

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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"If you can feel that staying human is worth while, even when it can't have any result whatever, you've beaten them."

—GEORGE ORWELL,
("Nineteen Eighty-four").

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Threepence

REFLECTIONS ON A T.V. PERFORMANCE

HORRORS OF 1954

WE are not surprised that both during and after the T.V. performance of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* the B.B.C. was inundated with telephone calls from "angry viewers", and it was this reaction which was exploited in the news columns of the Monday morning papers from the *Daily Worker* to the *Daily Telegraph* and not any thoughtful consideration of the success or failure of the adaptation of the book to the T.V. medium or an appraisal of the message it contains for our time. One Critic wrote that "there was no moral in this nea-useating story which held out no hope for the future that could justify its being shown on T.V.", while a B.B.C. spokesman when asked if this type of play could be classed as entertainment replied "I cannot answer that. It depends on what you mean by entertainment."

It is probably quite true that the T.V. performance of *Nineteen Eighty-four* was a failure as entertainment and as positive propaganda. We cannot imagine that Orwell ever thought of it as a subject for "entertainment" in the popular meaning of the word, any more than any writer, or playwright whose works contain a social message, a protest or a warning can expect a mass audience to see other

than the surface, the external forms in which that message is contained. It seems obvious that if the mass-mind were capable of a sensitive appraisal of the present with all its implications for the future such works as "1984", or even "Modern Times", would never be written or screened.

"HORROR" in the popular mind is something physical; it is the brutality of the Thought Police, it is the sight of Winston Smith in the coffin as the electric shocks rack his body, or when the rat cage with its hungry inmates is brought closer and closer to his face. But for Orwell the real "horror" was not physical destruction. For him the horrors of "1984" were the annihilation of the human spirit. In this respect the T.V. betrayed him, for it showed us an emaciated Winston Smith sipping his Victory Gin in the Chestnut Tree, whereas Orwell tells us that "he had grown fatter since they released him, and had regained his old colour—indeed, more than regained it". And he was never short of money. In fact "he even had a job, a sinecure, more highly-paid than his old job had been". Thus the tortures were no more than what to-day would be called electric shock treatment,

which is given as a cure not as a punishment. And Winston Smith, thanks to the patience and interest of the earnest O'Brien, was cured. He was, once more orthodox. For him $2+2=5$; his heart "stirred" when the victorious outcome of the "war" was announced over the television; and he had been cured of love ("They [Winston and Julia] could have lain down on the ground and done that if they had wanted to. His flesh froze with horror at the thought of it").

The cure was complete, "the long-hoped-for bullet was entering his brain", not literally, but spiritually, in the $2+2=5$ sense.

He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two glistening tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.

SOME critics have said, by way of explanation of the pessimism and horror of "1984", that it was the work of a sick man (and in fact Orwell died not long after the publication of his book). These are comforting arguments for the escapist. "Animal Farm", which they all praised, contained, however, the same message as "1984", but it was published as a "fairy story", with animals instead of human beings as the principal characters. No one was shocked, children were allowed to read it, it was presented as Radio Entertainment and no "angry" listeners jammed the B.B.C. telephone exchange with their protests. Might it not be that the comparative failure of this literary success to convey Orwell's message induced him to use a different medium; that of stark realism?

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A Scientist Appeals to the Fabians

THE Labour Movement generally throughout its history has, according to the nature of reformism, followed a compromising course. The leadership, encouraged by the passive acquiescence of the rank and file, has debased the principles of internationalism and to-day the whole of the Labour Movement, at least that section which seeks to appropriate the seats of power, is lacking in enthusiasm and inspiration.

This was noticeable at a lecture given recently by Dr. J. Bronowski to the Fabians, on *Scientific Change and World Relations*, where one had the feeling that while the audience may have understood the content of the lecture, they felt little of the warmth that animated the speaker.

Unfortunately, the night was cold and wet. But even allowing for the gloom from without which may have seeped through the walls of the Livingstone Hall, one would have expected a show of enthusiasm from the Fabians in response to a lecture which clearly demonstrated that science, far from destroying mankind, could, if used sensibly, be a liberative and constructive force.

Dr. Bronowski traced the development of science up to the present day. His main point was that technological progress which had in the past, and could in the future produce enormous wealth had not been accompanied by the sharing of information between nations. The development in methods for the use of, for example, atomic energy, could give to the technically under-developed countries the kind of knowledge and materials which could help the peoples of these countries to satisfy their dynamic urge for progress. National divisions however, prevented free access to experience and resources.

Dr. Bronowski reminded us that in 1951 he had, through the columns of the *Times*, suggested that an international body be set up to administer energy for peaceful development. This suggestion in fact had been quickly followed by an agreement between the Western Powers on entirely different terms. The West, as represented by Britain, America, France, Belgium and Canada were the main controllers of uranium and were in a position to hand out as much, or as little, to the countries in need as they deemed expedient. This, Dr. Bronowski held to be quite wrong and rightly im-

plied that the natural resources of the world should be available to all.

Few of us would disagree with the suggestion that science should be used constructively for the control of our environment. But we would like to think that the technically under-developed countries will learn from the mistakes of the West, and see the necessity for mental development as well as technical. We feel that in our world of jet planes and refrigerators, we are dangerously near losing our sense of values; the apathy to other peoples' suffering is but one aspect of this degradation. We do not suggest that science has been responsible, but science without an attitude of mind which leads to the sharing of experience so much desired by Bronowski, is not enough.

Individual Responsibility

Readers of FREEDOM will remember Dr. Bronowski's contribution to the Spanish Meeting held by Freedom Press to protest against the actions of the Spanish Government in 1952. He said then: "The infiltration of evil which we have experienced in the world in our lifetime does not take place anywhere except in our personal atrophy of conscience. Just trying to conquer the world is not somebody else's conscience; it is our conscience. . . . I do not believe that what I will say here will move the Spanish Government; it is to me that it matters, it is to you that it matters."

This, summed up in a moving passage is the fundamental point which socialists, in the pursuit of power through mass movements have overlooked—the importance of individual conscience and the need for individual responsibility. Whether the world is being conquered by a dictator, or in the sense of conquering our environment, it is the duty of each one of us, not only to protest against tyranny and injustice, but to see that the resources of the world are used for the benefit of mankind.

It is useless looking to those who seek power to adopt an attitude which gives everybody equal responsibility for decisions affecting our very lives; the road to power is paved with discarded principles. But those of us who are untrammelled by political considerations will gain further encouragement from humanist scientists like J. Bronowski.

R.M.

Prostitution in London

SOME people, with the welfare of the community very much at heart, have recently expressed concern over the apparent increase in prostitution in London—by which is meant specifically the hiring out of their bodies by women for immoral purposes. By 'immoral purposes', is meant extra-marital sexual relationships.

We specify this particular meaning of the word prostitution because it is not the only one. The Concise Oxford Dictionary, besides the above meaning, also shows: 'Sell for base gain (one's honour, &c.), put (abilities &c.) to infamous use.'

But this definition would include too many respectable pillars of society—generals and churchmen, lawyers and atomic scientists, politicians and hangmen, blacklegs and workers in armament factories, police informers and trade union bosses—to be generally acceptable.

No, however immoral wage slavery, deceit and misuse of knowledge may be, the word prostitution is never meant to refer to these features of the British way of life. Its use is restricted in the main to soliciting by women.

Even with this definition there are inferred provisos. Many prostitutes operate in hotels or with a restricted, but regular clientèle in their own private flat. These do not incur the wrath of the moralists so much as street-walkers, for they are not seen, and therefore their existence can be either denied or conveniently forgotten.

Nor must a prostitute be confused with a mistress. It is a recognised prerogative of those men who can afford it to establish an extra-marital relationship ('set her up in a flat') with someone whose skill in love-making is superior to that of their wives.

But the prostitution which is worrying our moralists just now is that expressed through soliciting in the streets. In the House of Commons last week, the Home Secretary, Mr. G. Lloyd George, was asked if his attention had been drawn to the increased alarm concerning the high incidence of prostitution in London and, in view of its possible adverse effects on the tourist industry, what additional measures he intended to take to deal with this social menace.

Mr. Lloyd George was able to say with pride that in fact not many complaints have been received by the Home Office in the last few months, and that the number of arrests for street soliciting has considerably increased in London in

recent years due to an intensification of police patrolling in the West End. The police will continue to do what they can.

The following exchanges took place: Lieutenant-Colonel M. Lipton (Lab. Brixton): Although £18,000 was collected last year from the women concerned in the way of 40s. fines—which they regard as a street trading licence—are you aware that soliciting is more blatant than ever, that a fine of 40s. is no deterrent, and that the chairman of the Holidays and Travel Association says the problem is without parallel in the Western world?

Mr. Lloyd George: It does not seem to have stopped travellers coming here. In fact, the figures went up last year.

The Home Secretary seems fairly sanguine about the whole thing. In fact, with his eye on business, maybe he thinks London will be able to take the place of Gay Paree as the European city offering every attraction?

Maybe, on the other hand, he really understands the nature of the problem, and knows full well that prostitution offers a very useful safety-valve in a sex-repressive society; that it is the other side of the marriage penny, and that it is far better for married men to have an easily-bought alternative to their wives than that marriage should become intolerable or free love flourish.

Perhaps he has read the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which maintains that prostitution does not affect the integrity of marriage so seriously as do the forms of matrimonial relaxations which involve husband and wife.

Free love—voluntary sexual relationships based on freedom and responsibility—this is a far bigger threat to the monogamous marriage system, based on compulsive morality and property, than is prostitution, which is merely sex commercialised like everything else. P.S.

ONWARD AND UPWARD

Within 10 years America will have V2-style rockets with atomic or hydrogen bomb war-heads, capable of crossing the Atlantic, the *New York Times* military correspondent said yesterday.

There was no foreseeable defence against the rockets which would travel at more than 4,000 miles an hour, and at a range of 5,000 miles would land within eight miles of their target, he said. *News Chronicle*, 25/11/54.

SYNDICALIST NOTEBOOK

RAILMEN STILL UNSATISFIED

It is just a year since the leaders of the National Union of Railwaymen made us all sit up by declaring their readiness to lead their 400,000 members out on strike if their claim for a 15 per cent. wage increase was not met.

A railway strike just before Christmas would be a troublesome thing indeed, and so the Transport Commission threw the N.U.R. a 6 per cent. crumb, which it gratefully accepted and called off the strike threat.

It is now eighteen months since the railmen first decided they wanted 15 per cent. The cost of living has gone up quite a few points since then and the railmen are once again getting restive. They have forced the Executive to repudiate an agreement for a small increase signed in October, and resolutions are now reaching Head Office calling for strike action if an increase of 8s.—10s. a week is not granted pronto.

N.U.R. branches in Wigan and Manchester have fixed the date. They have called for strike action from midnight on December 19.

Last year the strike was called off because the leadership took charge and carefully steered the union out of the dangerous waters of direct action. Result, as we have said: 6 per cent. instead of 15. If the railmen want the same thing to happen again, they will leave it to the paid leaders.

If, however, they want success this time, they will organise themselves and keep their action under their own control. That way they need not be foisted off with less than their demands.

RANK & FILE SEAMEN'S GROUP

It is not an easy job to get seamen organised, still less to take concerted action throughout a body of workers scattered all over the globe, at sea and in port.

Small wonder then, that the officials of the National Union of Seamen have a comfortable trouble-free time, and in the union's official organ, 'The Seaman', they can talk of 'quiet, steady progress', 'consolidation rather than spectacular progress', and other euphemisms for doing nothing.

The result is that seamen have plenty of grievances and until quite recently have had no means of expressing them. Now, however, a rank-and-file committee has been formed, which is publishing a bulletin each month which, unlike 'The Seaman' really does talk about things which affect the workers on board ship.

For instance, how British seamen are used along the Canadian coast to undercut Canadian seamen, through the vastly different wage rates of \$70 per month (40 cents per hr. overtime) for British and \$210 per month (\$1.20 overtime) for Canadians.

Shipowners benefitted from this and kept British seamen in Canadian waters for protracted periods, where, of course, they suffered from the much higher costs of living.

This was combated by the seamen by

walk-offs first from two ships in Montreal, which led to prison for the strikers, secondly from five ships in Sydney, N.S., which won an additional £6 per month for men and £3 for boys.

A rank-and-file movement is sorely needed among seafarers. If the existing rank-and-file group can provide a start and a rallying point for such a movement it will prove very much to the seamen's interest.

MINERS LOSING M.P.'s

A CURRENT trend which appears to be angering Welsh miners can only be welcomed by this columnist. This is the current Labour Party practice to appoint candidates for Parliament from Head Office instead of from the constituency. South Wales miners have always chosen their 'own M.P.'s, but now these are being chosen for them by Transport House.

And the miners don't care for the choice. They don't care for Mr. Arthur Probert, new member for Aberdare, who came from a council surveyor's office. Neither do they care for Mr. D. Granville West, M.P. for Pontypool, who is a solicitor, nor for the M.P. for Aber-tillery, Mr. Llewelyn Williams, who is a Congregational parson. They are not even very enthusiastic for Walter Padley, N.A.S.D.A.W. Secretary, who is M.P. for Ogmore.

Why do we welcome this tendency? Because the less confidence workers have in Members of Parliament the more will they come to rely on themselves.

A SURFEIT OF CIVILISATION

PRIMITIVE HERITAGE edited by Margaret Mead and Nicolas Calas. Victor Gollancz Ltd.

THIS is a very interesting anthology of savage customs, and ways of thought. None of the societies, or hardly any, are in fact primitive. All of them are highly developed communities, with war, private property, marriage, and often barbarous punishments to enforce conformity. One is surprised to find that such people as the Aztecs and the Ancient Egyptians are included. They were no more primitive than we are.

The book is in fact edited with a view to surprising one with the variety of the types of human society. In this it is something like the writings on travel of ancient times. In the Middle Ages the European regarded his own country, or at the most his own continent, as the centre of the world. Spreading out round this was a vast hinterland, full of all sorts of marvels, giants, men with faces in their chests, pygmies, people with the heads of cats, and wild and ferocious tribes of every sort. The further you got away from Europe the stranger everything became. Some of these fantastic stories had, so it turned out, a basis in fact. Most of them were completely imaginary. But they were all inspired at bottom by the fundamental idea that European civilisation was the norm, and all the rest of the world was inhabited by freaks.

Modern anthropological studies have tended to dispel this illusion. In her foreword, "The Restoration of Wonder", Margaret Mead claims that the new outlook, refusing to be surprised, or to wonder, at these different peoples, and their different ways, may lead to an attempt to turn them into reproductions of Europeans, neglecting their own cultures, and the contributions that they may be able to make.

This is of course part of the modern danger of centralisation, and it is a very real one. It was not so long ago that the different parts of England had each its own distinctive culture, even if all were basically the same. Nowadays the whole of Southern England is one vast suburb of London, and the rest of the country is doing its best to become so. Everywhere we see the same buses, the same cafés serving the same "sausage-egg-an-chips-tea-ambrembutter", the same people with the same drab clothes and expressionless faces walking like automatons from nowhere to nowhere about nothing.

But at the same time one cannot accept the editors' views on what exactly constitutes a primitive society. The modern tendency is to specialise, and the field anthropologist does not seem to bother much with archeology, or with psychology. His idea of a primitive society is one that it is a long way from anywhere, and is technically backward. He does not bother with theories of social evolution, and so he would no doubt consider the Australian whites, supposing they had been cut off from all contact with the outer world since the eighteenth century, as primitives. Certainly they would be technically, but they would have come originally from a civilisation.

The editors are exceedingly scathing about the theories of Engels, Freud, and Rousseau, but these men did at least try to explain why society has evolved the way it has. The modern anthropologists merely study how things are now, or were until very recently, and leave one to conclude that in the beginning was the Trobriand Islands, and at the end New York. They would say that it was none of their business to explain the development of civilisation. Their task is to describe what is at present. But if so, they have no right to fulminate against the "armchair" anthropologists, who try to get at the origin of present-day society, by building up theories on the facts made available to them, not only by the field anthropologists, but also by the students of archeology, psychology, mythology and religion, etc.

The truth of the matter would seem to be that the highly complicated societies described in this book are not surviving relics of man's earliest societies, but are degenerate civilisations. Some of them, as I mentioned above, are not even degenerate, and are included, I suppose, because they had not got as far as refrigerators and helicopters. Such societies as the ones described herein as primitive are at the end (just as we are) of a long period of social and technical evolution. Not at the beginning.

So, although we may learn a lot from studying them, we cannot learn (except indirectly) how man originally lived.

"It is inevitable," says Calas, "that in our evolution-minded era prophets of gloom should undertake to reinterpret the fall of man in anthropological terms. This series of prophets commenced with Rousseau, who detected everywhere signs of violation of the social contract free men had agreed to observe once upon a time. Rousseau's myth excited the im-

agination of later-day apocalyptic writers, and Nietzsche dramatized the social contract by attributing violation of law to murder, Engels, by attributing it to robbery."

Well, the social system is based on murder and robbery. Can anyone deny it, or does Calas live on another planet, and visit only outlying parts of the Earth at long intervals? In all humility I suggest that both he and Margaret Mead descend from their flying saucers somewhat more often, and have a closer look at the world we have to live in, instead of buzzing around their intellectual stratosphere.

Perhaps they would accept robbery and murder as an essential part of human nature. If so, all their anthropological studies are rather a waste of time. For surely what we need to know is how to run our society in such a way as to eliminate robbery and murder? And in fact they do wish to improve our society. Most of Margaret Mead's books are devoted to proving one thesis or another, with the ultimate aim of improving society. (That male nature and female nature are not innate but cultural, that adolescence need not be a stormy period, etc.)

Again we read, "We review with lofty and wholly justified disapproval psycho-analytical books which reveal, without the training of the humanists, in outworn views of primitive matriarchy or the importance of totemism."

However, if an analysis be successful, it should slough off from the person who undergoes it all the accretion of his culture, and so reveal a "natural" man. Needless to say this cannot be done perfectly, I doubt if any form of analysis could be so completely successful, but one can get very close to this result. For instance jealousy, which so many suppose to be natural and innate, is shown to be a cultural product.

Because primitive matriarchies no longer exist it does not mean they never did. As I pointed out in a previous article, feudalism will soon cease to exist anywhere, but myth and legend, as well as more tangible remains, will continue to witness to its having existed. No doubt the Meads and Calases of the remote future will solemnly assure us that the feudal system was a creation of the "armchair" enthusiasts Engels, or G. K. Chesterton for all I know, and was as a theory now quite "outworn".

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

Time Remembered

"TIME REMEMBERED" (at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith), is a version by Patricia Moyes of one of Jean Anouilh's lesser plays, *Léocadia*, the particular interest of which is rather in its position in the pattern of his work as a whole. The pure romantic comedy about love in an unreal world of comedy in this play is unfortunately not as enchanting as the name of *Léocadia*. A Young Prince is obsessed by the memory of three days he spent infatuated by a beautiful actress, *Léocadia*, who strangled herself one evening as she put on her scarf—she did everything passionately, and on this occasion seized her scarf, tied it far too tight and died. The Prince's aunt, a Duchess, collects in the castle grounds all the material things connected with those three days of adulation and gives them to her nephew: she buys him the nightclub where he drank champagne with *Léocadia*, the orchestra that played the waltz he danced with her and cannot forget, the *café terrasse* where they drank together, the taxi they drove in, the park bench they sat on, and the ice-cream cart that passed by as they dined. The Duchess also hires a little milliner (*Amanda*) to play the part of *Léocadia* and help her nephew to live his dream. The young *Amanda* quickly revolts against the falsity and pointlessness of this pretence, and the Prince after a struggle is drawn away from the ghost of *Léocadia* by the charm of reality in the person of *Amanda*.

Time Remembered presents the conflict between ideals, the dream world and reality, but here the creativity of reality is finally the more desirable and the more friendly—the dream is palpably false and stupid, cold and forbidding. The Prince is allowing the dead past to overwhelm him, just as we allow the dead to govern us, to work their will upon us. Who have made the laws that stifle and enslave us? The dead! Who have made the customs that we obey and that distort and falsify our lives? The dead! And the titles to our land, property and power—have not the dead devised them? If one goes to law upon a question the judge looks backward through his books until he finds out how the dead have settled it, and he follows. And all the writers, when they would give weight and authority to their opinions, quote the dead; and the priests and the orators and all those who moralize and lecture, are not their mouths

filled with the words that the dead have spoken? Our lives follow grooves that the dead have run out with their thumbnails, unless we rebel like *Amanda* in *Time Remembered* against having to act as a puppet of a dead ideal, instead of living and creating one's own future in spontaneity and freedom. Man is nailed to the cross of time with its tormenting contradictions, and he cannot bear its apparently unending course. Only when man is free, will his servitude to time, to death, to necessity, to the illusions of consciousness disappear. A moment of existential time is not subject to number, it is not a fractional part of time in a sequence of moments of objectified time, it is an emergence into the eternity of the inner reality of personality. Minutes which are short from the objective point of view may be lived through as an infinity, and an infinity in opposite directions, in the direction of suffering and in the direction of joy and triumphant rapture.

In *Time Remembered* we begin to feel the shame of the pretence in the same degree as *Amanda* herself, who begins the game willingly enough but later realises how futile it all is. This is another play in which Anouilh protests against the rule of the dead, the domination of false ideals and the past over the souls of the living. This vital world, this home of happy spirits, has become a dungeon of wretched mankind: poison-clouds of superstition rest on the dark nations. This need not be: we might arise and will that gold and the State should lose their power, and rulers their glory, that love, which none may blind, be free to fill the world, like light, and evil faith, grown hoary with crime, be quenched and die. Anarchy attacks the monsters, the phantoms of imagination that have ruled the world, attacking hypocrisy, asking for room—room for the uniqueness of the individual, the soul of man. Mr. Paul Scofield as the memory-haunted prince is sardonically humorous, and Margaret Rutherford is excellent as the eccentric and yet wise Duchess.

D.M.M.

WHO ARE THE REAL LUNATICS?

Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Brenner disclosed yesterday that he had reluctantly certified four elderly sane persons as mentally ill to get for them the custodial care they need.

Justice Brenner said the four were homeless patients, "made so because care and attention cannot be given them by relatives for financial or other reasons." "Some of them," he added, "are unwanted or neglected in their advanced years. Additionally, the Welfare Department of the city claims lack of funds for their placement in private institutions or old age homes."

He said the anomaly of certifying the four as mentally ill, although they "are not in fact mentally ill," grows out of a technicality of the state's Mental Hygiene Law. The statute prohibits admission of any person to a mental hospital for any cause other than mental illness.

However, the justice said, "since denial of custodial care and hospitalization to these people would probably result in their death, I find myself compelled to certify them as mentally ill."

(N.Y. Times, Dec. 10).

GAD SIR! MALENKOV IS RIGHT

The following letter from a Mr. John Cottrell was published in last Monday's *Evening Standard*:

"What would have happened if Churchill had shrugged his shoulders in 1940 and said 'I'm retiring'? Certainly Britain would have been much the worse for the loss. Instead, at the age of 80, he remains in office because he firmly believes he has some service to give to his country.

Yet, at the age of 25 Roger Bannister, with an opportunity of doing further great service to his country as an international runner, can announce his retirement.

Were he a Russian and did such a thing, there can be no doubt about his fate. But here, he has the freedom of choice—and of changing his mind. Bannister should think again. No man in his position, who has not yet reached his prime, should fail to put his country first and try to give it of his very best."

And if Dr. Bannister still persists in believing that practising as a doctor is more important than running around in circles, what then? Is it the Firing Squad or a little brainwashing?

CHOICE

IF men were creatures of instinct as thoroughly as other animals are, that is if they had hardly any other memory than an ancestral one, sure of itself, and all but slightly susceptible of being modified by learning, then there would hardly exist a problem of choice. Varied as choice can be in successive instances of time, there would always be congruence between each perceptual situation and an unburdened, unimpeded and unhesitating desire. But the life of reason in man is such that each new situation evokes memories of previous similar and contrasting ones which rob the present of much of its immediacy, actualizes a future, and with a future an envelope of non-being. Previous choices and refusals have also a cumulative and compelling effect; they are organized into a system, and it is no longer a matter of choices such as occasion may present at random, but a matter of ever-present Choice, a selected and selecting significance by which the self establishes and recognizes its unity and continuity. The life of society, concomitant with the life of reason, helps to determine and to enhance this Choice, because it also demands unity and continuity from each self, a fact that is most apparent in the many cases when one will do or not do certain things simply because a contrary course would upset the fixed and limited range of some other people's expectations.

One meaning of the word personality is the characteristic effect of attraction or repulsion that a human presence has on others, and it can be said to consist of the amount of sensible energy a man has put in his Choice, and of the fine combination of impulses and techniques by which this energy is made operative and manifested. But the other meaning of personality, much closer to the etymology of the word (*persona* in Latin means mask) can be taken as synonymous with all that surface of the self which is affected by Choice and is perceived from without, constituting the image by which any human presence is acknowledged, known, hated or loved. Insofar as any man is conscious of this image, and insofar as in order to gain self-knowledge

he objectifies himself and builds an image may or may not coincide with the one others perceive he breaks his unity of self, and becomes the field of many conflicting tensions, an intricacy of arresting and arrested movements, of fidelities and infidelities, of sincerity and deceit.

Every one is familiar with the Freudian distinction between the Id and the Ego though not perhaps with the earlier one made by Schopenhauer between the organic and irrational Will and the will that is cerebral and rational. But this simplification confuses rather than illumines the conflicts resulting from Choice. What happens is that Choice creates an automatism of the will, whether it be rational or not, and that this automatism prevents the emergence or satisfaction of other possible choices. It is not so much a matter of repression of the primitive and infantile by the civilized and adult as rather a tyranny of the past over the present, of the dead over the quick, of things that mattered once over things that matter now. A Choice conditions not only a man's personality but also the outward reality in which he is most closely embedded. Through Choice a man occupies a certain position, belongs

DID YOU REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO FREEDOM?

108 OF THE 300 READERS TO WHOM SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL NOTICES WERE SENT RESPONDED IN THE FIRST TEN DAYS. WE NEED ANOTHER 100 IN THE NEXT TEN DAYS. WILL YOU BE ONE OF THIS SECOND HUNDRED WHO HELP TO MAKE POSSIBLE THE CONTINUED PUBLICATION OF FREEDOM?

to certain circles, must keep up certain activities, is married or unmarried or married to the wrong woman, and though he wishes he could retrace his steps he cannot step out of all this for it would be like stepping out of his own self.

There is a case, therefore, in which it makes sense to say that a man is the slave of his own self. A Choice, however thorough and considerate, does not exhaust a man's ability to choose at any future time. Choosing as it were once for ever is a necessity imposed by the life of reason and society, spares many efforts and pains, stills the anguish of utter unpredictability, and strikes the happy medium between stupidity and madness. But there is also a law inherent in the life of reason and society, and in life *tout court*, according to which nothing is ever final. A true value must embrace all the present, and it is a false happiness which mortgages the future and by fencing off fear exorcizes all hope.

When an analysis of freedom is carried into the psychological sphere it is natural to feel, and legitimate to suspect, that freedom will be hurt or impaired. But in view of the above and of the conclusion I shall presently reach, that is not the case with the present enquiry. On the contrary, a kind of freedom will be vindicated, the realization of which will be accompanied by those feelings of ease and absence of compulsion and obstruction which are the surest guarantee of its authenticity. Some light will also be thrown on the connection between freedom and choice which are so often distorted and misrepresented, causing confusion of intellect and inner divisions.

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LIFE is full of situations where choice is imposed from without, one alternative being so obviously in the better interest of the person who has to choose that he who imposes the choice can be practically certain of reaping the advantage that prompts him to impose the choice on the other. Most forms of slavery are of this kind, the alternative to not doing what the powerful demands

Continued on p. 3

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Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

Vol. 15, No. 51 December 18, 1954

HORRORS OF 1954

Continued from p. 1

Unfortunately it is probably true that who understood the message contained in "Animal Farm" under stood the bitter truths of "1984", just as, conversely, those who enjoyed "Animal Farm" (or might have if they had read it), as a fairy story fit for their children, were "horri-fied" only by the brutality of "1984" (as one "viewer" significantly put it: "We hear so much about banning horror comics. This was sheer horror from start to finish").

BUT is it not perhaps true to suggest that the message of "1984" was not understood by the mass public of T.V. for reasons other than technical ones of production, serious as these are? That we, in 1954, are in fact living in the world of "1984" in which "WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY and IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH?"

For hundreds of millions of people BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU is a reality. God is every-where, watching, noting everything we do—how many of us were taught this in childhood by parents or by schoolteachers and Sunday school teachers? God is undefin-able, a myth become reality. But so is the Big Brother in Orwell's "1984".

For the world at large to-day, WAR IS PEACE. Do we recognise ourselves in embryo in this picture of "1984"?

"The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labour. War is a way of shattering to pieces, of pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking in the depths of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence in the long run, too intelligent. Even when weapons of war are not actually destroyed, their manufacture is still a convenient way of expending labour power without producing anything that can be consumed. . . . It is deliberate policy to keep even the favoured groups somewhat near the brink of hardship, because a general state of scarcity increases the importance of small privileges and thus magnifies the distinction between one group and another. . . . And at the same time the consciousness of being at war, and therefore in danger, makes the handing-over of all power to a small caste seem the natural, unavoidable conditions of survival. . . . It does not matter whether the war is actually hap-pening, and, since no decisive victory is possible, it does not matter whether the war is going well or badly. All that is needed is that a state of war should exist."

Are not the past nine years mirrored in those lines of "1984: the political hysteria of the United States, the world-wide policy of mili-tary conscription meekly accepted by its victims, the sacrificing of pro-duction for use to production for war, the cold war and the occasional hot war, the "unity" in politics and the stifling power of the Executive?

In "1984" what the telescreen could not observe in the daily life of the individual was more than made good by the informer. You could neither trust your best friend nor your own children. And in 1954?

Have we not been told by Authority that it is the duty of a mother to denounce her deserter son to the police if he seeks shelter in her house? Is it not constantly admitted by the police that they depend on the "nark" for much of their intelligence regarding crime? Have not the American F.B.I. and Senator McCarthy again and again admitted that their information in political cases has been provided by the undercover-agent, the informer and the tapped telephone? Do not all Parisians know that every other concierge in Paris keeps the police

IT is interesting to see how involved and contradictory a situation can be- come when well-intentioned people use the cumbrous machinery of the Law to solve a moral problem.

Take, for instance, the matter of obscenity in books on which so many people have been airing their views re-cently. Obscenity is a matter of taste. Some may find it in Gibbon's footnotes to his *Decline and Fall*—'left in the decent obscurity of a foreign tongue'; others in the fecund abundance of Urquhart's translation of Rabelais; others in *Scarlet Women of Soho*; yet others in *Superman* or *Captain Midnight*. There are many who believe that some degree of censorship is necessary in order to protect the, by now famous, people 'whose minds are open to such immoral influences' from those publications that 'have a tendency to deprave and corrupt'. The use of these archaic and unscientific words in the legal definition of obscenity arouses, not unnaturally, an entirely subjective reaction in those entrusted with the administration of the Law; the application of this definition by the Swindon magistrates led to their con-demning Boccaccio's *Decameron*, a decision which has rightly been ridiculed. In consequence of this, and similar in-cidents, there have been widespread demands for a new definition of obscenity that will prevent a recurrence.

But, as E. M. Foster said in a recent letter to *The Listener*, if the law is to be applied logically, surely what is required is not only a better definition of obscen-ity but also of depravity and corruption (which have been largely left undefined by the Judges); and, as other writers have

informed of the movements of her politically suspect *locataires*? And in Russia—well, the anonymous in-formers have been for so long esteemed that they have now be-come a nuisance or at least, some of them! According to the *Man-chester Guardian's* correspondent:

One of the most detestable social types thrown up by the Police State—the anonymous informer—may be on his way out of Soviet society.

The poison-pen letter-writer, who in Russia has attained heights of respect-ability and power undreamed of by his capitalist counterpart, seems to be causing the Soviet police and party author-ities more trouble than his denunciations are worth. So much so that a recent issue of "Party Life", a Moscow fort-nightly intended for the instruction of party functionaries, has found it neces-sary to condemn the practice of any-mouse denunciations and to reveal, in an effort to cut down the cost of checking such accusations, how widespread the practice has become.

However "Party Life" is more concerned with the results than with the principle of anonymous informa-tion, and for this reason supports open denunciation! But concludes the article making sure that the anonymous informer with something worthwhile to impart shall not be discouraged by what has previously been written, pointing out that, "even anonymous letters may con-tain facts" and that "of course, one cannot take a formal attitude and disregard every unsigned letter." It counsels official recipients of such letters to develop "the ability to dis-tinguish between a warning that deserves attention and the importun-ities of slanderers."

And in case any blue-eyed fellow traveller may think that "1984" is a nightmarish fantasy in Russia, we are reminded that if the anonymous letter-writer may be losing some of his ground, the *paid secret police informer*, the "seksot", is still present in every factory, office, village, and block of flats.

"1984" on T.V. failed to bring home its message in part, as we have already mentioned, for technical reasons (or was it for political reasons that the message should be obscured by a physical horror which could so easily and conveniently be linked with the political pattern to the East of the Iron Curtain?). But was it not also because the mass audience could not, as it were, see the wood for the trees? Or, as a contributor to FREEDOM captioned his article on the American witch-hunt last year, that they are still not aware that "1984" is Breathing down our Necks?"

THE LAW & OBSCENITY

pointed out, a prosecuting counsel has yet to produce a depraved or corrupted person as evidence of the evil conse-quences of reading a particular publica-tion. Though in this connection D. H. Lawrence does quote an instance in his pamphlet 'Pornography and Obscenity' (originally published in 1929 and soon to be re-issued, I believe): 'The late British Home Secretary, who prides himself on being a very sincere Puritan, grey, grey, in every fibre, said with in-dignant sorrow in one of his outbursts on improper books: "And these two young people, who had been perfectly pure up till that time, after reading this book went and had sexual intercourse together". One up to them! is all we can answer'. There have been few attempts at a scientific enquiry to determine what effect obscene publications may have on the incidence of delinquency (which is what the Law is concerned with) and there is certainly not sufficient evidence to allow a definite conclusion; thus, the Law is in the absurd position of trying to prevent the publication of 'harmful' literature whose harmfulness is yet to be proved!

The apologists of the Law may say: 'It is inevitable that the system be fall-ible because it is administered by human beings, but, taking this factor into ac-count, is it not one of the fairest that could be devised?' This fallacy that the Law is essentially fair is contradicted by the extreme divergence of views (and the decisions resulting therefrom) ex-pressed by Her Majesty's Judges on this question of obscenity (compare, for ex-ample, the summings-up of the Recorder of London and Mr. Justice Stable in two recent cases): the scales of the good lady who stands on top of the Old Bailey are definitely weighted.

Such contradictions are inherent in a system where a decision depends upon the opinions of one man (even in a case tried by jury—and not merely a magis-trate—the Judge's recommendation is usually followed). A Judge's opinion, and a summing-up is little more, is largely dependent on his emotional attitudes; this is particularly so where sexuality is concerned. If, for instance, a Judge has suffered from a severely repressive up-bringing his decisions in cases involving obscenity, or other aspects of sexuality, will most probably be un- or sub-consciously affected by such repressions. There are so many factors that may un-fairly affect the decisions of a censor, as the Law's representative becomes when obscene publications are involved, that it is absurd to maintain that the Law is a 'blind goddess'. We come back to the old problem common to all author-itarian systems—who polices the police, censors the censor or judges the judge?

THE answer of the authoritarian to obscene publications is repression; the attitude of the liberal section of public opinion has been frequently expressed in various periodicals. To give two

instances—Kingsley Martin, editor of *The New Statesman*, in an article called 'Sadism for Kids' (25/9/54), makes an emotional attack on the publishing of 'horror comics' and, like many well-meaning liberals, he gets carried away. . . . 'Those who want the civilization of the West to be destroyed could not have imagined a subtler or swifter method of undermining it than to pervert a whole generation of children; to give them an immoral instead of a moral upbringing. . . . He concludes 'Can magistrates be persuaded that sadism and horror, especially when offered to children, may be properly included in any definition of obscenity?' A similar attitude is ex-pressed in an article in *The Bookseller* for Nov. 13 entitled 'It is the Govern-ment's move now'—Dr. Horace King, M.P. is quoted as saying 'We have always been able to reconcile our passion for freedom with a desire and determination to protect our own children'. This fatherly desire to protect, which is the excuse of all censors, is the Statist disease in microcosm. A prime function of the State is to look after our interests; do not the Armed Forces exist for our pro-tection? There are few of us to protect in these days of total war, but if there are no individuals left there are always 'values', or 'civilization', or 'ways-of-life' which will serve. When the question of censorship comes up it is always the children who are dragged in to be protected—not the adolescent 'adult' who is the main buyer of 'horror comics'. Perhaps it is because children have even less opportunity to decide for

themselves than adults.

HOWEVER, even D. H. Lawrence, who was constantly being perse-cuted for alleged obscenity, comes down on the side of censorship. 'Even I would censor genuine pornography, rigorously. It would not be very difficult. In the first place, genuine pornography is al-most always underworld, it doesn't come into the open. In the second, you can recognise it by the insult it offers, in-variably, to sex, and to the human spirit' (*op. cit.*). A reasonable definition—but it is just as susceptible to criticism as any other definition: pornography which when Lawrence was writing would have been 'underworld' and 'not come into the open' is now sold openly (vide the sug-gestive 'pin-ups' of some of our co-called newspapers and magazines); an 'insult to sex and to the human spirit' may be obvious to Lawrence but is not neces-sarily so to a policeman.

As has been constantly stressed in these columns, the question of obscenity must be seen in its relation to our total environment. It is perversion that makes obscenity and not the other way about; with no unhealthy minds to attract, obscenity would cease to be a problem. 'Horror comics' are bought by children for two main reasons: because they have the attraction of forbidden fruit, and because the child's aggressive im-pulses have not been allowed a natural outlet. Repression and perversion breed repression and perversion: it is the roots and the soil of the human plant that need to become healthier—the spraying of the leaves with insecticide merely de-posit another poison. M.G.W.

CHOICE

being imprisonment, torture, starvation or death. Yet in these situations the violence to freedom is external. A change of circumstances, and especially in the relationship of power between master and slave, finds the latter in the full possession of his will, with no doubt whatever about the Choice that is most truly and exquisitely his, the dynamism and fulfilment of his real self.

An inner violence to freedom and to the integrity of the inner self is carried out instead when one, not seeing any necessity or urgency to choose, is pressed to make a choice by somebody else. It is an ineffectual violence in most cases, but not when pressure is exerted by par-alyzing the original movements of an-other's mind through superiority in dis-course, when advantage is taken of personal loyalties or the weight of some third power is added to play on a per-son's fears.

It is to avoid pressures of this kind that a Choice is often made. A Choice is an affirmation of independence, a form and a stiffness to warn off the many people itching to handle men as if they were wet lumps of plasticine. But if

freedom to choose, to have chosen is slavery to the extent that a choice already made makes further choices ex-tremely difficult and sometimes impos-sible. The argument that no choice is itself a choice is only conceptually valid. Existentially there is identity only when a refusal to choose is as deliberate as a choice. But there is a great difference between the making of a choice and not even being aware that there is a choice to be made, while another is free to try out the venture it offers. If the tone, the keenness and zest of life depend on its untapped resources, on its surprises, offers and temptations, on what it has still to be discovered and on what it has still to give, then Choice or, to use a more fashionable word, commitment, is a kind of having already tasted all that must be eaten still, a way of jumping from beginning to end with no attention to anything in between, a trick of labor-iously living in death, and hurriedly dying in life.

THINKING in terms of Choice, free-dom is a vocation, but there is also freedom which is a vacation. With choices, decisions, actions and their fruit, whether blessed by freedom or not, the life of men becomes crowded with tasks and commitments, squeezed and made smaller by defined types of rela-tionships and situations, by a kind of mortgage upon the future, a bridling of the potential, and a solidity that leaves no empty spaces, no vacuity whatever. It is also a law of life that what is aggrandizement for one is diminution for the other, and even freedom, which we can predicate as the ideal condition of life, is no exception to the rule. Each choice, with discrimination in thought, is limitation in act, and it is to this free-dom based on choice that I wish to oppose the freedom that is vacuity and vacation.

If life is a succession of choices, and a Choice is naturally developed to string them together, and since, on the other hand, life is one, and it is all-important not to make a mistake in making one's Choice, it is only by giving oneself occa-sional vacations from one's personality, and by cultivating vacuity as a state of suspension and waiting that it is possible to perceive one's unrealized self, and be available not only for new realizations but for the discovery of values by which to judge and perhaps reverse one's former Choice. What I recommend is tempo-rary withdrawal from commitment, from the automatism of will, from the slavery of planning, from the lack of time every-body is complaining about, and from that hurried and horrid way of life by which everything is tackled with the main object of getting it over and pass on to the next, none of them seemingly having any arresting meaning, and being worth doing for the sake of the doing, not for the sake merely of having it done and done with.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI.

BILLY THE KIDNAPPER

MANY people were left completely cold by the high figures of con-verted issued by Billy Graham during his evangelist campaign at Harringay Arena, London, last year.

It was pointed out that the highly charged emotional atmosphere of his nightly meetings, carefully staged-pro-duced to create something approaching to mass hysteria, were bound to have effect upon the emotionally immature or unstable, but that that effect would not be lasting.

The relationship of Star to Bobbysoxer was not exactly missing from these strange manifestations of religious fer-vour, and once the blond, handsome billy, with his gay American ties and his £5,000 a year had left the impressive scene, it was unlikely that the effect he had created was going to be maintained by the stodgy, balding vicar at the dusty, smelly little church around the corner.

And so it has turned out to be. In the *London Evening Standard* (6/12/54) there has appeared a report of a one-man, and admittedly limited, investiga-tion into the lasting effect of the Graham Crusade.

Mr. Walter Schwarz has been along to the parish churches of 20 London par-ishes, ranging from middle-class Kensing-ton and Hampstead to working-class Hackney and Clerkenwell. The total population of these parishes is 420,216, and the total number who 'came forward to register a decision for Christ' at Har-ringay was 336.

Of these 336, 226 were already regular

attenders at their parish churches, so they were not Graham converts, but 'came forward' merely to encourage the others, or to reaffirm their faith. The remaining 110 had their names and addresses passed on to their local churches, and of these, 35 are still going to church.

The success of Dr. Graham's six-week Crusade, then, can thus be assessed fairly accurately. He converted to regular churchgoing—regular at least since his visit—one in 12,000 of the population of these 20 London parishes. And since they are typical there is no reason why we should not apply that figure to the whole of London.

Billy Graham's campaign cost over £120,000, not counting salaries to himself and his circus, nor the salaries paid in the ordinary way to all those churchmen who 'voluntarily' helped him. He hired one of the biggest arenas in London, backed up by colossal ballyhoo through advertising, films, and radio.

It is a heartening indication of the lack of success of these methods that all he could hook was one in 12,000 of the population!

And who constitute all these 'ones'? Dr. Graham's Follow-up Department has figures for the ages of the converts (*i.e.* those who came forward, not necessarily those who stayed). These figures show: 8 per cent. aged 5-11; 25 per cent. 12-14; 27 per cent. 15-18. That is, points out Walter Schwarz, 60 per cent. under 19.

To those brought up in the era of juke-boxes and Johnnie Ray, Dr. Graham has a special appeal.

Giving Us the Willies

IN a recent letter to FREEDOM Arthur Moyses criticized anarchists for what he called "their lack of positive action towards contemporary problems" and chose as an example the so-called problem of the so-called horror comics. Having said that he has no use for censorship, he then went on to advocate a form of censorship under which certain publications would be awarded the literary equivalent of an "X" certificate and reserved for adults only.

There are a number of reasons why such a course will not appeal to anarchists. In the first place, who is going to "deem" which publications are unsuitable for children? Presumably Mr. Moyses and those who share his opinions in matters of taste. But just what qualifications will these self-appointed censors possess? They will all, of course, be convinced of their own impeccably good taste—everyone is. The usual way of assessing a person's taste is to compare his opinions with our own: if his correspond fairly closely with ours then we credit him with "good" taste.

Now it may happen that the censors appointed to carry out Mr. Moyses's scheme would share his (or our) taste to a large extent. But in practice it is far more likely that they would not. They would in all probability be like the newsreel commentator who remarked, when someone exploded a smoke-bomb near Marshal Tito during that tyrant's London visit, that it was "in very bad taste". They would be like the cleric who recently bemoaned the "popularization" (!) of sex. They would be like the magistrates who condemned the *Decameron*. They would be like the juries who sit in judgment on books the Home Secretary thinks are "obscene". They would be like the theological qualifiers to Pope Urban VIII, who declared that it was "philosophically absurd and contrary to the Holy Scriptures" to say that the earth moves.

But even if we had censors to our liking, would the scheme achieve what Mr. Moyses hopes? I do not think so. In matters of taste and opinion the attempt to suppress a contrary view always raises a suspicion that the suppressors are afraid their opponents' views will triumph over their own if third parties are left a free choice. This suspicion

has been proved to be well founded by so many instances in history that it is reasonable to assume it justified in every case. If you have the same opportunity as everyone else to put forward your point of view, and if many refuse to accept your point of view, it may very well be you who are wrong or mistaken. In any case agreement in matters of taste is unlikely to be general: in that event there can be no justification whatever for one side to impose its views on the other.

I have not seen any of these horror comics, but if the description and synopsis of one of them given by Claud Cockburn in a recent issue of *Punch* is any guide I am puzzled to know what all the fuss is about. I suspect that these comics would not horrify anybody but schoolteachers, clergymen, and those politicians who visited the teachers' exhibition and felt that they ought to be horrified, if only for the sake of the forthcoming election. Teachers are a notoriously obtuse lot. In my school-days we had no horror comics, but the "penny dreadfuls" we read used to induce apoplexy in any master who came across them. And we who grew up during the thirties thrived on the horror films of that period, though we found some of them rather insipid. Boris Karloff, who played the monster in "Frankenstein" had a tremendous fan mail from children all over the place, most of whom wrote to say how sorry they had felt for him. The only literature that produced any real horror in me as a child was a collection of goody-goody stories given to me by a pious aunt. I have long ago forgotten their plots, and all I retain to-day is a memory of my horror: there was something terribly inhuman about that book, though the author would probably have been surprised to hear it.

Nobody has so far produced any evidence that these horror comics are having dreadful effects on their readers. The argument has been put forward that they will encourage an attitude to life that

many of us disapprove of. But that is precisely what many teachers do; it is what many films and books do; it is what many preachers, politicians, youth leaders, and public speakers do; it is what many journalists and broadcasters do. Because they do it with relatively greater elegance and grace is no reason why we should regard them with greater favour than the purveyors of trash who are doing the same thing.

There is some confusion of thought here. Are these comics condemned because of what they say or because of the way they say it? When Mr. Moyses refers to "this flow of slush" what is it that he objects to? Is it the attitude to life expressed in these comics or is it their "trashiness" that riles him? If it is their artistic crudity that is so objectionable, one can only say *De gustibus non est disputandum*.

If, on the other hand, the objection is to the attitude to life expressed in these comics, then we anarchists can only retort that they are a mere trickle in a flood that goes swirling around us every day. Daily a torrent of superstition and prejudice pours from the classrooms, the newspapers, the radio, the pulpits, parliament, and every little jack-in-office. Every newsreel we see is a piece of crude propaganda extolling the virtues of the "free world", democracy, constitutional monarchy, and the capitalist system.

Mr. Moyses's proposal for stopping a tiny fraction of this outpouring would involve our asking the "authorities", who are almost, if not quite, as bad as the purveyors of horror comics, to make it illegal for publications that Mr. Moyses considers unsuitable for children to be offered for sale. We are to ask the politicians who are calmly preparing the horrors of an atomic war for our benefit to put certain forms of printed horror under the counter, which would certainly lead to a thriving black market and give these publications the added glamour of forbidden fruit. It is a grotesque proposal. It makes my flesh creep.

EDWIN PEEKE.

The Unfortunate Lawyer

A RECURRENT subject in Sunday newspaper articles is the prison experiences of some ex-convict journalist, or some renowned criminal who is paid royalties for signing pious drivel he probably never reads. Such works are rarely entertaining and never reliable.

But a specimen of ex-convict literature which seems a little more sincere appears in the *Observer* of December 12: a letter from a former solicitor describing, not his prison experiences, but the sufferings he has undergone since his release.

Naturally he has been struck off the rolls, so that he cannot obtain employment in his own trade; nor, since he is 56 and has experience only for sedentary work, can he obtain employment elsewhere. And he cannot draw unemployment benefit because his card was not stamped while he was in prison.

His commission in the R.A.F. has been terminated and his O.B.E. cancelled, which means he loses his Air Force pension. He cannot get a National Assistance grant because his wife is working.

He complains that he wrote personal letters to two members of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Board who spoke "such brave words" to him a few weeks before his release, describing his difficulties, and neither has replied. But really, it is difficult to see how they could reply.

Here we have an example of an intelligent and energetic man, successful in two trades, lawyer and Air Force Officer, either of which would help to develop his criminal abilities, to whom society can offer no legal way of earning a living.

A known criminal obviously could not be an officer, or a lawyer, or an executive; no sensible employer would give a labouring job to a sedentary worker of 56. Insurance schemes would be unworkable if benefits were granted without proper payment of contributions, and free welfare services must be restricted to the genuinely destitute. And if a

special pension were granted to old lags failing to find work, most old lags, by hook or by crook, would be drawing it.

The State, which this solicitor with his fine military career once supported so well, cannot help him now, without weakening itself. It is useless for the D.P.A.S. to make him pious speeches about "rehabilitation", useless for the police to threaten him piously, or benevolent persons to give him pious wishes for his reform. And it is equally useless for pious anarchists to hope such a man will work for the free society.

The best the anarchists can offer him is our sympathy, and best wishes for success in the criminal career which is about the only one the institutions we oppose have left him. D.R.

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)

DEC. 19—Audrey Murdon on THE SOCIAL PROBLEM OF INDUSTRIAL DISEASES (Note: Lecture changed for this date; that previously announced switched to JAN. 23)

DEC. 26—No Meeting

JAN. 2—S. E. Parker on ANARCHY, REVOLUTION AND THE INDIVIDUAL

JAN. 23—Rita Milton on THE FUNCTION OF A REVOLUTIONARY PAPER

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THE CONQUEST OF NATURE

WORDS, although meant to be tools, become often the masters of those who use them. The expression "The Conquest of . . ." calls up to my mind the image of a conqueror trampling on a fallen enemy. It is this attitude applied to the processes of nature that does harm. You may be able to use this militaristic expression without being influenced by its tone, in which case Comrade Sculthorpe is right, my argument is just a quibble on words. But I do not believe that this is the case.

Curiously enough Comrade Sculthorpe considers that the word "nature", in this context at least, is emotive. Well, I should say it is so, and so is the word "conquest". I object to the emotion that lies behind the latter word, and that was what I was protesting against. That is the root of the argument.

I think that excessive specialisation is something to be deplored, since it leads to a narrow outlook. We all know how dull, and sometimes how dangerous, is

the "man of one book".

The horror aroused by myxomatosis may be viewed by many with a philosophical calm, but then they are not rabbits! I also oppose such abominations as gin-traps, and it seems to me that it would be possible for some specialist to devise some method of keeping rabbits in check, which would at the same time be humane. But then most of the specialists have sold their souls to the Devil, in the shape of the militarists, and a lot of ingenuity is wasted on war machines.

I do not oppose science. If I did I should have to abandon this typewriter for a start. Nor do I have a nostalgic longing for the past, certainly not the historical past, and I do not believe that we can go back to primitivism. But I have no craving for the future, and I have a certain uneasy feeling that the crudest science fiction may yet prove the most prophetic. I do not crave for a world where all, or most things, are synthetic.

Ascorbic acid was recommended to me as a means of combating persistent colds. Later I was informed that fruit, particularly oranges, contained this, and I preferred to eat the oranges. But if one cannot get the fruit, then by all means take the ascorbic acid tablets. But it's better, I should have thought, to have the fruit. But perhaps that is mere sentimentality.

A great many diseases, both of mind and body, are the results of the efforts to conquer one's natural desires, or to get away from a fairly natural environment, and crowd into unhealthy cities—or unhealthy country hovels for that matter. To make our present society work it is necessary that people conquer their sexual desires, and, if need be, satisfy them (or try to) with synthetic substitutes, erotic films, books, etc. The result is that our world is rapidly becoming more and more of a madhouse, and the modern reversion to greater sexual freedom may well come too late to save us.

Man is bound to be an unnatural animal, as I said before, but that is no reason for trying to conquer nature in the cause of making his life more and more artificial. Many artificialities are good, many are bad. I suggest we pick and choose, instead of glorying in making everything "bigger and better", faster and faster, and all the rest of it.

London, Dec. 12. ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

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