

Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

Never yet has law formed a great man; 'tis liberty that breeds giants and heroes.
(SCHILLER)

At the Party Conferences

LABOUR'S DILEMMA

THE Conservative Conference at Bournemouth—more a social gathering than a conference—has come and gone. The Minister gave account of their activities, a number of "delegates" voiced their criticisms or approval—neither of which even theoretically influence policy—and for another year the local parties return to their dances and bridge parties and the Ministers to their consultations with the parties that count: the bankers, the industrialists, the Fleet Street millionaires and the "responsible" leaders of the Trade Unions.

By comparison the Labour Party, which has been holding its annual conference at Margate this week, is more democratic, more intelligent and more controversial. And in theory Conference influences policy, though in practise the juggling of the bloc votes of the Trade Unions ensures that the dead hand of the Executive crushes any "irresponsible" voice from the rank and file members of the party. We write on the opening day (Monday) which coincides with an armed robbery in the West End of London, and as a result the evening papers, with their great sense of public responsibility, have plastered the front and centre pages

with reports of . . . the armed robbery. Thus we can only speculate on the outcome of the conference however well informed we may be on every detail of the armed robbery!

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PERHAPS it is understandable that the Labour Party bosses, should seek the causes of defeat at the last elections by an enquiry "into the general organisation of the party" (which are the terms of reference of the recently issued Wilson Report), that is the party machine which so far as we can understand from the Wilson report acts, during the inter-election years, as a kind of financial accumulator ready for the moment (election time) when it is required to discharge millions of leaflets, posters, loudspeaker vans and the rest of the vote-catching paraphernalia more efficiently and voluminously than its rivals. We find very little "sensationalism" in the report's assertion that the Party machine is rusty and deteriorating with age (and when one reads that at the last elections literature was dispatched to the constituencies two or three days before polling day "sometimes on or after polling day" —"party machine" seems an appropriate

description of socialist organisation in this country!) Nor are we surprised that the "turn-over" in party agents is "alarming".

In 568 constituencies only 235 had the same agent in 1955 as in 1951; and only 133 had the same agent in the last three elections. In 179 now marginal constituencies only 72 had the same agent in 1955 as in 1951; and only 44 had the same agent in the last three elections. The turnover in election agents is thus even more serious than that among candidates.

(Wilson Report).

Equally alarming is the fact that in general Labour Party "full-time" agents spend most of their time raising their salaries by "devious means" and only one full day a week on organisation.

As to "voluntary workers" who were the back-bone of the Labour Party, these, for a number of reasons "wider than party organisation", are now fewer "in number and enthusiasm".

With the exception of a small number of constituencies, mainly marginal, all reports have confirmed that voluntary workers were fewer and less enthusiastic than at any previous time. Many of those who did work for a Labour victory were older men and women: with many it was habit rather than enthusiasm which provided the motive force.

NUR RESOLVE: ONE UNION FOR ALL RAILMEN

IT is with mixed feelings that we read of the resolution passed-unanimously at the National Union of Railwaymen's conference at Hastings on October 2.

We have always maintained that the division of railway workers into three separate organisations—the NUR, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen, and the Transport Salaried Staffs Association—is a source of weakness for these workers and a tremendous barrier to the development of a recognition of their common interest as workers in a public service, irrespective of their grade of work.

Now, one would think, we should welcome the campaign to be launched urging one union for all railwaymen, as a result of the resolution, which viewed with concern the bitterness still existing between ASLEF and NUR members because of the strike earlier this year.

We can well imagine the men of ASLEF regarding this as a most pious resolution. If the NUR wants unity it should practise solidarity. But such bitterness as exists is a result of the fact that while the engine-drivers and firemen of ASLEF were on strike last Spring the engine-drivers and firemen in the NUR went to work and seriously reduced the effect of the strike.

Practise What You Preach

One can hardly expect ASLEF to forget that easily, and it is all very well for Jim Campbell, NUR general secretary, to talk about unity at an annual conference, but it is more than a pity that he did not instruct his members to practise unity when it was needed.

There seems to be a great deal of pride involved in the relations between these two unions. ASLEF is a craft organisation, jealous of the skills and status of its members and not wishing to be swallowed up, losing its identity, inside a larger amalgam. The NUR is already, in effect, an industrial union, including in its members workers who could equally well belong to the smaller unions, and it finds the continued existence of the two small unions a stumbling-block in its progress towards control of the whole industry.

Anarcho-Syndicalists wish to see one organisation throughout the railways, eliminating the sectional divisions of the existing set-up. But we are not happy at the prospect of one industrial union under the domination of trade union bosses like Big Jim Campbell. And, of

course, if there was amalgamation, the existing NUR organisation would inevitably wield more power than the other parties because of the numbers it represents.

This is why we write of our mixed feelings at the news of the NUR resolution and proposed campaign. Although we want to see an end to sectional differences between rail workers, although we want to see one organisation unifying them, we are not enthusiastic about the kind of organisation that would emerge under Jim Campbell's leadership.

The Same Only Bigger

An industrial union on these lines would be a monolithic, centralised and authoritarian body, with discipline as its keynote and dictatorial control of its members as its methods. After all, we have seen the Executive Council of the NUR already at work to crush independence among its branches—the Railwaymen's Mutual Aid Society at Euston came into being because of that, when the E.C. tried to dictate to a whole branch. And an industrial union organised and controlled from above is only a craft union writ large.

No, the way to unity among railway workers is to build it up from the bottom, not impose it from above. Imposed from above it will give power to those above and there are too many swollen-headed TU officials already.

The real answer lies in de-centralisation, whereas the NUR scheme will bring the opposite. Railway workers should be thinking in terms of establishing their own local and regional councils, their own works councils in all large depots and stations. They should be organising themselves into organic, functional bodies for the purpose of defending and improving their pay and conditions and for laying a foundation for running the railways themselves by workers' control.

By all means let the footplate men, the clerks and all the other grades join together in this—it is in fact the only way it can be done. But do not let them put a noose around their necks by creating a centralised (and therefore inevitably bureaucratic) organisation which will discipline them and have a monopoly of negotiation with the boss.

Such an organisation will control the industrial workers. What we want to see is workers' control of industry.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST.

GERMANY - BOOM & BUST?

HOW many times during the last five years has the German working-class been held up before the lazy British workers as a shining example of what a virtuous working-class should be like?

We were told of the long hours the Germans worked and of how they were content with low wages, because they wanted to build up their country and put it back on its feet after the disastrous war.

This picture was really a continuation of the war-time 'servile German' characterisation which was the other side of the 'aggressive German', and it must have come as rather a shock to many an admirer of servility in the working class when Western Germany was suddenly rocked by some massive strikes this year.

The steady-going, hard-working, industrious, contented, patriotic German worker was actually going on strike for more money! It was even more shocking when, a couple of months ago, thousands of workers in Hamburg came out on *unofficial strike*—for all the world as though they were a bunch of London dockers!

The reason for the German worker being held up as such a good example is that, largely as a result of his efforts, German industry has made a fantastic recovery since the destruction, dislocation and dismantling of the war and immediate post-war years—and this recovery has made Germany Number One competitor with Britain in the world's markets for industrial goods.

Prosperity

The recovery, the expansion and the subsequent boom has brought great prosperity to the German capitalists—to such an extent that, as we have pointed out before, they were not at all enthusiastic about re-armament, for they are doing very nicely without it, thank you, and the necessary re-tooling and re-organisation entailed in the switch from export goods to arms would cost them plenty of money.

The strikes by the German workers (in the case of the Hamburg ones, the first unofficial strikes for more than 20 years), were a sign of their determination to share in their masters' prosperity.

But prosperity under capitalism is always too good to last. And to-day many Germans are being haunted by their memories of the mad inflations of the 20's and 30's, when the Mark fell to

nothing and millions were ruined. Twice in the last 30 years has Germany known inflation, and some ominously familiar trends are discernable again now.

At a time when German businessmen should be enthusiastically enjoying the boom, their very success is worrying them. The new militancy among the workers is only one tendency which disturbs them—the main one is the steady creep upwards of prices, in spite of the increased production in almost every sphere.

For How Long?

Over the last five years, industry in general has doubled its output—but coal has increased by only 20 per cent., and production is now stationary as many miners leave the mines to seek big money in other, booming, industries. The unemployment of five years ago has now disappeared and 'labour spivs' operate at railway stations (no doubt saying the German equivalent of 'Pst—want a job?') carrying off potential workers to employers who pay them £3 a head.

It is now costing five per cent. more to feed a family than a year ago—in spite of attempts now being made by the Bonn government to 'moderate the boom' by reducing duty on tea, coffee, sugar and matches, and by attempts by some manufacturers to reduce their prices (margarine recently came down ½d. a lb.).

Just as in this country, both sides in industry are demanding that the other side do something about it. The Trades Unions want the cost of living pegged, but the employers say that wages are already up too high for that already. An uneasy truce exists as each side looks over its shoulder to see if the end of the boom is in sight.

In many ways the situation is very similar to that in this country, although the Germans are congratulating themselves that 'things are not as bad as in Britain.' But in both countries the development of the economies since the war are classic examples of the lunatic capitalism which in never stable for long, which, whether in boom or slump, always has its anxieties, its insecurities, its massive problems even for the class which benefits most, let alone the workers.

If ever a working class should have been completely convinced of the madness, the murderous nature, of capitalism, it is the German working class. Must they suffer yet again before they seek an alternative?

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THE Labour Party in this country is in a bad way. But so are all the Socialist Parties in Europe today, and for the same reasons. They have become political machines engaged in the struggle for power within the existing framework of capitalist society. They have a hierarchical structure and are rank-and-file organisations only in name. But above all they are in a bad way because a myth has been finally exploded: that postulated by all the reformist socialist organisations, since the foundation of the second international in 1889, of achieving socialism through the ballot-box.

Continued on p. 3

Egypt - the Unknown Quantity

JUST over three years ago the revolution in Egypt was carried out by the Free Officers' Movement, King Farouk was forced to abdicate and the government fell. General Neguib, who had been made commander-in-chief of the army was made Prime Minister of the new government, and the world sat back to see what would happen next. A young army officer, Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser was appointed Interior Minister and proceeded to strengthen the position of the revolutionary government by concluding an agreement with Britain which ended the British occupation of the canal zone. Seven days later, as Nasser stood before an enthusiastic crowd in Alexandria, a man fired eight shots at him—all of which missed! Nasser remained standing and then made a passionate address to the crowd. Shortly after this Neguib was asked to resign, having been discovered to be in a politically compromising situation, and Nasser became Premier.

It is now considered that Gamal Nasser was the guiding hand behind the revolution and piloted it through the first difficult times until a suitable opportunity came for him to take power. Now that the initial excitement has died down, and the military dictatorship has had time to bring about much-needed reforms, it is possible to assess in some degree its performance. A programme of land reform has been laid down, under which 660 square miles of Egyptian arable land is being redistributed among the fellahin.

This represent about 5% of the arable land of Egypt, most of which previously belonged to the royal family. Nasser has not succeeded in raising a loan from the International Bank with which to finance a much-needed irrigation and power dam across the upper Nile, to correct the natural unbalances in Egypt.

Many enemies have been made amongst powerful groups inside the country, diplomatic ventures have failed, including Nasser's inability to form a defence union among Arab states. Hatred of Israel has continued, and Egyptians are still smarting under the disgrace of having been forced to make an armistice with the Israelis in 1949. Nasser, who is a believer in militarism, has gradually taken more and more power to himself, and appears to be nothing more than an above-average dictator who has not yet found it necessary to use particularly repressive measures against his people. Next January he is due to turn his military rule into a representative government with a parliament. If he actually does so it remains to be seen whether it will make any real difference.

What does it all amount to? There is no appreciable improvement in the lot of the Egyptian people. They still remain among the poorest, most badly fed, sickest and exploited nations in the world. The downfall of a corrupt monarchy has meant very little in terms of food, clothing and shelter to the ordinary people of Egypt, their standard of life remains at about the same miserable level—

possibly they are persuaded that conditions will improve in time, and perhaps they will. Meanwhile one can only suspect that Nasser and his government are very little different from any other ruling body.

Egypt—Armaments Buyer

And now Egypt appears once again in the world spotlight, forcing the whole of the West to sit up and take notice, and scoring political points against the United States, Britain and France.

A fortnight ago the first reports of an arms deal between Egypt and Czechoslovakia came through. The reaction was instantaneous; the British Ambassador, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, went to see Nasser and informed him that Britain was "gravely concerned" over the matter; the U.S. Ambassador, Mr. Henry Byroade was next man in, and stayed for two hours. The French Ambassador also called. Most important visitor of all was American Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. George V. Allen who was sent on a flying visit to Cairo by Foster Dulles to try to rescue the situation; Nasser kept him waiting in the lobby for 1½ hours. None of these eminent representatives of the Western Powers got any change out of the Egyptian Premier, and the arms agreement has gone through.

As far as is known to date, Czechoslovakia is to supply tanks, M.T.B.'s and artillery in exchange for Egyptian cotton, rice and other goods produced locally.

Continued on p. 4

"The earthly paradise has never been realised, but as an idea it seems never to perish, in spite of the ease with which it can be debunked by practical politicians of all colours. Underneath it lies the belief that human nature is fairly decent to start with, and capable of indefinite development. This belief has been the main driving force of the socialist movement, including the underground sects which prepared the way for the Russian revolution, and it could be claimed that the Utopians, at present a scattered minority, are the true upholders of the socialist tradition."

—GEORGE ORWELL,
("Manchester Evening News",
31/1/1946).

IN compiling my recent 'Notebook on Anarchism, Zionism and the Kibbutz' I was struck by a remark made in a speech by the late Dr. Arthur Rupp. "There is one conviction which I harbour," he said, "which is born not of reason but of deepest inner conviction: just as, in the field of natural phenomena, no force or energy can be lost or remain unaccounted for, so I believe that in the social processes no self-sacrificing and creative labour can be lost; sooner or later it must bear fruit."

*In the five September issues of FREEDOM, which will be sent to new readers for 1s. 6d.

COMMENT

NOTHING IS LOST

He was referring to the creative labours of the pioneers of the *kibbutzim*, but how true his remark is too, of the ideas which animated them. We have seen how in the creation of the Jewish collectives, "ideal motives joined hands with the dictates of the hour," in Buber's phrase, "and in the motives there was a curious mixture of memories of the Russian *Artel*, impressions left over from reading the so-called 'utopian' socialists, and the half-unconscious after-effects of the Bible's teachings about social justice". Now think of the Spanish collectives in their brief hour before the Spanish Revolution was crushed. What, in their inception, were the origins of the ideals which joined with the dictates of the hour? The ancient communal institutions of the Spanish peasantry, their primitive Christianity (not to be confused with the Church), the dissemination of the ideas of Proudhon and Bakunin in the sixties and seventies of the last century, the ferment of ideas in the "Generation of '98" following the Spanish-American war (corresponding to a similar phenomenon in European Jewry after the Russian

pogroms),—all these formed the climate of opinion which led the Spanish anarchists and the Spanish peasantry to their most creative efforts. Who dare say that because of the defeat of the revolution and the subsequent victory of Franco, all this energy, and the ideas which inspired it, have been finally lost?

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TURN to India, and examine the most interesting and important of its nation-wide social tendencies, the Community Development Projects and the Land Gifts Mission of Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan. Here again "ideal motives join hands with the dictates of the hour". The ideal motives were the legacy of Ghandi. The four books which influenced Ghandi most, apart from religious texts, the *Gita* and the *Vedas*, were Thoreau's *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, Ruskin's *Unto this Last*, Tolstol's *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, and Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops*.

In the Western world, if Thoreau is read much today, it is for his ob-

servations as a naturalist; if Ruskin is read—and judging by the volumes of his propping up the shelves in booksellers' basements he isn't—it is for his art criticism; if Tolstol is read it is for his two greatest novels; and if Kropotkin is read, it is I fear largely by readers of this paper and its foreign counterparts.

And yet a hundred years after Thoreau wrote his essay in prim New England, and years after the Bolsheviks had proved that the Tolstolians were simply "bourgeois idealists", their ideas broke an empire, when as Vinoba says, "Gandhiji used up all the moral oxygen in India, and the British Raj suffocated." And long after the economic ideas of Ruskin and Kropotkin superseded in political thinking by "scientific socialism", they are animating those movements in India which may realise Ghandi's idea of the Village Republic.

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THINKING thus about Israel, Spain and India, we can see how ideas expressed in the printed word may cause no more than a ripple on the surface of life when they appear, and may lie dormant until, having reached the right person and the right historical circumstances, they spring into fruition. Last week in reporting the Conference on Regional Planning we mentioned the striking change in attitude amongst people concerned with physical planning in the last ten or fifteen years. A number of factors have contributed to this, not the least of them the revival of interest in the ideas of Patrick Geddes, who "invented" regional planning. Geddes, Lewis Mumford declared five years ago, "is fast becoming a rallying centre for the best minds of this generation; his thought, like that of his old associate and friend, Kropotkin, will probably guide the future, since the mechanists and the Marxists, in the present hour of

FREEDOM

their triumph, demonstrate the failure of their philosophies to do justice to either life or the human spirit".

This very interesting remark, linking the revival of the influence of the wide-ranging ideas of Patrick Geddes with the inevitable decline of Marxism despite its enormous influence in the world, reminds us of the "re-thinking" which the contemporary philosophers of socialism are engaged in. Looking for "what went wrong" with the socialist movement, socialist thinkers from Vaclav Cerny to G. D. H. Cole are declaring that it dates from the defeat of Bakunin by Marx in the First International over eighty years ago.

But to return to Geddes; Lewis Mumford writes elsewhere:

"There are a few people, whose judgments have a right to be respected, who regard Patrick Geddes as one of the truly seminal minds the last century produced; a philosopher whose knowledge and wisdom put him on the level of an Aristotle or a Leibnitz. This informed opinion contrasts with that of the ordinary educated reader who has, often enough, not even heard of Patrick Geddes. There are both deep and superficial reasons for Geddes' personal obscurity. For one thing, he had no concern for priority, and felt that the very tradition of science reduced the desire for publicity for personal fame to a crass solecism: he even took delight in quietly disseminating ideas that other people would proudly claim as their own. 'I am like the cuckoo,' he would say, 'who leaves her eggs in other birds' nests, and is only too glad to have someone else feed them and care for them till they are ready to fly themselves'."

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WHEN we consider the effort and labour that has gone into propagating ideas usually dismissed as "Utopian", we may wonder whether it is really any use trundling the little wheelbarrow of propaganda around the world. One conclusion that we might draw from the examples I have mentioned is that if the content contains truly creative ideas, nothing is lost, and it is always worth while (to change to Geddes' ornithological metaphor), to feed them and care for them till they are ready to fly by themselves.

C.W.

BOOK REVIEW

Morals Without Religion

THE commonest objection to anarchism is based on the human nature argument which goes—"human nature being what it is" people are incapable of living in harmony without some coercive power to prevent the greedy taking more than his share and the homicidal attacking his neighbour or raping his wife. This view, which is based on an assessment of behaviour in this misshapen society, is reinforced by the Christian belief that all evil springs from man who has misused his God-given free-will, and only submission to God, through Christ, will save us from everlasting damnation. Orthodox Christians will deny that men are capable of exercising moral behaviour unless reinforced with a belief in God.

The anarchist view of human nature is somewhat less pessimistic. We hold that men are basically social and co-operative, and that given a suitable environment where love and not hate is encouraged, where co-operation and not competition is the established order, where men, regardless of race, stand equal with one another, the normal aggressive instincts would find expression in a harmless way. In effect, we maintain that a defective society produces defective people and not the innate evil of human nature.

Millions of people to-day without assistance from a doubtful deity and in many cases without even reference to a coherent code of ethics live harmoniously with their neighbours. This fact is not only accepted by anarchists, and when Mrs. Margaret Knight (Lecturer Aberdeen University), recently broadcast on the B.B.C. Home Service on *Morals without Religion* she was expressing the view of reasonable people everywhere. The value of her talks (now published in book form*) was that she was able, for the first time through this medium, to reach millions of people with a reasoned criticism of the Christian myth as well as presenting an alternative code of ethics which she described as Scientific Humanism. In her book she gives us the background to the talks, the final acceptance by the B.B.C. and the reaction of press, pulpit and public.

In 1953 she first submitted a draft script to the B.B.C. This fell into the hands of the "Catholics who hold key positions—and was rather forcibly rejected". A second script suffered the same fate. Mrs. Knight, however, kept pressing the B.B.C. and nine months after her first attempt it arranged the first talk.

Some of us who cherish the belief that State school education is more progressive in matters of religion than it was will be surprised to learn of the Ministry of Education circular which states that the moral education of children should take place in "its natural setting of religious instruction". It was a criticism of this view that Mrs. Knight was anxious to make on the Home Service, and it was further suggested by the B.B.C. that she should give some positive advice to non-Christian parents on the moral training of children. We all know the reaction which resulted, particularly from the guardians of our moral welfare—the press. The *Sunday Graphic*—the adult's horror comic—(staffed, one might think, judging from the contents, by moral delinquents), was the noisiest in its condemnation. Under the headline *The Unholy Mrs. Knight*, its reporter Terence Feely defends Christianity in these terms:—

"Mrs. Margaret Knight is a menace. A dangerous woman... The B.B.C. has allowed a fanatic to rampage along the air lanes, beating up Christianity with a razor and a bicycle chain. Who I wonder thought he was being progressive when he handed her the mike to take the mickey out of religion? ... Let's have no more of her twaddle. She's due to dish up a second basinful... The B.B.C. should pour it down the sink."

**Morals Without Religion*, by Margaret Knight. Dobson, 6s.

The *Daily Telegraph*, in an attempt to smear, compared the public advocacy of Scientific Humanism "to the public advocacy of polygamy or homosexuality." Mrs. Knight writes that from the Church in general the first reaction was one of outrage that the talks should ever have been permitted, although like the press, they later climbed down and the most violent Church critic made a public apology. (No doubt realising that the publicity of attack was more than Mrs. Knight ever hoped for).

Outraged because at last an obviously normal decent human being was able to spill the beans to listening millions, the Church had reason for its angry reaction.

Continued on p. 3

THEATRE

The Punch Revue

"THE PUNCH REVUE" (Duke of York's Theatre) seems to have little to do with the periodical of the same name apart from being sponsored by Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge and a charming opening and closing setting of a waggled-headed Mr. Punch by Joan and David de Bethel. The name in fact is simply a convenient peg on which to hang a revue.

We start off with the Victorian age when the first number of *Punch* has just come out, but this is merely an opening tableau, after that we are told we'll come right back to the present day and see what Mr. Punch's world is like in 1955. And then we find ourselves fobbed off for the first half hour with a lot of old numbers from a *Unity Revue* of 1946 by Messrs. Geoffrey Parsons and Berkeley Fase with nothing changed except in one case, the name. These numbers, while apt and amusing in their original milieu have no place here and now proclaiming to be the voice of today. For example, "Sunday at Home" which has grown whiskers by now, and I seem to remember as being much more spicy in the old *Unity* days. At any rate, in making fun of the *News of the World* rather than some of our other more lurid *Sunday* papers the "Punch Revue" directors prove themselves to be decidedly out of touch! Another old *Unity* number: "Brush up your Economics", an exposition of hard currency as opposed to soft currency, though beautifully put across by Paul Daneman has long since lost its potent flavour. Thus, among the first sixteen numbers we have only four notable ones, Mr. John Betjeman's brilliant thrust at suburbia "How to get on in Society", Mr. Auden's torch song "Tell me the truth about Love", set to music by Benjamin Britten and brilliantly sung by Miss Binnie Hale, "Party Pieces", the election campaign as presented by the three parties on Commercial T.V., and "Hameline, the Moor of Tyre", by Paul Dehn, an uproarious Shakespearean pot-pourri and skit on the Old Vic. The idea behind this is so simple and comes off so well that I marvel it has not been thought of before.

Possibly it has, in some school rag. It is hilariously funny and must give quite a kick to Paul Daneman till recently an executant in the Waterloo Road!

In the second half we have more old *Unity* numbers and only three memorable new ones, not counting Mr. T. S. Eliot's "Cats", danced before our eyes and spoken off-stage, which brought in a slightly self-conscious note and seemed misplaced. "One World", a sketch by J. B. Boothroyd about two ageing arty queers composing an international anthem for world peace somewhere behind the Charing Cross Road was played with wicked perfection by Alfie Bass and Paul Daneman. "Still Digging", by David Higham, a lecture from Venus in the year 2000 on the deep-freeze age of 1955 was cleverly written, and Miss Binnie Hale was amusingly malicious as Beatrice Lillie, introducing Margaret Leighton, as Yvonne Arnaud introducing Margaret Rutherford and finally as Joyce Grenfell introducing Marlene Deitrich.

I have long felt that revue is not a good medium for a full size theatre. No matter how good or how sophisticated and well-staged, one is always left utterly unsatisfied at the end. Revue is only continuous carabot after all and should find a small and intimate home somewhere such as the Watergate, the Gate or *Unity* Theatre, where the inadequacies of the means at the artists' disposal are made into assets, and imagination and ingenuity are brought into play. One expects less and is infinitely more pleasantly surprised and elated. The afterglow is warmer and more exhilarating.

The directors of "The Punch Revue" should aspire to keep the majority of their numbers on the intellectual level of Auden, Betjeman, Boothroyd, Dehn and Higham. They should give Messrs. Berkeley Fase and Geoffrey Parsons a rest and look around among their present-day contributors. Above all, they should be up to the minute, or, then, go back to the good old days of the *Diary of a Nobody* and the *Caudle Lectures*. They might have done worse as an experiment

in social history. They would at least have lived up to their name!

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At the Old Vic "The Merry Wives of Windsor" is given the full treatment in a rollicking production with a restoration flavour, full of comic invention not always in keeping or in period. It is helped very much by a charming permanent set by Paul Shelving and kept moving at a fast and furious pace by a sort of variant on Elizabethan staging.

The play is not good Falstaff as in "Henry IV". This is not the man at whose heels we follow enchanted and in whose company we glow. It is not even a good play. Its comic situation is repeated three times over. Indeed it is hard to be enthralled by the first half even though Mr. Douglas Seale the producer has been at great pains to lighten our task and has thought up all manner of comic business most of it genuinely funny. The second half is considerably better though the Merry Wives themselves come off worst. They are somehow colourless. Somewhere the wrong emphasis has been laid, for the Merry Wives are parts which great actresses have condescended to play. Here they are submerged and almost buffeted out of existence in the general hubbub and fray.

Mr. Paul Rogers, in a magnificent stomach by Latex Upholstery Ltd. does all and more for the loveable rogue, his eyes hold worlds of implication. Mr. Rogers has true comic zest. Mr. Barry Jones as the Welsh parson brought out most successfully the best of Shakespeare's comic phrasing whereas the French doctor of Aubrey Morris appeared least funny. Mr. John Wood's Pistol is a mistaken notion which starts off on the wrong note and continues to jar in an otherwise homogeneous production. The action is so swift throughout that there is hardly time to listen to the words but on the whole I feel that not much is lost. Mr. Seale has given us *The Merry Wives* without tears of boredom, he has stepped up his comic relief with some justification.

D.

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LABOUR'S DILEMMA

In the process the ballot box has become the ends instead of the means; internationalism has been swamped by a bigotted nationalism and an opportunistic patriotism; politics is simply a profession. It is as useless to draw the attention of the politicians of "democratic socialism" to the lessons (that is, the failure) of the experience of the 2nd International as it is to the rulers in the Kremlin regarding the 3rd. Power and the limelight (and the material comforts and privileges which accompany them), have made them deaf to the "idealistic and utopian slogans" which are the basis of the socialism with which anarchists such as a Kropotkin and a Malatesta identified themselves in their early struggles.

★

IT is possible that applying the recommendations of the Wilson Sub-Committee the Labour Party will be a more effective vote-catching machine, though the streamlining of the organisation and its finances is no guarantee of success. After all in 1945 the L.P. in this country and its equivalent parties in Europe gained resounding electoral victories without the aid of a well-oiled machine. As one M.P. put it to the Wilson Committee: "When the tide is with us our bad organisation relatively to the Tories doesn't matter; when the tide is against us our bad organisation is fatal". But so far as we can see none of the recommendations will ensure the success of socialism.

The Labour Party has become the political mouthpiece of the non-political trades unions. Instead of the individual members of the L.P., in their capacity as workers in their respective unions, seeking to influence their fellow workers in the basic issues of the class struggle of which the day-to-day economic struggles of the unions are but means or simply defensive actions, we have the opposite situation of the trades union bosses dictating to the Labour Party. The politicians of the L.P. have no difficulty in accommodating themselves. After all, not only do the Unions supply some five sixths of the Party's revenue but their power and prestige as "personalities" and party leaders depend on the backing of this mass of organised labour several million strong.

★

ON the first day of the Labour Party conference the Policy committee proposed that there should be no statements about further nationalisations at this stage, but that during the coming three years the Party should re-examine that and other Socialist problems. The list included Ownership of Industries, Housing, Public ownership of land, Social Security, Planning Control, Automation, the Individual and Society, Equality.

An important list of subjects, on some of which we should have thought socialists had made up their minds fifty years ago. Yet one can well imagine that with the "differential" mentality of the Unions predominating we shall hear that after three years of patient research the Labour Party had concluded on the subject of equality that "some are more equal than others" (a view shared by our new-look young Tories).

Yet it is on this very question of equality that the Labour movement will determine whether it goes forward towards a non-capitalist free society, or condemns itself to a sterile political struggle from which the forces of reaction and privilege will emerge ever stronger. Left to the Labour Party the outcome is a foregone conclusion.

The Sad story of Emmett Till

(From an American Correspondent)

NEW YORK, October.

THE sad story of Emmett Till, the 14-year-old boy whose recovery from poliomyelitis left him a little weak in the lips and not very good at whistling, but who none the less was abducted from his uncle's home, whipped, killed and thrown in the Tallahatchie River, is not yet over. It is probable that his body will be exhumed in Chicago so that his identity may be conclusively proved, for on the peg of his identity despite his mother's statement of certainty, the jury hung their acquittal.

Milam and Bryant, half-brothers, both have wives. Mrs. Bryant was described in one of the New York papers as a "pretty brunette". She looks after the grocery shop when her husband is out. Into that shop four days before his death came Emmett Till to buy some chocolate. It is not known what if anything he said because the other people present were not called at the trial, but it seems unlikely that a Negro boy in unfriendly territory would make the senseless statements reported by the young woman who was the instrument of his death.

"A Negro man," she is supposed to have said, appearing terrified by her own innocence. "said, 'How about a date? I've —ed with white women before'." She was terribly upset by the shock, her lawyer reconstructed afterwards. Her husband and half brother-in-law then found the "Negro man with the Northern brogue", or rather they thought they had. Actually it turned out that the boy was not the right one and they released him and told him to go on back to his uncle's cabin. On the way his uncle met him and seeing a chance to inflame racial feelings spirited him away to an official of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples—the N.A.A.C.P.—who spirited him out of Mississippi and spirited a dead body into the Tallahatchie River, first fitting on a ring they borrowed from the real Emmett Till.

The absurdities of the defence yarn are so obvious that only the more subtle need commenting on. The "Negro man" said, "I've —ed with white women before"—but this is a report in writing. Mrs. Bryant did not say "blacked with", "dashed with" or anything similar. The other is a written statement put out by her lawyers, leaving you to believe what you will. At no time did Mrs. Bryant identify Till as "the man", yet it was with his murder that her husband was charged. During the trial she came to give testimony about the verbal assault she claimed to have suffered, but the jury was sent out of the room and the judge with his much-praised "fairness" ruled that the testimony under Mississippi law was inadmissible. Yet if Till was not "the man" and the body was anyway not Till's, why bring up the grocery visit at all?

The answer is plain and so too the tactics of the Defence. When the boy was kidnapped his uncle, Mr. Wright, waited twenty minutes in the hope that he would be brought back. He then drove in his car to the nearest representative of the N.A.A.C.P. and the fact of the kidnapping was put on record and the police were obliged to search for the child. In a week the body was found

in the river, looked at by a doctor and handed over to a Negro undertaker for burial. The Sheriff said it must be Till.

That in all decency for the sheriff should have been the end of the matter. But Mrs. Bradley, breaking a promise that had been exacted when the sheriff gave permission for the body to leave his domain, had the coffin opened and said later, "It looked like something from outer space." Some judicial process was from that time more likely, and with a thorough knowledge of Southern customs Milam and Bryant were obviously advised to admit to kidnapping the boy, while their lawyers and the hysterical Mrs. Bryant circulated a story that became increasingly melodramatic as the days went by, some of it not meant for the ears of the future jury and excluded from the trial itself.

The jury solemnly swore that they would not be in the least influenced by the fact that White men were being charged with murdering a Negro. The two men under local law were not obliged to make themselves available for cross-examination. The State of Mississippi produced two witnesses, Negroes who have made themselves national heroes by risking their lives to testify, but two or three others mysteriously could not be found. One witness identified the two men as the ones who had kidnapped the boy at night and the other claimed seeing Milam coming for a drink of water out of the barn in which someone was being beaten. He also identified Till in a car with Milam. The Defence gave the jury the cue for acquittal by appearing to throw doubt on the identity of the body and suggesting dirty work by the N.A.A.C.P. The verdict came after an hour. Following the outcry of disgust from people in the rest of the country, it was plain that not even Mississippians believed in the two men's innocence, for there was no effort at all made either to identify the body if it were not Till's nor to find out what had happened to the boy if he were still alive.

You might think that an exhibition like this shows the necessity for excluding people with character disorders from a jury, for to call such a display of doublethink neurotic is the most charitable explanation. In practice of course this would prohibit the formation of juries at all; and when the word "necessity" is

used it implies an insurance that justice, of the ideal objective impartial kind so worshipped in our culture, will prevail. But this trial shows up the dilemma confronting the upholders of "Justice". For just as there are no natural rights, rights of man nor any other "rights" that are not the codified result of other peoples' struggles against formerly sanctioned rights, no longer recognised as such—the "right to kill", the "right to have slaves", the "right to rape", the "right to burn your house down", so there is no "natural justice", none that does not gratify the desires conscious or unconscious of the people meting the justice out. Justice involves a decision and a reward. It is the characteristic rôle of Prosecution and Defence to-manipulate the characters of the jurymen in such a way that their intellectual appraisal of an event will be weakened and their psychological tensions increased, that in terms of their own particular guilts a verdict of guilty or not-guilty may be the more rewarding to them.

Something to the effect that the public not the defendant is on trial has often been said. The criminal is merely the unfortunate one chosen to represent the passions and deceptions of the crowd, almost irrespective of whether he has committed the action or thought he is accused of or not. The criminal is a most needed person and we take care he shall not go in short supply. The "but not quite" of the "almost" above comprises crimes referred to higher authority and denatured of toxic properties. Thus the State may have the Rights alluded to earlier (with the strange and illogical exception that it may not rape).

What was "on trial" in this trial? It was the character neurosis of the dominant group among Whites in the Southern U.S.A. that was threatened, defended and acquitted. Without going into causes and without elaborating further the Southern neurosis is manifested by an adulation of White women and a hatred of the economically inferior group, in this case Negroes. In short, segregation—the local variant of discrimination or apartheid. Questioning the virtue of segregation constitutes a threat to the neurotic character who has sworn to defend that virtue. Concerned in this trial was not the abstract concept involved in the kidnapping (admitted) leading to the death (disputed) of Emmett Till. His death led to no tension. Only

when through pressure from the rest of the country his death was forced to become a matter of "justice" did tension arise—and everybody was involved in it.

The people of Mississippi were being compelled to take the death of a Negro as seriously as that of a White. Yet the "fair" judge Swango believes in segregation as much as the Defence lawyer, Carlton, and as much as the Prosecutor, Smith. This universal involvement made the acquittal inevitable. It was a perfunctory matter for the Defence to wind up with, "I hope every Anglo-Saxon one of you will have the guts to acquit these boys." Both Defence and Prosecution spoke to Negro witnesses in a sort of dialect—"axed" for "asked" and so forth, and both referred to Mrs. Bradley directly as "Mamie Bradley", and Mr. Wright as "Mose".

This contemptuous attitude showed up in the gutter press of New York. With the exception of *The New York Times* (which with its usual objective boredom printed small summaries along with other trials of current interest on back pages) and *The Post* (Murray Kempton wrote in his last despatch, "Even after Judge Curtis Swango thanked the jury and adjourned court there was no general sound from the departing audience except a low murmur which sounded as though everyone except J. W. Milam was a little embarrassed. He was beyond embarrassment, clutching the soft parts of his wife, Juanita's, flesh for the benefit of photographers and tipping his chair back, totally expansive") the members of the gutter league gave incomplete reports subtly loaded in favour of the kidnapers, doubtless reflecting a bias toward segregation. The *News* even went so far as to print this gem; a letter from New Jersey:

"Down among the great people of the great Southern region, the smartest and finest people this world has ever known, there are less trouble between white and Negro people than there is in any other part of the world, to the proportion of population. If you don't like segregation why don't you abolish Harlem? Crime and illiteracy is running wild in New York City.

PROUD MISSISSIPPI REBEL."

which doubtless rhetorically reflects editorial opinion.

The defendants are coming up for trial on the kidnapping charge early in November and since they have already admitted the charge they will probably get a perfunctory term in jail. Then no one will be able to say that justice has not been done.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Our (Progressive) Magistrates on Homosexuality

INCH by inch our magistrates are creeping up on modernity. The injustice, ineffectiveness, and inhumanity of the British laws on homosexuality between males has long been recognised by those not swayed by passion or prejudice. We are glad to see that they have now been joined by the majority of the Magistrates' Association, even though it is only to the extent of requesting a change in the law.

Last week the Association published its annual report in which it disclosed that a memorandum had been sent to the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution. The memorandum, which was agreed to by 41 votes to 33, suggests that homosexual conduct in private between consenting adults,

aged 30 or above, should no longer be a criminal offence except where a mentally defective person is concerned. As the law now stands homosexuality between consenting males of any age is illegal (a law passed incidentally in that heyday of sexual enlightenment, the latter half of the nineteenth century; the relevant clause was not even debated when the bill went through Parliament).

The Association is cautious in taking even this hesitant step. In fixing the "age of consent" at 30 they say that many persons of 21, or even 25 or over, are still emotionally immature and capable of corruption and that therefore the age should not be fixed too low. They believe that a change in the law would minimise the many opportunities open to blackmailers. Might it not also be of some relief to the homosexuals?—it seems that the Association regards that as irrelevant. And finally they say that "in putting forward the recommendation the council wished to make it clear that they in no way departed from the general view that homosexual practices were undesirable and dangerous, both for individuals and the community".

It is quite a difficult feat to take a step forward and at the same time persuade yourself you are really standing still.

Faroe Islands' Doctor Again

Earlier this year *FREEDOM* reported the resistance measures adopted by the Faroe Islanders when they were denied the doctor of their choice, who had served them for a number of years, and were ordered by the Danish government to accept another one. And now, according to a report from the village of Klaksvig, villagers have been beaten up by the Danish police brought over "to prevent disorders" because they still demanded the return of Dr. Havorsen.

Reuter state that Mr. Vigo Joensen, deputy mayor of Klaksvig, said that 300 to 400 old people and children had been evacuated to neighbouring islands. He added: "The Copenhagen police have made violent attacks against perfectly harmless citizens, including fishermen who do not even live here. The fishermen were dragged out of their cars and beaten up."

Morals without Religion

Continued from p. 2

Man's Moral Nature

In discussing the nature of Man, Mrs. Knight compared the view of Hobbes who held that man is essentially selfish with Rousseau's that man is "naturally good and only by institutions is he made bad". She says that the truth lies between these two views:—

"It is natural for us to be to a large extent self-centred, and to be hostile and aggressive towards people who obstruct us in getting what we want; and it is also natural for us to co-operate with other people, and to feel affection and sympathy for them. . . . We have both ego and social instincts—which may pull us in different ways. It is arguable that civilization depends largely on widening the scope of the social impulses. Primitive man is co-operative within the family or tribe, and tends to treat everyone outside as an enemy; the most civilized man may feel a certain kinship with the whole human race."

On the function of moral codes, she maintains that in the humanist view these "can best be regarded as an organised attempt to reinforce the social impulses". Although she points out that there is a common factor in all moral codes accepted by everyone from a headhunter in Borneo to a Jesuit priest, namely, that "We must not be completely selfish. . . . we must be prepared, at times

and within limits, to put our own interests second" this does not mean that we must always be making sacrifices. "We have a duty to ourselves as well as to others. But the essence of humanist morality is *disinterestedness*—not letting our own claims and interests blind us to other people's".

She further poses the question, why should I consider others? and comes to the anarchistic conclusion that "we are naturally social beings; we live in communities; and life in any community from the family outwards, is much happier and fuller, and richer if the members are friendly and co-operative than if they are hostile and resentful".

An essay on *Aesthetic Experience and The Problem of Evil* is a worthwhile addition to this book. "Mystical experiences", belief in God and the Cosmic Mind are discussed in terms of aestheticism while morality, justice and virtue are discussed on the human plane in terms of *human values*. Part two concludes with three short essays on the *Theoretical Implications of Telepathy, Intuition, Insight, and Can Figures Lie?* The latter contains some interesting comments on how statistics can be used in such a way as to substantiate opposing arguments. R.M.

Egypt - The Unknown Quantity

Continued from p. 1

It is believed that jet aircraft are also to be supplied, but almost certainly these will come from Russia in the shape of Mig fighters. Nasser maintains that he is dealing with the East and not with the West, only because there are no strings of a political nature attached to the Eastern arrangement, whereas he was being forced to make some such arrangement with any of the Western powers with whom he might have dealt. He has also stated that he is able to buy the arms more cheaply from Czechoslovakia.

One is inclined to believe these statements, for there is no reason to suppose that Nasser wishes to deviate from his rigid policy of independent nationalism and make a pact with the Communists. What is far less certain is whether he will actually be able to maintain this policy, for he will become dependent upon his suppliers, not only for supplies, but for technical information and "know-how" in using the new arms. This will particularly apply to the operation and maintenance of jet aircraft, and should these materialise it is difficult to see how Egypt can stop Russia from getting some sort of foothold, literally as well as politically, in Egyptian affairs.

Egypt—Independent Power

In U.S.A. and Britain the usual rumblings can be plainly heard from the political and military strategists, and without doubt high level talks are at present taking place to discuss "the balance of power in the Middle East". Two important policy discussions remain unanswered as yet, and America's Dulles has refused to comment on either so far. The first and probably the more important, is whether the West will now arm Israel to the teeth, and the second, what is to be done about the programme of economic aid from America, under which Egypt is receiving 43 million dollars.

We would venture to suggest that the answer to the first of these questions is that almost certainly the supply of Western arms to Israel will be stepped-up considerably, at least to the extent that the two powers, Egypt and Israel, shall remain militarily equal, but more likely so that Israel shall be the stronger. In this event, the likelihood of a full-scale armaments race is considerable.

The answer to the second question is more difficult, but it might conceivably hold the key to the first. Obviously there is a certain amount of bargaining value to be had out of the threat of withholding economic aid to Egypt. Undoubtedly America will use it for what it is worth, but it is hard to see what the outcome will be. Nasser was undoubtedly aware of the probable reactions of the Western powers to his arms deal and must therefore have taken the \$43 million into account. He may well be prepared to lose some or all of this aid—and in all probability he will.

An indication of Egypt's attitude has been quite clearly made in the semi-

official daily newspaper *Al Glamouria*, written by the Minister of State, Colonel Anwar Sadat:

"Egypt, which refused to submit to the dollar, will also refuse to strike bargains with the East at the expense of her independence and set principles—not even for the sake of all the arms in all the factories of America, Russia, Czechoslovakia or Britain."

These are stirring words with which to raise the ardent zeal of the Revolutionary Command Council—or even to stem the demands for a better standard of living from the Egyptian people, for a short time—but the problem which dominates all others is whether Premier Nasser will be able to stick to his guns (in both senses), or if he is unable to do so, with which side he will ally himself. If he returns to the bosom of the Western bloc then the status quo of the past three years is roughly maintained, but if he ventures into the open arms of the East, then the Middle Eastern situation will almost certainly deteriorate rapidly into a state of near war, or even war itself. Even if he can retain real Egyptian independence, there is little doubt that the situation will slowly get worse, as bitter antagonisms between States are fanned by increasing armed strength, and the desire to dominate the Middle East.

Meanwhile the Iraqi government is adding fuel to the flames, and a military committee in commenting on the Egyptian decision has stated that if arms supplies from the West were slow and not sufficiently modern, "... it would be our legitimate right to buy arms anywhere—even from Russia."

The Soviet Union is also reported as having started negotiations with Saudi Arabia to establish relations with that country; already it maintains Embassies with Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Persia, the Lebanon, Israel and Libya—only Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia remains without diplomatic relations. Possibly Rus-

sia is conducting a full-scale policy of diplomacy and arms-selling in order to increase her interests in the Middle East. Certainly the people of Egypt will have few ideological objections to Communist infiltration—they have very little to lose and may well be persuaded that Communism has much in common with those policies of Nasser's which are good.

Egypt—Government for its own Sake

As usual the governments which are concerned with their own ends in the Middle East, will have little thought of the impact which their policies may have upon their own people. Whether they are involved in a struggle for power, a "semi-war", the sale of armaments, maintenance of power equality, personal gain or the overall world balance of power; the last factor to be taken into consideration (if at all), is the welfare of the ordinary people—who do not want to fight a war, or struggle for someone else's ideal, and are not interested in trying to influence the policy of another State.

With cynical disregard for the lives of human beings, the two major powers will manoeuvre their economic and military strengths to suit their own interests, and the smaller powers will initiate them on a smaller scale—there may be war, starvation, further repression, but the game will go on—for governments exist on politics, and politics cause trouble, and that invariably means trouble for those who neither want it nor cause it.

H.F.W.

VIEWPOINT

"PROPHESIES & PHARISEES"

THERE are among the left-wing movements, comrades who seem to imagine that they have been endowed with the gift of extra-sensory perception. In this group, one can include a number of anarchists together with most socialists of the "Great Britain" variety, and all the public library Marxists, a few Trotskyists and a Labour Party member.

These gifted comrades, have already peered into their crystal balls and have seen no possibility in their lifetime at least of the remotest chance of the Free Society, Good Life, Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, Utopia or what have you, whichever target they are, or "were", striving for. But although their crystal balls are dogmatic in their consistency, they never give up the fight. Probably more from agnosticism than anything.

I rather feel that these good comrades have been disillusioned and need an injection of confidence and plasma. After all one gets apathetic, when confronted with the types of people at large in this great lunatic wilderness. But that simply means that our struggles must be all the more vigorous and consistent.

Now there are in my opinion two ways of looking at anarchism. The first is to treat our anarchist society as though it never existed in the past, and try to bring about a complete change in society consistent with our ideas. That in itself means that we must affect a metamorphosis which is going to be difficult in itself, as though changing sex.

The other and in my opinion the simpler, is to accept that we are already free people and are living in a free society, to live and think in terms of anarchism, and treat all the oppressive institutions as being forced upon us unwillingly. And in order to reveal our natural anarchy we need to rid ourselves of all the encumbrances which we find oppressive to us.

In that way we know exactly what we have to do. For the barrier to our freedom is here in existence, in the form of the State and its appendages. To render the State useless we only need not to support it. To render useless the economic system, we need only to withdraw our labour. We can achieve an ideal futuristic society by going backwards. Break down the barriers, instead of building new ones. We can destroy tangible barriers, but can only "talk" about hypothetical ones. Let us then devote our energies to people in order to assist them in seeing that they are in effect free people who have had the chains foisted upon them.

So let us give our crystal balls away to the fairground artistes and get our feet back on the ground. For the world is waiting for assistance, as an invalid waits for his crutches and as eyes that are failing need spectacles to assist them. We have the cure for the world's "stomach troubles". Don't let us underestimate our potential. Let us leave the intellectual chit-chat and competitive arguments to the Rotary clubs and Politicians and let us indulge in constructive conversation with an optimistic outlook. We have nothing to lose but our chains.

MONTY.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

The Best of Everything

SACRIFICE and suffering when used in the concept of living up to ideals makes the lack of the good things of life somewhat virtuous.

There must be someone for whom we can make sacrifices or suffer. In a like manner one might say that "sin" was invented by "good" people in order to give them the opportunity of being "good".

But we know, or should know, that "the best of everything" here and now, is possible if a sufficient number of us demand it.

Most of us have to put up with the inferior in food, clothing, housing and transport, and necessity often entails sacrifice and suffering, but this is no reason for making necessity a virtue. Neither will it help self-interest or others' interests to put up with the conditions which poverty entails.

Ammon Hennacy's concept is naturally bound up with the idea that this life is but a "vale of tears" and that the "hereafter" is the millennium.

But those of us who hold that this life is the only one we know realise that it is only by our rebellion against the acceptance of the inferior and shoddy that we hope to encourage our fellow humans to do likewise.

In the last 25 years there has been a great increase in the accessibility to goods and social benefits which were formerly the prerogative of the rich. This is not to say that the gulf between wealth and poverty relatively is not great. As Ian Mikardo writes in the *Observer*, 2/10/55—"There is a narrower gap between rich and poor, and the very rich stay very rich only by getting some tax-free money—but there are still haves and have-nots. Capital and Labour still begrudge each other's share of the national income and try to reduce it. The sweatshops have gone, but they're replaced by productivity-drives. The nomenclature has changed; the reality remains."

We cannot stand in splendid isolation in the manner of those Marxists of whom Max Eastman writes, conceiving "... themselves as travelling toward that society in a world which is like a moving

stairway taking them the way they walk ..."

Certain predictions may be safe, and my guess is as good as anyone's, but in the meantime we are part of the whole, and mankind still wants its dinner here and now, every day, and activities go on accordingly.

Minorities of the Left are divided in such a way as to afford much pleasure to the Capitalists. We have freedom of speech sufficient enough to propagate views in Hyde Park, street corners, and various periodicals, but this "freedom" under our property democracy is only a make-believe which conceals the reality of tyranny imposed by the vast machinery of power indoctrination by Press, Television, Radio, Cinema and Pulpit.

Whilst this position exists, I think it is as P.S. states: "... a matter of a one-man revolution all round."

And we hope that we are sufficiently responsible and understanding to avoid situations which may cause unhappiness to our fellow workers when we demand the best here and now.

So whether or not our individual requirements and tastes are bourgeois, let us continue to refuse to put up with the inferior and shoddy whenever it's possible, realising as friend "Wanderer" writes: "The actual reason for getting your cup of tea is not that anybody feels you need it, but because investors see how to exploit your need."

London. G.H.

WHY BURN THEM?

ANARCHISTS are regularly accused of having burnt churches in various countries at various times—and probably, in their revolutionary zeal, some anarchists have done so.

This, however, does not make church-burning a tenet of the anarchist philosophy, even when, as in Spain, churches were used as strong-points and as ammunition-dumps for fascist troops. Certainly, some churches are appallingly ugly, and the town or village unfortunate enough to contain them would be better-looking without them, but the unnecessary destruction of anything potentially useful is to be deplored. Potentially useful are the key words, for we are reminded here of an earnest young socialist who once argued with us against the burning of prisons. Now if there is ever a structure which is at once ugly, useless and positively asking to be burnt, it is a prison.

Churches, however, from a strictly utilitarian viewpoint, are in a somewhat different category, and the foregoing fragmentary notes come as a result of a tiny news item which gives us some little comfort. It read:

"The congregation at St. Paul's, Sherborne, Dorset, last night heard that their church had been sold and would close at the end of the month. Built in 1929, the church will be used for light industrial purposes."

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PURIFICATION AND ENRICHMENT

THE vicar, dignified in his spotless white surplice, raised his hands in supplication yesterday and said: "Oh, Lord, bless this place." The crowd stood bowed and bareheaded.

The Rev. Dr. William George Sinclair Snow, Vicar of St. John the Baptist, Bognor Regis, Sussex, was blessing television sets!

Crowds followed him down London Road, Bognor's busiest street, as he walked behind a cross-bearer.

Mrs. D. M. Locke, chairman of the local council, was there to open a new store. The latest TV models, ready to take commercial programmes, still polished and gleaming.

Then the vicar, trained at Edinburgh Theological College, raised a pontifical fist and intoned a special prayer he had written for the occasion over the latest 12-inch model:

"Oh Lord who came to be our example through whose spirit all human relations are purified and enriched, we pray Thee to bless this place with Thy Holy Spirit that it may contribute to the prosperity, happiness and well-being of Thy people in this town, that the goods bought and sold here may give joy and satisfaction, and be a means of deepening the sense of Christian responsibility and brotherhood amongst us.

"Within these premises may good service, honest dealing and mutual trust and goodwill abound."

The TV fans cried in unison "Amen." Said Dr. Snow at his vicarage in Burnham Avenue last night: "Big business and Christianity should go hand in hand."

They did. The store sold a lot of TV sets yesterday.

From "The People" (2/10/55.)

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!

WEEK 40

Deficit on Freedom £600

Contributions received £532

DEFICIT £68

September 30 to October 6

Minneapolis: M.A. 4/6; London: W.E.D.* 1/6; London: N.B.T.* 5/-; London: J.S.* 6/-; London: C.F.* 6/8; Shepton Mallet: E.H.S. 5/9; Falmouth: R.W.* 1/6; Stevenage: J.W.P. 1/6; Thornton Heath: P.J.H. 3/3; Oxford: Anon.* 5/-; Persian Gulf: D.G. £17/0; London: C.W. 15/-.

Total ... 4 2 8

Previously acknowledged ... 528 11 6

1955 TOTAL TO DATE ... £532 14 2

*Indicates regular contributor.

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

OCT. 23—Tony Gibson on
THE RELEVANCE OF STIRNER

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

INDOOR MEETINGS

Friday evenings at 7 p.m. commencing
Friday, October 14th at 200 Buchanan
Street.

OCT. 21—Mark William Kramrisch
ITALY, CIVILISATION AND
ANARCHISM

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. 20—Bonar Thompson on
"F. SCOTT FITZGERALD AND THE
ROARING TWENTIES"

OCT. 27—Jack Robinson
"6 YEARS IN A QUANDARY"

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