

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

COWARDLY DIVERSION BY T. & G.W.U. OFFICIAL

NO DISCRIMINATION!

ACCORDING to reports appearing in the press there seems to be "increasing alarm" expressed by sections of the public at the numbers of immigrants coming to Britain from the West Indies, and the fact that they are British subjects only adds to the consternation. If the immigrants had no legitimate claim to British citizenship, but were humble refugees grateful for the "hospitality" so consciously given, then it might be a different matter; as long as they remained suitably humble, keeping their places and not demanding too many rights they would be more or less acceptable.

West Indians appear in a different light; they proudly claim to be British subjects, and as such expect the same justice and civil liberties held to be the right of every subject in our democracy. Unfortunately, they happen to be coloured, and although Britain has no official colour bar we find that in practice life for the coloured man is very difficult indeed.

Where racial superiority is not frankly admitted as a reason for prejudice, the usual argument against permanent settlement of non-whites in Britain is an economic one. Trade Union leaders, never slow to seize upon any issue which will divert attention from their own failings, and who nowadays are seldom heard defending the rights of their members, are now very vocal on the problems created by the influx of coloured labour to Britain although the problem of finding jobs for immigrants is not as great as we are led to believe. Birmingham alone, one of the largest recipients of Jamaican workers, has 45,000 jobs vacant, and employers are welcoming labour from the West Indies.

Where however, there is no problem it is easy enough to create one, particularly when it involves a man of a different colour. Mr. J. A. Brown, Midland organiser of the National Union of Railwaymen says that he is very worried because two Jamaican railwaymen, according to

seniority rating, are due to become foremen. This, says Mr. Brown will mean that "these men will have supervisory positions over white men." Mr. Jim Leask, Midland organiser of the Transport & General Workers' Union agrees with Brother Brown that something should be done about it. Brother Leask has a strong sense of justice and his main worry is that in the event of a trade recession white men might be out of work while coloured men have jobs. He assures us that his motives are of the highest:—"Don't think we want a colour bar, but the situation has to be tackled." His methods for tackling the problem are threefold and will be presented for discussion at the T.U.C. advisory council this week:

1. Bar coloured men from promotion to supervisory jobs.
2. Prevent them being engaged while white men are available.
3. Make them the first to become redundant in a slump.

These proposals almost deprive the coloured man from getting a job at all, before he even gets a chance to become redundant.

Fighting for jobs between workers is one of the unhappy aspects of capitalist society; it deprives workers of their dignity and blunts their sense of solidarity. When this competition exists on the racial level the manifestations are even more vicious. We are horrified at the suggestions made by the Midland organiser of the Transport & General Workers' Union, that such discriminatory measures should be advocated by the unions.

The Transport & General Workers' Union is going through a crisis.

The behaviour of Arthur Deakin during the recent dock strike won more support for the dockers than they would have enjoyed if Deakin had not denounced the strike as a communist plot, etc. Already the effects are beginning to show in Liverpool where 8,000 dockers out of 14,000 are asking to join the Stevedores & Dockers Union. It is obvious that if the T.&G.W.U. is not to have its power weakened by further dissatisfaction it must make a show of defending the workers' rights. What better issue could they have than the employment of coloured men, a convenient scapegoat; powerless, because there must be a mere handful of them in the unions, and prejudices are so quickly roused especially when fear and ignorance are encouraged.

The trade union leaders could help to undermine the fear that coloured workers will lower living standards by the simple measure of welcoming them into the unions; by encouraging the aspects of solidarity between all workers which should be the basis of the trade union movement, and by pointing out the real reasons for trade recessions resulting in unemployment. They choose instead to take the course which they think is more popular.

But the real issue as we see it is not only the problem of work and a full stomach for coloured workers, but a need for a change in the attitude of the ordinary people. The misery that is felt as a result of being regarded as inferior beings can be far more destroying than hunger.

If the proposals outlined above are accepted by the T.U.C. advisory council, the workers in Britain will have little to be proud of. R.M.

SYNDICALIST NOTEBOOK

Ship Repair Strike Drags On

THE 8,000 ship repair workers on official strike in the Port of London have now entered the ninth week of their strike over the issue of "last-in—first out" in case of redundancy.

Unofficial talks are going on between both sides of the dispute and the Ministry of Labour, but the employers refuse to discuss officially until the workers go back.

A statement issued by the Amalgamated Engineering Union reads as follows: "The issue is the right of consultation on redundancy—a vital question in the Port where jobs are constantly starting and ending, as work is completed and vessels leave.

"It is not generally known that we are on two hours notice of dismissal, and are in fact, casual workers. Since 1942 the Employers have accepted the principle of consultation which became custom and practice.

"Now the employers are throwing down the challenge and are demanding the right to "hire and fire"—and no arguments.

"Why are the Employers suddenly challenging the Unions?"

"Because, behind this arrogant challenge lies the Employers' intention to attack conditions in the Port, to reduce earnings and maintain unemployment. To do this, the Employers must first break down our strong Trade Union Organisation on the job, which has been built up over many years and has insured reasonable earnings to our members. To break this Organisation, the Employers must be able to sack militant Trade Unionists and that is why the Employers are insisting on the right to sack who they wish, without regard to length of service or any other principle.

"We are not prepared to go back to the bad old days of low earnings and no security.

"Our Employers are leading the attack on conditions and old established customs—if they win, it will be the signal to Employers in other sections of Engineering to attack.

"Make no mistake, fellow workers—this is your fight. 15 Unions have recognised the Dispute and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has given its official support."

So far the only direct action to be taken by any union within the Confederation has been the ban on overtime imposed by the Electrical Trades Union on all electricians on maintenance work in the Port of London. This has now become effective in the Royal and London docks and if the electricians chose to ban all maintenance work in the waterfront, they could bring the whole port to a standstill once again.

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 46

Deficit on Freedom	£690
Contributions received	£685
DEFICIT	£5
November 13 to November 20	
London: D.O. 4/-; Newcastle, Staffs: R.E.W. 3/-; London: W.F.* 2/6; London: J.S.* 3/-;	
London: P.Q.* 2/6; Hyde Park: Various 1/3;	
Providence, U.S.A.: M.A. 15/7.	
Total	1 11 10
Previously acknowledged	684 4 8
1954 TOTAL TO DATE	£685 16 6

GIFT OF BOOKS: London: A.W.U.

ALCOHOLISM IN FRANCE

SPIRITING OUR LIBERTIES AWAY

Wine gives courage and makes men apt for passion; care flees and is drowned in much wine. Then laughter comes, then even the poor find vigour, then sorrow and care and the wrinkles of the brow depart.—OVID.

THE news that the French government is to introduce licensing laws must have led many to believe that the last bastion of civilization has fallen. The French, we have been told these many years, would never tolerate the barbaric restrictions on drinking that we have in England. But it now seems that they are going to tolerate something very much like them: for so far there has been no sign of public outcry against their government's proposals, which include a ban on the sale of spirits between five and ten o'clock in the morning and a heavier tax on all alcoholic drinks.

Governments usually have an excuse for their repressive measures, and the French government has a good one on this occasion. Since the war there has been a great increase in drunkenness in France—so much so that the mental hospitals cannot cope with the number of alcoholics in need of treatment. And nearly half the industrial accidents in France are due to drunkenness. One does not have to be a 'temperance' fanatic to realize that this is a great social problem. But, most important of all from the government's point of view, the cost to the State in medical treatment, crime, and accidents is some £150 million a year.

There is another economic aspect, which I mentioned in an earlier article*. Every year there is a surplus of wine and spirit in France. This is distilled into industrial alcohol. Much of this becomes surplus in its turn and is then bought by

the State, which now has enormous stocks of unwanted alcohol on its hands. No previous French government has tried to rid itself of this economic embarrassment for fear of offending the powerful wine-making and distilling interests. But the present government evidently intends to do so, and with a high moral purpose to back up the purely practical reasons. It is interesting to note, however, that it is the small private distillers who will go to the wall: the big operators will be allowed to stay in business, even though their claws may be trimmed a little by the higher taxes.

Examination of the government's high moral tone at once reveals how thin and quavering it is. It should be clear, even to a politician, that when people take to drowning their sorrows in drink then their lives are lacking in something. Indeed, Pierre Mendès-France, the French prime minister, has said that the best means of combatting alcoholism is the provision of decent living conditions, with fewer slums, better homes, and so forth. Mr. Mendès-France is an astute man, and no doubt he realizes that these are things that governments do not provide. Why else would he bother with regulations that will only make life more irksome for the French people in general?

IT is true that governments sometimes clear away a few slums—or, rather, arrange for them to be cleared away—but when it comes to the provision of better living conditions and that vast 'and so forth' then their records is one of melancholy failure. Such things as

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H-Bomb Aftereffects

IN the new *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Physicist Ralph E. Lapp describes the radioactive aftereffects of the U.S. H-bomb tests in the Pacific. Dr. Lapp figures that a 15-megaton H-bomb exploded near the ground will make an area of 4,000 square miles, mostly downwind, so radioactive that all people in it will get a "serious to lethal dose" in the first day alone. If they cannot evacuate, they will get more. Dr. Lapp believes that the explosion of 50 super-bombs would blanket the entire north-eastern U.S. "in a serious to lethal radioactive fog."

This possibility was underlined by the H-test of March 1, 1954, whose "death ash" killed a Japanese fisherman 72 miles away, and injured 236 Marshall Islanders and 28 Americans. Physicist James R. Arnold of the University of Chicago, who describes these events in the *Bulletin*, gives no estimate of the amount or kind of radioactivity released by that climactic explosion. He says hopefully: "The damage due to fall-out and [radioactive] rain over the whole globe, as thus far reported, was probably not serious."

The fact is that no one can estimate accurately the long-range effect of raising the earth's level of radioactivity by even a small amount. Geneticists fear, and loudly state, that any appreciable increase will raise the mutation rate in all the earth's creatures, from plants to man. The mutations (changes, mostly damaging, in the heredity-carrying genes) will reduce fertility, cause miscarriages, stillbirths, and the birth of imperfect individuals. The full effects may not be felt, the geneticists say, for centuries.

Besides the mutation effect, there are other threats, even less well understood. Bomb-borne radioactivity has already shown up all over the world: in race horses from New Zealand, and in gelatin from India. Manufacturers of photographic film have learned by costly experience that they must protect their factories against it. So far, it is weak, but no one can guess what effects it will have over a course of years.

Without more information, it is not possible to estimate how many H-explosions (in tests or in war) would be necessary to do damage to the whole earth.

Time, Nov. 22, 1954

Remember the Miners

SOME of the terrible conditions in which miners spend their working lives was revealed in the discussion that took place last week in the House of Commons on the Mines & Quarries Bill.

The Minister of Fuel and Power was welcoming a new clause to the Bill approved by the House, putting an obligation on all mine-owners to keep mines as free as possible from vermin and insects. The Government regarded it as vital, he said, that the disease and the vermin should be reduced. The virus disease was particularly menacing in some of the northern coalfields. The clause would put a definite obligation on the National Coal Board and other mine-owners, irrespective of the obligations already upon local authorities.

Welcoming the clause on behalf of the Opposition, Mr. Tom Brown (Lab. Ince) spoke of the wood hornet, which, he said, was generally in pit props imported from Finland and Northern Russia. These insects became active when they got into the pit atmosphere, and he knew of a case where a miner was crippled from septic poisoning set up through a bite from one.

Mr. H. J. Finch (Lab. Bedwelty) said that contamination from rats was a very serious disease for miners and often proved fatal.

The Minister told the House that the use of wood props was declining. Props were now specially treated to get rid of the pests.

"Tones of the Heart"

IN Ezra Pound's final vision of the Confucian "Ta Hio" we read:

"The men of old wanting to clarify and diffuse throughout the empire that light which comes from looking straight into the heart and then acting, first set up good government in their own states; wanting good government in their own states, they first established order in their own families; wanting order in the home, they first disciplined themselves; desiring self-discipline, they rectified their own hearts; and wanting to rectify their hearts, they sought precise verbal definitions of their inarticulate thoughts (the tones given off by the heart); wishing to attain precise verbal definitions, they set to extend their knowledge to the utmost. The completion of knowledge is rooted in sorting things into organic categories."

The most interesting part of this interesting train of thought, which I found first in Legge's translation of the "Analecta", is the one referring to the tones given off by the heart. I do not know Chinese nor do I remember any page in either translation where "tones of the heart" are further defined or analyzed. But I can see the fundamental importance they have both for Confucius and Pound, and how a clear idea of what they are could help get rid of much psychological haze, and simplify the solution of many problems of language and understanding.

In a physiology text-book the 'heart' is described as a muscular part of the vascular system, pulsations of which drive the blood along. This description can, and in certain cases must, satisfy students, doctors and their patients; but before it acquired this restricted meaning it was used freely and not less precisely by men who wanted to express inner rhythms and shocks, tensions and promptings which their awareness registered, and which were not less real and certain to them than forms, movements, vibrations and proportions the same awareness registered through the five senses. In all of them the muscular heart plays a part, even if not always a primary or most important one, and even if in some particular moment of the living whole some other organ may claim attention as the

most affected or most affecting centre. Language which by vocation and necessity selects, defines and unifies cannot dispense with a name for the living and innerly sentient whole of which awareness is a function in the same way as language is a function of awareness. The sentient whole being the measure of all concreteness naturally chose something concrete to name itself by, and the heart, uncontrollable and indispensable, so delicately and at times so violently responsive and ever present usually won the day against other claimants.



THE sentient whole is pretty constantly in a state of stimulation and contraction, the degrees of which, as registered by awareness which can in turn be a cause of stimulation and contraction, are discontinuous. That is that they are separated by a kind of interval which gives them a qualitative difference. Thus, by means of an analogy both with muscular and musical tones, we can speak of tones of the heart rather than of feelings and emotions which tempt one to regard them as having an independent existence, sometimes accidental or even extraneous to the sentient whole, as if they were objects of experience and not experience itself, a detached or detachable something which obscures the active involvement and continuity of the subject.

The heart extends in time as a single line, autonomous if not strictly independent, receiving orders from no one, unforeseeable in its reactions, and with such untouchable resources that even the strongest shocks and obstacles cannot quench its initiative. Psycho-analysis can trace retrospectively the curves of its history and mark the origin in time of some recurrent pattern, but cannot with any certainty or approximation tell how under the impact of a given situation it will follow one pattern rather than another. Thence its interest for the anarchist as the centre of that mysterious but undeniable reality he calls the individual's freedom.

The heart is always right. Anyone listening to it knows that it is so. For example, on hearing a statement that is relevant on its own merits, the heart is immediately affected, and it is its tones which dictate ensuing thoughts. Cerebral memory will supply words, phrases, syntactical and logical connections, but what we will think or say is decided by the heart beforehand in the fundamental matter of its being for or against the statement we heard. In the discussion that may follow the heart may issue other tones or the words we spoke can be turned against us to our confusion, but the heart will not accept it as final. Not only, as Pascal remarked, "the heart has reasons which reason cannot understand", but the heart never listens to arguments of reason, the direction of which, it has not itself supplied.



NOTHING is more disconcerting than to feel in the right, and to think and speak in the wrong, to have our inner truth—disputed, refuted and proven false when we present it to others. "Sincerity", in Pound's interpretation of another Confucian text, "is an activity defining words with precision", and in Hugh Kenner's comment on the poetry of Pound, "words as mimesis of things, a subtle adjustment of relative weights and tensions, of the thing spoken to the thing perceived, an intrinsic relation between palpable linguistic gestures and human tensions and actions". For words, whatever the uses they have been put to, and the discredit that has consequently befallen them, came first from the heart, to express the tones of the heart, the infinite modulations and discords of a sentient whole. Even when apparently adhering to outside reality, to things explored by the senses, words are still shaped by the heart because though the senses may be regarded as neutral and passive in perceiving, perceptions are not, especially when the need arises to name them. A thing has to be first interiorized in order to be given a name, and a name is given to it because it matters. The name is indicative of the quality and intensity of what singles out the mattering, so to speak, of the thing, its ability to move the heart and commit it to its existence.

Speaking, therefore, with no attention to the tones of one's heart or with no attention to the specific weight and quality of words, that is to their proper function as carriers of heart-tones can only result in insincerity. That very few nowadays mind this kind of insincerity or that our attention has become so gross that we shove all heart-tones into the two rudimentary categories of like and dislike, the only two that matter for prac-

HOW CAME CIVILISATION? by Lord Raglan. Methuen.

LORD RAGLAN'S books are excellent criticisms of popular fallacies, but like so many good debunkers he is weak on the constructive side. (A thing anarchists are often accused of being, but I think unjustly). His most famous work, *Jocasta's Crime*, shows that the taboo on incest is completely without rational foundation, and is in fact based on superstition and nothing more. In this book he turns his guns in another direction, this time on those who believe that culture arose spontaneously in the various places that it has appeared.

It is a most forcible work. Idols crash on all sides. "The savage never invents", says the author, and goes on to point out that in all the records we have of savage peoples there is no account of their progressing in technical devices or social systems, except under the influence of outsiders, usually at a higher level of culture. In fact all the peoples of the world, whom we regard as living the sort of life men led in the early days of civilisation yet to come, but the culturally degenerate descendants of a once world-wide civilisation.

He considers that civilisation arose in South Western Asia, and spread out from there all over the world, till the diffusion reached the Americas across the Pacific. The peoples on the outward fringe of this movement, cut off from the rest of the world, gradually degenerated till they were almost back where they started. This, he believes, is the natural tendency of man when cut off from the cultural stream. Ultimately the human impulse is to return gradually to the state of primitivism from which they first set out.

From this follows the pessimistic conclusion that "all culture is artificial, and what we call civilisation is an extreme form of artificiality, limited to small

tical purposes, just show how impoverished and dull our consciousness has become, or how we have lost faith not only in language but in the quickening and fulfilling reality that presides over its constant creation. This reality is the oneness of all human hearts, a potential oneness that is actualized by participation in one common language and to the extent that language adheres to the heart.

Language emerged so that men could understand one another. They could not act together without mutual understanding nor could they understand one another without feeling together, fearing and desiring, hating and loving together. So loss of faith in language goes with loss of faith in humanity, and finally with loss of faith in one's heart. If men now so seldom understand one another heartily the reason may perhaps be found in that the most frequent tones of their heart are tones of loneliness, unsympathy, of exacerbated unwillingness and inability to communicate and be communicated to.

Confucius' men of old can give us a salutary example.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI.

HYPOCRISY



Brown University, in Rhode Island, which ordered from Moscow 75 copies of Lenin's booklet, "The State and Revolution," has been told the U.S. Post Office is holding the pamphlets as Communist propaganda.

They will be allowed in, however, if the university undertakes only to study them and "in no way promotes their dissemination."

(News Chronicle).



Luton is full of serious-minded students of Italian social history. Or so it seems in the light of what happened after the Swindon magistrates decreed in July that the "Decameron" was obscene.

When the appeal against their decision was heard, the chairman asked whether it would be proper for the public library to have a copy. The solicitor for the police agreed that it would be, conceding that "students of Italian social history should have access to it."

The Luton branch of this student movement has clearly been busy. The annual report of the Luton Public Libraries list Boccaccio's "Decameron" as one of the eighteen works of fiction most in demand at the Central Library.

For the benefit of any Swindon cynics who might question the student status of the Luton readers it should be added that the annual report is for the year ended last March.

(Manchester Guardian).

HOW DID IT START?

minorities even in the most civilised countries. Frazer (*Golden Bough*, vol. 1, p. 236) 'notes the existence of a solid layer of savagery beneath the surface of society', and wonders 'whether the impulsive energy of the minority, or the dead weight of the majority, of mankind will prove the stronger force to carry us up to higher heights, or to sink us to lower depths'. Reformers and philanthropists proclaim as their ideal 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number', but fail to realize that this ideal is quite distinct from the ideal of progress, and may be incompatible with it." To which one is prone to retort, "To hell with progress!" But in actual fact this pessimism is not the usual attitude of the diffusionist, he is usually more inclined to be libertarian and pacifist in his conclusions (for instance W. J. Perry, and H. J. Massingham).

However apart from this rather aristocratic outlook, which is not essential to the rest of the book, there can be no doubt that its general tendency is to support the libertarian, if not the anarchist, case. It shows most clearly that a civilisation cut off from the outer world tends to decay. A continual influx of foreign ideas and influences is necessary if the culture is not to die gradually away. The ruins of vanished civilisations dot the earth. The conventional conservative attitude is that cultures rise in one place, as a result of the geographical conditions existing there, have their period of power and glory, and then grow old and die. Facile analogies are made with the lives of human individuals, and it is concluded that cultures behave, and function like individual people.

"This theory has been stated in its simplest and most fallacious form by Professor Arnold Toynbee, who scouts the idea that any form of culture has ever been diffused, and assures us that 'the Minoan civilisation was a response to the challenge of the sea, the Egyptian [sic] civilisation a response to the challenge of the Nile', and so on (*A Study of History*, vol. 1, p. 438)."

In reality cultural diffusion went on all the time, and indeed still does. Nationalists, and those who (as did the Nazis) talk of autarchy for nations,

keeping themselves to themselves, and relying on themselves for everything, are in fact helping the decay of the civilisation they are so keen (according to themselves) to defend. It is quite a mistake to imagine that no one travelled until the sixteenth century. Taken to its logical conclusion it would seem that up till Columbus all the peoples in the world evolved separately from their ape-like ancestors, and then proceeded to build up their respective cultures, all in the little spot of the world where the Europeans—those supermen—came along and found them. Resemblances of culture are to be ascribed to the similarity of the human mind all over the world. That is why carvings of elephants with people riding on them can be found on Maya ruins in Central America. The people had never seen elephants, but the human mind is so much alike all the world over that people will carve elephants wherever they may be, when they reach a certain stage of development. (However the anti-diffusionists claim that these carvings really represent macaws and anteaters).

There are so many resemblances between the cultures of India, China, and the East Indies, and America that they cannot be explained away as coincidence, nor by the similar workings of the human mind. If the latter were the cause why are not all cultures almost the same? They are not. But it is possible to trace their resemblances and modifications all round the world.

Those who argue that our present social system is a product of human nature should consider the following on the subject of marriage, property, and punishment. Three lovely institutions which of course must be preserved, cost what it may.

"It has, of course, been recognised for the last seventy years that man is descended from an ape-like animal, and it has never been suggested that ape-like animals have any of the ideas or artefacts mentioned above, but no attempt has been made to explain why the transition from animal to human was accompanied by such remarkable changes in innate mental endowment. And if such traits are innate, how is it that they are

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Theatre

THE WEIRD WOMAN OF ARRAS

(At the New Lindsey Theatre).

IN *The Weird Woman of Arras*,

Armond Salacrou takes for his subject the few seconds granted a dying man to see his life pass before him and to evaluate its true worth. This creation, tender, penetrating and fantastic gives Salacrou high rank among dramatists of his generation. In his brilliant satire of bourgeois society Salacrou has shown that the enslaved citizen does not live in himself, as the free man does, but always out of himself, knowing only how to live in the opinion of others. "Character" has no existence except as a false conception, a so-called object of knowledge to other people. Consciousness does not know its own character, except in so far as it may reveal itself reflexively from the point of view of another. This is why pure introspective description of oneself does not reveal a "fixed" character. If men really realised the spiritual horror of the world they have made, its obscene, dead respectability, and the misery and cruelty of the past, they would feel suddenly the infinite invisible night of freezing space silencing their smug, cowardly complacency, and would stare at one another with ghostly and anguished eyes. Perhaps, the most original of Salacrou's plays is *The Lenoir Archipelago; or Fixed Ideas Shouldn't be Interfered With* (1946). This is an extremely subtle and amusing satiric and penetrating scene of a family conference in the Lenoir household. The main title is explained by Victor Lenoir's comment on his rich and respectable relatives: "We are," he observes, "exactly like islands separated from each other, living each for himself. . . . However, when a number of little islands get together they form an archipelago. The Archipelago Lenoir." The apparent individualism of the bourgeois is external, static, objectified: it is not a living existential individuality, it is socialized, spuriously based on conformity and property. The archipelago in this instance is created when it is discovered that Grandfather Paul-Albert Lenoir has attempted to ravish a young girl; the girl's father is adamant; Paul-Albert will be brought to court; and as a result the family faces shame (through the action of one member! This social attitude is a survival of the early tribal system, when the existence

of an individual as a separate unique consciousness was not known; what one person did, the whole tribe was responsible for. Man has still to achieve complete personal conscience and existence, he is still submerged in the mass-mind in external society), and probably loss of revenue from the source of their fortunes, the famous Lenoir wine, concocted according to a secret recipe. The police are waiting downstairs, and they discuss what to do. They first think how good it would be (for them) if Grandpapa were to die; then they toy with the idea of killing him, and finally they argue him into committing suicide. Adolphe hands him a revolver. "But," says Adolphe, "you will always live in our memory." Grandfather: "Yes, when I'm dead, I'll live a little so far as you're concerned, but for my part I'll be quite dead." Adolphe: "I've never admired you so much. Take this revolver, and in a moment of courage—" Grandfather: "But an eternity of courage is needed for suicide." Adolphe: "They're knocking at the door. Take this revolver—" [Grandfather takes the revolver. Silence]. Grandfather: "What if I shoot at you instead of myself?" Adolphe: "Are you crazy?" Calmy the old man explains that if he were to shoot them all they would not have to suffer from his dishonour. In a frenzy Adolphe demands the revolver back, and the play ends in a tumultuous question-mark. A struggle begins. *The Curtain begins to descend slowly. Grandfather's voice is heard calling "Valentine! Valentine!"* Then there is a shot.

And the

CURTAIN

reaches the stage.

Bourgeois society is moribund: but in the realm of anarchy and creativity life acquires depth, meaning, character and interest, in contrast to the shallowness, insignificance and insipidity peculiar to the realm of property, morality and tedious external fact.

So much of life for Salacrou is a matter for laughter and regret, the world a place where but to think is to be full of sorrow. Night and the darkness of deep eternity conveys alien unknown presence which terrifies and pursues us into the deceptive daylight of our lives.

D.M.M.

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THE ROLE OF ANARCHISTS

IN our correspondence page this week we publish a letter from a reader who criticises FREEDOM, and anarchists in general, for what he calls our "lack of positive action towards contemporary problems" and gives some vivid examples to illustrate his contention that "the promise of a future utopia must mean little" to a large section of the community.

We are the last people to discourage enthusiasm for "positive action" but we feel we must avoid advocating "action" the carrying out of which is as much a utopian hope as the future society is, for our correspondent, a utopian dream. What we mean is illustrated by the example he gives of how he would tackle the problem of horror comics. When one analyses his plan it comes to this: that newsagents should not be allowed to display horror comics in their windows, the consequence of this action being that the newsagents concerned would soon be out of business! Assuming for one moment that the method he advocates would be effective, the question still exists as to who is going to prevent the newsagents from displaying the comics. As things are at present it can only be done by passing a law to this effect with the police seeing to it that it is observed. Now there is nothing very original in this proposal, and there is no lack of supporters for such action. Indeed, this is the point, that there are so many people to-day engaged in advocating short term measures to patch up the system, to smooth out an anomaly here and redress a wrong there, that we have lost sight of the major problem of social injustice on which the whole of present society is founded. It is in this respect that anarchists are different from all other reformers: in that their attack is directed primarily at the roots of the social problem, refusing to be deflected by details which are in fact but offshoots of the main problem. (The more so is that the case in countries where a liberal tradition ensures that all kinds of organisations will exist to press for improvements in living and working conditions, and to defend, and even extend, those few hard-won freedoms we still enjoy.

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THE rôle of anarchists, as we see it, is to seek to prevent people from accepting these interim measures, these sops, these palliatives, these reforms, as anything but attempts to patch up and make life more tolerable, and to ensure that they do not lose sight of the fact that only a revolutionary change in our whole way of thinking and of the social structure will provide the environment for a fuller and more satisfactory life for all mankind.

The need for such activity becomes more necessary as the possibilities of providing material comforts for all, through the development of new production methods, becomes every day more of a reality. The new slavery of the industrial era is summed up in the following sentences published in the *Newcastle Daily Journal*:

"Last night, as he stood in his new three-bedroomed house, his 33-year-old wife Amy said: 'We've got everything we want now. I'm satisfied. I've a fridge, a washer and a television set and that's all I want in life!'"

Without losing our sense of proportion and recognising the gigantic problem of providing food and decent living conditions for the hundreds of millions of people in the world who still exist at a starvation

CRIME AND THE SERVICES

CRIME AND THE SERVICES, by John C. Spencer. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 28/-.

THIS book is 'an account of a research into the effect of Service life on criminal behaviour' and although it is mainly concerned with 'the prevention of delinquency, both military and civil, in the Services', it raises several issues that are of interest from an anarchist point of view. The author is at present Director of the Bristol Social Project, started earlier this year, an experiment based on the premise that it is preferable to approach the problem of family welfare as a whole, and that this should be done along the lines of practical experiment and demonstration in preference to supporting a variety of research schemes. This empirical approach to problems is noticeable throughout the study. Dr. Spencer consistently stresses the necessity of examining any act of delinquent behaviour in the light of the fullest possible knowledge of the individual concerned. Without some such knowledge it is almost impossible to discover the causes of delinquency (the word 'delinquency' is used throughout in the sense of anti-social behaviour, not merely an offence against the law, for which the word 'crime' is used); so much should be self-evident to most normal people, yet Spencer finds it necessary to constantly reiterate this in face of the usual attitude of the police (and like-minded people) that the Seven Deadly Sins provide all the possible reasons for delinquent behaviour—when they trouble to think about causes at all. On page 2 Dr. Spencer says 'the explanation of delinquency in terms of a single causative factor, whether biological or psychological, on the one hand, or sociological or environmental on the other, has given place to what has been called a multi-factor approach, in which the total situation is the subject of study'. Man is very largely the creature of his environment and until that environment becomes considerably more healthy, from parental attitudes during the early years of childhood to the films shown at the local cinema, it seems unlikely there will be any less delinquency. What Spencer refers to as the multi-factor approach is undoubtedly an advance from the idea that delinquency is either due to a traumatic experience of early childhood, or hereditary factors, or the arrangement of the brain tissue, or entry into the Services; any one of these may be a contributory factor but is unlikely to be the sole cause.

'At the present time we have to contend . . . with the widespread incorporation of delinquent patterns of conduct into the actual structure and mechanism of society . . . When scientific psychiatry is deliberately invoked, as it is to-day, to deal with some individual crime, it must inevitably become widely involved

level, it seems clear to us that man has nevertheless now mastered the techniques for producing the food and manufacturing the goods needed to maintain a decent standard of living throughout the world.

At the same time, by the development of the Automatic Factory, he is solving the problems of how to relieve man from the need to engage in work in which his rôle is that of an automaton. Only last week, in the House of Commons, questions were being asked on this subject, and the attention of the House was drawn to the claim that in America a jet aircraft has been made completely without the intervention of any human workers on the process.

Such a revolution in industrial production and production methods, to be of use to mankind, and not the factors leading to unemployment and misery, and a new slavery, requires a revolution in all our thinking. And of this revolution we see few signs at present. It is towards this revolution that the anarchists—the "gentle anarchists"—need to direct and concentrate their energies and their intelligence to-day. We are within sight of a world in which we could have the necessary leisure to develop and to breathe as free men and women . . . if we control the Machine. But if our ways of thinking remain, do not move forward, then the new Industrial Revolution may well be a worse horror than any "horror comic" could portray.

in the study of the non-criminal forms of delinquency upon which patterns of centralized society have come to depend, since both the demand and the supply of delinquents may be held to be products of that society.' Thus Alex Comfort in *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State*. The armed services are part of such patterns and as such one would imagine they would be an important criminogenic factor: they are organisations with strict hierarchic structures, with a more repressive legal system than that of the State of which they form a part, and with an entirely anti-social function. However, Dr. Spencer concludes, on the basis of extensive study of ex-Service offenders in three civil prisons and of two hundred discharged convicts, that the Services, *per se*, are not criminogenic. He maintains that the Services frequently provide precipitating factors such as the sudden change from normal habits of family life; 'scrounging'; the boredom of long periods of inactivity; the effect of learning Commando methods of warfare; and familiarity with killing; but these factors will only precipitate delinquent behaviour where there is already some instability; on the stable personality they will have no effect. Such arguments may appear, at any rate to the layman, as prevarications—for the whole tenor of Service life is the very antithesis of a natural, life-affirming attitude, and it is indeed only the stable person who will remain unaffected. Most of us have our inner conflicts, with their origins rooted in infancy, which many people can resolve without being aware of them, but when one is subjected to a situation where 'Emotion and excitement based on physical fear and physical aggression are kept at a high pitch . . . Problems can be shelved and replaced by action or by appropriate gestures . . . The citizen is placed in the same situation towards forbidden acts of aggression as the child who is suddenly given the run of the forbidden room, or the repressed adolescent who suddenly gets access to sexual satisfaction' (Comfort, *op. cit.* on the atmosphere of the Services), then our aggression is given a direct outlet; the pleasant atmosphere of childhood is recreated; our welfare is the responsibility of others; once joining the Services is justified to ourselves then fundamentally independent views must be shelved as they can only be regarded as disloyal. It is precisely because so many people have become potential delinquents, mainly due to the conventionally repressive upbringing inflicted on the majority of

children, that the emotional appeals to commit aggressive acts (disguised as patriotism) and all the other factors typical of a wartime situation, are so dangerous. An added incentive to such delinquent behaviour is the official encouragement it receives; the censoring function of the conscious mind that prevents the socially unacceptable unconscious impulses from direct manifestation, is weakened. In such circumstances to maintain that the Services are not criminogenic is to beg the question.

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DR. SPENCER gives some idea of what our present system of Service prisons can mean to those unfortunate enough to be submitted to these (theoretically) reformatory institutions. At one Naval Detention Quarters he says (page 64) 'Each man was housed in a separate cell, with no communication with his fellows except during drill and exercise. At night he had to lie on bare boards without blankets, except in cold weather, until 112 good conduct marks had been earned, an achievement possible at the quickest only after 14 days. During the same period men could send letters only on compassionate grounds . . . opportunities for rehabilitation were, generally speaking, most inadequate, though in the best establishments there were facilities for military training'. I suspect the phrase 'facilities for military training' is a little euphemistic: training at such establishments not infrequently consists of pack drill 'at the double' with the packs filled with sand. The process of brutalising at which prisons, like the notorious 'glasshouse' at Aldershot, are so adept is not the only way in which the State seeks to break the individual prisoner. Imprisonment itself can have nothing but an unhealthy effect on the prisoners: separation from normal surroundings; enforced celibacy; lack of privacy; the regimentation, all lead to increased tensions and conflict within the character structure. How many have gone through the dreary sequence of Approved School, Borstal, the Services, and prison and have managed to retain any degree of normality?

However, modern theories of penology have advanced a long way from the barbaric idea of retribution and of punishment as a deterrent. There is a marked difference between the ideas of criminologists, the amorphous group covered by the term 'social workers', and (usually) the Prison Commissioners on the one hand and the administrators of the law—the police, magistrates, and lower ranks of the Prison Service on the other. This is the result of the inevitable clash between the discoveries of modern psychology, which have the authority of established truths, and a system of law based on the 'deterrent' principle. The conflict is not at first sight obvious, since official penologists and psychologists maintain that punishment is the best method of 'curing' the criminal; the difference between their approach and the traditional one was described in a recent talk on the radio as that between sending a criminal to prison as a punishment and sending him for a punishment. Their psychological techniques are used only at a superficial level, whereas the less biased penologist (like Dr. Spencer) is concerned

EXPORTING POLICEMEN AND JAILERS

A Reuter report from Nairobi describes the purpose of the London trip of Mr. Blundell, Minister without portfolio and a member of Kenya's war council of four, as one of hurrying on "the flow of manpower to the colony". It's no longer emigrants to cultivate (or at least supervise) the large tracts of land reserved for the white man which are not being worked that they are crying out for. Now it is the "police and prison departments here [in Kenya which] is waiting for recruits from Britain".

How did it start? Continued from p. 2

not universal? Dr. Westermarck recognises that they are not, since he speaks of the 'various forms of marriage'. It is true that all human communities have some form of marriage regulation, but they vary so much that it is impossible to believe any one of them innate, and the same applies to the rights of property. As for punishment, the very idea of it is foreign to savages, and the senseless and pernicious custom of the blood-feud is by no means universal . . .

It is a great mistake to imagine that we have existing on the globe at the present time human communities representing the whole gamut of human social evolution. As the matter of fact the nineteenth century saw the disappearance of a variety of tribes, and this was only a quickening up of a process of imperialism that had been going on for thousands of years. It is therefore difficult to say what social life was like before civilisation as we know it. If present progress continues, which in view of the growing shortage of food and raw materials is not likely, it will obliterate all the "backward" (so-called) tribes, and not merely their social systems, but it will wipe off all trace of the feudal system as well, and then, if an atomic war destroys most of the records, learned men of future ages will deny that there

ever were savages, that there ever was a feudal system, or even capitalism. They may well, in all seriousness, maintain that mankind had always lived under the particular social system that would be then in operation (let us hope it is anarchy), and that such a system is the only one possible to human nature.

Lord Raglan does not say this. He is mainly a destructive critic, not much interested in theorising about what may have been, or what may be. However the revolutionary may draw from his book a lot of conclusions that he does not. It is not impossible that mankind, even in his early civilisations, lived in anarchy, in a society of sex-equality and freedom, without government or war. This was the Golden Age of myth and legend, and it does seem that there is a good deal of evidence that it did exist.

The book does not really answer the question that it poses. In the end you are never really told how civilisation came. As in *Jocasta's Crime*, having smashed every possible orthodox explanation, one is left with the simple fact that things are as they are, but why they are so remains a mystery.

The reader must answer for himself, "How Came Civilisation?"

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

with learning as much as possible about the criminal and helping him to reform himself by bringing out the latent positive attitudes. This approach has been more widely accepted since the war, as witness the advent of 'open' prisons, in spite of the clamour of 'public opinion' voiced by the Press.

While in no way decrying the excellent work being done by criminologists, social workers, and others in the treatment and prevention of delinquency, it is clear that we cannot hope to remove the causes of delinquency from our society without a fundamental change in our approach to the problem. Anti-social behaviour is a symptom of some deeper sickness—and few doctors would be content with curing a symptom. A society which rejects the dogma of power as a necessity of organisation, a society which is matriformal and life-centred, will harbour at least aggression. And when there is more love than aggression then the positive human virtues will have more room to grow.

M.G.W.

DOWN WITH CULTURE . . .

One night recently only five people—three with complimentary tickets—formed the audience to see a play performed by a professional repertory company at Wellington, Shropshire. The company, the fourth in succession to have failed to establish itself in the town, is leaving to-morrow after a three-week stay. It had planned to stay until March.

. . . AND EDUCATION!

Miss Margaret Brown told the Welsh Association of Training Corps for Girls at Rhyd that in answering a corps general knowledge test a grammar school girl, aged 15, stated that Mr. Truman was Prime Minister and that the Communist party was one of the principal parties in this country.

Miss Brown is Commanding Officer of the Prestatyn unit of the Girl's Nautical Training Corps. Mrs. I. Roberts, Commanding Officer of the Flint unit, said: "One of my girls said Mr. Eisenhower was the Foreign Secretary."

Miss Brown said that the corps' training syllabus seemed to her too advanced for the average intelligence of the girls the movement got. "I would say that it is beyond 75 per cent. of them," she said. "Quite often we have to teach them to read and write."

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DOCKLAND SETTLEMENTS

In the issue of FREEDOM dated November 6th, there is a reference to the Docklands Settlements under the heading of "To Hell With the Lord Mayor's Charity." The writer would seem to approve of these settlements, in as far as he recommends the dockers to raise money for them.

I must admit at the outset that my own knowledge of the settlements is very limited. I recently gave a record recital at the main one in Canning Town and used my visit to talk to as many people as I could. I do not wish to belittle the positive achievements of these settlements or to make light of the unselfish work of many well-meaning people. However, I am convinced that the whole structure of the settlement is authoritarian and anarchists should have no part in recommending them as they are at present constituted.

The list of sponsors is riddled with military people, church dignitaries and socialites. One would have to search far for anyone of moderately progressive views. The accent is on discipline and religion and I was told during my visit that an attempt is being made to institute a ruling that the younger members have to attend the chapel at least once a week to qualify for membership. The report and accounts for 1954 is an interesting document for its revelation of the basic outlook of the settlements. The whole idea is to instil in the youngsters a respect for authority with its attendant

belief in punishment and gross superstition. The whole report is pervaded with an orthodox morality with no real understanding of the problems which are supposed to be dealt with.

It would indeed be an excellent thing if the dockers contributed to their own settlements or community centres. However, if they do so they should ensure control from within and make them genuinely libertarian in outlook. They would be ill-advised to support the present settlements which are merely centres where conformity is preached and planned. I suggest that Anarcho-Syndicalist has mistaken the verbiage for the reality.

London, Nov. 17. ALBERT J. MCCARTHY. [Our correspondent reads into Anarcho-Syndicalist's article what is not there! He was not discussing the pros and cons of the Dockland Settlements as such but the "skin-deep charity" of those who allowed an industrial dispute to influence an initiative which was for the benefit of all the young people living in dockland.

It is true that he did write that these clubs provide "the nearest thing to organised communal activity for working-class families" to the area, but even into this statement one cannot read "approval".

However, apart from these minor observations, we are sure most anarchists—and many dockers—will agree with our correspondent's comments on the settlements.—EDS.]

Anarchists Lack Positive Action

For a number of years I have been a reader of your paper and have attended many of your meetings, outdoor and indoor.

While I am in sympathy with much that you advocate I am always left with the feeling that there is no sense of immediacy in the views put forward in your columns or from your platform.

The consumptive spitting his lungs out onto the wet pavements of a dreary little industrial town, the child in a Glasgow slum watching the bugs crawling across the wall are things to be deplored yet I feel that to many of your group they exist merely to be discussed.

One feels that if an atom bomb fell on London to-morrow the Glasgow Branch would arrange a meeting next week to discuss its implications (weather permitting).

But to the consumptive who measures his life by each racking cough, to the child who will see the bugs in her bed to-night and to the men and women whose span of life is nearly finished the promise of a future utopia must mean little.

It would ill behove one who is not a member of your group to criticise what he feels is your lack of positive action towards contemporary problems unless he in his turn could offer some solution to a matter that you dismiss as insoluble.

In the October 16th number of FREEDOM there is an article on AMERICAN COMICS and the writer having attempted to analyse the appeal of these comics concludes with the following: "The problem is insoluble while the cur-

rent attitude towards children persists, and is therefore inseparable from the general problem of achieving a libertarian society" etc.

90,000,000 comics are churned out each month in the United States, but nothing can be done to divert this flow of slush until we have achieved a libertarian society.

Might I suggest that your correspondent has not only made no attempt to solve a contemporary problem but has completely ignored it. Various national newspapers are clamouring for the complete ban on these comics, trade union branches pass resolutions agreeing with the newspapers while the Sunday Times in an editorial gently eases itself onto the fence with your correspondent by writing that "While deliberate purveying of pornography should be an offence, no solution based on censorship and prosecution can ever fully meet the case. Basically, here is a matter for moral teaching, parental control and education" meanwhile to-morrow hundreds of thousands of small boys will be pawing over bookstalls in search of new horror comics to buy or exchange.

I have no use for censorship for it is not an attempt to solve a problem but merely an act of self-mutilation.

What I do suggest is this, that no publication deemed unsuitable for children should be offered to sale.

By that I mean that they should not be publicly displayed and should anyone wish to purchase a copy of "Screaming Blondes" it would be adults only.

PERSIA'S IN THE BAG

The Treasury announced to-day that the Government have offered to make available to the Persian Government a credit of £10,000,000 to be expended on goods and services from the United Kingdom.

The credit will carry interest at four per cent. per year and the repayable over five years.

It is to help Persia over her temporary financial difficulties before the oil revenues begin to flow and to promote British trade with Persia.

PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION

Children from seven Worcestershire schools have planted 8,500 trees in the Clent Hills, and will afterwards tend them. The planting has been arranged by the county council to give "a practical demonstration of how landowners may conserve and improve the rural landscape."

'We Shall (not) remember Them'

IT is many many years since the 'Labour Movement' switched its May Day demonstrations from the First of May to the First Sunday in May, so as not to interfere with the bosses' business. It is understandable that this should be officially welcomed, since workers' interests are always subjugated to those of employers and it would never do for the workers to realise their ability to bring the whole country to a standstill by an expression of solidarity once a year.

Previous to 1939, the State and local authorities did support a total national stoppage, however, for a brief moment every year, and that was on November 11th—Armistice Day—when for two minutes at 11 a.m. the whole country observed a silence in memory of the dead of the Great War. The wheels of industry were stopped, all traffic came to a halt, everyone, presumably, paid a momentary homage to the millions who had been slain.

And that took place on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month every year, irrespective of the day of the week, because that was the time and date in 1918 when the Armistice between Germany and the Allies was signed.

Came the 1939-45 war, however, and it was obviously somewhat hypocritical to pretend to remember the dead of the previous war in the midst of an even greater one. After all, 1914-18 was A War to End War, remember? It was a bit embarrassing to remember.

When 'Peace' returned it was appropriate to remember again. Only now we have two lots of dead to pay homage to, and we could hardly have two days a year interrupted by services at the Cenotaph. So what did they do? They fixed on Sunday. One Sunday for two Remembrances. No longer November 11th, whichever day of the week, because World War II did not finish in November... does anyone remember just when the Armistices—for Germany and Japan—were signed in 1945?

The first Sunday in November is now Remembrance Sunday. Prayers are said, wreaths are laid, and production is not interrupted. The Export Drive is not held up even for two minutes—neither is the Rearmament Drive. However many bullets are produced in Britain in two minutes; however many operations are performed by British workers on the production of jet-planes, tanks, bombs and guns, in two minutes of the nation's time, are not lost through remembrance of those who were killed by just such productions.

You remember on Sunday. Remembrance Sunday. The rest of the days of the week and of the year you forget. And even Remembrance Sunday is not taken seriously. How many observed the two minutes' silence this year? How many cared?

We who opposed the wars did so partly because of the mountains of dead that were to result. We have never needed services and funeral marches to remember the victims, and we have no guilt for their deaths for we did not urge them on to die.

But those who did; those in whose interests the millions were slaughtered; those who amassed profits from the means of death—they are too busy preparing for the next to allow production to stop for two minutes on a working day—to remember their victims.

Perhaps it is at least more honest that way. Perhaps the careless shrug and the naked indifference is better than veiled hypocrisy and the embarrassed pretence at a grief insincerely felt. At least we know where we are. We know that at the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we shall [not be expected to] remember them. P.S.

EDWIN PEEKE.

If that were put into effect it would mean that all the stalls and shady bookshops that sell only that type of reading matter would be out of business for they rely on their display to catch their trade. (I refer to the shops that make a few coppers profit on each comic they sell and not the high-price smut shops that are not interested in the juvenile yearnings of small boys with only a shilling to spend).

If one deprives children of these comics they must be given something to take their place and what they need is escapist literature as bright and as gaudy as those that it must displace. Comics that will while away an odd hour for a child without justifying evil.

This is my solution to one problem posed in FREEDOM.

It is a solution that could be put into practice next week.

If it is not the answer then tell me what is. Not for the distant future but now.

London. ARTHUR MOYSE.

(See Editorial Comment page 3)

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS
Every Sunday at 7.30 at
THE MALATESTA CLUB
155 High Holborn, W.C.1.
(Nearly opposite Holborn Town Hall)

NOV. 28—Mani Obahiagbon on
AN ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN
NATIONALISM.

DEC. 5—Donald Rooum on
ORIGINS OF THE STATE.

DEC. 12—Eric Kinton on
FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

DEC. 19.—Rita Milton on
THE FUNCTION OF A
REVOLUTIONARY PAPER

OPEN AIR MEETINGS
Weather Permitting
HYDE PARK
Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

ANARCHIST YOUTH GROUP

At the Malatesta Club
SAT. NOV. 27.—8.30 to 9.30 p.m.
Existentialist Poetry Recital
THE MIRROR OF INFINITY
DEC. 8.—Tony Gibson
"YOUTH FOR FREEDOM"

N.W. LONDON

ALL comrades interested in joining an Anarchist group in London, N.W.2, 3 or 6, are invited to write in first instance to FREEDOM, 27 Red Lion Street, W.C.1.

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DISCUSSION MEETINGS
AT MANOR PARK
Alternate Wednesdays
at 7.30 p.m.
Apply to Freedom Press for details

GLASGOW

INDOORS
at 200 Buchanan Street
Every Friday at 7 p.m.

Debate

UNIVERSITY HOUSE
Victoria Park Square, London E.2
THAT THIS HOUSE SEES NO
POINT IN MARRIAGE
Propose: Rita Milton
Oppose: Councillor C. Fleet
FRI. NOV. 26 at 8 p.m.

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Spiriting Away Our Liberties Continued from p. 1

war they can provide in plenty—war, servitude, and misery, those very conditions that lead men to seek some means of forgetting, at least for time, the burden of their lives.

The French have suffered three disastrous wars and two occupations in modern times. After the second world war they were riven by the vendetta between the vengeful maquisards and the collaborators, and on all sides the black marketeers waxed fat and rich. Then there were seven disastrous years of colonial war in Indo-China, during which time governments came and went with a bewildering frequency. Thanks to the cynical opportunism of a sybaritic ruling class the whole economy of the country had fallen into decay. There had not been more than a tiny fraction of the new building needed to replace houses that had grown old and decrepit. Obsolescence and ruin everywhere prevailed. Gone forever were the illusory security and the ephemeral progress of *la belle époque*. To-day, like the rest of us, they are tottering on the brink of doom. They cannot say with conviction *Après nous le déluge*: it may come to-morrow. As *Le Canard Enchaîné* puts it, 'Alcohol kills slowly. If you're in a hurry better use the H-bomb'.

It is small wonder that many Frenchmen have embraced too fervently the consolations of drink. There are some, no doubt, who would prefer them to embrace the consolations of religion. Such a one is the Catholic bishop of Leeds, Monsignor Heenan, who said recently 'Imagine in our day, a civilized people having to decree that alcohol must not be served between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m.' What must he think of his

own, so ardently Catholic, people, who have licensing laws as stringent as ours? What must he think of us? And what, O What, must he think of the Canadians, who in nearly every province of their vast country can buy their drinks only from government stores and then only on production of a permit? And I shudder to think what he must feel about the Americans, who once had, and in some states still have, total prohibition. The bishop's views would be interesting, but we are not, I fear, likely to hear them.

The whole history of temperance legislation has been one of monumental stupidity and futility. In America prohibition led to illicit brewing and distilling on a vast scale, and bootleggers fought pitched battles with police and coastguards. As fast as the police closed one speakeasy another opened. In New South Wales the government there recently graciously allowed the people to vote in a referendum on whether closing time should be 6 p.m. as at present or 10 p.m. as in England. The N.S.W. government was careful to point out, however, in case anyone got ideas about the will of the people and that kind of nonsense, that it would not necessarily extend the hours even if a majority favoured it. The present regulations have produced what is commonly known as 'the great Australian beer swill', in which large numbers of participants try to swallow as much liquor as possible in the limited time available. The Irish, less docile in some ways than the English, have their 'snugs', where convivial nights of illicit drinking are enjoyed by many. Everywhere the sensible person's response to licensing laws is to try to find way of circumventing them or breaking them.

TEMPERANCE legislation has never achieved anything but the annoyance of those it represses. If it engendered a contempt for law in general anarchists might welcome its continuance, but, alas, it does not even do that. Certainly it never achieves its ostensible purpose. The decline in drunkenness in England has paralleled the decline in misery since the days of the industrial revolution, when misery was abject and widespread and the cure was 'Drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence—straw free'. It is not legislation that has removed the need for such an anodyne: it is the improved conditions that working people have slowly wrung from their masters.

We can be sure that the proposed French legislation will have no effect whatever on alcoholism in France. Fining and imprisoning drunks found in the streets will no doubt suppress some of the symptoms, which is probably all that the government hopes for. With the façade of respectability restored nasty foreigners like Bishop Heenan will no longer be able to make scornful speeches about the 'decadent' French. Behind that façade the unfortunate alcoholics and the unhappiness that has driven them to such a state can molder unnoticed.

Apart from that the only effect of the new laws will be that the Frenchman who goes to work in the early morning will no longer be able to buy a nip of brandy to keep out the cold, and on one day a week his favourite café will be closed. But Mr. Mendès-France, as he sips his famous glass of milk in the National Assembly, is unlikely to worry very much about that.

EDWIN PEEKE.

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