

Freedom

ANARCHIST WEEKLY

Why is Abortion a Racket?

AT a trial at the Old Bailey two weeks ago, two women and a man were sentenced to a total of 14 years imprisonment for being concerned in an abortion organisation.

The trial did not attract a great deal of attention from the daily Press, but, in order to perform a service to the public and with never a thought to circulation, the Sunday People splashed the story and issued glaring posters to tell us so.

The story was indeed, from the point of view of conventional morality, a startling one. The trial exposed the existence of an abortion ring efficiently organised and effectively operating. What gave the story its news value, however, was the fact that the ring's clientele consisted to a large degree of Society girls, debutantes, fashion models, film and stage starlets. The alarming fact is, said *The People*, that more and more girls in this section of society are seeking the doubtful aid of abortionists.

Now it is true that girls of this kind live, on the whole, empty and unproductive lives. But we have never thought of them as being unnaturally devoid of natural desire, any more than any other class of human society. What seems to us rather puzzling is the implied fact that, since they land themselves in a position where they need an abortion, they are ignorant or inexperienced in methods of preventing conception.

The Same Prejudices

The excuse—and it is fairly valid

Third Degree is 'Common Practice' in Kenya says Judge

NAIROBI, Dec. 23.

The vice-president of the East African Court of Appeal, Sir Newnham Worley, referred to what he described as "a common practice" of the Kenya police in handing over Mau Mau suspects to screening teams for "softening up" to extract information. He was reading a judgment in the case of two Kikuyu appealing against the death sentence passed on them in October for possessing a home-made gun and consorting with terrorists. Their appeal was dismissed.

One of the condemned men, Mwangi, alleged that he was taken to a screening camp at Molo in the Rift Valley, and beaten on the head and body with rifle butts. "What I told them first at the screening camp was true," he claimed. "Then I was beaten and said whatever they wanted me to say."

Sir Newnham said that he and his fellow-judges, Sir Enoch Jenkins and Mr. Justice F. A. Briggs, felt that they could not conclude their judgment "without drawing attention once more to the activities of these so-called screening teams." He went on:

"In the absence of any rebutting evidence, there seems no good reason to doubt that Mwangi's allegations of ill-treatment are substantially true, although he may have exaggerated and lied in an endeavour to explain away a recorded statement. From this case and others that have come to our notice it seems it may be a common practice, when a person is arrested in commission of a terrorist offence or on suspicion of such offence, for the police to hand him over to the custody of these teams, where, if accounts are true, he is subjected to a softening-up process with the object of obtaining information from him."

Pointing out that the function of screening teams "to judge by the name," was to separate good Kikuyu from bad, he continued:

"But if this were its only function there could not in this case have been any reason to send Mwangi to such a team, for he had been arrested in actual commission of an offence carrying capital punishment."

—Reuter.

—for working-class women who are ignorant of birth control, is that they have had no opportunities in their restricted lives to be otherwise. This does not apply to the same degree to women of the 'Upper Set'. What they are subjected to, however, is exactly the same set of prejudices and conventions; the dead hand of morality is laid upon them in exactly the same way as upon their less-well-off sisters.

But the better-off girl has something denied the poorer one: opportunity. For the working and middle-class girl privacy is a rare thing, especially so in times like these of acute housing shortage. But for the girls of the fashionable world, living a round of parties, weekends at country cottages, extended holidays, privacy and escape from parental supervision is easier to come by.

In the sensational publicity given to the disclosures at the Old Bailey, much pious horror has been expressed at both the immorality of the girls concerned and the criminality of the abortionists. What *The People*, and similar staunch defenders of public morality, is not likely to do is ever to question either the morality or the law concerned.

Human Needs

Such reports as those of Professor Kinsey have shown to the world what anarchists have maintained for a long time: that there is no connection between accepted sexual morality and human needs. Whatever the moralists say, however much parents try to prevent it (forgetting their own youth), young men and women have and will always seize or make opportunities to express their natural desires. If they are able to avail themselves of birth control methods, all will be well. If not, and the girl 'gets into trouble' what should our attitude be?

Surely the sane and honest answer is that it is for the girl herself to

decide whether, in view of her own circumstances and feelings she should have the child she has conceived. Why should she be prevented from having a pregnancy terminated if that is her own wish, under the best possible clinical conditions?

In fact—and the Old Bailey trial showed why—few women to-day are prevented from having an abortion. It was shown in evidence that this particular organisation, though run on a money-making basis, operated a sliding-scale of payments according to the means of the patient. Those who could not afford more paid only a few pounds; for the wealthy it was fifty guineas and more.

Half-a-Million Anxious Women

An 'investigation' carried out a short while ago by another Sunday newspaper, *Reynolds' News*, showed that in fact some 500,000 women have abortions in this country every year. Clearly the law is incapable of preventing this wide-spread practice. But what it is able to do is to drive it underground and precisely thereby make it dangerous and a field for racketeers.

An abortion carried out under hospital conditions is a safe and easy operation. It becomes dangerous when performed in potentially septic conditions by ignorant or careless money-makers or by desperate girls using upon themselves any instrument that comes to hand.

And it is the law and the morality on which it is based that drives half-a-million anxious women every year into danger. There is no possible reasonable argument that can justify the present stupid anomaly whereby it is perfectly legal to prevent pregnancy by birth control appliances but illegal to terminate a pregnancy by surgical appliances, at the wish of the woman concerned.

In this, as in so many other things, the law makes the racket. P.S.

The Enterprising M. Chevallier

BASLE (WP).—A lone Swiss citizen, circulating a petition for a 50 per cent. reduction in national arms appropriations, has secured 85,000 signatures, brought consternation to traditional military circles, and probably forced a nation-wide referendum which he cannot win, but which will produce considerable impact on popular opinion.

M. Samuel Chevallier, originator of the appeal, hardly began his campaign auspiciously. Last May, he published the text of a popular initiative in the humorous and satirical journal *Le Bon Jour*. The gist of his proposal was this: that in the year 1955 or 1956, military costs be cut in half, and the money thus saved be used for benefit of Swiss children, for construction of low-cost housing, and for the relief of war-ravaged regions in neighbouring countries. *Le Bon Jour* was interested because M. Chevallier, himself a humorist, writes for it and because in general it directs its shafts against the people in power, against bureaucracy, against all abuses

which offend the sense of justice possessed by the "man in the street".

When children died from cold in unheated dwellings during the winter of 1953-54, especially in France, M. Chevallier wrote articles of protest. Groping for some practical and concrete step to deal with such situations, he came up with his disarmament plan, and, as all citizens are guaranteed the right to do by the Swiss constitution, launched his appeal for a popular initiative. Switzerland, which has not suffered from war, he argued, spends more for its army than for social works or projects of international relief. It was the logical land to set an example.

His reasoning found few favourable echoes in the leading press. The more serious journals, like the *Gazette de Lausanne*, mocked "these humorists who became moralists." The *Journal de Genève* spoke of an "astounding" initiative. General Guisan, army chief, went so far as to condemn the initiative as "criminal". Even the labour press, from its fear of Communism, has been hostile. On the other hand, the influential weekly, *Cooperation*, published the text of the initiative and ran an article which was favourable. The periodical, *L'Essor*, which is close to the Quaker point of view, has spoken clearly in support of Chevallier.

Astonishing to many is the fact that the referendum proposal, sometimes facetiously referred to as "the dove's egg" without backing from the press in general or support from any substantial organizations, has nevertheless piled up 85,000 signatures. They have come almost entirely from French-speaking Switzerland.

For a popular initiative to be valid, 100,000 signatures are legally required. The lists must then be sent to the different communes, which verify the signatures and cancel those which for one reason or another are not valid. M. Chevallier has recently informed his readers that the inspection is proceeding, and that he will in time propose the initiative for a national referendum.

The proposal cannot be dismissed as Communist, because, although of course Communists as usual were quick to praise it, in Switzerland Communism has scant influence, and any Communist support would tend to weaken, rather than strengthen, the influence of the Chevallier move.

Whatever happens to M. Chevallier's initiative eventually, he has at least demonstrated one thing: that there exists an undercurrent of humanitarian feeling, and a desire for positive peace steps, where these are often little suspected.

Will the Railmen Strike?

AS we go to press there is no firm indication with regard to the possibility of a national rail strike.

The executive of the National Union of Railwaymen, acting under pressure from its branches, has informed the Transport Commission that it will call a national strike on January 9 unless a wage increase is awarded.

The increase that is being demanded is simply the balance of the 15 per cent. claim that was made—and fobbed off with 6 per cent.—a year ago! The railmen then, can hardly be described as impatient!

The usual arguments about 'not being able to afford' the increase has been given by the Commission, and now a Court of Inquiry has been set up to investigate and report the dispute. At first the N.U.R. opposed the Court, but now, its terms of reference being satisfactorily wide, has accepted it.

For the railmen themselves, only one thing is certain. They will get precisely what they are prepared to fight for. And whatever their executive does (and we remember its hoax of a year ago) the success of the men's demand lies in their preparedness to use their strength through direct action.

Congress Investigates the Foundations

Proscribe Dangerous Thoughts!

SLOWLY but surely everything and everybody is being investigated in America. Last month it was the turn of the Tax-Exempt Foundations, which include the Carnegie, Ford and Rockefeller, with the publication of the four hundred page majority report which brands them as un-American promoters of "subversion in the true meaning of that term!"

The House Special Committee engaged in this investigation consisted of three republicans and two Democrats, and the majority report is signed by the three republicans though one of them has since declared that as a qualifying statement he had made dissenting from many of the conclusions had been omitted from the Report he regarded his own signature on the majority report as now "unauthorised". Thus the majority is of two out of five. But that is not all. The Report of the minority of two has declared that "Some of the statements of fact and opinion contained in the report are untrue on the face, others are at best half-truths, and the vast majority are misleading."

It points out too that all the witnesses who were called were hostile to the Foundations with the exception of Dr. Pendleton Herring,

president of the Social Science Research Council who alone "brought solid facts into this arena of bias and prejudice". But the chairman was not going to have his case destroyed by argument and halfway through Dr. Herring's testimony "he adjourned public hearings for all time to come".

"The hard truth", says the minority report, "is that, by the manner in which the proceedings of the committee were conducted and by the self-evident bias of the majority report, the committee has failed in the most basic way to carry out the mandate of the Congress. The results of the proceedings are of no value to the Congress, and it was,

therefore, a complete waste of public money."

Apart from the economic implications of the growing number of tax-exempt foundations (with the possibility that "a large part of American industry may eventually come into the hands of foundations") the majority report deals at length with the dangers of these foundations being responsible for financing subversive bodies and dangerous ideas.

Some of the most significant remarks are contained in the following paragraph taken from their report:

The prohibition against the use of foundation funds to support subversion also needs wholesale revision. As the law stands it is only the support of communism and fascism which is prohibited. It may be that the adequate revision of the law regarding political use would suffice, but it is clear to us that all support of socialism, collectivism or any other form of society or government which is at variance with the basic principles of ours should be proscribed. This subject, too, requires considerable study. We well understand that some research clearly not intended to have any political implication may, nevertheless, incidentally impinge on the political. We also understand that the effect may relate to what is merely one facet of an aggregate of collectivist thought. Yet we feel that the whole field of the social sciences is of such a nature that "risk"

is not desirable. As much as we support taking "risks" in the physical sciences, in medicine and public health and other areas, it is clear to us that risks taken with our governmental, juridical or social system are undesirable. If there is a burden placed on the foundations through the difficulty of drawing a line between what is in the broad sense "subversive" or "political" and what is not, it is better that the foundations suffer this burden than that they take risks with our happiness and safety.

Here clearly stated is the view that all ideas which "are at variance with the basic principles of ours" should be proscribed. No "risks" must be taken with subversive thought. Here is thought control with a vengeance and all for the purpose of protecting the United States from the thought control of Russian Communism! Or is it?

Hampstead Prudes
According to a writer in the fortnightly journal *Art*, the Hampstead Arts Council organised an exhibition in which there were two selecting juries—one composed of artists; the other of representatives of "the public" (a shop assistant, a professional cricketer, a bank manager, and so on). The "public" jury surprised the artists in several ways, but chiefly by their refusal to record a single vote for any nude, whether realistic, pretty-pretty, or cubist.

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!	
WEEK 51	
Deficit on Freedom	£765
Contributions received	£768
SURPLUS	£3
December 17 to December 22	
London: W.F.* 2/3; London: J.D. 2/6;	
London: J.S.* 3/-; London: J.A.* 10/2;	
London: H.F. 2/-; Wakefield: A.F. 6/6;	
Hereford: J.H.M. 13/-	
Total	1 19 5
Previously acknowledged	766 3 4
1954 TOTAL TO DATE	£768 2 9

BOOK REVIEW

DEGRADATION BY CONSENT

WHEN Roy Cohn, Senator McCarthy's ex-lieutenant, was asked about choosing speakers for a television programme he was arranging, he stated, 'Any author is out.' It was clear that he was echoing a prevailing fear among large groups of suspicion-fed American citizens. Not only were authors 'out' but, by implication, any group of questioning intellectuals, 'eggheads', and artists.

The intimidation and silencing of such independent groups, however, has not been an isolated phenomenon. It has been accompanied by an enormous growth in the extent and popularity of various kinds of 'mass' entertainment and propaganda—almost as if a nagging conscience were being slowly throttled as baser instincts asserted themselves. With the coming of television, and its intrusion into almost every home in America, this growth has received a tremendous impetus. Now, with the kind of films which are peculiar to America, with the popularity of the 'modern' comic, often the only reading matter of adults, with sixty-six copies of murder mysteries sold in a year, the addition of over twenty million TV sets at once gives more meaning than ever to a study of the pleasures of modern society.

A recent study of such pleasures is by Geoffrey Wagner.* He has divided his book—*Parade of Pleasure*—into four sections. Not, as one might imagine, love, beauty, leisure, the arts, but Movies, Comics, Pin-ups and T.V. It is not a profound book and one suspects that the author shows more relish for his sensational material than for the deeper aspects and implications of

the subject. As a survey containing valuable statistics and evidence, however, it achieves a cumulative effect so great that one is left with a kind of despairing resignation. Can this be taking place to-day? Is this the society which, after what it considers its unparalleled achievements, has named our time The American Century? Where can it lead? These and other questions are never far from the reader's thoughts.

Crime, violence and sex, are generally recognised as the major themes of contemporary American entertainment, whether it be comics for the seven-year-old or bedtime reading for those in their seventies, and the exploitation of these, no matter the extreme, no longer surprises us. Recent developments, however, suggest a far wider and more sinister use of such themes, not unconnected with political events, the cold war and the cult of McCarthyism. Starting with the assumption that America is now fighting World War Three, violence and sadism in the name of patriotism can be practiced to any extreme and in any situation.

Much of *Parade of Pleasure* is devoted to a detailed survey of the way literature, the cinema and TV, are manipulating these themes for political and social reasons as well as for the usual and remorseless motive of financial gain. The beautiful young female, tied hand and foot, can be flogged and branded for her part as a Red spy. Comics can suffer death and torture by every imaginable device. Supermen heroes can destroy whole armies of 'red lice', 'police tactics'—'blocking kick to the testicles'—and the practice of *strip and whip*, can all be shown to be justified in the battle to save democracy. To object to such manifestations in literature, on TV and cinema screens, brings an automatic accusation of being sympathetic to the enemy. Second only to the Red as the destroyer of the American way of life, is the scheming intellectual, and this type is now as recognisable a figure of evil as men with long noses, beards, or dark crinkley hair.

When all these things are considered, it is not surprising that Geoffrey Wagner can find an endless supply of facts and illustrations to supplement his study. A recent survey of Hollywood films, for example, showed an average of 7.8 acts of violence per film, murders 2.45 per film, one film in four to be a Western. Other surveys have shown 41% of all males between the ages of eighteen and thirty to be comic book readers, 100 million of such comics being sold monthly. We are told, too, that a special category to imply light reading has now been created—that of comic-comics. Then there is the pin-up craze and its particular literature with such titles as *Eye*, *Eyeful*, *Keyhole*, *Titter* and *Foo*, and establishments selling to readers such souvenirs as the soiled lingerie of pin-up models. The man suffering from the frustrations of the tormented and anxiety-filled existence of modern America can seek relief in the hiring of movie films advertised as follows:

'8 poses in chained Chastity Belt and Shackles, 2 rope Bondage, 2 Wooden Stocks poses, 3 arms spread-eagled bondage poses, 3 Strait-jacket spanking poses, 8 Spanking poses and 18 High Heel Lingerie poses (4 while holding whip in hand).'

TV has not been left behind in the rush to satisfy the artificially created 'yearnings' of its audience. On New York screens during a particular week of 1952, 2,970 acts or threats of violence were shown. From another station, after ten every night, only wrestling was shown.

Despite the equanimity with which violence, future wars and the 'sex angle', is accepted, the citizens of the United States cannot, however, be exposed to the corruption of such films as "The Bicycle Thief" (small boy relieving himself), "La Ronde"

(love treated in a adult way), or "The Miracle" (sacrilegious). The city authorities of San Antonio discouraged the sale of Einstein's works, those in Cleveland banned for display certain Renoir nudes. The passports of Charlie Chaplin, Paul Robeson . . . "Captain's Paradise" needing an explanatory note.

Of the reasons for such a state of affairs, we are all familiar. The pattern of city life, the frustrations of a capitalist society, the debasing injections of politics and the cold war, the inevitable direction of such a society towards two distinct ends—authority and the enslaved . . . It is too obvious to require further elaboration. Yet Mr. Wagner concludes his survey by saying: 'It seems to me almost undeniable that America is the greatest country in the world. Consequently her citizens are understandably proud of their status.'

One cannot do better than answer this statement with an earlier quotation from the book. 'Dr. Kracauer (in *From Caligari to Hitler*) saw the increase of violence in the German cinema of the thirties as symptomatic of a people lacking in both serenity and self-confidence. Yet even in some of the poorer of these German films . . . there was scarcely such an organised overall destruction of ethics, of the man-woman love affair, and of the family relationship in general, as we see in certain Hollywood pictures to-day.'

Whatever reasons the author of *Parade of Pleasure* might have for his extraordinary faith in American society, they are certainly not revealed in this book. Instead, on the part of the reader, there is a stubborn conclusion that at no time in history has the individual been under such pressure to discard his dignity, his humanity, and his identity as a person. If there were such a thing as degradation by consent, as distinct from that of men forced to commit crimes in the service of governments, America might well be such an example. In Russia the integrity and the independence of the individual is subordinated to the State and the Party. Is this so much worse than a society where the profit motive and private ambition can achieve a similar debasement without the victims being aware of it?

C.H.

SCIENCE NOTES—I

Science and the scientific approach are frequently mentioned and discussed in FREEDOM. We do not all, however, have the opportunity of hearing or reading about new scientific developments, and it is with great pleasure that we introduce a new fortnightly feature contributed by comrades who work in scientific fields.

SCIENTIFIC discovery and invention has made it possible for man to alter the face of the earth and the pattern of his life. Mountains can be moved, lakes created, and deserts turned into fertile soil. It is recognised by most anarchists that scientific knowledge and techniques can be used by man to improve his standard of living and enrich his life. But in certain spheres of knowledge, and in particular, in the biological sciences, the significance of certain discoveries is so confused and obscure that anarchists may reject them completely, even regretting their existence. We do not agree with this attitude, for we believe that scientific knowledge is in itself neither good nor bad. To ignore it or condemn it, to refuse to study its possible effect on our lives, is to leave it in the hands of the bureaucrats and power mongers, who will be delighted to use this knowledge to increase their power and further enslave the people.

Future discoveries in the field of genetics may make selective breeding in a man a possibility. What do anarchists think about this? Developments in medicine and surgery such as hormonal treatment and the notorious "Prefrontal leucotomy" make possible radical alterations to the individual personality. Then there are the various pep drugs, truth drugs, and those used in shock treatment, which all have their effect on the individual integrity which is the basis of the anarchist philosophy. It is our contention, that we should, as anarchists, try to understand such developments, assess their significance, and relate anarchist propaganda to the developing trend of knowledge.

The aim of this column is to bring to the attention of readers, items of scientific news, together with appropriately provocative comment, which we think might be of interest to anarchists.

BIRTH CONTROL

THE development of an effective method of conception control which involved merely taking a pill would probably be one of the greatest advances yet made in this field. It would make possible the widespread extension of conception control in Asiatic countries, where existing methods are unsuitable for general use. It could for instance replace the "safe period" method which is now officially advocated in India.

Experimental work is being carried out using phosphorylated hesperidin taken orally. This chemical inhibits the action of the enzyme hyaluronidase which is present in spermatozoa where it serves to break down hyaluronic acid, a viscous protective coating surrounding the egg.

Work has been done using rabbits and rats, and clinical trials are in progress. Although it has been suggested that effectively high concentrations of hesperidin cannot be achieved by oral administration, it may be that a way will be found to make this compound or a related one an effective birth control pill.

Incidentally although hesperidin is present in citrus fruits we do not recommend our readers to eat more oranges as an alternative to their present birth control methods.

"BRAINS"

ROBERT JUNGK in his book *Tomorrow is here already*, published in this country early in 1954 describes the uses made of "electronic brains" in America. The Rand Corporation, founded and supported by the air force uses one of these brains to help solve problems of war strategy. This particular machine is manned by three hundred scientists, including economists, sociologists, psychologists, and engineers.

According to the writer, Gen. MacArthur was relieved of his command in the Far East as a result of the calculations made by one of these brains. Its calculation that America would suffer serious economic effects if she became involved in a war, and that such a war might not end in her favour made MacArthur's replacement inevitable, at least until the 'brain's' predictions were more favourable.

Two American scientists of Russian origin are among those who have achieved fame with the aid of these instruments. Louis Bean in 1948 predicted the results of the presidential congressional election with a fair degree of accuracy, and for the department of agriculture he forecast the harvest yield and market conditions for agricultural produce. Professor Wassily Leontief when consulted advised partial mobilisation after the outbreak of war in Korea. In 1947 he predicted the increase in steel output that would be needed, to within a few hundred tons. His calculations are considered when decisions are taken regarding the proportions of raw materials to be used for armaments and consumption purposes.

These machines have aroused widespread interest and controversy and it is difficult to estimate whether their use by the American Government (and also presumably the Russian Government) has increased or decreased the danger of war. Although they are at present used mainly to strengthen the power of governments they could have a place in a free society.

Bios.

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Moulds of Power

ONE pointed remark Nietzsche made against the uncritical and vapid idealism still lingering at the beginning of the century was that man was not born with a natural instinct for truth, but had, on the contrary, a stronger and more readily observable inclination to lie. It is difficult, when we distinguish between a passion for truth and a passion for facts, to separate the former from the natural impulse to use one's mind in ordering one's experience according to a set of propositions given a coherent and satisfactory picture of the world. Speculation and imagination proceed hand in hand, and both, according to different methods but serving the same purpose, lie in the face of crude fact and existential intuition for the simple reason that they are both creative while crude fact is barren, and the object of existential intuition is an irreconcilable antithesis of nothingness and being. As soon as thought becomes articulate, as of necessity it must, fact is shaped into word, and existential intuition is abolished and transcended. But in the fact of communication, in expressing one's thoughts to another person, it is possible quite deliberately to tell a lie, that is to put forward a thought which one would never come across or entertain were it not for some satisfaction it can yield in being communicated. This satisfaction may be the anticipation of some advantage to be gained by telling the lie, but it is also the immediate pleasure of feeling oneself superior in one's complexity of intelligence to the simple-minded who believes the lie.

There is no natural instinct to tell a lie but the universality of lying derives from the universality of communication and a universality of trust without which

no communication would be possible. A lie is told because it can be believed, and one is a bigger or lesser liar to the extent one has one's lies believed or one thinks one has one's lies believed. The study of human nature, however deep and precise, cannot account for the actions of men if it is not accompanied by understanding of the permanent and necessary conditions of man living with man. These conditions, which I am tempted to call social categories, are ever-open possibilities, like moulds there from all time, and waiting for human nature to flow into them and be shaped. Man is a liar because it is possible for him to lie. It is in the nature of the possible to become actual even more than it is for the potential.

The same thing happens with what I call the archist principle. Again through communication, though not necessarily by words, the possibility is given of making a man set aside his will and do our own. A will to power may or may not be there originally, but it soon develops, and becomes a compulsion through habit and success, not to mention competition. Yet this will mould be but of relative importance and not carry us very far if there did not develop in other people through converse circumstances a will to be slave. Will, at any rate, would take either form or any other because their possibility is there, and as long as there is will in a fluid state, as long as a man is not exhausted and fixed in what we call his character, he will be turned, under opportune circumstances, into a master, a slave, or what you will. It is not human nature that is to blame, but social categories of existence, that is God, if you believe Him morally responsible for the universe, or the fact of not

being born out of a lonely shell on a lonely island. Accordingly all attempts at reforming human nature are doomed to failure and confusion if at the same time nothing or very little is done to change the social categories. These cannot be changed, by definition, and will always be there, making a perfect society, if ever it be realized, congenitally precarious. But the sliding or falling into them can be checked by convention and taboo. Convention and taboo, supported by punitive sanctions, are quite effective in preventing the majority of people from catching at ready possibilities, however acutely they may be itching to do so. The fundamental freedom of man is an ascertained fact at least since the times of Seneca. You can take a donkey to a spring but you cannot make him drink. So the possibility of becoming a murderer is there open to practically any man. Yet very few, comparatively commit murder because of moral convention and legal sanctions against it. For fundamentally similar reasons most men act according to somebody else's will a good two thirds of each of their days.

SOCIAL categories or, less detachedly, the general bias of things for evil, is very disconcerting for the anarchist. That freedom which he values as the greatest boon for mankind, when translated into lack of restraint, spells evil far and wide. It is like a seed of luxuriant vegetation, but the ground on which it lands is such that each plant shoots up at war with all its neighbours. If then the seed is opened evil will be found inside; for freedom is not quite freedom if not freedom to do evil as well as other things. Feet that stamp upon a plant,

Continued on p. 3

PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

THE newcomer to FREEDOM (and we hope there will be many in 1955) finds self-criticism in its columns to which he may not have been accustomed in the propaganda journals of political parties and organizations or in the more or less impersonal, Lib-Lab commercialised politico-literary weeklies. The profession of anarchist ideas and their propagation offer no sinecures, no social or material advancement; there is no National Executive to chastise us for deviations from the party line, or Whips to maintain "unity" in our ranks; there is no Big Brother noting our every heresy, not even from his glass-fronted coffin.

Unlike the Christians and Communists whose criticisms are, at the most, directed to the individual, but never to the Faith or the Party, anarchists, generally, are not subject to the blind acceptance of an anarchist dogma. Their anarchism is essentially a way of life for themselves as individuals, and this is more than revealed by the diversity of anarchist thought.

But it is this diversity which joins anarchists in a unity more solid than that achieved by the dogma of a Church, the shadow of a National Executive or the mummies in the Kremlin. For the determined defence of our own freedom makes us all the more conscious of the freedom of others. When Bakunin wrote "I can be really free when those around me are also free" he was expressing the feelings of men who are, at the same time, both individuals as well as members of a community. Experience must surely convince even non-anarchists that no man is free unless his freedom is respected by those around him (unless he withdraws completely from society and lives the life of a hermit). But neither can he feel free (unless he be a spiritual hermit) if he is surrounded by fellow humans, who, whilst not in a position to limit his freedom are themselves slaves (or whatever they are called to-day).



THE task of the anarchist militant, or propagandist, unlike that of his counterpart in the political parties and organisations, is one which is at the same time wide in scope and yet hedged in by what we can most simply describe as "principles". The political parties, instead, are hedged in by the narrowness of their vision of the society they aspire to but have no principles to hamper them as to the methods they will use to achieve their ends.

The anarchists—writes our correspondent H. K. Holt elsewhere in this issue (*Anarchists and Positive Action*)—by their methods have not succeeded in establishing anarchism in the "dozen or so countries where revolution took place [in the first half of the present century]". He should have added however, that neither did the people achieve the objectives of their revolutions by allowing the political parties to take control of them. In most revolutions the ordinary people have few but healthy ideas as to what they want: they demand the means of production, the land and an end to their exploitation. What they lack is confidence in their ability to reconstruct society from below without some kind of centralised control being introduced. It is this fear which all politicians exploit to maintain the *status quo* and their positions of power; which the technician, the manager and the scientist feed to retain their privileges and a society divided into classes.

In this respect then, the rôle of the anarchist propagandist would seem to be that of attempting to break down this apparently complex

JAPANESE CINEMA Ugetsu-Symbol and Reality

NEW YORK, DECEMBER.

IT has long since become standard procedure—whether as legitimate boast or as advertising gimmick—to tag a foreign film here as one which "Hollywood wouldn't (or couldn't) make", but it is somewhat less often that a movie deserves to be so tagged. One film so deserving is *Ugetsu*, Japanese import recently opened in New York.

More so than other peoples, the Japanese are able so deftly to combine symbol and reality in their art forms as to deliver to their audiences the impact of the former and the haecceity of the latter. This genius, so eloquently attested by *Rasho-mon*, which had a big success here a couple of years ago, is attested anew by *Ugetsu*; but whereas *Rasho-mon*, being more symbol than reality, was essentially an intellectual experience, *Ugetsu*, reversing the balance, emerges primarily an emotional experience therefore. The ingredients, though, catalysed by apposite mysticism, are admirably fused; and if a nation's cinema is a celluloid chronicle of the ethos it services, then by such masterpieces as *Rasho-mon* and *Ugetsu* do the Japanese people stand revealed and exalted with sensitiveness, humaneness, suffering, virtue and weakness. But then, one would expect no less from a people who can produce, and honour, talented poets who conjure up myriad images and little philosophies in austere three-line verses treating of the many-faceted cicada (cf. Hearn's *Shadowings*).

The "story line" of *Ugetsu* is simple itself, for the Japanese have learned well what Hollywood *et al.* refuse to consider, namely, that only the bare narrative can adequately convey the clash and clangour of life's complexities.

Genjuro, a skilled potter, lives in poverty with his wife and young son. One obsession rages within him: to escape the wretchedness of his poverty, for, as he wryly observes, "With money one can live; without it one can only suffer." His brother-in-law and neighbour is equally poor and equally obsessed: he would be a samurai and quit once for all the emaciated soil to which he is impoverished thrall. Here are the twin scourges, commixed and adulterine: in one—materialism, which is more than greed, more than ambition; in the other—self-aggrandisement, lust for status. For each man fulfillment of obsession implies a senseless morbid accretion foully rooted in an ineluctable itch to be what he is not.

The two men peddle Genjuro's wares and selling the pottery return with some

silver coins, which he triumphantly and lubriciously tolls into his wife's trembling fingers; it is an earnest of further profitable excursions. She asks for her sister's husband. "Oh, he went chasing after a gang of warriors," Genjuro reassures her with a laugh, "he'll be back before long." His wife laughs uneasily.

This trifling advance in condition but exacerbates Genjuro's cravings. He redoubles his efforts; his wife has to spend long wearisome hours at the fly-wheel while he fashions sake jars, rice bowls, etc. Their son cries for hunger, but Genjuro can hardly stop to worry about that. "Keep going, keep going," he commands his flagging wife, "everything we've got depends on this lot of pottery. Keep going!" She wearily cautions their son to be patient, but her bitterness pours out upon her husband's head. "What's come over you?" she snaps. "You used to be so kind and gentle, and considerate of our son. Now you're so irritable I can no longer enjoy working with you." About the finery he had purchased for her, she admits that it had made her happy, but "not because of the new robe, but because it showed your love for me."

Genjuro, however, has no time to muse upon this matter—he has, indeed time for naught except to expedite the preparation of his wares for the ready market in town. To this end he has commandeered not only his wife but her sister and the latter's husband, who has returned home from his misadventure somewhat bedraggled but no less obsessed. Genjuro never lets off prodding them, they're "risking everything on this batch of pots; if anything goes wrong we're ruined." And the simple potter, half-crazed for worry, anticipation and impatience, wrings his hands like a harassed floor-walker at Saks, Fifth Avenue on the last shopping day before Christmas. The deadly poison seeps through the organism, and in seeping looses a fierce contagion—

The Pope One Up on Lady Docker

It was reported that in his recent broadcast the Pope used a silver microphone. Later, according to the *Sunday Pictorial* he spent "part of the evening watching television on the £1,500 gold inlaid TV set given to him by American Catholics.

Moulds of Power

Continued from p. 2

thoughtless and ruthless hands that tear down its leaves or break its stem, a gardener's hands that prune and graft and bend and pluck, it is all evil from the plant's point of view. But it is a mistake to consider outside violence and interference as the only kind of evil as it was a mistake on Rousseau's part to contrast the angelic individual with Society wicked and perverted. Society is made up of individuals, and there is no evil in it which is not also in the individuals of which it is composed. Of course, the fact that some hold most of the power and the great majority holds practically none fosters the illusion that there is a clearcut and obvious division between good and bad. By getting rid of the bad, so the illusion develops, all men will be good. But apart from the twist in moral judgment and cracks in moral texture resulting from the necessity of calling good men who get rid of others classified as bad, the social category of power yawns as wide as ever. Getting rid of the enemies of freedom does not seem to make room for more freedom, but rather for more enemies of freedom. History teaches us that or teaches us nothing. Strangely enough, a new crop of tyrants turns out to be more vicious when the old ones have been deliberately disposed of than when they died a natural death. Disposing of old tyrants, one would say, is already the same thing as fitting in the mould of power, and the shape thus acquired is not easy to change.

The task of the anarchist is threefold. First he must resist any outside violence and constriction, and secondly he must discipline himself to resist any temptation to tyranny, to power over, and interference with, the will of others. Difficult as these two tasks may be the average thoughtful anarchist is confident that he can manage them all right. There remains the task of preventing others from becoming tyrants, of blocking up the moulds waiting for new tyrants to come. The argument of the anarchist is that if every one was like himself, that is if every one made a point of resisting

BUT it is a time of banditry, of lawlessness and war lords. The village is pillaged, the villagers are forced to flee. But where must he go? He must be dragged to a kiln. "I cannot now, else we will be killed." For him now as his wife, not a woman is a woman, not a woman is a woman. Me... amok... exact... want... itself... ness... practi... across... of wondro... —what re... conflagratio... social and eco... wood in its ble... can say—not castle... peat, but the madcap... huts and the dog-in-the-manger desecration of a pitifully paltry gunnysack holding the entire hoard and treasure of a household's three generations—this strikes home as a dozen castle-infernos must completely miss the mark. This is the scurrilous mask of war—a spear thrust into a hay-pile to feel out refugees or cattle, a rickety wall bashed in because the ant-eaten door happens to be a couple of strides to the left, the loathsome slaverings that make beasts of double-going men who suspect the mere possibility of the presence of a woman nearby. Not the jowly fanfaronades of politicians who safely parade the incendiary shibboleths of "national honour", "god", "civilization", "culture" and/or "Christianity", but this—this is war. Not reviews, and martial airs, and cynical decorations, but the lunge, the rack, the convulsion and the death—this is war.

Genjuro can be contained no longer. Despite the pleadings of his wife he sneaks back to reclaim his property and tot up the damage. It is his fortune that the damage is slight. Genjuro packs his wares and, leaving wife and son behind with the promise to rejoin them ten days hence, sets out with his wife's sister and her husband for the marketplace. There they are an immediate success, raking in the money hand over fist. As soon as he has a few coins, Genjuro's brother-in-law, the would-be

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weap
in a field when a band of
happens upon him. "Where
get that?" one of them asks,
pointing to the weapon. "At the castle,"
stammers Genjuro, not yet recovered from
the orgy, real or fancied. "What castle?"
"Why, Lady Watake's castle," comes
Genjuro's bewildered reply. They laugh
humously. "The castle burned down
more than a month ago, and this weapon
is stolen property. Fortunately for you,
however, the prison has also been burned
down (italics mine), so we'll have to let
you go free." Thus Genjuro, reclaimed
at the last, is at liberty after his near-
fatal brush with Ambition Gratified. It
has been a narrow escape, but no matter!
With the prison demolished simultane-
ously with his own liberation from the
omniverous vortex, he is free to return
home.

His brother-in-law, having purchased
a samurai's outfit, fortuitously comes
upon the head of an enemy chieftain.
This he presents as his own conquest to
the war lord of the town. Whereupon
he is accounted a great warrior and samurai
and great warrior and samurai
he remains so long as he acts and dresses
the part. This irony is reminiscent of
the incident upon which the great Ger-
man film of the early twenties, *The
Captain from Kopanek*, is based. In
that film an aged ex-convict, spurned
everywhere in his quest for honest em-
ployment, in desperation purchases a
second-hand great army overcoat, hat,
sword and boots. He presumes himself

Continued on p. 4

when the evil lay in the mould. Christianity, professing to hate the sin but not the sinner, was shown to be a higher and nobler way. Unfortunately, in this world at least, you cannot punish the sin without touching the sinner, as Christians themselves found out each time they took the matter into their hands instead of leaving it to God.

One can deny the existence of social categories or stick to the belief that men are perfectly good, and so the problem here presented is pushed down into the subconscious. Sense of reality, incidentally, can be and is repressed just as well as the libido. But if a solution to the problem is to be envisaged, then its terms may be as perplexing to the anarchist as those of the problem itself. Perplexing but not depressing or shattering. Self-discipline, however conceitedly unaware of the fact we may be, is the direct or indirect result of outer discipline, of outwardly proffered examples of self-discipline if nothing else. The more of this discipline that creates self-discipline is infused into the social body, the less need there will be for meanly or self-righteously calculated compulsion. I am not playing with words, I am drawing another vicious circle. Discipline is learning, and therefore it is teaching, and learning is hard, though not so hard as teaching. The cane may be a help to the teacher but it cannot be the substance of his teaching. He must be, however, in a stronger position than his pupils, or they will soon teach him which way to go. The anarchism of the future will have to do the same thing as the anarchism of the beginning, that is making the moulds of power uncomfortable and undesirable. For that it will have to exert a power of some sort. It will not have to seize power, as the expression goes, but simply to seize and guard the gateways to power. My readers will appreciate that "simply". Yet, theoretically, the thing is not impossible, and it is a theoretical solution that has to be attempted in the hope that practice will follow, since there are no signs of practice preceding theory, however much one would wish that there were.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI

ists and Positive Action

THE MALATESTA CLUB

...tions took place did anarchism become established, and this in spite of the fact that in two of them, Spain and Russia, there were numerous anarchist groups long anarchist tradition. Is there we may expect something Someone once said ke out in England to take Waterloo a buy a platform e think of any England in would have ss:— revo- r, changes ing techni- h on the if we can- in the are we to nt of anar- the infinite sky? If who are now continue to bound to have on us, and on later anarchists. Anarchism will become a sort of personal, secular Yogi-ism, in which anarchists will become more and more divorced from reality, driven into individual isolation, escapism and ever-increasing forms of crankiness. Or could we bring anarchy very much nearer by certain changes in technique, emphasis, determination of "priorities", organisation, fields of study, etc.? How far have we actually thought about what we mean by "anarchism" in our particular environment? Do we hope to get it 100 per cent., so to speak, or is there such a thing as a modified anarchism, or an initial stage of anarchism? Has the machinery of the State to disintegrate before anarchy can become possible? If so, are we not in a situation as unreal as that of the Communist, babbling of the "withering away" of the State? If not, and anarchy has to grow from within the State, is not some initial modification, adjustment, or whatever we dislike to call it, inevitable? What exactly are the implications of an "all or nothing" view?

...tunity arises. This article is an attempt to provide some response from general readers. It is not a criticism of that small group of people who, in addition to earning their daily bread, regularly week by week contribute articles and items of news and comment to FREEDOM. These contributions are, generally speaking of an exceptionally high standard and, when one considers the conditions under which they have to be written, they represent a great achievement. It is unreasonable to expect this small group to shoulder, in addition, the burden of research which will be necessary if anarchists are to seize opportunities as they are presented. But I am convinced that some of FREEDOM's readers should be tackling the job. I am aware that all sorts of difficulties exist, but I also feel that it is much more congenial for ageing savants within the movement to air their erudition in the realms of metaphysics than to get down to the sort of hard work that must be done if we are ever going to be capable of positive action.

...As I am a regular reader of FREEDOM I ought, particularly in view of the strictures I have made, to be putting forward some constructive ideas myself. Unfortunately, it is much harder to contribute constructive ideas than it is to offer destructive criticism; but this is no excuse for glossing over our inadequacies. I also know that were I to attempt the task here the foregoing criticism would be completely ignored by readers in their unholy rush to point out that my "constructive" ideas were not new, that they contained not the pure milk of anarchism, and that, in any case, they wouldn't work. Nevertheless, if readers continue to feel that we are as impotent in the face of events, actual and potential, as previous correspondents affirm I will, in a future article, endeavour to put forward, with much trepidation, such ideas as I possess on the subject.

I believe that anarchism is natural to man, and it is a profound mistake to assume, as "Anarcho Syndicalist" appears to do, that anarchists must await the perfectibility of man before we can make practical proposals. I am now forty-two, and a more convinced anarchist than I was some twenty years ago when I first accepted the principles; but I am quite sure, to-day, that we have not thought out, or even tentatively considered, what should be done in specific, localised situations, many of which may be confidently expected to arise in the near future. The "world" is just as likely to end with a whimper as with a bang. A weakening, or partial breakdown, of central control may result in a running down of political, social, or economic machinery at the extremities—and consequent opportunities for local action. Are we quite confident that we are not going to miss them?

...May I close by reminding readers of what, in my opinion, is the point of this discussion. This century has seen revolution in a dozen countries; in none of them has anarchism resulted. Time is running short. Our own society is threatened with collapse from a number of causes. Are anarchists helpless in the face of this situation and are they likely to remain so in any conceivable situation likely to arise in the span of time left to us by psychopathic politicians, hydrogen bomb-happy generals, mis-applied techniques and idiotic economic policies?

...The Club has overcome all that and many visitors have expressed their delight at the free and easy atmosphere and its unique character. It is true to say that there is not a similar club anywhere in London—and that probably applies to the whole of Britain also—where advanced political ideas find expression together with social activities and recreation.

Ugetsu - Symbol & Reality

Continued from p. 3

a captain in the Imperial German Army and is obeyed as such, inasmuch as no one dares challenge the *Uniform*. How flimsy, how artificial the raiments of authority!

Genjuro's brother-in-law decides to take repose in a house of pleasure, one of whose star attractions turns out to be his wife. "This is what your selfishness, your pretension have brought me to," she sobs, then adds with defiant mockery, "Come brave warrior, come sleep with me to-night. I've paid a pretty penny for all I have; now I shall make you pay." The warrior, shamed and suddenly betrayed for the falseness he had played her and himself, gravely doffs his chest-plate, so lately shining armour but now become cheap and tarnished. They return home. "Work!" she exhorts him over and over again as they near their hovel, "work! War fires up evil ambitions, but work, hard work is the best and only thing for us. Work hard and my fall will not have been in vain. Work, for there is much work to be done."

★

GENJURO too has come home. "Things will be the same as they were," he promises himself, "but I've learned my lesson." But things cannot be the same; unbeknown to Genjuro, his wife had been gratuitously run through by drunken bandit, bent upon robbing her of a few rice cakes she would protect for their son. She had risked her life—and had perished—to save the life of their son. How noble, how majestic this risk and death compared with the tawdry risk her husband had run merely to rescue his property!

Genjuro is anguished, grief-stricken, contrite; only the voice of his departed wife bucks him up to the hard tasks confronting him. "Work," she admonishes her husband as her sister had admonished hers, "work and my spirit will be at your side always." And Genjuro sets to work again, to work—to create, not in order to amass wealth or

to caparison himself in all the resplendent fineries money can buy, but to create for the inestimable joy of creating. "And now," the voice assures him, "you are my ideal of a good and honest man. My death has not been in vain. And I shall live at your side—I shall never be dead unless you are unfaithful to my ideals."

In this wise do the parallel lines of four meaningful lives converge in the end to reinforce the twin fundamental strengths of mankind: skill and muscle. Yet these are not forces discreet and wilful; these are forces commingled in the good and the honest so that neither strength shall enslave the other. Thus it is that the potter's skill would lie fallow were he either unwilling or unable to put his own arm-muscle to the finishing; and the farmer's arm-muscle would be ineffectual were he incapable or undesirous of ploughing his lands skillfully and intelligently. Without a true commingling, the one or the other—skill or muscle—would dominate. An elite would re-take hold, once again the insidious wheel would start to grind, and in grinding would break the back of another generation of Japanese—indeed, of everybody. It is relatively easy to be wealthy, or "great", by such false standards as are paraded before us every minute, every hour, every day. It is more difficult by far—more difficult and more manly—to be an "ideal of a good and honest man."

One need not expatiate over the symbolism inherent in *Ugetsu*. That the suffering of the two women is Japan's suffering for having been forsaken by her dually alienated men, is patent enough. The men, themselves seduced by foreign and native adulteresses, are no more obscure as symbols of peccancy. Eliminate this exotic overtone, however, and the lesson still remains that, our glut of sophistry and sophistication notwithstanding, we are not so remote therefrom that we cannot yet learn from the sanative "primitive" virtues.

SEYMOUR GREENBERG.

WITH the end of the year, the Malatesta Club in London has been open seven months, and there can be no doubt of the success of this venture. For 242 evenings of the 245 since opening on May 1, the Club has been open, with the teams of voluntary workers doing their jobs.

be seen to be believed, for more than one serious contributor to this journal has been seen displaying unsuspected talent for jive, mamba, samba and other forms of ritual dance.

Frequently, entertainments are provided by the Youth Group in the form of a floor show of skits, parodies, songs or sketches, and it can confidently be felt that at last we may be seeing the emergence of an Anarchist drama group.

Financially the Club is doing a little bit better than merely hold its own, though subscriptions are all too readily overlooked by the members. It is clear though, that before very long larger premises will be needed and it will be necessary to accumulate some funds to cover a move to a more suitable place.

On the catering side, variety of fare is limited through the lack of time available to our workers, most of whom come straight from their jobs to do their shift in the kitchen. But in spite of this, some delicious food is prepared by our girl comrades and prices are kept as low as possible. (A cup of tea, for example, is cheaper than in Lyons', and lemon tea, a great favourite, far cheaper than in any kosher restaurant we know!)

All in all, the first seven months of the Anarchist Club in London give us ample cause to feel pleased with our progress.

P.S.

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)
- JAN. 2—Geoffrey Ostergaard on THE MANAGERIAL REVOLUTION
- JAN. 9—S. E. Parker on ANARCHY, REVOLUTION AND THE INDIVIDUAL
- JAN. 16—Jack Robinson on THE CINEMA
- JAN. 23—Rita Milton on THE FUNCTION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PRESS
- JAN. 30—Frank Hirschfield on THE FAILURE OF PACIFISM?

INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

Every Thursday at 8.15.

OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting HYDE PARK Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

N.W. LONDON DISCUSSION MEETING AT HAMPSTEAD

Speaker: PHILIP SANSON on "The Basis of Anarchism" at 27 Christchurch Hill, Hampstead, N.W.3.

TUES., JAN. 4th, 1955, at 7.45 p.m.

NORTH-EAST LONDON DISCUSSION MEETINGS AT MANOR PARK

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FREEDOM PRESS
27 Red Lion Street
London, W.C.1 England
Tel.: Chancery 8364