

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"It is indeed a burning shame that there should be one law for men and another law for women. I think there should be no law for anybody."

—OSCAR WILDE.

## HUNGARY: REVOLUTION OR-?

WHAT is happening in Europe is, as the *Observer* pointed out last Sunday "of the greatest interest". We confess to preferring this very English form of understatement to the banner headlines of the reactionary Press and the almost gay abandon with which it and the politicians align themselves with the forces and the methods of Revolution! How different is the attitude when the rumblings of revolt are not in the Soviet Empire but in Singapore, British Guiana, Cyprus, Kenya, Malaya, Puerto Rico, Algeria and Indo China! The British and French governments which threatened to walk out of the United Nations Assembly if their actions in Cyprus and North Africa respectively were discussed, have called an emergency session of the Security Council to consider the "action of foreign military forces in Hungary in violently repressing the rights of the Hungarian people".

It is a matter for consolation that at this stage the self-proclaimed Revolutionaries of the West cannot do much more than send food supplies and bandages to relieve the starving and the wounded. But it will depend on the direction the struggle takes in Hungary, and the

satellite countries generally, as to whether the revolutionary upsurge will be encouraged or efforts made to isolate and starve it into submission. After all revolutionary fervour of the Press and politicians of the West manifests itself only for those clashes which they feel will result in reducing Russia's power in the overall struggle for power in the world. They seem to assume in the first place that such struggles if successful must lead to forms of government such as are common in the West, and so long as this appears to them to be the case in the satellite countries these uprisings of "the people" for their "rights" receive their blessing. It is only when the revolutionary struggle is clearly more than a *coup d'etat* and shows signs of developing beyond the control of the political institutions and the politicians, that the revolutionaries discover that those who appeared to be their friends are in fact false friends who have been using them, and who when they can use them no longer will become the most ruthless opponents of the revolution. One has neither to be old nor professional students of history to realise this! Contemporary history—from Spain in 1936 to the struggles of the Resistance move-

ments in Europe during the last war—surely teaches us this basic lesson.

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WE shall return to this, but for the present it may be more profitable to attempt to understand something of the nature of the violent struggle that is still raging in Hungary at the time of writing (Monday).

In a special dispatch to his paper (Oct. 22), the Budapest correspondent of the *New York Times* reported on an open meeting held on Győr the previous week-end, which was described by the newspaper *Győr-Sopronmegyei Hírlap* as the "first entirely free public and outspoken debate" since 1948. The withdrawal of Soviet troops and the release of Cardinal Mindszenty were among the demands put forward at the meeting which was presided over by Gyula Hay, a leading member of the Communist author's group (that voiced a demand a year ago for artistic freedom). Apparently this was the first occasion in which the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary had been publicly advocated. In his speech Gyula Hay expressed his approach to some of the problems in these terms:

"Yugoslavia has succeeded in protecting her complete independence and Poland and [Communist] China are on the way to develop a special way to build socialism based on national characteristics and the past of these countries. We must strive to develop this useful practice also in our country. That depends on us."

As for the abolition of Soviet bases in Hungary, he said, this would be part of an independent domestic and foreign policy that he hoped would be developed more vigorously in the wake of the current Belgrade talks between Hungarian and Yugoslav delegations.

As for the release of Cardinal Mind-

senty from his long imprisonment, Mr. Hay said he did not believe in religion but disapproved of administrative interference with it.

The correspondent also reported an announcement of a meeting of the central leadership of the Communist youth organisation known as DISZ to consider among other things the situation caused by the fact that university youth had begun to break away from it and form their own separate organisations.

And, of course it was on October 22 that the meeting attended by thousands of students\* of the Budapest University of Economic Science took place at which, according to *Reuter*

the resolution that "Nagy be placed on the top of the Government and the party" was greeted by stormy applause, and the speaker who read it was wildly cheered when he said, "Poland has set an example which our country should follow. We students express our solidarity with the Polish comrades."

The same source quotes Budapest Radio as saying that

other demands raised by the students included "a complete change in the leadership of the country and full explanation why all the mistakes were made in the past and who was responsible for them." A full report of the country's economic situation must be delivered by the Government, including all details of what has happened to Hungary's uranium resources. The students were "in favour of Hungarian-Russian friendship, which, however, must be based on equality."

According to a later report the students decided at their meeting to send delegations to all factories to discuss their proposals for "liberalisation" of the Hungarian régime with "young workers".

News from Poland had been given priority in the Hungarian Press and radio. "Both seem to have been

\*According to an Austrian eye-witness there were 5,000 students at the demonstrations and they were joined shortly after dusk by thousands of workers and others.

impressed by the Polish slogan: 'For friendship with Russia on the basis of equality'."

The Hungarian Communist Party newspaper *Szabad Nép* declared (Oct. 22) that

Hungary must map her own road to socialism. "The Soviet, Polish, Yugoslav, or Chinese roads to socialism do not absolve us from mapping out a Hungarian road." To make Lenin's ideas triumph in Hungary meant to precede every party and Government decision by a minute analysis of Hungarian conditions.

Mr. Erno Gero, the first secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party who returned from his talks with Marshal Tito the day after the student demonstrations gave a warning against all attempts "to loosen our relations with the Soviet Union, and declared that all attempts by "reaction" to spoil relations between the two countries would fail. He also "condemned" the nationalist propaganda which led to "the misuse of the country's youth for street demonstrations". "These demonstrations—he said—will not stop our party and Government in pursuing the road leading to a Socialist democracy". If one is to judge from the reports, Mr. Nagy has thus far remained silent though it would seem clear that he as well as Mr. Gero, as leaders of the rival groupings within the party, must have been in active contact with their followers.

It was during the night of Oct. 23-24 that the first attacks were launched in Budapest. The radio reported (9 a.m., Oct. 24) that:

"The bandits have stormed plants and public buildings, murdered civilians, soldiers and security police.

"The Government was not prepared against bloody attacks from ambush.

"The Government, therefore, has called Soviet troops stationed in Hungary under the Warsaw Pact for help.

"The Soviet units responded to the Government's request and are engaged in restoring order."

Before this announcement an-

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## AMERICAN ELECTIONS

### Stevenson's Rocket

THE greatest difficulty which confronts a politician during an election is how to overcome the fact that the known views of his party are almost identical with those of the party against which he is fighting. This has always been so, but never more so than at the present time in America.

This state of affairs naturally leads the parties concerned into a frantic search for some "new and important issue" upon which they may build their political platform. Only too often the gullible voter has such gigantic red-herrings drawn across his path, that in the "feverish excitement" engendered by the electioneering spirit, he completely forgets that there is not the least likelihood that the great new idea will be put into practice.

In America at this moment, electioneering is working up to its usual pitch of impassioned but incomprehensible partisanship, and Adlai Stevenson has at last chanced upon his "vitally important issue" for this year's Presidential campaign—the H-bomb.

As far back as April he had said: "I believe we should give prompt and earnest consideration to stopping further tests of the hydrogen bomb". At that time not a great deal of notice was taken of the statement, and although it was repeated in subsequent speeches there was no evidence of enthusiasm from the American voter, one way or the other. (At best it was an uninspiring and negative way to put his "belief", and the reaction reflected this.)

A few days ago however, speaking in Oakland, California, the Democratic candidate for President said the same thing in slightly different words and to his surprise received a burst of applause from an audience of 5,000. An immediate decision was made by Stevenson and his top-level campaign executives to exploit this windfall for all it was worth, commencing with a national television speech this week. Here was an ideal election gimmick which might sway many men-in-the-street to the Democratic ticket. Nothing need be proved (until after the election if they win), and it all sounds very progressive and non-war-mongering.

If, as seems unlikely, Stevenson should be faced with the prospect of actually having to put his idea into practice, he

can always say that the political situation has now changed in such a way as to make such an action ill-advised—but by this time he is in power.

Meanwhile Eisenhower continues electioneering on the basis of his "integrity and sense of high purpose", mixed with a dose of his "past record of solid achievement and elder-statesmanlike qualities." So far this has proved to be sound, reliable stuff, for as far as Americans are concerned he has about him a Churchillian kind of aura—the saviour of the side in difficult times.

Of Stevenson's H-bomb tactics, Eisenhower made his view quite clear. He has long ago decided that for America to suspend or abolish H-tests unilaterally would be a sign of weakness. "This week he said in Portland, Oregon: "We reject any thought of saying 'We are going to disarm and we hope that you will do so one day.' We will do it in unison." He then referred specifically to Stevenson's suggestion as a combination of "pie-in-the-sky promises and wishful thinking."

It is not quite clear as yet whether the Republicans deem it worthwhile creating an "issue" of their own on which to fight the election. Until now they have been so confident of victory that it has appeared to be unnecessary, but there are small signs that their confidence is weakening and something may yet turn up.

In our opinion Republican confidence is justified, and any slight H-test swing-over may be discounted. As far as we are able to judge, the "American mentality" will not allow a man who apparently advocates a weakening of American military strength to come into power, whether he means it or not. Most of those who are swayed now will in due course re-appraise their view and vote against Stevenson, the "too-intellectual, over-pacifistic, not-quite-American-way-of-life-enough" contender for the Eisenhower throne.

The H-bomb test-banning strategy can only rebound upon its promoters and prove to be a string of nails in their coffin. Whether or not Stevenson really means what he says makes little difference, for the Americans are much more scared of the present "Russian menace" than they are of radio-active fall-out in years to come. H.F.W.

## MORE MIDDLE EAST MADNESS

### Israel Takes the Plunge

JUST as we go to press the headlines in our morning newspapers have taken a sudden turn. The news from Hungary which has been in all our minds has taken second place to developments in the Middle East. Israel has finally taken the plunge and marched into Egypt in considerable force. Striking across the Sinai Peninsula it is reported at this time, that Israeli troops backed up by tanks have penetrated within eighteen miles of Suez. The strength of the attack and the way in which it has been carried out, seem to indicate that Israel is prepared for anything which the Egyptian High Command can put against her.

The timing of the attack is of course of the utmost significance, and whilst it comes as something of a surprise (though FREEDOM has always regarded it as a probability at some time), this is unquestionably the logical moment from Israel's point of view. With the U.S.S.R. deeply involved in serious trouble with Hungary and Poland, and perhaps more to follow, the U.S.A. on the eve of elections, with one of the main issues, the ability to maintain peace, and with Egypt apprehensive and uncertain as to her own position as a consequence of her actions in regard to the Suez Canal. On the face of it Israel could hardly have chosen a better time to attack.

The attack came as a climax to a day of nervous excitement within the foreign offices of the interested

This article was written the morning of Tuesday, 30-10-56 Its speculations should be read as valid at that time.

powers. Messages had been passing between Ben-Gurion and Eisenhower; British, American and French ambassadors made frantic calls upon Mrs. Golda Meir the Foreign Minister. The British Foreign Office in London had spoken of "the possibility of a breach of peace in the area". Britons were advised to leave unless it was essential for them to remain, and the same advice was given to all Americans in the area in an ever more urgent and forthright manner.

What will happen now? No one can tell of the possibilities as between the two conflicting nations, but although the actual fighting and its results are all-important to those nations, the actions of the big Powers are the ones which may well be of real consequence. If the attack proves to be a full-scale invasion and grows to war-like proportions then the three Western Powers are theoretically committed under the 1950 Declaration to take "immediate action both within and outside the United Nations" to prevent violation of Arab-Israel frontiers.

As usual the key to the problem of what happens next may be who is to be regarded as the aggressor. Although at the moment it is assumed that Israel is the "guilty" nation, this view need not necessar-

ily be taken by all the big Powers if it does not suit them. However, on the assumption that the Western Powers regard Israel as the aggressor, they should in accordance with the Tripartite Pact immediately defend Egypt from the armed force of Israel.

This is a situation which if the circumstances were not so serious might be regarded as slightly amusing, for the prospect arises of Britain, France and America leaping into the Suez Canal zones in order to protect those Egyptian interests which have hitherto not been regarded as Egyptian at all. Colonel Nasser is placed in the awkward position where he may be forced to call for assistance from those powers which he has specifically informed shall have no rights on Egyptian territory, and would they kindly leave him to pursue his sovereign independent policy in all things!

Britain might reasonably regard Israel's action as a stroke of good fortune. Here is the perfect excuse for re-occupation of the Canal Zone in the guise of protector of an attacked nation. An alternative argument might be put forward that it is essential for Britain to occupy the area, not to take sides but in order to act as the strong, impartial power, present on the scene in order to stop the two little powers from hurting each other.

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## HUNGARY: Revolution or - ?

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other broadcast had given the news that an emergency meeting of the Communists' Central Committee had offered the Premiership to Mr. Nagy and he had accepted. His first act was to declare a state of emergency.

"The cabinet has established the state of emergency throughout the country against all actions aimed at overthrowing the people's republic. The following crimes must be punished by death: Uprising, instigation to uprising, conspiracy, murder, assassination, arson, use of explosives, general crimes against the public, use of force against official and private persons and the possession of arms. This decree comes into force immediately."

The "rebels" were given at first until 2 p.m. to surrender. This offer was later extended to 6 p.m. But it met with no response and there were indications that the operations were spreading beyond the capital. The following day (Oct. 25) Mr. Nagy in an attempt to break the unity of the insurgents declared that he would demand the withdrawal of Russian troops as soon as the rebels had laid down their arms, and that talks would be opened with the Russians "on a basis of national independence". These promises were treated for what they were worth by the "rebels" who were given until 10 p.m. to lay down their arms.

The calling in of Russian troops from the first day would indicate that the government felt it could not rely on its own soldiers. And there is mounting evidence of members of the Hungarian forces joining with the insurgents. A *Times* report from Vienna (Oct. 27) points out

That many members of the armed forces have sympathized with the insurgents, either to the extent of joining them and providing them with arms, or of deserting to avoid fighting them, seems clear from accounts given by travellers who have arrived here, and from the broadcasts of Radio Budapest calling on soldiers to return to their units.

The *Observer's* correspondent on the Austro-Hungarian border refers to talks he had with two members of one of the hastily formed Hungarian "workers' brigades" who have crossed the frontier to obtain medical aid from the Austrians. They reported that

the workers' brigades in alliance with improvised battalions of students are now a quarter of a million strong and have entered into negotiations with certain high commanders of the Hungarian regular army.

The outcome of these negotiations could have an important bearing on the general situation. From the beginning of the revolt some elements of the regular army threw in their lot with the insurgents; and to-day's reports say that other regular units are now actively fighting Soviet troops in various parts of the country.

But it also appears—according to the *Times*—that the higher command of the Army "may be taking a hand in trying to shape the political situation". A leaflet signed by "The new provisional revolutionary Hungarian government and the National Defence Committee" attacks the former Communist leaders and Government for "having been concerned only with preserving their power" and for taking "hesitant steps solely under pressure from the masses". Their five demands are for

- (1) A new provisional revolutionary Army and national Government, in which will be represented the leaders of youth in revolt;
- (2) The immediate ending of martial law;
- (3) The immediate cancellation of the Warsaw Agreement; the immediate and peaceful withdrawal of Soviet troops from the motherland;

(4) The heads of those who are really responsible for the bloodshed; the release of the captured, and a general amnesty;

(5) A true democratic basis for Hungarian Socialism; meanwhile the Hungarian Army to assume responsibility for order and disarm the security police.

"Without that, the danger of further bloodshed remains. We shall continue the demonstrations till final victory, but we must remain calm. We condemn all anarchy and destruction. Comrades, Imre Nagy and Janos Kadar are members of the new revolutionary Army Government. There has been enough bloodshed."

**DURING** last week-end events took an unexpected turn with the order for an immediate ceasefire by Government troops throughout Hungary and the announcement by Mr. Nagy that Red Army units fighting in Budapest had already started to withdraw after an agreement to this effect between him and the Commander-in-Chief of all the Soviet forces in Hungary. He added that:

"Negotiations with the Soviet Government on the withdrawal of the Russian Army from Hungary will start immediately. The Government decided to ask for the immediate withdrawal of the Russian Army and that the National Hungarian forces, consisting of the Hungarian Army and the workers' militias should take over control of the country.

"The negotiations will be conducted on the bases of equality among the two countries. The Government meanwhile announces the immediate creation of a new police force, and armed units of the youth movement and the workers."

That Nagy was prepared to negotiate the unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops immediately and place the blame for the uprising on the government and party leadership is significant.

"The faults of the past are mirrored in tragic events. The situation is made worse because the party leadership up to the last minute had not broken away from its errors. The new Government will be a true Government of the people. It will immediately begin to put into effect the repeated demands of the people.

"The Government begins under the most difficult conditions. The already difficult economic situation has been still worsened by the struggle. The Government will depend on the first place upon the working classes. It will immediately begin with the carrying out of its programme, which includes the regulation of wages, pensions, and family allowances and the production of houses."

It is surely a confession of his impotence to control the situation in face of a nation-wide movement, united in the desire to free itself from the Red Army, and, as one correspondent puts it, fighting in a mood of fanatical bravery against the heaviest metal of the Soviet troops".

But at the same time it is a clear indication that Nagy means to live to fight another day. It must be remembered that he was swept into the leadership of the country by the insurgent movement. To have pursued his policy of the mailed fist, and to have continued to use the Red Army to restore "order" might have proved successful from a military point of view but would have created a new political situation in which he would have found himself as hated as are the former leaders Gero and Rakosi. Hence the dramatic reversal of attitude and his agreement with all the workers' demands. He even "greeted" the creation of workers' councils! [A *Reuter* dispatch from Vienna (Oct. 28) states that "Reports reaching here to-day indicated that in many areas of Hungary the Government appeared to have lost control to a disorganised popular movement which had established local councils of workers, students and soldiers to carry on the administration and to negotiate with the Government for the fulfilment of the rebels' demands].

Nagy even soundly contradicted official Russian statements by denying that what had happened was a "counter-revolution". It had been— he said, a democratic movement which had swept "our whole nation

in order to secure our independence, which is the only basis of a socialist democracy."

**THE** fate of the "revolution" in Hungary will probably be decided by the time this issue of **FREEDOM** appears. If Nagy's concessions are accepted at their face value by the rebels then there is the likelihood of initiative passing to the Government and while politically it will not be possible to return to the situation that existed before the insurrection, the concessions will be withdrawn one by one as the government consolidates its hold on the reins of power. That there are elements among the rebels anxious to arrive at any early settlement with the Government was indicated by a Budapest radio announcement last Sunday that negotiations were begun during the night between Government troops and rebels at the insurgents' request. Both sides were discussing the possibility of organising a joint commission to take over rebel arms, but the rebels had not yet agreed about this.

Similarly, the Győr "Freedom Radio" reported that the "Workers' Council" there had issued a manifesto declaring that Mr. Nagy was acceptable as Prime Minister "but many of his Ministers were not." It demanded Hungary's complete independence and free elections throughout the country as soon as possible. Thereby indicating that for a section—and one does not know whether it is a majority or minority—of the insurrectionary movement the main

objectives do not go beyond a change of Government and for "free elections".

On the other hand if in spite of Nagy's promises the insurrectionary movement stands firm, holding on to its arms and consolidating its organisation and co-ordination throughout the country then there is the hope that its original demands will appear as a stepping stone for a revolutionary movement in which initiative for the reorganisation of the economy and the social structure of the country will pass to the "local councils of workers, students and soldiers". If there is a possibility of this happening we should expect to hear very shortly that workers' organisations are taking over the factories and the land, and that the social services are being reorganised under workers' control. So far what information has found its way out of Hungary into even the serious Press seems to deal with the struggle purely at a political level. Yet 10 million people cannot go on living on politics alone. How are they managing with food distribution (and production) and what is the position regarding the public services?

At the time of writing the insurrectionary movement appears to be still strongly united. But if this movement has within it the seeds of a far-reaching social revolution then the time will come when

cracks will appear in that unity and new struggles and new alignments will emerge.

We do not believe that the revolutionary elements (as distinct from those who for patriotic or religious reasons have joined the struggle in its present phase) must inevitably be authoritarian and anti-libertarian as a result of more than ten years conditioning under Stalin's régime. The contrary might well be the case, though it is true that so far as the reports go it appears that in spite of their experiences they still have faith in government. But then one can never be sure of the reliability of press reports. After all, the struggle in Spain was for more than two years described by the liberal press as a struggle between democracy and fascism in spite of the fact that parallel with their armed struggle against Franco the workers of Spain were attempting to carry through one of the most daring and far-reaching social experiments of the century.

The fate of the insurrectionary movement in Hungary must not be in the hands of the rival governments of East and West. To-day the politicians of the West are the champions of Revolution. But the workers of the West must be on their guard, and refuse to be lulled into a feeling of security. The time may yet come when they will have to revive the worthy slogan of "hands off the revolution" . . . the Hungarian revolution!

## PEOPLE AND IDEAS LOOKING FOR A CITY

"But being one day at Hull, where I went casually . . ."

—ROBINSON CRUSOE, Chapter 1.

PLATO had no doubt about it. The city, he said, arises for the sake of life, but is for the sake of the good life. And from Aristotle who declared that the city was a place where men lived a common life for a noble end, to W. R. Lethaby who in one of his valuable essays on town-planning boldly claimed that "the whole purpose of civilisation is to build beautiful cities and to live in them beautifully", philosophers have concluded that the purpose of the city is to enhance the lives of their inhabitants in common, that is to say, as a community. Seldom have dreams and realities been so divergent, and the reason of course is that our cities are too big. They have become places that we enjoy escaping from. If we get that pleasant feeling of *belonging* to a place, it is not a feeling of belonging to London, but to a few streets, or one of the submerged village nuclei. We are really attached to the Old Kent Road, or Notting Hill, or Parson's Green. Recognising this, intelligent town-planners, in developing or redeveloping a residential area, seek to provide the physical background (an example of this kind of planning is the Lansbury Neighbourhood at Popuar), which may make the growth of a community possible. They cannot of course plan a community, and only a few very arrogant or stupid people would think that they could.

But nobody lives in London for the sole purpose of living at Camden Town. They live in a place because that's where they have found a place to live, or because it's near their work, or because it's a good place to raise a family, but also, and this is where Plato comes in, because it makes available their idea of the good life—the facilities for the thousand and one things that people enjoy doing, which they couldn't do, or think they couldn't, if they lived in a more remote place. Our idea of the good life might imply the Festival Hall, or the Hammer-smith Palais, or the British Museum, White Hart Lane, or Petticoat Lane, or simply the company of people like ourselves. In fact, leaving aside the question of whether or not the city as a social form is in fact obsolete, the criterion by which we judge a city, is the amenities it provides for living whatever our conception may be of the good life.

With these thoughts in my mind I have been wandering around in Yorkshire, of whose four million or more people, all but about 300,000 live in large towns and cities. Yorkshire, you will remember consists of three counties, meeting at the city of York; the North Riding with its moors and dales, largely agricultural, but with the iron and steel town of Middlesbrough at the north on Teesside, the West Riding with its 3½ million

people and enormous cities, the centre of the woollen and steel industries and the provider of one-fifth of Britain's coal, and the East Riding with the fertile plain of York where the rivers of the country converge in the long estuary of the Humber with the port of Kingston-upon-Hull serving the industrial hinterland.

I WENT casually to Hull from the other side of the Humber. New Holland, at the northern tip of the Lincolnshire flatlands is a pier, an empty dock, a brickfield, two decaying hulks sinking in the silt of the old boat-building yard, and one long straight street with two Methodist chapels. No-one was about except the dustmen from the Rural District Council, wheeling the bins out of the backyards on two-wheeled trolleys with long handles. I had never seen this aid to refuse collection before. "It must make your life easier," I said. "Well they have to do something to make us stay in this dump," said the dustman. "You have to go over that blooming ferry if you want a bit of life." He pointed past the level crossing where the shining new diesel railcars from Immingham Dock were going down the pier.

So over the ferry I went. As the paddle-steamer churned up the muddy silver estuary, the long line of docks, warehouses and sidings from Hessele to Salt End, came out of the mist. Last time I was in Hull, after the bombing, little seemed to be left of the centre of the city except Queen Victoria on her pedestal among the tram-wires and the formidable City Hall. In those days everything was going to be different. Mr. Max Lock prepared the Hull Regional Survey, declaring that "The regeneration of our obsolete and blighted towns, industrially over-developed, culturally stilted, requires a penetrating diagnosis of all aspects of town life". Using the facts that the survey revealed, Sir Patrick Abercrombie produced his *Plan for the City and County of Kingston-upon-Hull*. To-day the civic survey is in the City Clerk's archives, and the Abercrombie Plan is buried in a handsome binding in the Reference Library, and that is all that remains of the mood of 1944. There are new housing estates on the outskirts of the city, no better and no worse, in fact, no different from those anywhere else. There are big new blocks of shops and offices in Prospect Street, and still plenty of gaps for the Architects to do their worst. There is a certain 'period charm' about the Hull Garden Village built by Reckitt's, the starch firm about fifty years ago, for their employees. (When it was opened Sir James Reckitt declared "I urge people of wealth and influence to make proper use of their property to avert possibly a disastrous uprising"). And in the dockyard areas there is the same

mixture of squalor and vitality that you find in ports everywhere, though it is more clean and open than most.

HULL is certainly a lively city. In terms of goods handled it is the third largest port in Britain, and one of the biggest fishing ports. The trawlers were landing miles of haddock and cod, and were leaving daily for Bear Island, Iceland and the White Sea. The conservative *Hull Daily Mail* was thundering in its leading article about "Iceland's Nasserism" (referring to the dispute over territorial waters); the Labour Party's monthly *Hull Sentinel* was full of drivel about the people's democracies. (That was the October issue, I wonder what they will say in November!). The Film Society was showing *Windfall in Athens*, the Opera Society was presenting Verdi's *Nabucco* at the City Hall, Lord Harewood was talking about Mozart at the University. For Hull has the advantage of being a university city and however little that may mean to the students, it does mean that lectures and courses in most things are available to the general public, and it also means presumably, that support for the more rarified of amusements is increased by the presence of the University intelligentsia.

I stood in the market place in the old town, looking for the street with the wonderful name Land of Green Ginger, and I asked my way from a man standing under a great gilded equestrian statue of William the Third. "Our great Deliverer" it said on the plinth. "They must have thought a lot of him," I said. "Yes," he replied, "On his three hundredth anniversary all the tramcars in Hull were decorated." As it turned out he misinformed me both ways. I couldn't find the Land of Green Ginger, and the occasion when they decorated the trams was nothing to do with William the Third; but something much more remarkable. It was to celebrate the tercentenary of Andrew Marvell, the author of the greatest love song in the English language, who was a Hull man. A city which does honour to its poets is a rare city indeed. Then I recalled that there to-day, from the Marvell Press in Hull Road, Hessele, George Hartley publishes his poetry magazine *Listen*, and that from there came last year the best book of new verse for years, Philip Larkin's *The Less Deceived*.

There was also the fair. It has always been held in October in Hull since 1643 when, in the civil war, after battles outside the walls, the royalist Marquis of Newcastle had to call off his siege of the city and retreat, opening canals, destroying bridges and breaking up the roads behind him. But the fair, I was told, through the deafening strains of *See You Later, Alligator*, was not what it used to be. The boom was over, the showmen

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70 Years of Freedom Press :  
ACADEMIC NURTURING?

ANARCHISTS, in my opinion, are far too modest in their attitude towards their ideas and their movement. Too often are they prepared to admit rather sheepishly that after all these years we haven't got anywhere, because we cannot point to any corner of the world where an anarchist society has been established; because in countries where there have been sizeable and relatively influential anarchist movements they have been crushed; because in the 20th century the tide of political trends has been in the direction of statism . . . and so on.

To yield to this kind of argument is to fall into the trap into which our opponents have fallen—to accept to some extent the dangerous philosophy that if a practice has been established it must be right (50 million Frenchmen can't be wrong) and that if a body of ideas have not won the struggle for men's allegiance they must be wrong.

Now seventy years seems a long time for a tiny little enterprise like Freedom Press to have survived. And even longer for it to have existed without any noticeable effect upon world society. It might be said to have failed, because after all this time we still haven't got anarchism—or rather an anarchist society, because we have got anarchism. But in terms of social development 70 years is no time at all, and to throw up our hands in despair, to point to the mistakes made during those 70 years and to compare ideas which have barely been tested during that time with species of animals which took millions of years to evolve and die out seems to this very amateur student of history very unscientific indeed.

ISRAEL ATTACKS

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Certainly from an American point of view the latter argument would be the only feasible one. It is almost laughable to suppose that America would fight with Egypt against Israel with the elections so near. Neither the Democrats or the Republicans are likely to take such a risk of damaging their Presidential chances by advocating such action.

As for Russia, what will she do? She probably has not the time to bother over-much about the Middle East with all her present "satellite" problems, and as a consequence of this it is doubtful whether she is prepared at this time to take a really firm stand one way or the other, since one way might involve serious differences with the Western powers. No doubt there will be the usual denunciations and recriminations, but it seems unlikely that threats of force will be forthcoming unless the West sides in the last resort with Israel. One cannot help wondering whether perhaps there is some "deep-laid plot" of an "unofficial character" between Israel and Britain. If so, and events prove the possibility or not, it would be the most cunning strategy the Middle East has seen for some time. British and American public opinion has been with Israel against Egypt for a long time, and if the cards are played correctly, both the Western Powers and Israel stand to gain in terms of security at least, not to mention economically and politically speaking.

There remains one other possibility. Israel may think better of her violent action and withdraw. If she does it is unlikely that her troops will be hotly pursued by the courageous Egyptian army, unless other Arab nations are also prepared to join in. But on the whole the Arab nations prefer to talk of unity within their ranks rather than actively participate in a struggle whose outcome is completely unforeseeable. Most small powers, of which Israel and Egypt are the exception, do not like to jump into perilous situations until they have discovered which of the big powers are for or against them.

If Israel withdraws and the only result is a lecture from General Burns the United Nations truce supervisor, it would constitute a major victory, politically as well as militarily for Israel.

The main point that is overlooked by the realistic people who tell us that anarchism has failed, that it is a dead end, is that every other social ideology has also failed—and they have been tried, while anarchism hasn't. Is there anyone who will argue that any of the social or economic systems that have been established with great show of strength, purpose and permanency, have succeeded? Has capitalism? Have communism, Fascism or social democracy? They haven't succeeded even on their own terms, let alone on anarchist terms. They have all had to retreat, or go forward to destruction, or reform—as capitalism has done during this century by adopting some of the characteristics of the others.

True, capitalism has by this means survived—but Freedom Press has not had to adjust its principles in order to survive for seventy years as much as capitalism had had to do in that time. The mighty Nazi Party made rapid and obvious progress and stamped the anarchists in Germany into their graves; it built a Third Reich that was going to last for a thousand years. It went down in flames after twelve. The Communists built an empire that a year ago looked as solid as a rock. Look at it now.

THERE is one tremendous advantage which we of to-day have over our ideological ancestors of 70 years ago. Our experience. When Kropotkin launched FREEDOM in 1886 his theory was scientifically water-tight—but his listeners and readers had not experienced the failure of all the alternatives as we have to-day.

It is natural that people should try the easy way of doing things first. And when Labour politicians emerged promising to do things for the working class in return for no more effort than it took to walk round the corner to the polling booth, it was understandable that the majority of patient, easy-going, trusting folk should agree to let them have a go. When the terrible anger of the Russian people against the Czar simmered down it was not all that difficult for the Bolsheviks to persuade them that it was best for them to place their affairs in the capable hands of the Party—because no-one knew better from experience.

It is the easy way out to shuffle responsibility off on to someone else's shoulders. Anarchism, in demanding that the individual be responsible for his own affairs, makes the acceptance of it that much more difficult for people conditioned to irresponsibility—which is what servitude really is. But since Kropotkin's time the peoples of most countries have followed the path of irresponsibility only to suffer bitter disillusionment as a result.

Clever people look now at the workers and see apathy and lack of concern in what is going on around them and then proceed to climb upon a plinth of superiority, declaring the 'proles' to be stupid and hopeless. But what it really amounts to is that people to-day have been so deceived and let-down that they are becoming chary and cynical; they are wiser than before, but since there is not in this country nor in North America any situation which seems to demand anything more than dumb, personal resistance, there appears to be no need for social forms of struggle.

But when circumstances do arise in which such forms become necessary—then, and not until then—shall we see how much people have learned from their experiences. In one country or another we have seen the various parties of democracy, Communists and Fascists given opportunities to show what they can do. They all claim to be practical realists, looking at things as they are—not in the idealistic anarchist way of how we should like them to be—with short-term policies to solve the problems of their time. They have all failed, and in terms of human misery have been quite disastrous for the peoples of the world.

There is no longer any alternative to anarchism that has not been discredited. And it is encouraging to note that those people who have had the deepest experiences, such as the slave-labourers of Vorkuta and the populations of the East European States—when they voice their desires they make demands such as anarchists would wish.\*

NOW it is very fashionable to-day to follow the 'gradualist' line such as was drawn by George Woodcock last week. It is a sort of line which fits in fairly comfortably with the Marxist

\*See the Observer quote about returned prisoners from Vorkuta in last week's FREEDOM (27/10/56).

view, but it is a bit disconcerting to hear it coming from anarchists—even 'agnostic' ones. For it flirts dangerously with the concept of historical processes which in some way or another work their pattern upon human affairs without human agency.

Now putting it simply, surely the anarchist position must hold that history is made by people. If we are to nurture positive trends—trends which lead in the libertarian direction—this surely means that we should do everything to encourage people to become responsible in their work, their community and in themselves, and through that responsibility to make their own history. But making history is a tough business. Nobody can go it alone, for in spite of all the wonderful examples of outstanding individuals who have flown in the face of society to create changes, their fiercest struggles have all been to gain the support of their fellows so that their ideas may become effective. This has been the case in the world of science and of the arts. The struggle of Pasteur in science, Ibsen in the theatre, Cezanne in paint, achieved social significance only when championed and developed by others. How much more is that true of social ideologies themselves.

Indeed, after outlining tendencies which he considers worthy of support, George Woodcock says: 'Given direction and consciousness, these manifestations might well play their part in the weakening of the idea of coercive government . . . and in the overall expansion of freedom.' Given direction and consciousness by whom? He can only mean by people who see the whole picture and who try to draw together all positive trends and aspirations into a coherent general philosophy. Which in fact is what anarchists have been doing for donkey's years.

Woodcock knows as well as anybody the encouragement that Freedom Press has given to the education work of such people as A. S. Niell; the work in psychology of the early Wilhelm Reich; in sociology and anthropology, Margaret Mead and Malinovsky; in biology, the Peckham Experiment, and indeed to all

field workers whose aim is liberation even in a limited field. What the gradualists are now doing however is to assert that this encouragement is more important than the general propaganda for the general philosophy itself—or the creation of a movement to put it into practice on as wide a scale as possible!

There is too a basic dishonesty in the gradualist case. It points to trends and ignores how those trends were initiated. It stresses improvements which have taken place without demonstrating what kind of struggles were involved by what kind of forces in order to achieve those improvements. I can imagine in ten years time some pacifist gradualist will point to the trend towards industrial democracy in Hungary and say that that is a positive tendency which we should nurture. And he may not even know that the conditions for that trend to commence had to be won by a bloody revolution complete with barricades, workers' militia, and a lot of out-of-date romantic nineteenth-century-heroic workers who woke up one morning to find their chliastic dreams coming true.

I SUPPOSE that having said that I am now to be firmly relegated to the museum alongside the dinosaur. Well, if Bakunin and Kropotkin are already there too I shan't be in such bad company after all. Nor shall I object to being beside all those other comrades for whom anarchism is something more than an intellectual exercise—a position from which to utter moral judgments.

For far from agreeing that anarchism has been passed over by history (whatever that means) I maintain that history hasn't caught up with anarchism yet. The groups and movements which have sprung up and died down since Godwin developed anarchism as a system of thought have been in the nature of ex-plotatory, probing experiments. Inasmuch as they have found little response in the world in general so far we can only say that we must wait until a lot more clearing away and cultivation has been done before the ground is really receptive to the application of our ideas. It doesn't mean that we have missed the boat at all, unless we take a very narrow view of the nature and function of the revolutionary movements of the past.

Nor is it helpful in my opinion to make purely negative criticisms of our

THE HANGING DEBATE Worthless Constitutions

WE are generally not very impressed by constitutional arguments used by politicians because we have seen the contempt with which Governments can treat legislation enacted "by the will of the people" when they decide that the will of the people is contrary to the (often obscure) interests of the Governments. British Guiana is an important case in point. There, a Government was democratically elected but Whitehall decided that the banner under which the electorate had chosen to live was the wrong colour, so they destroyed the constitution.

We are therefore not surprised, particularly since we had a pre-view of things to come at the Tory conference, to learn that the Government intends obstructing the Death Penalty Abolition Bill, introduced by Sidney Silverman, and passed by a majority free vote in the Commons in February.

The method the Government has adopted, in rather a stupid attempt to cover up that pressure has been

brought to bear by the Lords, "some most eminent ecclesiastical and legal authorities" (Eden—House of Commons), and by rank and file Tories, is to introduce a bill of its own which is expected to amend the law of murder. In this way the Government hopes to find a measure "which would meet the view of the nation" but which will not in any way "limit the rights of member's "private bills". (We have never noticed that the Government is anxious to meet the views of the nation—whatever they might be—on issues where they feel popular opinion will militate against them. Measures which might be unpopular but which seem necessary for Government interests are generally legislated for first and justified afterwards).

Eden has asked the House to await the terms of the Bill which the Government proposes to introduce, but it will not find time in the next parliamentary session for Mr. Silverman's bill, although in February, after the first Commons vote the Government "declined to introduce an abolitionists bill itself but promised parliamentary time and a free vote for the Silverman bill".

The ramifications of the Parliament Act, introduced to limit the power of the Lords, are such that the Government is able to claim that any undertaking given applied only to the last parliamentary session. According to this interpretation therefore, if the abolitionist bill is re-introduced it will be an ordinary private member's bill "enjoying no special facilities".

Tribune, usually so definite and loud in its condemnation of Government policy promises that the matter will be examined in its columns by legal and penological experts but offers no solution except to say that the Lords should be abolished, a sentiment with which we wholeheartedly agree. We would go fur-

ther however, and suggest that the Commons should go with it and put an end to the parliamentary farce. It would seem that the Government, the Lords and the Bishops have 'worked a fast one'. If the Government bill is brought forward and hurried through early in the new session "it could finish its career through the Commons before Mr. Silverman's re-introduced bill had started" (Manchester Guardian, Oct. 24).

Silverman is quoted as saying, that pressure on the Government will force them to give time for his bill in the new session under the terms of the Parliament Act, if not, they would be committing a "grave constitutional error". This obviously has not deterred the Government from following its present course, and while it will have to concede time eventually, the delay will make the abolitionists' task more difficult, if not impossible.

According to all the terms of parliamentary democracy the free vote taken in February in favour of abolition should have decided the issue once and for all. But this is only another example of the defects of written constitutions; many ways can be found to legally get round them.

PHILIP SANSOM.

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