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Freedom

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"Almost everything appertaining to the circumstances of a nation has been absorbed and confounded under the general and mysterious word 'government'. Thought it avoids taking to its accounts the errors it commits and the mischiefs it occasions, it fails not to arrogate to itself whatever has the appearance of prosperity.

—TOM PAINE.

MAY DAY IN THE AGE OF APATHY

THIS weekend the Labour Movement of the United Kingdom, in common with that of many other countries, will be celebrating May Day—the traditional day when the workers of the world were supposed to slip their chains for a few hours and express solidarity across the frontiers.

This weekend the pathetic farce will be enacted again. The leaders of Britain's trade unions and Labour Party, which have twice led the nation's workers into war against their fellowmen, will mount platforms, plinths and pulpits and mouth hypocritical clichés for the satisfaction of the assembled masses and their own gratification. Then, on Monday, they will re-address themselves to their task of keeping their members' noses to the grindstone in the cause of economic and military competition.

And among the masses themselves, miners who refuse to allow Hungarians down 'their' mines,

transport workers who objected to non-white labour, hole-borers in wood and metal and members of rival unions will applaud the humbug of their hierarchies as if they really meant it.

This will all be done at the weekend. Quite safely, allowing no interference with the production of aircraft carriers, guided missiles or long-range submarines. May Day, which is actually a Wednesday this year, will be celebrated on Saturday and Sunday, the 4th and 5th of May. No workers will march out of their factories on Wednesday with their banners flying to make a gesture of independence of wage slavery. Such an act of indiscipline would be severely frowned upon by the workers' leaders, who would (rightly) recognise the spectre of anarchy if any unofficial action were taken.

In America, heavily interlarded with praise for the American way of life, similar speeches will be made, similar parades (only at least they

have drum majorettes with flashing limbs to catch one's interest) will be organised, even though any individual who expressed any militant internationalism might easily be hounded out of town.

While in the headquarters of world socialism, in the Soviet Union, this year's May Day parade in the Red Square of Moscow will be unusual if it does not consist of an exhibition of the military and aerial might of the first Workers' State. And the speeches of the leaders will pay lip-service to the cause of the emancipation of the world's proletariat, against a backdrop of H-bomb tests in Siberia.

The picture presented by the world's workers after seventy May Days is a pretty sorry one. The very organisations which they created to express the principles of May Day are the very ones which have perverted them. To-day organised labour in every country is organised

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Peckham Health Centre's Doors to Open

— But Only Very Slightly

THE Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham closed down six years ago, and its premises were sold to the London County Council, the Chairman of whose Health Committee said at the time that "the basis of the family centre was research into family health. It is a matter of national prestige to recreate it". The directors of the Centre, the late Dr. George Scott Williamson, and Dr. Innes Pearse issued a statement at the time, warning their supporters that in fact the Council's proposals did not amount to anything like a continuance of the unique research into the nature of positive health, as opposed to the curing of disease, which had been undertaken there. The purpose of the Centre was to study *function in healthy man*, and thereby to deduce laws both of function and of health, and from our point of view, the interim reports on its findings in the books *The Case for Action*, *Biologists in Search of Material*, and *The*

Peckham Experiment, provided valuable experimental verification of anarchist social theory.

The London County Council decided last week, after a division, to reopen the Centre as a diagnosis unit for family doctors, in co-operation with local hospitals. The new plan was agreed after a heated debate in which the Conservative Opposition objected to the LCC taking any responsibility for it. The opposition was led by Mr. Frederick Lawrence who said, "I can't understand why the LCC is proposing to set up a unit such as this. In those areas that I know these services are being provided by the hospitals. The unit may be of some help to the general practitioner but I doubt if it will be a major help."

Mrs. F. E. Cayford, chairman of the Health Committee said she could not see what his objection was. "The plan is to use accommodation that was not being used by the other services there. Most of the cost would be borne by the Sir Halley Stewart Trust, and the South-East Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board would pay for X-ray equipment and consultant services. The cost to us will be very small".

Dr. Somerville Hastings said that the new plan was a very valuable experiment. He quoted Lord Dawson's maxim 'You can't separate prevention and cure'. "It is because we have been trying to do that, that our Health Service has not been more successful", he declared. "We are trying to help the general practitioner to be more efficient".

On the other hand, Lady Petrie, the councillor for South Kensington, complained that the Council was putting the cart before the horse. "We feel this is a worthwhile experiment but I doubt if we are the authority to make it. It's a hospital experiment". The opposition pressed the issue to a division but was defeated.

Nobody familiar from the underside with the operation of the National Health Service, would dispute the value of a diagnostic unit of this kind, but equally, no-one familiar with the past of the Pioneer Health Centre can fail to see the pathetic contrast between the present scheme and the bold experimental work of the Peckham Pioneers. "We had found from experience", wrote the Centre's founders, "that seven out of every ten uncomplaining members of the public entering our doors had not even the negative attributes of health—freedom from diagnosable disorder. Still less had they the positive attributes—vitality, initiative, and a competence and 'willingness' for living".

Where, in the length and breadth of Britain to-day are these positive aspects of health being studied?

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Does Russia see the Red Light?

BULGANIN SWEET AND REASONABLE

THE importance of Mr. Bulganin's recent letter to Mr. Macmillan is in our view quite considerable not only because its suggestions and comments might eventually bring some results (this may easily not be the case), but because it probably gives the key to the reasons behind the present Russian attitude towards the West. Unfortunately we have not obtained a copy of the full text and cannot therefore comment properly upon the actual contents; we have however the good fortune to find in the *Manchester Guardian* dated April 25th, an article by Victor Zorza which analyses the contents of the letter in such a way that we feel justified in quoting from it at considerable length. Mr. Zorza writes as follows:—

"Perhaps the most notable thing about Mr. Bulganin's 8-000-word letter to Mr. Macmillan, the full text of which is now available in London, is its uncompromisingly friendly tone. It resembles in manner and matter the exchanges between Soviet and British statesmen of the pre-Suez and pre-Budapest era.

"That the Russians would like to revive the spirit of those times is clear from Mr. Bulganin's view—which, he observes, has also been expressed in Britain—that an improvement in the re-

lations between the two countries requires that there should be a desire for it on both sides, and also "confidence between the leaders" of Britain and the Soviet Union.

"The Russians, who after Suez displayed some doubt as to whether they could have "confidence" in a Government which, they said, launched an "unprovoked aggression," now apparently wish it to be known that they are again prepared to confide in the British leaders. By the same token, they seem to expect that their own action in Hungary should be forgiven and forgotten."

However unethical and hypocritical this may be from our point of view this is probably the only approach which Mr. Bulganin can make which is both friendly and acceptable to the British Government. It seems that he is anxious for honour among statesmen to be established and he puts great importance upon the maintenance of personal contacts with Britain's leaders. Such contacts he says have been beneficial in the past and can certainly give 'positive results' in the future.

This can perhaps be regarded as a clue that an invitation for Mr. Macmillan to visit Moscow is in the offing. But the main emphasis of the letter is upon the general im-

provement in relations and on progress towards disarmament. Mr. Zorza continues:

"In themselves, the disarmament proposals which he repeats contain nothing new. But the context is not without interest. Whether there will be any progress on disarmament, Mr. Bulganin acknowledges, will depend on whether "all" those now engaged in discussions on it "display a sincere desire to find jointly an acceptable solution."

"Mr. Bulganin says he "would like to hope" that Britain could find it possible to unite her own efforts towards disarmament with those of Russia, "in particular, on the question of suspending nuclear test explosions." The suspension of these, he notes, is being demanded by the peoples, Parliaments, and Governments of many countries, including, he adds pointedly, though "by the way", members of the British Commonwealth. Statesmen responsible for the future of their peoples, he says, must not gamble with their destinies.

"While he agrees that not everybody believes to-day in the good intentions of the Soviet Union, he wishes even "the most hopeless sceptic" to understand that Russia realises that the use of atomic weapons by one side would provoke their use by the other. His Government understands, too, what the use of such weapons would mean, "even for the Soviet Union, with its vast territories and the great progress it has made in anti-atomic defence."

"Lest anyone should regard this as an implied threat to "such a comparatively small and densely populated territory as the British Isles," Mr. Bulganin notes that even British experts hold that means of defence against up-to-date atomic weapons cannot be relied on. "I repeat," he stresses, "nothing would be further from the truth than possible attempts to interpret my words as threats and intimidation."

"Quite apart from any intrinsic merit of this argument, it is of value as putting on record the Soviet Government's view that Russia could hardly hope to escape the consequences of atomic warfare. One of the points of disagreement between Mr. Malenkov and his colleagues, before he resigned

the Premiership, was his public expression of the view that atomic war would be a disaster for the whole world. Mr. Khrushchev's formulation was that such war would merely mean the end of the capitalist system.

"Mr. Bulganin's way to bring about a situation in which "the atomic bombers and rockets of one State will never sow death on the territory of another" is through "joint efforts" towards the establishment of a European security system and disarmament, but, failing agreement, he does not exclude "unilateral" efforts in that direction."

It will be noted that much of what Mr. Bulganin has to say makes good sense, and might be regarded as the most realistic statement of affairs which has emanated from a top politician for a number of years; indeed one could add that it also contains a number of the most useful suggestions for solving some of the world's problems (in terms of this society), since the end of the war. The question however remains, in what spirit is the letter written? Is it with tongue in cheek as seems probable, or is it for once a sincere effort to stabilise a situation which is in such imminent danger of getting out of control?

The letter continues with some comments upon the Middle East and the duties of the Great Powers (including by implication Russia herself) in that area.

"We assume that the present situation of tension in the Near and Middle East is continuing first of all from the lack of will in certain circles in Great Britain and several other countries to face the justified interest and rights of the States of the Arab East who have taken a course of national independence and renaissance.

"It is our deep conviction that the task of guaranteeing a lasting peace demands that the Great Powers should strictly uphold the principles of a peaceful settlement of all conflicting questions connected with this region, and that they should respect the sovereignty and inde-

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The Handful Who Decide

THE wages and conditions of work of four and a half million employees are fixed by wages councils and boards. Workers' and employers' representatives sit on the boards in equal number, so that the decisive votes are those of independent members. Writing in the "British Journal of Sociology" Mr. F. J. Bayliss shows how these pivotal posts in the 64 wages councils and boards are filled by a handful of people. Although the 189 appointments as

independent members are shared among 58 men and women, 23 of these hold two-thirds of the seats. Real influence is concentrated in the hands of an ever smaller group than this. Twelve people hold between them 47 of the 64 chairmanships and six people who are chairmen of 35 of these bodies "have charge of almost all the councils and boards where the independent members play a significant rôle in the determination of wage proposals."

A Geologist Remembers Kropotkin

MY childhood contact with exiled revolutionaries at Barguzin and later at Irkutsk—men of the Populist and People's Freedom movements, who were the spiritual aristocracy of Russia in the 1880's and responsible for forging the character and philosophy of many a young Siberian—did not cease when I left Siberia to spend years in Western Europe. During my student years in Germany, I established contact with those veterans of the Populist movement, Volkhovski and Stepniak, then living in London, and they furnished me, and other young Russians studying abroad, with anti-Tsarist bulletins, pamphlets and other writings. . . . Also at my younger sister's house at Nervi, I met such men as G. V. Plekhanov, founder and father of the Russian Social Democratic Party, and Prince P. A. Kropotkin, famous both as a scientist and as leader of the anarchists.

I had many meetings with P. A. Kropotkin in 1911 and 1912, when I spent a considerable time in London, busy with orders for equipment for mining in Siberia. My visits to Kropotkin's home of those days have remained for all time among my most pleasant memories of that period.

During the thirty years between that day of 1876 when Kropotkin was committed to the Peter and Paul Fortress, and the 1905 Revolution, though the mere mention of his name was prohibited in Russia, in the outer world he attained fame both as a scientist and also as a tireless propagandist for a transformation of the very nature of human society. In 1897 Georg Brandes, in his introduction to Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* wrote: "There are at this moment only two great Russians who think for the Russian people, and whose thoughts belong to mankind—Lev Tolstoy and Peter Kropotkin" . . . He was a remarkable combination of a brilliant scholar who forged new paths in

MR. M. A. NOVOMEYSKY, the Russian mining engineer who started the Palestine Potash Company in the nineteen-twenties, was the son of political exiles in Siberia and has recently written an autobiography describing his early years, *My Siberian Life*, in which he includes reminiscences of Peter Kropotkin, whom he met during visits to London and Rapallo in the years before the first world war. We reprint below some extracts from these memories. *My Siberian Life* was published last year by Messrs. Max Parrish.

science and a tireless fighter for the liberation of man from poverty and slavery. His career was simply fabulous . . . He had before him the prospect of a brilliant Court career. But suddenly he threw it all up and elected to be a mere junior officer of the Cossacks, on a modest salary. Assigned to the staff of the Governor-General at Irkutsk, he now developed the ambition of exploring the vast unknown spaces of Siberia. Still no more than 20 years old, he organised and headed an expedition of exploration of the Transbaikalian Region, the Far East and Manchuria—all country which at that time was little known.

This work of exploration took him five years. He had no university degree or title, but now read a paper to the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics of Petersburg University, on the orographical features of the continental land mass of Asia, in which prior to the present age he postulated the existence of another geographical period in which the outstanding features of Asia were founded. Of immense importance in its result was his great Olekensk-Vitimsk Expedition of 1866, financed by the Lena Goldfields Company. The purpose of this was to discover a direct route through the unknown taiga, or Siberian forest, from the Lena Goldfields in the Province of Irkutsk to the town of Chita.

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THE general results of Kropotkin's numerous observations and his measurement of mountain heights may be summed up in two new propositions of importance. First he invalidated the views of the orography of Asia which then held, and completely changed the map; secondly, of no less importance, he rejected the theory of floating ice-fields formerly held, by which geologists essayed to explain the presence in that part of the world of huge isolated boulders of stone foreign to any strata or formations of the particular district. He advanced a bold new hypothesis of the existence of a so-called glacial period. According to this hypothesis, the present geological period was preceded by an age in which the surface of a large part of the central zone of

Europe, from the British Isles through Germany and Poland to the larger part of Russia, was once covered by a layer of glaciers in motion, and over 3,000 feet thick. The boulders were left as the ice melted away. The hypothesis was at first regarded as heretical, but has since been admitted as factual, and is to be found in every text-book of geography or geology.

This tremendous activity of Kropotkin's fertile mind was enough of itself fully to preoccupy any ordinary man, but soon it had become merely a sideline to Kropotkin. His heart was highly sensitive to the miseries of the majority of the people among whom he lived, and this concern withdrew him from exclusive preoccupation with any science and led him to another question altogether, how to reshape the clearly unethical structure of human society. Here too, just as in his scientific research in Siberia, he dedicated his entire being to the work. All his knowledge, his great gifts, and also his exceptional capacity for applying himself to work now went to the service of suffering mankind.

Kropotkin had been prompted to this climactic in his life by his first short visit to Western Europe, which was mainly spent in Switzerland. This was in 1871-2, the peak years of the International known as the International Working-men's Association, which embraced all shades of socialist opinion, and this had completely captured him . . . The London conference of this International was organised by Marx and Engels, and on that occasion Kropotkin was particularly attracted by the Federation of Watchmakers of the Jura. That body of Swiss Craftsmen rejected any idea of government and also Marx's state socialism. Instead they advocated a federation of free municipalities. (The centre of their own particular federation was the tiny watchmakers' town of La Chaux des Fonds, in the Swiss Jura).

Kropotkin spent a week among these watchmakers and established intimate relations with them, to return to Russia a supporter of their new teaching, which was to be known as *anarchism* . . . He now found only brief occasional spells of time to work on the completion of his

extensive scientific studies in the fields of geography and geology. He was above all busy building up an acquaintance among the workers, especially weavers. For two years the circle developed great propaganda activity among the workers and peasants, and built up a tremendous organisation and network of 'circles' extending over 48 provinces of Russia.

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Now, however, in the spring of 1874, the *Okhrana*, as the Tsarist Security Police were called, got on the tracks of the Central Organisation. Some—among them Sofia Perovskii—were arrested, the others being driven underground. There were already police spies hovering about the house where Kropotkin lived, but he found it out of the question to leave Petersburg without completing his large work on the ice age in Finland and Russia. At last the day of the General Meeting of the Geographical Society at which he was to read his paper came round, and invitations were sent out. The meeting ended in a great triumph for Kropotkin and he was awarded the Society's Gold Medal and offered the position of Head of the Department of Physical Geography. But even while he listened to the speeches of praise his thoughts were busy with the problem of where he was to sleep that night. For he now expected arrest. In fact, when he left the lecture hall he felt too tired to bother, so he simply slept at home, in his rooms. That night he passed safely, but the very next evening the police came for him. He escaped by a back entrance, but closely pursued by the detective and the weaver who had betrayed him. They hailed a passing cab, and caught up with him, and his liberty in Russia was at an end.

It also concluded for all time Kropotkin's revolutionary activity in Russia. On the Tsar's personal orders, he was incarcerated in the Peter and Paul Fortress. The formal indictment charged him with 'belonging to a secret society having the aim of overthrowing the existing form of government and being in a conspiracy against that sacred personage, His Imperial Majesty' . . . When eventually he made good his escape from prison (described elsewhere in *Mr. Novomeysky's book*.—Eds.), he made his way through Finland (then under Russian rule) and Sweden to Edinburgh, where he at once began a new feverish activity in two directions. First, he joined the small group of anarchists of Western Europe, but, using a pseudonym, he also began to contribute learned articles to

Nature, and that magazine gave him books to review. Among these he one day found his own work on the ice age, whereupon he at once revealed to the editor who he really was. The result was a lifelong friendship between the two men. Kropotkin now visited Switzerland, where he finally adhered to the Jura Federation, with which he had made contact four years previously.

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ANOTHER close friendship which Kropotkin made at this time was with Jean-Jacques Elisée Reclus, the great French geographer, another convinced anarchist, and Kropotkin contributed the fifth and sixth volumes of Reclus's encyclopaedic work on geography. His pen had become very active. Together with some English friends, he founded the anarchist periodical *FREEDOM*, at Geneva he edited the French newspaper *La Révolte*, while at the same time he contributed articles to the *Nineteenth Century* on the anarchist conception of society. He wrote . . . *Mutual Aid* . . . and travelled everywhere about the United Kingdom, lecturing on the Russian revolutionary movement, prisons and anarchism.

However, his anarchistic activities at last caused him trouble. When he visited Belgium he was deported, he was expelled from Switzerland, and eventually, at Lyons, in France, he was given a five-year prison sentence. But here, in prison, just as in Petersburg in the Peter and Paul Fortress, he contrived to write, and a number of articles in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Nineteenth Century* had the distinction of being written behind prison bars . . . Kropotkin was set free after serving three years. He then finally settled in London, there to continue his scientific, literary and propagandist activities . . .

Now at last I met Kropotkin in the flesh. I questioned him eagerly, and was most interested to hear how the anarchist movement had developed in Britain and other countries. That, however, was not the most interesting point of this meeting with Kropotkin. He had worked in my own Siberia for five years—from 1862 to 1867—principally during his researches into the geography and geology of the Transbaikalian Region. He had concentrated on the Olekensk and Vitimsk country, which included the district of Barguzin, where, thirty-five years after Kropotkin passed that way, I was to engage, first in geological enquiries, then in the practical work of extracting the minerals to be found there. The greater part of Kropotkin's reports on his expeditions had been published in Irkutsk, as part of the *proceedings* of the Siberian Section of the Geographical Society. The *Report on the Olekensk-Vitimsk Expedition* came out as a separate volume of some 700 pages, and at Barguzin had been my desk book. I was inseparable from it in the days when I lived on the mining site, for in it I found much of the information that I needed in my work. Kropotkin was a very communicative person and I was breathless as I listened to his tales of his work in Siberia, and of the many-sided life he had led . . . It was impossible not to have a very warm feeling for that veteran revolutionary when one heard him hold forth, with all the fervour of a young man.

M. A. NOVOMEYSKY.

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The Belated Awakening

THERE is something a little sickening about the belated disillusionment expressed at the recent Communist Party conference by some of the party's university bigshots like Professor Hyman Levy and Mr. Christopher Hill, blaming the party's leaders for keeping from them for so long 'the truth' about the Soviet Union, as though it wasn't incumbent upon themselves to find out a few elementary truths which were as clear as daylight to anyone who hadn't deliberately put on the blinkers of the party line.

The same refusal to blame oneself is apparent in an article in the new magazine *Universities and Left Review* by Mr. E. P. Thompson, a Leeds University lecturer (and author of a very thorough and well-documented, if misconceived study of William Morris), who was suspended from the party for publishing an opposition journal *The Reasoner*, and left at the time of the Soviet intervention in the Hungarian Revolution. Mr. Thompson, after a lot of brave clap-trap about 'socialist humanism' declares, "I am not going to spend years crippled by remorse because I was duped by the Rajk and Kostov trials, because I was a casuist here and perhaps an accomplice there. We were Communists because we had faith in the fundamental humanist content of Communism, and during the darkest years of the Cold War it was our

duty to speak for this. I do not regret this, although I wish we had spoken more wisely and therefore to more effect. Now that the conflict within world Communism has come into the open, it is our duty to take sides".

Mr. Thompson would profit, though he is apparently still too cock-sure to be chastened, by reading Anthony Hartley's letter to an ex-Communist, "You and your victims", in the current issue of *The Twentieth Century*. "There are certain facts you should meditate upon", writes Mr. Hartley:

"Consider how many people died during the twenty years you were a Communist, whose death you explained away in conversation or in letters to the *New Statesman*. Think that, when you took part in delegations to Eastern Europe, there were democrats mouldering in prison whose names never reached the pages of your ecstatic reports. Remember how you insulted better men than yourself because they opposed a tyranny whose existence you then denied, but now acknowledge. Indeed, what have you not done? You stand accused by the dead, by those of Vorkuta and the Lubianka, by the Spanish Trotskyists, by the hundreds of thousands of deportees, by whole nations taken from their homes. While the prisoners in the camps starved, you stayed in luxury hotels and talked of peace at congresses. While they were tortured, you drank with their torturers. You would not see, and you slandered those who had no tongues to reply. What

has always struck me, my dear X, about British Communists and fellow-travellers is their consummate indecency. Their Russian fellows at least take risks.

"So you see, though I welcome your conversion, I hardly feel like killing a fatted calf to celebrate it. You have done too much damage and behaved too badly in your time. You were meant to be an intellectual and you have dirtied the name—there is no worse intellectual disgrace than to go on believing something simply because it is psychologically comfortable. You were meant to be a man of the left, but you have brought dishonesty into that cause—'workers of the world unite' were once noble words, but what have you made of them? And all this, as I say, not because you were entirely a rogue or a fool, though something of both there was. What you lacked might be called an aesthetic sense. While teaching—history or physics, was it? with intelligence and even wit, you showed a strange blundering lack of perception about relationships involving human beings. It was as if you simply did not know how to behave, and above all, how to distinguish those things that should not be done in the service of any cause . . .

"What you lacked, my dear X, apart from a rigorous intellectual honesty to which you never aspired and which your friends would have scorned, was one of those elusive qualities which make us all human, and I must confess I do not quite see how you are ever to acquire it. I could, I think, give you some tips: do not write for the papers; keep off platforms of any kind; think less of what your actions mean to you and more of what they do to other people."

FRENCH WORKERS' NEXT STEP

THE Paris correspondent of the *Sunday Times* reporting on the head-on clash between the French 'Socialist' government of Mr. Mollet in the strikes which have paralysed the railways, the Paris transport system and public services, discusses some of the underlying issues in these terms:

"The unions are demanding a spectacular reform of major nationalised industries on a profit-sharing basis. They point out that the Government admits the justice of their wage claims, yet will not meet them. At the same time their spokesmen are acknowledging that the rosy dreams inspired by the post-war wave of nationalisations have not come true."

"Disillusionment," declares the correspondent, "has gone so far that the Socialist postal and electricity workers are demanding that the Post Office and electricity boards be transformed into autonomous co-operative bodies".

May Day in the Age of Apathy

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for the State—with all that that implies, in patriotism and nationalism, in trade rivalry and insularity, in suspicion and ignorance.

In 1957 the labour unions and the 'Left' political parties are strong as never before. In numbers and in wealth they represent a power in every land. Were they to unite across the frontiers there is no nation-state which could frustrate their will. But they are sold—sold on the *status quo*, sold on safety and timidity and legality and authoritarianism.

There's the heart of the matter. The ideas of international solidarity and working class emancipation are as revolutionary to-day as when May Day was first adopted in the 1880's. But the workers everywhere have chosen to abdicate from the responsibility which a revolutionary concept demands in favour of handing power to leaders. The workers have chosen—or had chosen for them—the authoritarian path, without realising, even now, the dangers and corruption inherent therein.

Leaders naturally tend towards reaction. Almost everyone with power has one concern before all others: the retention of that power. And this makes them suspicious of all attempts to decentralise initiative or to do anything which makes them dispensable. New ideas which threaten their establishment are anathema to them. The old apparatus by which they achieved their power has to be retained to protect that power. And in the context of the twentieth century, the interests of labour leaders become bound up with those of States.

This is true in the capitalist West, where capitalism survives only through the support it gets from organised labour. It is true in the 'socialist' East where bureaucrats have replaced private owners and the State is the capitalist.

It cannot be said that either system has the whole-hearted, the enthusiastic, support of its workers. The occasionally outburst in this country (as at Ford's), the more spectacular events as in Hungary, are but indications of the tensions which exist below the surface of authoritarian régimes all the time. But these events are sporadic and unco-ordinated. The general pattern is one of apathy, of dull acceptance of the facts of life for the many—drudgery, scarcity, indignity.

It was to combat this that May Day was first inspired. To continue to speak in terms of the concepts of seventy years ago, however, is to earn the epithet of 'unrealistic', 'idealist', 'crank'—or at best to be told in superior fashion that we are out of date.

Yet how much the world needs the spirit of May Day to-day! And who is to express it if not the Anarchists? Social democrats line up with the West, seeking no more than to ease the free enterprise jungle into the Welfare State; Communists cannot even appeal to the government they revere to set an example by suspending H-bomb tests, they are so wedded to the suicidal game of power politics.

Only the Anarchists, who specifically renounce the governmental struggle, can sincerely express the concept of international brotherhood. In the prevailing apathy and hypocrisy of to-day, such a task may seem futile to attempt.

Maybe no-one will listen, but for our own self-respect and sense of social responsibility, we should never let it be said that we didn't raise our voice against the wind.

"Not until we realize that a poor culture will never become rich, though it be filtered through the expert methods of unnumbered pedagogues, and that a rich culture with no system of education at all will leave its children better off than a poor culture with the best system in the world, will we begin to solve our educational problems."

—MARGARET MEAD:
"Growing Up in New Guinea".

THEORETICALLY, I suppose, those who adopt anarchism as a conscious social philosophy could be divided into apocalyptics and pragmatists, into those whose approach was "all or nothing at all", scornful of half-measures and of tinkering with existing social institutions, and those who, in Martin Buber's words, sought to fashion a new community "wholly in the present, out of the recalcitrant material of our own day". In practice of course, the two apparently irreconcilable attitudes co-exist in the same people. We want to "nurture the positive trends" in our own society, however dubious we may feel about those institutions through which it functions. And among the positive trends we count those tendencies (there are few enough of them), which make for local autonomy and the decentralisation of the administrative machine.

Thus the present arguments in the world of education about the 'block grant' system for the state subsidies to local authorities have rather different implications for us than for those who are simply concerned with the efficiency of the educational machine. Primary and secondary schools are administered by the Counties and County Boroughs, and the Treasury pays 60 per cent. of all expenditure approved by the Ministry of Education, the remaining 40 per cent. being met from the rates levied by local authorities. The arrangement is purely fiscal, you pay anyway since you are

BOOK REVIEW

Background to Immigration

RACIAL prejudice is one of the most irrational emotions which adds to the difficulties of people who are trying to establish a society based on equality and justice. Even the white man who claims to understand the anarchist concept of justice very often betrays the feeling that he is in some way superior to the black. His skills, which have been developed as a result of education and industrialisation, are often thought of as innate, and when the coloured man coming from an industrially backward country appears to be awkward and slow to learn the techniques of factory life the obvious explanation for his lack of skill is generally overlooked.

This is one of the many problems which have to be overcome by coloured immigrants to this country seeking a living which has been deprived them in the country of their origin.

*They Seek a Living** deals with the West Indian immigrant, and is an important book giving also a clear historical picture of the West Indies and the origins of slavery.

We can follow the dreary journey of West Indians to the "mother" country where illusions are invariably shattered by, among other things, rain and racial prejudice, and one feels the misery of an impoverished people coming from a sunny land into the dismal slums of Brixton to find that conditions for most of them bear no resemblance to their expectations.

The beginning of slavery in the West Indies would make embarrassing reading for the superior white man who claims that we brought culture to the backward peoples if he were prepared to read and draw the obvious conclusions from the facts. Joyce Egginton writes:

"The first settlers . . . British men among them who went out to colonize the land . . . soon discovered that there was a more satisfactory method than working their own smallholdings, and that was to organize large estate farms with slave labour. Africans were taken from their native land, marched in chains to the coast, herded into ships, severed from their families and sold like cattle in a strange country. They were not allowed

to marry, hold meetings, to make music, to show any form of artistic or religious expression which might recall their pagan origin. They belonged body and soul to the plantations and there was a full stop in Negro civilization which lasted three hundred years . . . Field slaves worked long hours with primitive tools harvesting the cane with cutlasses, then carrying it on their backs. Like dogs they wore metal collars of identity ("Mr. Jones's Negro"), and if they attempted to run away, like dogs they were brought back and whipped. They lost their basic human dignity, their rights of possession, even their names—which explains why modern West Indians have English surnames, being obliged to 'borrow' those of the slave-masters."

The introduction of the Slave Laws, which many people regard as having been in the interests of the slaves, we learn were "aimed to protect planters from possible rebellions rather than to provide decent standards of living for the Negroes". In 1846 when Free Trade was established in Britain a change began in the West Indies. British West Indian sugar was beginning to lose its place in the markets of the world. Competition from Cuba and the French Colonies and the demands of the industrial revolution meant that Britain could satisfy the demand for cheap sugar outside its own colonies. Thus preferential treatment for West Indian sugar was abolished. An interesting point is made about the Bill of Emancipation which was completely in force in 1838:

This Bill "may well have been a matter of expediency as well as humanity. It cost the British taxpayer £20,000,000 in compensation to the slave owner, but it meant that he no longer depended upon them, or they on him."

If the market for cheap West Indian sugar had continued much longer we wonder when slavery would have been officially abolished?

Reasons for Immigration

One of the reasons why there is an increasing number of West Indians coming to Britain is the appalling economic conditions which exist there. Poverty is rife. The Colonial Report on Jamaica for

PEOPLE AND IDEAS

Who Rules the Schools?

AT the Easter Conference of the Union, a unanimous resolution was passed condemning the proposal, in spite of the speech by the Minister, Lord Hailsham, defending the government's scheme, in which he declared that there was nothing in the fear that had been expressed that the government's contribution would be frozen at some arbitrary figure, instead of being adjusted as the service develops. "There is no reason to believe that under the stimulus of the local voter and under the direction and control of the Minister, local authorities would prove any less mindful of their obligations under the general grant than they had been under the percentage grant". But he failed to convince the N.U.T., and Mr. E. L. Britton, for example, said that a progressive authority, under the percentage system was encouraged to be more progressive, but that if the new system becomes law, any little extra advance will have to be financed entirely out of the rates. "The shout that now goes up at progressive measures will be two and a half times as loud; you can guess how much progress we shall have then". What, he asked, were the government's reasons? The Chancellor had said that it was to stabilise grants for local authorities. The Minister of Local Government had said that it was to grant local authorities freedom, "but stabilising meant only one thing—it was a polite word for spending less; and what did this freedom really amount to? Local authorities would not have one jot more freedom under a system of block grants than they did not enjoy under the present system. If a local authority wanted to spend on something not included in the Government regulations it could do so perfectly easily by paying 100 per cent. out of the rates. This new freedom meant in fact freedom for the backward authority to be more backward".

The N.U.T. general secretary, Sir Ronald Gould continued the attack. Fixed block grants, he said, would lead away from the concept of a national system of education, locally administered, towards 146 separate education systems, each with different standards. He feared this movement, he said, for he neither loved nor trusted the parish pump. Similarly at last week's conference of the National Union of Women Teachers, where Miss H. K. Allison of West Ham said, "This is going to put education at the mercy of the local ratepayers. It will place a great responsibility upon local government and will endanger the national standards of education for which we have fought so long".

THERE is little doubt that the government's intention is to use the block grant system as an economy measure, in spite of all Lord Hailsham's big talk since he became Minister about the importance of spending more on education, and there is little doubt that the teaching profession fears the result of placing greater responsibility in the hands of the local authorities. They neither, as Mr. Britton said, love nor trust the parish pump. And educational practice in America seems to confirm their misgivings. Mr. Tatton Brown, a school architect from Hertfordshire, talking on the radio recently (about school buildings, though his remarks hold good for other aspects of school administration), said that, "whereas in Britain 146 education authorities operate under the overall direction of the Ministry of Education, America has some 85,000 school districts striving to build without any direct assistance or control from the Federal Government . . . This fundamental dif-

Continued on p. 4

1952 states that the island's education system had no provision for 50,000 children of school age. This is in a land which for years has been yielding large profits to white landowners (culture for the backward peoples?). Workers in the sugar industry receive from 6/- to 9/6 a day, and a woman domestic worker averages 16/6 a week.

Is it surprising that men and women seek a living in other countries, particularly Britain, for which the uninitiated West Indian seems to have the most extraordinarily romantic notions?

The land of milk and honey was favoured by many West Indians until the McCarran Act of 1952 limited their numbers. The Act was established so as to "maintain the historic population pattern of the United States" and included in it were clauses which limited the duration of stay allowed to West Indians. It has been pointed out that McCarran's father was an Irishman who managed to 'make' America by the unorthodox method of stowing away! Are we to assume that McCarran is interested in making America a land fit for Irishmen to live in?

Britain cannot so easily put a limitation to the number of immi-

grants from the West Indies to this country because theoretically they can claim full "rights" as British subjects. But there are of course other means which can be employed to curtail immigrants. One sure method is lack of transport and money. At the moment however, there is no immediate danger from the point of view of employment of coloured labour in this country, but the author of this book underlines our own view on this problem should conditions change. The policy of the Ministry of Labour and the trade unions is "last in (to a job) first out", but in a serious unemployment crisis "it is doubtful whether this policy would be wholeheartedly applied".

The domestic life of the West Indian in Britain and the attitude of the British worker to his coloured counterpart makes interesting reading, and perhaps we can be excused if our sympathies generally are with the lonely coloured man in a strange and often hostile environment.

The rigours of the British climate are less depressing perhaps than the rigid attitude of the white man and his sense of superiority even when he is trying to be kind. M.

*Joyce Egginton, Hutchinson & Co., 16s.

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Who Rules the Schools?

Continued from p. 2

ference between the USA and ourselves accounts for the relative inferiority of most American schools. For it is fair to say that, generally speaking, their school boards do not get as good value for money or overall efficiency in the buildings they put up . . . Sometimes there is real enthusiasm and outstanding achievement but often the results are a reflection of the views of the majority who have asked for—and got—education on the cheap.

But if we take seriously our anarchist conceptions of a decentralised non-governmental society, instead of regarding them as applicable to some purely hypothetical 'free society', we must be striving 'in the present, out of the recalcitrant material of our own day', to make education more and more a local responsibility, whatever reservations we may have about the structure of British local administration, and even though in the present state of the public mind the result would be a less efficient system. I don't mean by this that we should rush out and vote for Councillor Bloggs or Alderman Blenkinsop—there are other ways of influencing local affairs, but I do mean that if we really want a decentralised society we must welcome what decentralist tendencies there are, hoping that growing public participation and interest in education will prove stronger than the parochial niggardliness that the teachers fear.

★

THE financial aspects of the present dispute lends interest to a report prepared last year by a study group of the Royal Institute of Public Administration, with the title *New Sources of Local Administration*. They suggest measures "which would increase the revenue available to local authorities without levying a heavier burden on the taxpayer. In addition to a local income tax, non-progressive and limited to 3d. in the pound, the group proposes that entertainments tax and motor duties should be returned to local jurisdiction. In all this would yield about £270 millions to the local authorities at the expense of the Treasury and thus greatly reduce the need for Treasury grants which now come close to providing half the income of the authorities".

Commenting on this report, the *New Statesman* (1/12/56), remarked:

"Two factors account for the declining effectiveness of local authorities—the steady transfer of functions to the central government and the growing dependence of local councils on Treasury grants. For both reasons, local autonomy has dwindled and the authorities have more and more become agents of Whitehall for policies laid down in Westminster. To arrest this decline, and it should be arrested, the long overdue reform of local government is essential. And this reform must create authorities competent enough to receive back some of the powers that have been progressively surrendered".

There is sufficient truth in this comment to make one consider seriously the virtues of the report's proposals. "There you are", you may say, "this is what happens, when anarchists start considering what piecemeal social engineering would improve our present society. You start by looking for virtues in a bit of specious fiscal juggling by the government and end by approving proposals for localising income tax!" But must we really abandon any consideration of the here-and-now in seeking the means of changing the structure of social administration? C.W.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

What's in a Name?

WHILE reading your excellent article "Sticks and Stones", (FREEDOM, 20/4/57), it occurred to me that that extremely ambiguous word *anarchy* is, in the eyes of the general public, a pejorative word, signifying chaos in the worst possible sense. One even hears the 'anarchical state of Italy under its many petty rulers' being referred to.

Not only is it this ambiguity that has led to the downfall of the word. There are also the writers ("The Man Who Was Thursday", by Chesterton, etc.), who have made anarchists appear as fanatical bomb-throwing idiots.

Surely as propagandists (or should I say educators!) it is our duty to society to make our doctrine as attractive and as appealing as possible, right from the start. Surely then, we must give our doctrine a meliorative name. Only this way will the anarchist movement be anything other than a comparatively insignificant minority in Britain.

London, S.W.15. DAVID ROLFE.

[We agree that there is nothing sacrosanct about the words *anarchy* and *anarchism*, but the fact remains that ours is the correct use of language (The Penguin

Political Dictionary gives this definition: *ANARCHISM*, from Greek *anarchia* (non-rule), a political doctrine standing for the abolition of every organised authority and State machinery, and the creation of a Stateless society instead . . . There is, however, no anarchism advocating anarchy in the sense of dissolution of every social order. The various alternatives that people propose, like "libertarian socialism" or "voluntary socialism" are imprecise and linguistically unsatisfactory. Alex Comfort, who no doubt would be more ready than ourselves to abandon the word if there was a satisfactory alternative to describe his point of view, discusses this point in the following words:

"If the word 'anarchism', as a name for the attempt to effect changes away from the centralised and institutional towards the social and 'life-oriented' society, carries irrational implications, or suggests a preconceived ideology either of man or of society, we may hesitate to accept it. No branch of science can afford to ally itself with revolutionary fantasy, with emotionally determined ideas of human conduct, or with psychopathic attitudes. On the other hand sug-

gested alternatives—'biotechnic civilisation' (Mumford), 'para-primitive society' (G. R. Taylor)—have little advantage beyond their novelty, and acknowledge none of the debts which we owe to pioneers. 'Free society' is equally undesirable for its importation of an emotive and undefinable idea of freedom".]

God - and - Such - Things

To me it is interesting that you give so large a proportion of space this week to an article based on the *News Chronicle's* Gallup Poll on 'religious beliefs'; for I would not have supposed that a single reader of FREEDOM could be in danger of attaching value to the results of an enquiry so superficial and inadequate. But you do not comment on the very considerable importance of the fact that an ordinary daily newspaper should take up such a subject at all.

Your own remarks on 'the God story' puzzle me. What can you mean by: 'Man—has waited nearly 2000 years for just one palpable proof of God's presence'? Why do you limit history to 2000 years? And what, exactly, do you mean by 'palpable'? I suspect you are using it in its narrowest sense, and mean 'proof by the senses?' But even so, what a dangerous statement! Why, even in common experience the senses vary widely not only in different species of creatures, but also in individuals of the same species. How can you, even if you are a nonagenarian whose whole life has been devoted to profound study of the subject (which I guess not to be the case), dare so sweeping an assertion? I wonder also, I own, what you mean by the word 'wait'!

But of course your question concerning God and the H-bomb is not 'silly'. How, in God's name, can you possibly suppose that it might be thought so? Only (I ask this without arrogance, and with humility—or as much as I can summon up for I am not good at the patience which is an essential of humility, and am very much a learner in this), may I beg you yourself to think 'for a moment longer' about your own question?

Perhaps it is a mistake for me to write to you about God-and-such-things. I think we may perhaps be too far separated in every stratum of our experience for communication by words alone. But the simple word 'friendly' can hardly go wrong in this context—and it is in a friendly spirit that I have written this letter.

FRANCES BELLERBY.

Goveton, Nr. Kingsbridge.

Where Does the Money Go?

WHEN motor-car licences were introduced it was decided that the revenue from them should be used for the improvement of the roads. That is why they are known as Road Fund Licences. Where in fact the money does go was discussed in the following letter which appeared in the January issue of *Motor Sport*:

"As conscientious motorists dutifully part with £12 10s. for their car licences at the beginning of each year, how many, one supposes, ever stop to consider just what happens to their money. Do they imagine that it will be spent on road upkeep, or improvement, or do they regard it as the price of a coloured disc of paper which the law demands they renew each year? Either way, it is likely that only a very few view the ultimate goal of their money with any great concern.

"Each year, the British Road Federation issues a booklet called "Basic Road Statistics," and perusal of the latest edition reveals some remarkable facts. In 1950, 60 per cent. of all motor vehicle tax receipts were spent on roads, in the form of maintenance, cleaning and im-

provement; a matter for concern perhaps, considering the accident rate and general state of Britain's roads. But in 1955 only 23 per cent. was spent, representing £2 17s. 6d. out of each £12 10s. that motorists paid, and of this amount only 5s. represented the sum spent on "major improvements and new construction."

"These facts, together with the continual increase of traffic congestion and lack of foresight of officials concerned led me, some while ago, to the honest belief that my money was being wasted. I therefore resolved (not through any desire to break the law) not to tax my car in the future.

"The conspicuous absence of major road constructions, together with the steady increase of accidents indirectly attributable to poor conditions, and traffic jams due to atrocious bottlenecks, strengthen my belief that I am justified in my action.

"Some will say that an attitude such as this serves only to aggravate the situation but the fact remains that if the majority of motorists took my view, then the state of affairs would be rapidly assessed to better effect, and sensible steps taken to cure it."

The Bulganin Letter

Continued from p. 1

pendence of the countries and should not permit any interference in their internal affairs.

"The safeguarding of Britain's economic interests in the Middle East should be pursued not along the road of using force, but also along the roads of negotiations and sober consideration of the just interests of the sides concerned, along the roads of developing normal economic relations between the States without infringing in any way the sovereignty of the countries of that area.

"We believe that the Great Powers would make a big contribution to the normalisation of the situation in the Middle East if they denounced the use of force as the means of settling the unsolved problems of that area. It is impermissible that disputed issues are settled by armed force, that reckless actions by some states or others still brandishing arms, imperil the peace of that area."

What are we to make of all this? Can it be the olive branch bearing the magic words—let bygones be bygones—and from now on all is to be sweetness and light? Attractive as the idea is, it must be regarded as unlikely, for one can never quite forget that the U.S.S.R. is pledged to a policy of expansionism—it is a basic tenet. Nor can one forget that Russian policy towards the West has swung from cold to hot and back again many times. On this occasion there are a variety of very good reasons why she should once again present a warmer front. *The Observer* editorial for April 28th summed up the position eminently well:

In the first place, the political events of last autumn have resulted in a weakening of Russian and a strengthening of American power. The Soviet grip on Eastern Europe has become precarious; the Satellites have proved worthless as military allies. At the same time, the Suez crisis has led to the replacement of British influence in the Middle East by American intervention, backed by far greater power.

In the second place, the Kremlin has become aware that the arms race is now about to enter the phase of the intermediate-range ballistic missile, capable of carrying atomic warheads some 1,500 miles. When this becomes practical, and until the inter-continental missile of 5,000 miles' range becomes a fact, the Americans will have bases from which, theoretically, they could launch missiles at most vital targets in Russia, while Russia will be unable to retaliate directly against the United States. However absurd the idea that the Americans would use this period to attack Russia may appear to us, it must enter into Russia's calculations; and the Bermuda agreement on missiles for

Britain, followed by our defence White Paper and by Dr. Adenauer's call for atomic arms, has no doubt stimulated these anxieties.

Finally, it is fair to assume that the thought of the Jordan crisis leading to an international flare-up alarms the Russians as much as the Americans. And Mr. Khrushchev's fear that an East German rising could set the East-West border aflame is shared by most thoughtful people in the West.

The Russians, then find themselves faced with a military-political situation which is both unfavourable and explosive. It follows that they will certainly try to divide the West by both threats and flattery; but also that they have a genuine interest in reducing the risk of an outbreak of hostilities anywhere. That interest coincides with ours.

In other words the U.S.S.R. has seen the red light with the realisation that she no longer holds the strong position achieved in earlier years, and it is not unreasonable to assume that until she attains once more what she considers to be approximate military and political parity with the West she will continue with the new post-Hungarian "Bulganin attitude" of friendlier co-existence with Britain at least, and perhaps, in due course with a reluctant America. How much success she will gain depends very largely on what inducements are offered, but it may be that Russian unilateral action will be necessary before the sceptical West is prepared to cooperate to any degree. Or possibly no-one will make the first move and the accustomed stalemate position will result. But Mr. Bulganin has certainly left himself more wide-open than usual.

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SERIES OF FOUR MEETINGS ORGANISED BY THE INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST CENTRE

MAY 5—Arthur Uloth on HISTORY OF ANARCHISM

MAY 12—Alan Albon on LIVING IN COMMUNITY

MAY 19—ANARCHIST BRAINS TRUST

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP MEETINGS

MAY 26—Sid Parker on IN DEFENCE OF PHILOSOPHY

JUNE 2—John Smith on WHY I AM AN ANARCHIST

JUNE 9—Max Patrick on IS THERE A RULING CLASS?

JUNE 16—John Bishop on Subject to be announced

JUNE 23—Donald Rouom on ANARCHISM AND RELIGION

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