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# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

We think a man needs to be governed; and we let him govern others

Anonymous

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Threepence

## B. & K. TRADE EMISSARIES?

THE visit of the two Soviet leaders to this country poses a very considerable problem for the entire Western bloc. Why are they here?

The short and simple answer to this problem, that they are here because Anthony Eden invited them, is delightfully accurate, but in fact merely provides us with the problem in the first place, and represents none of the question.

The handling of the event by the Russian press and radio has been such as must lead us to believe that the visit is to be regarded in Russia as an event of great and historical importance. A Moscow Radio commentary included the following statement in a broadcast to the Russian people: "This is an historic day in Anglo-Soviet relations. For the first time in the 38 years of the existence of the Soviet State its leaders stepped on British soil." The visit is being presented as a vast and overwhelming success, even before it is established that it is having any real success whatsoever. In this way one may assume that Bulganin and Khrushchev are attempting to prove to the Russian people, their superiority over Stalin in creating better world relations.

This is no doubt necessary for a variety of reasons. Having exploded the Stalin myth, it now behoves them to pursue a different course from that of their old boss, or they tend to become tarred with the same brush; the firmness with which they are entrenched as leaders of the U.S.S.R., and their general popular-

ity, is not so strong that it is unnecessary for them to consolidate their position. So by junketing around the world in comradely fashion, they prove to their people how brilliant they are, and at the same time are indicating a different policy from that of their predecessor. Their ambition may well be to visit America on the next trip!

But one must now ask oneself why they are adopting this particular policy. It might be that the Soviet people have become restless and resentful (within certain limits), at being for so long cut off from the rest of the world. In which case the latest foreign policy will be very popular as well as different—which in turn strengthens the positions of Bulganin and Khrushchev.

Of far greater importance however is the probability that the change of policy is an indication of the changing rôle which Russia intends to play in world economics. In these days of the hydrogen bomb and mass destruction it has become too dangerous to be involved in a world conflagration, and to attempt to achieve political and economic domination by war or threat of war must now be regarded as too great a risk for both sides. But the desire to enlarge Soviet influence is still the object; it is just that we can now expect a different method.

Quite obviously the best method to hand is the one already practised by the rest of the world—international capitalism. To do this Soviet trade with other countries must be expanded and the present

state-capitalism adjusted to meet the changing policies. The first requirement for trade expansion is better relations with the countries with whom one wishes to trade—although this is not always necessary; but in this instance is probably the best way.

Khrushchev's recent speech extolling the virtues of co-existence and acceptance of one's neighbour, sounded exactly like the prelude to serious trade-talks and a further rise in temperature for the cold war. Russia's attitude towards the Middle East (formerly ignored), may reasonably be regarded in the same light. Similarly her willingness to assist other countries economically, and the generally changed attitude from almost complete isolationism (excepting her fellow-countries in the Eastern bloc), to a disposition inclined towards international co-operation. These happenings may all be viewed in the same light—the resolution is almost complete, and Soviet international-capitalism is to disprove Marx!

H.F.W.

### PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

THOSE who produce FREEDOM enjoy doing it. The writing, editing, proof-reading, addressing and stamping of wrappers, sending out reminders, and all the other work involved in the production of a weekly paper is a labour of love for a relative handful of comrades.

And because it is a weekly paper that has to appear regularly, all this work has to be done consistently week in, week out, for as far ahead as we care to look. It's a bit frightening at times, but since the work is satisfying, we keep going.

What is disappointing, however, is to find, after all the effort has gone into production, that there is so little attempt at distribution. Are there no comrades or sympathisers among those who appreciate FREEDOM who are prepared to match the efforts of its producers by selling the paper at meetings, tube stations, street corners, Hyde Park, or at any other likely spot?

Are all our readers prepared to be only consumers of the paper, and not assist at all in distribution?

## The Police and Hanging

WE recently published a quotation from the Leicester police journal supporting in its editorial columns the abolition of the death penalty, showing that not all policemen were fearful of its results, as is claimed by so many retentionists.

In *The Observer* of 15th April, a letter was published from a retired Chief Superintendent of the Lancashire police opposing abolition, and last week (22nd April) it was answered by a retired Chief Inspector from the City of London force.

They make interesting reading, and we publish them in full without comment, for our readers to judge for themselves the standard of thought in each case.

First, from *The Observer*, 15th April:

Sir,—As a retired police officer, and therefore in a better position than my serving colleagues to say what I think, may I raise one or two points on this question of the death penalty?

Like the other 99 per cent. of the public, I have happily assumed that Parliament could not possibly be so far out of touch with the feeling of the people as to give serious consideration to the Silverman Bill.

## WHY CONCERN OURSELVES WITH SOUTH AFRICA?

(From our own Correspondent)

IT may seem unnecessary for anarchists to ask themselves 'Why concern ourselves with South Africa?' For the anarchist, people everywhere are the concern of people everywhere, irrespective of race, colour or creed. And the greater the tyranny anywhere, the greater should be the concern everywhere else.

But for the majority of mankind who are not anarchists, it seems to be too easy to shrug the shoulders and pretend it is none of their business.

It is to these in Britain that Father Trevor Huddleston is addressing himself in a series of meetings launched last Monday with a packed gathering at the Central Hall, Westminster.

### The Commonwealth

The situation in South Africa to-day, he said, is such that she has become an embarrassment to her sister nations of the British Commonwealth and that is why it is of special concern to the people of Britain.

South Africa is a member nation of the Commonwealth, which is supposed to be a free association of free peoples. But for Africans it seems that free peoples means white peoples.

Why, asked Father Huddleston, should a State denying the principles of freedom be allowed to remain inside the Commonwealth? He answered this by pointing out the economic and strategic importance to Britain of South Africa through its uranium and the Cape route (which are obviously strong enough reasons for the British Government turning a blind eye to the Nationalists' excesses).

But, he said, the Nationalists are opposed to Britain anyway. They are claiming now to have reversed by parliamentary methods the military defeat of the Boer War, and when it suits them they will walk out of the Commonwealth. We should not wait for that, but should throw them out now.

### Race Relations

South Africa should concern us also because, claimed Father Huddleston, race relations is the greatest single moral issue facing the world to-day, and it is on this issue that the Government was chosen to challenge world opinion.

South Africa is particularly important because it is the one place where a genuine multi-racial society could develop, if it were not crushed at the outset.

But whenever race relations within her boundaries are mentioned at the United Nations, South Africa walks out. [He should have reminded his audience that Britain takes the same attitude about Cyprus and other colonies!] Yet still

she maintains she is a Christian and democratic country.

The recently-issued Tomlinson Report (of a commission to enquire into the means and cost of apartheid and how to maintain it without damaging economic consequences) has said that for South Africa the choice is clear: either the challenge of apartheid must be accepted or the integration of the Bantu and European populations must be endured. It is going to cost the Government £104 million in 10 years to begin the separation of the races—and in 50 years time there will still be 6 million Africans living in white areas!

Father Huddleston went on to deal with the boasts of the Strydom Government that they are tackling slum clearance. The facts he gave will be familiar to FREEDOM readers, for we have pointed out before that the worst slums are being left untouched (at Orlando, for example), while the reason for the evictions from Sophiatown are that it is a black area now encircled by whites and that it is a place where Africans own their homes—which the Government is trying to stamp out.

### What Can We Do?

The speaker then outlined what can be done by sympathisers over here. And although he said that the least effective thing that can be done is to talk, the suggestions he made all in fact add up to talk in one direction or another.

What is necessary is to create an informed public opinion in this country—and indeed throughout the world—as to the truth of the situation in South Africa. To do this we should become better informed ourselves and then start informing others (including, said Fr. Huddleston, our M.P.'s and the South African Information Office). We should combat race prejudice here, we should raise a storm over the passports issue, through which the S.A. Government controls entry and exit of 'undesirables' and if, as seems likely, Mr. Strydom the Prime Minister of the Union comes over here shortly to demand that his Government take over the British Protectorates, we should protest in every possible way.

### The Africa Bureau

THE Huddleston meetings are being organised by the Africa Bureau in conjunction with Christian Action.

Our readers will probably be more interested in the former organisation, whose address is:

The Africa Bureau,  
 30 Old Queen Street,  
 London, S.W.1.

from which information on South Africa and full details of how individuals can help, can be obtained.

## Italy: Dolci Released - Reverse Strikers Attacked by Police

THE trial of Danilo Dolci (see FREEDOM, 18/2/56 and 31/3/56), ended three weeks ago with a verdict of guilty. He was sentenced to 50 days imprisonment and fined 14,000 lire. The sentence was "conditional" and Dolci, with his four co-defendants, was released.

He has now returned to Partinico, the Sicilian town where his organisation of a "reverse strike" of unauthorised labour on the roads, was the pretext for his arrest.

"The reverse strike of February 2nd," Giovanni Pioli writes in a *WRI News Service* dispatch, "is but one of a quite recent series of similar incidents in Sicily, Calabria, Puglia and Lucania, where peaceful gatherings and 'reverse strikes' have been violently attacked by

the 'forces of law and order'. Scores have been wounded and arrests have been made by the hundred".

An Italian anarchist paper *Seme Anarchico* reports a typical instance from Venosa in the province of Potenza where "the unemployed had in the New Year sent a delegation to the Prefecture to beg the Prefect to intervene personally to get the current sum assigned to 'winter help' actually allocated with all speed to its actual purpose. The sluggish bureaucracy showed no signs of getting a move on, and meanwhile the labourers were starving. It was common knowledge that the funds needed for the repair of the Extramural road were already voted, but nobody had actually decided on making a start on the job.

"In those circumstances, on the morning of January 13, the men themselves decided to start the work, and so set about it with picks and shovels... The police authorities gave orders to their rank and file to wrench from the hands of the workers the tools they were using...

"The police, armed with staves, struck violently at the wrists of the workers, and having seized the picks and shovels cast them into a ravine over 300 yards deep. Immediately afterwards, the police threw tear gas to disperse the workers. The latter, however, were not even given time to get away. The gendarmes were ordered to fire and the opening shots were directed against a mass of men who had their backs turned. A young labourer, Rocco Girasale by name, fell struck in the shoulders by a charge of shot at a few yards' range."

The account in *Seme Anarchico* concluded, "And so, dear fellow workers, if you go on strike and down tools you run the risk of arrest for not working; and if on the other hand you set yourselves to work on your own initiative, your action is termed a 'reverse strike' and you're for it just the same".  
 (See "People and Ideas", p.2.)

### There's Money in Oil

A record net profit last year of \$25,363,673, representing an increase of 28 per cent. over the 1954 net of \$19,777,648, was reported yesterday by the Amerada Petroleum Corporation.

The 1955 profit is equal to \$4.02 a share on the 6,309,400 shares outstanding, against \$3.13 a share on an adjusted basis the year before. A two-for-one stock split effected last May increased the net outstanding shares to 6,309,400 from 3,154,700.

(New York Times)

### From Porno to Piety or All for Profit

"Samuel Roth, 62-year-old publisher of border-line material, was sentenced on February 7 to 5 years imprisonment and fined \$5,000 for sending obscene literature through the mails...

In pleading for a suspended sentence Mr. Roth's attorney said that he had had 'several conferences with Roth, and he wants to get out of this particular business and to merchandise razor blades and publish religious classics'.  
 from *Publisher's Weekly*, 18/2/56.

Continued on p. 3

"I knew all this, and more besides. I could understand the misery of a sick member of the human race of toilers, and of his family around him. Does not every man know it? Cannot every man understand it? But perhaps every man is not a man; and the entire human race is not human... One persecutes and another is persecuted; not all the race is human, but only the race of the persecuted. Kill a man, and he will be something more than a man. Similarly, a man who is sick or starving is more than a man; and more human is the human race of the starving."

—ELIO VITTORINI:  
Conversation in Sicily.

DANILO DOLCI (whose sentence and release are reported on another page), is one of those dedicated people impelled to devote their lives to the dispossessed. His work of regeneration among the starving and hopeless poor in the very centre of Sicilian 'banditry' suggests a comparison with that of Michael Scott and Father Huddleston in the terrifying slums of Johannesburg. And just as Father Huddleston was recalled as a prudent gesture by the Anglican church, and Michael Scott was deported from the Union of South Africa, so Don Zeno, the priest with whom Dolci worked when he first went to Sicily, and his community of Nomadelpia broken up by order of the Vatican, and Danilo Dolci found himself, handcuffed, in the court at Palermo.

Dolci's work in Trappeto and Partinico, as he says himself is merely scraping the surface of the distress of the poverty-stricken Sicilians. Its social importance is in its challenge to the moral responsibility of the North. "I want to impress on you," he says, "that in this district where 50 per cent. of the 50,000 people are starving and many escape death only by trespassing on other peoples rights, someone is actually dying

## PEOPLE AND IDEAS DOLCI, LEVI & 'LA MARTELLA'

of starvation because we have lent no helping hand". At a protest meeting in Rome prominent Italians affirming their solidarity with Dolci, included Ignazio Silone and Carlo Levi, whose moral influence is so much more valuable than their interventions in Italian socialist politics. Dolci's work, said Silone, was inspired by the ideas and techniques of Gandhi. It was the very novelty of these spiritual values, he declared, which had provoked such bland reaction by the authorities.

Carlo Levi, whose famous book *Christ Stopped at Eboli*\* described life in Lucania in Italy's Deep South, where he lived in police confinement during the thirties, told the meeting that Dolci's crime was to have given human consciousness to a population that has been kept for centuries in a sub-human condition. This was what had disturbed the whole archaic equilibrium of Sicilian society. "Many powerful forces are at work to destroy Dolci," he said, "but the cards are now on the table; the whole of Italian culture is behind Dolci."

★  
IN a new book, *Le Parole Sono Pietre* ('Words were Stones'), Levi writes about the late Rocco Scotellaro, a devoted interpreter of the *contadini*, the peasantry, of Lucania, about the murder of Salvatore Carnevale, a Sicilian peasant who tried to organise a union, and about Dolci and his work:

"His is not the tone of a missionary nor that of a philanthropist, but that of a man who has faith in mankind... With him I pass into each house,

\*Reviewed in FREEDOM 29/5/48.

and meet in every one the elementary problem of a world enslaved in the grip of hunger and sickness."

Levi returns from his journeys in the South re-affirming the belief in peasant autonomy (*autogoverno, autonomia contadina*) with which he concluded *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, where he wrote of his hope in "an organic federation of autonomous rural communities".

"But," he declared, "the autonomy or self-government of the community cannot exist without the autonomy of the factory, the school, and the city, of every form of social life..."

★  
READERS of that earlier book will remember—they could hardly forget—Levi's description of the 'peasant city' of Matera in Lucania where 15,000 people, half the population, lived in the *Sassi*, the caves which honeycomb the steep hill-side. The impact of this description was one of the factors which led to the initiation of a social survey of the town, started by Dr. F. G. Friedmann, with Rockefeller Foundation funds, and plans for a new village, La Martella, for the inhabitants of the *Sassi*, financed by the Unrra-Casas administration.

The re-housing programme could have been viewed as simply a technical matter, —so many units to be re-housed in sanitary barracks or in an impressive monument to its architects. This kind of solution was not confined to the Italy of Mussolini. But as Patrick Geddes wrote in enunciating his principle of Survey Before Plan, the task of town-planning "is not to coerce people into new places against their associations, wishes and interests, as we find bad schemes trying to do. Instead its task is to find the right places for each sort of people; places where they will really flourish. To give people in fact the same care that we give when transplanting flowers, instead of harsh

evictions and arbitrary instructions to 'move on', delivered in the manner of officious amateur policemen".

★  
EARLY in the survey of Matera, Professor Friedmann wrote to the architect Ludovico Quaroni, "In order to understand the human reality, we don't want only a minute description, a description coming from outside, but an intimate penetration dictated, not by sentimentality, but by a profound sense of responsibility". A few years ago I sat with Quaroni in the pub at the Lansbury Neighbourhood in Poplar, (itself an attempt, not entirely unsuccessful, to rebuild a bombed and blighted London district while retaining the spirit of its 'human reality'), while he explained how the social survey of the ancient community had given shape to the village of La Martella with its central market place from which radiate the clusters of houses, with their chicken runs and kitchen gardens, linked by their stables and barns. A recent description by Federico Gorio, an engineer member of the team which designed La Martella, conveys the spirit of their approach:

"The question looked simple enough: destroy a town because the houses were sordid and unhealthy and provide more hygienic dwellings for the people: but on the point of taking this very obvious decision one saw a certain brutality in it. Tradition is also the relationship between men and the things around them and biologists as well as sociologists know that destroying the environment sometimes means destroying the species. One tackled the problem of 'La Martella' with this in mind. The environment had to be saved and transferred with the people: each main function of the village has been considered along with its habits, and in many cases the final choice has been left to the peasants themselves: in fact the general scheme, already completed, has been studied again from the beginning in order to

include in it the communal bakery which had not been forsaken and which is an age-old habit in Matera, where each single family takes its own bread to be baked in the communal bakery. Even if La Martella may be said to be non-traditional in the more generally accepted sense of the word, it is traditional in so far as it keeps faith with that bond which unites us with our fellow-men."

★  
Considered as a sociological experiment La Martella has not been an unqualified success. How could it be since it is a pioneering effort in this kind of human planning, and since it exists in an unchanged economic environment? The 'problem of the South' remains. But it is, like the work of Dolci in Sicily, a manifestation of what Silone calls the will to keep faith, a declaration of the *contadino* that not everyone acquiesces in his exclusion from the twentieth century, a green shoot in the landscape of despair. C.W.

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## Mutual Aid for Readers, Booksellers and Publishers

MR. J. B. PRIESTLEY in one of his recent television programmes on books was going to investigate methods of selling books. This, for reasons best only known to the B.B.C. was vetoed, but not before suggestions had flowed in to Mr. Priestley, many of which may be of interest to readers of FREEDOM, readers of books, buyers of books, and just

to people interested in the anarchist ideal of mutual aid.

The rising prices of books have made things very difficult for readers to buy books, and for publishers and booksellers to sell them. With that ingenuity of which the human race is capable many groups have started for the express purpose of buying current books, sharing the cost among the members by contributions and passing the book round to all members by the group in turn. Students of social history will remember the mechanics' reading circles in the days of the industrial revolution who clubbed together their spare coppers and bought cheap editions of Darwin, Spencer, Lecky and such writers which the more literate members read aloud and the company discussed the points raised. Some of us remember, even without shame or pride, the politically conscious thirties when with a co-operative effort, 40,000 read as one at 2/6 a time!

Reading circles were known of on the railway and even in the Civil Service about forty years ago. The record (according to the *Bookseller*) is held by a club in Cheddar which has been going for sixty years.

There are in existence several clubs, in an engineering firm and in I.C.I. for example; one paying a shilling a month and one 16/- a year. Freedom Bookshop now has one such group as regular customers.\* These clubs are connected with industrial groupings but it is possible to make residential groups of such a nature.

It was also suggested to Mr. Priestley that instalment schemes for book-buying could be arranged. This has met with little response from the booksellers or publishers, however such schemes are not unknown to Freedom Press or Bookshop.

The book trade is in a very difficult period with rising costs of production and distribution, two recent sensational bankruptcies (followed in one by a fraud prosecution), have shown that orthodox high-pressure best-seller salesmanship are not the way of healthy development for a book trade of value to readers, author, publisher or bookseller. Freedom Press and Bookshop will be happy to co-operate with any reader who can form such circles as described.

We can promise speedy despatch (post free) of any books chosen and can help with selection or tracing of books. A scheme of book-sharing would be particularly advantageous in helping to circulate Freedom Press publications and in helping forward our work for anarchism. J.R.

\*Members pay an agreed sum per week or month. The book or books are bought through us (postage paid by us), and, either a library is formed, or a draw is made for each book, the winner being out of the next draw.

## ANARCHISM & INTEGRITY

WE publish on another page a selection from the letters we have received during the past fortnight from readers either renewing (or cancelling, in one or two cases), their subscriptions to FREEDOM. From a perusal of these letters it will be seen that what is one man's food is another's poison! Some readers derive strength from the paper others develop a kind of feeling of insecurity; for some it is an outlet for their ideas, for others, as one correspondent puts it, "it is to have a mill-stone about one's neck"; for some the effect is to draw them towards their fellow-men, for others it makes them want to run away. We have been publishing a paper for too long not to know that it is impossible to please all readers. But it would seem that at least those who have written have been stimulated by FREEDOM, favourably or unfavourably, and in so far as we succeed in doing this we shall not consider our efforts have been wasted.

That such papers as FREEDOM live a hand-to-mouth existence, that they are read by few people, that our twenty columns are not planned each each week (because instead of an editorial basket crammed with submitted manuscripts it is invariably empty); and that in spite of seventy years of almost regular publication there is no sign of social change... all these undisputed facts succeed in depleting the already depleted ranks of active libertarians, and those who give up very often either blame us, the propagandists of the idea, for our inability to put it over, or even the idea itself for being vague, impractical, superseded or before its time (depending on whether they join the ranks of Gaitskellian "socialism" or Cadbury liberalism!). Rarely are they honest enough to say, as does our correspondent, our "erstwhile comrade" of Broxbourne, that to hold anarchist ideas (firmly, not in the romantic half-light of an Espresso Coffee Bar) "incapacitates one from pursuit of so many careers, and divorces one from so many pleasures. It denies one the chance of riches, and poverty is no virtue".

What our correspondent complains of is that to be convinced of the validity of anarchist ideas and to accept its values as a way of life one cannot hunt with the hounds and run with the hares. If personal integrity has any meaning and value and importance in our lives and in the pursuit of happiness, the material disadvantages that may accrue as a result of living in a society which does not value or recognise integrity, are matters of relative importance; indeed, if we are to judge by the list offered by our "erstwhile comrade" we feel that we are not missing very much! For him the study of anarchist ideas has apparently revealed only the "social" disadvantages which the holding of these ideas may entail without the strength of purpose, the ever widening horizons, the new interests, the new social awareness, which, we believe, derive from acceptance (based on conviction and a critical approach) of the anarchist philosophy.

If one examines more closely such arguments as are advanced by our correspondent, one realises that in fact he is not specifically attacking anarchism. What he is in fact attacking is human integrity. He is attacking the pacifist who accepts prison rather than conscription; the American citizen who refuses to turn informer for the F.B.I.; the Kenya African or the Cypriots who prefer collective punishment or the concentration camp to the denunciation of their fellow-countrymen to the British authorities. He is attacking the worker who refuses to scab on fellow-workers; the writer who refuses to write to order or the painter who accepts poverty rather than paint to please the academicians and the art dealers.

★  
NEVER in his long history has Man possessed the knowledge, the raw materials and, what the Americans call, the "know how" to produce an abundance of food and material comfort, as he has to-day. Yet never can human integrity have been at a lower ebb than it is to-day. It might be argued that the former

explains the reasons for the latter; that integrity being, as it were, a spiritual value, it is inevitable that in a world in which the accent is on the achievement of material well-being, spiritual values must perforce be sacrificed to its achievement. On the other hand it has been widely argued that it is no use talking about freedom, culture, happiness and other such concepts to people with empty bellies and without a roof over their heads. We believe this to be true, but we equally believe that full bellies and material comforts are no guarantee of active, independent and inquiring minds. At most they provide the very necessary physiological pre-requisites; but something other than food and labour-saving gadgets are needed to stimulate them, to set them free!

Theoretically it is the function of education to provide the necessary stimulus to the young mind. In practise it serves to mould the minds of millions of young people to a pattern which serves the interests of the State (which exists to serve the interests of a small privileged minority in society) and not those of the community or the individual. The freeing of human minds from the shackles of conformity is therefore the task of those people who have themselves succeeded in not only freeing their own minds but who have also the ability to express and communicate their thoughts, their values, their common sense and their critical sense to those of their fellows who, for a host of reasons, have lost their way in that maze of wage rates, cost of living indices, piece-work rates, ignorance, prejudice, hordes of unwanted children and worn-out, worried and nagging wives.

★  
IT is to the writers, the painters, the musicians, the actors and the poets; to the political *avant garde*, the sociologists, the educationists, the scientists, the regional planners and the philosophers that we should be able to turn to provide that education in living, that food for the mind, without which the well-fed body is but a living corpse. Those

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## ANARCHISM AND INTEGRITY

Continued from p. 2

of our correspondents who rationalise their own inactivity or despair by pointing an accusing finger at the "workers" who shirk their social responsibilities and escape into a jug of beer or lose their identity in a football crowd or are hypnotised by a television screen, should, for a change, survey the scene as presented by the professional and intellectual world, those mentally privileged members of society, who by reason of their status and their intellectual powers should be (and have been) the public conscience.

Culture has become an industry and second only to whisky as a dollar export. Writers write with an eye on the Books of the Month Clubs and Hollywood (would Bernard Shaw have objected to Pascal's film of "Pygmalion" being destroyed as the price of having it produced as a very profitable musical "My Fair Lady"?). Composers make their fortunes composing background music for films, and painters and sculptors are now shrewd enough business-men and socialites to rub shoulders with the super-tax gents of the stock-exchange.

Intellectuals who have no time for this or that unpopular cause, or to write for a minority journal (which besides being a minority journal is so inconsiderate as not to pay its contributors!) nevertheless can find the time to sit in the Times Book Shop for a day autographing copies of their books sold to admiring fans, or of exhibiting themselves before the television cameras pontificating on every subject under the sun (for a fee of course). Others of them spend a large part of their lives in airplanes while others have their bags permanently packed ready to rush from one important culture (plus cocktail) conference to the next. Some raise their super-tax demands writing pedestrian reviews of pedestrian books and, like film-stars, they submit themselves to all kinds of stunts for publicity purposes. But not only have they sold their dignity; many have in this crazy pursuit of living standards sacrificed their intellectual standards and their integrity. A remarkable editorial appeared only last week in *The Times Literary Supplement* (20/4/56) with the title "The Inner Censorship". It points out, uncritically we think, that the "talent for compromise" in this country thanks to which "so many left-wing writers are able to work for right-wing newspapers and magazines" and authors have publishers who do not share their views, etc., "benefits writers more than most". But the meaning of "compromise" is changing.

"The compromise that allows so many apparently varying opinions to coexist is now too often a compromise between the writer and his conscience; the censorship takes place within the man himself. For a rule has grown up which is unwritten and unrecognized, and therefore unquestioned. Its sense is this—it is pleasanter for everyone if the writer just refrains from writing what he knows his employer will jib at. He does not put down what he thinks, but the best reconciliation he can contrive between that and what is likely to prove acceptable. He senses the prevailing tone of the publication or organization for which he works, and sees that his work conforms. He may loudly complain of that tone in private, but on paper he quietly helps to maintain it; and it seldom comes to an actual argument between himself and his overlords which would have to be resolved by compromise in the old sense."

This the T.L.S. does not view as a "healthy development" for it tends to create the impression, so far as the public is concerned, that there is "general agreement and no alterna-

THE event of the week has been the visit of the Théâtre National Populaire of France, brought to the Palace Theatre under the hospitable and enterprising auspices of Mr. Peter Daubeny.

Under the inspired direction of Mr. Jean Vilar, and adapted in style and staging no doubt, to the vast Palais de Chaillot, their national home, all three of the productions have a breadth of interpretation, a welcome lack of scenery and most ingenious and effective lighting and music. No curtain is used for the opening and the house-lights are dimmed some minutes after the commencement of the play. This has the exciting effect of making the audience actual participants in the drama. In "Marie Tudor" this achieves an unrivalled significance.

The first offering was Marivaux's "Le Triomphe de L'Amour" and engaging fantasy reminiscent of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night". It suffers somewhat from a lack of subtlety in interpretation and some gross miscasting. It also cries out to be judiciously cut, and this is made all the more apparent by a certain monotony in grouping. Madame Maria Casares has not chosen wisely to make this her English debut. As Leonide, Princess of Sparta disguised as a man she is handicapped by an unbecoming, mousey grey wig (so youthful why not white?) and an ill-fitting drab costume. Moreover she is here prone to a most irritating mannerism of constantly quivering hands. Her undisputed sincerity fails to bring out the essential freshness and charm of the comedy, the ingenious subterfuges of youth and its impulsive resources that spring from the maxim "all's fair in love and war". She smiles too much and works too hard throughout the play and it becomes a strain to watch her. Mr. Jean Vilar too is a disappointment as Hermocrate the philosopher. He allows mere crabbiness and stiffness of demeanour to take the place of the more intellectual aspects of the character: a man firmly rooted in the conviction that he is perfectly attuned and better off without the danger of women, well-contented with his way of life until the havoc of love enters his soul and breaks down the bastion of his defences.

It is Mr. Daniel Sorano as Harlequin who dominates the play. He is a constant delight with his infinite variety of expression (somewhat reminiscent of Fernandel). He is the essence of vitality

and keeps the comedy going at a rollicking pace ably assisted here by the old gardener of Mr. Georges Wilson. Despite the shortcomings it is a joy to hear these French players putting over their lines as if they were fresh and newly-thought instead of the usual chanting and ranting we have come to regard as the classical French tradition.

Molière's "Don Juan" is a most delightful play, quite different from all other Molière and much more attuned to an English audience. Here it is as producer that Mr. Vilar scores. Though again subtlety is lacking, the production is on a grandiose scale but staged with the utmost simplicity. Some very ingenious lighting effects and eerie music particularly in the statue scene amply compensate us, it always exciting and sometimes quite magnificent. Again a certain amount of cutting would have been an advantage and the Elvira of Mlle. Chaumette was entirely out of place and would have been more at home at the Comedie Francaise.

Unfortunately Mr. Vilar has neither the physique nor the psychological equipment to play the evil genius which was Don Juan. He totally lacks the diabolical fascination of the man. This is particularly noticeable at the beginning of the play in the scene where he woos the two peasant women. Later on in the play he grows in stature though he is undoubtedly miscast.

Again it is Mr. Daniel Sorano as Sganarelle who runs away with the play. He is the embodiment of it. As Don Juan's valet he gives us a portrait in the round, a weak superstitious man, a slave, a coward, a liar, a tool in the hands of his overbearing master, but deeply religious by instinct, a warm human being all too human, with all the lovable mobility of a simple pathetic clown. A most satisfying performance.

The brilliant pageantry of the opening and closing scenes of "Marie Tudor" were most thrilling in their bold starkness. This was grandiose but very much 'live' theatre. The play lacks poetry but the vitality of this production and the highlighting is such that instead of watching a dusty museum piece we really imagine ourselves back in the murkiness of Tudor London. People emerge out of total darkness, the stage is enveloped by black curtains. This gives it a boundless depth and leaves our imagination free play. It is the ideal setting for drama and the effect is tremendous.

As the ill-starred Marie Tudor, Madame Maria Casares comes into her own with a searing portrait of a woman torn by passion, arrogance and suspicion, a psychopathic woman always on the point of hysteria.

The plot revolves round the queen's love for Fabiano, an Italian of low birth who is hated by the English court. While basking in the sun of the queen's favour he carries on at the same time an in-

## FRENCH THEATRE IN LONDON

# The 'Theatre National Populaire'

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trigue with the Lady Jane Talbot, a protégée of one Gilbert, a swordsmith. The queen who has him spied upon, learns of his infidelity and in the presence of the entire court turns on him the full fury and vindictiveness of a woman scorned. She accuses him of attempted assassination and confronts him with his mistress. Gilbert the swordsmith is also arrested and both men are condemned to await death in the tower. At the end of an electrifying scene the queen summons the executioner and offers him the head of her lover which but a few minutes before was lying in her lap.

Unfortunately the second part of the play tails off badly both in action and production. The queen wanders aimlessly around the tower repenting her rashness in condemning her lover to death. Jane Talbot also is creeping around its dark precincts. The queen mistakenly believes that she has come to rescue Fabiano. She entrusts her with a plan for his escape. A series of duologues

here become merely ludicrous and we are suddenly and for the first time aware that we are watching a piece of Victorian melodrama which might be housed at the Lyceum.

While the people clamour at the gates for the death of Fabiano and the bell tolls for the impending execution, neither woman knows which man will emerge from the general confusion. Here both women stand side by side emoting full out to the audience.

By this time Mr. Vilar the producer has lost his inventiveness. Apart from the final pageant the play here clearly defeats him. He is not helped by the hamming of Mlle. Chaumette and Madame Casares overloads her performance and nearly wrecks it altogether. It is a bad let-down from the first magnificent part of this full-blooded old drama of court intrigue.

Mr. Vilar is undoubtedly an artist of great integrity, but lacking at present sufficient boldness to make big innovations in production or text. Nevertheless there is so much vitality, enthusiasm and undoubted talent gathered here that we must be profoundly grateful for the opportunity of seeing this ensemble in its various aspects. D.

## EXHIBITION

### The London Group Show

THE most interesting works at the London Groups' Exhibition at the R.B.A. Galleries, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, are to be found amongst the sculpture—Lynn Chadwick, F. E. McWilliam, Elizabeth Frink, Averil Shepherd and Joan Moore all show excellent examples of their highly individual work. Especially Elizabeth Frink with her "Dead Dog" and "Warrior", the latter being a very strange and haunting piece of sculpture with real power. I would like to mention by name several more of these serious sculptors who, for me at least, saved the show.

For it cannot be said of this annual artistic event that it is an outstanding exhibition of *avant garde* art. In fact, the London Group has painfully little to offer which it is worth writing about, and many of the chief disappointments are to be found amongst the members themselves.

Dotted about the rooms are occasional good things—William Gear's painting "White Element", the only abstract the selection committee need have bothered with; Patric Heron's "Still Life"; L. S. Lowry's two characteristic works; two pleasing landscapes by R. O. Dunlop; a couple of good Bratby's, and a picture by Roy L. de Maistre which were perhaps the best things in the show. There were a few more pictures and drawings worth looking at, but not many.

Why has the London Group of late so consistently failed to come up to the standards which one customarily credited the Group with? First, I think it must be said that selection to-day is a most difficult task. Either one has an academic standard in mind such as we expect from the Royal Academy, and which is easily recognised and judged according

to a kind of competent technique standard, or one has to puzzle through the heaps of wearisome abstract painting of a repetitiveness and similarity which is almost suicidally boring. And in addition, there are those painters which clearly will never get the unfortunate painter, and even less so the unfortunate spectator, anywhere at all, and of which, judging by the quantity here, there seems to be an inexhaustible supply.

Secondly, I think *avant garde* painting to-day is in a condition, not so much of retreat, but of confusion. It has been blown back upon itself. We have those young painters who prefer to call themselves the New Realists, and who paint very well and usually scenes and arrangements of objects of a singularly unlikely kind. This comparatively new school is gradually gaining ground, and in spite of its rather gloomy colour and outlook it exerts a strong and steady influence on painting to-day.

It is the strongest of the new groups and it is certainly the most youthful, and will continue to gain fresh adherents especially from among those young painters who have had enough of Parisian sophistication and abstraction. This makes for a wavering and uncertainty and it is this, I feel, which one can sense at this exhibition.

There is an indecision, almost an apology, about this show as though someone were stying—"we know it's a bit of a mess—but don't worry, it will all have settled down in a year or so". In the meantime, we have to make the best of confusion and I, for one, prefer to escape from it as quickly as possible, and doff my hat to the sculptors in passing. R.S.

### The Police and Hanging

Continued from p. 1

man named Trelawney, I have not so far found anyone down here who has a word to say in favour of the Bill!

Yours faithfully,

F. R. PARRY,

(Retired Chief Superintendent, Lancashire Constabulary).

Mullion.

Second, the letter of 22nd April: Sir,—I was interested in last Sunday's letter from ex-Chief Superintendent Parry, of the Lancashire Constabulary, who believes that 99 per cent. of the public share his view that Mr. Silverman's ill is an "appalling measure", while its supporters are "members of the intelligentsia pursuing a half baked fantasy."

#### NOW READY :

#### FREEDOM SELECTIONS

Vol. 4

### LIVING ON A VOLCANO

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I am sure it is not true that 99 per cent. of policemen think this. I was a Chief Inspector in the City of London, and can remember the names of a good many former colleagues who thought that the death penalty, on its record alone and regardless of moral or emotional reasons, was outmoded, ineffectual, and therefore ripe for abolition. They would answer Mr. Parry's main questions rather like this:—

1. Do you think these types [the criminal classes] scruple about taking life or are deterred by anything except fear of the extreme penalty? Yes. Not perhaps the ones who are mad or commit suicide immediately; but there is plenty of evidence that the death penalty is not uniquely deterrent to the rest.

2. Have you stopped to think that there are plenty of old lags to whom the idea of spending the remainder of their lives in a long-term prison is, if anything, a positive attraction, and who would be quite prepared to risk taking on a job of murder for a small consideration? We should be very surprised if there were. Conditions out of prison have improved as well as those inside. In fact, now that it's so much easier than it was before the war to get fourteen years' "preventive detention", old lags are trying a lot harder to behave themselves.

3. Have you ever thought of the effect of this Bill on old people living alone, parents of young children, bank clerks and messengers, or judges, police, and prison officers living under threat of revenge? Yes. All these seem to have about the same expectation of life in the

abolitionist countries. They may even be a bit safer if the armed robber feels no need to save his own life by taking theirs. And although we release, even now, far more murderers than we hang, these murderers never seem to go gunning after the police or the judges.

4. Could the police be expected to arrest armed criminals? Yes: and when the police do it they will be armed themselves as—whenever forewarned—they are now. There is absolutely no evidence that more criminals carry or use firearms when there is no death penalty.

5. Has it occurred to you that the victim and his relatives may suffer a little, as well as the murderer and his? Yes, we think the State ought to do something for the victim's relatives. At the moment it does nothing, and no proposal to do anything has ever come from the people preoccupied with punishment.

6. Do you propose to go on shooting young soldiers for cowardice in the face of the enemy? This was stopped sixteen years ago.

I should say that a majority of the police are with Mr. Parry in supporting the death penalty, though they might reject some of his reasons; but nothing like 99 per cent. A County Police journal recently declared for abolition, and a provincial police debating society quite lately found itself with a substantial majority against the death penalty. The names of the police officers I know myself who would vote for abolition to-day would make a fairly impressive list.

Yours faithfully,

S.E.3.

C. R. HEWITT.

A PAGE OF LETTERS

WHAT DOES 'FREEDOM' MEAN FOR YOU?

DEAR COMRADE,  
An unsolicited testimony from a satisfied reader, recently having renewed subscription. I know it is not necessary to beg to appear in your columns, for you have invited me—in your demand notice to pay up, or become a free reader—to write and express what I felt about the paper. I think it is an excellent one, well balanced—if anarchists don't mind their paper being so called—humour and meat being well mixed. I think your reviews of the Arts make a capital presentation of what goes on. The warmth and glow inspired by the review of the film "Race for Life" by J.R. was well and deservedly made. It was indeed good to see a film in which a director delicately sketches the message into ones consciousness. How often propaganda seems to need a sledge-hammer to drive the point home, and when our intelligence is respected how wonderful it feels. I know I yawned with the bus conductor about the film afterwards for it seemed to be necessary to share such an experience. I only wish I could have conveyed my respect for this film as clearly as your review.  
I hope your theatre critic will have an opportunity to review "The Power and the Glory" for Graham Greene is an artist at presenting a faith surely, but without the aid of a hammer.

get that it equally corrupts those under authority. It creates for itself a situation in which it becomes indispensable. It is a sad fact that many revolutionaries are revolutionaries because they want power for themselves. The abolition of the state and its methods of coercion can only lead to chaos and further State coercion until the slave-master mentality can be removed from men themselves. How can we remove it? Until we can do that, Anarchism will always be defeated and the victory will go to those who support power and coercion.

Yours fraternally,  
Rotherham, April 8. N.J.T.  
[I]n fact FREEDOM's approach is more "popular" than in the past it is not the result of a new policy aiming at getting a wider public. FREEDOM's approach—apart from the editor's regular contributions—is determined by the material we receive for publication. The writers mentioned by our correspondent, as well as others whose writings no longer appear in FREEDOM, have certainly not been excluded from our columns. If they have anything to say and want to say it in FREEDOM our columns are open to them.—EDITORS].

DEAR EDITOR,  
Allow me to say that although I am not strictly an anarchist, I value FREEDOM more than any of the dailies or weeklies I read. It is so much more am not strictly an anarchist, I value intellectually alive. Also it helps debunk some of the nonsense which one has perforce to read if one reads extensively in the left-wing press (much of it wrongly called).  
All good wishes,  
Chorleywood, April 10. S.E.E.

DEAR FRIEND,  
I find the reading matter in FREEDOM very interesting and very instructive. The only trouble is that I find the gulf between myself and the average person becoming greater and greater. I suppose in effect this is the logical conclusion, seeing that their life and reality are so very much different.  
Anyway, I find people very often are interested in FREEDOM but unfortunately, not interested enough.

I put this down to the fact that although they may agree with various articles, etc., they fear a new attitude and behaviour to everything about them. This, of course needs a lot of breaking down, especially as they are so soaked in ordinary propaganda, as to render it almost an impossibility.  
Anyway, a good point here and there does do a lot of good and it relieves one's feelings towards them.  
I hope the paper will continue to improve. I would feel lost without it.

Yours,  
Leytonstone, April. L.T.R.

DEAR SIR,  
On looking at the books for sale, I note with surprise that Arthur Koestler is still advertised. The reason for my surprise is a normal reaction when one remembers that in one of his recent books Koestler ended with the words, "Oh, Lord, give me another chance." If a man like Koestler is confused, how much more bewildered must a layman like myself be?  
He is permitted to change his mind and return to the moral and spiritual teachings of Moses and Christ—without

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INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS will be arranged.

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SOCIAL EVENING.

doubt two of the greatest figures the world has produced.  
Koestler's words (last words?), prompt the thought that has been nagging at me for some time. Is there such a thing as spiritual evolution? Other things in this world have evolved, why not spirituality?  
I have followed your arguments, and teachings (teachings?), for some years but I fear, doubt concerning their validity, has gained a foothold and will not be dispersed by your screams against capitalism. I hate capitalism. I also hate bowing down to a stone-cold Karl Marx. If an intellectual like Koestler can change his mind so can I. I no longer subscribe to your views.

Yours truly,  
EX-READER.  
London.  
P.S. and N.B.—I am a Jew. But I recognise that the Jews are a unique people, and the driving force that compelled them to write the Bible also forced them to found the laws of Communism. I feel they were right the first time, 4,000 years ago.

DEAR ERSTWHILE COMRADES,  
Please don't send any more copies of FREEDOM: If I had known that you would still be sending them I would have written before.

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**AN APPEAL**  
**SPAIN'S FORGOTTEN MEN**

From the  
LIGUE DE MUTILES ET INVALIDES DE LA GUERRE D'ESPAGNE EN EXIL  
Comité National  
1 rue de la Fontaine-au-Roi  
PARIS (XIe)

COMRADES,  
Franco has been admitted to U.N.O., but Spain, under his régime, is still the realm of dictatorship, a country with a sole political party, where no freedom is allowed, and people have to hide their democratic feelings. In that country of ours, nobody can write what he thinks, the Press is at the Government's service, books and all sorts of publications are only permitted within the limits fixed by the State. There are no free trade unions, no political parties, no social activities other than Falange's. Such is the aspect of the régime that has joined the United Nations.

It is true that you, amongst many others, are not in agreement with the decision recently taken against everything standing for democracy and progress. You did not wish to sacrifice the Spanish people; your hope was to see it free and happy one day, working with all other peoples of the world for the achievement of peace and more justice amongst men.

We, the invalids of the Spanish War in exile, also wait for the happy day that shall open to us the doors of our country, give us again the taste of life, and allow the return home of all Spaniards in exile, so that Spain may renew itself and become a country where democracy is not just an empty word. But, while we wait for such a day, while we have to remain far away from our country, the sick, the blind, those who lost their limbs or had to undergo great trepanations, need some care, they have to be attended, so that one day they may go home, into a Spain where justice and freedom are no longer unknown.

These men are getting no pension as war invalids. Many of them are unable to work, and some, who could, do not find employment. The loss of a limb is the ruin of a man! Thus, their means do not come up even to a third of the unskilled French worker's wages, and, if they are to live, it is indispensable to provide them with clothes, some medical services, the most urgent aid each one may need.

That is why we are addressing to you this solidarity appeal. It is within your means to help democratic Spain in the person of these thousands of disabled men who refuse to admit defeat and submit to adversity, always hoping for a happier and juster day. Since 1939, their life has been torment: concentration camps, hospitals, Old People Homes, tawdry rooms in towns and villages, unemployment, sheer poverty. . . Now, some of them are getting help from Assistance Services, but such that it does not allow them to live properly; and others, who are the majority, lack even that. They need help, and our Association shall only be able to give it in the measure of the support granted to us.

You, who think of Spain and would like to see it free; you, who regret the tragedy of our people, and have not forgotten its brave anti-Fascist fight—SEND PROOF OF YOUR SOLIDARITY TO THE BROKEN SOLDIERS OF THE SPANISH WAR; HELP DEMOCRATIC SPAIN BY HELPING THEM.

Your gifts can be sent to our Association at this address: José Jadraque or A. Trabal—Mutiles Espagnols, 1, rue de la Fontaine-au-Roi, PARIS (XIe).

Thanking you in anticipation, and to everyone who cares to answer our solidarity appeal,  
We are,  
Yours faithfully,  
THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE.  
Paris, March, 1956.

To believe what you believe is to have a mill-stone about one's neck, is to live in fear, and is to live in a prison of imagined bars. The land and the law is quite all right provided we keep on the right side of it. To believe what you believe necessitates keeping on the wrong side of the law, or at least feeling hostile towards it, and logically demands that one should refuse the aids of the State and its institutions. It incapacitates one from pursuit of so many careers, and divorces one from so many pleasures. It denies one the chance of riches, and poverty is no virtue.

There is absolutely no possible chance of a society such as you have envisaged coming into existence within centuries, you must realise that, and it is equally doubtful whether it will come about at all. You may say that I am an example of how sadly ineffectual your methods of spreading your ideas are.

One sees every day examples of how unwilling, innately, people are to make decisions of moment for themselves, one sees also the disastrous conditions of those who choose to decide for themselves over important questions of conduct, opinion, and attitude. Have you not heard of the instinct of submission and of the characteristic tendency of society to oppose change? Is it not true that the species which is most adapted to its environment is the one that will be the most biologically successful, and that man is the most numerous and most varied (and therefore the most successful, biologically speaking), of all mammals, other than those which he has bred under domestication? Is it not also true that our present society is the most successful, in that it has a greater variety of institutions and provides better conditions for its units than do any others (the means by which it does so are irrelevant to the question)? Is it not true that there are other societies, more nearly like those which you desire, but which are less successful in that they are not so vigorous, their units live under worse conditions, and when they compete directly with ours they and not we, fall?

It is generally accepted that societies of all human kinds are based on intolerance, and that a standard of behaviour is demanded from all the members of these societies, non-acceptance of which is always punished or disapproved of to some extent. In this one we are allowed a wide range in our behaviour-patterns, as shown by the fact that groups are allowed to continue which aim at the destruction of the society as it is now!

The next decades will see a spectacular advance in the sociological and psychological sciences, which may eventually

enable man to organise himself and his institutions more in accordance with his requirements. At the moment the society is directed by people who operate from a priori theories, by the sort of people you are against, and these people are, in the main, criticised by others with similarly unfounded and unproven theories, such people as yourselves in fact. It will be a great advance when all these people can be replaced with people who are specially qualified and trained for the job, if indeed such a job is found necessary! Instead of theory we will then have a sound knowledge of the natural laws governing men and their society, backed by an increased skill and experience. The fear that the new knowledge may be mis-used is groundless: what is true is true, what is false is false, and ultimately the one cannot touch the other. History proves it. If then what you believe is found to be true, that will be how society will be; if your beliefs are false, they will not come to pass, and nothing will have been lost.

Yours regretfully,  
Broxbourne, April 17. B.N.C.

**MISTAKEN IDENTITY**  
DEAR COMRADES,  
Several people have ascribed to me articles and letters by S. R. Parker which have appeared in FREEDOM and other publications. I wish to make it quite clear that S. E. Parker and S. R. Parker are two entirely different persons, and I am in no way responsible for views expressed by the latter.  
London, April 20. S. E. PARKER.

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