

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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Threepence

POLITICAL BIAS & SECTIONAL INTEREST

BEHIND THE NEWS STRIKE

AS we go to press the strike of newspaper workers continues, in its second week, with little apparent likelihood of ending quickly.

It began with the strike of engineers and electricians in newspaper works, affecting immediately all newspapers owned by members of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. Now, however, it is beginning to affect workers on the printing side, for the employers have given dismissal notices to the compositors and machine minders, to take effect on April 15.

This has clearly been done with the intention of creating bad feeling against the electricians and engineers, but this is certainly not the case so far, for the printers are behind the Electrical Trades Union and the Amalgamated Engineering Union in their struggle for an increase.

The reasons for this are not altogether connected with solidarity and brotherly feeling for fellow trade-unionists, but more with purely economic motives.

The NPA granted an increase recently to the unions in the Printing & Kindred Trades Federation, maintaining that there would be no further increase for the AEU and ETU. The PKTF accepted the increase, though with reservations, because it meant an increase in the differential between the printers and the maintenance workers, but on the understanding (at least on their part) that if the ETU and AEU workers were given a rise, the printers would get more, so as to keep them ahead in the wages hierarchy.

Therefore the PKTF is quite sympathetic to the maintenance men's struggle. If they win more (although the AEU/ETU claim is based on cost-of-living, not differentials) then immediately the printers will bang in another claim themselves. So, although the printers are getting the sack, they are not out of sympathy with the strikers.

The "Daily Worker"

One particularly unpleasant action has been taken by the London Society of Compositors. This is in connection with the *Daily Worker*.

Cat and Mouse Treatment for American C.O.'s

FOUR brothers have twice been imprisoned for being conscientious objectors. They are the Doty brothers of Minnesota, U.S.A., reputed descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Their first sentence ranged from 18 months to two years for Joel, the elder brother. On release, they were asked to register for the draft, and when they refused the prison officials forged the names of all four brothers on the registration cards.

Shortly after they returned home, they were ordered to report for induction into the Army, and when they ignored the order, they were again arrested.

The Court found them "guilty of refusing to report for induction," and sentenced them to two years each.

William Doty, their father, himself a conscientious objector in the First World War, in a letter to Governor Bracken Lee of Utah, pointed out:

"Some of these war objectors who were imprisoned because they would not fight for Communist Russia in World War II, were also imprisoned again under the 1948 peacetime draft, because they would not fight the Communists.

"Conscription should be abolished and war should be outlawed forever and ever..." (Peace News)

The *Worker* was prepared to pay the engineers and electricians the increases they are demanding, and the latter were prepared to go to work on the *Daily Worker*, which is anyhow not a member of the NPA.

Mr. Willis, however, the boss of the London Society of Compositors, declared that if the other dailies could not appear, neither could the *Worker*, and he called out the compositors!

This seems to be an action motivated purely by political bias. Readers know well enough our attitude to the *Daily Worker*. It is not out of sympathy with its views or record that we denounce Willis's action, which seems to us to be restrictive and spiteful, and quite against what should be the attitude of printing workers. It is an example of political bigotry which should be denounced and defied by his own members — although the *Daily Worker*, with its well known concern for 'not splitting the working class'(!) would be highly embarrassed by such action, even on its behalf.

Union Weakness

And, in fact, the publication of the *Worker* would help the strikers by scaring the members of the NPA, many of whose readers would, in desperation, buy the *Worker* for the first time—and read an opposite point of view. On the other hand,

however, it would help to have the strike labelled 'Communist inspired'.

All these inter-union ramifications show the weakness of craft union organisation. More than anything else, this dispute shows the need for an industrial organisation for newspaper workers. Something along anarcho-syndicalist lines would be eminently practicable in newspaper shops, if the workers could forget their craft differences and organise at the point of production for the purpose of eventually practicing workers' control. In a tightly organised industry like printing, consisting mainly of skilled workers in each function, the necessary high degree of responsibility and co-operation should be possible.

But in that case, the workers might get too responsible to print the junk that appears in most newspapers! P.S.

ETU Prevents Newspapers' 'Invasion'

AN American paper with offices in Paris planned a 'London Edition' to be flown in during the London newspaper strike.

It was prevented by prompt action by ETU employees of BAOC at London Airport who threatened immediate stoppage if the paper was handled.

Merseyside Dockers Win Right to Union of Their Choice

THE strike last week of dockers on Merseyside and Manchester ended with their complete victory.

When, last year, dockers in Hull, and then on the Mersey, began to swing away from the Transport & General Workers' Union and to join the National Amalgamated Stevedores & Dockers, first the latter was expelled from the Trades Union Congress, for 'poaching', and then the dockers themselves were threatened with loss of their jobs.

We said at the time that these were vain threats. We pointed out that, whatever the TGWU may think about it, thousands of dockers could not be sacked just like that, and that if they made a stand, they could break the stranglehold of Deakin's union.

This the dockers have done. Trouble blew up last week when the time came for new books to be issued to all the dockers in the Mersey area. These books are given to all registered dockers and work cannot be obtained in the docks without them. They are renewed every six months.

Last week, the end of March, was the first renewal period since the changeovers began last autumn. And when the dockers presented their books and their union cards (another document essential for dock workers) all those with 'blue' union (NASDU) cards were told there were no new books for them and to come back at the end of the week.

There was no hesitation on the part of the dockers. Within a day of the first intimation of this action by officials of the Dock Labour Board, 16,000 men had walked out. It began at Garston, near Liverpool and spread immediately to Liverpool proper, Birkenhead and Manchester, and would have undoubtedly have affected London within a day or so.

But the Dock Labour Board climbed down, and courageously taking the considerable risk of offending Arthur Deakin, agreed to issue new books immediately to blue card holders.

The number of men on strike included, not only the full strength of the NASDU men, but many members of the TGWU as well, who, though in a different union, came out in sympathy with their fellow-workers and their right to join the union of their choice.

The next step for the blue union is to

win the right, still withheld, to negotiate on a national level. For the dockers themselves, however, the next step is to realise that their strength and readiness to act is what won the issue last week and, in the last resort, is what every union relies upon.

Why therefore should they not organise themselves to use that strength directly in their own interests, instead of merely to put leaders in a position of strength?

Local Elections

The People Stayed at Home

THE poll in last week's London County Council elections was one of the lowest on record, averaging 32 per cent., compared with 43 per cent. in 1952. The highest reported poll was at Woolwich West, where 55.85 per cent. of the electorate voted. At Stepney the percentage was 17.6, and at South-west Islington it was 18.53.

In Stepney, which is a working-class borough, therefore, over 82 per cent. of the electorate did not think it worth their while to register a choice between the candidates—although there were representatives of four parties, Labour, Conservative, Communist and Liberal.

The electioneers had, of course, a ready-made excuse for the low poll in the absence of daily papers during the last week before voting day. But this is really rather flimsy, for the national dailies have never devoted much space to local elections. The most pathetic use of this excuse was put forward by Mr. Enoch Powell, M.P., leader of the London Conservatives. He said that it was lack of newspapers and nothing else which had caused the low poll. He was certain that more people were taking an interest in, and voting at, local elections, but the newspaper strike was bound to affect this growing interest.

Well said, Mr. Powell. Obviously if more people are voting, but you get one of the lowest polls on record, there is something wrong somewhere. Could it be your inflated idea of your own importance?

AN ANARCHIST'S NOTEBOOK

German Youth Oppose Rearmament

WORLD OVER PRESS Berlin correspondent reports that:

The more imminent the coming of rearmament, the more active is the German opposition. It is a grass-roots movement, welling up despite efforts by some leaders in church and state to head it off. Nor is it inspired to any considerable extent by Communists; the Bonn government and its spokesmen have tried their best to find evidence of Communist conspiracy behind it, but the students and other young people in the anti-rearmament drive have been extremely anxious to steer away from Communist contacts, knowing these might spoil the effectiveness of their campaign.

Although the Catholic Church is leading in the support for conscription, large sections of Catholic youth are in open rebellion. In a school at a monastery in Bavaria, every one of the boys has pledged himself not to go into the army but to be a conscientious objector. It is notable, too, that the resolution against rearmament adopted by the great trade union movement was carried almost unanimously, although nearly one-third of the delegates belonging to Adenauer's party.

Rearmament will make the German

Peace Worries Them

JUST as Wall Street showed its apprehension, by a drop in prices, when peace in Korea appeared imminent, so do some circles appear concerned with the economic situation in Kenya if and when the Mau Mau "emergency" comes to an end.

The *New York Herald Tribune's* Economic Review (4/4/55) dealing with the "mild inflationary economic boom" resulting from the Mau Mau war, refers to the "worrysome future when the emergency ends".

"Despite the emergency (in some instances because of the emergency) new industrial enterprises totalling about

Is National

Service a Success?

ONE reason for compulsory military service, sometimes given (among others) by such apologists for conscription as the Duke of Edinburgh, is that it completes the young man's education, giving him steadiness and a sense of discipline. Dr. Kinsey and his co-workers, by questioning numbers of people about their sex-lives, upset a lot of notions about how most people behave sexually; and a government-sponsored body, the Advisory Council on the Relationship between Employment in the Services and Civilian life, by questioning numbers of ex-servicemen in a similar way about their working-lives, seems equally likely to upset notions about how National Service influences employment.

The report of this body is not yet ready, but the experiences in work of 10,708 men demobilised in September, 1953 have been recorded, and some statistics published in the *Manchester Guardian*:

"When the men were classified into groups according to educational standard, the proportion reported as satisfactorily settled varied from 88.3 per cent. (those who left school before 15) and 94.4 per cent. (those who left between 15 and three months before call-up). If classified by the number of jobs held before enlistment, it was found that 94.3 per cent. of those who had held one job only were satisfactorily settled again, but only 73.7 per cent. of those who had held three jobs or more. The proportion of "settled" men rose slightly with the age at enlistment."

In other words, pending the full report, people who are steady usually stay steady, people who are unsteady have usually been unsteady before, people with longer educations stay in the same job longer, and people get steadier as they get older. Statistically speaking, National Service doesn't seem to have made much difference either way, does it?

"Every innovator who presents himself with new fangled notions, a creative intelligence, and ideas contrary to custom, becomes either a creator or a martyr; but lucky or not, he acts and the world changes."

—ELISEE RECLUS.

re-unification an almost impossible task. And this may explain why the Catholic Church is playing such a prominent part in implementing the decision. For at present in W. Germany the country has approximately as many Catholics as Protestants. E. Germany on the other hand is almost entirely Protestant. Thus, with re-unification the Catholic strength would be only half that of the Protestants. And that would mean, in the event of elections, the eclipse of Dr. Adenauer's Catholic Government.

"In Berlin"—writes *Worldover Press*—"the situation is somewhat different from that in the rest of the country. Here the Social Democrats are divided, and the leading figure in the trade unions, Herr Scharnowski, is frankly for re-militarization. Berlin is much more dependent upon financial aid from the West than other places, and people are fearful of losing such support if they do not give Adenauer what he wants."

Yet the younger people are in the same mood as elsewhere. A recent meeting was so overcrowded that many had to stand outside. A newly invented slogan is: "Better be active now than radio-active later!"

\$23,000,000 in capital value have started up in Kenya in the last two years. In Nairobi, a building boom of helter-skelter architectural grace is under way, at a building rate about one-third higher than a year ago.

It appears that even farm output has increased, though wages too have risen by some 30 per cent. in the past year. But beneath "all this mild boom condition" is the fact that "the emergency has brought some 6,000 British troops to Kenya, many with their wives and families, and has brought an emergency subsidy of about \$2,800,000 per month from the government in London. What the effect will be when the subsidy is withdrawn and the British forces, who buy most of their food and supplies locally, go home is something that Kenya worries about but has yet to calculate.

It is to place the economy on a better long-term footing that Kenya is seeking American development aid, and has asked for both a Foreign Operations Administration mission and a World Bank survey. It has also extracted a promise from the United Kingdom of continued financial help when the emergency ends."

Neither East Nor West

ERICH KLEIBER, the internationally renowned conductor recently left East Berlin, where he was the conductor of the State Opera, and entered the Western zone of the city, declaring that he had given up his post as a result of political interference. Herr Kleiber has always refused to allow politicians to make political capital out of his music. Thus though he had been musical director of the Berlin State Opera for twelve years when Hitler came to power, he soon broke with the Nazis on the grounds that they were injecting politics into art. Now with the Communists in East Berlin. But on similar grounds he has refused to conduct in West Berlin! He refused because at the time when he was conducting in East Berlin he was not allowed by the Government to give performances in West Berlin. "I declare—he said in a statement made public last week—"that I shall not lift my baton in West Berlin as long as the present cultural authorities are in power, for they proved to be small-minded and hostile when I wanted to build a musical bridge between East and West."

He added that he would not allow himself to be used for "political propaganda—no matter from what side."

These "cultural authorities" were also responsible for preventing the great Russian violinist David Oistrakh from playing in West Berlin though he had visited cities in W. Germany and other Western countries, including Britain.

THEATRE

A PLAY ON THE SOUTH

"SOUTH" to be seen at the Arts Theatre Club, is the first play of Julien Green, the expatriate American-French novelist.

It is set in the Southern States of America a few hours before the outbreak of hostilities between the North and the South in April, 1861. It is a play of extremes. North versus South, white man against coloured man, the old world of Europe in contrast to the new world of America, and the difficulty that the sexually normal have in understanding the sexually abnormal. When the difference between these contrasting elements becomes so great that all toleration and understanding is lacking, the setting is ripe for tragedy. Green takes as the theme of his play Aristotle's definition of tragedy, "the purification of a dangerous passion by violent liberation."

The central character is a homosexual Polish officer who has enlisted as an officer in the Yankee army though spiritually drawn to the South, but having no deep convictions of loyalty to either side. His only feeling is the painful realization that he is an outcast in every way. A stranger, a man outside, with mysterious yearnings and an enigmatic smile. An orphaned niece, living under the same roof is deeply in love with him, though aware of his abnormality. (How she knows it we are never told, and it is hard to believe that a young girl of twenty-two, brought up in the sheltered Southern atmosphere of 1861 can fathom such a situation without a shred of evidence). Her love brings out in him only a sense of power and a harshness and cruelty towards her while he fails to grasp her suffering. He manages to capture the affection of most of the other members of the household by a somewhat bland and casual charm. This façade breaks down completely when he comes face to face with his own personal crisis, the love for another man. The unleashed force of his feelings and the utter lack of response or even understanding from the other arouses in him a savage desire to lash out, hurt and insult, obviously the only way to get an emotional response of some kind. But his desire to be punished, struck down by his idol and annihilated is a stronger one. It releases him from a hopeless bondage and gives him the expiation of his sin. At the same time it expiates the sins of his forefathers, for there is a strong hereditary influence. So he allows himself to be struck down by his opponent in a duel, without lifting a finger to defend himself. A crumbling monument, the evidence of his own guilt, he dies at the hands of the man he so hopelessly loves. He is the symbol of self-destruction as a means of purification.

Mr. Green's play opens up a world of emotional tensions and frustrations, though it bears unmistakably the marks of a novelist's play. I had the feeling that it was written as a novel and that

the author felt compelled to try to turn it into a drama later. It never quite comes off as a drama, though it keeps us unceasingly attentive and alive to its numerous implications and problems. But it is curiously unsatisfying and seems to hold a world full of dramatic promise without ever getting to grips with that world.

Here, I think, the production is also at fault. It is overcharged right from the beginning, as if a lack of dramatic writing can be compensated by over-emphasized acting. This has the effect of making the play seem "phoney", as well as most of the performances. Every entrance and exit, every turn and gesture is full of portentous significance. Every curtain leaves us curiously guessing at its hidden implications, and all the vital things are left unspoken.

One or two of the actors manage to steer clear of oversteering their parts. Miss Zena Walker gives us a natural, full-blooded picture of an adolescent girl just ripening to womanhood, though regarded as a child by the rest of the household. Melvyn Hayes is quietly effective as a young boy, there is a most moving performance of an old blind negro with the gift of second sight by John Harrison and Rita Stevens as a negro servant who has so identified herself with her 'betters'—the white folk who are 'quality'—that she becomes *plus royaliste que le roi*, gives us in interesting glimpse of her relations with the other blacks. The others, Mr. Denholm Elliot, Mr. André Morell and Miss Clare Austin, though it must be admitted that their task is harder all try a little too hard, though Mr. Elliot and Miss Austin sometimes come very near to hitting the mark. But by their over-anxiety they lose a sense of urgency and reality in very real and poignant situations.

The final curtain marks the outbreak of the civil war, while the body of the young officer lies dead upon the stage with the young girl prostrate at his side. More than one world has crumbled, and we are left to brood upon its untenable values and shattered illusions.

It will be interesting to see Mr. Green taking up the theatre in earnest, he has obviously much to give and can certainly not be ignored.

CONCLUDING A SERIES

ORWELL & ANARCHISM—5

ORWELL'S last two books reached an enormous audience. A million copies have appeared of both *Animal Farm* and *1984*, both have been translated into twenty languages, and have been serialised, dramatised, condensed, summarised, and in one case filmed, and in the other televised. Both have been widely misunderstood. The publishers of *Animal Farm* described the book as a 'good-natured satire upon dictatorship', which is putting it mildly, and the *Spectator* recently called it a 'bitter satire on the Welfare State'. Orwell himself, in the preface he wrote for the Ukrainian edition gives this account of its inception:

Up to 1939, and even later, the majority of English people were incapable of assessing the true nature of the Nazi régime in Germany, and now, with the Soviet régime, they are still to a large extent under the same sort of illusion.

This has caused great harm to the Socialist movement in England, and has had serious consequences for British foreign policy. Indeed, in my opinion, nothing has contributed so much to the corruption of the original idea of socialism as the belief that Russia is a socialist country and that every act of its rulers merits excuse, if not imitation.

Thus, during the past ten years I became convinced that the destruction of this Soviet myth was essential if we wanted a revival of the socialist movement.

On my return from Spain I conceived this public denunciation of the Soviet myth in terms of a story that could be easily understood by almost any reader and easily translated into other languages. However the actual details did not come to me for some time until one day (I was then living in a little village), I saw a small boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge horse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn aside. It struck me that if only

such animals became conscious of their strength we should have no power over them; and that ordinary people exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat.¹

Animal Farm was written in the winter of 1943-4, but it was not published until August, 1945. "During the past four or five years", Orwell wrote in 1946, "it has been extremely difficult even to get anything of anti-Russian tendency into print. My book had to be peddled round from publisher to publisher over a period of a year or so, just as had happened earlier with my novel *Burmese Days*".² Afterwards of course the tide turned and anti-Communism became fashionable.

Apart from its literary perfection, for it is a book which seems as sure of immortality as any work of our time, and apart from its merits as 'a fairy story' (which is its sub-title), or as a general fable on ends and means, it is still important, while there are still people duped by Communism, to insist on *Animal Farm's* validity as an attack—and a deadly one since satire can often hit home where argument fails—on the Soviet myth. Every episode is a parallel of some incident in Soviet history, even the final page is intended to represent the Teheran Conference, and Orwell in his Ukrainian preface mentions this as a point which

has been missed by the majority of critics, possibly because I did not emphasise it sufficiently. A number of readers will shut the book with the impression that it ends with the complete reconciliation of pigs and humans. That was not my intention, on the contrary I meant to end the story on a loud note of discord. For I wrote it immediately after the Teheran Conference which everybody thought had established the best of relations between the U.S.S.R. and the West. I personally did not believe that such good relations would last

long; and as events have shown, I wasn't far wrong.³

★

IF *Animal Farm* is a satire of limited intention, designed to purge the socialist movement of one of its most dangerous illusions, *1984* is an allegory which transcends satire and becomes a denunciation of the cult of power for its own sake which its author saw as the main tendency of the political movements of our time. It is not, as some American critics have suggested, a satire on the Labour government, nor a picture of Britain under Soviet rule. (In fact, if the novel is taken literally, it is a picture of Britain as part of an American superstate, 'Oceania', in the strategic position, 'Airstrip One', allotted to her by today's American military plans. Even the currency is in dollars and cents. But this is anyway incidental to the allegory. *1984* is really an 'anti-Utopia' in the sense used in M. L. Berneri's *Journey through Utopia* which was written at the same time as Orwell's book. "To a large extent", she writes,

the structure of the societies advocated by past utopians has become a reality, and as the results bear little resemblance to those which they had led us to expect, one may be justified in thinking that the structure is a faulty one. When the twentieth century has tried to carry out the utopian plans of the past it has failed miserably; it has created all-powerful States which control the means of production, but which have not abolished starvation; States encouraging scientific discoveries and developing production, but failing to give to every citizen a decent standard of life; States which claimed to institute perfect equality, but which have given birth instead to new privileged classes and new inequalities perhaps more appalling than the old; States which have made people into Taylorised robots, subordinated by

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WRITINGS OF THE PAST WITH A MESSAGE FOR TO-DAY

EDWARD CARPENTER'S

NON-GOVERNMENTAL SOCIETY

MOST people agree nowadays in the view (to which I have alluded already) that the growth of bureaucracy and officialism in the modern State is a serious evil, and that the extension of Government interference and the multiplication of Laws are a great danger. We all know that the institution of the Law and the Courts actually creates and gives rise to huge masses of evil—bribery, blackmail, perjury, spying and lying, wrongful accusation, useless and deliberate suffering and cruelty; that it publicly sanctions and organises violence, even in extreme forms; that it quite directly and deliberately supports vast and obvious wrongs in Society—as for instance land-monopoly; that it is absurd and self-contradictory in much of its theory and practice; that (as Herbert Spencer so frequently insists) it paralyses the folk that submit or trust to it; and finally that it is to-day for the most part so antiquated and out of date that (even if this were thought desirable) it might well seem impracticable to patch it up for real human use.

Yet in these cases—though we admit that the things are evil—our defence usually is that they carry some compensations with them, and that anyhow they are necessary evils, which we cannot dispense with, and without which disorder, violence and social disruption would ensue.

It may be worth while to consider this defence more closely; for curiously enough the history of nations and peoples is, on the whole, to contrary effect. Not only have all the early tribes of the world got on and cohered together in order and social amity without any rigid and ponderous system of laws; but even among the peasant peoples of to-day—like the Irish or the Swedes or the Swiss or the Chinese—where they are still living in moderately primitive conditions, we find the same thing. Governmental law and its operations and institutions occupy but a very small part in their lives. It is true that Custom is strong among all primitive folk, no doubt as a very necessary backbone or framework to their society; but Custom is a very different thing from Law. It is law in its inception—when it is yet in a tentative, rudimentary condition; and however harsh, rigid, or senseless the customs of many savage tribes may be, they are yet easier to alter than when they have become ossified into written forms, with their huge weight of age and ceremony, and the authority of armed men to enforce them.

That human societies can subsist without a considerable amount of Custom we may well doubt; but that they can subsist and maintain themselves in good order and vitality without written law and its institutions there is no reason at all to doubt. And when Custom, among a reasonable and moderately advanced people, leaving behind the barbarities of the savage age, takes on a gentler form, and while exercising considerable pressure on individuals is itself fairly plastic and adaptable to the general movements of society—we seem to see in such pressure a force as far superior to Law as life itself is superior to mere mechanism. A vast amount of

our social life to-day in all departments of its activity is ruled by Custom, and some of these customs, like those of "society" and fashion, have a very powerful sway. There is no law, for instance, for the recovery of betting debts, yet their non-payment is extremely rare.

Of course, accustomed as we are to "call the policeman" on every emergency, we find it hard to imagine life without this institution; and our life being largely founded on it, it is so far necessary, and its removal would cause dislocation. That is, since without the police the present spoliation of the poor would not be possible, and the enormous existing inequalities of wealth and poverty could never have been heaped up—without them the society founded on these artificial inequalities could not well be maintained. But to say that because a certain institution is necessary to build up and retain society in a certain abnormal and unnatural form, therefore society cannot exist without that institution, is the same as to say that because a Chinese woman of rank foot-banages are necessary, therefore women generally cannot exist without foot-banages. We have to realise that our present social forms are as ugly and inhuman as a club foot; and then we shall begin to realise how little necessary are these institutions, like law and police, whose chief concern and office is to retain and defend these forms.

The chief difficulty, then, which arises in people's minds at the thought of a free non-governmental society does not concern its desirability—they are agreed as a rule that it would be desirable—but concerns its practicability. And much of this difficulty is derived from the society of the present. People see, in fact, that an internecine competition for subsistence is the ruling force of life to-day, and the chief incentive to production, and they infer that without government society would dissolve into a mere chaos of plunder on the one hand, and of laziness on the other. It is this difficulty which has first to be removed.

Though it seems a hard thing to say, the outer life of society to-day is animated first and foremost by Fear. From the wretched wage-slave, who rises before the break of day, hurries through squalid streets to the dismal sound of the "hammer," engages for nine, ten, or twelve hours, and for a pittance wage, in monotonous work which affords him no interest, no pleasure; who returns home to find his children gone to bed, has his supper, and, worn out and weary, soon retires himself, only to rise again in the morning and pursue the same deadly round; and who leads a life thus monotonous, inhuman, and devoid of all dignity and reality, simply because he is hounded to it by the dread of starvation;—to the big commercial man, who, knowing that his wealth has come to him through speculation and the turns and twists of the market, fears that it may at any moment take to itself wings by the same means; who feels that the more wealth he has, the more cares and anxieties belonging to it; and who to continually make his position secure is, or thinks himself, forced to stoop

to all sorts of mean and dirty tricks;—over the great mass of people the same demon spreads its dusky wings. Feverish anxiety is the keynote of their lives. There is no room for natural gladness or buoyancy of spirits. You may walk the streets of our great cities, but you will hear no one singing—except for coppers; hardly a ploughboy to-day whistles in the furrow, and in almost every factory (this is a fact) if a workman sang at his work he would be "sacked." We are like shipwrecked folk clambering up a cliff. The waves are raging below. Each one clings by handhold or foothold where he may, and in the panic if he push his neighbour from a point of vantage, it is to be regretted certainly, but it cannot be helped.

But such a state of affairs is not normal. Allowing that the struggle for existence in some degree or form is unavoidable, history still, except at rare crises, presents us with no such spectacle of widespread anxiety; the study of native races—whom we might consider in a state of destitution—reveals no such dominion of dread. I want the reader to imagine for a moment this burden of fear lifted off the hearts of a whole people; and the result.

Let us imagine for a moment that some good fairy—some transcendental Chancellor of the Exchequer—with a stroke of his wand, has assured to us all not only an old age pension, but a decent provision for all our days of the actual necessities of life (to go no further than that); so that for the future no man could feel any serious or grinding anxiety for his own material safety, or that of his family. What would be the result on our actions?

Perhaps, as many would maintain, nine-tenths of the population would say, "I'm blessed if I'll ever do another stroke of work." Like the organ-grinder who came into a little fortune, and who forthwith picked up an axe and fell upon his organ, shouting as he hacked it to pieces, "You shall neffer play dat tam *Alabama Coon* any more," we should feel so sick of our present jobs that we should want to turn our backs on them for ever. Very likely, I should say—and rightly enough too; for "work" in the present day is done under such degrading and miserable conditions by the vast majority of the population that the very best and most manly thing would be to refuse to continue doing it.

But let us suppose, since a bare living has been assured to us, and we are in no danger of actual starvation, that we all take a good long holiday, and abstain religiously from doing anything. Suppose that we simply twirl our thumbs in idleness for two, three, four, or six months. Still, is it not obvious that at the end of that time nine-tenths of the population would find sheer idleness appallingly dreary, and that they would set themselves to work at some thing or other—to produce comforts or conveniences rising about the level of sheer necessity—objects of use or beauty, either for

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AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE DISTORTING MIRROR

A POLITICIAN is reported as saying last week-end that "The absence of newspapers diminishes the size of events". Since some of us believe that a great many "events" owe their importance only to the build-up they receive in the newspaper offices we suggest that in fact the absence of newspapers does not "diminish" the size of events, but rather puts them in their true perspective, and their importance gauged by their impact on everyday life. And as we pointed out last week (No News is Good News, FREEDOM 2/4/55) so much that is considered hot news, is in fact a balloon of hot air manufactured in Fleet Street.

But with all that, even a rational society could not flourish and develop without a Press. The Press, like most things, can serve both for good as well as for evil. The impish delight some of us feel at the present stoppage is occasioned by our awareness that the Press is put to harmful uses which far outweigh any good that it does. (And it is no more objective to argue that since millions of people are craving for their daily news dope it must therefore be serving a public need than it is to say that our addiction to tobacco converts the Tobacco Barons into public benefactors!)

It is unfortunate that the present stoppage will have ended before the public has had time to consider the whole problem of the press and its relation to the needs of the community. If we lived in a really intellectually lively society this enforced release from our daily dope should have resulted in public meetings at which the subject of "The Press We Want" would have been thoroughly ventilated and the practical problems examined with the help, not of Press Lords and financiers, but of working journalists, many of them just as nauseated at having to work for the popular press as we are at having to read it. Yet no signs have appeared anywhere (if one excepts the duplicated race cards put out by the book-makers, and the football and racing results issued by various enterprising money-makers). The public seems to be just waiting for the dispute to be settled and for the rotary presses to start turning out even bigger daily doses of the familiar dope.

★
THE Press in a rational society, as we see it, should serve to raise people's outlook above the parochial, to broaden their interests and their understanding away from the narrow and prejudiced paths of their fathers; it should serve as a link between the peoples of the world, not identifying the people with the struggles of the power-mongers in all countries, but on the contrary, stressing the common factors in their problems and aspirations; the Press should serve the cause of internationalism and the equal rights of all mankind irrespective of race or religion or colour and not foment divisions between them on the grounds of national superiority or racial inferiority. The Press should stress the good, positive, actions of individuals and groups and not, as at present, place the emphasis on crime and anti-social behaviour.

By this we do not mean that the Press should be all starry eyed, with Utopia round the corner. It should be hard-hitting at abuses of power, and injustices at all levels; it should attack intolerance and apathy. It would however, differ fundamentally from the "popular" Press in its approach for the following simple reason: the Press to-day is a busi-

ness conducted for profit and political power; it supplies a demand which it has built up and itself moulded in the course of the years largely through the stranglehold of its monopoly (as a writer in the *New Statesman* points out: "If there is anything harder than starting a newspaper, it is starting a political party"—a reflection, too, on the monopoly of the two-party system). Politically the Press defends the *status quo*, government, capitalism, classes, nationalism, power politics and the rest, and as a consequence its attitude to the human race is one of *pessimism*, that it is fundamentally bad, wicked, perverse and stupid. It therefore views its dual rôle, that is of business and politics, accordingly. It must cater for our wickedness and badness—that sells the paper. And politically it must speak down to the public, do its thinking for it and act as the mouth-piece and recruiting sergeant of the party, industrial or financial group whose political and power interests it subserves.

A rational Press, on the other hand would exist neither for profits nor to serve the interests, political or financial, of any monopoly or party caucus, but for the purpose of informing, enlightening and defending the rights of the public and could not be produced but by men and women who have a positive and optimistic approach to humanity and to the future of Mankind. Such a Press would direct its appeal to that which is best in human nature; it would treat its readers as intelligent people and not as morons; it would encourage independent thinking and not seek to control or warp it; it would seek to stimulate the free growth of the human personality and not titillate it with Hollywood day-dreams and cheap smut.

Finally, a rational press would also be a *decentralised* Press. Only then can the newspaper serve the community both as a vehicle of information and opinion as well as the forum for building up real active community life. Then will the daily newspaper bear the warm, human imprint of the community it serves and the widely held view that only millionaires can afford the luxury of controlling a daily newspaper be exposed as yet another myth created by those whose vested interest it is to fetter all informed and independent thinking.

themselves, or for their families and neighbours, or even conceivably for society at large; that, in fact, a spontaneous and free production of goods would spring up, followed of course by a spontaneous and free exchange—a self-supporting society, based not on individual dread and anxiety, but on the common fulness of life and energy?

That people relieved from care do spontaneously set themselves to work is sufficiently shown by the case of the well-to-do classes to-day. For these people, though having everything provided for them, and not merely the bare necessities which we have supposed, exhibit the most extraordinary and feverish energy in seeking employment. A few decades of years have been quite sufficient to make them feel the utter failure of picnics as an object in life; and now we are flooded with philanthropic and benevolent societies, leagues, charity organisations, art missions to the poor, vigilance crusades, and other activities, which are simply the expression of the natural energies of the human being seeking an outlet in social usefulness. It is, of course, to be regretted that owing to the very imperfect education of this class their ideas and their capacities of social usefulness should be so limited. However, this is a defect which will no doubt be remedied in the future. All that concerns us here is to see that since the rich, though in many ways ill-adapted by training and tradition, do spontaneously take up a life of the kind, there is nothing extravagant in supposing that the average man, surrounded by so many unfulfilled needs, might do the same.

And if any one still doubts let him consider the thousands in our large towns to-day who would give their ears to be able to get out and work on the land—not so much from any prospect of making a fortune that way, as from more love of the life; or who in their spare time cultivate gardens or plots or allotments as a hobby; or the thousands who when the regular day's work is over start some fresh little occupation of their own—some cabinet-making, wood-turning, ornamental iron-work or whatnot; the scores of thousands, in fact, that there are of *natural* gardeners, cabinet-makers, iron-workers, and so forth; and then think how if they were free these folk would sort themselves spontaneously to the work they delighted in.

Thus it appears to be at least conceivable that a people not hounded on by compulsion nor kept in subjection

MAN being a social animal, he communicates his ideas, fears and desires to his fellow men. He seeks knowledge of the happenings around him, and explains them in terms of differences and similarities with other happenings. He uses models, constantly replacing them with better ones as more information is gained, thereby improving communications and understanding.

In early days men were said to be activated by demons and spirits resident within their bodies, but later it was found more useful to replace animistic models for man-made machines. Medi-

A SENATOR LOOKS FORWARD

ANARCHISTS need take no particular pride in aspiring to what they consider a better life. Most people have aspirations of some sort, even if only to get a bigger wage, have a child or come up on the pools; and most people are prepared to do something for what they want. Dissatisfaction is a usual and generally laudable quality of humanity, in this society at least.

If Hollywood folk-lore is to be believed, this desire for a better world was very strongly marked in men like Jefferson, Lincoln, and other founders and upholders of the American Constitution, and is still very noticeable among the senators of our time, now fighting a strong defensive battle against the totalitarian invasion. Hollywood is not always right in these matters of course.

But the following account of a senator's aspirations comes from that renowned bastion of comparative objectivity, the *London Times*:

WASHINGTON, MARCH 22

Members of the joint congressional committee for atomic energy returned from their cruise in the *Nautilus* with the conviction that the nuclear powered submarine is the capital ship of the future. Their chairman, Senator Clinton Anderson (New Mexico), said to-night that it was "anachronistic" that the *Nautilus* is armed only with conventional torpedoes. He looked to the day when guided missiles with atomic warheads could be discharged from a submerged vessel with "staggering" military consequences. The submarine, he said, would lie undetected beneath the surface and fire its missiles at targets hundreds of miles away—a matter of conjecture until now in naval circles.

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SCIENCE NOTES

Communications and Models

cine would not have advanced so rapidly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries if the engineers had not invented the steam engine, dynamo and other machines with which the human body was compared. Harvey would not have explained the heart as a pump if the pump had not been invented.

Brains and Machines

Biologists who are studying the brain are turning to the machines of the "small current engineers" (Cyberneticists) to help them understand—by analogy—the functioning of the brain. Machines have been built which exhibit some of the attributes of mental processes. These machines are based on the principle of "negative feedback" best illustrated in the thermostat of a heating system.

If the temperature exceeds a certain figure the information is fed back to the heat controller and the heat is switched off. If the temperature drops below this figure the heat is switched on again. The hormone and temperature systems of our own bodies are controlled in this way.

The machines that are to be compared with humans must be able to memorise, learn from experience, and make suitable predictions. Calculating machines store information by relay systems similar to the way in which our brains are believed to do, but more permanent methods are needed to limit the machine's size. Punch card systems and magnetised wire are used for permanent storage of information and there is evidence that analogous methods are used in the brain. Brain cells and fibres vary in size considerably, frequent stimulation tends to enlarge them, and neglect causes atrophy, and the enlargement may be a form of permanent record.

Prediction and learning are extensions of memory. It is possible to reproduce mechanically the learning mechanism, and machines are used to make predictions in many workshops.

Thinking

It may be argued that although machines can do all these things they do not actually think. To consider this we must first examine what thinking involves. Biologists have shown that thinking involves comparisons of incoming patterns with learned patterns, and rejection of unsuitable ones until the correct one is left. For instance if asked to give the name of an object which is spherical in form, orange in colour, with a rough texture, and which is commonly eaten, we 'search' our memories for spherical patterns and reject other shapes. Similarly with colour and texture. The combined pattern, if it is commonly eaten, is the answer. In this case an orange.

A machine faced with a similar problem uses the same method, comparing the information received with the already

established information and arrives at an answer in the same way as ourselves. It can be said to have thought the problem out. If the patterns had not been built into the machine it could not have given the answer, as we could not, if we had no previous experience of an orange.

Whereas in our brains the ability to respond to patterns of stimuli is learnt in childhood, the machines' 'stimuli' patterns have to be built into them, but this difference is not absolute as machines have been built which in a simple way are responsible for the establishment and control of their own workings.

Animal species other than our own are said to live by instincts, but animals do learn and make decisions, the difference is again one of degree. If it is still insisted that only *Homo sapiens* is capable of thought then the onus is on the insisters to give their interpretation of "thinking" and present the evidence for their theory.

SCIENTISTS AND POLITICS

WE believe that anti-war propaganda that describes the horrors of war in an attempt to arouse fear is very unsuccessful. There seems to be for instance more concern shown over the possible genetic effects of radiation exposure than there has been over the more directly lethal effects of atom bombs even though these effects may not be realised for several generations. Perhaps the instinct for survival of the species is stronger in man than might have appeared. In a field where so little is known it is tempting to speculate but with the investigation now proceeding it is unlikely that the dangers will be either overlooked or underestimated, although they may not be published.

Certainly scientists are beginning to express themselves forcibly about the potential dangers of their devices. So much so that the politicians are beginning to hit back in defence of their new symbol and god—a mushroom. Governor E. Johnson of Colorado who spent ten years on the Senate Atomic Energy Committee has described the bomb as all that stands between peace and war in the world to-day. He has accused American scientists of waging a nationwide drive against the development and testing of atomic bombs.

Such attacks are not without effect, for although the Congress investigation of tax-exempt foundations caused much amusement in America (mentioned in Science Notes) it is already producing results. It has been reported that the big foundations who finance so much research in America have already resorted to a policy of extreme caution and conservatism. The struggle continues and its outcome may affect us considerably. Bios.

Non-Governmental Society

Continued from p. 2

by sheer authority, would set itself spontaneously to produce the things which it prized. It does not, of course, at once follow that the result would be perfect order and harmony. But there are a few considerations in the positive direction which I may introduce here.

In the first place, each person would be guided in the selection of his occupation by his own taste and skill, or at any rate would be guided by these to a greater extent than he is to-day; and on the whole would be more likely to find the work for which he was fitted than he is now. The increase in effective output and vitality from this cause alone would be great. While the immense variety of taste and skill in human beings would lead to a corresponding variety of spontaneous products.

In the second place, the work done would be useful. It is certain that no man would freely set himself to dig a hole, only to fill it up again—though it is equally certain that a vast amount of the work done to-day is no more useful than that. If a man were a cabinet-maker and made a chest of drawers, either for himself or a neighbour, he would make it so that the drawers would open and shut; but nine-tenths of the chests made on commercial principles are such that the drawers will neither open nor shut. They are not meant to be useful; but they are really made to sell. To sell, and by selling yield a profit. And for that purpose they are better adapted if, appearing useful, they turn out really useless, for then the buyer must come again, and so yield another profit to the manufacturer and the merchant. The waste to the community to-day arising from causes of this kind is enormous; but it is of no moment as long as there is profit to a certain class.

Work in a free society would be done because it was useful. It is curious, when you come to think of it that there is no other conceivable reason why work should be done. And of course I here include what is beautiful under the term useful—as there is no reason why one should separate what satisfies one human need like the need of food. I say the idea of work implies that it is undertaken because the product itself satisfies some human need. But strangely enough in Commerce that is not so. The work is undertaken in order that the product may sell, and so yield a profit; that is all. It is of no moment what the product is, or whether bad or good, as long as it fulfils this one condition. And so the whole spirit of life and industry in the other

society would be so utterly different from that of the present, that it is really difficult for us to compare the results. But it is not difficult to see that if on the principles of freedom there was not so much produced in mere quantity, and folk did not (as may indeed be hoped) work so many hours a day as now, still, the goods turned out being sincere and genuine, there would really be far more value shown in a year than on the strictly commercial system.

In the third place, it follows—as William Morris so constantly maintained—that "work" in the new sense would be a pleasure—one of the greatest pleasures undoubtedly of life; and this one fact would transform its whole character. We cannot say that now. How many are there who take real pleasure and satisfaction in their daily labour? Are they, in each township, to be counted on the fingers? But what is the good of life if its chief element, and that which must always be its chief element, is odious? No, the only true economy is to arrange so that your daily labour shall be itself a joy. And, your work being such, its product is sure to become beautiful; that painful distinction between the beautiful and the useful dies out, and everything made is an artistic product. Art becomes continuous with life.

Thus it will be observed that whereas the present society is founded on a law-enforced system of Private Property, in which, almost necessarily, the covetous hard type of man becomes the large proprietor, and (supported by law and government) is enabled to prey upon the small one; and whereas the result of this arrangement is a bitter and continuous struggle for possession, in which the motive to activity is mainly Fear; we, on the contrary, are disentangling a conception of a society in which Private Property is supported by no apparatus of armed authority, but as far as it exists is a perfectly spontaneous arrangement, in which the main motives to activity are neither Fear nor greed of Gain, but rather Community of life and Interest in life—in which, in fact, you undertake work because you like the work, because you feel that you can do it, and because you know that the product will be useful, either to yourself or some one else!

How Utopian it all sounds! How absurdly simple and simple-minded—to work because you like the work and desire the product. How delightful if it could be realised, but, of course, how "unpractical" and impossible. Yet is it really impossible?

(To be continued)

BEVAN TOES THE LINE

COMMENTING this week on the decision of National Executive not to expel Bevan from the Labour Party, *Tribune* claims that this settlement is a great victory for the Labour movement. *The New Statesman and Nation* also propounds the view that the National Executive, being faced with Bevan's "good natured and generous response" to their demand for 'assurances', were forced to admit defeat although doing so with the worst of grace.

Leaving aside for the moment the ethics of party expulsion (this has already been dealt with in FREEDOM), let us consider the Bevan victory.

The speech which finally led to the withdrawal of the whip was the one in which Bevan attacked the leadership on their agreement with the Government to manufacture the H-bomb in Britain. It was not his opposition to the decision (which had already been taken by the Government), but the terms of his attack that forced the Parliamentary Party to restrain him. The ensuing outcry from various constituency parties showed that his support was stronger than was generally known, but not strong enough to risk expulsion from the party as his astonishing apology to the executive indicates.

If Bevan had been reclaimed because of popular support and his ideas adopted, one could truly say that a victory had been achieved, but the terms of his submission show little sign of this. He said:—

"The essence of democracy in a political party is to enable the argument to proceed while at the same time maintaining the effectiveness of the party in action.

"It is not always easy to achieve this, but we must always strive for it and I shall do my best to make it possible.

"The charge is that in what I have done and also in the way I have done it

I have created difficulties for Mr. Attlee and caused embarrassment in his position as the leader of the party.

"This was certainly never my intention. But if my actions or speech could lend themselves to the interpretation that such was my motive then I am sincerely sorry and I apologise to Mr. Attlee for any pain I may have caused him.

"I ask for nothing more than the opportunity to serve our party under his leadership. In doing so I claim no more privileges than and accept all the obligations shared by all other members of the Party."

So, he wants nothing more than to serve the party even although the rank and file who supported him did so precisely because they were opposed to the official party view.

We feel that the aggressive resolution adopted by the majority of the Executive give them, at least, temporarily, the victory claimed for Bevan by *Tribune*. The Executive states that:—

(A) It is satisfied that the decision of the Parliamentary Labour party to withdraw the whip from Mr. Bevan was fully justified:

(B) Whilst noting the assurances given by Mr. Bevan in his statement to the special subcommittee of the Executive on March 29, 1955, it warns that it will take drastic action against future violations of party discipline.

Expedient?

It will be argued by supporters of Bevan that with a general election in the offing, expulsion would not have been expedient. We admit that expediency is largely behind his statement, and that at a suitable time in the future he will no doubt find issues against which he can inveigh. In this way, as we have discussed often in FREEDOM, he also serves a useful purpose to the party by holding those leftist rank and filers who would have drifted years ago but for the fact that they feel Bevan represents 'real' socialism within the Labour Party.

But it is precisely these political expedients that we oppose. The damage to that enthusiastic section of the rank and file labour movement who have genuine international feelings and view the manufacture of arms with horror will be considerable, more so when the real issues are not made known to them. As long as they are kidded into believing that only through parliament can a change in society be effected, then they will continue to be baffled and dispirited by the constant switch in the tactics of their leaders.

This was an issue on which Bevan had an opportunity to demonstrate his sincerity by refusing to toe the line, even at the risk of expulsion. Such a step may well have gained him greater support. But, once the fruits of power have been tasted it is difficult to renounce the plans which lead to bigger and juicier fruit; tiresome arguments which involve honesty and principles confuse the issue; we must be realistic, comrades!

R.M.

Unlikely Behaviour of an Actress

A WORD of warning here though—the *Times* is not as reliable as all that. One of the *Times* Arts correspondents reported a tour of India by a theatre company including Lewis Casson and Sybil Thorndike. Their friendly reception, he said, offset the victories of Russian and Chinese artists touring there recently, on behalf of the Western Democracies. "As entertainment their tour has been a success . . . As another thrust in the cold war it is more difficult to judge its effects."

But really, Mr. *Times*, it is hardly probable that Dame Sybil made any attempt to incite India to become anybody's ally; rather, in fact, the reverse. She is the Hon. Treasurer of the Peace Pledge Union. D.R.

READER'S VIEWPOINT A PLEA FOR UNITY

IT is a noticeable feature of all parties and groups, the members of which hold approximately the same opinions, that their differences invariably lead to far more discussion and general excitement than do their similarities. For current proof of this we have merely to observe the Labour Party strife between the Bevanites and the Rest; this widely publicised disagreement which has lasted over a period of years has effected nothing but harm to their cause.

All the knowledgeable people have said that this internal argument if continued, can only lead to an even more serious weakening of the general Socialist position, and for once one is forced to agree with those who are supposed to know. Whereas this particular situation gives us no cause for alarm, it can act as a pointer for all who wish to see a strengthening of the Anarchist movement, for this tendency to split on issues of greater or lesser importance has always lurked in the midst of Anarchist groups all over the world.

The argument put forward in favour of this sort of domestic feature has always been that there is nothing so fine as the healthy and spirited exchange of ideas which leads to the weeding out of bad ones and contributes towards more new and original thought. This of course is often true, but can also lead to the sort of fracture we are able to observe among the Labour ranks.

One would like to see rather less internal seething in the Anarchist movement, particularly between those who really agree on the basic, important issues, and a better presentation of the solid, undeniable truths of Anarchist thought by everyone who already believes these truths. In this way the quite considerable group which teeters on the edge of Anarchism, and the very solid mass of liberal thinkers who are ready

to swing this way would be more inclined to do so than at present.

If these 'near-anarchists' observe nothing but petty bickering and interminable squabbles, on issues of little importance, they can only become confused and unimpressed, but if it were possible for them to hear more or less general agreement and a far greater united body of opinion, this would surely have a stronger appeal and form a more lasting impression.

The Anarchist movement is not so strong that it can afford to lose so much as a single prospective member. Anyone who appears to have leanings in the right direction should be encouraged to lean further, and the best way to achieve this would seem to be the presentation of a reasoned argument to which all can agree, on the broad principles in which all believe.

London.

H.W.

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155 High Holborn, W.C.1.
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APRIL 17—Sam Levitsky on
SETTLEMENTS IN ISRAEL

APRIL 24—Bonar Thompson on
MYSELF & THE WORKING CLASS

MAY 1—F. A. Ridley on
THE ETHICS OF ASSASSINATION

MAY 8—Edwin Peeke
Subject to be announced.

MAY 15—Sybil Morrison on
THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

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★
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ORWELL AND ANARCHISM Continued from p. 1

the machines they serve, brutalised by propaganda; States which have created conditions where all individual thought is regarded as criminal, where literature, music and art cease to be the expression of the individual and instead eulogise the régime where servitude to the old religion is replaced by that to the State and its new gods.⁴

M. L. Berneri's remarks are echoed in the book-within-a-book in 1984, "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism by Emmanuel Goldstein". This is the key to the book, and we may take it as a presentation of Orwell's own views, since in it are reflected many of the ideas expressed in his essays and journalism during his last years. For instance in 1947, writing on 'The Future of Socialism', he declares

If I were a bookmaker, simply calculating the probabilities and leaving my own wishes out of account, I would give odds against the survival of civilisation within the next few hundred years. As far as I can see, there are three possibilities ahead of us. (1) That the Americans will decide to use the atomic bomb while they have it and the Russians haven't. This would solve nothing. It would do away with the particular danger that is now presented by the U.S.S.R., but would lead to the rise of new empires, fresh rivalries, more wars, more atomic bombs, etc. In any case this is, I think, the least likely outcome of the three, because a preventive war is a crime not easily committed by a country that retains any traces of democracy. (2) That the present 'cold war' will continue until the U.S.S.R., and several other countries, have atomic bombs as well. Then there will only be a short breathing-space before whizz! go the rockets, wallow! go the bombs, and the industrial centres of the world are wiped out, probably beyond repair. Even if any one State, or group of States, emerges from such a war as technical victor, it will probably be unable to build up the machine civilisation anew. The world, therefore, will once again be inhabited by a few million, or a few hundred million human beings living by subsistence agriculture,

probably, after a couple of generations, retaining no more of the culture of the past than a knowledge of how to smelt metals. Conceivably this is a desirable outcome, but obviously it has nothing to do with socialism. (3) That the fear inspired by the atomic bomb and other weapons yet to come will be so great that everyone will refrain from using them. This seems to me the worst possibility of all. It would mean the division of the world among two or three vast superstates, unable to conquer one another and unable to be overthrown by any internal rebellion. In all probability their structure would be hierarchic, with a semi-divine caste at the top and outright slavery at the bottom, and the crushing out of liberty would exceed anything that the world has yet seen. Within each State the necessary psychological atmosphere would be kept up by a complete severance from the outer world, and by a continuous phoney war against rival States. Civilisations of this type might remain static for thousands of years.⁵

★

THIS third possibility is the assumption on which 1984 is based. Its first sentence is also the assumption on which British policy on the hydrogen bomb is allegedly based. In his essay on James Burnham, Orwell remarks:

It will be seen that at each point Burnham is predicting a continuation of the thing that is happening. Now the tendency to do this is not simply a bad habit . . . it is a major mental disease, and its roots lie partly in cowardice and partly in the worship of power, which is not fully separable from cowardice.⁶

Is Orwell guilty of the same fault? I think that John Atkins has supplied the answer when he writes

Many critics have expressed surprise that the society depicted in "1984", although a credible one if you apply merely rational criteria, should have been placed only three decades on. There is little doubt that Orwell was aware of this particular improbability, and it seems likely that it was part of his pro-

pagandist purpose. He wished to rouse people to the dangers inherent in existing political tendencies. He did not believe that the individual is altogether powerless, although this is probably the majority feeling in the Western world today. He knew that many of his readers would still be living in 1984 and he hoped that this book would act as a stimulus, cause them first to take warning and then action to avert it . . . We know, and Orwell always maintained, that totalitarianism can only be challenged by individual values. This Winston Smith was quite incapable of doing. He was a weak creature who was born to be victimised.⁷

The heart of the book is not in the degradation of poor Winston into a gin-sodden wreck who loves Big Brother (although here Orwell destroys one of his own arguments for even Winston is only made to believe that two and two make five by physical torture, terror, and an electrical operation on his brain), it is in his earlier discovery that *If there is hope, it lies in the proles:*

The birds sang, the proles sang, the Party did not sing. All round the world, in London and New York, in Africa and Brazil, and in the mysterious forbidden lands beyond the frontiers, in the streets of Paris and Berlin, in the villages of the endless Russian plain, in the bazaars of China and Japan—everywhere stood the same solid unconquerable figure made monstrous by work and child-bearing, toiling from birth to death and still singing. Out of these mighty loins a race of conscious beings might one day come.⁸

★

O'BRIEN points out to Winston that this is a delusion, that the proles are bound to be defeated, and Orwell's critics have, almost gleefully, agreed. But this is not the point. The proles will be defeated in the sense that we will all be defeated: "The essence of being human", says Orwell, is that "one is prepared in the end to be defeated

and broken up by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one's love upon other human beings."⁹ Hope lies in the proles, Winston realises, not because they will triumph but because they are human:

The terrible thing that the Party had done was to persuade you that mere impulses, mere feelings were of no account, while at the same time robbing you of all power over the material world. When once you were in the grip of the Party, what you felt, or did not feel, what you did or refrained from doing, made literally no difference. Whatever happened you vanished, and neither you nor your actions were ever heard of again. You were lifted clean out of the stream of history. And yet to the people of only two generations ago this would not have seemed all-important, because they were not attempting to alter history. They were governed by private loyalties which they did not question. What mattered were individual relationships, and a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself. The proles, it suddenly occurred to him, had remained in this condition. They were not loyal to a party or a country or an idea, they were loyal to one another. For the first time in his life he did not despise the proles or think of them merely as an inert force which would one day spring to life and regenerate the world. The proles had stayed human . . .

"The proles are human beings," he said aloud. "We are not human."¹⁰

Stay human; love one another. This is Orwell's ultimate message. It is not revolutionary, it is not political, it is not even original. But it is the most important message of all.

C.W.

SOURCES:

- 1 and 3. Author's preface to the Ukrainian edition of *Animal Farm* (1947). I am indebted for this to the bibliography by Mr. Ian Willison of the British Museum.
2. Polemic No. 5. Sept.-Oct. 1946.
3. Marie Louise Berneri: *Journey through Utopia* (1950).
4. Partisan Review, July-August 1947.
5. Second Thoughts on James Burnham (Polemic, May 1946).
6. John Atkins: *George Orwell* (1954).
7. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).
8. *Reflections on Gandhi* (Partisan Review, Jan. 1949).