need for industrial workers which it thought of drawing from the overpopulated country-side. By expelling the kulak from the villages—and everybody could be regarded as a kulak when it suited the Government—a vast reserve of labour was formed. Some of the dispossessed farmers were employed in labour camps but many drifted to the towns and supplied cheap factory labour.

Without taking into consideration the material interests of the Government the equalitarian desires suddenly manifested by Stalin's Government would appear a mystery. It would also be very difficult to understand why such risks were taken in imposing a decree which disorganized the countryside and caused tremendous losses in grain and animals. Where the Government seemed to lose however, it in fact gained. The losses were only borne by the peasants. The results of collectivization are not to be judged by the increased happiness of the peasant but by the advantages the State would draw from improved fiscal administration, increase in exports, plentiful supply of labour for its industries. Considered in that light collectivization was a success!

The way collectivization was carried out leaves no doubt as to the real intentions of the Government. The first blow to the N.E.P. was dealt by the Congress of the Party which met in December 1927 and which imposed restrictions upon the rights of hiring labour and leasing land. In January 1928 a decree was passed ordering the exclusion of kulaks from the village Soviet. On November 7th, 1929, Stalin in an article entitled *The*

*Year of the Great Crisis* declared war on small peasant economy, justifying the needs of industrialization. "Put the U.S.S.R. in a car and the peasant on a tractor" was the slogan. In the meantime the Government tried to obtain grain from the peasants at low prices in exchange for imaginary industrial goods with the result that the peasants withheld their crops. Searches, forced requisitions, use of the Army and the G.P.U. followed but gave little results.

In January 1930 it was announced that the liquidation of the kulak and the collectivization of the land would be accomplished in three years. "The task was to liquidate from ten to twenty million peasant holdings out of the 25 millions that existed in Russia. It was necessary to share them out between a few hundred kolkhosi, controlled by a few thousand machinery and tractor stations belonging to the State" (Ciliga, *The Russian Enigma*).

This plan could only be carried out by force; it met with great resistance and risings took place all over the country. The G.P.U. conducted the punitive expeditions. "It can be considered that 5,000,000 villagers at least, regardless of sex and age, have been chased from their hearths and doomed to a life of iniquitous misery, many to death" (Souvarine, *Stalin*).

The disastrous results of such a policy obliged Stalin to retreat. On the 2nd of March, 1930, in an article, ironically enough entitled, *Dizzy with Success*, he denounced forced collectivization, putting the blame on the G.P.U. and on too zealous bureaucrats. Not only was collectivization to be slowed down, but it was going to be less radical than originally decided: "Whereas originally everything was to be collectivized down to the last fowl, it was now decided that the peasant was to hand over 'only' essential produce to the collective; his lands, his ploughing cattle, agricultural implements and barns. He was to keep his house, together with what he needed for his own domestic purposes" (Ciliga, *The Russian Enigma*).

The "democratic" character of the collectivization was a mere joke. If execution and exile to Siberia were less frequently used, economic pressure was adopted instead. Starvation or collective farming was the choice.

(to be continued)



# THE ENGLISH MIDDLE CLASSES

THE ENGLISH MIDDLE CLASSES, by Roy Lewis and Angus Maude. (Penguin 2/6).

IN recent issues FREEDOM has been made the ground for a singularly inconclusive battle around the exact definition of what we mean when we talk about a "worker". Such arguments are inevitably indecisive, since social classes are at best approximate categories. We may point to some individual with accuracy and say that he is indubitably a "worker" or indubitably a member of the middle classes, but there are a vast number of individuals whose status is indeterminate (they increase with astonishing rapidity in such societies as those of the United States, Canada and even Switzerland), and once we actually try to establish the boundary line between working class and middle class we are bound to realise how nebulous social classes have become. The feudal classes of nobility, knighthood and priesthood, serf and burgher were relatively clear-cut, but the disintegration of mediaeval society played havoc with traditional conceptions of status.

Indeed, it is probably only in the rigid authoritarian hierarchy of Communist Russia that we can find to-day anything in the nature of a neatly arranged class structure which would enable us to tell almost immediately where a man "belongs". Elsewhere the boundaries of social classes have tended to merge and grow vague, contrary to the Marxian idea that the bourgeoisie would become more and more restricted by the immersion of its lower ranks into the proletariat. In reality, the opposite to what Marx predicted is tending to happen; the middle class in countries like England, and to a greater extent Canada and the United States, grows by the absorption of the upper layers of the working class, and it is often difficult, if one is a stickler for definitions, to decide just where, say, an American plasterer at 25 shillings an hour or a Canadian tree feller at £250 a month actually belongs. By occupation both are productive workers; but it is possible that they will own houses in the middle class suburbs, that they will drive to work in Chryslers, that their children will go to the University, and that their general standard of living will be as high as that of many lawyers or doctors in their own countries, and higher than that of most middle class people in England or France. In status and material living they are on the up grade (unless a depression supervenes), and what is perhaps most significant, they tend more and more to regard themselves as members of the middle class; in youth they may have been Wobblies, but day by day the higher paid workers are tending to vote Republican and join the bourgeois social clubs.

Except in certain rarefied circles, the stigma which in Europe tends to attach to manual work has left it in North America, particularly in the Pacific seaboard regions, and while manual workers tend to move more freely into the middle class, the impoverished man or woman of middle class status will turn to manual

work with little feeling of inhibition and no loss of caste. I know university graduates who work as skilled loggers and garage mechanics, master mariners who work as carpenters, and yet remain in attitude, in their own opinion and in that of others, completely respectable members of the middle class. The North American skilled worker becomes more and more of a bourgeois, and, though a genuine proletariat remains, among the unskilled workers and the rank and file of the factories and farms, it tends to grow less proportionately from year to year.

I do not suggest that this is a static conditions; an economic setback might change it a great deal, but I do contend that it is a situation which should make us speak with a little less dogmatism than some are inclined to do at present in rigid class terms. Even the hierarchical societies of antiquity and the middle ages were never so lacking in fluidity as they have seemed to some subsequent observers, and the changing economic and social currents and pressures of our own age make mince-meat out of the sharply demarcated classes which existed in industrial society at the time when Disraeli wrote *Sybil* and the Communist Manifesto was published.

Yet, fluid though the frontiers have become, classes still exist, marked out in terms of privilege, of status, of snobbery, and of economic conditions. That many people in some countries seem to stand midway between two classes, that the middle classes seem to be expanding downwards to embrace certain categories of skilled productive workers, does not take away from the fact. And there is therefore an ample justification for the writing and publication of such a study as *The English Middle Classes*, by Roy Lewis and Angus Maude.

Whether this study actually meets the need from which it sprang is another question. For it is written by members of the middle class and for the glorification of the middle class. Throughout it is governed by the assumption on the part of the authors that the middle class is the force that gives balance in the community, equalising the scale between the upper class and the proletariat, the rich and the poor, mitigating the authoritarian excesses of the one and the ignorant envy of the other. This, it is hardly necessary to point out, is an unjustified conception, since the history of the middle class, as a class, has almost throughout been one of unenlightened self-interest. From its emergence in the Civil War of the seventeenth century, the middle class has striven for its own dominance; it is true that at times this struggle has forced it to fight for important liberties, and at other times has seen it forming alliances with the workers, as in the Reform struggle of the early nineteenth century. But the liberties it has won for itself it has often denied to others (witness the record of middle class administrators in India and the colonies), while its alliances with the working class have always ended when its own interests have been served. Indeed, the record of the middle class shows that it always prefers to ally itself with the upper class, and fails to do so

only when the upper class refuses to grant a demand that is vitally necessary for the middle class.

To-day, in almost every part of the world—Russia not excluded—we live in a society dominated by the middle class. Even the so-called working class parties, Communists as well as socialists, and the trade unions are governed by cadres of men and women whose standard of life and attitude are basically bourgeois. They have the shrewd materialist outlook which the middle class has displayed since its emergence, and, though the middle class philosophy appears to have made an almost complete *volte face* from the *laissez faire* utilitarianism of Bentham to the dominant cult of the welfare State, the changes of attitude which have contributed to this somersault have in fact represented a subtle process of adaptation to environment which has left the fundamental situation of the industrial revolution untouched. Whether he is a capitalist of the old style, or a state or corporation manager of the new style, the man of the middle class is still in the saddle and can keep the worker where he wants him. The vital agencies which keep capitalist or State capitalist societies functioning, the civil service, banks, police forces, armies, medical, legal and clerical professions, are more firmly in middle class hands than ever before, with the virtual disappearance—except as a decorative chorus for Coronation Day—of the old upper class, while the new managers are all the more powerful than the old capitalists because their sway is corporate rather than individual.

In order to maintain this position, the middle classes, or certain sections of them at least, have made sacrifices, or have been forced to accept certain sacrifices imposed by circumstances, and Messrs. Lewis and Maude make a great deal of these. They talk at great length of increasing taxes and decreasing purchasing power, of the difficulties which middle class parents experience in giving their children the public school education which is regarded to be their right and the hardships of middle class women in a time when working class girls are reluctant to enter domestic service.

Some of these hardships are more imagined than real. For instance, in

## BERIA

Continued from p. 1

him an opportunity to defend himself. What a "triumph for the principle of civil rights"! What an opportunity for boosting up Malenkov as the saviour of Russia!

★

**PRAVDA** refers to Beria's

"ignominious machinations aimed at seizing power. Beria started by attempting to put the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Internal Affairs before the party and the Government and by using M.V.D. organs in the central and local bodies against the party and its leadership, and against the Government of the U.S.S.R., by selecting workers for the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Internal Affairs of personal loyalty to himself."

(In passing one would like to ask whether the seizure of power can be affected by any means other than "ignominious" ones). But if one believes that Russia is ruled by a small group of men vying with each other for supreme control, then it is only by doing what Beria is accused of doing that one will eventually come out on top. Stalin was a past master at this game only the sycophants were too busy licking his boots to see his face. But it took Stalin many years, and countless liquidations, not to mention political intrigues, to establish and consolidate his unassailable position of power.

Malenkov has still a long way to go. But his victory over Beria is not a small step along the road to supreme power. A false move last Friday and the Soviet peoples might have been hailing Beria as the saviour of Russia and denouncing Malenkov as the agent of Capitalist Imperialism!

One thing however would not have changed: Malenkov's downfall would still have been hailed by the yes-men of King Street as "revealing once again the strength and stability of Soviet Society."

Canada and in parts of the United States where there is no large Negro population, the domestic service problem no longer looms large in the minds of middle class women. Not long after I arrived in Canada I earned my living for about three weeks peddling from door to door in the upper middle class streets of Victoria, and, after England, I was astonished to find that not more than one door in a hundred was answered by a servant. Later I learnt that, in a great part of North America, women of this class, who in England would be everlastingly hankering after a cook general, had already, some years ago, become reconciled by means of the mechanical kitchen to the fact that domestic service was gone for good.

At the same time, it is true that the living standards of the English middle class, at least, are not in general so high as during the epic Victorian days when those interminable squares of tall houses with dim basements and servants' attics were built across vast areas of London. Some members of the middle class remain excessively prosperous, but their proportion is probably less than it was even thirty years ago. Yet it must be remembered that wealth is not always the driving aim of a ruling class. The Spartan ruling class, for instance, for centuries eschewed wealth precisely because it might weaken and corrupt them and deprive them of their power. It is perhaps not unreasonable to suggest that, faced with the alternative of losing their power or losing their wealth, the English middle class have unconsciously reached a collective decision to sacrifice a little of their material advantages in order to preserve the power without which their wealth would in any case have been indefensible. It is significant that, much as the middle class may grumble at the Welfare State, they have made no single concerted attempt to oppose it by methods of boycott, etc., and have accepted gladly all the positions as administrators and managers which its building offered them.

By co-option of the lingering remnants of the upper class and of certain key categories of the working class, the middle class remains, in spite of Karl Marx, as powerful if not as prosperous as it did in the Victorian heyday. And it retains over the working class in general the advantage of opportunity. The plums of wealth are fewer in number, but the cherries of office are more numerous with every year that passes, and every middle class boy, if he does not carry a field-marshal's baton in his haversack, might be said to carry a manager's fountain-pen in his breast pocket. Thus the troubles of the middle class as recited by Lewis and Maude are not without their compensations and do not affect the general position of the class.

"The real strength of the middle-class position," they tell us in the conclusion, "is . . . that it represents a reservoir of experience, knowledge and understanding; and that it has a reserve of social and financial strength. The middle classes cannot be made the mere tool of any small ambitious group, as can an army of janissaries or a cadre of functionaries."

Only one of these statements is true—that relating to "financial strength". Socially, the middle class is, as a whole, more retarded, cautious and ridden by snobbery and prejudice than either the classes above or below it. Its "experience" is detached from the soil and the workshop, its "knowledge" suffers similar limitations, and those bourgeois intellectuals and artists who have shown real understanding of social issues have generally been rejected by the mediocre mass of their own class. As for the final claim—in the first place, we must not forget the extent to which the middle class contributed to the rise of Hitler and Mussolini, and in the second place we must bear in mind that from day to day the middle class are in fact being transformed into a cadre of functionaries.

Individuals who have sprung from the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie may be excellent in intention and action, but the middle class as a class shows all the defects of a ruling group, and nothing

## YET ANOTHER UNIFORM FOR THE DUKE

The War Office announced last week that the Queen had approved the appointment of Field-Marshal the Duke of Edinburgh as Colonel of the Welsh Guards, with effect from July 6, in place of Honorary Brigadier the Earl of Gowrie, V.C. who has resigned.

that Messrs. Lewis and Maude have said appears to mitigate this fact or the related fact that the function of the middle class, in general, is an exploitative and non-productive one. Most middle class individuals are in fact involved in occupations connected with the financial, governmental and managerial aspects of the state-capitalism partnership. There is, it is true, a minority of productive workers, such as doctors, working farmers, artists, writers, technicians, scientists and scholars, who, by the fact that their professions need money to embark on or that they occupy key positions, are often—but not always—members of the middle class. But this does not take away from the generally parasitic nature of the bourgeoisie, since even the productive workers who are within the middle class are inhibited in the full use of their capacities by the interests of that class. The doctor who practices an abortion, the writer who speaks too loudly, the scientist who believes that his discoveries should be the property of all men, is soon made aware of this fact.

In other words, nothing among the arguments of *The English Middle Classes* (well presented though it is) alters our opinion that the positive achievements which have emerged from among the middle class would have been more beneficial in a productive and non-exploiting society, nor does it convert us from the view that the eventual disintegration of middle class and proletariat alike into a classless society is the only sound solution to the frustrations peculiar to both these existing classes.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

#### OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting

HYDE PARK

Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

TOWER HILL

Tuesdays at 12.30 p.m.

INDOOR MEETINGS *Watch this column for announcement of new meetings in September.*

### NORTH-EAST LONDON

DISCUSSION MEETINGS  
IN EAST HAM

Alternate Wednesdays  
at 7.30 p.m.

### BRADFORD

OPEN-AIR MEETINGS

Broadway Car Park,  
Sundays, 8.30 p.m.

### GLASGOW

OUTDOOR MEETINGS  
from now until further notice

at  
MAXWELL STREET,  
Sundays at 7 p.m.  
With John Gaitney, & others

### 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. July 12, 26, etc.

Enquiries to:  
J. Pinkerton, 12 Alt Road,  
Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancs.

## Comments

### ALL CLUTTERED UP

"We shall use some of Tchaikovsky's ballet music, but in our own way. Tchaikovsky wrote plenty of good tunes, you know, but the trouble is he would insist on cluttering them up with a lot of orchestration."

—Walt Disney, who is to make a full-length cartoon version of "The Sleeping Beauty"

★

Too bad about old man Tchaikovsky. Trouble was he was born too soon. These old guys didn't know nothing about Box Office—didn't realise that you've got to give the public what it wants. And the public wants a good toon you can whistle on the way home.

They were all the same, too. Take that other guy, Shakespeare. Some of his plays was O.K. Good plots—five or six murders in some of them—but he would keep holding up the action with too much dialogue. And not only dialogue—monologue, some of it!

Well, that's no good nowadays. You gotta keep a show on the move, see? Plenty of action and at least one smash hit in every scene.

But, boy, what a team you could make with some of these old guys—providing they had decent managers, who knew how to handle them right. This Tchaikovsky, for example. He shouldn't have

been allowed to do his own arranging. His manager should have built up a team around that guy, with a slick arranger to do the orchestrating and someone else to write the words. (Would you believe it, most of this old sucker's tunes didn't even have any words to them!)

This lyric writer would have to be a famous guy—someone like that, English lord—what's his name—yeah, Tennyson, that's it. Then they could have taken one of Shakespeare's plots and polished it up a bit—and what a show they could have made. It would have run on Broadway for a year.

I can see it in lights now:

OMELETTE

—THE EGG FROM DENMARK

From the Story by  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Adapted by  
BUTCH MURPHY

Music by  
TCHAIKOVSKY

Arranged by  
JOE HAMMERTOE III

Lyrics by  
DUKE TENNYSON

★

Yeah, too bad about old Tchaikovsky. But there's still time for Walt Disney to turn him into Box Office. Joe.