

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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Threepence

BEWARE OF THE 3 CARD TRICK!

THE choice of a time for a general election is always taken by a government to suit its own convenience. A party in power quite naturally and rightly from its own viewpoint, operates the machinery of government to suit itself. It would be foolish to expect otherwise.

We can take it, then, that Sir Anthony Eden considers that the present time favours the return of the Conservative Government, and in order to assure himself a full term of office he has chosen to go to the country for what is, in effect, a popular vote of confidence.

Sir Anthony has shown some shrewdness in doing this. Although the newspaper strike deprived the resignation of Sir Winston Churchill from achieving its full blast of publicity (thank goodness!), some measure of ballyhoo did reach the public, a very good proportion of which has been convinced for a long time that Sir Winston was a great man.

Churchill's retirement brought the spotlight on to Eden. Cinemas all over the country presented newsreel features showing the development of the boy from Eton, the gallant young officer, the fashion-plate diplomat, into the mature statesman of to-day. The public have been assured that the old war-horse has every confidence in his younger successor, and that the adulation and

loyalty that was given so abundantly to Sir Winston could be safely diverted to Sir Anthony.

Now or Never

The latter is, quite rightly, of the opinion that he should strike while the iron is hot. Before the glow of Winston's glory fades, the votes must be pulled in. While the gratitude of the people of Great Britain can still be relied upon (if it can: remember 1945?) and before the old man dies (he had a stroke last year), the weight of his presence in the party must be put in the scales.

Add to this the possibility that Labour critics of the Government's economic policy may be right, and that there may be yet another crisis on the way, and we have strong arguments, from the present Cabinet's point of view, for an election now. And indeed, these economic arguments were probably the cause of Winston's retirement. We can hardly imagine that the old boy would have chosen a period of newspaper blackout to hand over, or that the date could not have been postponed had it been felt to be possible.

The fact that Churchill retired when he did indicates that pressure was put on him from his associates, particularly the three top men of the new Cabinet, Eden, Macmillan and Butler, so as to give the party a chance to reorganise, have an elec-

tion, win an increased majority, as they hope, and settle down in strength before the autumn, when Mr. Butler will introduce his full Budget. Last week's was recognised as an interim Budget to tide over the election and win a few votes in the process.

'Adjustments' Will Come

It is, then, quite possible that there will be an economic crisis in the autumn, which will demand a crisis Budget, in which Mr. Butler will re-impose the cuts he has just made in income tax, or, we may be sure, find some means of getting back what he has 'given' us. Even if there is no crisis (except for the workers, who face economic crisis every Thursday), the economic situation may 'demand' 'adjustments' which will undo the present concessions.

Whether this does transpire or not, the fact remains that it could. Butler's Budget has done extremely little; has done no more than enable actual income of taxpayers to rise a notch or two behind rising prices; but it has the appearance of relieving the pressure of taxation. Most people are humbly grateful for small mercies—steal a cake from them and give them back a thin slice and they'll think you're a good chap—and are always willing to give someone the benefit of the doubt.

This is a pleasant characteristic, but dangerous where politicians are concerned. If the Tories win the election they will come back for another five years—five years in which anything can happen, and probably will. They are playing their cards extremely shrewdly, and a vote-catching Budget is an Ace. But a three-card trickster is helpless if the suckers refuse to play.

When the man in the train spreads out his newspaper and just happens to have a pack of cards in his pocket, the wise passenger declines to take a hand. He knows the trick of being allowed to win at first, only to be well and truly rooked in the end. Anarchists are wise passengers—in fact we are not even going in the same direction as the three-card tricksters.

The Newspaper Strike Why did they go back?

JUST as we went to print last week the news came that the newspaper strike had ended. This was not in itself surprising, but it was some shock to see the maintenance men go back on the very terms which they were striking against.

It was our contention that the announcement of the election put the strikers in a strong position. The Newspaper Proprietors' Association would be frantic to get publishing, persuading the voters to do the right thing. What we omitted to take into consideration, however, is that the unions are just as much tied to the political racket as are the bosses.

There is only one interpretation to put upon the sudden collapse of the AEU and the ETU: they took their orders from the TUC. The Trades Union Congress provides the money bags for the Labour Party and it expects to see results. It cannot tolerate the interests of a few hundred trades unionists hampering the Labour Party machine in its assault upon the people, or doing anything that might lead to a weakening of interest in the ballot box.

After 27 days, therefore, the strikers had to crawl back with nothing gained except a promise to open negotiations—after the elections.

Their chances of getting their demands have been thrown away in the interests of their political bosses.

Notes from the News BLACKLEG PRESS FOUNDED

EDWARD MARTELL, the chairman of the Recorder, has initiated a group called the Free Press Society, to "purchase, maintain and run a fully equipped general printing works, including newspaper presses capable of an output of millions a day", whose resources will be opened to all newspaper publishers, excluding only Communists, during any future printing strike.

"Free Press staff will be only those, either members of unions or not, who are prepared to give an undertaking that in no circumstances whatsoever will they strike or refuse to operate works".

The mere existence of this organisation "will, it is hoped, act as a deterrent to any future printing strikes". It is hoped to start building in about three month's time.

The Free Press "will not necessarily publish a newspaper itself", but it is worth remarking that Martell's last attempt to start a daily newspaper failed for lack of capital, whereas his new venture may generate enough enthusiasm, in reactionary circles, to give him access to greater funds.

His associates in the Society (which plans to retain a 51% control of the press) are Lord Moynihan, Major-General

A man who does not do his own thinking is a slave, and is a traitor to himself and to his fellow men

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL

Are Taxes Worth the Money?

ON April 17, the Chancellor of the Exchequer took part in an Anglican service. Among his duties was to read the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, verse two of which begins:

"Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? . . ."

Nevertheless, he announced a couple of days later that the population of the United Kingdom would be required, during the succeeding year, to spend £4,710,150,000 on maintaining the State, including £1,494,200,000 on "Defence".

The Chancellor, as such, has probably managed his job very well. All governments, to survive and function, must acquire enough wealth to maintain their sovereignty and discharge whatever responsibilities they have undertaken. The British government's requirement for the coming year is slightly less than the year before; while there is argument about the tax distribution, there seems to be general agreement, among those who believe in government, that the total itself is a very fair figure. Yet, to divide it by the population, it means that the average inhabitant of the United Kingdom must henceforth pay about 37/6 a week to the State, including about 12/6 a week for armaments!

Let us try to answer Isaiah's question, above, from the individual's point of

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SOUTH AFRICA

FORMER JUDGE ON APARTHEID

The New York Times publishes a letter on the political and social problems in South Africa, which is of particular interest since the writer is a former judge in the Supreme Court of the Transvaal Provincial Division and chairman of the Wage Board of the Union of South Africa.

WHAT has attracted most attention to our actions in other countries is our policy of apartheid or segregation of the blacks, called Natives here, from the whites. The Government considers that policy essential for the security and supremacy of the whites.

Some time ago a conference of ministers of the Dutch Reformed Churches, which strongly support the National party, passed a resolution advocating total apartheid. Dr. Malan at once rejected this as impracticable, as in fact everybody knows it is. In 1932 the Native Economic Commission, of which a majority of the members were Nationalists—including our present Ambassador in Washington—and of which I was a member, unanimously reported: "Nobody advocates this. It would be impossible and uneconomical even if possible."

What is being done in the name of apartheid is, however, a farce. We have separate entrances and exits for blacks at our post offices and railway stations. Meanwhile the number of blacks being taken on in industry and trade is increasing rapidly.

Economically the policy of the colour bar, which aims at keeping the skilled and high-paid occupations for the whites, is thoroughly unsound. It is intended to prevent the black man because of the colour of his skin from developing and using his ability and skill.

The small white population cannot provide all the workers needed to perform the work from which the blacks are excluded. Not only are the postal and railway services seriously hampered and rendered inefficient by there not being sufficient whites to do the work but the national income of the country is kept abnormally low.

However, despite that policy, the industrial revolution which has taken place since the Second World War has introduced a comparatively large number of

semi-skilled and some skilled black workers into factories. This appears to be worrying the new Minister of Labour. To judge from his recent speeches he wants to put an end to it.

Apart from that advance the position of the black worker is economically weak. He is restricted in the main to low-paid labouring work. His earnings are not adequate to provide a proper family and there is consequently much malnutrition. The great majority of the blacks are landless. Only one-third of them live in the Native Reserves, which are quite inadequate for the maintenance of even that number. To make the landless Native's lot still worse the law makes it a crime for him to desert from his service or to strike.

Hardly any of our politicians will listen to advice. South Africa is a fear-ridden country. Fear of the black man and to a lesser extent of communism is the explanation of our oppressive and illiberal legislation. The fear is very general that the blacks if they are not kept strictly under control will in time drive the whites out of Africa, and in any event will take their jobs and lower the standard of living.

It is on our land system that the policy of apartheid must, I believe, inevitably founder. The blacks, who are about three-quarters of our total population, have only one-ninth of the land. With total apartheid they would need two-thirds at least. In 1936 Parliament authorised the purchase of enough land to bring up the total area to be available for occupation by Natives to 13 per cent. But the white land-owners have refused to sell much more than half of what was necessary for this purpose. They are not likely to agree to give up two-thirds of the country.

It is not surprising that there is growing rapidly a burning hatred of the whites. That this will culminate in the immediate future in a violent outburst is unlikely. But in these days of speedy changes he would be greatly daring who would venture to assert that such a thing could not happen in the next ten or even five years.

F. A. W. LUCAS,
Johannesburg, Union of
South Africa,
April 5, 1955.

PRICE OF WAR OR "PEACE"

THOUGH, according to the American Assistant Secretary of Defence "for a long time we did not even regard it as a war" the Korean adventure cost the United States, apart from the losses in human lives, a total of some \$18,000 million (about £6,200 million) not counting the pay of service personnel.

He also revealed that since 1949 the United States had spent about \$72,000 million (£25,000 million) on its own forces and a further \$11,000 (£3,700 million) "in the creation of military strengths among our allies". During the corresponding period the nations belonging to the Atlantic Treaty Organisation had spent "only" about \$35,000 million (£12,000 million).

The wasted effort represented by these astronomical figures needs no comment. What is even worse is that it is far from ended.

President Eisenhower has asked Congress for \$3,530 millions (£1,260 million), which is about Britain's total expenditure for the year on the Defence programme) of "foreign aid". Less than a quarter of this "aid" is for non-military projects. A thousand million dollars is for "Defence support (particularly in Asia)" and a further \$1,717 million is for "Military Assistance".

Last week the House of Representatives, by 372 votes to 3 against, approved the expenditure of \$1,317 million (£440 millions) on a naval building programme. One cannot help speculating on the pressures exerted by the ship-building interests to push through this programme, which includes the construction of 34 new craft as well as the conversion of some 28 others.

By contrast the announcement that Hungary is increasing her "defence" expenditure by 1.5% (inci-

dentally, all nations refer to "defence expenditure". Is the "aggression" coming from the Eskimos?) need cause no alarm in democratic military circles. With the increase the total expenditure is still a very modest £175.8 million, or less than a half of America's naval building programme for the present fiscal year!

The welcome news that France has now decided not to make atomic weapons in spite of previous statements to the contrary is counteracted by a report from Stockholm that Sweden is proposing to join the Atom Bomb Manufacturers Club in 1960. The usual arguments are put forward to justify the vast expenditure as well as the risks involved.

Already Sweden has done more than most countries in building downwards as well as upwards. Aircraft hangers, munition dumps and factories have been built underground, and the latest plans include for the evacuation of 90 per cent. of Stockholm's population. The remaining 10 per cent. would live and work well below the earth's surface like human moles.

As a pastime it appears that unofficial rehearsals of the evacuation are carried out on "every fine Sunday in summer"!

The above is simply a selection. A comprehensive survey of the activity in which governments throughout the world are engaged to "defend" their people, "freedom", "progress", "civilisation" and all the rest of the slogans would be such a startling document that in the end one would really have to question the sanity of mankind. Certainly it seems to us that such a "civilisation" as they are creating isn't worth all the trouble they are taking, with our work and sacrifices, to defend!

Some Account of Prisons

PRISONS are an enduring monument of man's inhumanity to man. This is not only the opinion of those with 'progressive' ideas but of all who care for their fellow men. Sir Alexander Paterson, a Prison Commissioner, once wrote, 'Imprisonment leaves no visible scar to shock the eye, but it may well have done damage to a human character that nothing can repair. There are cases where it is kinder to break a man's neck in a second, than to spend twenty years in breaking his heart' (*Paterson on Prisons*, 1951). A worthy sentiment—though of course there are more humane alternatives to judicial murder and life imprisonment! Prisons are vital to the existence of the State, they are the instrument for breaking or moulding the State's enemies—whether such people may or may not be genuinely anti-social is immaterial, the point is that they have broken the law of the land, they have transgressed. To quote Sir Alexander Paterson again: 'A man is not primarily sent to prison in order that he may be reformed. Were this the case, the Court might well send thousands of wealthy and important citizens to prison who had committed no legal offence, but were sadly in need of moral training. Civil Servant and stockbroker, publican and novelist, might well jostle in the prison gate, fully qualified for reformation but strangely unwilling to endure the process.' It is interesting to note that a man who has been responsible for administering a prison system of a 'democratic' country does not claim that reformation is the primary aim of imprisonment.

The idea of prisons as a place to be sent to as a punishment is of fairly recent origin. Their original purpose was as a place to keep in custody those who were awaiting trial, and on conviction the punishment meted out by the Judge was a corporal one—whether it was the stocks, the pillory, the ducking-stool or any of the innumerable tortures devised by man for man.

Twelfth Century

It was some time in this century that the first rudiments of our prison system became apparent. Newgate was one of the main entrances to London and as such acted as a filter to ensure that too many undesirable characters did not enter the city. The need for dungeons in which to accommodate these suspi-

cious persons was met by building them at the gate itself. Thus began England's most notorious prison. The need for gaols in other part of the country became pressing and in 1156 the Assize of Clarendon directed that all counties and boroughs should build them.

Fourteenth Century

Conditions at Newgate were so bad that an official inquiry was ordered, which needless to say had little result. In 1381 the followers of Wat Tyler broke into the prison, set the prisoners free and partially destroyed the building.

Fifteenth Century

In 1414 the state of Newgate was so pestilential that typhus broke out and the gaoler and forty-four of his prisoners died. This led to the prison being knocked down and a new one being built with money that was bequeathed for charitable [sic] purposes by Sir Richard Whittington, 'thrice Lord Mayor of London'. The new prison was known as 'Whit's Palace'.

Sixteenth Century

The shape of things to come becomes clearer. The decline of the feudal system, under which malefactors were incarcerated in the dungeons of their lord's castle, and the first signs of the enclosure of the common land, forced many peasants to become vagrants. In order to provide 'compulsory work for sturdy beggars' the first workhouse was built at St. Bride's Well. These 'houses of correction' or 'bridewells' represented the first attempts at reformation of the criminal.

Seventeenth Century

Conditions in the prisons were becoming worse. With the growth of cities and of trade, with sharper differences between the wealthy and the poor, the incidence of crime increased. Prisons became the home of those unwanted in society—orphans, old people, criminals, consumptives and maniacs were herded together in large open dormitories.

G. D. Roberts in *The Old Bailey* (1928) tells of one 'John Bernardi, who was arrested in 1689 for political reasons, thrown into Newgate, and in his own words, "loaded with heavy irons and put into a dark and stinking apartment". He was taken to the Old Bailey and was about to be bailed out, when at the instance of the Treasury Solicitor . . . [he] was returned to Newgate, and by a special Act was left there for twelve months on the plea of waiting for further evidence against him. By successive Acts of Parliament he was kept a prisoner without any charge being made against him. Consolation came to him in his sixty-eighth year, when, in Newgate, he married a virtuous, kind, and loving wife; in his own words "she proved a true help-meet", and the truth of this can be realised when we learn that, within the precincts of the prison, she bore him no less than ten children. Finally in 1736, after nearly fifty years' imprisonment, Bernardi died, still untried and still in Newgate.'

Eighteenth Century

The state of the prisons was worse than ever. Prisoners were farmed out to keepers who extorted money from them by putting on or taking off their irons and by other favours. 'Those who could not afford the price demanded by the gaolers for some of the amenities provided by them in the way of special accommodation, had to associate with the lowest dregs of humanity, hardened by the brutal spirit of the times and the degradation of prison life. They were perpetually tortured and eaten by vermin.

The Newspaper Famine Summing Up

"The deeper effects of the strike will take a little longer to wear off. The conception of the Fourth Estate has taken some heavy blows, and it may yet prove a fact that some readers having had a lifetime's habits broken will have to be wooed back to subjection.

"Some foreign correspondents were asked by their home offices to cable every detail of the horrid fate of a democracy without such a large part of its daily press. They looked everywhere for signs of terror and dissolution and found none, except among members of their own profession and on the part of people who are addicted to newspapers as others are to narcotics. One careful searcher could find no prophet of doom more outspoken than the father of a family who said he was being driven out of his mind by the bright conversation at a breakfast table without the usual barriers of paper."

(Manchester Guardian).

and whether they were chained or not depended upon whether a prisoner could pay for his "easement of irons". (Crew: *London Prisons To-day and Yesterday*, 1933).

Transportation was a popular method of punishment to reduce the prison population and ensure that the criminal would not again trouble society. Between 1607 and 1776 some 50,000 convicts were sent to the American colonies and to Australia more than 100,000. The voluntary colonists, however, not unnaturally objected to this influx of unwanted immigrants and in 1852 a parliamentary committee said that the system was 'unequal, without terror to the criminal class, corrupting to both convicts and colonists'.

So acute became the problem of where to put the criminals that unwanted naval vessels were used, known as 'prison hulks'. These terrible floating prisons were overcrowded and unhealthy and constantly infected with disease.

However, it was in this century that the great prison reformers—Howard, Bentham, Beccaria and Fry—by their vigorous campaigns forced authority to improve conditions. Some attention was at last being paid to the design of prisons. Bentham published his idea of a 'panopticon'—a circular prison with the cells round the circumference so that they could be kept constantly in view from the centre.

One of the first prisons to allow prisoners individual cells was built in 1703 by Pope Clement XI, for delinquent boys.

The Prison Act of 1778 established the principle of separate confinement for English prisons. Manual labour and moral and religious instruction were formally prescribed as a condition of imprisonment.

Nineteenth Century

Harsh discipline and grinding hard work was the treatment the prisoners received in Victorian times. Little contact with fellow prisoners was allowed and the work was soul-killing and monotonous—the treadmill, stone-breaking and oakum picking. As the power of the State grew so the revenge visited on its enemies became more calculating; the days of *laissez faire* were over. Prisons became the prey of reformers; their zeal

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A Vocabulary of Politics

THE VOCABULARY OF POLITICS, by T. D. Weldon. Penguin Books, 2/-.

THE revolution in philosophy associated with the name of Ludwig Wittgenstein has taken a long time to make itself felt in the field of political science. This is not altogether surprising in view of the early logical positivist conception of ethics. For if, as they held, ethical statements were neither true nor false, i.e. were not genuine statements, but simply expressions of approval or disapproval, or disguised exhortations or commands, then political statements of the type, 'Democracy is the best form of government', were equally empty of factual content. One might argue about the correct description of democracy but once one had agreed on the facts of the situation, there was no point in continuing the argument. One either approved or disapproved and that was that.

The abandonment of the crude emotive theory of ethics and the general advance from the position of logical positivism to that of linguistic or philosophical analysis paved the way for a great interest in political theory. With the recognition that each type of discourse has its own 'logic', it was only a matter of time before the language of politics was subjected to systematic analysis. Weldon's book is the first popular and full-length discussion of the subject by a member of the school and as such it has deserved, despite its faults, the widespread attention that it has received since its publication 18 months ago.

The cries of anguish that it provoked in many quarters were to be expected. Philosophical analysis, despite its virtual domination of the philosophy faculties of English universities, still remains something of an *enfant terrible*. The toning down of its original indictment of metaphysics has not deprived it of its power to shock the uninitiated. The debunking of pretentious nonsense continues and the professors of nonsense continue to be outraged. (Naturally, no one likes to be told that he has spent a lifetime purveying nonsense to his students).

Anarchists will appreciate Weldon's debunking of contemporary ideologies.

A large part of his book is concerned to exhibit the absurdity of what now pass as the foundations of Democracy and of Marxism. Political theorists, both East and West of the Iron Curtain, have long assumed that their task was to justify the superiority of their own and the inferiority of their opponents' brand of political eye-wash by the establishment of certain fundamental truths about political society. Weldon shows that the attempt is futile. It can't be done; our preference for Democracy as against Totalitarianism or *vice versa* is not something capable of demonstration. No alarming consequences, one must add, follow from this. One can still have good reasons for preferring one set of institutions to another. But 'reasons' are not equivalent to 'demonstrations' or 'proofs'.

"Why should I obey the State?" Or, more generally, "Why should the ruled obey their rulers?" That, it has been maintained, is the central question of political theory: the problem of political obligation. And the answers have been various. Because men have consented to, says Locke and the social contract school. Because Society (read "the State") is an organism, says Rousseau, Hegel and others. The State is more than an aggregation of individuals; it is a moral person, a Divinity ("The March of God on Earth"); apart from the State the individual is a meaningless abstraction. Because the State promotes certain ends, say the liberal idealists; brings about the greatest happiness of the greatest number (Bentham); maintains a system of rights (Green); promotes the social good (Laski); fosters the development of personality (Barker).

The anarchist, however, has a refreshingly novel answer. Those who pose the question tacitly assume that the reply will be positive, but why should it be? Why not a negative answer? Why, indeed, should the ruled obey their rulers? Why the division between rulers and ruled at all? Why not, in Huey Long's catch-phrase, every man a king? I should *not* obey the State; the ruled should *not* obey their rulers.

The anarchist answer does not figure very large in the text-books of political

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The Preoccupation with Horror and Violence

THE preoccupation with horror and violence continues. The Hiroshima panels reviewed here, April 16th issue, and the life-sized photograph of a burned child in a shop window in Piccadilly with the caption in bold type "This child became a living torch" are endeavouring to achieve different ends by similar means, and the means in both cases are designed to arouse our sense of horror, in the belief that horror is likely to result in a constructive and helpful response either to aid burned children or to prevent war. While I do not deny that many people may be shocked into some useful action by the exhibition of horrors, and that therefore the organisers can, with some justification, point to increased donations or some other measure of helpful response, nevertheless there will be those who find in horror and its accompanying violence and brutality a fascination which feeds upon the organised and ceremonial presentation of dreadfulness wherever it can be found, whether in photographs of burned and maimed children in shop windows, panels in art galleries depicting the torture and misery of scorched people, horror comics, in films or in vividly written accounts in the *News of the World*, or in any of the numberless places where horror and suchlike things are exhibited and purveyed.

In "Joan and the Judges" by Thierry Maulnier, broadcast on Sunday evening, 17th April, a prison guard tells Joan after her recantation that he, and many others, were disappointed that she recanted and escaped the stake—"We've never seen a burning, we've seen some horrors in war, but not a thing like this was to be—a ceremonial burning of a girl, it's disappointing, Joan".

There may be some value in using horror as propaganda but I think the response is questionable, unless as D.R. said in his review of the Hiroshima panels "some great artist is at work", or as E.P. points out in the excellent review in the same issue of *FREEDOM* of the Japanese film "The Children of Hiroshima"—"the director is completely sincere and honest and avoids the sentimental

ality, self pity, and over-dramatization that such a subject so easily leads to".

That there is to-day an abnormal interest in dreadfulness is very apparent. All accident prevention advertising is based upon the horror associated with death on the roads, maiming, children under vehicles and so on. It never seems to occur to the advertisers that the skillfully displayed picture of people happy, alive and doing satisfying work would probably have a far more desirable effect. But perhaps that would be too far-reaching.

It is wrong to assume that the response to horrors used as propaganda will be one of shocked condemnation of the causes of such horrors. I don't think that it affects in a positively useful way any but a very tiny minority.

I am endeavouring to measure what I say by the huge sales of horror comics, magazines and those newspapers that make a practice of scavenging around the sores of civilisation for the matter that they prefer to publish. The response to horror more often than not is an enthusiastic one and to make it worse, it is so often a secret enthusiasm, twisting the miserable enthusiast into a dangerous pervert—the hypocrite, the supporter of wars to end wars, and the manufacture of armaments and bombs. Horror is indeed a double-edged affair. Its propaganda value is dubious. Let us instead go to the roots, to the basic causes. The effects of the bomb as D.R. indicated last week are well known to most people.

However, before we entirely leave the subject I must mention the exhibition of paintings by Edward Burra at the Leffevre Gallery, Bruton Street. Here is another artist using horror as propaganda in a particularly subtle way. His pictures are frightening. They have an atmosphere of desperate frustration. They are pictures of a maddened world where the appetites for all the more murky vices are in vicious abundance. They never miss. Burra's aim is low but accurate. The result is a deadly powerful horror; he can make this kind of picture with a devastating mastery. Rows of hung women dangle from ropes, deformed creatures perform grotesque

antics in a sunless twilight. Burra's gloomy outlook has become thoroughly familiar.

Cliff Holden's small show of silk screen prints at the Stockpot Coffee Bar, opposite Notting Hill Gate Station, are refreshing and well worth a visit. His works are among the best things I have seen executed in this medium. Perhaps his approach, which is to regard silk screen not simply as a reproductive process but also as another medium, is the reason for the very interesting results which he has obtained. The evident seriousness with which he works is responsible for the sense of unity and completeness which these prints have; made with genuine interest and a belief in the possibilities of his medium Cliff Holden convinces us with the clarity and simplicity of his statement. I hope I shall see much more of his work.

Lastly I come to the works of Jean Dubuffet. These peculiarities of the creative urge hang in the I.C.A. Gallery in Dover Street. That they are peculiar few will deny. They are so far removed from conventional painting as to require quite a long explanation from Georges Limbour. This is contained in the foreword to the catalogue. It tells us that—"Dubuffet's essential theme is not the object represented but the material used" and indeed, he does use a variety of materials—cement, paste, tar, pitch, white lead, gravel, sponge, and a great many other materials. And where does all this strange confectionery get us? According to Limbour—"It is matter, in the same way as the world is matter, and by plumbing the depths of this pictorial substance, analysing it, transforming it, transmuting it, one can establish a link with the matter and spirit of the Universe. One can not only understand it but also experience it—". Well, there you are. For me, none of these things are possible since I found Dubuffet's works boring and pretentious, and his sponge sculpture is so like a badly worn sponge that it would never suggest to me, under any circumstances, the remotest possibility of establishing a link with the matter and spirit of the universe.

R.S.

THE MEETING OF THE EXTREMES?

No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.

ORWELL in "Animal Farm". THE findings of a survey, conducted in America, to ascertain what the American people think about Communism and free speech has surprised those in authority for they indicate that the advocacy of Communism is viewed by the public with much more concern than are the activities of communist agents. This is the opposite of the view held by the government!

Thus, while only 1% of those interviewed are worried either by the threats of Communists in the United States or about civil liberties and 8% are concerned with Communist sabotage or espionage, 28% are fearful of the danger that Communists will convert other Americans to their doctrine. It is not surprising therefore to learn that only 27% would allow a communist to speak in their community and from 63 to 68% would "fire a Communist radio singer or store clerk". Also some 36% would boycott a sponsor's product if the radio programme employed a singer who could be identified as a Communist while "many" would like to remove books by Socialists, atheists and government-ownership advocates from American libraries.

Commenting on these figures, a New York Times columnist, Roscoe Drummond, concludes that the "average American is overwhelmingly and implacably resistant to Communist propaganda and Communist conversion . . . [and] that we don't need to be afraid of the Communist advocate".

FROM the point of view of the East-West struggle for power all that is needful is that the average American should be as impervious to Communist propaganda as his Russian counterpart is to the Voice of America and other weapons of "democratic" propaganda. On the other hand from the point of view of progress it would be interesting to know how resistant is the Average American to all non-conformist ideas. After all, the report does reveal that "many" good Americans would ban (or burn?) books by "socialists, atheists and government-ownership advocates", which simply means that a wide range of thought would be proscribed altogether. It is a very sad reflection indeed that these people appear to be so insecure in their principles of freedom and democracy that, like the Catholics, they would take steps to prevent others as well as themselves from having contact with other ideas lest they might shake their faith in Americ-uber-Alles and the American-Way-of-Life.

There is, surely by now, enough fact, palpable evidence, apart from all the fiction, about Communism, to make it difficult to understand how any normal, thinking person could choose it as an alternative to American or British capitalism, without jumping from the frying pan into the fire. For with the passing of the years the dissimilarities between the systems on either side of the Curtain become less noticeable. In the West a growing regimentation and uniformity coupled with the ever increasing power of the State machine over the economic as well as the social life of the community is being

FEEDING THE FIFTY MILLION: A Report of the Rural Reconstruction Association.
(Hollis and Carter, 12s. 6d.)

SINCE the days when this country did feed its population on home-produced food there have always been lone voices declaring that it should. Radical traditionalists like Cobbett, patrician aristocrats, lamenters of the dispossessed peasantry and the deserted village, enemies of the squalor and false values of industrial society, have all argued the case, but all the political parties have opposed it; Conservatives, apart from the diminishing minority of landed gentry, Liberals when they were still a political force, and were historically, the party of industrial and commercial interests, and the various factions of the political Left. "Examine a typical Labour Party, I.L.P. or Communist Party programme, and you will find that, except for a token demand for nationalisation of the land and some half-hearted proposals for improving the status of the agricultural labourer, there is little in the way of a

met half way from the opposite direction by the East where, with the end of the Lenin-Stalin era, there seems to be less fanaticism, with more and more of the ordinary people adopting the standards and the vices of the West.

WHILST Russia and the satellites make it less difficult for the foreigner to visit their countries, America makes it more difficult. Only last week there was the amusing spectacle of 11 Russian editors refusing to submit to the "humiliation" of having their finger-prints taken as a condition for entry to the United States, and being able to point out that no visitor to their country was ever subjected to such treatment. The Americans in justifying their demands point out that no foreign visitor was allowed to land on their shores unless he was finger-printed! Again, many, in recent months, have been the artists, scientists, and sportsmen who have crossed to this side of the iron curtain to participate in cultural, scientific and sporting events. At the same time growing difficulties are being experienced by Americans who are not politically "pure" to obtain passports to leave the United States to fulfil professional engagements in other part of the world.

Supplemental regulations made in August 1952, governing the issue of passports added to the existing difficulties for they even deny passports to those citizens who "regardless of the formal state of their affiliation with the Communist party, and to whom there is reason to believe, on the balance of all the evidence, that they are going abroad to engage in activities which will advance the Communist movement for the purpose, knowingly and willingly, of advancing that movement."

How dangerously such regulations can be interpreted is shown in the case of the American State Department's refusal to issue a passport to the much persecuted Professor Owen Lattimore so that he may honour his commitments to deliver lectures at the Universities of Oxford, London, Birmingham, Sheffield and Copenhagen besides addressing the Congress of the Historical Sciences in Rome and the Congress of Sinologies in Leiden. What hot-beds of Communism!

The American public has every right to seal its ears when Professor Lattimore opens his mouth. But what right have the American authorities to prevent those of us in this country who may wish to hear him expound his views on "Nomad History and the Imperial Cycle", or on "Land Frontiers in Asia" or "Western Policy and Post-war Asia"?

IT is said that an H-bomb war would mean the end of civilisation. But the way things are going it seems likely that all those human values that constitute a civilisation will eventually be abolished—in the name of civilisation of course—without the H-bomb.

LAND IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

constructive and truly socialist agricultural policy that aims at making full use of the productive capacity of British soil."

This paper has always taken the minority view. Its first editor, Peter Kropotkin, originally advocated agricultural self-sufficiency as a necessity of revolutionary strategy—his early book in which he outlined his ideas on the nature of an anarchist revolution was called, significantly, *The Conquest of Bread*.² Later, in one of the most valuable and thought-provoking works, *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, first published in 1898, he extended his examination of the subject, and with a wealth of statistical illustration, he argued the case for decentralised industry and intensive agriculture on economic and social grounds, and declared that it was possible and desirable for the soil of Great Britain to feed its inhabitants (who then numbered 42,000,000).

Soon after Kropotkin's day the question became one of urgent interest in the 1st world war when the submarine blockade brought this country very near to starvation which was only averted at the cost of thousands of seamen's lives and the loss of millions of tons of shipping. After that war, in spite of the usual good resolutions and the propaganda of people like Sir R. G. Stapleton and Mr. Robertson Scott, British agriculture sank to its lowest condition for hundreds of years, even though the depression and mass-unemployment showed how illusory were the safeguards of our industrial and commercial supremacy. Farming had languished to such an extent that Mr. Laurence Easterbrook in his introduction to the present volume declares that when at the beginning of the 2nd world war

TAXES *Continued from p. 1*

view. Why should we spend such an appalling amount on unsatisfying things? What, exactly, do we buy with our taxes? Protection? We certainly don't get protection from foreign attack; if the Government get itself involved in a war, so far from protecting us, it will call on us to protect it!

Yet "Protection", in another sense, is precisely what the individual does buy from the State; even as the occasional unfortunate must buy "Protection" from lesser gangsters. If he pays up, he is left alone; if he refuses, he gets done.

Communist Gains in Andhra Election

IT will be remembered how the Indian Communist Party put everything they had into winning the Andhra elections in March; and how, for all that, the number of Communist seats fell from 49 to 15 (out of 196, including 146 to United Congress Front). This result was widely taken, at the time, to mean the Communists had lost some standing with the Andhra electorate. But R. Palme Dutt, writing in the *British Communist Party's World News* (April 23) points out that the loss of seats was not due to loss of votes. He quotes the *Times of India*, March 12, as saying:

"While the parties belonging to the United Congress Front have obtained 11 per cent. more votes than in the last elections—4,270,000 as against 3,870,000—the Communists have improved on their previous poll by 80 per cent., 2,600,000 as against 1,450,000."

Dutt himself attributes the loss in seats, partly to the mean cunning of Congress in forming a coalition "with two minor reactionary organisations", partly to the "notorious British system of single member constituencies."

"One Congress seat represents 17,900 votes. One Communist seat represents 134,000 votes."

"There could not be a more glaring exposure of this type of undemocratic electoral system."

Almost as bad as the single list of candidates in a Russian election, isn't it Mr. Dutt? D.R.

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!

WEEK 16	
Deficit on Freedom	£240
Contributions received	£208
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London: W.E.D. 7/-; London: C.G. 3/-; Hornchurch: R.W.D. £1; Los Angeles: Italian Group per A.S. £8/15/0; London: V.T. per V.R. £1; London: J.S.* 3/-; Cookham: G.H. £1; Sebastopol: W.L.B. 1/6; London: R.S. 3/-; London: M.C. 3/-;	
Total	12 15 6
Previously acknowledged	195 18 8

1955 TOTAL TO DATE	£208 14 2
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GIFT OF BOOKS: Stroud: S.L.R.

he was called to the Ministry of Agriculture, "There were large areas of our country where men had forgotten how to cultivate the land. In the Midlands, there was parish after parish that did not possess one single plough. We had to ask for volunteers from the eastern counties to go to such places and teach men this most elementary item of husbandry".

FOOD

production was very greatly increased through war-time necessity, and during the war a very able little book was written by a farmer, industrialist and chemist, Col. George P. Pollitt,³ who set out to show that Britain could grow all the food she needed to feed the pre-war population of 48,000,000, at a cost no greater than the cost of importing it.

After the war, the continuing world food shortage, the loss of overseas investments and the vagaries of export economics, together with a new awareness of the basic importance of agriculture among people who used to take it for granted that their food would turn up somehow behind the retailer's counter, that the desire to consolidate the war-time agricultural recovery, kept the question in the public mind, but have had all too little an effect on public policy. The most striking of post-war polemics on agricultural self-sufficiency in *Prophecy of Famine* by Edward Hyams and the late H. J. Massingham which was reviewed at length in these columns.⁴ These authors based their statistical evidence on the progress report of the Research Committee of the Rural Reconstruction Association which was studying the extent to which this country could become self-supporting in staple food-stuffs. The present volume is the final report of this committee.

Feeding the Fifty Million, as the work of a committee, where a variety of views are represented is not a sensational or prophetic or revolutionary document, but an account of our present resources and production and of the necessary steps to be taken if they are to be increased and the type of legislation and government action which the committee think will encourage these steps. "The degree to which the nation reduces its dependence on imported foodstuffs," say the authors, "is determined primarily by the degree

to which it is prepared to adapt its economy to that end. Any substantial increase in agricultural production will be the result of a change in national policy. Without a change in national policy, no change merely in agricultural policy will, in the long run, make any substantial difference to the volume of agricultural production".

THIS

book with its facts and figures will provide valuable evidence to support or refute the vague arguments based on our prejudices or predilections which usually surround discussion of this crucial subject. On the key question for instance of agricultural output compared with that of other countries, on which such conflicting statements are made every week to 'prove' that our farming should be made more intensive (the Kropotkin-Hyams point of view), or more extensive (the 'scientific', capitalist point of view), the report says, "It should be noted that, on a basis of output-per-person, United Kingdom farming is, by a considerable margin, the most efficient in Western Europe, though Western Europe, though much less efficient than farming in the 'newer' countries of Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand; but that when a basis of output-per-acre is employed the position is almost exactly reversed, the United Kingdom being much more efficient than any of the 'newer' countries with possible exception of New Zealand, but distinctly below such near neighbours as Holland, Denmark, and Western Germany. We thus appear to occupy an intermediate position. But seeing that our food-supply problems, and our general agricultural conditions, are closer to those of North West Europe than to those of North America and Australasia, it seems reasonable to conclude that we should look to the former area rather than the latter for purposes of comparison . . ."

1 *New Life to the Land* by George Woodcock (Freedom Press, 1942).
2 An examination of agriculture in this light was made in these columns in a series of articles on *Agriculture and the Social Revolution* by John Hewetson, in April-July, 1947.
3 *Britain Can Feed Herself* by George P. Pollitt (Macmillan, 1942).
4 *Prophecy of Famine* by H. J. Massingham & Edward Hyams (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1953). See also the article under this title reprinted in *Selections from "Freedom"*, Vol. 3, 1953, pp. 62-68.

Concerning Prisons *Continued from p. 2*

that the prisoner be supervised and directed by authority at every moment ensured that no suspicion of humanity be allowed to appear.

The huge prisons that are still very much in use to-day were being built. The 'model' prison of Pentonville where the ideas of separate cells and long periods of solitary confinement were first thoroughly applied; Wormwood Scrubs, Holloway, Dartmoor and Strangeways were all built in the nineteenth century.

Twentieth Century

In the twentieth century there have been many reforms that have lessened some of the more obvious cruelties of the nineteenth century prisons. Hard labour was abolished, the Borstal and probation systems were introduced, 'open' prisons were used, and many more similar measures.

The twentieth century has also seen the growth of those super-prisons, the concentration camps. Dr. Grygier in *Oppression: a Study in Social and Criminal Psychology* (1954) shows what a hideously disruptive effect the Nazi concentration camps had on the psychological balance of their unfortunate inmates.

"It was found that the delinquency rate among Displaced Persons with concentration camp experience was eighty-three times greater than in the remaining Displaced Person population." And later . . . a small group of Jewish Displaced Persons with a background . . . of severe oppression . . . was tested . . . The results showed a still more extreme form of extrapunitive and the paradox that the aggression, if not directed outwards, tended to direct itself inwards; the impulsive reconciliation to the disagreeable situation, the "forgive and forget" attitude, was comparatively rare . . . These results indicate a preoccupation with the problem of guilt, as if the subjects would say: "Somebody must be guilty, probably the others, perhaps even myself, but there is guilt in this situation and there must be punishment." Thus the torture is continued long after the physical factors have ceased to exist.

And finally a contemporary (1950) account of the women's prison at Holloway, by an inmate. At the reception section—"I sat down on the broad

wooden bench which formed part of the back wall. It was a very small cubicle, only room for one person to sit down comfortably. By stretching out my hand I could touch the door with the tips of my fingers. Wire netting formed the ceiling, so that the room lighting shone through . . . I heard the occupant of the next cubicle crying quietly. I began to read the pencil scribbles which no one had bothered to wash off the walls. Names, and hearts and arrows, and "I love you, Bert" written over and over again in the same illiterate hand, and "God, get me out of this place" in large block capitals. The first sight of the prison proper—Very bright lights threw a yellow glare over the whole scene. For all its brightness, it seemed strangely foggy. There were three or four tiers of landings with cell doors lining the sides as far as you could see. There were wire nets slung between each floor, so that you could look right up to the roof, and little iron staircases connected the landings. A few women were walking about with pails, and one or two were talking together. They were dressed like myself, but they all looked unkempt, with straggly hair and shining faces; and they all had the incurious expressions of sleep walkers." (from *Who Lie in Gaol* by Joan Henry).

CARLO LEVI, author of *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, writing in the 'Unesco Courier', said 'I cannot help feeling that the present penitentiary system—as practised in almost every country—is marked by the cruelty, inhumanity and degradation condemned by Article 5 in the Universal Declaration [of Human Rights]. This noble document which was, ironically enough, unanimously approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations, contradicts every aspect of government.

Article 1 reads:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience, and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Which member of the United Nations will be the first to abolish prisons? M.G.W.

A Vocabulary of Politics Continued from p. 2

theory. Nor do the philosophical analysts consider it. But, if they were to do so, they would put it in the waste-paper basket along with the rest. None of the answers is a genuine answer because the question is not a genuine question. The problem, as posed by the classical political philosophers, does not exist. It makes sense to ask, "Why should I obey the Conscription Act?" or "Why should I obey the present government of this country?" because we know what sort of criteria to use to answer these particular questions (although we may not all agree on the criteria or answer the questions in the same way). It looks harmless and very philosophical to proceed from the particular to the general: to move from "Why should I obey this law?" to "Why should I obey any law at any time in any circumstances?" But, in fact, in doing so one removes the context which gave the first question its significance. The general question demands a general answer; but no criterion or formula can apply to every circumstance, to every context—without becoming completely empty and tautologous. To ask for the ultimate ground of political obligation is really to ask whether there might be a political society without political obligation, which is absurd—since by 'political society' we mean simply a society organised according to rules enforced by certain members of that society, i.e. the rulers. The anarchist answer, "One should not obey the State; the ruled should not obey the rulers", is as fatuous as the other answers. For to answer in a negative way presupposes that it is possible, i.e. significant, even if incorrect, to answer in a positive way. But the presupposition is absurd.

The "problem" is analogous to the metaphysical "problem": What is the purpose of life? "To obey God's will", replies the holy roller. To which the atheist retorts, "There is no purpose of Life: Life is meaningless". But to

say that Life has no purpose presupposes that it is significant, even if false, to say that Life has a purpose. The atheist, just as much as the religious person, is implying, therefore, that he knows what it would be like for Life to have a purpose, i.e. he knows what criteria to apply to answer the question. But does he? Isn't it, rather, that he *doesn't* know? The proper retort to the assertion that "Life is meaningful" is not "Life is meaningless" but "Life is not something of which it makes sense to say that it is either meaningful or meaningless". Assuredly, those atheists with the stiff upper lip who keep bravely asserting that "Life is meaningless" have not yet exorcised the last remnants of their religious faith.

Anarchists should not, therefore, take too much delight in the philosophical analysts' discrediting of current ideologies, for the debunking applies as much to the anarchist ideology as to any other. The 'foundations' of anarchism are no more sure than the 'foundations' of Democracy or of Marxism. But, as Weldon is at pains to show, nothing tragic follows from this conclusion. It can still have good reasons for preferring anarchist institutions to democratic or totalitarian institutions. What one cannot do is to prove that anarchism is superior to democracy, totalitarianism or what have you. And that, after all, is not very surprising. For what distinguishes the anarchist from his opponents is not the possession of some special truths about the nature of politics which non-anarchists do not share, but the social values that he adopts. And values are not things which can be demonstrated as superior or inferior.

However, it would be misleading to give the impression that because no alarming consequences follow from the discrediting of all political ideologies, including our own, that we can go on as before. For the mistaken belief that one can demonstrate the superiority of particular ideologies springs largely from the 'one-true-meaning' fallacy. Anarchist philosophers, as much as other philosophers, have talked as though political terms like 'the State', 'freedom', 'justice', etc., have essential meanings. In fact, as Weldon shows, such terms do not have meanings in this sense at all: they simply have uses. They are only part of the verbal apparatus which we use in describing and appraising certain

types of human behaviour. To know their meaning is to know how to use them correctly, i.e. intelligibly, in ordinary and technical discourse. For example, to know 'what the State is' is to know how to use the term 'State' correctly. And to do that it is not necessary, though it may be helpful, to take a course in political science. From this it follows that there is no distinctively anarchist (or Marxist or democratic) theory of the State. It is senseless to dispute whether the State is or is not the organ of the ruling class, the association of associations, the representative of the collectivity, etc., etc. You can, of course, define it how you like—although if you define it too rigidly you will risk misunderstanding and confusion—so long as you remember that a stipulative definition is neither true nor false, i.e. not a factual statement. What are not senseless and what are worth discussing, from the anarchist point of view, are the arguments for and against the system of enforcing rules in society. For what is central to anarchism and what lies behind the anarchist "answer" to the "question" of political obligation is the assertion that society would be better if social rules were not enforced; if, as Edward Carpenter put it, Custom were to replace Law.

Philosophical analysis, it may be concluded, does not solve any problems. It merely dispenses with pseudo-problems; and in so doing it helps us to understand more clearly what we are talking and arguing about.

GASTON GERARD.

Treatment of Prisoners

ACCORDING to German government officials the six skeletons found recently in a sand pit at Dahn, west of the Rhine, were of German S.S. troops captured and shot by American forces in the closing days of the last war. The State prosecutor said that ten S.S. guards were captured by Americans in the area and that they had been "mistreated" and then taken to a forest and shot. Six were killed and four escaped with wounds.

A small incident but which serves to make one realise that the brutalising effect of war is not limited to the enemy but can affect all who engage in it. After all when your own life is held so cheaply for what reason should you pay much attention to the life of a captured "enemy"?

VIEWPOINT

PROBLEMS WE MUST FACE

IN reply to your correspondent H.W. as a sympathiser with the Anarchist position, and indeed an individual Anarchist, I wish to deny his assertion that, in my case at least, I am put off 'Anarchism' by the differences of opinions amongst Anarchists, whether over major or minor issues. Rather the contrary—I find it stimulating to associate with people who hold varying views but are all searching for greater individual and social freedom of expression.

If Anarchists were able to dogmatically forecast the ideal form of human society in all its aspects, would it necessarily mean that their 'monolithic view' was any nearer practical fulfilment, or achievement by the majority of mankind? Life to-day is full of very ominous question marks and it is a rash person who is so completely assured of the correctness of his views as to close his mind to valid criticism, or new developments.

There are a number of problems which I think a great many Anarchists—and other Idealists—fail to face squarely. May I briefly enumerate these?

1. Will the large number of people who fail to exercise their brains over social problems, partly through ignorance, partly through fear, and partly through being overburdened with the daily struggle for existence, ever become active in the struggle for greater Freedom?

2. Closely allied to the above question is the problem of Freedom with Responsibility, because certainly no decent and considerate social order can come into being without the vast majority being free and at the same time not

abusing that freedom to restrict others' freedom.

3. Following upon the first two problems comes the most important one of all—can a real measure of personal integrity and achievement be realised in a machine-dominated society? It seems to me that mankind's intellectual, moral and emotional development has lagged far behind his achievements in Technology, so the question must be posed: Will not the next World War destroy our technology in a large measure, together with millions of industrialised human beings? If that is the shape of things to come, rather than the robot world of Orwell's "1984", why not decide now what level of mechanisation is desirable in a free society? For while machinery removes the drudgery in certain occupations, it makes mankind as a whole develop into over-specialisation, and lose its humanity in the process.

London.

R.C.

Freedom for Budgerigars

A SAD little item of news on Radio Newsreel last week. A group of kindly people subscribed for a special aviary at the London Zoo, with a trap-door from which budgerigars were permitted to fly away and return if they felt so inclined. None of them took advantage of this opportunity and resolutely ignored the open door. It seems that budgerigars are also conditioned to their present society and have little desire for change.

There was an encouraging note however; the speaker considered that the birds might overcome their nervousness in a few days and wing their way to freedom. Perhaps we shall follow their lead in due course, though one strongly suspects that some of us have not yet noticed the open door.

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(Nearly opposite Holborn Town Hall)

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

INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

Every Thursday at 8.15.

OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting

HYDE PARK

Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

GLASGOW

INDOORS

at 200 Buchanan Street

Every Friday at 7 p.m.

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At Maxwell Street

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.

The Malatesta Club

155 HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.1.

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TWO "HUMAN ANGLE" STORIES

I

HUMAN problems, which occupy the minds of most ordinary people, are usually overlooked in the battle for headlines between national and international politics, and it is only when these human difficulties contain "news value" that they are given space in our newspapers.

Since 1953, the islanders of the tiny Faroes port of Klaksvik have been sheltering their doctor who was dismissed by the Danish Medical Association because of differences between them. That was two years ago. We now read that the Danish Government, repelled by the native population in their first attempt to land another doctor, backed by reinforcements is to make a still further attempt to force the Government-chosen doctor on the islanders. It is reported that the population propose to resist by force, and have organised themselves into an effective fortress:—

'Fifteen tons of dynamite, to be set off by remote control, lie under water tonight to await the Danish police ship Parkeston, according to "Viking" rebels of the tiny Faroes port of Klaksvik.

At 9 p.m. the Parkeston left moorings at Thorshavn—destination secret. As she did so Klaksvik radio warned all shipping to keep clear of the harbour, saying it was blocked. Latest reports suggest the Parkeston will remain at sea for the time being "pending negotiations."

Klaksvik (population 3,000) is fighting to keep its Danish doctor, Olas Halvorsen, against the wishes of the Faroes Government. When attempts were made to land a Faroese doctor, he and Government officials were chased back to their ship.

Herr Erlunder Pattursen, leader of the Faroes Independence Party, said: "All adult Faroese have sporting guns and rifles."

Said Harbourmaster J. Fischer-Heinsson: "Let there be no doubt, we are ready to fight. We are ready to explode the dynamite charges right under the Parkeston and we will shoot if anyone gets ashore."

Contact with Klaksvik was difficult to-day. Telephone lines were tapped.

Dr. Halvorsen said he was ready to quit at any moment. "But it would be irresponsible for me to leave patients just operated on, so long as the population is preventing any other doctor coming ashore."

There are not enough details of the differences between the island Doctor and the Association to say whether there is a medical justification for his dismissal, but those of us who have lived for any length of time on an island know how carelessness on the part of the doctor has led to premature death. On one island known to us it was taken for granted by the native population that, as one doctor died off another replaced him from the nearest city, that there would be "something wrong" with him. There usually was.

This did not prevent the Doctor from becoming one of the "natives" in time, and in the case of the Danish islanders it is obvious that their affection for the Doctor is stronger than their desire for efficiency, which shows a splendid human warmth too rarely demonstrated in our society.

It is of course easier for this kind of affection to develop where the incidence of illness and disease is low and patients few. The harassed town doctor working under difficult conditions in a working-class area has little time to develop a human relationship with his patients.

II

CHILDREN have little sense of national and racial barriers, and left alone, away from the corrupting influence of adults, children will mix happily, white and black, Jew and Gentile. Similarly, children brought up by foster parents have shown as much affection for them as they would for their natural parents which disproves the widely held belief that only biological parents are capable of giving this love and care.

A particularly tragic case reported from Paris, involving parent and foster parents, illustrates this point, as well as showing the inadequacy of attempting to solve human problems in a court of law. It is reported (News Chronicle, April 23rd) that:—

'During the German occupation a member of the Resistance, Georgette Cadi-Phelippeau, stole a German officer's revolver; she was caught and jailed. In jail she gave birth to a girl, Josette.

At first the Nazis allowed her to keep the baby in her cell. Then one April morning guards took the baby away. She did not see her child again.

When she was freed at the end of the war she begged the Allies to trace her child. It took five years.

The baby had been moved from orphanage to convent, until she came eventually into the care of a 25-year-old German woman, Erna Rustler, in Eger, Czechoslovakia. She called the baby Claudia.

When the Red Army swept into Czechoslovakia Erna, the child in her arms, fled West until she found shelter at her father's house in Southern Germany.

Soon she was faced with another crisis. Her husband, demobbed, objected to the child. Rather than part from Claudia Erna Rustler agreed to divorce.

For several years she worked as a charwoman to keep little Claudia. Finally, she settled down in the little Bavarian town of Ebersberg, and there she married a hairdresser, Otto Skobarnek.

He, too, came to love Claudia, now growing up like any other pigtailed German girl. Claudia never realised that Erna was not her real mother.

Then, two years ago, the long legal battle began for the child's custody. Twice the American High Commissioner's court ruled that the girl should stay in Germany. But at the final appeal the court reversed its judgment and awarded her to her real mother.

Mother and daughter met for the first time since they were torn apart in the prison cell. The girl could not speak a word of French; her mother did not understand German.

"We will teach her French and make her happy here," she said. "Josette cannot stay in Germany. Her father was killed in a concentration camp."

Erna and her husband, however, are determined to fight for "their" child. Whatever happens it will be some time before the German courts, to which they have appealed, can give a decision.

The child? She is 11 now. She wants to remain Claudia, the little Bavarian girl, with the couple who have showered affection on her.

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