

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"The great are great only because we are on our knees."

—MAX STIRNER.

## THE CRACK IN DEAKIN'S EMPIRE

# WHY NOT A DOCKERS' SYNDICATE?

SOONER or later it had to come. Sooner or later some section of the million-and-a-quarter workers who have been pushed around by Arthur Deakin for so long were bound to get tired of it and walk out.

Individually, workers have been doing that for years. The Transport & General Workers' Union, of which Deakin is permanent boss, has a fantastically high turnover of membership—something like a third of its total every year! But until now there has not been an organised challenge to T.G.W.U. monopoly in any one trade on a large enough scale to shake its massive foundations.

Now it has come—and the wonder is that it has taken so long. But it is not surprising that the first move to break away a sizable industrial section from the T.G.W.U. has come from the dockers.

For—particularly since the war—the relations between militant dockers and 'their' union have been anything but harmonious. Time after time delays in negotiation have pushed the dockers beyond the limits of their patience—only to be confronted by a coalition of employer and union official. Time and again dockers have had to take immediate action to defend a gain hard-won in the past, only to see 'their' union organiser concerned primarily to get them back to work on the boss's terms in order that the talking may begin—with never a guarantee as to how it would end.

### THE ALTERNATIVE

For years an alternative union has existed in London—the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers' Union—and in fact 7,000 out of 27,000 dockers in the Port London do belong to this organisation, the 'Blue' union as it is known, from the colour of its membership cards.

But it had no support outside of London. The dockers of every provin-

cial port were, if not content with the Transport & General (no-one could be that!) not prepared to take the drastic step of leaving it.

It was from Hull that the first move came—as reported in FREEDOM 28/8/54—for an organised breakaway. The shilly-shallying, the weakness, of the union officials there during the recent strike against antiquated methods of unloading wheat, provided enough evidence for the Hull workers to decide the T. & G.W. did not serve their interests. So they applied for membership of the 'Blue' union in London, which was, of course, pleased enough to have them.

They have now been followed by a section of the Birkenhead dockers, who have had their own very active unofficial Portworkers' Committee for several years now. This Committee has been a thorn in Deakin's flesh, and it has constantly been exposing the collaborationist and cowardly policies of the union officials on both national and local levels.

Under the leadership of Bill Johnson, chairman of the Birkenhead Portworkers' Committee (he was one of the seven dockers tried at the Old Bailey in 1950 on charges of inciting unofficial strikes) enough Birkenhead dockers have now decided to leave the T. & G. and join N.A.S.D.U. to make it worth-while for the latter to really make an effort to get going on Merseyside.

### THE BRIDLINGTON PROPOSALS

There are, however, snags. And they are bound up with the position of both unions as organisations affiliated to the Trades Union Congress. These are the conditions binding upon affiliated unions which govern relations between unions and are aimed to prevent the 'poaching' of members.

These conditions are known as the 'Bridlington Proposals' and they lay down that:—

- (1) Unions, should reach agreement among themselves on spheres of influence.
- (2) They should never accept a member from another union if the member is under discipline, engaged in a trade dispute, or in arrears with his contributions.
- (3) They should never attempt to organise workers in any establishment in which another union has a majority of members and the right to negotiate.

In other words, once a union has got you organised, you can have no choice of joining any other union in the same field of activity without the new union running the risk of expulsion from the T.U.C.—and thereby becoming isolated in the Trade Union world.

An article in *Tribune* 27/8/54, justifies the Bridlington proposals, and says:

*'Poaching between unions is a serious crime in the trade union movement. It can create bitter hatreds between officials of unions whose essential interests are identical. It can destroy united action, even in the middle of a deadly fight with the boss. It can be the boss's friend, in fact. And it has to be stopped.'*

*'If it is not, hardly a union in the country would fail to lose members. For all unions have brushes with unofficial strikers, some unions more frequently than others. That is the essence of the problem.'*

### WHO IS THE 'BOSS'S FRIEND'?

These two paragraphs hardly seem to belong to the same argument. When was the last time your union engaged in 'a deadly fight with the boss'? Few but the oldest readers of this journal could hope to remember such militant activity; probably 1926 is the deadline for most. The 'boss's friend' to-day is the T.U.C. itself—and no part of that friendlier than the Transport and General.

This is in fact implied by the second paragraph, which admits that if workers were free to choose, nearly all unions would lose members, and they all have trouble with unofficial strikers, who are always the rank-and-file and do usually represent rank-and-file opinion far more accurately than the official leadership.

## SOME FATHER!

THE dispute at the Japanese silk mills involving 30,000 women workers (FREEDOM 21/8/54) ended this week when the owner, Kakuju Natsukawa, signed an agreement undertaking to "stop interfering in the lives of the workers and to improve working hours, wages, holidays and welfare services".

It says something for the determination of these women (the majority are under twenty) that in spite of intimidation from the company strike-breakers and the parents and brothers of the women, who it is claimed beat them in an attempt to get them back to work, they held out for so long. Let us hope that this victory has given them strength because, as we pointed out in our original article on this affair, the Japanese Labour Laws are such that the employer can get round them merely by paying a £5 fine! As it is, the workers would have found it even more difficult to maintain their strike had not the Government belatedly stepped in, not out of sympathy for the

impoverished workers, but for fear of repercussions to the Japanese textile industry abroad.

After so many years of American occupation with its 'liberalising' effect on ancient Japanese customs, it is curious that a large number of workers are still existing under feudal conditions. In this connection the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent writes that the *Yomiuri Shimbun* said "that the dispute had exposed the infringement of personal rights that is still widely prevalent in Japan."

To our minds the whole affair has an air of tragi-comedy. We have the women workers living in factory dormitories, forced to buy food from the company for which is deducted 32/- a month from their wages of £4. 10. 0. a month! But the astonishing thing is that it was not for higher wages that they struck but for the elementary "right to love, and to marry; to receive letters unopened". To refuse, before starting work, to be assembled in a yard to sing songs to the glory of the boss with the promise that "to-day I will make no immoderate demands; to-day I will not grumble or complain".

### WHY NOT A SYNDICATE?

When we reported the Hull strike—which the men won completely—we wrote:

*What strength they have shown in this strike has been as a result of their own solidarity in direct action. They have shown their organising ability and their preparedness to fight in their own interests. Why hand all that over to another*

union boss? Why not base their organisation on the point of production, instead of a head office in London in the hands of a leader they will not be able to control?

This argument applies even more to the Birkenhead workers, who have, as we have said, their Portworkers' Committee well established, tried and experienced in many a struggle on the spot.

It seems to us that the time really is ripe now for dockers to establish an organisation much more on syndicalist lines. The men in Hull and Birkenhead (and there are plenty more in London) are fed up with the leadership they have had. Would they not see the force of arguments against union leadership. Would they not see the advantages of syndicalist organisation, with:

1. No full time paid organisers;
2. All organisers chosen by the ranks to carry out specific functions, subject to immediate recall and paid no more than they would earn at work;
3. All funds (the amount of subs to be agreed themselves) to be kept as a fighting fund and to practice mutual aid among themselves and their families in time of need, and not spent in high salaries for officials or rents for offices;
4. Organising themselves, under their own control, to use their strength through direct action—which is after all, the only strength the unions can call on anyway;
5. Be prepared to back up workers in other ports with solidarity;
6. Taking decisions themselves instead of waiting for instructions from above.

These are limited only to the immediate needs of the moment. Through such an organisation, however, it would be possible to encourage and develop the real issue facing the dockers and workers everywhere—workers' control of industry.

Incidentally we must mention that Bill Johnson has only led the walk-out from the T. & G.W. into the Blue union on the understanding that he takes no official position in the latter. This we think is a very fine attitude; he could easily have got himself a job and given up his hard docker's work. He has preferred not to do it, however, but to stay and work and struggle alongside his work-mates. Also—may we say it?—if he remains out of office he will be freer to keep an eye on the new leaders and expose them as he exposed the previous ones.

## BURYING ONE OF OUR FREEDOMS

THE passport from being a document to facilitate the traveller in his journeys to foreign parts is becoming more and more the means for preventing him from leaving his country when he so wishes. In the United States as we have mentioned already in these columns the Government has given itself the powers to refuse to issue passports to those citizens whom it considers are "Reds", and in this way effectively prevents them from travelling outside the United States.

We now read, according to a *Reuter* report, of a complaint made last week by the South African Minister of the Interior, Dr. Dönges: "that a number of Africans had recently reached the Soviet Union and other Communist countries via Britain. This was possible because Britain allowed people considered British subjects to land in the country without passports."

Dr. Dönges said the South African Government was studying steps taken by other Governments to prevent people without passports from leaving their home countries. Legislation, as well as passport regulations would be necessary. The Government did not want unnecessarily to complicate matters for bona fide tourists, but everybody would have to accept any inconvenience as necessary matters to prevent unfriendly persons from going overseas and harming South Africa.

The congress passed several resolutions asking the Government to prevent people without passports from leaving South Africa and later returning to the Union."

It would appear that the Russians fear of contamination by contact with the outside world is a catching disease. One wonders sometimes on which side of the Iron Curtain we are situated. Or is it that there is more than one Iron Curtain?

## END OF SEGREGATION IN U.S. SCHOOLS

THE end of segregation in American schools, following the ruling of the Supreme Court last May, officially came into force when schools re-opened this month. In certain States it appears that the change-over has been smooth and friendly. But in the Southern States of Mississippi and Alabama attempts are being made to get round the ruling by abolishing public schools.

Last week the State Legislature in Jackson,

"passed a constitutional amendment permitting the abolition of public schools, if necessary, to maintain racial segregation. The amendment will be voted on by a general referendum on December 21 and inserted in the State constitution if approved."

Supporters of the amendment said that it was necessary if Mississippi was to keep segregated schools in spite of the Supreme Court's decisions to ban racial segregation in public education. Members of the legal education advisory committee, who drafted the amendment, promised to support a state public school building programme if the people ratified the amendment.—(*Reuter*).

In Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, about 275 of the high school's 430 pupils went on "strike" in protest against the integration of Negro students. The boys and girls paraded through the streets of the town, demanding that 23 Negro pupils at the school should be returned to their former school, in Lewisburg.

In Hutchins, Texas, prospective negro pupils were told by the Principal of the white Linfield elementary school that the Texas Education Agency had ruled that segregation would be maintained in the State's public schools for at least another year.

## Resistance in Kenya Continues

IN spite of the almost daily claims made by the authorities in Kenya that more Mau Mau "terrorists" have been killed or captured the resistance continues, and judging by last week's news, is making up for its lack of weight in war materials (compared with the last word in equipment being used by the British) with an ever growing skill in manoeuvrability and surprise tactics.

*Reuter* reported early last week that: "British troops, police, and Kikuyu guards, with armoured cars, to-night encircled the Magugu forest, twenty miles from here, in an attempt to kill or capture 'Field-Marshal' Dedan Kimathi, the Mau Mau's senior commander."

The hunt for Kimathi had been going on for twelve hours. He has now driven to ground in the twenty square miles of forest with, it is thought, between fifty and a hundred other terrorists. It was feared, however, that the approaching darkness would cheat his eight hundred pursuers of their prize (Kimathi has a price of £500 on his head)."

Every available man of the 49th Brigade, as well as police and Kikuyu guards was called to the area to establish strongpoints around the forest. Yet *Reuter* reported the following day that Dedan Kimathi had escaped through the cordon.

That was on the Wednesday. On Friday night *Reuter* reports told of a "brilliant attack", believed to have been personally led by Kimathi with 40 Mau Mau, on the Lukinia Prison in which they succeeded in freeing 232 prisoners

and capturing nine rifles and more than 300 rounds of ammunition. Incidentally, the "crimes" for which most of these "terrorists" were in prison were the possession of forged passbooks and identity papers.

At the time of writing less than half the escaping prisoners have been recaptured, though a force of about 1,000 troops, police and "loyal" Kikuyu tribesmen were rapidly deployed in the area very soon after the break-out.

The Mau Mau forces are, in our opinion, showing each day more clearly how a small, ill-armed band of guerillas, utilising what advantages are offered by the terrain, and being able to count on the sympathy of considerable sections of the population, can resist a modern war machine apparently indefinitely.

Though such tactics cannot result in the military defeat of the government forces they must necessarily eventually have a serious repercussion on the morale of the troops and of the settlers. Furthermore the concern shown by the Colonial Office for the welfare and improvement of conditions for the Kenya African is, whatever they may do to the contrary, the direct result of Mau Mau activity and the lack of co-operation by those African communities which, while not actively joining with Mau Mau or even sympathising with its methods, view the activities of the Kenya Government and the settlers with as much, and perhaps even more suspicion and distrust.



# Anarchism and Form

**A**NARCHISM is a negative concept, expressing exclusion or absence—absence of order in at least one sense of the word. Playing on words, the dictionaries that give it as a synonym of chaos are justified insofar as one current meaning of chaos is absence of order.

Another meaning of chaos is absence of form, and although no anarchist will admit that his heart's desire is a formless society, but will insist that his ideal is that of an unimpeded variety, fullness and harmony of forms, the vagueness of this ideal will readily become apparent if a description is asked of the specific forms that would so wonderfully flourish in an anarchist society.

On the other hand freedom would have no transcendent meaning if the forms of an anarchist society were fully numbered and described, prophesied and prescribed. An anarchist society is a thing of the future, and mostly in the hands, therefore, of future generations. The anarchist's faith is a reliance on mankind's hidden potentialities, and his task that of removing impediments that clog the way to their achievement.

No carefree optimism nor quietism are the distinctive features of an anarchist faith. There is some kind of mysticism in some cases, a belief in unpredictable and unquenchable Spirit, but generally, in accordance with the temper of the time when anarchism found its feet, this faith is professedly resting on some rational support. Indeed, more than an ideal, anarchism presents the features of a rational scheme, and, as with all rational schemes, there is a lack of adherence to empirical reality, in other words a lack of form because there is no actual form devoid of substance.

Anarchist writers and speakers are most eloquent when criticizing this or that aspect of the society they live in. If they happen to praise some other society it is again as a way of indictment of the one they live in, and if the latter has some undeniable anarchist characteristic, the approval they give it is usually annulled by heavily stressing the inadequacy of its results. Anarchists are difficult to satisfy, and if their own initiatives so seldom take shape and come to grips with reality one reason is to be found in their inarticulate but ever-lurking awareness of the limitations necessarily besetting any concrete achievement.

It is boundaries, contours, and limitations that give form to a thing, or, rather, the form of a thing can only be apprehended through the very lines that mark its finitude. So the anarchist's aversion to form is at bottom a protest against human finiteness, an existential contra-

dition between thought and reality, freedom and necessity, universality and contingency, essence and existence.

The anarchist ideal is political and yet goes with contempt for politics, it is historical because it gives meaning to the present through the past and the future, and yet it is accompanied by aversion to embroilment in historical processes; it claims fullness of life, and yet it shares the disdain of rationalism for life's blind ways. With these contradictions there is bad faith, which may or may not be redeemed by anxiety and open doubt. The anarchist wants to say yea to life and at the same time preserve the autonomy of the self; he wants to impose on the social world a construction of the self, and at the same time expects the social world to realize that construction, as it were, of itself, through a process analogous to that of organic growth.

For Christians Christ is the new Adam; brazen-faced Aragon speaks of Communists as a new species; sick with humanity, Nietzsche dreamt of a superman. Through newspapers and films, through much current literature, there is no doubt that present-day humanity stinks, and the Communist 'new' specimens even more strongly than the rest. Will anarchists just hold their noses as some existentialists do? Or will they endeavour to bring forth the new man or, at least, to strip and wash the old one clean? To put it oratorically, it is a new man, the anarchist type of man that is the form, the concreteness and creation which is so sadly wanted for anarchism to breathe and move as a living thing, to set men wondering and thinking, and finally to affect the revolution that will fall upon the world like a baptism of fire.

Even if circumstances, as it is most likely, will demand that the new man keeps in hiding and obscurity, his form may still be achieved in cultivation of feelings, clarity of actions, and consistency of thoughts, there is a way of shaping one's life through fidelity to the past and to the future, through an acceptance of one's limitations, through a choice of one's potentialities, much renunciation and sacrifice, and at the same time, commitment. A keen appreciation of one's substance is the first condition to a successful form.

To shape one's personality towards ends intended yet unforeseen is a work of art. It is not to be compared so much to that of a sculptor chiselling a statue out of a block of marble as to giving water form and design which Schopenhauer unhesitatingly included among the fine arts. For one's personality is fluid, and it would indeed be to make it as hard and dumb as a marble statue if it were so objectified as to make the subjective shaping activity wholly subordinate to a narcissistic contemplation. The material to shape is life itself, disturbed and disturbing, full of staidness and surprise, an elusive and rebel, tyrannical material, yet the most generous of all.

There is no character, Stendhal remarked, except in relationship and conflict with others. Aloofness will not do, while on the other hand there is soundness in Paul Valery's advice: "Don't touch your enemy, don't make them adversaries, and, therefore, your equals". The danger of unqualified, all-out rebellion, is that the enemy will make the anarchist his equal, bring him down to the same unethical level. The task is to make friends, other anarchists with whom it will be possible to give actuality to the anarchist way of living, and, in however small and ephemeral a way, to create anarchy as a living social form.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI

## PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 37

Deficit on Freedom

37 x £15 = £555

Contributions received £477

GAP £88 (or \$251)

September 9 to September 16

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## COMMENT

# PUT 'EM IN THE BIN!

**W**HEN I was a boy, we used to sing a rather ribald song which went on for a dozen verses, and began:

*"When we went down hopping,  
Knocked at number one,  
Saw old mother Murphy, . . . etc."*

This referred of course to the annual migration from East London to the hop fields of Kent in September. I suppose this is the nearest thing in this country to the grape-picking festivals of Europe, except that the rollicking peasants are unmistakably townspeople from Stepney and Poplar, West Ham, Bermondsey and Deptford, and the evening entertainments are football, talent contests and the ubiquitous community singing.

The hop bine, *humulus lupulus*, was brought to this country in 1524 by Flemish refugees, and is still raised to-day in the places where they settled—Kent and Worcestershire. It is a handsome plant, (I saw one last year used decoratively round a summer house in Sussex) and is grown in the Kentish hop gardens in rows on tall poles linked together with overhead wires along which the bines are trained. It looks like a vineyard, and the sun shines through the leaves down onto the families who move systematically down the rows stripping off the hops, which put the flavour into the beer brewed during the winter. A family, working from about seven-thirty to four in the afternoon might pick about forty bushels a day, or rather

less in a bad year like this, the price paid for a bushel varying according to the locality and the facilities provided; the huts, water and occasionally electricity are free. The huts may be very primitive, but are often made gay with paint, lino and curtains, brought down in readiness on August Bank Holiday by regular pickers.

**HOP-PICKING** cannot be called lucrative, although you do hear of families which by keeping themselves to themselves, and by spending little and not drinking through the evening (hopping is thirsty work), have saved a fair amount from their earnings. Fifty years ago Sir Walter Besant described the piles of worn-out boots discarded by returning hoppers who had bought new ones on the way home. But generally the wage has always settled down at a subsistence level, and there are always arguments when the measurer comes round with a bushel basket to empty the bins and call out the number to the "bookies" to write in the tally book. Old hoppers know exactly the quantity of leaves which the measurer will tolerate among the hops, but since the hops are spongy, he can squash a very large quantity in his bushel measure while the hoppers look on furiously. This is excellently described by George Orwell in his early novel *A Clergyman's Daughter*, and he quotes a song sung on such occasions:

*"Our lousy 'ops!  
Our lousy 'ops!  
When the measurer 'e comes round  
Pick 'em up, pick 'em up off the ground!  
When 'e comes to measure,  
'E never knows where to stop;  
Ay, Ay, get in the bin  
And take the bloody lot!"*

But the great thing about hopping was of course that it provided three weeks of sun and air and merriment for the people who most needed it, a holiday which paid for

itself and "set you up for the winter." It is tiring but not exhausting work and although it makes the hands black and sore, you pick mechanically and pass the time singing and joking as you get browned by the sun and slightly hilarious with the smell. Although many families go year after year to the same farms in the hop belt from Tonbridge to Maidstone, there is little real contact with the local people whose attitude to the hoppers with their tow ways who swarm into the Kentish lanes is rather like their attitude to gypsies, or as someone unkindly put it once, like the racial segregation of the Deep South. The pubs often put up a special shed for "Hop Pickers and Friends". The pickers are not worried; they live a self-contained three-week world. Some East London shop-keepers make the annual migration too, and open temporary shops.

**I**NCREASED incomes and holidays-with-pay (and the strictness of school attendance officers) have been reducing the ranks of the hoppers year by year, although tens of thousands of people still go; and this has had the usual result, the development of machine picking. In the past several types of mechanical pickers have been developed but without much success because the brewers complain that the steel combs of the machines are not so kind to the delicate cone of the hop as the nimble fingers of the pickers. There are now several improved machines. The "Bruff" machine of which 20 have been installed this year, and 35 are ordered for 1955, has a "rack carrier" which runs down the rows collecting the hops which are fed into the machine in a shed. This machine which requires a total of 30 operators, separates the hops which emerge on an endless belt with women standing on either side picking out any leaves which remain. Another machine which I saw, the K.E.F. McConnell Hind's *Rotobank* works in much the same way. A farmer at Brenchley was employing 20 pickers instead of his usual 220. Twelve people are employed directly on the machines and eight work in the gardens cutting the bines.

There are also smaller mobile machines which are pulled through the rows by a tractor, and are less expensive and more economical for small growers.

**T**HIS has been a bad year for hops because of the weather. They are small and are consequently taking a very long time to pick. This affects the earnings of both pickers and farmers. At the same time it is necessary to pick them quickly before they are affected by mould and downy mildew. At Beltring there are seven acres flattened by strong winds and in some places farmers are said to be picking no hops at all. This is cheaper than picking to waste if the quality is so poor that the crop would not be sold.

These conditions encourage the use of machines. A farmer at Hutton Court estimates that his 40 acres will cost about £1,000 to pick as against £3,000 last year, and another nearby, who uses the machine as a standby only, because of the brewer's preference for hand-picked hops, is glad to have it this year since he reckons on a minimum of only 17 hop-picking days, and the big machine can cope with about 3,000 bushels a day.

On the other hand, the machines are often less effective when the weather is wet as the leaves stick to the hops. The big breweries own some hop-gardens themselves and Whitbreads, for instance, declare that on their farms, as long as there are people wanting to pick, they will continue to employ hand-pickers. So it is not likely that our generation will see the end of "going hopping".

ROY SACKMAN.

Have you asked for VOLINE'S NINETEEN-SEVENTEEN at your local PUBLIC LIBRARY

## EXHIBITION

# CHILDREN'S ART

**O**NE of the most striking features of the exhibition organised by the *Sunday Pictorial* of Children's Art at the Royal Institute Galleries, 195, Piccadilly, is the truly childlike freshness of everything there. I found an atmosphere of promise, springlike and utterly persuasive in the idea that childhood is happiness and love above all else. And then, most unhappily, the vague outline of something not altogether in keeping with the prevailing childish outlook began to take shape at the edges of my pleasure, and suddenly, I exclaimed with some alarm—"of course, the *Junior Daily Mirror*, the *Junior Daily Express*, the *Junior Daily Sketch*, and no doubt, we shall soon be having the *Junior News of the World*, together with a nationwide distribution of the more lurid of the American comics—and of course, there is TV too, and the murder posters outside the cinema—". There I faltered to a stop and once again I was back gazing with grateful pleasure at 14-year-old Doreen Pursey's "Head crowned with grasses", having hastily come to the conclusion that children are tough—much tougher than most of us believe them to be.

Just how much are children influenced by all these various crude and subtle tenders for their attention? On the evidence of this show I would say not at all, and of course, the child whose home life is healthy, active and happy will always unconsciously counter anti-social influences by the natural daily observance of pleasurable work and play. The real damage is done to those children who experience in their daily lives some of the emotional disturbances which, in the first place, must exist in the writers and artists who manufacture all the startling rot which crowd the cruder comics and the more sadistic film posters. For what person loving children, and aware of the tremendous value that the reciprocation of love between adult and child has for both, and for society, could want, either directly or indirectly, to injure them by drawing and writing, or in some other subtle way, unless that person himself were already emotionally sick?

Yet, here are the works of children and all of them generous and wonderful with their contributions to our moment

of uncontaminated pleasure. And the adult world offers them in return . . . !

**T**HIS exhibition is, if it were possible, better than last year's—it is very good indeed. No particular age group, considered as a group, could claim priority. The winners of the *Sunday Pictorial* Art Training awards of £250 and £100 went respectively to John Brooke, 16, of Epsom, Surrey, and Richard Napper, 15, of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Their works are most remarkable, but particularly so, in the case of John Brooke's leafy green picture by the River Stour—this is a lyrical painting of the most unusual loveliness.

The main bulk of the exhibited work is bright lovely colour and fascinating evocations of form. There are so many particularly good things to note—for these 383 works are the cream of an entry which exceeded 40,000—that one could mark almost everything in the catalogue for some particular interest. Yet I managed to restrict myself to a few that I find most pleasing, and of these few, I underline (No. 1) by Robert Baker, "A Shipwreck", vivid and exciting, and (No. 9) by Jane Causer "Foxgloves and Bees". There were some really fine trains by Anthony Larkham (No. 36) and Peter Goldsbury (No. 105). Other favourites were "Mushrooms" by Naomi Lee (No. 115) and Frank Wilson's (No. 141) "Portrait of Barbara Lake".

In the age group 12-16 the works continued to show the same sustained animation and brilliance as the younger groups. Nos. 249, 169, 184, 196 and 249 are my favourites, but there really is so much to delight over.

I was much interested in the craft section—here ingenious use had been made of various unlikely materials, such as egg shell and pieces of broken glass to make mosaics which are very beautiful and exciting. Witnessing the successful application of unlikely materials is immediately stimulating and I have already commenced collecting bus tickets and the occasional breakfast eggshell, and have promised my children and myself quite a sticky evening very soon now.

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# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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## PROTECTING YOUTH INDEED!

THE conspiracy in which the police, the Home Office and the Director of Public Prosecutions are engaged to protect British youth from the horrors of sex proceeds apace in spite of the words of wisdom uttered by Mr. Justice Stable recently, and the reversal of the Swindon magistrates' decision that Bocaccio's *Decameron* should be added to the purifying bonfire.

Last week at the Old Bailey the publishers, printers and the managing director of both were each fined £500 for having published an obscene libel in the form of a novel entitled *September in Quinze*.

We are not here concerned with the literary merits of this work, though it appears to have been "reviewed in the most sober and conservative journals and no reviewer has even suggested anything in the book offended against accepted standards of tastes or morals. There had not been one single suggestion of complaint—added defence Counsel—from any of the big libraries of respectability". But we are most concerned with the problem of censorship in whatever form it is applied, and in the methods that should be adopted to combat it.

In passing sentence on the defendants the Recorder, Sir Gerald Dobson (who is not what one would call an "enlightened" man) said:

"I should have thought any reader, however inexperienced, would have been repelled by a book of this sort, which is repugnant to every decent emotion which ever concerned man or woman. That it could have ever been in doubt is difficult to understand."

This strikes us as a most original definition of "obscene libel". Since the many books just published dealing with the extermination camps in Nazi Germany and the slave camps in Russia must surely excite these very feelings in the minds of their readers, are we to assume that their publishers will now be prosecuted for obscene libel?

The Recorder went on to say that it was a comforting thought that juries from time to time took a very solid stand against this sort of thing, and realised how important it was for the youth of this country to be protected, and that the fountain of our national blood should not be polluted at its source.

It is quite clear that pleasant and encouraging as it was to publishers to hear Mr. Justice Stable talk sense on the subject of sex in literature (and so unusual that such frankness on the "facts of life" should emerge from the dreary walls of the Old Bailey that we reproduce his summing up in full in FREEDOM) the freedom to write and to publish will never be won through the Criminal Courts, and this is surely the lesson to be learned from the more recent trial in which quite the contrary verdict was reached. To leave the decision of what should be read and what should not to a jury and their personal prejudices (and who knows to what extent the attitude of Mr. Justice Stable influenced the first, and Sir Gerald Dobson the second—verdict?) is to place the most elementary freedom in continuous jeopardy. If publishers were more concerned with principles than with profits one could hope for a great campaign in open defiance of the Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions, and for the education of the general public which badly

needs enlightening no less than the judges and magistrates!

★  
THAT phrase uttered by the Recorder about how important it was for the youth of this country to be protected, and that the "fountain of our national blood" should not be "polluted at its source" must have sounded very moving as it echoed through the corridors of the Old Bailey. We wonder if it carried to Vienna's Schoenbrunn Barracks where two young British soldiers, one 20 the other 19 years old, were being sentenced to death for murder by a Court Martial?

One night last June these two youths, the worse for drink "ran amok" with rifles killing a Viennese merchant and shooting another soldier in the eye. We will spare our readers the sordid details of that "terrible hour" as the prosecutor called it. Five generous Austrians who appeared as witnesses all echoed the sentiments of the one among them who asked the Court not to "do them too much damage. They are so young". One witness, Herr Enzmann, said he tried to reason with the soldiers. "I asked them what they wanted and one of them replied he wanted a woman".

Passing sentence of death on the two youths, the president of the Court Martial added a recommendation of mercy "because of their youth and previous exemplary character".

★  
THERE is the miserable picture of cant and hypocrisy. With one hand the authorities seize the literature which deals with life and sex as they often are in order to "protect the innocence of youth" and with the other they give them rifles and send them to Occupied Europe, to Africa and Malaya where they are the *herren-volk*, the master-race, and where they can indulge in every excess which occupation forces expect as a matter of course at the expense of the "natives".

The Law "protects" these youth from reading about such life in the raw but puts them in a position where they can live it to the full!

THE characters in the plays of Gabriel Marcel are real, because they are not dissected or analysed, they are truly individualized. Marcel seems to me to feel that scientists, moralists, objectivists and authoritarians of all types must be prevented from rationalising, investigating and taking the human soul to pieces to see what makes it feel and exist. All too often men have surrendered their self-sovereignty, their authenticity and individuality to abstractions, the State, the nation, the demagogue and the dictator, who have been made infinitely more powerful by modern instruments of mass persuasion.

Marcel's play, *Un Homme de Dieu*, is a real play: a play becomes real to the degree that the characters are not puppets but have a spontaneity of their own, and that any audience succeeds in identifying itself with the lives and deeds portrayed. Events, characters on a stage are real to us because we accept them as true though they occur supposedly in Heaven or Hell. The reality of a theatrical performance has no inherent connection with its "realism", the degree of fidelity with which it reproduces or reflects the "facts", as we say, of life. These "facts" are frequently false objectivizations which the dramatist should expose, explicitly or implicitly.

It is not possible in a limited space to give an adequate analysis of *Un Homme de Dieu*, as there is scarcely a line of its subtle and complex dialogue which is superfluous, any more than it is possible to describe any individual's character. To do so one would have to know and reproduce his or her emotions, feelings and thoughts during the whole of their life, the flow of their consciousness, and even then one would not have a real existential human being, but a specimen, like a dead butterfly pinned to a sheet of paper. The inner reality of an individual's life is mysterious, elusive, even to himself, and must remain so if the individual is to truly live and develop in harmony with his personality.

These "descriptions" of people are like photographs taken showing the person with a fixed "meaning". People are judged by actions, and so they are objectivized, forced to pretend: it is as if their reflection in the mirror of society and other people's minds had come to move of itself, and the real living person has

## ON THE THEATRE

# The Plays of Gabriel Marcel

to imitate the expressions and movements of his objectivized "reflection". If he is a poor imitator, he is labelled "immoral", "ne'er do well", "untruthful", etc., etc. If he openly refuses to imitate it at all, he is looked down upon by the majority as "crank", "eccentric", "intellectual", "scoundrel", etc. They are so hypnotised by their own acting that they cannot understand anyone wishing to be himself.

★  
THE main theme of *Un Homme de Dieu* is that the chief lesson in life is not to deceive oneself. Claude Lemaire, the Pastor, realises that he is a failure and spiritually bankrupt, because he has pretended to be what he is not for most of his life. He says to his mother:

"When I think of the atmosphere I was brought up in, Francis' speciality was literary composition, mine was moral scruples. Your eyes used to shine with pleasure when I trotted them out for your inspection. Francis has intellect, everyone would say, but Claude has something more, he has moral consciousness. God knows if I didn't sometimes invent my scruples just to please you."

Many years before his wife, Edmée, had a love affair with another man: the daughter Osmonde is not his, although she does not know this. But Edmée accuses Claude of having forgiven her, because she gave him a marvellous opportunity of exercising his gifts as an evangelist, of "saving" the soul of a poor sinner. "You argue and you quote and you talk about duty. What has duty got to do with it? I'm beginning to wonder if you're not simply acting a part." His daughter Osmonde defends her friendship with an older man whose wife is insane: for the first time in her life she has met somebody who can think of her as she is, and not as one of a family group living a humdrum existence in a happy Christian home, with texts on the walls and family prayers every morning. "I'm always being told about self-denial and helping other people, but the sort of sacrifices I'm asked to make are ridiculous and humiliating. Nothing has changed, nothing, I tell you, since the days when I was told to give my favourite doll to the orphan's home, or to enter my good deed for the day in a little leatherette diary. That kind of morality revolts me. I may be heading for danger, I may be in the edge of a precipice, but at any rate . . . !"

★  
THE basic theme of *La Fin des Temps: Le Signe de la Croix; L'Emissaire; Le Dard* is the suffering of the contemporary world. The soul in exile is the soul which has become a stranger to itself, which can no longer understand itself, which has lost its way. We are all playing under masks what we would like to be (or what we think we ought to be); what other people think us to be; while what we really are we do not, up to a certain point, know ourselves. Sincere dramatists like Marcel try to keep people from sinking forever into the thick leaden sea which is the everyday vulgarity and stupidity of the so-called realist world, a world without poetry, freedom or mystery, a mass of people living in a submissive routine to which we have been drilled from our childhood.

Liberty, spontaneous choice in life is the breath of existence to the individual. But words, "Truths", abstract commandments, ideals, maxims, virtues,

duties, obligations, this haze of opinions and habits grows in extent in authoritarian society, and lives almost independently of the people it surrounds and stifles. It is this haze which gives rise to the immense effect of general judgments on "man" (Max Stirner gave an incomparable analysis of the falsity of Truth in *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*)—all those men who do not know themselves believe in a bloodless abstraction which they call "man", i.e. in a fiction. Not a single individual in this haze can oppose a real ego, an ego which is accessible to and real to himself, to the universal pale fiction, which he could thereby destroy. Gabriel Marcel stands in reaction against "fixed" characters, against people who are as we say, all of a piece against a world, filled with stiff, unchanging forms.

The inauthentic individual is nothing more or less than what he seems to be to others—what, through the influence of what he seems to be to others, he comes to seem to himself. Such a person assumes a different aspect according to the other with whom he has to deal and according to the "official" character he represents in life. But sooner or later he is bound to discover this situation. Each of us some day looks into his own soul, and the result for him is either consternation or surprise or laughter or tragedy. As Marcel says in his lecture, *The Drama of the Soul in Exile*: "We are infinitely more than we are aware of wishing to be and sometimes, strange to say, the apparently most conscious and clear-headed are, in fact, most ignorant of their inner selves."

In *L'Iconoclaste* Abel says to Jacques, "You could never be satisfied for long in a world deserted by mystery . . . Life, without mystery, would be stifling." But to-day everything is analysed, rationalized, people are restrained, sceptical, unemotional: to emphasise the value of experience, of wonder, by poetic means

Continued on p. 4

## SOUTH AFRICA—ON TO THE REPUBLIC

ONCE again Dr. Malan, Nationalist Premier of South Africa has seen fit to raise the bogey of secession. Reinforced no doubt by the recent successes in the Provincial elections and the split in the official Parliamentary Opposition, the road to a republic is slowly but surely being traversed.

Since their initial success in 1948 the 'hot-head' faction of the Nationalist Party, headed by Mr. Strydom, Minister of Lands, has been agitating for a republic and secession from the Commonwealth. Only the 'statesman-like' qualities (and greater political experience) of Dr. Malan saved the party from an open split.

In the recent provincial elections, although fought on the issue of greater control of the native and the need to save 'white civilisation', the issue of the republic was a definite undertone. Now the republic faction find their hands further strengthened. Liberal overseas opinion about South African racial oppression has been interpreted as interference in domestic affairs—the only remedy for which appears to be a republic.

To the native, the Nationalist successes at the elections means a strengthening of the government's hand to carry on with the removal of the 'black spots' (the native urban settlements) with the inevitable hardships that must follow.

The Nationalists now control three of the four Provinces—which gives them a clear head for any scheme.

A republic would leave the natives completely at the mercy of government policy and would be met with apprehension in the one predominantly English Province, which would be in a state of near revolt.

English people who emigrated 10 years ago and more still refer to England as 'Home'—an attitude greatly resented by the Boers or Dutch who hold this up as a further argument for a republic. They argue that either the English think themselves as first and foremost South Africans or else get out.

With the republic would come all the Nationalist paraphernalia; the Flag, the National Anthem, and the Afrikaans language brought to its 'correct' position in the 'cultural' life of South Africa.

## We did not say it

# The Majesty of the Law

Senator McCarran's liberalism in regard to immigration matters is very high—when it comes to sheep. When the sheep on the Western ranges are short of shepherds—presto! legislation is magically passed to permit a few hundred hardy Basques to enter the country in circumvention of the McCarran Act that keeps so many equally desirable people out of the country. The third of such measures within the last few years was signed by President Eisenhower over the week-end. The sponsor? Senator McCarran, Democrat of Nevada.

But this was a shepherders' bill with a difference. On the very last day of the session the McCarran shepherders' bill was amended. The amendment had nothing to do with sheep, but it had a lot to do with human beings. Sponsored by Representative Walter, co-author with Mr. McCarran of the basic immigration law, the amendment alleviates one of the more inhuman provisions of that law which barred admission to the United States of otherwise eligible aliens who had committed the most minor offences.

Mr. Walter told the House: "American consular officers are excluding entirely too many aliens on very technical grounds. . . . Visas are being denied to persons who committed such petty crimes as theft of a loaf of bread during the famine days of 1946 in Germany, or for failure to return a ration card when required to do so in England, or for killing and roasting a duck on an outing, and so forth.

Under the amendment, commission of one such misdemeanour will no longer serve as an absolute bar to immigration. Thus, riding on a sheep's back so to speak, Congress has approved what President Eisenhower called "the first major adjustment of standards for permanent admission to the United States" since enactment of the 1952 law.

The President pledged himself long ago to revision of the McCarran-Walter Act; but the rider to the sheep bill did

not stem from any Administration pressure. Passage a year ago of the emergency Refugee Relief Act—which to date has resulted in a mere 8,400 visas—in no way lessens the need for a thorough-going rewriting of the McCarran Act. Our country only injures itself by this kind of law. The sooner it is revised the better.

(New York Times Editorial, Sept. 8)

## The Majesty of Government

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 10.

Mr. Sam Rayburn, leader of the democrats in the House of Representatives, said in Fort Worth (Texas) to day that President Eisenhower's legislative programme is "as dynamic as the dodo, as forward-looking as yesterday. If there is one word in the English language which can describe this Republican Administration, it is the word inept!" said Mr. Rayburn.—*British United Press*.

## 'Selected by Somebody Else'

THE quotation by Chapman Cohen which appeared at the top of FREEDOM last week had a very good little illustration immediately to back it up.

In Morpeth, Northumberland, a by-election is pending. It is a safe Labour seat, with a 16,000 majority, consisting mainly of the votes of miners from the surrounding pits.

These miners, not unnaturally, would rather like to have someone of their own choice as candidate. They would like one of their own union officials to go to Westminster to 'represent' them. Parliamentary candidates, however, are selected by the National Executive of the Labour Party, and that august body has chosen Mr. William Owen, telling the Morpeth miners that he is a Co-op education official.

Whether he is or not we don't know, but what the Labour bosses omitted to

tell their constituency party members was that Bill Owen is the secretary of the Master Ladies' Tailors' Association—an employers' organisation!

Now we have no doubt that Mr. Owen could quite easily play the part of a Mister-Facing-Both-Ways, but it is not us who have to be convinced; it is the miners of Morpeth. And we fancy that they will have a simpler view of these things, and will expect the candidate for whom they will cast their vote to be somebody content with one job—'representing' them.

We also fancy that they will kick up a row about not being allowed to choose their own man—and thereby question that quotation by Chapman Cohen, which went: Universal suffrage gives to every man and woman the right to vote for a candidate selected by someone else.'



# Cruelty to Children

UNLESS one believes that man is naturally "bad" or anti-social, one cannot accept the harsh treatment to which children in our society are subjected as part of the natural order of things. Even in our society, acts of outstanding savagery shock the citizens, and often rouse them to a fury of cruelty almost as bad as the act itself. We have progressed slightly since the days when a man had power of life or death over his children (and sometimes his wife as well), and could do with them exactly what he liked. Nowadays the law steps in, belatedly and clumsily, when things have gone too far, and protects the child after a fashion. Which means in practice that so long as you do not actually slay your offspring (or maim it or drive it mad), you can do more or less as you like. Even were the law all that is claimed for it, it could not give much protection; ultimately the only prevention of cruelty is the construction of a society in which the causes of cruelty are removed.

Not that children cannot be very irritating at times. Probably it does little harm to yell at them and drive them away when one is trying to concentrate on some difficult problem. If they in their turn have the right to preserve their privacy from the adult, when the latter tries to interfere, they will learn to respect the liberty of others, their own being respected.

But this is a very different matter from the hideous and carefully thought out punishments that adults inflict, some of the worst being more psychological than physical. This is very different from the prolonged and highly ingenious methods of breaking the child's spirit, that our society approves of and supports. A very favourite argument by the supporters of violence in child-rearing is that female bears cuff their cubs sometimes, when the latter annoy her, or do not take cover quickly enough when danger threatens. This argument is so popular (it usually concerns bears, but sometimes other animals) that it probably reflects some bizarre psychological aberration that is widespread. Of course it is no argument at all. For bears, quite apart from being exceedingly well padded with fat and fur, are at a different level of evolution from *homo sapiens*, and one cannot construct a form of society or a system of education for man on the basis of what is suitable for a totally different animal.

THERE exists in our society a philosophy of what one might term "brutalism". It is so widespread that I doubt if there is a single person who is not touched by it in some measure. In-

## ANGELS FROM HEAVEN

Seventeen chaplains baled out of a U.S. Air Force plane which caught fire over the desert near Newhall, California, yesterday. The crew of three also parachuted.

deed a tiny amount of it is almost a necessity in such an exceedingly barbarous society as ours. This philosophy glorifies "toughness", and even cruelty, for their own sakes. The public, most of whom are fairly unaggressive, flock to films about gangsters and cowboys, while the more intellectual go to see "Viva Zapata!", "The Bandit", or "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre".

This attitude springs from the present form of social organisation that grew up over thousands of years. A form of social organisation based on private property in one form or another. Such a social system leads to the development of a spirit of competition rather than co-operation, and the consequences of this are absolutely disastrous. In such a society hardness is made much of, while tenderness and gentleness are made to seem inferior. Women are despised, since their rôle of mother makes it impossible for them to dispense with tenderness and softness altogether, although they frequently do all they can to dispense with it.

It therefore becomes the job of the father to bring his son up "to be a man". The fate of the daughter did not matter so much in the past. A development of this was to send the child away from home altogether, right out of the reach of mother's influence. Hence we get the unbelievably barbarous custom of taking the child away from the mother at an early age, and sending it to some sort of institution, where it is herded with a lot of other children of the same sex, under a very harsh discipline. The growth of sex-equality in modern times has brought about a similar fate for the girls, who were formerly spared this horror. There is a grain of truth in the arguments of the anti-feminists that sex-equality

brings about the "masculinization" of women. Authoritarian equality, here as elsewhere, leads to equal slavery rather than equal freedom.

Of course the treatment is of the "kill or cure" type. To take a child away from its mother and home is to cause it a severe shock. Many children speedily recover, or rather seem to, but whether they succeed in adjusting to their new environment or not, the results are equally bad. The child who "likes school" accepts the pernicious ideals on which the school is founded. The chances are that he, or she, had a pretty tough home in the first place, and so is used to the sort of life that boarding school provides. On the other hand the child who is too sensitive to fit in will carry the marks of the experience throughout life. Whether they are small or great depends of course upon a variety of circumstances, but sometimes the effects are so bad that they incapacitate the person for living a normal life.



It has been well said, "For a person who has been to an English preparatory school, the rest of life, whatever may befall him, cannot fail to seem a holiday." And it does seem that English people are harder on children than most other European peoples, although they are kinder to our dumb friends. This tendency, at least as far as children are concerned, can be traced back to the Middle Ages, but it goes without saying that many peoples all over the world have practised the custom of taking children and/or adolescents away from their homes, and sending them into harsh institutions, where they are subjected to hardship in order to train and mould their characters, and to make them

"strong". Sometimes the young man, on attaining manhood, has to submit to ordeals to prove his right to enter adult status.

The English boarding and public school system is the most highly developed system of the kind in the world. A more carefully planned system for crushing the spirit of the human animal could not possibly be devised. It is extremely efficient. No effort is spared, nothing short of the most extreme cruelty, psychological and physical, is omitted that may bend the individual will to submission. Human children are "broken in" like horses. Indeed if a man were to treat horses as savagely he would undoubtedly be prosecuted.

Of course it may be argued that only middle and upper class children are subjected to this kind of treatment, but quite apart from the fact that bourgeois children also are human and suffer, it is now being proposed to get the more intelligent working-class children into the system too. The form of society to which we are heading is a managerial one, and there is no doubt that the boarding school and public school sys-

tems are admirably adapted to turning out a new ruling class. After all it is for training rulers that they exist. In the nineteenth century the public schools, formerly a preserve of the aristocracy, started to take in the sons of the new manufacturing capitalist class, and thus assimilated them into the traditions and outlook of the aristocracy. This was possibly one of the reasons why there has never been in England the conflict between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie that one gets on the Continent. There is no reason to suppose that the same cannot be done again with the sons of the new socialist bureaucracy. Be that as it may, some sort of hard tough schooling is necessary for members of a ruling class, and it is not easy for a day-school to provide it.

In present-day society the tendency is to make schooling more human. But a danger lurks there also. The hardest tyrant to fight is he who is kind, and it is quite possible that a system may be devised, with the aid of a prostituted psychology, by which children may be gently conditioned to slavery.

"SMOOG".

## Others beginning to see 'the Light'

IN a world absolutely dominated by narrow nationalistic conceptions, largely it is true fostered and nourished by overmuch propaganda, and not always reflecting the true thoughts and opinions of the ordinary citizen of the various states; in a period of time which has just seen the breakdown of an attempt to ensure the defence of Europe, in the main solely because of this very spirit of nationalism, it is worthy of note that men and women from almost every country in the world will meet this week-end in London to debate and discuss the reasons and arguments for world government. The World Association of Parliamentarians for World Government is holding its fourth annual conference, and delegates from over 40 countries will be present, each one paying his or her own expenses. It is a long time since Tennyson talked of the "parliament of man" and much recent history has, to say the very least, tended to spread the idea that such a possibility is one for the millennium, but acting on the theory that it is always darkest before the dawn the organisers of the conference are of the opinion that the time for the propagation of such an idea was never more opportune. Working on the assumption, which has a very solid basis, that no ordinary people in this world desire the outbreak of war, and yet seeing with almost as much certainty that war is the ultimate outcome of rival states engaged in the struggle for world markets, it is true that the need for supra-national authority of some kind, if accepted by all, is plain. Unfortunately it could also be said with just as much reason that all rule and all government has failed and therefore an end should be made of all its manifestations forthwith. The follies of national governments would only find themselves magnified in world government and, short of the possibility of the prevention of war, which is not a certainty, the peoples of the world could find themselves infinitely worse off. It is not remarkable that the names of delegates include some of those people who have made the whole world their debtors in

many fields of human advancement. What is remarkable however is that such people still continue to think, after all the miseries of the last 40 years brought about by man's inhumanity to man through the extension of the authoritarian idea, that a larger and fuller dose of it will improve the lot of mankind in general. Surely all the signs suggest that what the world is short of is not bigger and better government but less of it all round.

(Editorial in the *Prestwich & Whitefield Guide* 3/9/54).

## LETTERS

### The Proposed Manifesto

*Individual Action* does not endorse—and it could not endorse—the manifesto published in the Sept. 4 issue as was inferred. We do not support the formation of industrial unions, a so-called third camp and some of the other propositions in the aforementioned manifesto. We would therefore appreciate it greatly if you would kindly correct this misrepresentation.

New York JOHN GOLDSTEIN,  
Editor *Individual Action*.

[In a recent issue of the *Industrial Worker*, the journal in which we originally read the proposed Manifesto for an American Anarchist Federation, similar disclaimers to the one we have received from the editor of *Individual Action* are published from David Wieck of the Resistance Group and from J. Spivak of the Libertarian Book Club.—EDITORS].

### The Need For Blueprints

IT is just possible that A.W.U. may have been prompted to write his article "The need for blueprints" which appeared in the September 18th number of *FREEDOM* after hearing from some comrade that the Southampton group has been working for some time on precisely the sort of thing which he recommends, in answer to the need he emphasizes, and with the same cautions he makes in his introductory paragraph. If the idea, instead, came to him from some other source, he will probably be interested to hear, the same as those readers who valued his article, that the Southampton group will soon bring its work to completion, hoping to produce it in pamphlet form, and anybody interested in it may even now write to the undersigned, 38, Athelstan Road, Southampton. Once the pamphlet has been published criticisms, suggestions and alterations will be welcome for a larger and better edition, in the hope that this utopia, which has already more than a population of one, may increase the number of its inhabitants and join them in the further task of working out the means better suited to its actualization.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI,  
Southampton, Sept. 19.

## The Plays of Gabriel Marcel

Continued from p. 3

requires more and more bravado and self-assurance, becomes in fact a slightly ostentatious act, like pinning a flower in one's button-hole, and "flowery" language becomes the mark of the literary dandy. Words become a debased currency. The simplest way of "putting a play over" is to let the audiences hear the kind of speech they have just been indulging in at cocktail parties, clubs or over bridge-tables, to give them in the theatre the kind of dreary talk they are in the habit of hearing from their friends. And their lives are so unnecessarily tangled and so absurd. As Violetta says to Jerome in Marcel's *Ariadne*: "It's very odd. You can't find your way about in your own life. You're lost in it, like a child in a wood. Yet you plan the lives of others without giving a thought to the lie of the land or the thickness of the trees—Or is it that you're not even conscious of your own inner confusion?"

People stifle themselves with their false relationships, they watch each other always with suspicion—each is always trying to possess others, to dominate them, to humiliate them. Each is unable to understand himself, to be himself, and yet he is always judging, criticising others. Each hates and fears the very existence of other people, but he cannot live without them—human society

is like a chain gang of prisoners who despise and loathe one another. And the fetters which bind them together are envy, greed, bad faith and possessiveness. In *Ariadne* we see that we are condemned to live in the dark and to wander without hope, without any permanency or certainty in our lives, without any real understanding or sanction for our lives except what we create for ourselves in our own inner ideals, which we destroy by trying to impose on others or to mould their existences to them. We ought to draw the power to help ourselves and thus indirectly others by realising the very darkness of our own despair, by facing up to the inevitable tragedy and misunderstandings we are continually exposed to in our attempts to form our own lives. People are desperate and they don't know it, they don't even know their darkness for what it is. Their relationships and lives are warped and tainted by the most useless evasions, pretences and the most hopeless illusions. They do not talk or express their spiritual bankruptcy, but their inner nihilism is revealed all the time in their sordid, mean ambitions, their lies, and absurd pride which has no justification, no foundation. They cheat themselves, and they never even realise that they have failed.

D.M.M.

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SEPT. 26—DEBATE  
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### PUBLIC MEETING

at Baldwin Institute,  
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