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Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"I have little hope of any man or any community of men, that looks to some civil or military power to defend its vital rights . . . If we have not in ourselves to defend what belongs to us, then the citadel and heart of the towns are taken."
—WALT WHITMAN.

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Threepence

The Middle East Share-Out

NOW IT'S SYRIA

IMPLICIT in the indignation expressed by the Western Powers over Syria "selling herself to communism" is the opinion, which we are expected to swallow as truth, that the West is interested in the Middle East for the best possible motives while the Soviet Union is concerned solely with the benefits she might derive in terms of power and influence.

We do not deny that Russia is anxious to appear to the whole Arab World as a benefactor and will exploit any situation to this end. But we do question the purity of the motives of Britain and America in relation to the Middle East. As anyone can see who is not already blinded by patriotism or wishful thinking all the conflicting interests in this area revolve round the wealth to be gained from the control of oil and through this to political domination. Thus Britain and America are trying to sell the Western way of life while the Soviet Union offers her peculiar brand of communism.

To the uncommitted Arab States it may be that Russia appears as the lesser of two evils since it is unlikely that the Arab rulers are taken in by the Soviet's self-styled disinterestedness. For decades they have had experience of Western control which has brought wealth to many Arabs at the expense of national freedom although there has been little change in the traditional poverty of the mass of Arabs.

The present political upheaval in Syria therefore, if viewed in terms of "interests" will seem clearer to the ordinary observer who might be otherwise confused by the pounds of

ink and yards of paper which have been wasted discussing the ideological conflicts. The conclusions of which amount to—Russians want control of the Middle East but her ideology is bad; "We" want control of the Middle East but our way of life is good.

Subjective factors may well play a small part in moulding Syrian policy. The army officers, who are virtually in control, as distinct from the landowners and wealthy merchants, may favour the Soviet Union for a variety of reasons but it will be the external realities which will ultimately determine the final jump.

The decision to accept the Soviet offer, according to a Syrian foreign office official, was made because the West had been unwilling to offer similar favourable terms. The agreement with Russia provides for:

- (i) A £40 millions development loan, payable at 2½ per cent. interest in ten years;
- (ii) help in the construction of railways, roads irrigation works, industrial and electric-power plants "and other projects";
- (iii) a mission of Soviet economists to survey and plan the projects; and
- (iv) the sale of Soviet "machinery, equipment, materials, and other goods" in return for imports of Syrian grain, cotton, and other materials.

"These negotiations," Mr. Khrushchev announced, "are considered the symbol of unconditional co-operation. The Soviet Government gave Syria whatever it asked for. . . ."

The Moscow agreement had not only secured the disposal of Syrian surplus crops and products, "which have suffered from a slump this

year," but also provided the means for industrialisation refused by the West. Thus "we have rescued ourselves from the economic blockade which certain countries seek to impose upon us."

And an inevitable part of any deal with the big powers are the tanks and arms for Syria—enough to fulfil Syria's "military requirements".

The claim made by Syria that the Western powers were approached and refused her aid has so far not been (to our knowledge) officially denied either in this country or America. Conflicting reports come from Syria that the conditions laid down by the West were impossible, one of which was that Syria should agree to have no truck with the Soviet bloc. In other words trade negotiations and political issues would be decided by the West.

What is interesting is why Syria should be less important to the Western powers than other Arab states. The answer again is to be found floating in the oil. Syria is not an oil-producing country but has added enormously to her wealth by allowing pipelines through the country carrying oil to the coast. Some months ago the army sabotaged the pipelines from Iraq which resulted in a considerable drop in revenue. The result was the decision made public at that time that plans

Continued on p.

Nkrumah and Civil Liberties

FOLLOWING the deportation of a journalist last month, two Moslem leaders have now been ordered to leave Ghana.

The facts of the case are not very clear, being shrouded in mists of charges and counter-charges. But as far as we understand the Government's view it appears that the two Moslems have been charged with behaviour likely to prejudice the public good. A Government Bill gave the Minister of the Interior power to deport the men "without appeal to or review in any court". The Government Bill has now been amended following riots in Accra to:

"Any deportation order made before 1957 . . . shall be automatically revoked and, if the deportee is in custody, under the 1957 act he may, notwithstanding any proceedings in any court, whether pending or determined, be retained in custody for the purposes of this act without being released."

Little has been published in the British Press about the actual political activities of the two Moslems, but it is interesting to note their financial status. A report from *Reuter* says that:

Alhaji Ahmadu Baba (one of the two men) said he was managing director of Ahmadu Baba Properties Limited and owned seventeen modern buildings and a fleet of commercial lorries. He had business and property worth £7,000 in Ghana. Both the men were born in Kumasi, Ashanti.

Premier Nkrumah is acting in a way which we have come to expect from politicians everywhere in defence of their positions. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the Moslems in question are the innocent victims of Government tyranny. We have no reason to suppose that they would act any differently towards the opposition if they were in power.

What is particularly tragic about Ghana is that having got freedom from white rule the tyranny is being continued just as ruthlessly.

The eyes of the "anti-black" world will be watching this experiment in self-government with satisfaction, forgetting that Nkrumah is only carrying on in the old tradition with some slight variations.

Empire men in this country will be sitting in their clubs telling each other that "we" ought never to have left these blacks to make a mess of running the country. But as the *News Chronicle* has noted in its Editorial:

How many civil rights were respected when Archbishop Makarios was deported from Cyprus? What is going on in Singapore where the Chief Minister has announced that Communists may be held for two years without trial while those who are not Singapore citizens may be banished?

These "democratic" lovers should indeed clean up their own back yards.

Forward to Another Crisis!

INFLATION

CHANCELLORS of the Exchequer, Trade Union leaders, politicians and journalists talk and write knowingly and confidently on the problems of, and cure for, Inflation, that cloud which periodically appears as if from nowhere to obscure the sun of prosperity in which warm rays every now and then we are briefly allowed to bask. It is not surprising if at the end of it all the man-in-the-street asks himself which condition is fiction and which fact. And unless he is a person with a few ideas of his own he is going to find himself hard put to answer this question. For prosperity and inflation in the language of the Bankers and the manipulators of finance have very little bearing in the concrete realities and experiences of the ordinary working man or woman.

As a matter of fact the professional economists are not even agreed among themselves as to how, what they call "inflation", develops.

HELL FOR LEATHER

The Conservative and Unionist Central Office has just distributed an extract from a speech by Mr. E. H. C. Leather, the Tory M.P. for Somerset North, which ends with this classic mouthful:

"But I say to you without fear or hesitation that if we can put the national interest first, adjust ourselves and our thinking to these revolutionary times in which we are living, face up bravely to the new problems which confront us every day, and stand united behind our well-tried principles, then there is nothing on earth which can stop the Conservative party from winning the next election whenever it comes."

[Or was this just a little piece which the hon. gent. from Som. N. lifted from that well-known pamphlet, *Clichés for Conservatives?*]

The public can therefore consider themselves no less guinea-pigs when various measures are taken "to combat inflation" in spite of the assurances given by their governments that they have not just the right cure for the disease. Yet we cannot help thinking that the disagreement between the experts is not between eager seekers after the truth; indeed we believe there will never be agreement since the truth would reveal the real malignancy compared with which, inflation is but a painful boil on society's backside.

★

INFLATION occurs, we are told, where the pressure of demand on our resources overstrains the economic machine. A writer in the *Observer** so described the symptom:

Just as a motor-car engine suffers if it is strained to the limit all the time, so with the economic machine, where the overstrain shows itself as inflation.

In that writer's expert opinion "The only way to prevent this overstrain is to run the economy rather less than flat out". This is not a new approach (even Lord Beveridge has been protesting that his Social Insurance Utopia is only financially possible if there is something less than full employment). And Mr. Day enlarges on this counter-inflationary measure in these terms:

No one knows how far below capacity we should have to run in order to avoid inflation completely. What is certain is that the less near to full capacity we run, the less severe the inflation will be. A reasonable guess is that an average

*Alan Day, Reader in Economics, London University, on *An A.B.C. of Inflation* (*Observer*, August 4, 1957).

of two to three per cent. unemployment would mean in current circumstances that inflation would be very slow. Perhaps such a level of unemployment would be accompanied by an annual price rise of one to two per cent. That is probably about the best we can hope for, unless we were to adopt an extensive system of controls, which would have serious drawbacks of its own.

The theory behind this prophylactic for inflationary boils is that on the one hand employers will be in a stronger position to resist demands for more wages for obvious reasons, while on the other, business men will be more "reluctant" to increase prices if costs rise, since demand will be less "buoyant" (presumably as a result of unemployment as well as the fear of unemployment which will encourage people to save rather than spend). There is also the implied assumption that the threat of dismissal and unemployment will act as an incentive to increasing productivity (that is, output per worker as against total output).

To the layman who protests that as he sees it the material prosperity of the nation is determined by how much is produced, the expert replies, albeit with a sigh, that

There is, of course, something rather disheartening about controlling output so that we do not produce quite as much as we could produce in any year. Inevitably, one thinks regretfully of the "lost" output. But we cannot get the "lost" output without giving incomes to the people who produce it—and they will spend the incomes, pushing the economy back into the zone of overstrain.

So here you the the bald admission, that under our financial system general material prosperity is impossible. There must at all times be one section of the community going

The Chinese Puzzle

One Man Reports and Another Fellow Travels

ABOUT two weeks ago in Moscow, towards the end of the Communist world youth festival, it came to the ears of the U.S. Embassy that forty-five young Americans intended to accept an invitation for a very inexpensive trip to China. The result was an urgent message from the Acting Secretary of State in the U.S.A., Christian A. Herter, to the would-be travellers:

"Dear Fellow Citizen, By traveling to Communist China at this time you will, in the considered view of your government be acting as a willing tool of Communist propaganda intended, wherever possible, to subvert the foreign policy and the best interests of the U.S."

Herter also added for good measure that Americans who went to Red China might eventually be liable to criminal prosecution under the Trading with the Enemy Act since there was still "a quasi state of war" between China and the U.S.

Forty-one of the forty-five ignored the message (and its attendant threat), two took the hint, and the remaining two turned down the invitation but said they might try to catch up later. Although some of the China-tourists may well have Communist sympathies or leanings, it is incredible that the U.S. Government should be so scared of the effect of a visit to China by a bevy of young people who cannot possibly have any noticeable effect on

the American Way of Life and Thought on their return.

Even supposing they had an unbiased public they could only report accurately or inaccurately, and whichever it might be would be accused of exaggeration, lying, having Communist sympathies, being suckers for Red propaganda and/or acting like misguided young fools who could not see through the cunning Chinese Communist plot.

Last week the United States confused the issue by giving twenty-four reporters permission to enter China on "an experimental basis". It was announced by the State Department that "new factors" had influenced the decision, which was authorised by Mr. Dulles. Passports are to be validated for the nominated correspondents, one from each news-gathering agency, for a period of seven months. At the same time emphasis was placed upon the continuing state of "quasi war".

"Generally speaking it is still not consistent with United States policy, or lawful, that there be travel by Americans to areas of China now under Communist control."

Can it be that the U.S. Government is prepared to allow reporters who will write the right things to visit China, but that anyone who cannot be so easily controlled may be forced into silence by criminal prosecution? A lesson in comparative freedom.

The Meaning of Mental Ill-Health

(Continued from previous issue)

A somewhat humble instance will serve as an illustration. A little girl of nine years old is taken to a child guidance clinic because she has given a great deal of trouble at home and at school, and nothing seems capable of making her mend her ways. Outwardly prim and polite she does odd things; she has nearly killed her baby brother on more than one occasion; sometimes she soils her knickers at school; sometimes she has temper tantrums which are so violent that her teachers do not know what to do with her; sometimes she will try to abstain from food for days. The child is "neurotic".

The purpose of the child guidance clinic is firstly to piece together the developmental history of this child, to find out what these various odd manifestations mean to the child. In the course of a long investigation, in which the child is able to convey more by her play, her fantasies and her relations with the child therapist than by any direct means of communication, the clinic finds that not only is the child being investigated and treated, but the whole family comes under review and, to some extent, treatment. Such an investigation often embraces the grandparents, the wife's lovers, the husband's work place, the schoolteacher's emotional life. This great ramification of personal relationships is finding expression in a little girl ill-treating her baby brother and lying on the classroom floor screaming. Improvement in the child's condition, if it occurs, may be accompanied by the snapping or reorganization of the web of personal relations which surround her. Mother may run off with a lover whom she has rejected for years "for the sake of the family". Father may fling up his intolerable respectable job and to hell with keeping up with the Joneses. Grandma may be ousted from the position at the centre of the spider's web and undutifully relegated to an Old Peoples' Home.

Somehow the clinic, by patient expostulation with the grownups and by getting the child to realize the nature of her own problems, must make some reorganization possible.

This small illustration is quoted to emphasize that nobody is mentally ill all on his own. Mental illness is a social thing and the main sufferer, the one who is often taken to hospital, cannot be held individually "responsible" for his breakdown. Curing him involves enabling him to break and reorganize the web of social relationships around him. In a form of society where the individual is very much dominated by social institutions which on the one hand succour and protect him (like a child in a family) and on the other involve him in irreconcilable contradictions of the kind that Orwell called "doublethink", the rate of individual mental breakdown is likely to be high and the mental balance of the whole society to be precarious. In a harsher society, such as that of early 19th century Britain, the individual had to be reconciled to being more of an individualist, and although subject to many other risks which are not common to-day, was less likely to have his mental balance destroyed.

The above is not to be interpreted as a plea for a "harsher" form of society of the Spencerean variety. On the contrary the present writer's main criticism of present day society is its lack of humanity in its real sense. Where everybody is my neighbour nobody is my neighbour. Modern man is dominated by depersonalized ghosts. Citizenship confers on him many rights, but as we are constantly reminded, rights imply duties—duties which are crammed into him along with the milk, orange juice and cod liver oil in the free Nursery School with a benevolent Local Authority provides. Staggering through life under this load of duties he does not really enjoy the rights but strives to keep going by the three palliative means which are mentioned in the passage quoted from Freud above.

What alleviation workers of various kinds in the field of mental health can bring is welcome, but it is a drop in the ocean. Specialists like Eysenck who are more concerned for facilities for research than for treatment, delight to point out the slenderness of the evidence for the benefits of various sorts of psychotherapy. In the opinion of the present writer the research must be sociological as well as psychological. There is an astounding lack of questioning that our form of social organization—the megalopolitan one—is the right form. The petty squabble between the American and the Russian way of life leaves many fundamental questions untouched.

The main merit of the anarchist movement is that we are pioneering ideas which are neglected to-day, and that few people seem concerned to explore the fact that civilized society is going round the bend for want of self-knowledge. The present writer does not share the pessimism of Toynbee and other prophets of doom. It seems to me that in the symptoms of any illness are the signs of hope. As long as the organism does not lie down and disintegrate, its fevers, its rashes, its groans are signs of an attempt to adapt to the new environment.

HOW TO KEEP FRIENDS

If you live in Bonn and your phone isn't being tapped, you can't amount to much, remarked a German writer ironically the other day. The fuss made in the Commons over the Marrinan inquiry puzzled people here, where phone-tapping is taken as a matter of course.

The latest joke is that a worried M.P. had begged the Gehlen organisation to tap his phone line because he was losing the respect of his friends.

The Gehlen organisation is Chancellor Adenauer's own private-eye service run by a former army general with a staff of 1,200 and an annual budget of £24 million.

The shadowy world of the spy is not prominently featured in the tourist guides. But last year over 6,000 persons were arrested for sundry treasonable activities and for endangering the security of the State.

So many espionage and counter-espionage rings are at work that almost every fifth man is a third man.

News Chronicle Correspondent in Germany, 10/8/57.

The Myth of the Post Office

IN the eighteen-eighties when the Fabians first began canvassing nationalisation as an objective for socialists, critics who said that nationalised industry couldn't work had the Post Office waved in front of them as a shining example which was supposed to silence their doubts. William Morris jeered at Sidney Webb for holding out the Post Office as a beacon of the future society, as well he might, for what appealed in theory to Webb's tidy bureaucratic mind was precisely what, in fact, appalled his radical critics—red-tape, bumbledom and low wages, even in the days when the Post Office was making a net profit of 25% of its gross income.¹

The rise of syndicalism in France before the first world war, led to devastating attacks on the organisation of the Post Office there (Beaubois: *La Crise Postale et les Monopoles d'Etat*), accompanied by the demand for workers' control of the postal services, while with the advent of Guild Socialism in this country the same demand appeared here. (c.f. *Towards a Postal Guild*, 1919). G. D. H. Cole wrote in 1918, "It is significant that the demand for control should have come in its most articulate form in such a public service as the Post Office". To this day the U.P.W., contrary to official T.U.C. policy, holds as its objective a self-governing postal service. Discussing this survival from the bolder ideals of an older generation, Geoffrey Ostergaard writes:

"The Union of Post Office Workers... formed by amalgamation in 1920 largely owing to the inspiration of the Guild Socialists, still adheres officially to the guild objective which was written into its constitution in 1922. Alone among the larger unions, it has conducted a battle against the socialism of the public corporation. In the 1930's and again in the immediate post-war years, it made proposals for 'joint control' (Union and State) of the service as a step towards the ultimate aim. As the union with the longest experience of nationalisation, one might have thought that our Labour-Socialists, who pride themselves on their 'empiricism' would have taken some notice. Instead, the T.U.C. looked askance at this inconvenient demand and, discouraged perhaps by lack of support from the Post Office Engineers, the U.P.W. have not pressed the matter again."²

Some authorities claim a certain measure of success for the U.P.W.: "in a new procedure which is being applied experimentally in some Post Offices a considerable degree of participation has been granted..." writes Hugh Clegg; "the U.P.W. has achieved a consultative status for Post Office employees that

falls only a little short of Joint Control over management," says the pamphlet *Democracy in our Working Lives*. Your postman may be less confident, but the fact that over the past forty years, sometimes fiercely, sometimes merely formally, the postal workers with more consistency than those of any other industry, and in opposition to the T.U.C., have been demanding a radical change in its structure, is enough in itself to demolish the socialist myth of the Post Office.

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BUT there is another perennial post office myth that is always trotted out to confound anarchists and decentralists. "Look at the Post Office," people say, "how can a complicated nation-wide service like that possibly be run by autonomous local units?" The answer is really very simple: look through the telescope instead of the microscope. What is the Universal Postal Union but a complicated international service run by autonomous local units? Kropotkin used to point to the International Postal Union (as it was then called) as an example of voluntary co-operation. It is not a union of governments but simply of post offices. Article 1 of the Universal Postal Convention declares (1) that the countries between which the convention is concluded form a single postal territory for the reciprocal exchange of correspondence; and (2) that the aim of the union is to secure the organisation and improvement of the various postal services and to promote in this sphere the development of international collaboration.

But where is the grand universal central post office, where the postal parliament, the ultimate authority, the legislative body? There are none. There is simply the freely arrived-at agreement between delegates meeting every five years or so, honoured by all, and enforced by nothing more than mutual advantage and common sense. What applies between countries can just as surely apply within them, and one has yet to learn that small nations, some with a smaller population than an English city have postal services, inland or foreign, any less efficient than ours. The opposite is sometimes true. Take Holland, with a population no bigger than that of greater London. Any Dutchman will tell you that its Post Office provides a better service than ours, while those Walsall business men who found it cheaper, though illegal, to send their catalogues to Holland in bulk and have them posted from there to English customers will probably agree with him.

As a matter of fact the Post Office itself, as a result of the report of the Bridgeman Committee in 1932 undertook a certain amount of devolution, setting up a kind of board of senior civil servants instead of the original direct departmental control and dividing the service into regions with a 'limited autonomy'. Nevertheless, Hugh Clegg in his *Industrial Democracy and Nationalization* asks "How can regions in a national co-ordinated, interlocking service have more than a strictly limited independence...?" The answer is of course that Manchester could have just as independent a postal service as Luxemburg or Switzerland. We could if we wished have a British Postal Union just as we have a Universal Postal Union, for the purpose of such service unions, as Leopold Kohr says of the latter, "is not to unify productive or political entities but, on the contrary, to provide them with the facilities that enable them to remain separate and small. They are here to link, not to fuse, to adjust, not to unite..."

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WOULD it be an advantage to anyone but stamp-collectors? Nobody knows. It might be, to judge by the advantages the citizens of Hull have from their municipal telephone service (described in last week's FREEDOM) as compared with the rest of us who are served by the G.P.O. We could also dispense with the Postmaster General, who has, be it noted, no opposite number in the Universal Postal Union. Wiretapping would be more difficult to keep secret—some of the member Post Offices might decline to do the government's dirty work in this respect. The advocates of workers' control in the Post Office might get a chance to put their theories to the test. There might be ideological rivalry between say, the worker-controlled Lancashire Post Office, the municipal one in Manchester, and the private enterprise one in Cheshire. This may be fantasy, but it is no more fantastic than the thin blue line of postmen and sorters, telephonists and technicians who link Lichtenstein and Liberia, China and Peru, Iceland and New Zealand.

The myth of the Post Office is that this has any essential connection with governments, centralisation, or Lord Altrincham's pin-up girl who so monotonously monopolises our postage stamps.

C.W.

¹See figures in W. Tcherkesoff: *The Concentration of Capital: A Marxian Fallacy* (Freedom Press, 1911).

²G. Ostergaard: *The Tradition of Workers' Control* (FREEDOM 21/7/1956).

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But You Can't Let People Do Just What They Want!

THE taunt of 'Utopian' and 'non-realist' is often flung at anarchists without a realization that many of the taunts have no value as many Utopian schemes are in constant practice and the most 'unrealistic' schemes have worked steadily for years in various spheres. At the beginning of the public library system (a Utopian scheme if ever we saw one!) the usual library system was of closed shelves and the reader applied for books at the counter. There were wild-eyed revolutionaries who supported an 'open-access' system where people went and chose their own books. Every 'realist' knew what would happen, shelves would be completely emptied, people would bear away armfuls of books and convey them direct to the second-hand bookshops.

But what happened? The open access system gradually spread over the whole country and the book-losses are slight in comparison to the vast quantity of books borrowed.

Now we can see another step in the direction of freedom of the libraries. It is not perhaps known that library fines have no legal sanction, their purpose is merely to speed up the return and circulation of books. Tickets were issued for fines but one London borough has now realized the clerical waste in such a venture and has installed a box into which people may drop the fines due. Obviously what will happen say the 'realists', is that no one will pay any fines and everyone will keep books for weeks and years.

Finally those hot-headed visionaries at Her Majesty's Stationery Office have issued a manual on 'Public Library Service for Children' by Lionel R. McColvin which brings anarchy and chaos within easy reach.

The author who is Westminster City Librarian, advocates that libraries should be free, and on open access. He is against fines, on the grounds that these are likely to cause losses of both books and readers. He urges a minimum of regulations and the simplest possible book-issuing procedure. Indeed, he considers that a children's library should, in every respect, be run on such lines that the children could, if need be and so far as practicable run it themselves.

He furthermore says "logical justification should be given when telling a child that he will not like this or that book". "One should never prohibit a child from taking any book: there will be nothing on the library's shelves that could do him harm, and refusal can be taken as a personal criticism". It will be noted that these are pre-selected children's books but the reflection could still apply to adult libraries.

Finally, this anarchic manifesto finishes with the observation that governments could subsidise the publication of children's books. A dangerous principle this, since governments could condition thought by withholding grants from books they felt to be subversive (e.g. *Alice in Wonderland*, *Gulliver's Travels*) and subsidising those which uphold the status quo. But he points out that "one could subsidise many good books for the cost of a gun".

Freedom has been seen to have a practical value in the realm of public libraries. Librarians have discovered 'human nature' is not the councillor's nightmare of a book-stealing, book-destroying vandal but a reasonable being if treated reasonably. J.R.

CORRECTION

In the first article in the series 'Round the Bend' by G., two footnotes were omitted in error. In case any students of the subject wish to check back on these, they should have appeared thus:—

¹ Encounter, June 1957.
² D. Stafford-Clark, *Psychiatry To-day*, Pelican Books, 1954.

INFLATION

Continued from p. 1

short, subsisting on the dole and relief.† Why?

ARE we really expected to believe that the economic health of the nation is dependent on the reduced spending capacity of say even a million people? It only makes "sense" when one sees the unemployed as a threat to higher wages and better working conditions and an incentive, through fear, to increased productivity. For then it will be possible to peg the cost of living, the rich will continue to be rich, the struggling worker will go on struggling and the army of social parasites (and whilst sympathising with old-age pensioners and invalids and others who depend on fixed incomes to eke out an existence and are the first victims of inflation, let their plight not lead us to assume that all people who live on incomes are either old or infirm!) will go on living very comfortably on the backs of the workers . . . and the unemployed.

Less than half the population of working age is engaged in producing goods or essential services. To say that the economy will be healthier by reducing the number so employed rather than those who live unproductively on incomes derived from rent and other investments in war production and industry, may well make sense for our professional economists and the upholders of our financial system. To a normal human being who works for his living it is sheer lunacy, and the sooner he stops thinking that he may be wrong and starts shouting from the roof tops that he is right, the better!

The world is being so hypnotised by the opinions of experts that people don't even bother to find out on what these people are experts and authorities. They accept rather in the same way as during the war some housewives would join a queue without first ascertaining what the queue was for, just because it was a queue!

The professional economists are all arguing how to make capitalism work smoothly. None are asking themselves whether capitalism itself serves the real interests of mankind and is worth saving. And in trying to bolster up the system they are quite prepared to sacrifice millions of people either to unemployment or to a life of suspicion and fear.

FOR the vast majority of workers, capitalism offers no hope. The Labour Party's advocacy of "Equal Opportunity" aims at ensuring that the executive, technical and managerial jobs at the top will be open to all classes of society. At most, and in theory, it may mean that at the bottom cockneys and old Etonians may find themselves shoulder to shoulder in the sewers and the mines—if that is any consolation for continuing to live as a member of the under-privileged classes! But it

†The figure of 2-3 per cent. unemployment apart from being a "guess" is based on the cold war economy in which a very large number of conscripts have as little to spend as an unemployed man. If, as the Government has intimated, the armed forces will be considerably reduced in numbers the personnel must either be absorbed in industry and increase the inflationary strain on the economic machine or swell the ranks of the 2-3 per cent, which will then become 4-5 per cent. For the same reason economies on the Armed Forces if returned to the public in the form of tax concessions will mean that there is more money to spend and to increase the inflationary trend! What then will the government do with this money?

BEYOND THE WAGE SYSTEM

(Continued from previous issue)

CO-OPERATIVE Co-partnerships are the result of efforts on the part of ordinary workers to lift themselves up by their own boot-straps. Ideologically, they are part of the working class movement. Two other notable experiments in recent years have been initiated by capitalist owners inspired by Christian pacifist principles. These are Farmer and Sons, printers, of Edgware Road and Scott Bader Ltd., manufacturers of synthetic resins, of Wollaston, near Wellingborough. In both these cases, in the face of the initial scepticism of their employees, the original owners have divested themselves of most of their property, retaining only a certain measure of control to ensure the continuance of the experiment and anticipating that even this will finally be relinquished—in the case of Scott Bader, within the next few years. The principle of both concerns is co-ownership which goes beyond co-operative co-partnership in that the capital is owned collectively by the members and not individually. In form, the organisations consist of two parts: the industrial undertaking which is a private joint stock company, and a community organisation which owns the shares in the former company. As members of the community organisation, the workers are joint owners of the enterprise and participate in its control on a basis of equality. In the case of Scott Bader especial interest attaches to the experiment in that attempts have been made to integrate the factory in the local community outside. A representative of the town is invited to participate in the Community Council, which is the management body of the Scott Bader Commonwealth, and in addition individual members undertake certain charitable responsibilities in the town.

It is too early to judge the success of these two experiments which are less than ten years old, and there are special difficulties—and also certain advantages

—attached to attempts to transform from above authoritarian into democratic work relationships. But the general impression of outside observers seems to bear out the opinions of the founders that a genuine community is taking root.

Against the background of industrial organisation in this country neither the co-operative co-partnerships, nor the co-ownership concerns, nor the few other experiments in the same direction, may loom very large. But as experiments they have a significance out of all proportion to the number of workers affected by them. They point the way beyond the wage system to a method of organising production on the basis of free co-operation. As such they deserve the close attention of all who share the aim of creating a free and harmonious society of responsible individuals.

There is however one feature common to all these experiments which it is important to notice. They are all small scale enterprises. The Scott Bader Commonwealth even has a provision in its constitution that the enterprise shall not exceed 250 people in number and that when this size is reached a new industrial unit shall be hived off from the parent body. The ground for this provision is interesting: so that every person in the organisation "can embrace it in his mind and imagination". The implication is that co-ownership could not work, or at least work well, in a large scale enterprise.

The relationship between size and industrial democracy has suggested to a number of observers that these co-operative enterprises have little relevance to industry generally where increasingly it is the large firm which dominates the economy. Thus the Labour Correspondent of *The Times* in a not unfriendly recent article on the Co-operative Partnerships concluded that "they seem to provide a means of harmonious self-government in a small concern that is

satisfied to remain small. But there is no evidence in the experience of this country that they provide any solution to the problem of establishing democracy in a large scale modern industry." Quite clearly this judgment is correct if what we have in mind is a co-operative group of workers establishing an enterprise in, say, the motor car industry or even taking over an existing firm. For one thing, no group of workers has the capital required for such an investment. As it is the workers own only one-quarter of the total capital of the 40 or so co-operative co-partnerships in this country and most of them could not long survive without their close tie-up with the retail co-operative movement.

But the point at issue is not whether Co-operative Co-partnership in the form that we know it can hope to establish itself in large scale industry but whether the principles of free co-operative work can be so applied and, if so, how? On this issue only the undiscerning will be dogmatic. Evidence from the social sciences is steadily accumulating all of which underlines the difficulties of creating anything but a nominal democracy in large scale organisations. The institutional devices suggested by the syndicalists—absence of permanent organisers, no organiser to be paid more than the rank-and-file, strict delegation of powers to representatives, and so on—would probably, if applied, go far towards making leaders responsible to their constituents but the difficulty is in getting them applied. Moreover, from what we know of democratic organisations of various kinds, it appears that the continuance of democracy depends more upon the spirit that motivates all members than upon institutional safeguards of one kind or another, which at the best make the subversion of democracy only more difficult to achieve.

On this whole question of the relationship between size and industrial democracy I, for my part, am quite clear that

SCIENCE COMMENTS

A JEWEL set in a sea, not of silver, but of sewage, is how this island was recently described in a medical journal. The complacency of the advocates of sea bathing has been shattered, and as it is well known that no river in the country is sufficiently free from bacteriological pollution to be safe, it would appear that we should confine our swimming to baths of dilute chlorine. Manchester, Glasgow, and London ship their "sludge" as it is called, some thirty miles out to sea and dump it. Some Yorkshire towns sell it as fertilizer after preliminary treatment which includes sterilization. The process is relatively expensive, and the demand for it at the price is small. But most of the sewage of this country is discharged untreated into the sea to the disgust of those enthusiasts who want it put back on the land. On the Lancashire coast the amount involved is frighteningly enormous. The system dates back to the era of the Victorian expansionists who however failed to foresee the expansion of sea bathing that has occurred. An expert has now explained on television how sewage being warmer and less salty than the sea water tends to float on top, especially around our crowded seaside holiday resorts, where for a few months of the summer the population is much larger and the already creaking sewage system may be strained to breaking point.

does not alter the basic realities of capitalism: that it can only run smoothly when production is geared to less than full capacity, which in our society means that some people are prevented from obtaining even the necessities of life.

If that is not enough to provoke a little thought and rebellion let us take the matter one step further with this question. Is there any reason to suppose that in the coming era of automation the problems of capitalism will be eased? Not only do we think that the problems will not be eased; we think that they will be intensified. But we leave it to our readers to work out that one for themselves!

Nobody quite knows what to do; abolish the prosperity which now permits workers to have holidays; upset the holiday industry of the seaside towns by persuading people not to spend their holidays at Blackpool and Southend, or build better sewage plants, returning at least some of the sludge to the land it came from? But there is of course no money available for that. Our sewage system like our railway system is out of date.

Alcoholics, considered to be a serious social problem by some politicians in France, and to have a specific disease by the medical profession, are also a happy datum-collecting ground for American sociologists. An American from Yale has been trying to relate the incidence of alcoholism in different social groups to their cultural behaviour patterns. In the *Journal of the American Medical Association* he compares protestant middle class urban Americans with Anglo-Saxon backgrounds, with Mormons, Jews, and an unspecified tribe of South American Indians. The middle class protestants are summarized as having a nebulous defensive attitude to drink. "There is much feeling, but attitudes are contradictory and the degree of sanction varies between wide extremes," he says. Three to seven out of every hundred drinkers are alcoholics. Among Mormons drinking is taboo and considered akin to atheism, disease, and immorality. Very few drink but amongst those who do, more than seven out of every hundred are alcoholics. For orthodox Jews drinking has a sacred and symbolic character, and plays an important part in the ritual which draws family and group to God. It is therefore a custom acquired in childhood, part of normal behaviour; and alcoholism is practically unknown. The South American Indians consumed large amounts of alcohol with, and as, a food. Not surprisingly there is much drunkenness, but not he claims, any alcoholism.

Right wing politicians have in the past criticised the mania of datum-collecting found among sociologists of the American universities and the Ford foundation, and one is tempted to speculate how far it would stretch if placed end to end. The capacity to integrate the vast collection of facts stored in University libraries appears to be lacking. There

probably isn't time to even read it. No coherent laws of social behaviour emerge from the American universities, just a large number of Doctors of Philosophy.

The conquest of space is the theme for the adventure story of to-day. The projected launching of the American artificial satellite is taking us from the realms of science fiction into science facts, or it would be, if some important problems had been solved. The launching of the satellite has been postponed for lack of suitable means to get it up. If this problem is solved no one has any idea how long it will stay up. Before anyone can actually travel into space, the problem of navigation and of a suitable method of propulsion, has to be solved. No return tickets are likely to be available. A trip to even the moon is so far away that we can safely return to our science fiction, with the pleasurable anticipation that we will there find that many of the societies of the future and distance have near anarchist forms of social organisation.

Is intelligence a function of heredity or environment? Our answer to this question depends mainly on our politics and on which decade of the century our views were formed. Sir Cyril Burt described recently in *Nature* the stages in the evolution of opinion. Twenty years ago most British psychologists accepted the Francis Galton theory that in childhood intellectual efficiency in all directions is determined by a single factor, the result of the individual's genetic constitution. Later improvements in nutrition, general health, and educational opportunity led many to deny the possibility of mental inheritance, and environment was assumed to be the supremely important factor. Now it is believed that intelligence is a general attribute to all brain tissue, and differences in intelligence depend on differences in general brain structure which like other physical characteristics will be inherited according to the Mendelian laws of inheritance. This view is supported by the observed wide differences in intelligence in children brought up in orphanages, and the evidence that identical twins separated at birth have similar educational achievements despite having had different environments.

if it could be shown that large scale industry and a free co-operative organisation of work are incompatible, then the choice must be made in favour of free co-operation—whatever may be the consequences on efficiency, which, in any case, are I suspect rather dubious. At this stage, however, we are not faced with such a hard choice because there have been no serious attempts to apply co-operative principles to large scale industry.

Of the various proposals to do just this, the one which is most promising is the collective contract, an institution favoured by the guild socialists, fervently propagated for decades by the Frenchman, Hyacinthe Dubreuil, and put forward again by G. D. H. Cole in his latest book, *The Case for Industrial Partnership*. In essence, the collective contract system involves the division of the large work group into a number of smaller groups, each of which can undertake a definite, identifiable task. Then, on this basis, instead of being paid individually, each group enters into a collective contract with the management. In return for a lump sum sufficient to cover at least the minimum trade union rate for each individual, the group would undertake to perform a specified amount of work, with the group itself allocating the various tasks among its members and arranging conditions to suit its own convenience. Such an arrangement, argues Cole, I think correctly, would have the effect of "linking the members of the working group together in a common enterprise under their joint auspices and control, and emancipating them from an externally imposed discipline in respect of their method of getting the work done." Such a system would effectively break the hierarchical organisation of industry in which authority descends downwards from the Managing Director through lower management to the workers on the shop floor and pave the way for its replacement by a system of mutually co-operating functional groups knit together by collective contracts.

Its general adoption would mean a significant breach in the wage system. It would give back to the worker control over the organisation of his labour; it would dispense with the false abstraction of labour from the labourer—management would be dealing with autonomous groups of men, not a number of hands; and the groups might, with the aid of their trade unions which would, of course, still have important protective functions, ensure that the contracts guaranteed them adequate security in their work. In short, the first three of the four cardinal features of the wage system which I mentioned earlier would be abrogated. The fourth, absence of control of the product of labour, would not. The functions connected with control of the product or, if you prefer, the process of exchange, would still remain in the hands of management. Investment, the control of raw materials—buying, and the control of the finished product—selling, would not be touched by the collective contract system, as they are under the systems of co-operative co-partnership and co-ownership. Management, therefore, would still retain great power but control of production by the workers would provide some guarantee that the control of the product by management would not lead to exploitation and the establishment of a privileged class of managers. In time, having firmly secured their position in the productive process, the workers might extend their control to the product, or management might be reduced to just one other co-operative group within the larger enterprise, enjoying the same status as the others but specialising in the functions involving the product.

The Labour Party's recent policy statement on *Industry and Society* has underlined the importance of the emergence of the large firm which is collectively controlled by its managers. The statement even faces the possibility of the managers constituting themselves as a new privileged class. But it then lamely proposes to tame the managers by getting them to accept a code of social conduct and to submit to measures of central economic planning. The possibility of a managerial revolution is, I believe, very real: the social revolution that we are witnessing about us to-day is the managerial revolution. But no code of social conduct and no measures of State control such as the Labour Party piously proposes will prevent such a revolution. The revolution will be prevented, if at all, within industry by methods which wrest from the managers the sources of their power. A successful assault on the power of the managers can only take the form of an assault on the wage system as such. In going beyond the wage system we shall find ourselves going beyond the managerial society.

WHO WILL DO THE TOTTING IN A FREE SOCIETY?

IN Lambeth, London, the housewives are doing the Lambeth Walk—with their own dustbins. For the second week, 140 miles of the borough's streets (*that many miles?*) have been left without the services of the corporation dustmen, who are on strike to defend their ancient right of 'totting'.

For those ignorant of the useful art of scavenging and of the even more useful trade of refuse disposal, we should perhaps explain that 'totting' is a word inherited from the nineteenth century, if not earlier, and denoting 'anything of value found in refuse', and for as far back as they can remember, dustmen have rummaged through the garbage cans to see what they can salvage—to make an honest penny for themselves on the side.

At least, in Lambeth, nobody really worried about the honesty or otherwise of totting until some busybody in the Town Hall decided that the situation couldn't go on. Since the picking up and capitalising of other people's thrown out rubbish was neither legal nor illegal, something had to be done about that.

And naturally, since matter is indestructible and even unwanted property is still property and you can always be done for stealing-by-finding and the law is the law and authority hates you to get something for nothing and a variety of other very good reasons, the busybody in the Town Hall decided to make totting a crime.

Now, if you live in Lambeth, everything you put in your dustbin is a free gift to the Corporation. It claims ownership of every broken plate, rusted out old kettle and every slimy packet of kitchen peelings. (Perhaps you could show your appreciation of their concern for your refuse by sending it *direct* to the

Town Clerk?) and since it's no good having a law you can't enforce, the Corporation is now putting the screw on the dustmen to stop their little game. So the dustmen are on strike in defence of their right to remove the totting and sell it for their own profit to rag and bone men, scrap-metal merchants, and other middlemen of the refuse trade. This practice probably has an ancestry as old as that of the first dust heap.

The *Manchester Guardian* tells us that the source of the word 'totting' baffles even the Oxford English Dictionary. 'Origin unascertainable', it says, '... a dust heap picker's name for a bone whereby it extends to anything worth picking. Hence totter, a rag and bone collector'. In 1873 a dictionary of slang stated that 'totting also has its votaries on the banks of the Thames where all kinds of flotsam and jetsam, from coals to carrion, are known as tots.'

And to this day any waterman finding a corpse floating in the Thames can claim 7s. 6d. if he tows it to the nearest river police launch. Haven't the Corporations of Lambeth and the other boroughs bordering the Thames yet claimed property rights over the bodies in which people throw themselves out of this world? It seems remiss of them not to.

Anyway—although business men may have their expense accounts and even miners their free coal without too much bother, the 'perks' which presumably add interest as well as profit to a dustman's lot are going to be denied them if Lambeth Corporation has its way. If it does, be sure the dustmen will soon be agitating for a rise in pay, and the rates will go up to meet it. Thus does the Corporation defend our interests.

SYRIA Continued from p. 1

were afoot to by-pass Syria in a vast new scheme for piping oil. This will make the oil companies independent of Syria.

Unreliable politically, at war with some of the surrounding Arab States—Jordan and Lebanon are openly hostile—and not economically all that valuable to the West, these facts might really indicate that Britain and America are not really very alarmed by the new deal at the moment.

What are the chances of Russia gaining the much feared foothold in the Middle East? Physically they would suggest not very high, unless of course Syria gains in the future full support from the other Arab States—an unlikely eventuality. But, in the word of the political pundits, Russia has won at least a temporary victory in the cold war—an important enough consideration in the perpetual contest which exists between the "Great Nations".

Before going to press (Monday, August 26th) we read a report that

Russia's security chief, General Serov, spent the last ten days of July in Damascus. According to this report he discussed plans for stirring up revolution in Jordan (he might even be more successful than we have been in our revolutionary attempts to stir 'the people'). The Russians cannot complain about this sudden disclosure since they themselves are so expert at discovering plots at the right moment.

Whether or not an uprising is imminent in Jordan organised from the Kremlin time alone will show us. But preparations to counter the plot may be under way by the United States Sixth Fleet which is on manoeuvres in the Western Mediterranean and is ready "to move Eastwards if necessary". At a press conference on August 21st, Eisenhower said that there were "very definite limitations" on what the United States could do in dealing with the internal affairs of Syria. He refused to call the present Government in Syria Communist, saying that he tried to respect the principle that you should "always give your enemy a line of retreat if you can"! In other words, Syria can always limit her co-operation with the Soviet Union if she should change her mind. If trouble is inevitable then the Sixth Fleet will sail East and another Suez may be organised.

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Volume 6, 1956

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Through Knowledge to Reform

HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE LAW

THERE is news of a project to set up a clinic which will concern itself with the problems of homosexuality and related matters. It has been described in a letter to the *British Medical Journal* by Mr. R. H. N. Long who is a surgeon and assistant secretary of the Medical Defence Union. According to him a committee of twenty people, nine of whom were doctors, supported the proposals unanimously.

It is proposed that a clinic should be operated in a convenient part of London on an out-patient basis. Mr. Long writes that, "It will offer no new therapeutic technique except in so far as a clinic concerned solely with homosexuals is new, and this may well prove to be a big step forward." Research will be carried out at the same time as therapy.

The project might well prove to be a forward step, and could help to shed some much needed scientific light in many darkly prejudiced quarters. It is to be hoped (if not actually assumed) that the project has about it a libertarian, as well as a scientific approach.

So far as our understanding of homosexuality is concerned it would appear that there are roughly two categories; those who by the forces of circumstance and background have become homosexual, where they might not have done under different circumstances, and those who in some degree would be regarded as homosexual whatever their circumstances. Obviously it is often impossible to make the distinction, and equally it is impossible to distinguish where so-called normality ends and homosexuality begins. What is so important is that there should be recognition of the existence of more than one category, acceptance of "non-normality" as a fact having nothing to do with immorality, that male

and female "characteristics" are *always* intermingled in all men and women, and that homosexuality and crime have nothing in common except through the absurdity of existing laws relating to it. (It should also be remembered that many homosexuals have no desire to be "cured" or "reformed" and are quite content with a condition which is for them, normal).

If a clinic can be set up with official recognition (it would be pointless and damaging to ignore the existence of officialdom), which might in the light of research and medical practice bring pressure to bear upon the Government, upon journalism and upon public opinion, it could help to change the law, alter the moronic approach of the Press and change the unpleasantly moralistic attitude of the general public. In this way the problem of homosexuality, which in many instances is not a problem at all, could to a great extent be resolved.

Alternatives to Prison

We do not suggest that the present situation is likely to be altered in a short space of time merely by the creation of a single clinic devoted to the scientific study of homosexuality, nor in fact is it necessarily the policy of those who support the scheme to change radically the laws governing it, but at least it would be a considerable step if the Government were to accept that there could be an alternative method of "rehabilitation" to the usual prison sentence.

For example it could become in due course an automatic procedure for homosexuals charged with a homosexual crime to be given a proper and specialised examination at the very least, followed if necessary by treatment. The *process of the law* might in this way be modified and it would become possible to impress upon the public and authorities that

homosexuality is not a crime even within the meaning of the present law.

Progress has been made in the last century, glimmerings of understanding are noticeable, but a general attitude of unreason still prevails. Any measure which might further the knowledge of the medical profession and the general public might eventually be brought to bear upon the law-makers. There can be no reason to spurn reformist half-measures of this kind simply because they do not represent all that is necessary and just.

If the State can be persuaded that most, if not all anti-social homosexuals are in need of medical attention and not preventive detention (which in a prison probably serves to worsen the condition), and that most homosexuals are not in fact anti-social at all, then perhaps the illogicality of the law which does not recognise female homosexuality as a crime in itself but takes the opposite view where males are concerned might be put to rights.

We have no reason to expect logic from governments where the law is concerned, though there are often obvious political and economic reasons for this, but neither of these reasons applies other than remotely to homosexuality. We could argue that it is largely a question of emotional unreason, which in some ways is hardest of all to overcome—but at least there is no essentially vested interest in the maintenance of unjust law and the homosexual.

MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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September 6.—Richard de Haan:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF XIX
CENTURY RADICAL PHILOSOPHERS.

September 13.—Russell Blackwell:
INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY
RESPONSIBILITY IN TO-DAY'S
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