

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Politics: The Conduct of public affairs for private advantage."

—AMBROSE BIERCE

(Devil's Dictionary.)

THE SCIENTISTS & BUSINESS MEN CONFER & OFFER

MORE PIE IN THE SKY

THREE conferences of scientists have been taking place during the past week or so. The first a two-day meeting sponsored by the World Association of Parliamentarians for World Government was attended by 130 delegates from 24 countries on both sides of the erstwhile Iron Curtain. From the sketchy press reports one has the impression that this conference was particularly concerned with the social issues resulting from the development of atomic power, though commissions were also set up to examine such practical questions as the possible harmful effects of peaceful uses of atomic energy as well as its supervision and control. Yet another commission, led by Professor J. Bronowski, will deal with the social responsibility of scientists in relation to nuclear energy. In the discussion that took place on this topic Professor J. Furth of Birkbeck College proposed a pledge which scientists of all countries might be expected to take. He called it a "Hippocratic oath" for scientists. The deliberations of these commissions will not be published until the second conference to be held in a year's time at the Hague.

Russian bear and removed the nightmare of an H-bomb war, new topics have been needed to keep up the public interest in, and the 16 million circulation of, the British Press. There being nothing new on the face of the earth the obvious next step was to join the enthusiasts of science fiction in the realms of outer-space. And since the opening of the International Astronautical Congress in the land of Hans Anderson, at the beginning of this month, the Press, aided and abetted by President Eisenhower and the other Big Powers, have been whisking us 250 and 500 miles from home (vertically) with as little respect for our feelings as they showed a few years back when millions of people were being driven underground to protect themselves from the very latest in bombing planes.

It is clear from this congress that apart from the healthy curiosity shown by scientists to learn more

and more about the workings of the Universe, to seek answers to scientific questions which have eluded them so far; apart from this curiosity which is the health of mankind, the governments of the world have shown an enthusiasm for man's conquest of space which is almost suspect! Already Khrushchev has responded to Eisenhower's statement that America will launch its first man-made satellite, with an offer to co-operate "if it is in the interests of mankind". It is true that mankind cannot stand still, but sometimes one wonders whether it might not pay to pause a while to ask the question: "what are the interests of mankind?" Science is now so far ahead that in more senses than one it appears no longer to have its feet on the ground. Every scientific discovery is heralded by the promise of great prosperity round the corner. Now at Copen-

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ITALIAN MINERS CONTROVERSY AGAIN

THE opposition of the miners in the Yorkshire and South Wales coalfields to the proposal by the National Coal Board to recruit over 12,000 Italians for work in the British mines is not entirely based on the economic arguments put forward by the men. This is evidenced by the recent history of the Yorkshire miners who, in many pits, operate a colour bar, and who were so strong in their opposition to the 1952 Italian contingent of miners that most of the two thousand men had to return to Italy.

The miners argue that the answer to the acute manpower shortage in the mines is to increase pay and pensions for British miners, because the average earnings of a face worker are not adequate in the Midlands to "counter the appeal of a surface job in the engineering industry, where a man may smoke occasionally".

While we acknowledge that some men may genuinely feel that foreign labour will keep wages down, the disturbing factor is that the opposi-

tion to the Italian miners is largely prejudicial and the economic arguments merely a justification.

In any case, there is little evidence that foreign workers in the large specialist industries work for lower wages or are content to put up with bad working conditions. If we examine the position we find, and this is particularly so of the coloured worker, that workers coming to Britain from other countries are acutely aware of trade union "principles" and are careful not to transgress them. This has been acknowledged time and time again both by the rank and file and the leadership of some of the unions when disputes have arisen over the employment of coloured labour.

We have to face the fact that ordinary decent men who would not think of beating their wives or starving their dogs to death are apparently indifferent to the fate of their fellow workers from Europe.

At the moment there are 10,000 foreign miners working in Britain, and although their employment had been accepted by the British miners, objections have been raised from the Yorkshire area to their continued presence. It is easy to see that while a deep-rooted prejudice rankles, when grievances arise it will be the non-British worker who will provide the scapegoat. And although the employers are anxious at the moment to recruit 17,000 men into the mines, in times of slump and crisis they will be just as indifferent to the fate of the foreign miners as they were to the British miners in 1926. Viewed from these two angles the future of workers from abroad is not very bright. What a tragedy that the workers of the world cannot see the strength of co-operation and solidarity.

makes the point quite clearly: "It is one thing for weak and cowardly men to agree to limit their freedom. It is quite another for a Government to forbid freedom by Order in Council."

One might have supposed that the public would have created an uproar against this type of autocracy, if not on grounds of principle, at least for the reason that they are being deprived of a part of a very popular form of entertainment—no such uproar is in evidence, and it is highly probable that the great majority of the electorate would take the view that if the Government has seen fit to take action of this sort then it must be right and proper. Yet if a similar slice of Press freedom were withdrawn there would undoubtedly be a public reaction of

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Freedom Vanishes into Thin Air

JUST as Parliament prepares to go into a long recess, the Government has issued a directive which officially deprives us all of a part of our freedom of speech. The word *directive* has about it a strangely ominous and undemocratic ring, and in this instance would seem to be highly appropriate to its reference. It requires of the B.B.C. and the I.T.A. that they: "1. 'Shall not, on any issue, arrange discussions or *ex-parte* statements which are to be broadcast during a period of a fortnight before the issue is to be debated in either House or while it is being so debated.' 2. 'That when legislation is introduced in Parliament on any subject, the Corporation shall not arrange broadcasts on such subject by any Member of Parliament during the period between the introduction of the legis-

lation and the time when it either receives the Royal Assent or is withdrawn or dropped."

So runs the text as issued by the Postmaster General, Dr. Hill. (Can it be an irony of fate that the ex-Radio Doctor, who made his name through this medium, (now dictates its partial strangulation?) There can be little or no justification for such a step, and indeed the arguments so far put forward as justification are so transparent as to be laughable. Firstly we are informed that radio and television debates might improperly prejudice an issue, and subject Members to undue outside pressure when they cast their votes; secondly that since many unorthodox M.P.'s are first-class performers on political programmes, full freedom of debate would give them undue advantages over their loyal colleagues.

Possibly we have misunderstood the meaning of democracy, but these arguments seem to be nothing short of fantastic even in terms of democratic government. It is extremely hard to find reasons why Parliament should deem it necessary to forbid prejudgment of issues either by the public or its own members, when in fact it is upon prejudged issues that all members are elected. It is also questionable whether anyone prejudices the issue of a parliamentary debate because they take part (speaking, listening or watching), in a discussion on radio or television. The attitude taken up by the

directive implies that discussion and debate are the worse possible preliminaries to further debate (in the House), and might involve M.P.'s in compromising situations.

One might reasonably enquire as to the source of outside pressure—and what is the pressure? It cannot come from the audience sitting at home, unable to contribute anything (unfortunately); it cannot be undue pressure if exerted by fellow panel members, for they will be met in the House next day. But even supposing there were some evil-minded person lying in wait for the unwary politician, the only pressure he could bring to bear would be in conversational form, and who knows but that he might be right.

Even more ridiculous—if that is possible—is the argument as to "undue advantage over loyal colleagues". Here is an example of the absurdity of the present system; the cult from which springs the 'democratic' notion of voting with the Party—right or wrong. The term *loyal colleagues* refers to devotees of this curious cult. *Undue advantage* presumably means that it is not quite fair for some M.P.'s to know a little more about the subject of the debate than others; perhaps if they knew too much they would vote the wrong way. So much for the justification of this latest measure to protect the workings of the present governmental system.

In actual fact the directive would seem to be unnecessary even from the Government's point of view, for the position with regard to this type of broadcasting has for some time been almost exactly what is now laid down. During the war the B.B.C. agreed to these measures despite the fact that there was no legislation forcing it to do so, though there is every reason to believe that if it had not done so, legislation would immediately have been put forward to remedy the situation. In practice this agreement has remained ever since that time, and operates even more effectively now than it did then.

However the substitution of an Order instead of an agreement in time of stress, alters the situation quite considerably. The correspondent of *The New Statesman*

"UP FIDO—DOWN FIDO"

ADDRESSING the leaders of Russia at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet, the Russian Federal Premier, M. Alexander Puzanov said of the people of the world:—"We stand for sincere and firm relations with the American people, as indeed with all peoples", and "The people do not hate each other".

If the people do not hate each other, and governments have everything in common, who or what causes wars? Or could it be the people are made to hate each other by a cleverly disguised and diabolically consistent propagandist machine, intent on whipping up nationalistic feelings. "The country is in danger" is a sure way of getting public support and unanimity of spirit.

The irony is that during wartime the enemies who slaughter one another are not governments (who can always go to Switzerland and have a nice cozy chat), but members of the common herd. It is not the governments who drop bombs on people, but poor little misguided Fritz or Tommy or Ivan or any other working man anywhere in the world. War Cabinets do not bombard towns, Joint Consultative Councils, General Staffs do not stick bayonets in bellies and Hitler didn't operate Belsen. That might have been too sickening even for him. In fact all the orders are issued by the governments and the operations are carried out by "The People" who "do not hate each other".

It would seem that the "People" are being conditioned now to accepting peace. A sort of sickly, nostalgic, syrupy peace, not a natural one because people want it, but an unnatural peace that governments want the people to have. "Up Fido—Down Fido".

The Anarchist appeal to people is to first withdraw your support from government. Then and only then can you say that government does not speak with your voice. For once having voted or supported government you have no right to argue with government policy. Government can only speak of "the people" when people allow them to. And to make the sentence "The people do not hate each other" ring true, it must be said by the people, not by government confidence-tricksters. It must be said by the removal of travelling restrictions, abolition of passports, a social consciousness on the part of the people and above all it must mean that people must first get to know one another. For how can you hate or not hate somebody you haven't even met?

So I still remain uneasy by the false words of M. Alexander Puzanov. All the time people swagger about the Red Square with banners or line up ten deep at Constitution Hill all night or have two entrances in American hotels, I must remain uneasy of his words. "The people do not hate each other"—Phooey! Let them prove it first. MONTY.

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!

WEEK 31
Deficit on Freedom £465
Contributions received £410
DEFICIT £55

July 29 to August 4

Fresno: P.P. £11/5/4; London: D.S.M. 1/6;
Huddersfield: A.L. 10/-; London: C.F. 3/2;
Dereham: J.B. 10/-; London: J.S.* 5/-;
London: Anon* 2/-; London: Anon. 2/-;
London: Jover 5/-; Crews: C.Q. 2/-; San Francisco: In memory of Falstaff, £35;
Spokane: R.F.W. & T.H. £3/10/5; Kingston: J.C. 11/6.

Total ... 52 7 11
Previously acknowledged ... 358 2 7
1955 TOTAL TO DATE ... £410 10 6

Is Everybody Happy?

ACCORDING to a recent news report, doctors are concerned about an increase in the suicide rate, which they attribute to the stresses of modern life. The 1953 total in England and Wales was 4,754, that for the previous year, 4,338. The 1954 figure is likely to show a further rise when it is published in the Ministry of Health report.

In Middlesex the total for last year rose by nearly 40 per cent. (from 181 to 250), according to the annual report of Dr. A. C. T. Perkins, county Medical Officer of Health. He said that in the age group of 25-44 suicide was the second most frequent single cause of death, and added "Deaths by suicide now materially exceed those involving motor vehicles (210) and are approaching the total for pulmonary tuberculosis (292)."

PIE IN THE SKY

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hagen we are being promised "pie in the sky".

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AT Geneva the Atom scientists are discussing among themselves the problems of atomic energy in its application to industry. With them have come the business men who have spared no expense in laying out their wares—the Americans have already issued an atomic price-list.

As the *Manchester Guardian* points out, in somewhat forthright terms, the motives behind the conference are far from idealistic. In the first place the free discussion is not the result of the New Look in world politics, but partly to an awareness by the Big Three powers that scientific information was so widely known by each of them that there was no point in maintaining secrecy, and also to a need to instruct commercial firms in this country and America in the techniques of atomic energy. Furthermore another motive for the conference was the need that different countries have recognised to advertise their expertise to others for the reason of prestige. There is every likelihood that in the next ten years the struggle for the international market in atomic power will have an important bearing on the countries taking part in it.

And here is where the cynicism of governments who glibly talk of "the interests of mankind" comes in. For reasons given above the *Manchester Guardian* considers that it is only fair to expect that some parts of atomic energy will remain secret even after the conference. Technical details that affect one country's ability to make an atomic pile cheaply or efficiently may well be as closely guarded as industrial secrets often are. As long as the basic information is made available there will be no cause to complain of this.

Thus, the "interest of mankind" must, as always, come second to the interests of big-business and competition for world markets. Mr. Henry Ford, who has provided 1 million dollars for financing awards to scientists who achieve outstanding things in the field of atomic energy, has written that he hopes that "business men will provide an incentive for finding new ways in which atomic energy can be used for the benefit of mankind". He clearly indicates in this one sentence that "the benefit of mankind" is not in itself an "incentive" for business-men. Which of course is no discovery!

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AS we have written on other occasions the new "Industrial Revolution", symbolised by Automation and by Atomic energy, has not been accompanied by a corresponding revolution in social and political thought. If we wait for the politicians and business men to have a change of heart, we shall indeed wait a very long time. They will go on promising us pie-in-the-sky . . . when we die. If we want something more substantial, if we want Automation and Atomic energy to be developed for "the benefit of mankind", we must act now. As a first step we must start thinking for ourselves; we must question every concept on which existing society is based; we must clear away the cobwebs which have allowed prejudices to be accepted as basic truths. Doubt is perhaps less comforting than certainty. But just as doubt is the key to the progress of science so is it the key to development in social thought.

Or are our minds so warped that we dare to penetrate the unknown with rockets but fear the impact of new ideas?

(Continued from our last issue)

THE industrial revolution in Britain caused untold misery to the newly created industrial proletariat. What could have been a gradual development of technical knowledge and processes, bringing with it a steadily increasing well-being and abundance for the ordinary people, became instead degradation and want.

In order to sell Britain's new industrial products to the undeveloped countries of the world, our commercial masters had to offer Britain as a market for the agricultural products of those countries. The underdeveloped countries could not buy British goods unless Britain bought theirs. This made it necessary to curtail agricultural production in this country and in this process the Land Enclosure Acts of the early 19th century played a double purpose.

These Acts enclosed the common lands, taking away from the common people lands on which they had held grazing rights for centuries, land to which all in a community had free access. Enclosing this land, driving the common people off it, giving it to the rich and powerful who already had plenty, performed the two very useful functions of reducing agricultural production and producing a class of dispossessed, landless people with 'nothing to sell but their labour power'.

And who could they sell it to? Who but to the industrialists looking for labour for their new factories, their mills, their railways—and their mines. So the exodus from the land began, and into the towns streamed thousands of desper-

ate folk, robbed of their means of livelihood on the land, forced to sell themselves into the insecure slavery of the industrial dungeons.

Plundering Natural Wealth

But it was, of course, not only the people who were thus exploited. The most important natural resource of this country—industrially speaking—was coal, and the coal deposits underneath Britain were assaulted with blind and thoughtless vigour in the landowners' determination to cash in on the wealth beneath their fields. Here, incidentally, is a third very useful function of the Land Enclosures—by giving surface rights to the right people, they also gave ownership of what lay beneath the surface.

The rape of the land which took place over the plains of the Middle West in America, leaving behind the huge man-made deserts of the dust-bowls, had its equivalent in Britain during the previous 100 years under the ground, where the "black diamonds" were ruthlessly torn out to be sold and wastefully used without thought for the future, as well as on the surface where the need to build dwellings for miners and their families led to the growth of the drab and ugly mining villages, dominated by the towering black slagheaps, making deserts of wide tracts of countryside.

But soil erosion, through hard and patient toil, can be overcome. Years and years of tending can put heart back

into exhausted soil—but how can you put coal back into the earth? Creating humus, making soil fertile again, this can take long enough in terms of one man's lifetime—but coal takes millions of years to make by natural processes, and anyway demands thousands of years of the growth and decay of mighty forests. Once you've had your coal—you've had it.

More Difficult to Get

And that is exactly the position that Britain is working herself into now. Thousands and thousands of millions of tons of coal have been torn from the pits of this country and one by one they are beginning to dry up. In many cases, of course, the "drying up" means that it is no longer economical in the money sense to get the coal out; it does not necessarily mean there's none left. Nor does it mean that there are not pits with enough coal for another 100 years at present rates of production—or that there is no possibility of discovering new seams.

By and large, however, the coal deposits of Britain have been, and are being, sucked dry. The coal that remains in known deposits; the small amount that may yet be discovered, cannot be got out in sufficient quantities to satisfy the demands of this country's still expanding economy.

For it is not only that the abundance of coal is simply not there any more, but what is still there is getting harder and harder to get. All the coal that was

easy to get was used up years ago. Today all our most productive mines are very very deep and very very long, burrowing for miles, thousands of feet down.

In the coastal areas of the North of England, seams have been followed for miles under the North Sea from Northumberland and Durham, under the Irish Sea from Cumberland. In these and in all the inland fields, the continually driving through the seams have led to added expense and difficulty in getting the coal to the surface—as well of course to added danger in the work.

A Worn-out Industry

Through all the years of bustling prosperity for mine owners before the first World War, the only thought was to get the coal out regardless of equipment, safety or the future. During the depression years between the wars mines were closed down and neglected, while Britain's industrialists found it cheaper to buy foreign coal and Britain's miners sang in the streets.

When the war came in 1939 and brought with it the need for coal, the bustle began again, but old and neglected mines could not be re-equipped because the steel had to be used for guns and the man-power was making them, or using them. When, therefore, the National Coal Board took over in 1947, it inherited an exhausted, worn-out industry, manned by exhausted, worn-out miners, and the heavy losses the Coal Board sustained during its first years of operation were in part due to its desperate efforts to re-equip, modernise and mechanise the mines in order to produce the tremendous quantities of coal that the country's economy now demands.

Not a small factor in the losses, of course, was the hefty compensation the State agreed to pay the ex-owners. It seems that the huge fortunes their families made in the past through their savage exploitation of the country's natural resources and workers, was not enough—they had to be kept for another few generations on the proceeds from those resources and those workers.

The Coal Board's efforts at mechanisation, however, have had very mixed results. Their direction has been two-fold: to develop machinery and new technical methods here at home, and to import machines from abroad. Unfortunately, however, machines which suit the conditions of American and German pits are not necessarily suitable for British pits and so the experience of technicians and mining engineers from other countries has not been all that valuable here. There was one German machine worth £12,000 left rusting at the bottom of a Yorkshire pit for months because the Coal Board had ordered it without realising that it was quite unsuitable for the conditions in that particular pit.

Mistakes like that can only be made when both the direction and the technical research are divorced from the place of work and the men on the job. P.S.

(To be continued)

COAL-2

ANARCHIST SUMMER SCHOOL

THE ninth annual Summer School of the British Anarchist Movement, and the second to be held at the Malatesta Club in London, took place over the August holiday week-end.

On Saturday afternoon S. E. Parker gave the opening lecture on "The Problem of Violence". After several years during which he had considered that violence could, under certain circumstances, be used by Anarchists in defence of a revolution, Comrade Parker had returned to the point of view that the use of violence must inevitably have a corrupting effect on those who seek to establish a free society. This, he submitted, presented an agonising problem, as in a particular situation to abstain from violence might appear to be betrayal of the revolution, while if they did resort to arms the theoretically freedom-loving anarchists would be using their enemies' own methods of coercion, and involving themselves in the hierarchical structure of military organisation: a process which could only end in the rise of another authoritarian régime. The solution, he suggested, lay in the adoption of positive non-violent methods of resistance to authority.

A vigorous discussion followed. The main problems raised concerned what action should be taken in a given situation such as that in Spain on July 19th, 1936, the link between mass revolutionary violence and individual violence, such as the restraint of men about to commit injurious acts, the bourgeois nature of the pacifist movement, and whether it was harmful to commit ourselves in advance to a principle of this kind.

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SATURDAY evening was given over to social activities, with dancing as

Freedom Vanishes into Thin Air

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some magnitude—the results would probably be negligible but at least an injustice would be noticed by those whom it affects.

It is hard to understand how the comparative freedoms of Broadcasting and the Press are now to be rationalized. A Member of Parliament is now forbidden to express his views on radio or television with reference to any legislation which is at that time before the House; he may write articles for newspapers or effect an advertising campaign on precisely those issues about which he cannot broadcast. If he wishes he may even stage a giant demonstration in Hyde Park. For some reason therefore, it is the Government's policy—supported by part of the Labour Party even when out of office—to suppress certain freedoms of Broadcasting.

The main reason is not too difficult to find. Unscripted broadcasts are impossible to control, and con-

stitute a threat to the smooth-running efficiency of the party machine. Who can tell what a flustered and perhaps bewildered M.P. will say on the spur of the moment—only too easily may he make an off-the-party-line remark without sufficient time to consider carefully what the line is. Or worse still, comment on a current issue before the party has made up its mind as to its official view. One may re-read a written article, or submit it to the censorship of Lord Woolton or Mr. Morrison, but a few rash words before an audience of three million can never be blue-pencilled.

No reasonable case can be made for this latest directive, no valid justification put forward. Another freedom is forfeited—freedom to discuss or debate in the most public place of all, those questions which are of the most importance to all—for they may be law to-morrow.

H.W.

The discussion that followed Tony Turner's lecture was, inevitably, wide and diverse, ranging from the early Christian fathers to the mating habits of beavers, but, as the speaker had anticipated, there was a general measure of agreement with his own attitude.

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ON Saturday afternoon the usual open-air meeting was held in Hyde Park, giving the provincial visitors a chance to hear the London speakers and giving the London crowd a chance to hear at least one speaker new to them.

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ON Sunday evening, dealing with "Anarchism and Education", Philip Lewis spoke of his experiences as a student teacher at St. George's-in-the-East, the most progressive State school in the country, and, on the demand of the audience, continued to describe A. S. Neill's famous school at Summerhill.

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SCIENCE NOTES

THREE WORLD PROBLEMS

A GLANCE at the newspaper headlines, or any attention paid to a B.B.C. news broadcast would lead one to a completely false impression about the important basic problems in the world to-day. Politicians meet, argue and quarrel about the exact position of national boundaries, the political future of Formosa, or spheres of political influence in the Middle East. Yet such conferences do not help to feed one child anywhere in the world. Scientists appear to be almost entirely concerned with designing faster fighter planes, or more destructive explosive forces; efforts which will not eradicate a single disease. Many people are employed preventing crime, catching criminals, and keeping them in prisons, but few are studying the problem of anti-social behaviour and its causes whether due to the nature of the individual, or the structure of society.

(1) Food Supply

U.N.E.S.C.O., although the largest world organisation ever created for tackling basic problems, is but a "poor relation" of U.N.O., that glamorous extravaganza of political intrigue, the "green table" of world politics.

U.N.E.S.C.O. has given help to a few small areas where there is an acute food shortage, but a majority of people still do not get enough to eat and death from starvation is common. Educational help in better farming methods, and soil erosion control; fertilisers, irrigation schemes, and improved animal stocks, are urgently needed in many parts of the world. Skilled help and advice and the means to be able to make use of it must be sent from areas where it is available to where it is most needed.

(2) Physical Health

The second basic problem is the problem of physical health, and the preven-

tion of disease, and is intimately related to the first. For the improvement of nutritional standards would in themselves bring about a big improvement in general health. Malaria which can be prevented and cured is still the largest single cause of death in the world but pessimists have argued that if people are saved from malaria they will die of starvation. But the weakening effect of chronic malaria and hookworm is partly responsible for the low agricultural standards in affected areas. In many areas such as India and Central America both basic problems can only be tackled simultaneously. The development of chemotherapy has simplified the large-scale treatment of epidemic and endemic diseases. Their application is held up partly by political considerations, partly by superstitious, and religious objections to the prophylactic and therapeutic measures involved.

(3) Mental Health

Many millions who are not short of food and who do not suffer from any organic disease suffer intensely from an inability to make satisfactory social relationships, in our complex urban society with its variable and incoherent standards of value. This problem although perhaps less important than the first two, is rapidly increasing in size. In America it has been calculated that more hospital beds are needed for mental health cases than the others. And with the breakdown of so many small static cultural systems and the spread of a world urban civilisation this problem will in the ultimate be the greatest of the three. Palliative measures in social adjustment may help but the final solution may involve such considerable social changes as to be considered revolutionary. Bios.

