

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"To know what you prefer instead of humbly saying "Amen" to what the world tells you you ought to prefer is to have kept your soul alive."  
 —R. L. STEVENSON.

## A PALACE REVOLUTION IN ARGENTINA

# FOR GOD, COUNTRY (& THE DOLLAR)

THE almost indecent haste with which the American and British Governments and the Vatican have recognised the 'new' régime in Argentina is sufficient indication to us as to the nature of that régime.

There was no doubt about the fact that Peron had lost his grip on the reins, mainly through being unable to keep the workers (the main source of his power) satisfied, and also through being so ill-advised as to challenge the Catholic Church.

Frankly we were always rather puzzled by Peron's recent conflict with the Church. That it was a naked struggle for power was obvious, but why it should have been launched was not so clear, until we realise that it was in fact provoked by the Church itself in order to discredit him and get international support for an attempt to remove him.

At the beginning of Peron's régime, the three power groups in the country—Church, Army and the Peronite politico-economic unions—got along together very well. They effectively and enthusiastically stamped out the independent socialist unions and every expression of civil liberty among the populace except—significantly enough—a parliamentary opposition.

This parliamentary opposition theoretically had freedom to oppose, but in fact the leaders of the Radical and Socialist Parties were regularly arrested before each election, after the discovery by the Peronistas of a plot against the dictatorship. In spite of this they retained one-third of the popular vote throughout the country, but because the opposition remained parliamentary, it made not the slightest difference to Peron's effective dictatorship.

### They Used the Workers

The coalition of control remained solid while things went well, and in his hey-day Peron effected lasting economic changes in the Argentine. But his grip on the situation was never the same after the death of his wife Eva. It was she who inspired the *descamisados* (the shirtless ones) of Peron's trade union movement into marching on Buenos Aires in 1945 when he was arrested by the Army and showed to the traditional ruling class of the country the power of the workers.

But it was a power always carefully controlled and canalised in the direction the Perons wanted, which was the development of a corporate State nationalism, based on a personal dictatorship. The supreme power of the dictatorship was curbed by the entrenched and traditional strength of the Church and the Army, but Peron's success came from his ability to balance and use these forces with his own and not allow them to join against him.

The Church was at first wooed by Peron, who gave it privileges previously unknown. For the first time the traditional separation of Church and State was abandoned and religious instruction was given in State schools. The Army, too, had its rewards in being well looked after by

the dictator, who modernised it into the best equipped in South America. The support of the workers and peasants was bought by welfare schemes, industrial expansion in the cities and in attacks on the power of the rich landowners in favour of the small peasant.

But Peron's ambitious nationalism strained the resources of the country too far. The wave of prosperity of the first few years had to be paid for, and the cry, familiar enough to the British, for restraint and tightening of the belt, came from Government House. More discipline was demanded of the workers and the more the economy got into difficulties, the more Peron tried to bluster and bully his way out.

### The Church's Opportunity

Here the Church saw its opportunity to make political capital among the workers. Already affronted by Peron's lay canonisation of Eva as 'spiritual chief of the nation', the Catholics had clearly decided that the time was ripe for a move to a position of more power. In Cordoba, a strong Catholic centre, the leaders of 'Catholic Action' began to form Christian trade unions in opposition to the Peronistas, as a basis for a modern Christian Democratic movement.

## The Whites of Mississippi SEGREGATION & A LYNCHING

AS we have pointed out in FREEDOM on a number of occasions the Law is on many occasions in advance of "public opinion" (or "public prejudice"). This seems obviously the case in the United States with regard to the status of that large majority of its citizens who happen to be Negroes.

Some months ago the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in the schools was unconstitutional. In spite of this in many States the Court's findings have either been flouted or made unworkable by the introduction of all kinds of difficulties including violence and intimidation.

The Bill of Rights in its very first article sets forth the right of petitions. Yet as Mr. Roy Wilkins, executive of the National Association of Coloured people had occasion to point out, in Washington, that right is at this very moment under attack in a part of the South. He is reported as saying that in some States Negro citizens had presented petitions asking their various local school boards to carry out the decree of the Supreme Court against segregated public schools. "The filing of these petitions," he said, "has touched off in numerous localities a calculated campaign of intimidation and terror utterly un-American in character and without parallel in our history." He submitted to the committee a copy of a four-page advertisement in the Yazoo City Herald, of Mississippi, inserted by the White Citizens' Council of that city on August 25, 1955.

The advertisement contained the names and addresses of every person who had signed a petition to the school board asking for de-segregation. Of the 54 citizens who signed it, it is estimated that up to to-day all but six have asked that their names be removed. Many of the 48 were dismissed from their jobs and others were subjected to threats of a nature which caused them to recant.

One man, a plumbing contractor, not only lost a contract but was refused materials from a plumbing supply house and was told by his grocer that a loaf of bread would cost him \$1. In Natchez, Mississippi, a funeral director who signed the petition had his loans called by the local bank but was able to secure alternative financing from a bank in Tennessee. The wife of one of the leaders in the petition signing in Missis-

siippi has been so "harrassed and terrified that she would not consent to her husband's absence for one night to make a trip to Washington to tell the Department of Justice about conditions there." In Orangeburg, South Carolina, a garage proprietor who signed a petition, was asked to surrender his franchise. Another was denied delivery of petrol just before the Labour Day holiday. A woman signer was evicted from the house she was renting.

There are nearly half-a-million Negroes of voting age in Mississippi but only about 22,000 have been granted the right of registration. Last May 7 the Rev. G. W. Lee, the first Negro registered voter in Humphreys County, Mississippi, was killed by a shot-gun blast as he drove past in his car. "The Sheriff," Mr. Wilkins said, "cynically suggested that the shot-gun pellets in his jaw and neck could have been lead filling in his teeth." On August 13, Mr. Lamar Smith, another registered voter "was shot down in broad daylight on the Court House lawn at Brookhaven, Mississippi, the home town of a judge who had gone about the country urging the impeachment of the United States Supreme Court."

Emmett Till, a 14-year-old Negro boy from Chicago was spending a holiday with his uncle in Money, a village near Sumner, Mississippi. It is alleged that the boy "wolf-whistled" at Mrs. Carolyn Bryant "an attractive 21-year-old brunette" one day and when she told her husband, he and his half-brother called on Emmett's uncle and went off with the boy. His body was recovered from the river a few days later. He had been beaten viciously about the face and shot in the head. The two men were arrested and charged with kidnapping and murdering the boy.

At the trial Negroes and Whites occupied segregated sections of the courtroom, including the journalists. Said 20-stone Sheriff H. Strider: "We haven't mixed so far down here and we don't intend to." For these same reasons presumably the jury was an all-white one.

After a trial lasting four days the jury returned a verdict of not guilty on the murder charge. (The kidnapping charge will be tried by a different court). The foreman told press reporters that the jury

And here's where Peron lost his head completely. Over-estimating his own strength and under-estimating the influence of the Church among the armed forces—and among the workers, Juan Peron challenged the Church head-on, with the events we have already described in these columns.

It was his great mistake. With a shaky economy beneath him he should have placated the other pillars of his triumvirate, seeking their support, not their open antagonism. But dictators have their pride. Their prestige comes first, and their blown-out egos tend to obscure their vision.

So he has paid for his mistakes. Although he has undoubtedly salted away a comfortable fortune to see

him through his enforced retirement. A new ruling clique shoulder him aside and sit down in his chair. God has found the guns, as usual, and the equally almighty dollar, key to so much South American politics, finds the new boys quite acceptable.

The USA never quite knew where it was with Peron. His nationalism led him into conflict with dollar imperialism, but the industrial development he wanted demanded dollar investment. Probably the new régime will be more international-minded (after all the Church is universal), at least as far as the flow of profits across the frontiers is concerned.

It doesn't matter that the new régime has been imposed by force (any more than it mattered in Guatemala); such arguments apply only to China and countries where principles can be expressed because they don't get in the way of investments.

A palace revolution has been successfully made—for God, the Fatherland (and the Dollar).

## REFLECTIONS ON The Free Press

ELSEWHERE we reprint a letter published in the *New Statesman* from a correspondent who seems on the point of giving up writing letters to the Press protesting at injustice as it seems to him a waste of time and energy at least judging by the results. In theory the Letters to the Editor feature in the British Press (noticeable by its complete absence from much of the continental press), is a valuable weapon of free speech. But in practice, a closer analysis of the letter columns reveals that certain newspapers reserve this space for the views of titled personages, politicians or V.I.P.s, while others mix these with very brief contributions on controversies no more dangerous than the problem of "litter louts" or bad time-keeping on British Railways. Only exceptionally does one see a letter that cuts across all the accepted values, free from compromise and the acceptance of the lesser evil as a basic philosophy.

The Press, more perhaps than any other medium of expression, could pioneer new ideas, new values at the same time as presenting the widest coverage of news and thus help to draw the peoples of the world closer together. Instead to-day, excluding the gutter press (which means ex-

cluding the most widely read section of the Press), the few "serious" papers that are left serve at most the negative function of curbing governments or local authorities, and preventing some abuses which otherwise might be perpetrated with impunity.

EVEN such a regatitv rôle can be precarious since it depends on the acquiescence of the governments concerned. Only in the past week we have been forcibly reminded of this important fact as a result of the palace revolution in Argentina where one of the first measures agreed to by the new Government was to restore that country's most influential newspaper *La Prensa* to its owner-editor. This action, however, reminds us that when General Peron could no longer tolerate that paper's criticism he simply seized it lock, stock and barrel and ran it with his own stooges.

But we have no doubt the Peron's successors have the same attitude to the Press and are just as likely to follow his lead should *La Prensa* exceed certain limits of criticism. Just as has happened after two years of General Rojas Pinilla's régime in Colombia which we are told "came to power with great hopes and great promises", yet is now, in the words of the *New York Times*, "a harsh, one-man dictatorship". And the Columbian Press which was "one of the most independent, lively and

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### PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 38

Deficit on Freedom £570  
 Contributions received £518  
 DEFICIT £52

### September 17 to September 22

Los Angeles: The NOI Group (picnic donations Sept. 4) £12/5/0; Prestwich: V.M. 11/-; Falmouth: R.W. 1/-; Stroud: S.L.R. 1/6; London: N.B.T.\* 2/-; Kenton: R.S. 1/3; London: J.S.\* 6/-; Liverpool: P.E. 7/-; Paterson: D.V. 14/-; Huddersfield: J.D. 5/6.  
 Total ... 14 14 3  
 Previously acknowledged ... 503 1 9

1955 TOTAL TO DATE ... £517 16 0

\*Indicates regular contributors.  
 GIFTS OF BOOKS: Maidenhead: L.S.; London: D.M.R.

### CORRECTION

The item "I'Adunata £6/14/11 was included in error in last week's list. The total, however, remains unchanged.

# The Libertarian Tradition & the New Society

"There can be pseudo-realisation of socialism, where the real life of man to man is but little changed. The real living together of man with man can only thrive where people have the real things of their common life in common; where they can experience, discuss and administer them together; where real fellowships and real work guilds exist. We see more or less from the Russian attempt at realisation that human relationships remain essentially unchanged when they are geared to a socialist-centralist hegemony which rules the life of individuals and the life of the natural social groups. Needless to say we cannot and do not want to go back to primitive agrarian communism or to the corporate State of the Christian Middle Ages. We must be quite unromantic, and, living wholly in the present, out of the recalcitrant material of our own day in history, fashion a new community."

MARTIN BUBER, in a speech at Heppenheim, 1928.

WHAT remains to be said of the return to Zion? Three very important things. I do not wish to mention again what it has done for Jewry, though I must remind you of Stephen Spender's remark that "Israel is the result of the persecution of the Jews in this century, unprecedented in scale, and the welfare of the State should be a question of moral conscience for the whole world". The three things which Jewish settlement in Palestine has given to the world are a

human example, an agricultural example, and a social example.

The human example is in the magnificent qualities it has drawn out from its participants. The need makes the man, and what wonderfully creative personalities it produced in, for example, Joseph Baratz, A. D. Gordon, Pinchas Rutenberg, Henrietta Szold, Arthur Ruppin, Chaim Arlosoroff . . . to name only those we have mentioned in this notebook.

The agricultural example is, of course, in the reclamation of the desert, the most thrilling aspect of the Jewish experiment, but also in the new type of peasant which has been produced: the type that Kropotkin asked for fifty years ago in *Fields, Factories & Workshops*, and the type that Mr. Hyams asks for to-day in *Prophecy of Famine*. Yehudi Menuhin gave a concert at Ein Gev and was enthralled by the people he met:

"I stood there, realising that here I was watching an entirely new type of peasant folk. While elsewhere in the world the peasant is being destroyed and changed into a factory hand of the land, these people had succeeded in finding strong roots in the earth, without in any way losing the spiritual and intellectual values of life. Perhaps, I thought, they are an example of what eventually a peasant will be like. It will not be the age-old, instinctive specimen of the kulak as we have known him, who up to this

very day has formed the backbone of all human culture, and who is becoming obsolete in our mechanical time. Nor is it the industrialised farmer, the man who runs his farm as a factory. Here, in these kibbutzniks, there might be a way out and a solution of one of the gravest problems of our age."

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## Two Socialisms

THE social example is to be found in the structure of the collective settlements. They are related in Martin Buber's beautifully argued book *Paths in Utopia*, to the tradition of Proudhon, Kropotkin and Gustav Landauer. Buber's book is a defence and a restatement of that stream of socialist thought which was castigated by Marx and Engels and their disciples as 'Utopian'.

"Kropotkin summed up the basic view of the ends in a single sentence: the fullest development of individuality 'will combine with the highest development of voluntary association in all its aspects, in all possible degrees and for all possible purposes; an association that is always changing, that bears in itself the elements of its own duration, that takes on the forms which best correspond at any given moment to the manifold strivings of all'. This is precisely what Proudhon had wanted in the maturity of his thought. It may be contended that the Marxist objective is not essentially different in constitution; but at this point a yawning chasm opens out before us which can only be bridged by that special form of Marxist utopias, a chasm between, on the one side, the transformation to be consummated sometime in the future—no one knows how long after the final victory of the Revolution—and, on the other, the road to the Revolution and beyond it, which road is characterized by a far-reaching centralisation that permits no individual features and no individual initiative. Uniformity as a means is to change miraculously into multiplicity as an end; compulsion into freedom. As against this the 'utopian' or non-Marxist socialist desires a means commensurate with his ends; he refuses to believe that in our reliance on the future 'leap' we have to have now the direct opposite of what we are striving for; he believes rather that we must create here and now the space now possible for the thing for which we are striving, so that it may come to fulfillment then; he does not believe in the post-revolutionary leap, but he does believe in revolutionary continuity."

## The Things They Say

"It is said that the Soviet leaders smile. This is a real smile. It is not false. We want to live in peace, in tranquility. But if anyone thinks that our smiles mean the abandonment of the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, he is deceiving himself cruelly. Those who expect this to happen might just as well wait for a shrimp to learn how to whistle."

—Nikita Khrushchev.

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"Our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is."

—Dwight D. Eisenhower.

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"The Foreign Office does not know any secrets. It is a gigantic build up for leaders of the aristocracy so that they can go all over Europe and people will say 'Your Excellency'."

—A. J. P. Taylor.

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"The scientist is not only disliked, but also distrusted." Governments treat the scientist as "indispensable, but unreliable, a hangdog hangman who has the bad manners to be good at war work and the impertinence to find it distasteful. The public thinks that he has no conscience, and his security officer fears that he has two consciences. . . . He is unhappy between his scientific creed and his social loyalty; between, that is, the long and triumphant tradition of open publication, and a society which still hopes to survive by the pleasant adage, 'Least said, soonest mended'."

The public "puts its fear of the scientist into robust terms—he is going to blow man off the earth, or (in alternate weeks) he is going to overpopulate it."

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"We do not contemplate any early move on any—and I repeat any—aspect of the exchange front."

—R. A. Butler.

\*Sir Stafford Cripps said nine times that he was not going to devalue the pound—then he did it (in 1949).

When we examine capitalist society, says Buber, "we see that it is a society inherently poor in structure, and growing poorer every day." (By the structure of a society is to be understood its social content or community content: a society can be called structurally rich to the extent that it is built up of genuine societies), that is local communes and trade communes and their step by step association). He compares Proudhon with Saint-Simon:

"Saint-Simon started from the reform of the State. Proudhon from the transformation of society. A genuine reconstruction of society can only begin with a radical alteration of the relationship between the social and the political order. It can no longer be a matter of substituting one political régime for another, but of the emergence, in place of a political régime expressive of society itself. 'The prime cause of all the disorders that visit society,' says Proudhon, 'of the oppression of the citizens and the decay of nations, lies in the single and hierarchical centralisation of authority.'"

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## Kropotkin & Landauer

HE sees Kropotkin as amplifying Proudhon's thought in stating the simple antithesis between the principles of the struggle for existence and mutual help. He regards Kropotkin's earlier theory of the State as historically understated and regards as more correct the later view in *Modern Science & Anarchism* (French edition of 1913):

"All through the history of our civilisation, two contrary traditions, two trends have faced one another; the Roman tradition and the national tradition; the imperial and the federal; the authoritarian and the libertarian."

Buber in his critique of Kropotkin says:

"As in his inadequate distinction between the excessive and the legitimate State, or the superfluous and the necessary State, so in another important respect Kropotkin's view, although perceiving many historical relationships unnoticed by Proudhon, is not realistic enough. . . . The danger of collective egoism, as also that of schism and oppression, is hardly less in an autonomous community than in the nation or party, particularly when the community participate as a co-partner in production."

Gustav Landauer's step beyond Kropotkin, Buber says, consists in his insight into the State. "The State is not, as Kropotkin thinks, an institution which can be destroyed by a revolution. The State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human

behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently." Therefore, says Buber, we shall always be helping to destroy it to the extent we do in fact enter into other relationships. Landauer declares that:

"One day it will be realised that socialism is not the invention of anything new but the discovery of something actually present, or something that has grown. . . . Socialism is possible and impossible at all times; it is possible when the right people are there to will and do it; it is impossible when people either don't will it or only supposedly will it, but are not capable of doing it. . . . Let us be under no illusion as to the situation in all countries to-day (July 1914). When it comes to the point, the only thing that these revolutionary agitations have served is the nationalist-capitalist aggrandisement we call imperialism; even when originally tinged by socialism they were all too easily led by some Napoleon or Cavour or Bismark into the mainstream of politics, because all these insurrections were in fact only a means of political revolution or nationalist war but never a means of socialist transformation. . . ."

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## Marxism & Co-operation

BUBER then examines the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, and he shows how in their changing and contradictory attitudes to the old Russian communal institutions, the *Mir* and the *Arel*, and in their attitudes to co-operatives and Workers' Councils, they regarded them simply as a tool in the political struggle. "From the standpoint of Leninism", said Stalin, "the collective economies, and the Soviets as well, are taken as a form of organisation, a weapon and nothing but a weapon." One cannot in the nature of things, comments Buber, "expect a little tree that has been turned into a club to put forth leaves." He goes on to consider the history of the Co-operative movement:

"But for the most part the running of large co-operative institutions has become more and more like the running of capitalist ones, and the bureaucratic principle has completely ousted, over a wide field, the voluntary principle, once prized as the most precious and indispensable possession of the Co-operative movement. This is especially clear in countries where Consumer Societies have in increasing measure worked together with the State and the municipalities, and Charles Gide was certainly not far wrong when he called to mind the fable of the

Continued on p. 3

## OPERA

### BEHIND BARS

WE recently quoted some remarks of Victor Gollancz about an amateur production of Beethoven's *Fidelio* which he saw in a converted barn. It wasn't a very good performance, but as he sat there in the same room with Leonora and Florestan, with the prisoners fumbling their way about almost on top of him, he felt almost unbearably involved in the opera. "It was as if one were suddenly all mixed up with fidelity and freedom and hope, and not merely watching the symbols of them from the outside." For quite opposite reasons, something of the same personal communication of the theme of the work imbued the performance by the Stuttgart State Opera at the Festival Hall in London last week.

Beethoven had not the temperament of an operatic composer, and one of the unsatisfactory things about *Fidelio* as normally produced is the disparity between the naturalism and 'artificial realism' of *opéra comique* in which it is cast, compared with the noble and heroic themes of the plot and the music. The producer of the Stuttgart Opera's performance, Mr. Wieland Wagner, has sought

to overcome this defect by the bold step of putting the whole opera into a stylised and symbolic form. He has a fixed set for the whole work, the stage is an oval platform bathed in yellow light and enclosed by prison bars. The costumes are subdued and faintly modern, all props have been eliminated, except the pick with which the jailor Rocco digs the grave intended for Florestan, the political prisoner, and the pistol with which Leonora, the prisoner's wife, disguised as the jailor's mate, prevents Pizarro the prison governor from killing her husband. Almost all the spoken dialogue has been omitted, the overture has been replaced by the *Leonora No. 2*, and in the opening scene the sequence of the arias has been rearranged so that there is not the usual awkward transition between cosy domestic comedy in the jailor's quarters and the aria *Mir ist so Wunderbar*. The curious stylised movements of the characters at first seems a little comical and rather reminiscent of unsuccessful German experiments in expressionist drama, but the total impact of this mode of production is tremendous. Its strength, and its weakness appear in the prisoners' chorus. John Hewetson described this part of the opera in these words:

"At the end of the first act, Leonora arranges for them to be let out to exercise in the garden of the prison, ostensibly to enable her to scrutinise each prisoner in the hope of finding her husband. But in Beethoven's hands this detail of mere plot becomes completely submerged in the emotional response of the prisoners themselves to the open air and sunlight. The opening music as they totter out of the darkness of the cells half-blinded by the unaccustomed daylight is unforgettably moving. Indeed, the whole chorus of prisoners comes near to being emotionally the most powerful passage in the whole opera. . . . The attitude of the composer and librettist to the prisoners is made quite explicit in the words of their chorus, in which they say that 'a prison is a grave', and in a passage where they cry 'Oh, freedom, freedom, will it yet be ours—be silent, never speak that word, here we are watched and overheard,' the reiterated whispering of the word *freedom* becomes almost obsessional."

In Mr. Wagner's production, the prisoners are in two compact bodies in chains, dressed not in a pathetic variety of rags, but all in a sort of tropical battledress, and they circle slowly round the stage, rhythmically swaying to and fro. Thus they do not appear as individuals; prison has, but for the words they sing, crushed them completely as persons. It is a different conception, but not a false one. There is a hint in their tragic depersonalisation of Van Gogh's and Gustav Doré's famous *Prison Circle*. Indeed the production is full of half-felt hints and allusions, Pizarro looks sometimes like Napoleon or like Hitler, but wisely Mr. Wagner lets the mind draw its own allusions and is content to hint.

Even the anti-climax of the finale (when, after the tension of Florestan's aria and the drama of his rescue, Beethoven turns his work from opera into oratorio), even the finale becomes in this production, with its change of lighting and introduction of colour at last, dramatic and thrilling, and the singers and orchestra rose to the occasion—an admirable and triumphant success.

## THEATRE

### THE DISPLACED COUNT

"THE COUNT OF CLERAMBARD"

(Garrick Theatre), which has enjoyed more than a year's successful run in Paris, has suffered badly in transit. It is a brittle satire dished up in the manner of farce, a dangerous mixture at any time to transport across the Channel. It is a bitter comment on the prevalent modern attitude, either we see the light, accept miracles where there are none, give away all our possessions, grovel in the mire of our sins and beg at the hands of our fellows, or take the other, the existentialist way, destroy, brutalize, kill, and revel in the sheer destruction and cruelty of it. It seems also to be aimed at certain French playwrights who advocate just this sort of attitude. In fact this is a flashing diamond of a play with a hard relentless core and no sugaring of the pill. But in the English production all the hard corners have been carefully rubbed off, the bite is softened, and even visually, I assume that the whole thing has been more than somewhat watered down. The net result is lamentable and does the author a disservice.

The Count of Clerambard, an impoverished nobleman, is a monster of cruelty and decadence, he kills cats to supplement the family dinner and dogs for pleasure, while his wife, son, and mother-in-law are kept slaving away endlessly at knitting looms making jumpers to restore his fortune. By a vision of St. Francis of Assisi he is suddenly converted so completely that even spiders are henceforward addressed by him in terms of 'little sister', and he upbraids his wife and son for daring to kill one of the poor helpless little creatures! He decides to give up his chateau and all his possessions, scotches the idea of his son marrying into the rich shopkeeper-class to restore the family fortunes, and decides he shall marry none other than the village whore. Thereupon he takes his entire family to live in a caravan at the mercy of their fellow human-beings. Indeed once he has seen the light he cannot grovel enough in dirt and remorse.

M. Aymé is out to prove very effectively that both the doctrine of sadism

and masochism are too easily embraced and are at best only facile attitudes of extreme self-indulgence, an escape from reality and responsibility. In its English version however, the play becomes neither farce nor serious comedy, merely distasteful and utterly unbelievable. The producer has obviously not understood the play as his casting alone shows. The cast utterly fail to find a common level of interpretation and everyone seems to be acting in a different convention or according to his or her own lights.

Mr. Clive Brook as the Count, though in the first act he stands too much outside himself and finds himself too pointedly funny, might have carried us along all the same if his supporting cast had made the least attempt to support him. As it is they consistently break any illusion he sets out to create. Miss Mai Zetterling as the whore gives a sort of cabaret performance of her own unique interpretation of a gamine street urchin, full of balletic poses and movements and 'snatches of old songs' that jar. She is embarrassing while utterly lacking in sensuality, the first requisite for the part. Miss Valerie Taylor, as the harassed wife is under the weather from start to finish while Miss Helen Haye, as her mother, merely wears an air of disapproval throughout the proceedings. Both seem to have strayed out of some dreary English drawing-room comedy where they would obviously have been more at ease. The only person in the cast who has understood what sort of acting the play requires is Alec McCowen as the son. His is the only consistent and compelling performance of the evening.

Standing utterly remote from the real essence of the play the producer has here and there brought in elements of whimsy, and the dirty bits of sex and squalour have been carefully highlighted, so that, instead of being part and parcel of life as understood by M. Aymé, they are deliberately underlined as *risqué* for the benefit of bringing in the English public. And judging by the huge audiences packing the theatre he has achieved his aim.

D.

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## THE FREE PRESS

Continued from p. 1  
technically excellent in Latin American... [and] had a newspaper in El Tiempo of Bogotá "that was one of the best dailies in the hemisphere" has been suppressed by Rojas Pinilla "along with other newspapers, and there is no freedom of the press left in Colombia".

In Turkey, only last week, the Martial Law authorities closed down five newspapers. And in India the government has decided to prevent all foreign news publications from printing editions in India. This decision was apparently based on the recommendations of an Indian Press Commission set up last year. It is probable that the representations made to the government by some Indian newspaper owners (concerned with circulation!), may have influenced Mr. Nehru and his cabinet.

Add to this picture of recent interference with the press the fact that in the countries of the Russian bloc, and in most Latin American countries and in Franco's Spain the Press is directly controlled by the respective ruling cliques, then the conclusion one comes to is that there is no such thing as freedom of the press; at its highest it can be put as government *toleration*. Some editors, such as Mr. Russell Wiggins of the *Washington Post* cherish the illusion that

freedom of the press is not a privilege reserved for newspaper men but a right of the public to guarantee that its Government will be obedient to the public interest and will shun all exercises of arbitrary or secret power.\*

But to achieve the limited objectives put forward by Mr. Wiggins (assuming for one moment that any government will be "obedient to the public interest), the Press must spring from those it serves. Yet excluding those periodicals and newspapers which are the organs of groups or organisations, and which are but the poor relations of the press world, the Press to-day is just another industry which far from defending the public interest, is concerned with moulding it and influencing governments in favour of sectional interest (generally those of a privileged minority in society). In France and Italy we know for a fact most of the leading dailies are owned by the large industrialists, and we can well imagine that the powers behind the "free" Press in most other countries have ramifications in industry and politics. What remains, and it is very little, and mainly limited to the *periodical* press, survives because it is sufficiently respectable, conformist and "popular" to command a circulation which interests the advertisers.

The advertisers, that is the government and the large industrial concerns—who are the power behind the mouthpiece called government—are the backbone of the Press! How then, even in one's most insane moments, can one believe that the Press speaks for the people?

A MYTH, obviously circulated by the Press barons themselves, widely believed by the gullible public (and apparently confirmed by the dismal failure of the *Recorder* with all its respectability and "backing") is that the Press is a kind of "closed shop" exclusively reserved for millionaires. Even assuming this to be correct how explain the fact that "organised labour" representing

\*Max Freedman quoting from Mr. Wiggins in the *Manchester Guardian* (19/9/55) adds that "he probably does more than any other newspaper editor in the United States to keep Government officials aware that public business must be transacted in public and that it is an abuse of office to deny access to public information."

some 8 million workers in this country has no daily newspaper which after all could represent the "interests" of a very large section of the working population? For an outlay of a mere threepence a week for a year there would be an initial capital available equal to five million, with which to launch a daily newspaper owing no loyalty to advertisers or government. But perhaps, therein lies the snag. The politicians of the Labour Party and Trades Unions think of themselves as governors who are only temporarily out of power. To have an organ which is financed and organised from below might be a thorn in their sides when they cease to be simply the leaders of Her Majesty's opposition. How else can one explain the fact that they tolerate a minority share in the *Daily Herald* which the National Executive declares has done less than its best to help Labour win the recent elections†.

THE Press will only be free in the fullest sense of the word when it fulfils the needs of those who read and support it. This means a complete reversal of the existing set up. But, and we cannot help repeating ourselves for the umpteenth time, it will not happen until there are enough people who find or make the time to start thinking and getting together to decide what it is they want. Just as it is true that the public won't get the best kind of furniture, clothes, food and services until they know what they want so with the Press. It's not enough to complain. You have also to know what you want and be prepared to join with others of a like mind to get what you want!

†Earlier this month Attlee, Summerskill and Phillips, leader, chairman, and secretary respectively of the party complained formally to the four T.U. directors on the *Daily Herald* board that "their paper had given Labour inadequate support during the general election."

## Anarchism and Self Interest

IN the recent correspondence in *FREEDOM* with regard to taxation and its resistance or evasion, and again in the editorial of September 17, the discussion skirted around the subject of self-interest in a way which, in my opinion, leaves too many loose ends.

In the said editorial, a sentence was quoted from my articles 'Should we make a Fuss?' and the editor maintained that it obscured my real point. But I don't think it did at all; it added another aspect to the main one I asked to be considered, which was whether we can happily complain about bad service when our complaint may lead to another person getting into trouble. This, my main point, was certainly concerned, as our editor pointed out, with human relations, and was very well answered in those terms by George Hilbin, a catering worker, in the same issue.

The sentence quoted in the editorial seems, however, to have worried the editor somewhat, as being out of character with the label of 'communist' anarchist which he chose to give me. I wrote 'As anarchists we also want the best of everything here and now, without waiting for the revolution...' and since this might appear to be a yielding to bourgeois values, perhaps I had better try to explain further. After all, one must be so careful, or someone might decide we are only neo-anarchists.

Firstly, may I clear up this 'communist' label? I have a comrade who, when he has had a glass of wine too much, always denounces me to any present company as 'that syndicalist'; now along comes our comrade editor and pins 'communist' on me, while I have, of course, been denounced as 'individualist' by non-anarchists in the past. This really points to a very satisfactory situation, for if you earn all the labels, it's as good as earning none.

I am an anarchist, and I have no wish to be sub-divided into any category. I support the idea and practice wherever possible in industry of anarcho-syndicalism, because I consider it to offer the most suitable means of introducing anarchism into the economic life of society. I support equally the basic concepts of anarchist communism as being the most suitable foundation for social life. I believe that before we can have a social revolution, either in the traditional ('cataclysmic') sense or piecemeal à la gradualism, we must have one-

man revolutions all round. I support wholeheartedly Kropotkin's analysis and propagation of mutual aid, while recognising the force and value of Stirner's egoism and to a certain extent practice both where necessary. I think that group co-operation is essential, but jealously guard my individuality and freedom of action.

In my work as a propagandist I urge all these aspects upon our audiences and leave it to them to follow-up the line of thought which appeals to them most. And I have nothing against any anarchist who embraces one interpretation and propagates that to the exclusion of the others—until he becomes avowedly anti-the others.

THIS I think to be bad—both tactically and in principle. (For what is bad in principle is rarely good tactics). Tactically it is bad because it leads to internal wrangling (as distinct from 'healthy discussion'), to a diversion of energy from outward propagation and more constructive struggle, and to a stressing of differences rather than agreements. In principle it is bad in that it is contrary to the anarchist attitudes of tolerance and co-operation.

In a small movement such as ours it is, I suppose, to be expected that the lack of scope for action will lead to an over-intellectualisation which can so easily produce barren criticism more concerned with scoring slick points than doing anything to further a common cause. And yet it is the common cause that brings us together in the first place.

And here we come on to the 'self-interest' point. What is it that makes people accept anarchism? Surely nothing more than that they want an anarchist society, or that they have found in the philosophy something which appeals to them. In other words, as P.H. put it (17/9/55), we 'are in a position to ask people into the movement for what they can get out of it.'

People therefore become attracted to anarchism because it has something they want—either the life of the movement here and now, or the promise of a society they would like to see established. I propagate anarchism because I want an anarchist society. Self-interest. I do it because I must protest against the indignity forced upon me by authoritarian society. Self-interest. I work for my own interests through the movement because my interests coincide with the movements aims and needs and so I gain strength from the movement. Self-interest. And the day I decide that my interests no longer coincide with what the movement holds out, I shall quit—but that will mean that I shall have ceased to be an anarchist. And I hope I shall be able to admit it, instead of trying to rationalise my change of interest by pretending that it's the movement that has changed instead of me; that I am the only one in step.

If we look at anarchism from this standpoint, we can see how wrong

Ammon Hennacy is in his concept that trying to live up to our ideals entails sacrifice and suffering. It does nothing of the kind. If you accept anarchism it means that you accept a different scale of values from that of bourgeois society—this Hennacy himself asserts. In living up to these new values, then, value is its own reward, and the satisfaction you get from living your way instead of the enemy's way far outweighs the physical or material discomfort that it may involve. In any case, you are following your own interest, and just as you may pay a high price for an article you want to possess, so in embracing revolutionary ideas you know the price you may have to pay—and if you are sufficiently interested in revolution, then you accept the bargain and the question of sacrifice doesn't come into it, for the only things you can lose you have already rejected anyway.

It is this unclarity of thought on such issues that shows us how Hennacy can reconcile anarchism with Catholicism—for once you've done that, the rest is easy.

NOW to get to the point of wanting 'the best of everything here and now. In rejecting bourgeois values, are we to refuse to enjoy the good things of life? Hennacy will obviously say 'Yes', because his anarchism is sacrificial, but I cannot believe that self-abnegation can lead to a healthy society. If it is self-denial that we want, then capitalism in any of its forms will oblige only too willingly for the vast majority of mankind. Authority is always demanding subjection of self-interest to its interest, always wants restraint, austerity, tightening of belts, giving of life. Are we to base a rebellion against these things on the same demands for sacrifice? For what? For another ideology to replace those which plague us already with the same attack on our appetites but justified by another name?

Anarchism is an assertion of our own responsibility. An assertion of our own stature against those who seek to reduce it—an assertion of self against those who try to destroy us, in one way or another. This is what makes it different from those other 'revolutionary' ideologies which, based upon authority, demand subjection to leadership, to the historic mission, to the cause, to the State or to God. I have known Trotskyists who quite deliberately lived in squalor, drinking their tea out of jam-jars and rejecting all bourgeois values of cleanliness because they thought this was revolutionary. Needless to say they were all of middle-class origin and this was the best they could do to identify themselves with the workers. It was a pity that they knew so little about the working class that they did not realise that those workers most likely to adopt revolutionary ideas take a pride in their appearance and in the cleanliness of their homes and themselves—and, incidentally, in their work and how much they get paid for it.

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## The Libertarian Tradition

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wolf disguised as a shepherd and voiced the fear that, instead of making the State 'Co-operative' we should only succeed in making the Co-operative 'static'.

Of the repeated attempts in the last 150 years in Europe and America to found co-operative settlements, he says he would apply the word *failure* not merely to those attempts which after a more or less short-lived existence either disintegrated completely or took on a Capitalist complexion, thus going over to the enemy camp; he would also apply it to those that maintained themselves in isolation.

"For the real, the truly structural task of the new Village Communes begins with their *federation*, that is, their union under the same principle that operates in their internal structure. Even where, as with the Dukhobors in Canada, a sort of federation itself continues to be isolated and exerts no attractive and educative influence on society as a whole, with the result that the task never gets beyond its beginnings and, consequently there can be no talk of success in the socialist sense. It is remarkable that Kropotkin saw in these two elements—isolation of the settlements from one another and isolation from the rest of society—the efficient causes of failure even as ordinarily understood."

### The New Society

IF the 'Full Co-operative' in which production and consumption are united and industry is complemented by agriculture, is to become the cell of the new society, it is necessary, says Buber, that "there should emerge a network of settlements, territorially based and federatively constructed, without dogmatic rigidity, allowing the most diverse social forms to exist side by side, but always aiming at the new organic whole". There is one effort, he concludes, "which justifies our speaking of success in the socialistic sense, and that is in the Jewish Village Commune in its various forms, as found in Palestine". He calls it a signal non-failure, he cannot say a signal success, because he is too aware of the setbacks and disappointments, of the intrusion of politics, of the "lamentable fact that the all important attitude of neighbourly relationship has not been adequately developed", of how much remains to be done. But of the importance of this non-failure he writes:

"There can hardly be any doubt that we must regard the last war as the end of the prelude to a world crisis. That crisis will probably break out—after a sombre interlude that cannot last very long—first among some of the nations of the West, who will be able to restore their shattered economy in appearance only. They will see themselves faced with the immediate need for radical socialisation, above all the expropriation of the land. It will then be of absolutely decisive importance who is the real subject of an economy so transformed, and who is the owner of the social means of production. Is it to be the central authority in a highly centralised State, or the social units of urban and rural workers, living and producing on a communal basis, and their representative bodies? In the latter case the remodelled organs of the State will discharge the functions of adjustment and administration only. On these issues will largely depend the growth of a new society and a new civilisation."

There are two poles of socialism, declares Buber, between which our choice lies, one we must designate—so long as Russia has not undergone an essential inner change—by the formidable name of *Moscow*. "The other I would make bold to call *Jerusalem*." C.W.

### Bluebeard on Our Side

NAIROBI, SEPTEMBER 22.

A loyal Kikuyu chief, Njiri, was today presented with a Union Jack by the Governor of Kenya, Sir Evelyn Baring, for his resistance to the Mau Mau. Njiri recalled that three years ago he hoisted an old Union Jack on the edge of the Aberdare Forest, and had told his people to choose between him and the Mau Mau. Njiri has 53 wives and a hundred sons.—*Reuter*.

The report does not make clear who "his people" are. Was the Chief in fact addressing himself to his army of 53 wives and 100 sons or to potential wives among the Kikuyu?

### Good Old Charlie!

Do I miss some of the conveniences of the American way of life? No, with the exception of certain items, such as being able to buy balanced-diet cat food and the high-speed diaper-cleaning service.—MR. CHARLES CHAPLIN.

## COLONIAL SAVAGERY

A CORRESPONDENT in this week's *New Statesman & Nation* refers to that journal's editorial comment on the *Kamau Kachina* case (see *FREEDOM* "Torture by Orders", 17/9/55), in which surprise is expressed that very little public protest had been aroused in this country "which used to be sensitive to issues of justice".

The N.S. correspondent asks how can one publicly protest at this and "similar barbarisms" and continues:

Over the past ten years or so I have written hundreds of letters to the press and to my M.P. protesting against actions which disturbed me to such an extent that I have compiled a scrap-book of newspaper cuttings from which I will now refresh your memories:—

1. Entire villages destroyed in Malaya.
2. "The Tragedy of Kampi Ya Simba" (Kenya). 2,200 Kikuyu women and children, and 750 men evicted from villages where they had lived for more than three generations, in order that the villages might be destroyed (November, 1952).
3. Two Kenya police reserve officers fined (£30 and £100) for causing actual bodily harm to an African ex-mission teaching (flogging, which was followed by death) (October, 1953).
4. Forty-four Kikuyus sentenced to death for murder of a year-old baby during *lari* massacre (September, 1953).
5. Chinese girl, aged 17, killed by security forces in Malaya, and her body, clothed in a green jungle outfit, strapped to an upright plank and exhibited outside a police station (November, 1953).

6. Eleven Africans hanged for a ritual murder in Basutoland (August, 1953).

7. Fine of £50 for ordering five Africans to be whipped with a rhino-hide whip—Kenya police officer (December, 1953).

8. Ten-year-old boy shot dead in Malaya; consorting with terrorists (January, 1954).

9. Mau Mau oath taker drenched in paraffin and set ablaze by 16-year-old Police Reservist (February, 1954).

10. A member of Mau Mau sentenced to death for carrying 10 rounds of ammunition. He also carried one of General Erskine's surrender pamphlets. (This brought a protest from the *News Chronicle*) (February, 1954).

11. Kikuyu woman sentenced to death for possessing seven bullets (February, 1954).

12. Life imprisonment for teenage Kikuyu girl who had one cartridge in her handbag. The judge: "If you had not been under 18 I would have sentenced you to be hanged" (April, 1954).

The above are just 12 examples selected from a very large number.

I have protested hundreds of times, lost very many nights' sleep; on one occasion arrived home after a very busy day's work and wrote letters to four different newspapers concerning a case in Kenya. And now I realise that our much-praised freedoms here in England are purely negative. I detest the people responsible for our colonial savagery, but as for protesting I now realise only too sadly that such a thing is sheer waste of both time and money.

Sutton, Surrey. D. BRADSHAW.

## A TEACHER OF FREEDOM ALEX BLOOM

YEARS ago, my father who was an elementary school teacher in the East End of London, described a friend of his, A. A. Bloom, as one of the few who after years of teaching, remembered what was the purpose of education. Bloom was then a teacher in a secondary school using quite ordinary methods. In October, 1945, he was appointed headmaster of St. George-in-the-East Secondary School in Cable Street, Stepney, and there last week he died, at the age of sixty.

When Alex Bloom re-opened this derelict tumbledown school at the end of the war, he was given 260 boys and girls from local primary schools, and ten teachers, most of them unknown to each other and hardly any of whom he knew. But, as a tribute to him in *The Times* last week said, "What he did know was Stepney, with its bomb ruins and overcrowded medley of tongues and peoples. He saw no point in starting an ordinary school in that particular place and year. Instead, he designed one in great detail to meet the social and emotional needs of his particular adolescents. He did not believe that gradualness or a piecemeal reform would meet those needs, and he himself laid down to his staff the school aim: the establishment of a community to which each child should contribute from his own growing confidence and competence, and in which his contribution would be spontaneous, not the by-product of regimentation, punishment, reward, or competition."

Tony Gibson tells us that when Bloom began to put into practice his libertarian ideas, half his staff declared that he was mad and left, and he replaced them with young men and women who had been influenced by progressive ideas during their training. Alex Bloom's ideas went far beyond the opposition to corporal punishment by which people know him. The keystone of his educational beliefs was co-operation, and as a consequence of this came his rejection of punishments and rewards and his institution of a council of pupils to discuss the year's projects and to choose their own curriculum. Answering criticisms of his school some years ago he wrote to *The Times Educational Supplement*, (3/8/51):

"Let me assure you first, that our pur-

pose in removing the normal incentives to effort is not to hide from the child his weaknesses. So many children enter the secondary modern school trailing dark clouds of failure. These mists and the inhibiting effect of the fear of failure have been dispelled. The positive compulsions of streaming, marks, prizes, competition, and the negative compulsion of imposed punishment—the teacher's 'artful aids'—these cannot help to restore the child's self-esteem. By removing them we enable and encourage him to adventure, and if he fails he fails with impunity . . . and with a smile, but with every social inducement to improve his skills.

"You feel that 'the rather sophisticated satisfaction of work well done' is an inadequate reward. But what if that satisfaction alone is adequate? What if, by their fourth year, the children no longer seek 'carrots'? Would you deny them the joy of disinterested achievement?"

"Further, you suggest that because of its ubiquity competition is both right and inevitable. True it is that from the cradle man is subjected to the conditioning of an unceasingly competitive environment and has to face innumerable competitive situations. But this does not prove that competition is right and must continue. Perhaps something should be done about the conditioning! Industry, to-day, is learning that the old incentives, for various reasons, have failed and is looking to the social motive to replace them. And a glance at the troubled state of our competitive world is hardly an argument for their continuance.

"Collaboration with and competition against are mutually exclusive concepts. Competition and rivalry impede the free flow of friendly communication and stunt the growth of group consciousness and co-operation. We have, therefore, discarded them."

★

IN the work of bringing freedom to education the work of independent pioneers like A. S. Neill is of great value as a pilot-light and an inspiration, but the most important thing is to get their ideas accepted in the ordinary primary and secondary schools which the overwhelming majority of us attend. This is the challenge nobly accepted by people like Mr. Teddy O'Neil at Prestolee, Mr. A. L. Stone in Birmingham, and by Alex Bloom in Stepney (all three of them, be it noted, working in slum schools in 'tough' areas).

What is to happen at St. George-in-the-East now that Bloom is dead? He used to say that there were plenty of people in the scholastic world who would like to see him thrown out of the profession. Will

the L.C.C. now bring things back to normal by appointing a disciplinarian in his place? Tony Gibson in his pamphlet *Youth for Freedom* suggested that one of the reasons why Bloom never got the sack was because it would be very difficult to get anyone else to take over. "Imagine about three hundred children in Stepney, one of the toughest districts of London, who have had the opportunity of building up their own school community: would they tamely acquiesce in the transformation of this into an ordinary school with its dreary routine, its suppressed hatreds, its canings, its hypocritical morality? It is obvious that they would give real hell to anyone trying to change the régime."

St. George-in-the-East is better known to foreign visitors, as a great educational experiment, than to most British educationists, declares the correspondent of *The Times*, who concludes, "His work was so quiet that it can never be fully assessed. His children, unlike those of a great public school, are not likely to make their mark in the world and so bring him posthumous renown, but they do go out into a variety of work far beyond the traditional tailoring of Stepney. They have a good record of job holding and a far lower delinquency rate than their local average. And perhaps they will be gentler and more loving parents because of Mr. Bloom's fatherliness." This is a reasonable enough conclusion. People often seem to demand from progressive teachers more than can be expected of them, like those critics of A. S. Neill who triumphantly declare that none of his former pupils has turned out to be a genius. I once spoke to Alex Bloom about the remark that his work was only a drop in the ocean and he said he hoped it was more like a pebble in a pond—a sharp impact in a particular spot, sending out a series of ripples over a much wider area. And now that Bloom is gone, whatever happens to his school, isn't it a real and precious achievement, in these last ten years, to have given hundreds of children a happier and more adventurous adolescence, and to send them into the world with a little less of the spirit of our competitive and acquisitive society, and a little more of the spirit of social co-operation, of spontaneity and freedom? C.W.

## Organisation of a Free Society

"THAT is how we would like society to be, but is it possible?" Some libertarian writers tend to base themselves on the assumption that everyone wants a free society, and the primary task is to convince them, by explaining the organisational networks of syndicates and communes, that a materially high standard of living is possible without the necessity for either capitalist ownership or State control of the means of production. Examples of this type of argument can be found in the extracts from Edward Carpenter's writings printed in *FREEDOM* earlier in the year, and in Alexander Berkman's *A.B.C. of Anarchism*.

More recently, due to the development of psychological knowledge and to the consistent failure of revolutionary movements to make more than a minute impression on the peoples of most countries of the world, anarchists have come to recognize that the important part of the problem of freedom lies rather in the fact that the mass of the people do not consciously desire freedom, but on the contrary put up pretty stiff resistance to anyone who attempts to offer it to them.

Nevertheless, there is a noticeable minority who do realize that the problems of individuals and social groups arise from the present set up of power and authority, but at the same time feel reservations regarding the possibility of a stateless society which prevent them from becoming active anarchists. The immensity and complexity of the economic inter-relations in a country such as England certainly presents difficulties, and attempts to describe the possible federations of syndicates and communes often brings out the objection that they are just the same old State under a different name.

Because of people like this, it is useful to have as clear an idea as possible about the organisational aspects of a free society.

To begin with, it can only be conceived in terms of a free people, who understand the type of society they wish to construct. There is no question of a few militants making adjustments in its structure, and then hoping desperately that anyone will fit in with their adjustments. Anarchy must be based firmly on the attitudes of individual people.

When questions of co-ordination arise, such as arranging for the efficient running of long-distance trains, or seeing that production of, for instance, motor car components, is equal to the desired production of motor cars, then some kind of committee of delegates will have to be set up. The possibility of such committees being effective, and socially useful, without being able to exert authority, depends ultimately on the reasonableness of ordinary people, and their ability to co-operate freely together when it is to their mutual advantage. The caricatures portrayed by apologists of government suggest occurrences such as engine drivers, who wanted a particular train to leave Paddington at 9.25, refusing to take it out because the delegates of the syndicates have arranged for it to leave at 9.10. Normal people do not behave like that, even in this society. In fact a worker's feeling that if he does not work at full capacity it may only mean more for his fellow-workers to do is often unscrupulously exploited by bosses, foremen, and supervisors.

At the same time, the widespread understanding of freedom, and the absence of means of coercion would prevent such committees from becoming a new State. For one thing they would only be dealing with matters of detail, with the co-ordination of decisions made in principle by the direct participation of the people involved, and in any case the driver

would always know that if he really objected to driving the train at 9.10 he need not do so, and no-one would wish or be able to compel him to, even by the use of "moral pressure".

To avoid any inconvenience arising from this, it would simply be advisable to see that groups of workers were always working well within their capacity.

While most democrats (both bourgeois and proletarian), usually begin their discussions by humorously pointing out that nobody wants freedom to break their neighbours' windows, etc., anarchists do demand that there should be no organised means of bringing retribution on the heads of window breakers, realizing that it is the very same organization which inevitably maintains the authoritarian structure of oppression. While one does not normally want to break windows, it would be a sign of a free society if it was possible to do so without fear. If such a feeling of complete freedom was widespread among the majority of people, it would be possible for extremely complex economic relations to be entered into by the local units, without any possibility of a new authority arising, and as for bureaucracy, no committee would stay together for very long when it found its recommendations totally ignored!

It is possible that a society run on these lines may be less "efficient" in terms of production figures (although this is by no means certain), but this is a small price to pay for freedom.

If it seems premature to discuss the nature of an anarchist society at this stage, the clearer an ultimate object is, the easier it is to decide on current activities towards it. P.H.

## MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

#### LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS

Every Sunday at 7.30 at

THE MALATESTA CLUB  
155 High Holborn, W.C.1.

(Nearly opposite Holborn Town Hall)

OCT. 2—Alan Bain  
ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM AND  
THE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY

OCT. 9—To be announced

OCT. 16—F. A. Ridley  
SPARTACUS AND THE SLAVE  
REVOLTS OF ANTIQUITY

OCT. 23—To be announced

OCT. 30—Annie de Witt  
ANARCHISM IN HOLLAND.

#### INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

Every Thursday at 8.15.

#### OPEN AIR MEETINGS

Weather Permitting

HYDE PARK

Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

MANETTE STREET

(Charing X Road)

Saturdays at 5.30 p.m.

### GLASGOW

#### OUTDOORS

At Maxwell Street

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.

### The Malatesta Club

155 HIGH HOLBORN,

LONDON, W.C.1.

#### LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Informal Discussions Every Thursday,  
at 8.15 p.m.

#### THURSDAY DISCUSSIONS:

OCT. 6—Bonar Thompson

"HAMLET"

The Truth at last

OCT. 13—S. Fanaroff

"MYSELF AND THE WORKING  
CLASS"

OCT. 20—Bonar Thompson on

"F. SCOTT FITZGERALD AND THE  
ROARING TWENTIES"

OCT. 27—Jack Robinson

"6 YEARS IN A QUANDARY"

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## Anarchism & Self Interest

Continued from p. 3

Workers don't choose poverty, they try to get out of it—and when they do they get castigated by middle class 'revolutionaries' for accepting middle-class values. We cheer workers when they go on strike for more wages, or against taxation (although tax evasion is usually carried on by subtler methods), but when they use the money they gain by their action to buy a television set or a car, we are worried about the corrupting influence of bourgeois values. If, then, we think that a rising standard of living makes the workers soft and lessens the chances of them becoming more revolutionary, then we should denounce every wage increase and do all in our power to resist all improvements in living standards, social services, or anything else which makes things 'better' than before. Our demands should be for more misery, more degradation, more poverty. We should cheer at the news that America is going to restrict her wheat acreage next year, for that will mean more hungry mouths unfed and therefore more potential revolutionaries. A lot of support we should get—or deserve—on such a policy, and yet that is what really lies behind a lot of so-called 'revolutionary' thinking.

★

IN rejecting bourgeois values we should be clear just what we mean by them. I must plead guilty to a most bourgeois appetite for good food, wine and French cheeses, a comfortable bed, a roof that doesn't leak, holidays abroad and a car. Some of these I can afford some of the time, and my satisfaction of these appetites is adjusted to suit my income. I keep myself poor and have to forego other things because I run an old car that I can't really afford in order to be

free from the ghastly conditions of travel to and from work by London Transport. But I don't want a television set, ostentation in any form or more living space than I need and I should simply hate to have a servant or employees of any kind. What I want is the best of everything according to my taste—and to hell with the Joneses. And I want a society in which everyone is free to have the best of everything according to their taste—because such a society presents the only guarantee I know that I can satisfy my appetites. Needless to say, the best of everything includes congenial work which I can willingly do.

The bourgeois values that we should reject are not, it seems to me, those which offer a fuller and more satisfying life, but those which offer just the opposite. The conventional morality, the conformity, the mediocrity in cultural standards, the dullness, the snobbery, the insularity, the spitefulness, the outward ostentation and inner poverty, the false standards of money and position and authority. These we can reject whatever our own standard of living.

It is true that any standards above that of abject poverty entail in a capitalist world, the exploitation of others—indeed to live at all is to live through exploitation, since that is the mainspring of this economy. Even if we are on public relief, others have been exploited to provide the means.

Our task as anarchists surely is to widen people's horizons, open their eyes and develop their appetites for better ways of living in all directions—ethical and social as well as material and physical. And I don't think we shall make a convincing job of it if we are repressed and dissatisfied individuals ourselves. P.S.

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