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# Freedom

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## REFLECTIONS ON U.N.O.

# THE DISARMAMENT COMEDY

RUSSIA'S new disarmament plan which has just been placed before the United Nations disarmament sub-committee, has, like Russian ideology, been subjected to a spring-clean—at least the surface has been dusted. At last year's session of the disarmament committee Russia campaigned for the abolition of the H-bomb and its progeny, whereas the West were more interested in a reduction of the conventional weapons of war. And we were told then that Russia wanted the abolition of atomic weapons because she was weaker than the West in their development, and it was equally clear that the West was interested in reducing conventional weapons because it was believed that Russia disposed of greater forces than the West. Now Russia puts forward a plan for the limitation and reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons, and on paper the proposed reductions are quite drastic and it would even appear that if implemented the West might dispose of a greater combined force than Russia, China and satellites. Russia goes on to propose that the funds saved by the reduction of the armed forces of the "United" Nations "should be used in a special U.N. fund for aid both to the nations involved and to under-developed states." Various proposals for inspection are put forward and for the establishment of a European zone, which would include both states of Germany, in which only a specified number of troops from both sides would be maintained and from which nuclear weapons would be prohibited. But, declared Moscow Radio, last Saturday, Russia "still wanted a complete prohibition of the use of atomic weapons".

The reactions to these proposals in the press are typical of the general attitude to the international

political struggle. The *News Chronicle* in its editorial on Monday points out that

Now that Russia has caught up with the West in atomic development, she is vague about banning the H-bomb but ready and willing for a progressive reduction in conventional arms.

The instinctive reaction of Western leaders to this new proposal will be one of suspicion. In the light of Russia's attitudes and actions since the war, there is good reason to be suspicious.

But even so, says the voice of liberalism, any open door—even if there is a booby trap on the other side (to us "Utopians" who can see both sides of the door it seems as if there are booby traps on both sides!)—must not be slammed since a "major war might wipe out civilization", and Russia's proposals "come close enough to the West's earlier offers to deserve detailed sympathetic scrutiny".

The *Manchester Guardian* in its editorial columns goes into the details a little more thoroughly and discovers that Moscow has included in its proposals some which "take up ideas which the West put forward in the past but has now dropped" for reasons which we find difficult to explain on the grounds of peace or disarmament but which, on the contrary, smack of power politics.

★  
WHAT strikes those of us who view politics from the outside is that when it comes to the point politicians have as little faith in politics as we have! And this fact makes the United Nations Organisation an expensive farce and an impressive façade designed to perpetuate the system of Government. So far, at any rate, there is no evidence that it has drawn the nations together in common action and purpose.

The failure of U.N.O. (for those who believed that it had a mission) is that it has not drawn the nations together for the attainment of common objectives, which, be it noted not only concern the major political objectives such as "world peace" but also social ones such as the "Four Freedoms". U.N.O. is no

more than a political market place in which nations align themselves into blocs on particular issues according to their narrow national interests. The "unity" of the United Nations is one of sheer coincidence of sectional interests, never one whose vision is international, that is with the interests of mankind as a whole as the guiding factor. For these reasons one finds, for instance, the major powers in the U.N. declaring themselves the saviours of mankind and the defenders of its liberties, so long as their actions within their own territories are not questioned. S. Africa and France "walked out" when apartheid and conditions in N. Africa respectively were on the agenda, and Britain threatened to do the same if it were decided to discuss Cyprus. Russia would do the same if it were proposed that forced labour should be investigated, and what would Franco say if an international commission were to visit his prisons?

★  
IN practise a United Nations Organisation would only function when the need for it had ceased to exist! By which we mean that "United Nations" is a contradiction in terms so long as the nation is primarily a political and economic, as opposed to a geographical, entity. There can be no unity between or within, nations without an acceptance of the principle of the equality of mankind in the social and economic sense. The first step to inter-

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All statesmen agree that if the people were in too easy a condition, it would be impossible to restrain them

RICHELIEU  
(Political Testament)

## U.S. Tax Collector fails to Silence the Daily Worker

THE attempt by the American government last week to suppress the (American) *Daily Worker* by recruiting the services of the Income Tax collector's henchmen not only provided the Communists with nation-wide publicity (which is just what they want) but did not in fact prevent the newspaper from appearing. On the grounds that the *Daily Worker* owed \$46,000 in taxes (in spite of the fact that everyone, except the Communists, declared that its publication was financed by Moscow—and therefore that it could not make a profit, the grounds on which it would be liable for taxes), agents of the Internal Revenue seized the premises of the newspaper, and according to some reports used the occasion to seek to snoop among the files of subscribers, a familiar police trick not only in America.

The *New York Times* in spite of its own experience of investigation by political inquisitors, cannot be unequivocal about the *Daily Worker*. It sees the raid as "essentially a tax case not a censorship case", and it "questions" whether this particular action against the "dwindling party and its organ has not given both unwarranted advertisement and provided them with a means of diverting the attention of their still few faithful followers away from the sensational anti-Stalin disclosures in Moscow which have put both paper and party on the spot". Is one to assume that not even these objections would be forthcoming from the *N.Y. Times* if there had been no Moscow "crisis" and the party had not been "dwindling". However, it still has the nerve to end its editorial with a high-sounding cliché to the effect that "even in a tax case it is incumbent on the Government to take no action that can be interpreted as an effort to suppress any segment of the press, however unpopular the views of that segment of

\*And the Communists put the loss on the *D.W.* at \$200,000 per annum.

the press may be." Of course the *N.Y. Times* criticism of government tactics was fully justified. A couple of days later in its news columns it reports that:

"Despite padlocks on its editorial and business offices *The Daily Worker* has continued to publish. It sold an extra 5,000 copies Wednesday and Thursday on the basis of publicity accompanying the tax raid. To-day's press run was about 4,000 above the usual 8,000 and 9,000. Plans were made to run off 32,000 copies of the week-end edition instead of the usual 23,000.

The Communist party has been enjoying an equal publicity splurge."

There is no doubt about the fact that government officials are stupid!

### U.S. Tightening Its Passport Rules

Starting this summer all persons seeking passports will be required to swear they never belonged to the Communist party.

This new order, made known yesterday by the State Department, may effect 3,000 Americans daily.

The department, meanwhile won another round in its efforts to deny passports to applicants who had refused to sign non-Communist affidavits. Federal Judge Joseph C. McGarraghy in Washington ruled against passport pleas by Rockwell Kent, 73-year-old artist, and Dr. Walter Briehl, Los Angeles Psychiatrist.

Non-Communist affidavits heretofore had been asked only from certain persons at the department's discretion. When the present forms are used up about July 1, applicants will receive new ones that ask:

"Are you now a member of the Communist party? Have you ever been a member of the Communist party? If ever a member, state period of membership."

(*New York Times*, 29/3/56).

## THE VIOLENCE IN CYPRUS

ONE of the occupational risks of a soldier is the possibility of being shot at by a resentful population whose territory he might be occupying. In Cyprus at the moment a number of British soldiers are being killed by Cypriot patriots who are opposed to what they consider to be the imposition of a foreign rule whose orders are carried out by an army of occupation.

When a soldier is killed we read in the British press that he has been

murdered in the course of his duty. When however, we read reports of soldiers killing Cypriot civilians this is called "putting down terrorism" and justified in the name of law and order.

British style law and order in Cyprus is now following the pattern of General Templer's collective punishment technique which was carried out in Malaya. The latest killing of two British soldiers while patrolling the village of Phrenaros has led to a £15,000 fine being imposed on all the villagers and the promise of eviction for some of them.

Two hundred men of the village were rounded up, put into a barbed wire pen, and there "cold and hungry they stayed all night". They were then given the opportunity of disclosing information about the killing under the threat that the whole village would suffer if they refused. Mr. John Weston, commissioner for Famagusta, told them:

"I know the whole village is not bad. You have had a good record until now but because of these bad people you all run the risk of severe punitive action."

When the Germans carried out their collective punishment measures in occupied Europe this was rightly considered in this country to be a brutal method of terrorising people into submission. But the principle in Cyprus is the same, the only difference being that British interests are threatened instead of German.

The people of this little Cyprus village probably do not really care whether they are united with Greece or not. They are now put in the position of submitting to the British

and running the risk of reprisals from EOKA or not talking, thus laying themselves open to British reprisals. Many of them will have no knowledge of EOKA activities but will have to pay their fine just the same.

Who can blame them if they decide that after all it is not a bad idea to get rid of British rule?

★  
SINCE writing the above more information has come to light about the men from the village of Frenaros who were hounded into a barbed wire enclosure after the killing of two British soldiers.

A delegation of men from the village called on D. N. Pritt, Q.C., now in Nicosia, to protest against the brutality of men of the Leicester Regiment who had been sent to search the village. This is the story they told as reported by Stephen Barber in the *News Chronicle*, Monday, April 2nd:

When the Leicester's patrol came to the village after the killing, they ordered 300 inhabitants over the age of 14 out of bed into a barbed wire enclosure in a field. It was at 1 o'clock on Wednesday morning.

The villagers were forced "at the point of a gun" to lie face down on the ground until 11 a.m. next day.

Nicolaos Skiatos, a farmer, claimed he was strung up by a noose about his

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## No Conscience in the Co-operative Party?

THE Co-operative Party, in spite of its strong pacifist tradition, took a retrogressive step at its annual conference after a clash between delegates on the hanging issue when a decision was avoided by moving on to the next business. Four local parties had tabled motions or amendments opposing hanging.

The Chairman, Alderman Ballard, made the astonishing comment that the issue was one for personal conscience rather than political policy making. Have we to assume from this remark that conscience has no part to play in the political decisions taken by members of the Co-operative Party, and that this is an implied admission that political expedients determine policy? This is no surprise to us but we fancy it will be to some of their supporters.

We would have thought at this time when even some Tories are supporting abolition that events might have offered encouragement to the more backward members of the Co-

operative Party. But it appears that irrational views, as expressed by a rather stupid man, a former Scots miner, are more persuasive. Mr. Anderson informs us that on two occasions he visited the condemned cell in Glasgow prisons and was rather petulant about the callous demeanour of the condemned men who appeared to sneer at their visitors. How does he expect men who have been condemned to death to react? Does he really expect them to show gratitude to the hangman and the judge, and to Mr. Anderson for paying them a visit before the rope is placed round their necks?

The relatives of the victims however, will be pleased to know that Mr. Anderson is lining himself up with them. We are also sorry for the relatives, but an irrational desire for revenge cannot bring the dead back to life or encourage an understanding of the disorders which compel a man to commit murder.

## Communists and Conscription

AS referred to elsewhere in this issue, the British Communist Party discussed conscription (though very briefly) at its Easter conference.

The reasons for declining to come out for complete abolition make interesting points. Apart from the one mentioned in our fuller report, the argument was also put forward that there are times when it is useful to have a working class trained in the use of arms—and the Spanish civil war was quoted.

There are several flaws in this argument, however. In the first place, the British workers who went to Spain in the International Brigade had not been through conscription, for it did not exist in this country at that time. The Communist, however, have always assured us that then their contingents put up a splendid fight—without the aid of State training.

The real resistance to Franco came from the Spanish workers—and they had not been conscripted either. Such training as they had they had organised for themselves in the revolutionary struggle—just as the Irish workers prepared themselves for battle against the English without going into the British army first.

Conscription has one very good feature from the Communist point of view—it is a training for discipline and for taking orders. But the real reason for the CP being unable to come out with wholehearted opposition to conscription is that it exists in the Soviet Union.

How can they argue against it here when it is in force there? Stalin or no Stalin, the Soviet Union can still be an embarrassment to the Communists of the West.

### Coca Cola Civilization Progress Report

The Pepsi-Cola Company achieved in 1955 the highest sales and earnings in its history, according to the annual report yesterday of Alfred N. Steele, chairman, and Herbert L. Barnett, president.

Net income climbed 52 per cent. last year to \$9,456,766, or \$1.60 a common share, from \$6,212,690, or \$1.07 a share, in 1954. Earnings before taxes came to \$18,880,766 compared with \$12,703,690. (N.Y. Times).

# LAMB, FOX AND TIGER

[This article was written before the Stalin debacle. I do not propose to amend my references to Stalin, because it is pointless to try to keep up with the changing Party Line].

"In adversity—a Lamb, in equality—a Fox, in power—a Tiger." This 16th century aphorism has a particular aptness for a body which has grown up in our own time. I refer to the Communist Party. The dilemma which faces us in Western countries is due to the fact that it is now part of Russia's foreign policy to order the national Communist Parties in Western countries to seek to co-operate with, and if possible to dominate, the various movements concerned with pacifism and international friendship. Many of the offers of co-operation from Communists and Fellow-travellers on limited issues seem perfectly genuine, but it is wise to consider just what has been the result of such co-operation in recent history.

To begin with, it is as well to try to understand just what is the object of such co-operation from the Communist point of view. Individual Communists may be perfectly sincere and convinced that they are acting from genuine peace-loving motives, when they offer to join with pacifists in opening the eyes of the public to the tragic folly of war. This is particularly true of the humbler rank-and-file Communists and Fellow-travellers who have little understanding of the meaning of Communism (Lenin-Stalinism). But the Communist Party is not like any other political party; it is international in its ramifications and highly centralised in its control. Its members are trained to have a high degree of loyalty to the dictates of the Party—a loyalty which transcends and supplants the dictates of their own private judgment. Whatever the party line of the moment may be (and we have seen some truly amazing switches), there is one end in view, and one end only—the eventual triumph of the power of Russia throughout the world. Unhappily this triumph is conceived in Communist ideology in terms of armed conflict. This conviction of the necessity for the eventual triumph to be achieved through war, and only through war, runs through all the writings of Lenin, Stalin, and other approved authorities. To believe otherwise is heresy.

"We are living not merely in a state, but in a system of states and the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end supervenes a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states will be inevitable. That means that if the ruling class, the proletariat, wants to hold sway, it must prove its capacity

to do so by military organization also."

(LENIN: *Selected Works*, 1943, Vol. 111).

The above is a fundamental dogma of Communism, and Russia has continuously shaped her foreign policy with a view to the final Armageddon.

"The tasks of the party in foreign policy are: (1) to utilize each and every contradiction among the surrounding capitalist groups and governments for the purpose of disintegrating imperialism; (2) to spare no pains or means to render assistance to the proletarian revolutions of the West; (3) to take all necessary measures to strengthen the national liberation movement in the East, and (4) to strengthen the Red Army."

(STALIN: *Works*, 1947, Vol. V).

A belief in the inevitability of Russia's military might as the deciding factor in the future of humanity, is the basis of Communist international policy. But such a truly atrocious belief can nevertheless exist in individuals along with quite idealistic hopes for human betterment. This is typical of Communist psychology, and is endlessly rationalized by Russian writers.

"The aims of our constructive work and the principles of Soviet state policy, are identical with the general direction of the historical development of the human race. . . . The rightly understood interests of all the progressive elements of the whole world are identical with the interests of Soviet policy. In our age, since all roads lead to Communism, all those who take part in the Soviet Union are historically in the right. All those who are

historically against the Soviet Union are in the wrong. They are trying to stop the wheel of history. But that is impossible, and he who attempts it is broken and crushed by the course of history. . . . Every victory for our Soviet Fatherland is a victory for peace and progress."

(KHOVOSTOV: *Stalin's Foreign Policy*, 1950, *Voprossi Istovii*).

In 1939 when it became evident that relations between Britain and Germany were degenerating towards war, the various 'cultural' bodies of the Nazis in this country made unofficial approaches to The Peace Pledge Union and other pacifist bodies, with a view to sympathetic co-operation. Oswald Mosley's Fascist organization, which became an instrument of German foreign policy, made similar approaches. Most pacifist and anti-militarists naturally refused to have anything to do with such odious bodies. After the outbreak of war, the Fascists were naturally suppressed. However, Russia joined with Nazi Germany in invading Poland, and the two countries became allies. The alliance between the Nazis and Communists was published to the world as the pact of friendship signed by von Ribbentrop and Molotov on 28th September, 1939.

### THE FOX

It was now the Communist Party's turn to try and woo the peace movement of Britain. In this they were more subtle and more successful than the Fascists had been. They used the technique of seldom approaching any organizations in their own name; they invented various "Innocents' Clubs", that is, groups which consisted of many non-Communists who were unaware that their organization was

strictly Communist controlled. These groups had the outward appearance of being non-sectarian, and comprising many points of view. This was the Fox in action.

It was not, of course, the Communists' policy to take too strong an anti-war line; they did not want to share the same fate as Oswald Mosley's organization. They used their association with pacifists and anti-militarist Socialists of high repute as a cover for their activities. At the same time they encouraged their party members to join the armed forces and to 'bore from within'. In general, the line that they took was as expressed by Palme Dutt:

"This is an imperialist war, like the war of 1914. It is a sordid exploiters' war of rival millionaire groups, using the workers as their pawns in their struggle for world domination, for markets, colonies and profits, for the oppression of peoples."

(PALME DUTT: *Why this war*, November, 1939).

The Communist anti-war agitation was carried out largely under the cloak of a consensus of "Innocents' Clubs" known as The Peoples' Convention.

This Convention certainly embraced a large number of people who had no idea that it was entirely under the effective control of the Communist Party. It was a masterpiece of skilful engineering, the fruit of the Fox's many years of working through "Popular Fronts".

### THE TIGER

In 1941 Germany turned on her ally and attacked her. The German armies soon penetrated deep into Russia. The Communist Party line in this country was dramatically switched to a pro-war basis, and the Peoples' Convention collapsed like a house of cards. This swift folding up of the Peoples' Convention came as a considerable surprise to the non-Communist members who could not see how Russia's entry into the war altered the general anti-war case at all. The Communists tried to persuade their erstwhile collaborators that the war had now changed from being a Bad Thing to a Good Thing, and if they continued to hold fast to their anti-war principles the Communists denounced them as cowards, traitors to their country and worse. It was instructive to see how many Quakers, humanitarian pacifists and sincere anti-militarists were now 'unmasked'

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## Catholics Examine Conception Control

SOME Catholic authorities are getting worried about the increasing birth rate (the U.N. estimates that by 1980 there will be from 34% to 63% more people on earth), and the Netherlands' Catholic Institute for Social Ecclesiastical Research has launched a two thousand

pound contest to find new ways of controlling population. This is going to be a very difficult task, since mechanical interference with conception is, according to Catholic doctrine, a mortal sin, but the Institute still want answers to be effective from a positive scientific point of view, without interfering with Catholic principles.

The reason behind the proposed research is an awareness on the part of this organisation that, in the words of the Institute's Director:—

"In the Western world it's a problem largely created by Catholics, who provide two-thirds of the annual population increase. In the rest of the world Catholics are contributing to the problem by the doctrine they advocate. We as Catholics have a duty to find a solution to the problem. My aim is to compel the church to see its responsibility."

This is a utopian aim, because the church does not consider that it has responsibility in preventing more births. Its aim is to increase the Catholic population and to frighten the flock into obedience to dogma. If however, Catholics unable to support large families begin to question the validity of dogma relating to childbirth the church may have to accommodate itself, as it has done so often, to changing conditions. So far, the Vatican comment on the new research does not offer much hope. Said an official last week: "If the institute's initiative leads to the discovery of another way to avoid childbirth without thwarting the end of coitus, the Vatican will certainly examine it tolerantly."

## THE HANGING CONTROVERSY

### What Constitutes a Hitch?

IT has always been one of the most macabre aspects of capital punishment in this country that a prisoner has to be in good health to be fit for hanging. Or, to be more accurate, a prisoner cannot be lifted out of a sick bed straight on to the gallows.

There must, of course, in the grim history of executions in Britain, have been many instances where a condemned murderer has been suffering from an incurable disease. But as long as he could walk to the death-house, or if he could not, the reason why was not attributable to his illness, then he was healthy enough for the hangman.

Even more revolting, however, is the procedure where a prisoner is in a state of collapse and has to be carried to the execution chamber.

The British always hate fuss. If an unpleasant job has to be done it is jolly well much more decent to do it calmly and in a gentlemanly fashion. Only a cad, one feels, would kick up a fuss on execution morning.

But even British prison officials have feelings behind their stiff upper lips, and one can only wonder just what they must be feeling when they carry a poor wretch to his death. Especially when it's her death.

The exchanges in both Houses of Parliament that have arisen out of Arthur Koestler's articles in the *Observer*, have now disclosed officially a small part of the facts surrounding the execution of Mrs. Thompson in 1923. And what the Home Secretary has disclosed, shows us that the official statement issued in 1948 (That the execution was 'carried out without a hitch') is just not true.

### 'More Humane'

Last Wednesday week (28/3/56) Mr. Paget, M.P. for Northampton, asked the Home Secretary whether he would issue the instruction to prison governors about executions, together with any subsequent amendments; if he would publish the information in his possession about the execution of Mrs. Thompson; and how far the conduct of that execution caused amendments to be made to the rules for the conduct of executions.

Major loyd-George, in a written reply, said:—

Before the execution the Governor of Holloway Prison, who was also the medical officer, in accordance with the discretion vested in him, gave Mrs. Thompson sedatives. At the time of the execution the Governor considered that it would be more humane to spare her the necessity of walking the few yards to the execution chamber, and although he thought that she could have walked with assistance he had her carried and she was supported on the scaffold. Apart from this nothing unusual occurred.

Having examined all the information available, I am satisfied that there is no truth in the allegation that Mrs. Thompson "disintegrated as a human creature" or that she "fought, kicked and screamed and protested her innocence to the last, and that it required about five men to hold her down while being carried to the gallows and having the noose put over her," or in the story that "her insides fell out."

No incident occurred during the execution of such a nature as to call for any change in the instructions to governors, and no change was made in consequence of it. These instructions have always been treated as confidential, and I am not prepared to depart from the practice of my predecessors in refusing to publish them.

What a disgusting picture this conjures up! And even more disgusting is the attempt of the Home Secretary (who was an opponent of capital punishment when the Tories were out of power), to pretend that everything was all right.

Two points spring to mind. Firstly—why did the Governor consider that Mrs. Thompson needed sedatives? Was she already hysterical before the time came for her to be carried to her death?

Secondly, what kind of incident must occur before it becomes really unusual? What grotesque pretence at being 'humans' must be enacted before the Home Secretary would admit to a 'hitch'?

### Refusal to Publish

And still both Parliament and the country are to be denied full knowledge of the instructions issued to prison governors on what they should say after an execution.

The day after Major Lloyd-George's reply had been read out in the Commons, Sir Robert Boothby (East Aberdeenshire, C.) asked the Home Secretary whether he would now give the facts about the execution of Edith Thompson in 1923,

and publish the full text of the instructions subsequently issued to prison governors regarding executions in general, indicating how far those instructions were affected by the facts in Mrs. Thompson's case.

But the Home Secretary refused to budge, so although members of the government and prison officials are supposed to be servants of the public, the public are not to be allowed to know what instructions pass between them when human life is being taken on our behalf and in our name.

### AN APPEAL TO THE PRESS COUNCIL

*THE Observer* announces that 'in view of the renewed allegations and inaccuracies in the Home Secretary's statement last week on the instruction issued to prison governors about executions and the hanging of Mrs. Thompson, *The Observer* and Mr. Arthur Koestler are making a joint formal request to the Press Council for a full investigation.

## CINEMA

### Race for Life

CLOUZOT has made a reputation for films of suspense as in "Wages of Fear" and "The Fiends" and this film from his adaptation is no exception. It is the story of an outbreak of illness on a fishing trawler in the North Sea. The radio has broken down and the only means of contact with the outside world is an 'amateur' transmitter, the message is picked up by a 'ham' in Togoland and instructions are eventually given over the radio and the disease is diagnosed, a serum is proscribed and flown out to the ship and dropped by parachute. The incident is a simple everyday one and the suspense is very cleverly built up with cross-cutting from the ship to the adventures of the various participants in the delivery of the serum. The amateur in Togoland relays to a boy in Paris, who enlists a doctor's wife and a German war-blinded veteran. The doctor's wife gets the help of a Polish air-stewardess. The German war-veteran contacts his daughter's American boyfriend whose friend in Berlin ventures into the Russian zone in search of the serum. There he is picked up by the Russians, whose commandant after agonizing delays arranges for a Russian plane to help fly in the serum. In turn a French and a Norwegian aeroplane relay the package and the Norwegian skillfully drops it by parachute.

and the irony of the bureaucratic complexity of modern life is emphasised and contrasted with its inability to perform simple humanitarian acts. The serum has to be paid for, the customs formalities must be gone through. As the commentator breaks in at one point "The regulations do not cover human fellowship or death's approach".

The serum is forwarded by means of people prepared to break the law and risk the consequences. Human solidarity that breaks across the barriers of race and national hatred is stressed time after time. The human being rises above the littleness of boundary posts and the festoonings of red tape. "Even today a single life is a precious possession", and the efforts of people of diverse nationalities to save the lives of the fishermen are given in all their simple direct disinterestedness. The irony of the world situation is underlined by the artistic direction of this film.

The director, Christian-Jaque has made an excellent film with all the qualities of suspense and a message to reach out to all, as the film has a 'U' certificate which is a rarity in these days for an intelligent film.

The supporting programme includes a film on Utrillo which is a welcome contribution to the growing repertoire of art films. J.R.

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\*See FREEDOM, 17/3/56.

## REFLECTIONS

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national unity, therefore, is unity within nations, not the phoney nationalism with which the world is at present plagued, but the growth of the free, equalitarian Society of communities within a Community.



PERHAPS our Paris correspondent who berates us, in another column, for our *facilisme* (our simplification) of the problem of motor-car tests, will, if he is logical, presumably apply the same arguments to the problems of the United Nations and the disarmament sub-committee and the colonial sub-sub-committee of the U.N., and accuse us of offering pipe-dreams as solutions to practical problems.

We are in fact not simplifying the problem nor offering easy (by which is meant utopian) solutions. On the contrary our solutions are far from easy, since they demand that we should overthrow most of the values which are basic to the society in which we live. And we believe that nothing less than this revolution of mankind's way of thinking is needed because the methods available to a society divided by classes, whose values are measured by the money system and which is run by a professional élite called politicians, offer no solutions to any problem which are either beneficial to mankind or do not create others as great or even greater than those which they ostensibly set out to solve. To seek to solve problems by methods which one knows beforehand to be doomed to failure is dishonesty; to support those who use such methods is sheer larceny!

The "practical"-socialists (and the few anarchists suffering from the same complaint), in our opinion, do a disservice to their basic cause by perpetuating the myth of the lesser evil, instead of sowing the seeds of new values and principles. Their support of an effete Republican government in Spain rather than of the workers revolutionary struggle, may have been done with the best intentions, but it neither prevented the victory of Franco nor the wholesale massacre of his opponents after victory. Their support of the "antifascist" war against Hitler neither prevented the extermination of millions of Jews in the gas chambers and tens of thousands of non-Jews in concentration camps, nor, with military victory, the intensification of totalitarianism throughout the world. World War II besides sending some 20 million humans to their graves has released new and greater forces for war and none for peace.

Just as violence breeds more violence, so, it seems to us, compromise results in more compromise, evil in more evil. If we are to move in the right direction (and by this we very modestly suggest that it is the direction which tends towards human happiness—and, if you like, we will add, for the greatest number, not of any particular nation, but of mankind as a whole) to move in the right direction, we were saying, it is surely time that we decided to take the right road! And even assuming that the anarchists have not found that road one thing is certain: they know which are the wrong roads and consider it a waste of time to take them. If that is being unpractical or unrealistic then we rejoice in being so labelled. However, if we succeed, at least, in convincing others of these "negative" truths we shall have achieved something positive, for their minds will have been freed to search for the right road. Surely a more practical and profitable occupation than burying one's head in the shifting sands of a Disunited Nations Organisation!

## THERE IS NO DEFENCE

ONE of the first public statements of the new Minister of Defence, Sir Walter Monckton, made him look more than somewhat silly.

It probably wasn't his fault, poor chap, since he was presumably expressing Government policy, but when a reputedly intelligent person gets up in Parliament and announces that the Government are working on plans to evacuate 12,000,000 people in the event of war, he is rather asking for ridicule.

And he got it. From the Labour benches particularly came hoots of derision as the Opposition quoted from a Government White Paper showing that a hydrogen bomb dropped on Liverpool could leave a trail of destruction right across England to the Wash. In a tight little island like Britain—where could 12 million people be evacuated to?

Sir Walter might have expected the Commons to have been bowled over with admiration at the scope and brilliance of this scheme. He probably saw himself as a potential rival to Cecil B. de Mille in the staging of the super-colossal epic. Even that old Hollywood showman has never claimed to employ 12 million extras! But studio owners in the Celluloid City can buy their yes-men; Sir Walter found no reverence in the tone of his reception. So he beat a hasty retreat, muttering that the scheme had not been fully worked out, that all the details have still to be filled in. We rather think it is Sir Walter who should be filled in.

It is, however, a sobering thought to know that the Government is seriously considering such a desperate measure as this huge evacuation from our cities. And the fact that such a scheme is hopelessly impractical indicates the dilemma facing the Government.

The probable source of such an idea lies in the Government's recognition that under the threat of H-Bomb war even British calm might break down, and the flood of panic-stricken refugees that would start streaming out of the big towns would create insoluble difficulties for the defence forces. In traditional governmental fashion, therefore, the Government says that if the people are going to evacuate themselves anyway, it had better be done under its own orders, so that it can keep its control of the people. But even the Government is not going to be able to provide space that isn't there, even if, by some miracle of

planning, it could provide supplies of food, shelter and the social services for the multitudes of evacuees.

Sir Walter Monckton's announcement clearly went off at half cock, and he did well to take it back for reconsideration. He would do even better to give much more serious thought to the question: 'Is defence possible?'

In order to keep up the morale of the people, it is necessary for a State to keep them assured that they are going to be ably defended. So far the British Government has managed to do this in spite of itself. For certainly the methods of civil defence that have been recommended—ranging from wrapping ourselves in brown paper to being evacuated by the dozen million—have hardly been reassuring. The morale of the British people with regard to an H-Bomb war has been kept up mainly because the British never believe such things are really going to happen anyway. And even if they do happen, the comical foreigner will never get the better of us.

It is the innate spirit of superiority which keeps up morale in this country—for if the people really woke up to the facts of life in the H-Bomb age and realised that a stiff upper-lip is not a completely effective defence weapon, the Government might find itself in trouble.

Among the people who know, whose job it is to be realistic and not merely reassuring about situations, the 'Britain Can Take It' line doesn't go down so well. This country is simply not designed to take H-Bombs and survive, and according to Randolph Churchill, in the *Evening Standard* (28/3/56), there is a growing number of people concerned with defence at high level who are recognising the futility of attempting the impossible.

Already Anti-Aircraft Command has been scrapped, it being obvious that by the time an enemy plane carrying an H-Bomb is within the range of AA guns, it is near enough to do colossal damage merely by jettisoning its bomb. A plane has only to cross the East Coast to be in a position to wipe out half the Home Counties!

Similarly, the day of the fighter plane is numbered. The dog-fights which enlivened the skies of Kent in 1940, when the 'First of the Few' fought the Battle of Britain, are not likely to be repeated in the next war. As Randolph Churchill writes:

'Even if we had made better and faster fighters than we have, and, even if they could intercept the very high

proportion of enemy bombers that Fighter Command did in the last war, the county would still lie nakedly open to aggression.

'In the last war it was thought that if out of 100 enemy bombers 10 could be shot down the enemy would fairly soon find the raids too expensive. And the damage done by the 90 that got through, though disagreeable, never seriously affected our survival or war-making capacity.

'To-day the calculation is that even if 95 per cent. were intercepted, and only five enemy bombers out of 100 got through, armed as they would be with hydrogen bombs, it would mean the total destruction of the war-making capacity of this country, and an immense abridgement of life, both present and future, and a serious doubt as to any form of survival.'

It seems, therefore, we have seen the last of the few.

What, then, is our defence to be? Mr. Churchill maintains that the only

sure defence is the power of heavy and instant retaliation. We therefore have to maintain for ever a state of preparedness at the highest possible level, constantly scrapping and replacing as equipment gets obsolete, constantly spying upon potential enemies to make sure they don't get ahead, living with a background of fear and anxiety, aware of the fact that the national leaders of the world are so brilliant that they can devise no better way for mankind to live than by the perpetual threat to annihilate itself.

This is the prospect before us. Hardly an inspiring one. Yet it is all that can be offered by any who believes in the *status quo*. There is no defence against H-Bombs—there is only offence against the peoples of the world by those who direct the manufacture and use of H-Bombs. An offence against humanity.

And the only way to break from that is to destroy the circumstances, the cause, for the situation as it has developed. For those who want to live to destroy the institutions and powers which have been so deadly to us through the centuries.

## Letter

### Field Theory of Political Ideology

IN the last two issues of *FREEDOM* "G" has suggested that political ideologies may be seen to lie along a straight line, a series of straight lines, or a circle (which is a kind of bent straight line). It says something for the objectivity of this latter theory that it makes the fascist meet the communist coming in the other direction even though both of them hotly deny their mutual proximity.

All the theories noted and put forward by "G" assume a point at which the individual can be located. I would like to draw attention to a theory which is essentially different from those considered so far—that is, the field theory in which the individual is shown as ideologically more or less within the influence of clusters of attitudes.

Instead of the five points or lines representing communists to fascists, imagine five clusters of dots rather like nebulae, each dense at the centre and radiating outwards with the dots getting farther and farther apart. Any point in this system will be a greater or lesser distance from each of the "storm-centres". Now imagine that your individual is somewhere in that system. If he is near the Conservative centre, for example, he will be a staunch Tory and his corresponding attitudes will be illustrated in number and strength by tightly-packed Tory dots interspersed by a very few non-Tory dots. If, on the other hand, he is only moderately near the Communist centre he will be a fellow-traveller, mostly sympathetic to the CP case but also influenced by other clusters, e.g. Labour.

This method of looking at political ideologies overcomes some of the diffi-

culties presented by the linear methods while presenting new difficulties of its own. For example, it enables us to see that a sympathiser of a political party becomes a member when he reaches a threshold point, which would be represented by a certain density of attitudes associated with that party (a better representation than that of moving along a line). But the analogy of the field of political forces is not adequate unless it takes into account the individual's own perception of his position, and does not merely allot him a place according to his objective behaviour in certain situations. Enough is known of how people see what they want to see and rationalise inconsistencies in their beliefs to prevent us being over-confident in predicting from a little information even a few of an individual's attitudes.

"G" was a little hazy about how Anarchists fitted into the various diagrams he gave. I incline to the view that Anarchists have a little cluster of attitudes just like other people—a rather nicer and looser one, perhaps, and not so incandescent as formerly, but a cluster nevertheless. In general I do not think it is desirable to be in the thick of one of these clusters for any length of time—even the Anarchist one. It would seem to be preferable to spend a good deal of one's time in the more rarefied political atmosphere between clusters, if only to give oneself a better view of the system as a whole. At other times one can dive in and take a stand on a particular issue, and it will then be a better-informed stand, owing something to all the other elements in the system.

S. R. PARKER.

### SOME POLICEMEN SUPPORT ABOLITION

AS soon as the House of Commons voted on abolition a month ago, the Prison Wardens' Association protested to the Home Secretary that its members were being put in danger of murderous attack by prisoners—especially long-term prisoners and lifers.

There were also many demands for the police to be armed, to give them protection against criminals who would get long sentences if caught and would therefore have little to lose if they shot their way to escape.

The letter-writers, leader-writers and reporters who have advocated the retention of the rope or the arming of the police have claimed to speak for all the officers of law enforcement.

It is therefore refreshing to read of a police journal repudiating these attitudes.

The *Clarion*, official journal of the Leicester City police force, says in its editorial, written by Inspector C. A. Adkin:

"The deliberate taking of life is evil. There is no fundamental difference between a murderer and a hangman, and it is not right to shelter beneath the cloak of justice.

"Many adherents to capital punishment think it is a necessary evil, but we are doubtful whether, in the society we know to-day, it is at all necessary.

"We believe its abolition will not mean more murders, and that surely is the point at issue in the majority of minds to-day.

"Common sense, it is said, dictates that hanging is the most powerful deterrent to murder because life is valued above all else. The experience of neighbouring countries shows, however, that after the abolition of hanging, little or no increase of murders is recorded; rather the opposite.

"Most Continental police forces are armed, a factor which enables the policeman to meet his assailant on equal terms. Many believe that the police in this country would be armed if capital punishment were abolished.

"We disagree very strongly with any suggestion of arming the police, because the unique and peculiar support the public accord the police would be inevitably lost. Gun battles, common to America, would ruin for ever any real public spirit towards law and order. Arms are certainly not the answer.

"The more one delves into this controversy, the more groundless the case for capital punishment becomes."

### THE 'SURPLUS' IS DWINDLING!

It needs your support!

### Lamb, Fox and Tiger Continued from p. 2

as Fascist Beasts. The Fox had now turned into the Tiger—a small and rather many tiger because its resources were limited, but a vicious beast. Sellers of *Peace News* and other anti-war papers were assaulted in the street both verbally and physically by Communist rowdies. "Pacifism and Fascism—it's all the same thing!" shouted these former advocates of civil liberty.

In the factories and workshops which supplied the war material the Communists changed their tactics too. During the period of Russia's alliance with Germany, the Communists had not scrupled to go into the war factories, but they carried out a policy of discreet sabotage in labour relations. Now all that was changed. The war was a glorious thing and all workers must put heart and soul into providing for it, irrespective of any hardships or damage to established Trade Union principles. So-called slackers were reprimanded and workers who stood out against the encroachment on their rights were labelled "Trotskyists", and denounced to the management.

"The Trotskyite lead is not concerned with any improvement for the workers, but is directed towards fomenting and extending disputes and weakening the war effort... There is no room for their viewpoint or their propaganda in the working class movement. Hitler's aim is the destruction of the Labour movement and all that it stands for. If his Trotskyite agents or their dupes are allowed to occupy positions of even the smallest influence in the working class movement they will use them to aid their master

... Sooner or later we will have to deal with them; why not now?"

(JOHN McMAHON: *Hitler's Agents Exposed*, C.P. Publications, February, 1943).

Association with the genuine anti-war movement in the People's Convention had given the Communists much valuable information about their co-workers. This information was now used as a means of blackmail. Those who were on the wrong side of the law regarding military service or agitational activities were now denounced to the police by Communist informers. This may seem an act of peculiar treachery to non-Communists, but it is surely in keeping with the Communist outlook. When it is a matter of honour to repress private feelings and private judgment in the interests of the Party, when one regards all possible human benefit as being linked with the military victory of Russia, such acts are seen in a different light. The justification of such denunciation rested on the technique of dubbing all dissident opinion as "Support for Hitler". Mr. Harry Pollitt distinguished himself by demanding that all who called for a negotiated peace should be shot out of hand.

"It is an enemy with whom there can be no parley. No negotiation. No compromise. Whoever tries in any way to support this enemy—by encouraging a defeatist mentality, by tolerating practices or vested interests that prevent the full mobilization of our country and its allies—brands himself as a traitor who should be shot out of hand."

(HARRY POLLITT: *The World in Arms*, 1943).

### THE LAMB

In the post-war era the Communists have switched to "Peace" again. They have made that word highly suspect in the public eye. They have indeed done a grave disservice to the genuine anti-war movement, for not only have they given the authorities a convenient lever for suppressing genuine pacifist endeavour under the guise of anti-Communist security measures (which would have public support), but they have made all attempts to combat the growing militarism of our time seem just another political gambit in the service of a foreign power.

In the latter part of the war the Communists created deliberate confusion between genuine anti-war endeavours and pro-Hitler plotting; we are reaping the harvest now. Genuine efforts for peace are being misinterpreted as pro-Russian plotting. Anti-militarists, anarchists, pacifists and all who oppose the present drive towards a suicidal war must be prepared to have their *bona fides* continually doubted. The falsely-bleating Lamb is only too willing to travel together with every sort of anti-militarist on this side of the Iron Curtain. It is up to all who want to make their anti-war activity effective to repudiate collaboration with Communists as vehemently as collaboration with Fascists. The Communist Party has in fact the worst record for betrayal of all parties which have ever existed. By being Lamb, Fox and Tiger in turn it employs woolly-minded sentimentalists, sly diplomats and arrant thugs in its party ranks as the occasion demands. The best service that we can do for the dupes of the C.P. is make it plain that we are not to be drawn into supporting "Innocents' Clubs". Anything which smells of the Party is to be ostracised—completely.

G.

Easter Conferences

Unusual Criticisms in Communist Party

ONE of the more interesting events in British politics has just taken place at the Battersea Town Hall—the long-awaited twenty-fourth congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain. It has been no ordinary congress this year, although it has been attended by roughly the same bunch of tired dialecticians as usual; for this has been the year of the 'great Stalin disclosures', the year in which the Communist Party has been permitted to learn the innermost secret of the Kremlin—the secret which the non-Communists of the world (and especially the anarchists), have always known—that Stalin was a monomaniac with an overwhelming desire for power. The conference was opened by Willie Gallacher, who said: "I believe this will be a great clarifying congress." To what extent this statement will prove true is unknown as yet, for the principle discussions which may help to clarify the thoughts of the comrades, probably took place during the six hour secret session last Sunday! One thing seems quite clear however, all is not well with the party; the leadership has been criticised from below (almost unheard of in the past), and there appears to be increasing dissension in the ranks.

Several delegates accused the Executive Committee of working things so that it could re-elect itself, and the Committee's refusal to publish the names of candidates for the next Executive did not pass by unnoticed. One delegate even went so far as to suggest that only an interim Executive should be elected, and thereby demonstrated his lack of confidence in the leadership. It would seem that he was by no means the only one.

These incidents follow upon a number of letters which indicate that there may be many readers, and party members too, who are dissatisfied with their leaders. One such letter asked quite a straight question: "... Those leading party people, did they know that there was something funny going on in Stalin's days? If they did, and some of us, if not many of us, think that they did know, why did they not report back like good Communists and democrats?" Apart from the more laughable aspects of this letter (and many Communists do think of themselves as democrats), it is of interest to ponder the reasons why this and other letters in the same strain, were published in the *Daily Worker* at all.

Cyprus

Continued from p. 1

neck until he was unconscious. His brother is wanted as an Eoka suspect, he admitted to me.

"The British wanted to know where he was," he said.

Markos Xydias, who had a black eye and scarred nose—claimed that he was beaten up.

Markou Vassilias, with his arm in a sling, said it was dislocated by interrogating "soldiers".

George Kafalas, a schoolmaster, showed me a signed and witnessed statement by Mrs. Nicola Mylou, aged 25, the pregnant wife of a shepherd, who alleged a British soldier attacked her.

An official Government spokesman has said that a full enquiry in "accordance with established procedure" has been opened into the killing of the soldiers, and the subsequent search by security forces.

It seems likely that as the Cypriot struggle becomes more determined and violent reprisal measures on the part of the security forces will become more brutal. Such was the pattern in Kenya, where only the more obvious acts of terrorism by British soldiers were publicised.

Malatesta Club

SWARAJ HOUSE, 32 PERCY STREET, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, LONDON, W.1. (Tel.: MUSEum 7277).

ACTIVITIES

Every Sunday at 7.30 p.m. London Anarchist Group Meetings (see Announcements Column)

Every Wednesday at 8 p.m. BONAR THOMPSON Speaks.

APRIL 11—50 YEARS OF HYDE PARK ORATORY

Every Thursday at 8 p.m. INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS will be arranged.

Every Saturday: SOCIAL EVENING.

Further criticism of the Executive was put forward by several delegates who spoke harshly against the leadership's intention to support the retention of National Service for one year. Although this is not a new topic for debate in the Communist Party, the forcefulness of the arguments used, and the outspoken manner of the delegates was quite new. Jock McGinn of Glasgow effectively summed up the argument against the Executive by saying that a party that was fighting a peace campaign (sic) could not formally endorse conscription for any period of time. The leadership seemed to argue that the 'forces of the Left', helped by several newspapers, could succeed in reducing National Service to one year, whereas the Communist Party fighting on its own for abolition, could not hope to win. (It was not made clear who were the 'forces of the Left', or which newspapers!)

Here though was a hint of future policy—friendship and co-operation with the Labour Party. Both Palme Dutt and John Gollan emphasised the importance of the new tactic: "Is it not time to end the cold war in the British Labour movement?" said Mr. Dutt with some warmth. What interesting travelling

companions the two parties will make—lukewarm Labour and confused Communist! It is doubtful whether this policy will have much success; Labour is nowadays so conservative, and the Communists are such doubtful allies.

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IT would be a mistake to over-estimate the importance of the events aforementioned. There are good reasons for them, some of which may be guessed at, others remain to be seen. Similar episodes have occurred before, and will no doubt occur again. The 'revelations' as to the true nature of Stalin and his régime must have come as a great shock to the average party member—however efficient a Marxist he may have been. Although accustomed to performing a *volte-face* at frequent intervals, the British Communist has not had quite such a revolutionary change of line thrust upon him since the Ribbentrop pact in 1939.

To have their idol destroyed in such callous fashion must have been a bitter-blow to the comrades—and for many, Stalin must have represented an admirable father figure who could do no wrong, was all powerful and possessed

the wisdom of Solomon. Now the illusion is shattered and the dream world turns to hard reality. For others the Khrushchev attack means that they will no longer be able to respond to awkward questions about Russian methods with the same quick answers. The reply *par excellence*, "It's all lies—you shouldn't read the Tory Press", no longer carries the same weight.

In circumstances like these, some Communists may be thinking that it does not matter if they are outspoken and critical for a change, because they do not now care if they are thrown out of the Party. This 'punishment' might even be a welcome relief for some of them.

As for the hardened members, one may be sure that the few who were brave enough to commit themselves to any serious breach of Party etiquette, knew what they were doing and had a good reason for doing it, or are now preparing themselves for disciplinary action, for the machinery is always there, ready to tighten up Party discipline, if it becomes necessary. Without this sort of machinery a party which represents only seven hundredths of one per cent. of the population could never possess the relative amount of influence which it does. In his book *The Communist Technique in Britain*, Bob Darke (a well-known ex-Communist) has the following comments to make on this subject: "The

Communist Party could not operate without firm discipline or without penalties which will make that discipline effective. Discipline . . . is based on the Party's power to do him serious harm if he offends it."

If the Party appears to have become more liberal in its attitude towards criticism, it is mainly for one, or some of the following reasons. They do not quite know what their own position is *vis-à-vis* their Russian masters; they have been ordered to give the appearance of being more 'democratic', or they have been caught by surprise and have not yet had time to re-organise themselves.

Whatever the reasons may be it is absolutely certain that their long-term aims remain the same. If circumstances appear to favour a new approach, and the Party bosses decree that it shall be so, then all the British Communists will adapt themselves to it—but the general line will emanate from a Kremlin, whose good will has always been in doubt, despite the statement which was handed down after the Battersea six-hour secret session which expressed, "full confidence" in the Soviet Union, its people, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union". H.F.W.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS Every Sunday at 7.30 at THE MALATESTA CLUB, 32 Percy Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.1.

THE TRADITION OF WORKERS' CONTROL IN BRITAIN

APRIL 8—Norman Carr on CO-OPERATIVE CO-PARTNER-SHIPS

APRIL 15—Geoffrey Ostergaard on THE SYNDICALIST TRADITION IN BRITAIN.

APRIL 22—Speaker to be announced on *The Community in Farmer & Son*.

APRIL 29—Tony Gibson on SOME PROBLEMS OF COMMUNAL ORGANISATION

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

At 200 BUCHANAN STREET, GLASGOW OUTDOOR meetings at Maxwell Street, every Sunday commencing April 1st at 7.30 p.m.

LIBERTARIAN FORUM

813 BROADWAY, (Bet. 11 & 12 Sts.) NEW YORK CITY

Round-Table Youth Discussions

Friday Evenings at 8.30 Apr. 13. Fascist Trends in America Apr. 20. To be announced. Apr. 27. Lecture by Joseph Spivak—The Social Health Plans of Britain and the U.S. Compared.

SPECIAL NOTICE

A MAY DAY MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE EVENING OF TUESDAY, MAY FIRST, AT THE LIBERTARIAN CENTRE, 813 BROADWAY.

Paris Comment on a Comment

ANARCHISTS AND MOTOR-CAR TESTS

DEAR COMRADES,

Like you, I am of the opinion that every authoritarian institution or proposal is a challenge to the creative intelligence and spirit of initiative of free men: if this challenge is not taken up there need be no surprise that State solutions, based on servitude and compulsion, have come more and more to prevail among us. For they are lazy solutions *par excellence*, marking a defeat for the human spirit and leading to the decadence of the individual.

Alas! Many problems of the moment are very difficult to resolve by means of open agreement (or arbitration contractually accepted by the parties) because of a mental climate that is irrational, impassioned, poisoned by prejudices, and too often opposed to the objective recognition of facts and the search for a reasonable solution. That is why it is extremely difficult to-day to put forward a claim to settle in a libertarian way a problem like that of Cyprus, Kenya, South Africa or Algeria.

In the meantime it is certainly easier to find an open or contractual solution to problems like those of road traffic or the safety of private vehicles; it is precisely in fields like these that, through force of circumstances or the progress of civilization, certain rules of fair play and mutual freedom predominate; moreover the technical difficulties clearly have the appearance of techniques, that is to say they are amenable to general or particular experience, adequate investigation, and good sense. That is why I was particularly happy to find in *FREEDOM*\* an editorial entitled "Anarchist Comment on Motor Car Tests".

Even before running through this article, I admit that I was rather recklessly forming an idea of its contents beforehand. I was imagining on the one hand your enemy the welfare state interfering once more "out of kindness" for the British driver by laying down a series of official requirements, more or less vexatious and costly, as the price of a false security. On the other hand I was imagining the driver, jealous of his responsibility and independence as a road-user, placing in opposition to this guardianship the defence of his own integrity and his own interests under a plan of mutuality and freedom.

For, in short, I said to myself, what is it all about, in Great Britain as in France? It is a matter of persuading the user of a car (or motorcycle, scooter, or even bicycle) to keep in running order and maintain his tyres, steering, lighting, and traffic indicators—for the greater benefit and convenience of himself and the peace of mind of others: in a word, to mind his own business and to look after himself. If you cannot get that from a grown man, if it is necessary to threaten the offender ceaselessly with fines or imprisonment for his own safety, then it is for ever vain to dream about establishing freedom in other fields. The universal remedy for our frailty from then on is named the police, and as the police force is made up of men we enter the vicious circle of *Quis*

*custodiet custodes?*—and we shall stay there till the end of time.

The alternative to fear and police compulsion is obviously knowledge and the attractiveness of what is good. *Freedom*, I said to myself, will certainly propose to make a start by ensuring that the driver is made aware of that at least.

Three-quarters of the careless drivers are ignorant drivers. They are not interested in the maintenance of their engine because they did not make it themselves and have only a very vague idea of how it works.

While waiting for the co-operative workshop, where perhaps everyone will go one day, under the supervision of shrewd advisers, to strip, examine, and re-assemble his own machine (the dream of the real motorist ever since mechanical vehicles came into being), the thing to do is to place at the public's disposal notices about maintenance and tuning-up clearly showing what should be done and the benefits to be derived from doing it (which is still very often neglected by the makers); there is also the question of equipping the user with tools so that he will be in a position to follow the instructions given (as a general rule no tools are supplied by the makers). Finally, and above all, he must be able to detect safety defects by having access to scientifically designed inspection and measuring apparatus (repair garages and service stations are too often without them). There I foresaw a fine field of action for the motoring clubs, the networks of sales agents, the municipalities, the specialized press, the fuel distributors, etc. But above all I saw it as the concern of the road-users' associations, whose rôle would be to co-ordinate everything, so as to stand up to the State, to do without it, and to ignore it victoriously.

There remains, of course, the question of the inducement to be offered to the driver so that he will willingly use the means of inspection and overall put at his disposal. And, there again, I had an *embarras de choix* when considering the "incentives" that could be put forward by drivers in free association: free periodic examinations and the impartial drawing up of an estimate for repairs to be carried out; the issuing (after the vehicle has eventually been put in order) of a special emblem of "roadworthiness"; a substantial reduction in insurance premiums and, in case of accident, the taking into account of the reduced liability resulting from appropriate overhauls; and finally, as a last resort, the issuing of club membership cards, insurance policies, mutual-aid emblems, etc., only to those drivers who keep their vehicles in good condition under the inspection and guarantee of the associations concerned.

It is obvious that an anarchist paper may or may not take an interest in a campaign of this nature according to whether it judges the thing to be worth while, both from the practical point of view and as an example that has been set. I was delighted at the idea of seeing *FREEDOM* demonstrate, in this instance, its interest in the immediate applications of our ideal.

Indeed it seems that it is illusory to

think of interesting the public in general, or even those comrades most convinced of the theoretical merits of anarchism by postponing indefinitely the solution of every problem considered.

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I was profoundly disappointed, I must confess, when I found that *FREEDOM*'s editorial, after a very realistic outline of present-day difficulties and the objections provoked by the interference of the State with its scheme for a new duty to be imposed on road-users, contented itself with asserting that "in the anarchist society there will be no problem of 'dangerous cars' simply because there will no longer be either government or money—and consequently no competition, no profit, no privileges, no wage system, no bank accounts, no economic insecurity, etc."

Malatesta lashed out more than once against our proneness to *facilism*. Well, comrades, to cause or to allow anyone to believe that the disappearance of government and money (which at the present time control very many human actions) will be enough to cause the disappearance for ever of all those problems that this control raises appears to me to be a very dangerous "facilism". It is hardly true to say that anarchism consists of the profession of utopian faith; it consists rather of adhering to this working hypothesis—to this "belief", to this practical "conviction" of general order, that human problems must be brought down to, and their provisional solutions sought in, the field of individual freedom, the only one where they appear in their true light and with all their complexities, whereas authority always dodges the real question. For millennia authority, with the law as its sword, has been intending to cut the Gordian knot of social injustice and insecurity, those knots that anarchism, on the contrary, proposes to untie patiently and peacefully. Proposing to state any social problem at all in the form of a libertarian equation at a time when history is running strongly against our aspirations is certainly a hardy enterprise. It may be, however, that an improvement is possible in the situation created by the project for "motor-car tests" legislation, an improvement on the private, optional, and contractual level, due to voluntary action by those concerned, from which anarchism would derive a theoretical gain.

A. PRUNIER (To be continued)

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